

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILDREN OF DIVORCE AMONG EUROPEAN
CANADIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN CANADIAN YOUNG ADULTS: THE ROLE OF
DIVORCE NORMS AND CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION**

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Abstract

Since the latter half of the 20th century, divorce has become relatively common in individualist cultures (e.g., European countries), while it is still rather uncommon in collectivist cultures (e.g., South Asian countries). Previous work has found that individuals that stray from marital norms can be stigmatized, but no previous studies have examined the views that people hold regarding children of divorce. The present study ($N = 221$) explored the extent to which European Canadian and South Asian Canadian young adults stigmatize other young adults from divorced families. While participants from both cultures were not highly stigmatizing, differences in stigma were partially explained by differences in perceived cultural divorce norms. The heritage cultural identification of South Asian Canadians was also found to moderate the relationship between perceived cultural norms and individual stigma. Results point to the importance of perceived social norms and cultural identification when examining the perception of young adults with divorced parents.

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The prototypical family unit in most societies is one that involves a heterosexual married couple with children. There are of course, many exceptions to this prototype. Given the increase in the number of divorces beginning in the latter half of the 20th century, one frequent exception is the marital status of parents within a family unit. When encountering children or young adults, however, the common expectation is that their parents are married. So how are children of divorce viewed by others? Are they more likely to be perceived as being less adjusted because of their parents' divorce? Are children of divorce more likely to be perceived as experiencing relationship problems as adults? Will they be viewed as less desirable as friends or as romantic partners? Do these views depend on how common divorce is in a culture? It is quite likely that children of divorce will be stigmatized to a certain extent, but surprisingly, little research has directly examined the potential stigma of having divorced parents.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the existence and degree of stigmatization of children of divorce using a social norms perspective. Because culture is the carrier of social norms, cultural factors will be investigated as well. This paper will begin with a discussion of social norms, typical reactions to norm violations, and how norms regarding marital relationship dissolution may differ by cultural group membership. This literature review will lead to the general prediction that people stigmatize children of divorce; that is, children of divorce, compared to children from intact families—will be seen as less well adjusted, as having more relationship problems, and others may be reluctant to befriend and date them. Furthermore, my key prediction is that attitudes towards children of divorce will differ by culture, as a function of perceived cultural norms regarding divorce and cultural identification.

It is worth noting at the outset that when using the term “children of divorce,” we are referring to individuals up to and including emerging adulthood whose parents are divorced. The

current study will focus on the opinions of young adults towards other young adults whose parents are divorced.

Reactions to Social Norm Violations

Social norms are implicit or explicit rules or standards that are understood by members of a group and which guide and/or constrain social behaviour within that group (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Social norms are considered important for sustaining groups and cultures (e.g., van Kleef, Wanders, Wanders, Stamkou, & Homan, 2015). When individuals violate social norms, they will often experience negative interpersonal consequences such as social rejection. People generally do not like it when others demonstrate behaviours that deviate from socially-prescribed norms. Research has found that people are very sensitive to norm violations and that they are adept and quick to categorize others as norm-violators or norm-abiders (van Leeuwen, Park, Penton-Voak, & 2012). For observers, norm violations often trigger emotional responses such as anger and shame (e.g., Kam & Bond, 2009; Ohbuchi et al., 2004), and sometimes even anxiety and fear (Siddiqui, 2012). These emotional responses tend to occur even if the violations do not cause any personal harm or disadvantage, such as when someone cuts into the line behind them (Helweg-Larsen & LoMonaco, 2008).

The aversion to norm violation is a deeply rooted response that is seen across cultures. When presented with norm violating stimuli, anger and blame are the typical emotional responses in various Eastern and Western cultures (Ohbuchi et al., 2004). The intensity of this aversion, however, may be moderated by the group membership of the norm violator, as well as the cultural context in which the norm violation is taking place. In terms of group membership, aversion to norm violation tends to occur especially if the norm-violator belongs to the observer's ingroup, also known as the "black-sheep effect" (Marques, Yzervyt, & Leyens, 1988).

There is also evidence that this group-based social sanctioning is present from a very young age. Schmidt, Rakoczy, and Tomasello (2012) found that toddlers were more likely to protest against puppets that were violating social norms when the puppets were supposedly affiliated with their ingroup compared to their outgroup

In terms of culture, Bierbrauer (1992) found that people from collectivistic cultures (i.e., Kurds and Lebanese) felt that individuals who violate norms should feel more shame and guilt than those from individualistic cultures (i.e., Germans), especially if they self-identified as being religious. Gelfand et al. (2011) note that cultures that are considered “tight” (where there are many strong social norms and low tolerance for behavioural deviance, e.g., South Asian countries) tend to have more severe sanctions for norm violations than cultures that are considered “loose” (where there are weaker social norms and more tolerance for deviant behaviour, e.g., European countries). Tighter cultures tend to exert more pressure for uniformity, maintain more order, and to have less positive attitudes towards people viewed as “different.”

Divorce and Culture

Social norms are present in all cultures, but cultures can vary considerably in what is considered to be normative. Divorce offers a good example of cultural variability in social norms. From an individualism-collectivism perspective (Triandis, 1994), it has been argued that an individualistic society would be more receptive to the idea of divorce as a strategy to deal with marital breakdown (Naroll, 1983). Although divorce has multiple potential antecedents, the act of divorce ultimately prioritizes the needs of the individual (children notwithstanding). Kitayama, Varnum, and Sevincer (2014) have argued that explicit values differ between cultures and that behavioural differences between cultures are correspondingly guided by these values. Cultures with more individualistic values will thus display more individualistic behaviours, such

as divorce. It has been observed that individualist North American cultures tend to have higher rates of divorce than Asian collectivist cultures, and divorce rates have even been used as a marker to operationalize individualism (Hamamura, 2012). For example, when Vandello and Cohen (1999) studied individualism and collectivism within the United States, they used the divorce-to-marriage ratio as a face-valid indicator of individualism.

Divorce Rates and Social Norms

Social norms regarding marriage and divorce can change relatively rapidly over time even within a culture. Scott (2000) examined the relationship between changes in legal regulations surrounding marriage and changes in social norms. The study explored how, in the latter half of the 20th century, shifts in social norms regarding relationship commitment and gender roles coincided with marital law reform. Furthermore, these changes in norms coincided with changes in divorce rates. Olson (2015) reported that the American divorce rate (measured as the proportion of new divorces divided by new marriages in a given year) was slowly increasing until the 1960s (where the ratio was about .25) when it began to rapidly increase in the 70s, and plateaued in the 1980s (with a ratio of about .50). This rapid increase coincided with the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in 1970 (Weitzman, 1985). Prior to this, married couples seeking a divorce needed to prove that a spouse was at fault, whether by adultery, cruelty, or desertion. Starting in 1970, several American states started to adopt a no-fault policy, making it easier to divorce. Since the 1990s, however, the American divorce rate started to decrease slightly, down to a ratio of approximately .40 in the 2010s. The potential contributing factors associated with this decrease have yet to be fully examined. One possibility is that there are fewer marriages than before and that more couples are opting for common-law relationships. Another contributing factor may be changing patterns of immigration to the US; there is an

increasing percentage of immigrants coming from cultures where divorce is less normative (e.g., Massey, 1995; Lee & Bean, 2004).

With respect to Canadian data, the pattern of divorce rates over time is similar to that observed in the United States (Statistics Canada, 2015), although Canadian data is based on a different metric (i.e., the proportion of divorces per 100,000 Canadians). From the 1950s to the late 1960s, the divorce rate was stable and low at approximately 55 divorces per 100,000 Canadians. There was an initial spike in 1968 (where the rate grew to nearly 140/100,000 in 1970), which coincided with the implementation of a new Divorce Act (1968). This law allowed couples to divorce for reasons beyond adultery and cruelty, and couples separated for at least three years were permitted to dissolve their marriage. The divorce rate continued to rise for the next 15 years, reaching a plateau of approximately 250 divorces per 100,000 Canadians in the early 1980s. Another major spike in the divorce rate occurred in 1986 (increasing the divorce rate to around 360 divorces per 100,000 Canadians), when the Divorce Act was amended, reducing the mandatory separation period from three years to one year (Divorce Act, 1986). The divorce rate in Canada has been steadily declining since the 1990s, however, and the divorce rate has been around 210 divorces per 100,000 Canadians in the mid 2000s. This decrease is potentially attributable to an increase in common-law relationships as well as an increase in immigration from countries holding more traditional views regarding marriage.

It is clear that there is a relationship between changes in divorce rates and law reform, and both of these changes are related to changing social norms. These norms are reflected in the policies that were introduced to remove the requirement of fault, making divorce much more accessible. As a result, the increased frequency of divorced couples has altered the rigidity of the prototypical nuclear family.

From a global perspective, the divorce rate has increased steadily in the latter part of the 20th century, even in some collectivist countries. Lester (1996) examined demographic data from 27 nations in North and South America, Europe, and East Asia and found that the divorce rate had increased steadily in 25 of these nations, while both marriage rates and birth rates had decreased. Lester speculated that as divorce became more normative, people felt more comfortable divorcing and a snowball effects occurred with the divorce rate increased further. Even in Japan, a noted collectivist nation, Hamamura (2012) reported an increase in the Japanese divorce rate for the latter part of the 20th century, with steeper increases in the 1960s and 1990s. Despite the overall rise, the Japanese are still not divorcing as frequently as Americans, as the Japanese divorce rate was still nearly half the American divorce rate in the mid 2000s.

Understanding marital relationships from the perspective of social norms is important, because those who stray from their group's marital norm are at risk of being affected in negative ways. For example, Stavrova and Fetchenhauer (2014) conducted a cross-cultural study in 24 European countries and found that parents who were not married but living together (i.e. cohabiting parents) had lower well-being than married parents, but that this effect was only present in cultures where cohabitation was non-normative. The authors found that the effect was due to cohabiting parents feeling less respected due to social disapproval, among other social sanctions. In another European cross-cultural study, the same researchers found that single parents have lower life satisfaction and well-being than partnered parents in countries such as Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey where there is a strong two-parent norm for families (Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015). It thus appears that social norms surrounding marriage and family may have important psychological consequences.

Children of Divorce and Stigma by Association

Much of the literature on norm violation in a marital and familial context has focused on comparing married people to those who are divorced or who have a less typical relationship (e.g., common-law couples, single parents). Little research attention, however, has been specifically given to the stigma associated with being divorced using a social norms framework. Furthermore, even less attention has been given to the stigma of having divorced parents. The latter is perhaps due to the fact that the majority of norm violation research has focused on injunctive norms (what people should do), and descriptive norms (what people actually do) (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Cialdini, 2007; Park & Smith, 2007), both of which refer to behaviour. In contrast, being a child of divorce may violate a social norm, not because of the behaviour of the child, but rather because of the inherent association between the child and norm-violating (i.e., divorced) parents. If divorce is seen as non-normative, then children of divorce may be seen as non-normative by association. This phenomenon is akin to the concept of stigma by association (Neuberg, Smith, Hoffman & Russell, 1994).

Many studies conducted in North America and Western Europe found that people experience stigma by association. For example, people reported experiencing stigma for having homosexual friends (Neuberg et al., 1994), having friends with physical disabilities (Goldstein & Johnson, 1997), being close to someone who is obese (Hebl & Mannix, 2003; Penny & Haddock, 2007) or of a different race (Howarth, 2006). Even AIDS volunteers experience stigma through their association with the people they help (Snyder, Omoto, & Crain, 1999). Stigma by association is also reported for familial relationships. For example, stigma by association has been reported for having relatives with a psychotic disorder (Östman & Kjellin, 2002), for being

mothers with children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Norvilitis, Scime, & Lee, 2002), and for having parents who are alcoholics (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1995).

Children of divorce, therefore, are likely to be stigmatized for their association with divorced parents who are themselves stigmatized for their marital status. Moreover, the ripple effects of divorce on children may be more marked in collectivistic contexts, where family is more likely to be construed as a primary unit of identity and closely aligned to the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Vignoles et al., 2016). Children may be perceived negatively by others if they are part of a family that has been “tainted” by divorce. Given that research in individualist cultures has indicated that people are seen negatively because of their familial association with stigmatized individuals, this stigmatization may be even more marked in cultural contexts where individuals are perceived as being strongly defined by their families. Within the North American multicultural context, the strong link between self and family for individuals coming from collectivistic heritage cultures has been nicely captured by Lay et al’s (1998) measure of family allocentrism.

The Detriment of Parental Divorce and Social Norms

Although research has not examined whether children of divorce are in fact stigmatized by association, there has been a wealth of research documenting the negative consequences of divorce for children. Given the stigma experienced by divorced parents who are norm violators by virtue of their non-normative relationship status (e.g., Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2014, Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015), it is expected that their children may also suffer by association. To the best of our knowledge, however, no studies have examined whether or not children of divorce are stigmatized. Nonetheless, there is evidence that divorce can be detrimental for children. Researchers have consistently found that children of divorce are more likely to have

adjustment problems compared to their peers with married parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry, & McLoughlin, 1983; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). A summary of literature on the effects of parental divorce can be found in two meta-analyses conducted by Amato and Keith (1991), and Amato (2001). These meta-analyses included data from 159 studies, mostly conducted in North America between 1960 and 2000. The studies compared children of divorce with children from intact families on several outcome measures. Many of these studies controlled for various factors such as socioeconomic status, level of parental conflict, age of the child when the parents divorced, and with whom the child lived after the divorce. After controlling for these factors, the meta-analyses found several key differences between these two groups. Compared to children from intact families, children of divorce tended to report weaker academic achievement, poorer psychological adjustment (e.g., higher rates of depression), poorer conduct (e.g., higher rates of misbehaviour), and weaker self-concept (e.g., lower self-esteem). It thus appears that there may be a kernel of truth within the stereotype that children of divorce may be more likely to have problems of adjustment.

Interestingly, the discrepancy between children of divorce and children with intact families in these outcome variables has changed over time. The effect size estimates for the markers became weaker from the 1960s to the 1980s and then stronger again in the 1990s. This pattern coincides with the increase and decrease in divorce rates in North America for those same decades (see Olson, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2015). In times when divorce was less normative, the negative effects of parental divorce were more marked. As divorce became more normative, children seemed less harmed by parental divorce, as the discrepancy in outcomes between children of divorce and children of intact families became smaller. It thus appears that

there is a potential link between the normativity of divorce and the extent of negative impact that it may have on children of divorce.

The Current Study

Given that stigma associated with divorce differs based on the extent to which divorce is normative in a specific culture or during a specific time period, we predicted that children of divorce would be viewed negatively, especially by individuals from collectivistic cultures where divorce is more non-normative (Vandello & Cohen, 1998). To test this prediction, we recruited individuals from both individualistic cultures (European Canadians) and collectivistic cultures (South Asian Canadians). European Canadians have cultural roots that are individualistic. South Asian Canadians are the largest visible minority group in Toronto (12.3% of the population; Statistics Canada, 2013), where this study was conducted, and they have cultural roots that are collectivistic in nature. Past research has indicated that South Asian Canadians report higher levels of family allocentrism (i.e., collectivism that is expressed at the level of family relations) than European Canadians (e.g., Lou, Lalonde, & Giguère, 2012).

It was thus expected that children of divorce would be negatively viewed, and that this stigmatization would be greater for South Asian Canadians compared to European Canadians. Furthermore, it was expected that this cultural difference would be accounted for by the fact that divorce is perceived as less normative within South Asian Canadians' heritage cultures compared to European Canadians' heritage cultures. Finally, it was expected that for South Asian Canadians, the perception of divorce norms in one's culture would have a greater influence on stigma when one strongly identified with that culture.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from a research participant pool of introductory psychology students at a large university in Toronto and were given course credit for their participation. A general pre-screen question regarding cultural heritage permitted the recruitment of participants that had indicated a “White/European Canadian” or “South Asian” cultural heritage.

A total of 304 participants were initially recruited. Responses of participants were removed from the data set if they answered none or only a few of the primary measures ($N = 43$). Participants were also excluded ($N = 25$) if they gave more than two incorrect responses on the five items from the Conscientious Responders Scale (Marjanovic, Struthers, Cribbie, & Greenglass, 2014) which were interspersed throughout the survey (e.g., To answer this question, please choose option number four, ‘Neither agree nor disagree’). Fifteen participants were also removed because they were not of South Asian or European descent. The final sample included data from 221 respondents: 128 South Asian Canadians and 98 European Canadians.

The mean age of participants was 19.86 ($SD = 4.3$), with a range from 18 to 60. The majority were women (75.1% female; 24.0% male; one participant identified as “Agender”). Most participants reported being single (61.5%) or dating (34.4%), while four (1.8%) participants were married or in a common-law relationship, one engaged, one separated, one divorced, and one stated “it’s complicated.” Most participants reported their parents were married or in a common-law relationship (87%); 5% reported having divorced parents, 4% had separated parents, and 3% had widowed parents.

Nearly all participants were Canadian citizens (95.5%) or permanent residents (4.1%); there was one international student. Most participants (70.1%) were born in Canada, and lived at

home with their parents (87.8%). Of those that were not born in Canada, the mean age of arrival was 7.11 (SD = 4.74, range: 1 to 21). Of the participants not born in Canada, their origins were from Pakistan ($n = 24$), India ($n = 22$), Sri Lanka ($n = 6$), Bangladesh ($n = 3$), the USA ($n = 3$), and Kuwait ($n = 2$). There were single participants from Afghanistan, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

The majority of participants (85.1%) reported having a heritage culture other than mainstream Canadian culture. In particular, 68 (73.1%) of the European Canadian participants and 120 (93.8%) of the South Asian Canadian participants reported having a heritage culture besides mainstream Canadian. When asked to write the name of their heritage culture, 44 (50.6%) of the bicultural European Canadian participants listed Italian or Italian mixed with another European country (e.g., “Italian-Portuguese”), while the rest of the European Canadian participants listed another European country. As for the South Asian group, nearly all participants listed either a South Asian country or simply wrote “South Asian” as their heritage cultural identity.

In terms of religious tradition or affiliation, the frequencies for South Asian Canadians were as follows: 9 Christians, 39 Hindus, 45 Muslims, 25 Sikhs, and 8 Atheist/Agnostics. Among the European Canadian sample, there were 75 Christians and 10 Atheist/Agnostics.

Procedure

After providing their informed consent, participants answered an online questionnaire (median completion time: 14.7 minutes). There were two versions of the questionnaire. At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked if they identified with a heritage culture other than mainstream Canadian culture. If participants selected yes, they were asked to provide the name of that culture (e.g., Indian). These participants were presented with additional measures of

heritage culture identification, perceived divorce norms in their heritage culture, and cultural stigma for their heritage culture (see below) where the name of the culture they had provided was used for items in these measures. Figure 1 provides a flow diagram of the measures. All primary measures were assessed using 7-point Likert scales ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree unless indicated otherwise. The description of measures follows the order in which they were presented to participants in the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics for all measures can be found in Table 1.

Measures

Cultural identifications. Cameron's (2004) 12-item measure of social identity was used to assess Canadian identification (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$, e.g., "I have a lot in common with other Canadians") and heritage identification (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$, e.g., "I have a lot in common with other Indians"). Items assessed the extent to which an individual is tied to the ingroup, how central the ingroup is to their identity, and how they feel towards the ingroup. A higher mean score indicated greater identification with either heritage or Canadian culture. For the bicultural participants who had indicated a heritage culture, heritage cultural identification was assessed first and then Canadian identification was assessed.

Views on children of divorce. The primary variable of interest was the stigmatization of children of divorce. There were no known measures available, so items were created to measure the extent to which participants stigmatize children of divorce. Four separate measures were created to capture different types of stigma towards children of divorce: adjustment stereotype, relationship problems stereotype, friendship stigma, and romance stigma.

The first 8 items measured stigma by asking participants to compare children of divorce with children of intact families. The section began with "Compared to young people with

married parents, young people with divorced parents:” A list of 8 statements were then presented. The first four items pertained to an *adjustment stereotype*: “are less likely to do well in school,” “are more likely to use illicit drugs,” “are more likely to drink excessively,” and “are less likely to be well-adjusted when they get older,” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$). The next four items related to a *relationship problems stereotype*: “are less likely to have positive views about marriage,” “are more likely to give up when things get tough in a relationship,” “are more likely to have difficulties in their own relationships,” and “are more likely to divorce in the future,” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$). An exploratory factor analysis with principal axis factoring extraction and direct oblimin rotation revealed a two-factor solution that confirmed the distinction between adjustment stereotype and relationship problems stereotype items. Mean scores were calculated separately for each stereotype with a higher score indicating greater stigma towards children of divorce.

The next 8 items measured stigma by asking participants to rate their agreement with statements about their preferences vis-à-vis children of divorce. In particular, the first four items referred to *friendship stigma*: “I would prefer not to hang out with someone if their parents are divorced.”, “Being friends with someone whose parents are divorced might negatively affect my reputation.”, “I prefer not to befriend someone whose parents are divorced.”, and “I would be less likely to invite someone to my home if their parents are divorced.” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$). The latter four items assessed *romance stigma*: “I would be hesitant about dating someone if their parents were divorced.”, “I wouldn’t get romantically involved with someone whose parents are divorced.”, “If someone’s parents are divorced, I would find them a little less attractive.”, and “I would prefer to date someone whose parents are still married.” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$). Exploratory factor analyses with principal axis factoring extraction and direct oblimin

rotation revealed a two-factor solution, confirming the distinction between friendship stigma and romance stigma. Mean scores were calculated separately for each stigma measure with a higher score indicating greater stigma.

Perceived Cultural Stigma of Divorce. Divorce stigma at the cultural level was assessed using the intersubjective approach (Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, & Wan, 2010). This approach essentially asks participants to report what they think is the attitude of an average person in their cultural group regarding an issue (e.g., children of divorce), as opposed to simply asking participants about their own attitude. Chiu and colleagues demonstrated that the intersubjective approach can provide an effective measure of cultural norms, as individuals often use the intersubjective opinion of their culture to guide their behaviour (Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2000; Chiu, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000; Fu et al., 2007; Gelfand, & Realo, 1999).

There was no existing measure of cultural stigma for children of divorce and an 8-item measure was created. The cultural stigma measure was designed to capture the main elements of the individual stigma measures in one measure. Participants were presented with a list of items that measured the extent to which participants believed that members of their heritage culture stigmatize children of divorce, followed by a measure with the same items but reworded for Canadian culture. For monocultural European Canadian participants, only the Canadian version of the cultural stigma measure was administered. Participants were instructed to indicate their opinions regarding what people in either their heritage culture or Canadian culture thought about young people whose parents were divorced. The items were preceded by “(Heritage culture)/Canadian people think that,” and then followed by 8 statements: “If your parents are divorced, you are ‘damaged goods’,” “Individuals with divorced parents probably had difficult childhoods,” “Individuals with divorced parents do worse in school than those with married

parents,” “Individuals with divorced parents are more likely to get divorced themselves,” “Having divorced parents is bad for your reputation,” “People with divorced parents will be less successful in their own marriages,” “It’s better not to be in a long-term relationship with someone whose parents are divorced,” and “Families with divorced parents are lower in status.” An exploratory factor analysis with principal axis factoring extraction and direct oblimin rotation was used, and a single factor solution emerged for heritage version of the measure, suggesting unidimensionality of the items. Although a two-factor solution emerged for the Canadian version, a single measure was used for the purposes of measure compatibility. Both versions had high scale reliability (Cronbach’s α for heritage cultural stigma = .94, Cronbach’s α for Canadian cultural stigma = .90). A higher mean score indicated greater perceived cultural stigma.

Perceived Normativity of Divorce. An 8-item measure of the perceived normativity of divorce was created for the study. The measure was repeated twice for bicultural participants: once asking participants about the commonplace nature of divorce in their self-identified heritage culture, and once regarding the normativity of divorce in Canada. Items include “It’s not surprising to hear that a (heritage)/Canadian person filed for a divorce,” “It’s normal for (heritage)/Canadian people to get divorced,” “Divorce doesn’t happen often in (heritage)/Canadian culture” (reverse coded), “In (heritage)/Canadian culture, normally people don’t get divorced, instead they work things out,” (reverse coded), “Only in extreme cases do (heritage)/Canadian people get divorced” (reverse coded), “Divorce is normal part of society in (heritage)/Canadian culture,” “Divorce is taken relatively lightly in (heritage)/Canadian culture,” and “It’s a really big deal if a (heritage)/Canadian gets divorced” (reverse coded). Exploratory factor analyses with principal axis factoring extraction and direct oblimin rotation was used, and two-factor solutions emerged for both heritage and Canadian versions of the measure, whereby

the positively keyed items were on one factor and the negatively keyed items on the other. For the purposes of simplicity, however, a single score was used. Both versions had good scale reliability (Cronbach's α for perceived heritage divorce norms = .86, Cronbach's α for perceived Canadian divorce norms = .77). A higher mean score indicated that divorce was perceived to be more normative.

Family allocentrism. The 21-item Family Allocentrism Scale was used (Lay et al., 1998) to assess the degree of connectedness to one's family; family allocentrism is in essence a measure of collectivism at the level of family (e.g., I think it is important to get along with my family at all costs;" "I should not say what is on my mind in case it upsets my family") (Cronbach's α = .86). A higher mean score indicated stronger ties to family.

Additional measures. At the end of the survey, items were included to measure demographics such as age, gender, religion, relationship status, parental relationship status, and status in Canada. Religiosity was also measured using a single item: "How religious are you?" on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 "Not religious at all" to 7 "Very religious". Participants were also asked whether or not they have any family members who were divorced, and whether they had any close friends whose parents were divorced. An exposure to divorce measure was calculated using the sum of exposure to divorce, with 1 unit added for each reported divorce person known. The survey concluded with an open-ended question that asked participants for any additional comments regarding children of divorce, divorce in general, and overall feedback on the survey. This was followed by a brief debriefing about the purpose of the study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations of the primary measures are presented for the overall sample and separately for the two cultural groups in Table 1.¹ When considering the overall sample, relationship problems stereotype had the highest mean of all four individual stigma measures ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.24$), whereas the friendship stigma had the lowest mean ($M = 1.54$, $SD = .87$). The romance stigma measure was also associated with a relatively low mean response ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 1.12$). The range in means suggest that the four measures are capturing different types of stigma towards children of divorce. In line with the assumptions about culture underlying our research, correlated t-tests indicated that divorce was perceived to be significantly more normative in Canada ($M = 4.97$, $SD = .87$) than in participants' heritage cultures ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.15$; $t(186) = -18.31$, $p < .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.34$), and participants felt that children of divorce were stigmatized more in their heritage culture ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.64$) than in Canadian culture ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.25$; $t(187) = 9.05$, $p < .000$, Cohen's $d = .66$).

When contrasting the means for two samples (see Table 1) using a series of independent t-tests, a number of cultural differences were observed. Adjusted degrees of freedom are reported whenever the Levene test indicated that variances were not equal. South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be significantly less normative in their heritage culture ($M = 2.44$, $SD = .93$) than European Canadians did in their heritage culture ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.21$; $t(111) = 5.85$, $p < .000$, Cohen's $d = .94$); South Asian Canadians also perceived stigma to be greater in their heritage culture ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.69$) than European Canadians in their heritage culture ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.47$; $t(186) = -2.96$, $p = .003$, Cohen's $d = .46$). South Asian Canadians scored significantly higher on the family allocentrism scale ($M = 4.78$, $SD = .74$) than European

Canadians ($M = 4.45$, $SD = .75$, $t(219) = -3.22$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = .44$), supporting the assumption that South Asian Canadians are more collectivist than European Canadians. Finally, South Asian Canadians ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.56$) reported being more religious than European Canadians ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.75$; $t(184) = -3.87$, $p < .000$, Cohen's $d = .52$).

It should be noted that the predicted cultural difference in individual stigma was not found for any of the four measures: adjustment stereotype ($t(219) = -1.53$, $p = .128$), relationship problems stereotype ($t(219) = -.33$, $p = .739$), friendship stigma ($t(219) = -1.66$, $p = .099$), and romance stigma ($t(219) = -1.18$, $p = .241$).

The correlations between all variables are presented separately by sample in Table 2. Correlations above the diagonal in the matrix are for the South Asian Canadian sample, and correlations below the diagonal are for the European Canadian sample. Regarding the individual measures of stigma, the two stereotype measures (adjustment and relationship problems) were highly correlated with each other for both the South Asian Canadian ($r(128) = .62$, $p < .000$) and the European Canadian samples ($r(93) = .70$, $p < .000$). Similarly, both friendship stigma and romance stigma were strongly correlated for both the South Asian Canadian ($r(128) = .54$, $p < .000$) and European Canadian sample ($r(93) = .67$, $p < .000$).

An assumption underlying this research was that individuals' views regarding children of divorce would be influenced by the views of the culture to which they belong. Specifically, the more participants felt children of divorce were stigmatized by their culture, the more they would individually stigmatize. In support of this assumption, three of the four individual stigma measures positively correlated with the perceived heritage stigma for both samples (all but friendship stigma). Moreover, for the South Asian Canadian sample, Canadian stigma was also significantly correlated with the same three individual stigma measures. For the European

Canadian sample, Canadian stigma was significantly correlated with all four individual stigma measures.

When it comes to the perceived normativity of divorce, the more normative divorce was perceived to be in Canada for South Asian Canadians, the less they felt divorce was normative in their heritage culture ($r(119) = -.56, p < .000$), suggesting that South Asian Canadians perceive a discrepancy between divorce norms in Canada and their heritage culture. Also, in both samples, the general trend was that the more participants perceived divorce to be non-normative in Canadian culture or their heritage culture, the more they held stigmatizing views towards divorce. In particular for European Canadians, the less common they felt divorce was in their heritage culture, the more the more they felt children of divorce have adjustment problems ($r(68) = -.27, p = .025$) and relationship problems ($r(68) = -.36, p = .003$). Furthermore, the less common they felt divorce was in Canada, the less they wanted to befriend ($r(93) = -.31, p = .003$) and be in a relationship with a child of divorce ($r(93) = -.22, p = .036$). For South Asian Canadians, the less common they felt divorce was in their heritage culture, the more they felt children of divorce have relationship problems ($r(120) = -.33, p < .000$), and the less common they felt divorce was in Canada, the less they wanted to befriend a child of divorce ($r(127) = -.20, p = .028$).

There were instances where greater perceived divorce norms were not related with less stigma, but actually more stigma. The more South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be more normative in their heritage culture, the less they were interested in being friends with a child of divorce ($r(120) = .37, p < .000$). Similarly, the more South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be more normative in Canada, the less they were interested in being in a relationship with someone whose parents are divorced ($r(127) = .23, p = .008$).

Another assumption underlying this research was that the perceived non-normativity of divorce would be related to perceived cultural stigmatization. In support of this assumption, participants felt their heritage culture stigmatizes children of divorce more when they perceive divorce to be less normative in their heritage culture, for both the South Asian Canadian ($r(120) = -.25, p = .005$) and European Canadian samples ($r(68) = -.58, p < .000$).

Tests of Key Predictions

The mediating role of divorce norms in explaining cultural differences in stigma.

One of my main predictions was that South Asian Canadians would hold more negative views towards children of divorce than European Canadians. T-tests indicated that this prediction was not supported. It was further predicted that one of the factors that would mediate this cultural difference would be the perceived normativity of divorce in their heritage culture. It was still possible to test whether heritage divorce norms would mediate the association between culture group (South Asian Canadian and European Canadian) and individual stigma by having an indirect effect. That is, since South Asian and European Canadians differed in perceived normativity of divorce, it is possible that in turn, differences in perceived normativity of divorce is associated with differences in stigma toward children of divorce. That is, I predicted that South Asian Canadians would perceive divorce as less normative in their heritage culture than European Canadians and in turn, report greater stigma towards children of divorce. To test this prediction, I used the PROCESS SPSS macro to construct a 95% confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect using bootstrapping techniques with 10,000 resamples (Hayes, 2012). According to Preacher and Hayes' (2004) bootstrapping method, mediation occurs when the indirect effect is significant, as indicated by a confidence interval that does not include zero. European Canadians

were dummy coded as 0, and South Asian Canadians as 1. Figure 2 depicts the conceptual model and the results of the mediation analyses are reported in Table 3.

Although there was only one significant direct path between culture and stigma for the four stigma measures (i.e., for friendship stigma), the analyses revealed significant indirect effects of culture on stigma for three of the four stigma measures: the adjustment stereotype, the relationship problems stereotype, and friendship stigma. These indirect associations were accounted for in part by South Asian Canadians' perception that divorce is less normative in their heritage culture compared to European Canadians. Specifically, consistent with my prediction, South Asian Canadians perceived divorce as less normative in their heritage culture than European Canadians, and in turn, felt that children of divorce would report more adjustment and relationship problems. That is, compared to European Canadians, South Asian Canadians' beliefs that children of divorce were more poorly adjusted and would have relationship problems was indirectly explained by their perception that divorce was less normative in their heritage culture.

Contrary to prediction, however, compared to European Canadians, South Asian Canadians were *less* likely to want to befriend a child of divorce as they perceived divorce to be *more* normative in their heritage culture. In sum, culture did have an indirect effect on stigmatization through the perception of stronger heritage divorce norms, but not always in the predicted direction.

The effect of cultural norms on stigma depends on cultural identification. My second key prediction was that the extent to which perceived heritage divorce norms were associated with South Asian Canadians' views towards children of divorce would depend on how much they identified with their heritage culture. In particular, I expected that perceiving

divorce as less normative in one's heritage culture would be associated with greater stigmatization of children of divorce, but only when participants highly identified with their heritage culture (and not when their identification with their heritage culture was low). To test whether the relationship between perceived heritage divorce norms and individual stigma was moderated by heritage cultural identification (using only the South Asian Canadian sample), I conducted moderation analyses using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2012). Significant interaction effects were followed-up with simple slope analyses according to the principles of Aiken and West (1991). A diagram of the model tested is shown in Figure 3. The results of the moderation analyses are presented in Table 4.

In line with my predictions, viewing divorce as less normative in one's heritage culture was associated with believing that children of divorce will have more relationship problems ($b = -.45, p < .000$), and heritage cultural identification was a significant moderator of this association ($b = -.27, p = .023$). The simple effects tests (as depicted in Figure 5) revealed that for people who strongly identified with their heritage culture (+1 SD on heritage cultural identification), perceiving divorce as less normative in their heritage culture was associated with the belief that children of divorce will have more relationship problems ($b = -.71, p < .000$). But for those who did not strongly identify with their heritage culture (-1SD on heritage cultural identification), there was no significant association between perceived heritage normativity of divorce and the relationship problem stereotype ($b = -.18, p = .235$).

As for the adjustment stereotype, though viewing divorce as less normative in one's heritage culture was not significantly associated with believing that children of divorce are poorly adjusted ($b = -.21, p = .108$), heritage cultural identification was a marginally significant moderator of this association ($b = -.24, p = .068$). The simple effects tests (as depicted in Figure

4) revealed that for individuals who strongly identified with their heritage culture, perceiving divorce as less normative in their heritage culture was associated with the belief that children of divorce were more poorly adjusted ($b = -.44, p = .021$). But for those who did not strongly identify with their heritage culture, there was no significant association between perceived heritage normativity of divorce and the adjustment stereotype ($b = .03, p = .858$).

Contrary to my predictions, however, South Asian Canadians who perceived divorce as less normative in their heritage culture were more likely to want to be friends with a person whose parents are divorced ($b = .33, p < .000$), and heritage cultural identification was a significant moderator of this association ($b = -.22, p = .014$). The simple effects tests (as depicted in Figure 6) revealed that for individuals who did *not* strongly identify with their heritage culture, perceiving divorce as less normative in their heritage culture was associated with *more* interest in befriending someone whose parents were divorced ($b = .54, p < .000$). For individuals who did strongly identify with their heritage culture, there was no significant association between perceived heritage normativity of divorce and friendship stigma ($b = .12, p = .360$).

As for romance stigma, though viewing divorce as less normative in one's heritage culture was not significantly associated with less romantic interest in someone whose parents are divorced ($b = .06, p = .601$), heritage cultural identification was a significant moderator of this association ($b = -.32, p = .009$). The simple effects tests (as depicted in Figure 7) revealed that for people who did *not* strongly identify with their heritage culture, perceiving divorce as less normative in their heritage culture was associated with more romantic interest in someone whose parents are divorced ($b = .38, p = .020$). But for those who did strongly identify with their heritage culture, there was no significant association between perceived heritage normativity of divorce and the adjustment stereotype ($b = -.25, p = .152$).

Additional Analyses

The role of exposure to divorce. Given the assumption that perceived norms regarding divorce would play a role in influencing one's views towards children of divorce, it follows that the extent to which one is exposed to divorce might play a similar role. Only 5.0% of participants reported having divorced parents and most participants (79.6%) knew at least one person in their social circle that is divorced. In particular, 41.2% had a divorced aunt or uncle, 11.3% had a divorced cousin, 4.5% had a divorced grandparent, 3.6% had a divorced sibling, and 61.1% reported having a close friend with divorced parents. An exposure to divorce measure was calculated using the sum of exposure to divorce, where 1 unit was added for each reported divorce person known (e.g., if a participant reported having a divorced sibling and a close friend with divorced parents, then their score is a 2 for divorce exposure). The overall mean exposure score was 1.24 ($SD = .93$, min. = 0, max. = 5). In line with my prediction, participants that were more exposed to divorce were more likely to report that divorce was more normative in their heritage culture ($r(188) = .24, p = .001$) and that their heritage culture was less stigmatizing towards children of divorce ($r(188) = -.20, p = .007$). Those that were more exposed to divorce were also more interested in being in a relationship with someone whose parents are divorced ($r(221) = -.16, p = .018$). Greater exposure to divorce was also associated with lower family allocentrism ($r(221) = -.16, p = .017$) and lower religiosity ($r(221) = -.19, p = .006$).

When comparing the two samples, South Asian Canadians were found to be exposed to divorce significantly less ($M = 1.02, SD = .79$) than European Canadians ($M = 1.60, SD = .99$; $t(170) = 4.72, p < .000$, Cohen's $d = .66$). For the European Canadian sample, the more exposed to divorce they were, the more normative they felt divorce was in Canadian culture ($r(93) = .21$,

$p = .044$), and similarly the more South Asian Canadians were exposed to divorce, the more they felt divorce was normative in their heritage culture ($r(120) = .21, p = .021$). Interestingly, the more European Canadians participants were exposed to divorce, the more they felt Canadian culture stigmatized children of divorce, ($r(93) = .21, p = .045$), but the opposite was found for South Asian Canadians: the more they were exposed to divorce, the less they felt their heritage culture stigmatized children of divorce ($r(120) = -.25, p = .006$).

Finally, given the study's focus on attitudes towards young adults with divorced parents, participants who reported having a close friend with divorced parents ($N = 135$) were compared to those that did not have such a close friend ($N = 86$). This was the only divorce exposure item that implied a freely selected relationship (i.e. all the other items referred to divorced family members). Not surprisingly, participants who did not have any close friends with divorced parents ($M = 1.70, SD = .97$) were more stigmatizing towards children of divorce on the friendship stigma measure than participants with a close friend with divorced parents ($M = 1.44, SD = .78, t(151) = -2.11, p = .036, \text{Cohen's } d = .30$). They were also more stigmatizing on the romantic stigma measure (no friend with divorced parents: $M = 2.36, SD = 1.26$; friend with divorced parents: $M = 1.93, SD = .98, t(149) = -2.70, p = .001, \text{Cohen's } d = .39$). Participants with no friends with divorced parents ($M = 2.54, SD = 1.07$) perceived divorce to be less normative in their heritage culture than participants with a friend having divorced parents ($M = 2.99, SD = 1.16, t(186) = 2.67, p = .008, \text{Cohen's } d = .40$). Finally, participants with no friends with divorced parents ($M = 4.63, SD = 1.62$) felt that their heritage culture stigmatized children of divorce more than participants with a friend with divorced parents ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.59, t(186) = 2.67, p = .008, \text{Cohen's } d = .49$).

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the stigma that may be attached to being the child of divorced parents and how this stigma may be shaped by social-cultural norms and identity. It should be stated at the outset that the young adult Canadian sample that was recruited for this study did not hold strongly negative views regarding children of divorce. Four measures of individual stigma towards children of divorce were created for this study. These measures included two stereotypes regarding the children of divorce—that they may have adjustment problems and that they may have problems in their own intimate relationships. The other two measures assessed the extent to which children of divorce were stigmatised by being seen as undesirable either as a friend or a romantic partner. The mean responses for all of these measures were relatively low. Only the relationship problems stereotype had a mean score that was slightly higher than the midpoint. The mean responses to the other three measures indicated that participants generally disagreed with stigmatizing children of divorce in terms of friendship and intimate relationships, and endorsing the adjustment stereotype. It thus seems that the respondents in this study did not hold very negative views of individuals with divorced parents. This finding suggests that within the Canadian context where this study was conducted, individuals may not hold negative views of children of divorce because divorce may not be construed as non-normative.

It is worth noting that the two stereotype measures both had greater endorsement than the friendship and romance stigma measures. The stereotype measures required participants to indicate their agreement with popular stereotypes about children of divorce, whereas the friendship and romance stigma asked them about their personal preferences that are being applied to individuals. Participants may be more reluctant to agree with a statement that clearly

indicated a propensity for discrimination (e.g., “I prefer not to befriend someone whose parents are divorced”), than statements regarding beliefs about a group of individuals (e.g., “young adults with divorced parents are more likely to have difficulties in their own relationships”). Furthermore, the data mirrors the findings in the meta-analyses conducted by Amato (2001) that found that children of divorce do tend to have more adjustment problems than children with married parents. It is possible that the greater endorsement of the adjustment and relationship problems stereotypes are reflective of actual differences between children of divorce and children with married parents.

Perceived Normativity of Divorce and Culture

There were two assumptions underlying the research approach that we took to study the influence of cultural norms on the stigmatization of children of divorce. One assumption was that our South Asian Canadian sample would be more collectivistic in its orientation than the European Canadian sample. There was evidence for this assumption, given that South Asian heritage participants scored higher on average than the European heritage participants on the measure of family allocentrism. This measure is an index of the degree of family interdependence or collectivism at the family level (Lay et al., 1998) and this difference replicates past research (e.g., Lou et al., 2012). The second assumption was that South Asian Canadians would perceive divorce as less normative within their heritage culture than European Canadians. This second assumption was also supported by our data. South Asian Canadians perceived divorce as being both less normative (e.g., divorce is a normal cultural product) and as being more culturally stigmatizing for the children of divorce (e.g., children of divorce are seen as damaged goods) in their heritage culture than did the European Canadians. Moreover, it was found that European Canadians were more likely to know individuals who were divorced within

their social circles than South Asian Canadians, mirroring how divorce is much more common in individualist countries (e.g., Olson, 2015; Weitzman, 1985), than in South Asian countries. In fact, there is no known reliable source of data on the divorce rates for India, Pakistan, nor Bangladesh. The absence of such data suggests that divorce is in fact quite non-normative. There is data on South Asian Americans, however, using subsets of data from the American Community Survey (Cohen, 2014). From 2008 to 2012, Indian Americans had a divorce rate of 5.3%, 7.1% for Pakistani Americans, and 4.6% for Bangladeshi Americans, which are much lower than the country-wide divorce rate of approximately 40% in 2010 (Weitzman, 1985). Because divorce is so non-normative among South Asians in the United States, it is likely as low if not lower in South Asian countries. It was not surprising, therefore, that South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be much less normative in their heritage culture than European Canadians and that they perceived their culture as more stigmatizing of children of divorce.

Cultural Influences in Individual Stigma

One of the central predictions was that South Asian Canadian participants would be more stigmatizing towards children of divorce than European Canadians, because divorce is likely less normative in South Asian cultures than in European cultures. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the two cultural samples on any of the individual stigma measures. This was unexpected given that the normativity of divorce was perceived to be different in their respective heritage cultures and that both South Asian Canadians and European Canadians identified strongly with their respective heritage cultures.

Why did South Asian Canadians and European Canadians not differ on the individual stigma measures? It could simply be that there are no real differences in individual stigma between the two cultural groups. Although we may have expectations of cultural differences, the

reality is that cultures are more similar than they are different (see Lalonde, Cila, Lou, & Cribbie (2015), Moreover, whereas participants strongly identified with their heritage cultures, they also strongly identified with Canadian culture. It is possible that heritage cultural effects become diluted for young bicultural Canadians who perceive divorce as being quite normative in Canada.

Divorce Norms as a Mediator of the Relationship between Culture and Individual Stigma

It was expected that cultural differences in individual stigma could be explained by differences in perceived heritage culture divorce norms. While there were no significant differences in individual stigma between cultures, South Asian Canadians did perceive divorce to be less normative in their heritage culture than European Canadians, and perceptions of the non-normativity of divorce in the heritage culture was related to greater stigma for many of the individual stigma measures in both cultures. Furthermore, our mediation analyses did find that for the adjustment stereotype and relationship problems stereotypes, perceived heritage norms regarding divorce did mediate the relationship between culture and individual stigma in the expected direction. South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be less normative in their heritage culture than European Canadians, and this belief in the normativity of divorce in one's heritage culture was the indirect pathway through which culture (i.e., South Asian Canadian vs. European Canadian) was related to the individual stigmatization of children of divorce in terms of perceived adjustment and relationship problems.

The results of the mediation analysis for the friendship stigma measure was unexpected. Although South Asian Canadians were slightly less inclined to befriend a child of divorce than European Canadians, and the indirect relation between culture and friendship stigma (as mediated by the perceived heritage divorce norms) was surprisingly positive. In other words, the more participants felt that divorce was normative in their culture, the less interested they were to

befriend someone whose parents were divorced. It is possible that South Asian Canadians who perceived as divorce as being more common in their heritage culture, are more attuned to the potential negative consequences of befriending someone with divorced parents.

The implication of these findings is that for young bicultural Canadians, culture has more of an indirect than a direct influence on the extent to which individuals stereotype children of divorce. Moreover, this indirect effect is related to the perceived normativity of divorce in their heritage cultures. This indirect pathway involving a cultural contrast between South Asian Canadians and European Canadians, suggests that the effects of coming from a “tighter” heritage culture with less room for deviance (Gelfand et al., 2011) carries over for young South Asian Canadians, leading to greater stigma towards children of divorce.

The Role of Cultural Identification on the Divorce Norms and Stigma Relationship

As predicted, significant interactions were found between cultural norms and cultural identification on individual measures of stigma for the South Asian Canadian sample. Particularly, divorce norms and individual stigma had a negative relationship for two of the four measures, such that the less normative divorce was perceived to be in the heritage culture, the more participants felt that children of divorce were likely to have adjustment and relationship problems, which is in line with previous research linking deviance from marital norms with stigma (Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2014; Stavrova & Fetchenhauer, 2015). Furthermore, the finding that children of divorce were perceived to have less relationship problems when participants felt that divorce is more normative, is in line with results from a study by Wolfinger (1999) which found that children of divorce in America were less likely to get divorced as divorce became more normative in the later half of the past century.

The negative relationship between perceived normativity of divorce and stereotypes, however, only existed when participants identified strongly with their heritage culture. This is in line with previous research that found that greater identification with a collectivist country is associated with greater collectivism at the individual level (Jetten, Postmes, & McAuliffe, 2002). Thus, cultural norms may have greater influence on behaviour when individuals actually identify with that culture. If one feels distant from that culture, then what is considered normative and acceptable may not necessarily have an impact on one own's values and belief system. When one identifies strongly with a culture, it is likely that the culture played a role in shaping the individual's values and belief system, and thus the individual tends to have negative views of ideas that are considered non-normative in the culture.

Unexpectedly, an opposite trend was found for the friendship and romance stigma measures. The more South Asian Canadian participants viewed divorce as normative in their heritage culture, the less comfortable they felt befriending and dating someone with divorced parents, although this relationship was only significant when participants did not strongly identify with their heritage culture. It is unclear as to why this was found. More research is needed to unpack the relationship between perceived divorce norms, the stigmatization of children of divorce, and cultural identification.

Stigmatization of Children of Divorce at the Cultural Level

Both the European Canadian and South Asian Canadian samples had relatively low mean responses for the individual stigma measures. The simplest and most optimistic reason is that European Canadian and South Asian Canadian young adults simply do not hold stigmatizing views of children of divorce. Alternatively, it is possible that participants were not authentically reporting their views because of a social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993). It is possible that

participants held somewhat more stigmatizing views, but were not comfortable admitting to them in a survey. However, by asking participants about stigma at the cultural level, it might have allowed participants to distance themselves from the negative views in the items, since they are reporting the extent to which they believe people from their culture stigmatize children of divorce. In other words, it may be easier to admit that others in your culture stigmatize a particular group than to admit that you personally hold stigmatizing views.

In support of this assumption, a difference in cultural-level stigma was found; South Asian Canadians did report stigma being higher in their heritage culture than European Canadians did, mirroring the finding that South Asian Canadians perceived divorce to be less normative in their heritage culture. Together, this supports the argument that cultural differences are shaped by the different values held by that culture (Kitayama, Varnum, & Sevincer, 2014). However, it is very likely that the personal views of participants towards children of divorce are not solely influenced by their heritage culture's views, especially since participants from both cultural groups strongly identified with both Canadian culture and their heritage culture.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study may be the first of its kind to explore the nature of the stigmatization of children of divorce, but it still has several limitations. The first is that the sample sizes from each cultural group were relatively small, and future research should aim to survey a greater number of participants. Furthermore, this study was correlational, and thus causality between variables cannot be inferred. Future research could employ experimental paradigms to assess perceptions of children of divorce. For example, participants from different cultures could be asked to report their impressions of an individual described in a vignette, where the individual is either described in part as having married parents or divorced parents. It is possible that an experimental

approach may reveal evidence for the cultural stigmatization of children of divorce, especially since it bypasses the social desirability bias inherent to self-report. Another limitation of the current study was that it compared two cultural groups who were residing within the same country. For better cross-cultural comparisons to be made, it would be ideal to have mono-cultural participants that reside in different parts of the world (e.g., Western Europeans living in Western Europe vs. South Asians living in South Asia). It would also be interesting if future research investigated the experience of stigma from the perspective of children of divorce, as valuable insight might be gained from their vantage point. Finally, there may be differences in attitudes towards children of divorce depending on whether or not the supposed child of divorce belongs to the same culture as the participant, since aversion to norm violations tend to be greater when the norm-violator belongs to the observer's ingroup (Marques et al., 1988). Future research could compare attitudes towards ingroup children of divorce and outgroup children of divorce.

In conclusion, it seems that European Canadian and South Asian Canadian young adults do not hold very stigmatizing views of their peers with divorced parents. While South Asian Canadians may feel that divorce is much less common in their heritage culture than that of European Canadians, South Asian Canadians do not hold more negative views of children of divorce than European Canadians. However, the perception of divorce norms has an indirect influence on one's attitudes towards children of divorce, such that perceiving divorce to be less common in one's heritage culture is associated with greater stigma. Furthermore, the influence of cultural norms on stereotyping views of children of divorce are dependent on how strongly one identifies with that culture.

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Footnotes

¹ Although no gender or gender by culture interactions were expected for any of the primary measures, these analyses were still conducted. There were no significant gender by cultural group interactions for any of the measures, but a number of gender differences were observed. Regarding the individual stigma measures, women ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.23$) felt that children of divorce have relationship problems significantly more than men did ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.23$, $t(217) = -2.39$, $p = .018$, Cohen's $d = .37$). However, men ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 1.05$) were significantly more stigmatizing on the friendship stigma measure than women ($M = 1.45$, $SD = .78$, $t(71) = 2.27$, $p = .026$, Cohen's $d = .39$). Men ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.28$) were also more stigmatizing than women ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.03$) on the romantic stigma measure ($t(217) = 2.90$, $p = .004$, Cohen's $d = .43$). Finally, women ($M = 5.06$, $SD = .85$) found divorce to be significantly more normative in Canadian culture than men did ($M = 4.54$, $SD = .82$, $t(216) = -3.89$, $p < .000$, Cohen's $d = .62$).

Tables

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Main Measures

	<u>Overall sample</u>			<u>European Canadian sample</u>			<u>South Asian Canadian sample</u>		
	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Adjustment Stereotype	221	3.78	1.31	93	3.62	1.32	128	3.89	1.30
Rel. Probs. Stereotype	221	4.28	1.24	93	4.25	1.30	128	4.30	1.19
Friendship Stigma	221	1.54	0.87	93	1.43	0.82	128	1.63	0.89
Romance Stigma	221	2.10	1.12	93	1.99	1.03	128	2.17	1.17
Heritage Culture Stigma	188	4.17	1.64	68	3.71	1.47	120	4.44	1.69
Canadian Culture Stigma	221	3.08	1.24	93	3.06	1.19	128	3.10	1.28
Heritage Divorce Norms	188	2.80	1.14	68	3.44	1.21	120	2.44	0.93
Canadian Divorce Norms	220	4.93	0.87	93	4.85	0.82	127	4.99	0.90
Heritage Identification	188	5.29	0.94	68	5.40	0.86	120	5.23	0.98
Canadian Identification	221	5.24	0.77	93	5.15	0.80	128	5.31	0.73
Family Allocentrism	221	4.64	0.76	93	4.45	0.75	128	4.78	0.74
Religiosity	221	3.88	1.70	93	3.38	1.75	128	4.24	1.56

Table 2

Correlations between Measures: South Asian Canadian Data above the Diagonal and European Canadian Data below Diagonal.

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
1. Adjustment Ster.		.62***	.09	.21*	.25**	.41***	-.14	.14	.05	-.11	.13	.08
2. Rel. Probs. Ster.	.70***		-.06	.09	.24**	.39***	-.33***	.23**	.06	.12	.07	-.02
3. Friend. Stigma	.24*	.08		.54***	.01	.15	.37***	-.20*	-.13	-.19*	-.12	.10
4. Romance Stigma	.40***	.21	.67***		.24**	.34***	.08	-.02	-.04	-.10	.04	.18*
5. Heritage Stigma	.48***	.52***	.07	.27*		.29**	-.25**	.26**	.04	-.08	.14	.86
6. Cdn. Stigma	.46***	.42***	.30**	.25*	.46***		-.09	.06	-.05	-.18*	-.09	.07
7. Her. Div. Norms	-.27*	-.36**	-.05	-.20	-.58***	-.19		-.56***	-.21*	-.23*	-.32***	.04
8. Cdn. Div. Norms	-.05	.08	-.31**	-.22*	.21	.07	.14		.35***	.15	.27**	.04
9. Heritage ID	-.01	.05	-.24*	.02	.30*	-.13	-.33**	.28*		.27**	.44***	.29***
10. Canadian ID	.03	.04	-.15	-.09	.11	.08	-.05	.03	.14		.18*	-.09
11. Allocentrism	.04	.04	-.17	-.05	.26*	.01	-.19	.05	.27*	.08		.40***
12. Religiosity	.10	-.01	-.02	.17	.19	-.10	-.25*	.06	.40***	-.03	.31**	

Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Results of Mediation Analyses: The Relation between Culture on Individual Stigma as Mediated by Heritage Divorce Norms

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>a-path</u>	<u>b-path</u>	<u>c-path (total effect)</u>	<u>c'-path (direct effect)</u>	<u>Indirect effect</u>	<u>95% CI of Indirect Effect</u>
Adjustment Stereotype	-.99***	-.24**	.26	.02	.25	.07, .46
Rel. Probs. Stereotype	-.99***	-.40***	-.04	-.44*	.40	.19, .66
Friendship Stigma	-.99***	.17**	.28*	.45**	-.17	-.07, -.30
Romance Stigma	-.99***	-.03	.32	.29	.03	-.10, .19

Note. N = 130. Tests of significance were conducted for the a-path, b-path, c-path, and c'-path coefficients (unstandardized *b*), where * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The coefficients for the indirect effects are considered significant when the 95% CI does not include zero.

Table 4

Results of Moderation Analyses: The relation between Heritage Divorce Norms (X) and Measures of Individual Stigma (Y), as Moderated by Heritage Culture Identification (M) (South Asian Canadian sample only)

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>Her. Norms (b)</u>	<u>Her. ID (b)</u>	<u>Interaction (b)</u>
Adjustment Stereotype	$F(3,116) = 1.92, p = .131$	.05	-.21	-.02	-.24
Rel. Probs. Stereotype	$F(3,116) = 6.64, p < .000$	.15	-.45***	-.05	-.27*
Friendship Stigma	$F(3,116) = 8.61, p < .000$	.18	.33***	-.09	-.22*
Romantic Stigma	$F(3,116) = 2.60, p = .056$	.06	.06	-.08	-.32**

Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figures

Figure 1

Flow Diagram of Measures used in the Study.

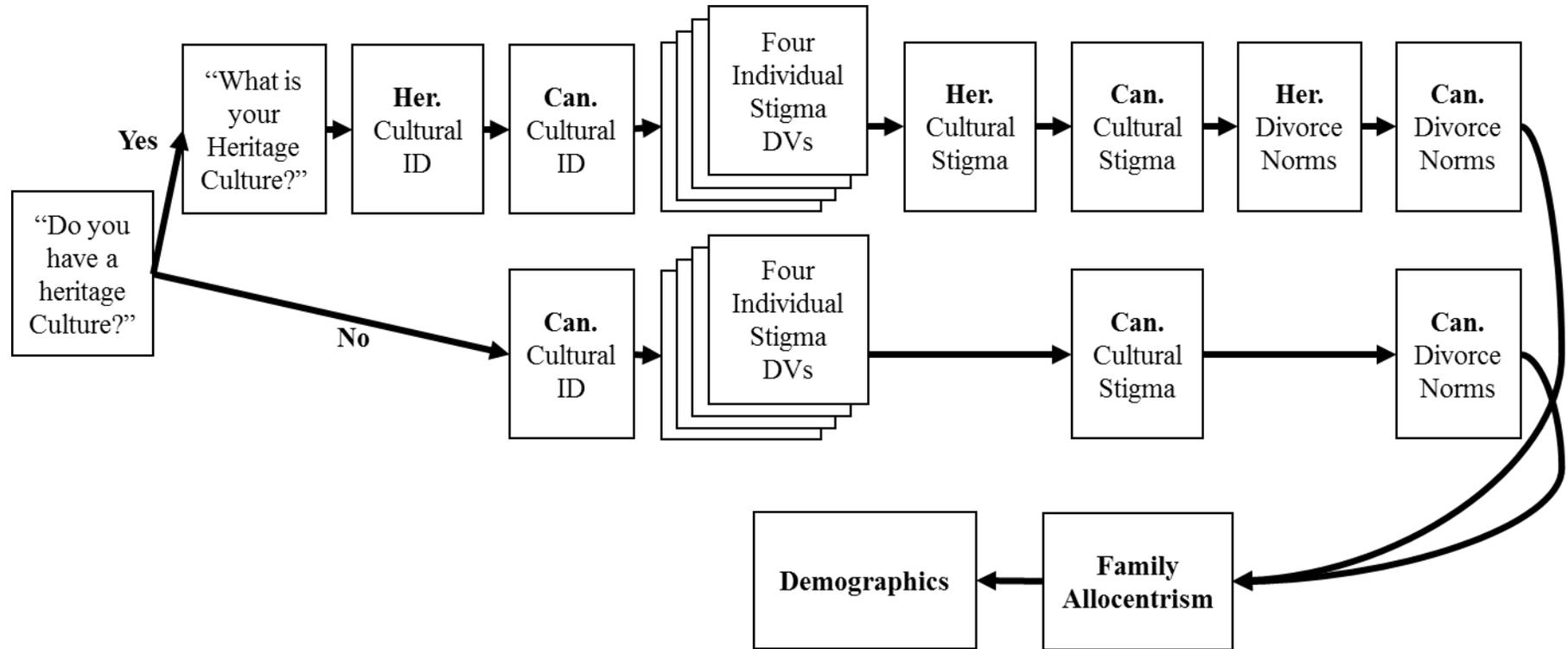


Figure 2

Diagram of the Role of Heritage Divorce Norms as a Mediator of the Culture-Stigma Relationship

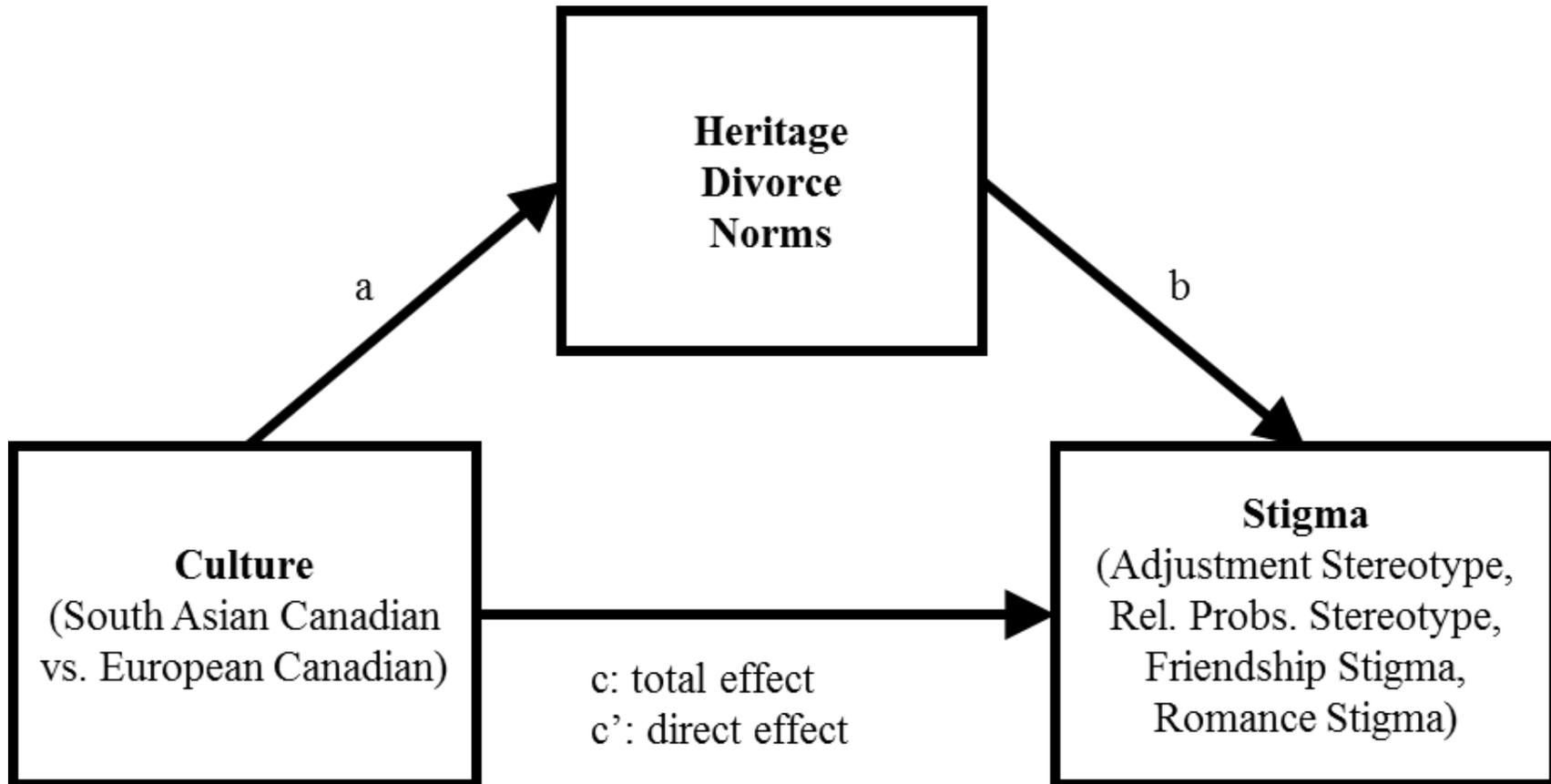


Figure 3

Diagram of the Role of Heritage Culture Identification as a Moderator of the Heritage Divorce Norms and Stigma Relationship (South Asian Canadian sample only)

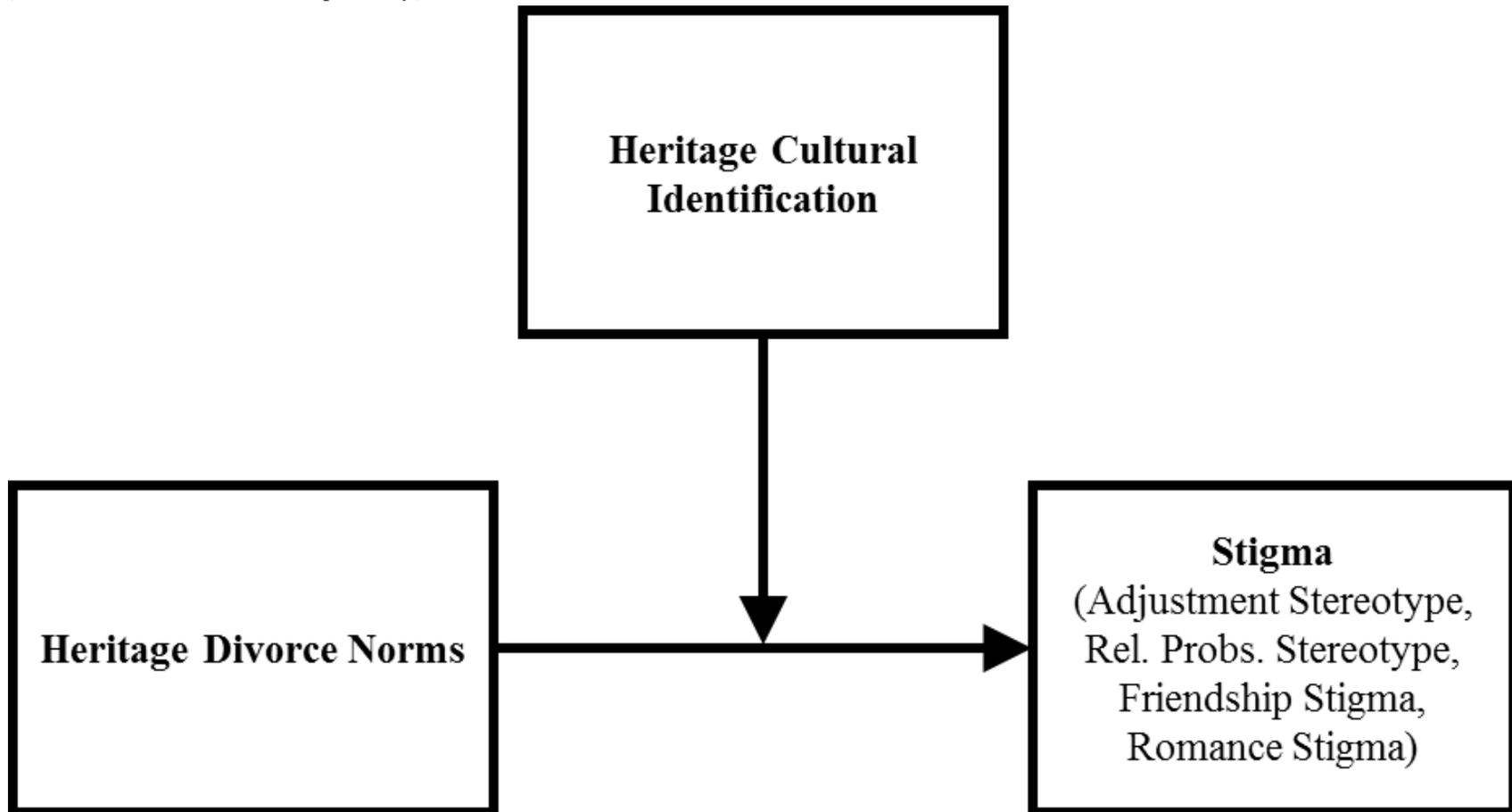
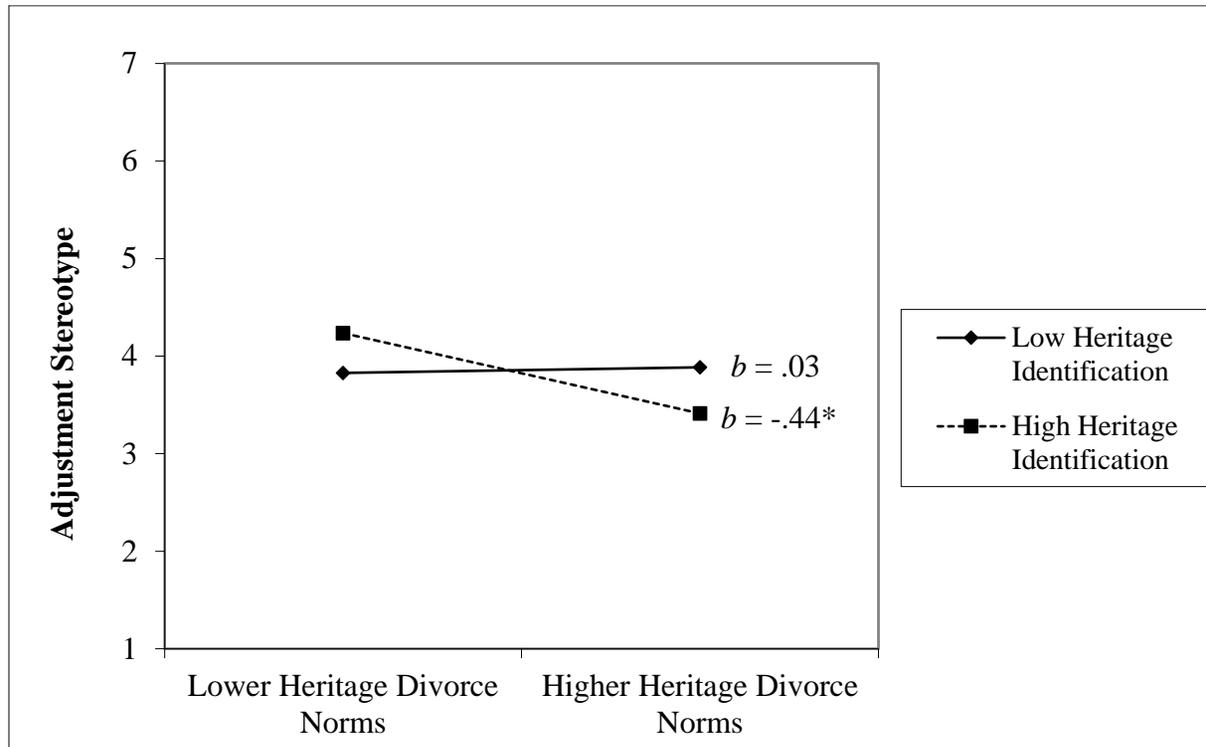


Figure 4

Interaction between Heritage Divorce Norms and Heritage Culture Identification on the Adjustment Stereotype



Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

Figure 5

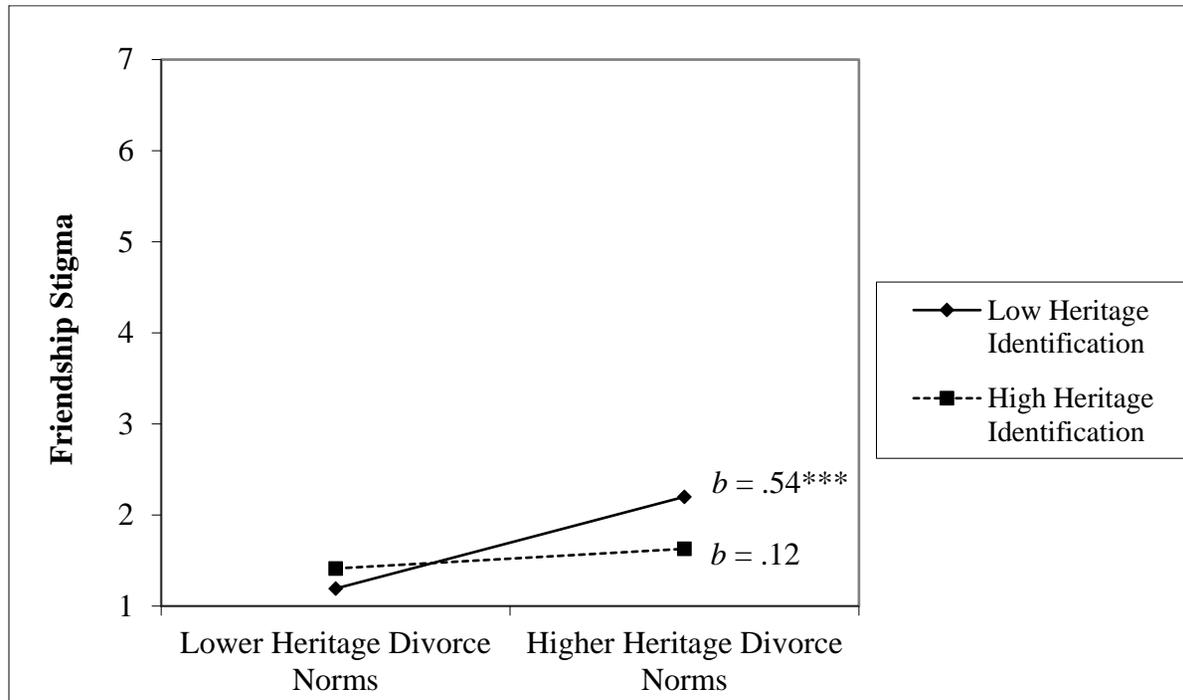
Interaction between Heritage Divorce Norms and Heritage Culture Identification on the Relationship Problems Stereotype



Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

Figure 6

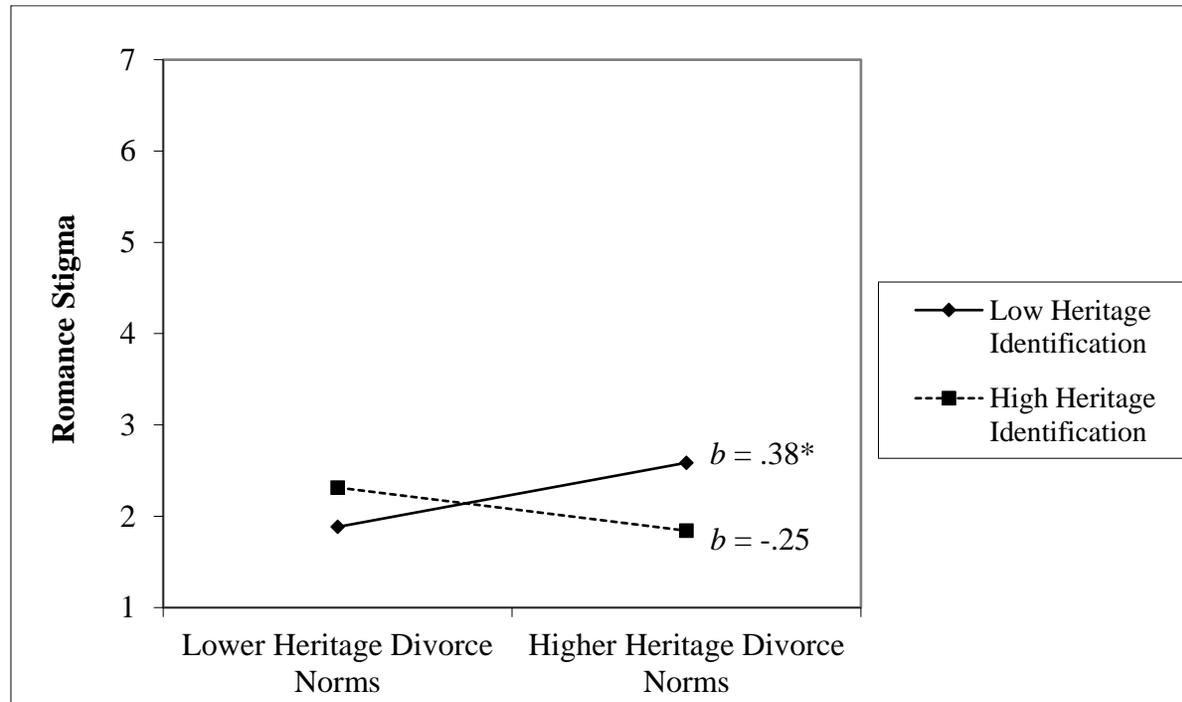
Interaction between Heritage Divorce Norms and Heritage Culture Identification on Friendship Stigma



Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 7

Interaction between Heritage Divorce Norms and Heritage Culture Identification on Romance Stigma



Note. All tests of significance were two tailed. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.