

PAUL R. AMATO *Pennsylvania State University*

---

## Research on Divorce: Continuing Trends and New Developments

*Research on divorce during the past decade has focused on a range of topics, including the predictors of divorce, associations between divorce and the well-being of children and former spouses, and interventions for divorcing couples. Methodological advances during the past decade include a greater reliance on nationally representative longitudinal samples, genetically informed designs, and statistical models that control for time-invariant sources of unobserved heterogeneity. Emerging perspectives, such as a focus on the number of family transitions rather than on divorce as a single event, are promising. Nevertheless, gaps remain in the research literature, and the review concludes with suggestions for new studies.*

Divorce continues to be a major topic of scholarly interest. A search using the ISI Web of Science bibliographic database in August 2009 revealed a total of 1,980 articles published in social science journals since (and including) 2000 that listed *divorce* as a key topic. Given the large amount of published material, many high-quality studies conducted during the last decade do not appear in this review. In addition, I omitted studies of “informal divorces” among unmarried cohabiting parents. Although a large proportion of cohabiting unions end in

disruption, this topic is beyond the scope of the current review. Readers should note that the majority of marital separations end relatively quickly in reconciliation or dissolution. For this reason, most of the research described herein does not distinguish between separation and divorce. This article begins with an update on the demography of divorce. I then discuss topics that have received the most attention from researchers during the last decade: predictors of divorce, associations between divorce and the well-being of children and former spouses, and interventions for divorcing families. The final section provides suggestions for future studies.

### DEMOGRAPHY OF DIVORCE: DIVORCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Determining how common divorce is would seem to be a straightforward task. Unfortunately, several states do not submit vital statistics on divorce to the federal government on a regular basis. For example, in 2004, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, and Louisiana did not report this information. For this reason, we do not have a complete count of how many divorces occur in the United States annually. Nor do we have an official estimate of the number of children affected by divorce every year.

Despite this limitation, the U.S. Census Bureau uses data from participating states to publish an annual crude divorce rate, which is the number of divorces per 1,000 people in the population. This measure is less than optimal because it is affected by the age structure of the population as well as the proportion of married

---

Department of Sociology, 211 Oswald Tower,  
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802  
(pxa6@psu.edu).

*Key Words:* adult outcomes, child/adolescent outcomes,  
demography, divorce, family policy.

adults. A better measure—the refined divorce rate—is the number of divorces per 1,000 married women. Nevertheless, the correlation between the crude divorce rate and the refined divorce rate between 1960 and 1996 is over .90 (author's calculations), so the crude rate is a useful proxy for the refined rate. The crude divorce rate rose from 2.2 in 1960 to 5.2 in 1980—a 136% increase. This rate then dropped gradually to 3.6 in 2006—a 31% decline (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008, Table 77). A study by Heaton (2002) found that the rise in age at first marriage since the 1980s and, to a lesser extent, increased education appear to be responsible for this decline.

An alternative approach is to estimate the probability that members of different birth cohorts end their marriages in divorce. Although more difficult to calculate, this statistic has the advantage of being easier to understand than the crude divorce rate. Schoen and Canudas-Romo (2006) estimated that the probability of a marriage ending in divorce for women increased linearly since 1910 and then reached a plateau between 1990 and 2000, the final year for which the authors provided estimates. At the end of the 20th century, 43% to 46% of marriages were predicted to end in dissolution. Because a small percentage of marriages end in permanent separation rather than divorce, the common belief that about half of all marriages are voluntarily disrupted is a reasonable approximation.

Divorce rates are higher for some groups than for others. Data from the National Survey of Family Growth indicate that 42% of non-Hispanic Whites and Hispanics divorced within the first 15 years of marriage, compared with 55% of African Americans (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002). The comparatively high rate for African Americans is because of a complex set of historical, economic, structural, and cultural factors that have yet to be disentangled. Although Hispanics have an overall rate of divorce comparable to non-Hispanic Whites, variation exists between Hispanic groups. For example, Puerto Ricans and Cubans are more likely to be divorced than are Mexican Americans or those from Central America (American Community Survey, 2007). Immigration status also is relevant. For example, Mexican Americans born outside of the United States have an especially low divorce rate. Mexican Americans born in the United States, however, have a

divorce rate comparable to non-Hispanic Whites (Sweeney & Phillips, 2004). Another variation is that Hispanics and African Americans are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to end their marriages in permanent separations rather than divorce (Bramlett & Mosher).

With respect to education, individuals with college degrees tend to have more stable marriages than do individuals with high school diplomas or less education (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002). Moreover, the divorce rate has been declining for college-educated couples since the late 1970s but has remained essentially flat for couples without college degrees (McLanahan, 2004). In other words, the drop in the crude divorce rate noted earlier was due mainly to an increase in marital stability among well-educated couples. Research has not provided information on whether the decline in marital dissolution since the 1980s varied with race and ethnicity, except to the extent that these groups differ in social class.

## PREDICTORS OF DIVORCE

### *Demographic and Economic Predictors of Divorce*

Building on research conducted in prior decades, family scholars have continued to document the major risk factors for divorce. These factors include marrying as a teenager, being poor, experiencing unemployment, having a low level of education, living with one's future spouse or another partner prior to marriage, having a premarital birth, bringing children from a previous union into a new marriage (especially among mothers), marrying someone of a different race, being in a second- or higher order marriage, and growing up in a household without two continuously married parents (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Bratter & King, 2008; Sweeney & Phillips, 2004; Teachman, 2002).

Although these variables predict divorce, one cannot assume that they are causes of divorce. Perhaps the greatest controversy continues to surround the role of premarital cohabitation. Some researchers have found that premarital cohabitation is associated with negative marital outcomes only under certain circumstances, such as when it involves a nonmarital birth (Tach & Halpern-Meehan, 2009) or occurs with a partner other than one's spouse (Teachman,

2003). On the basis of research from the 1990s, some researchers assumed that the cohabitation “effect” is entirely because of selection factors—traits that increase the likelihood of cohabitation as well as the risk of marital discord and divorce (Lillard, Brien, & Waite, 1995). More recently, Stanley, Rhoades, and Markman (2006) argued that some cohabiting couples who are incompatible or lack strong commitment to their relationships eventually marry because of the “inertia” of cohabitation. Couples have lower standards for cohabiting partners than for spouses as well as lower levels of commitment to cohabiting partners than to spouses. But after couples live together, constraints to ending the relationship begin to accumulate, such as having shared possessions, pets, and even children. These constraints lead some cohabiting couples to marry, even though they would not have married under other circumstances. On the basis of this framework, Stanley, Rhoades, et al. (2006) argued that couples who are engaged prior to cohabitation, compared with those who are not, should report fewer problems and greater relationship stability following marriage, given that they already have made a major commitment to their partners. Several studies have provided evidence consistent with this hypothesis (Brown, 2004; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009).

An earlier generation of scholars assumed that wives’ employment and income are risk factors for divorce. More recent evidence, however, is mixed about the strength and even the direction of this association (Rogers, 2004; Sayer & Bianchi, 2000; Schoen, Rogers, & Amato, 2006). On the basis of research from the last decade, several conclusions seem likely. First, wives’ employment has the potential to generate tension between spouses over the household division of labor. Frisco and Williams (2003) found that perceived unfairness in the division of household labor was associated with decreased marital happiness among spouses and an increased likelihood of divorce. Similarly, Amato, Booth, Johnson, and Rogers (2007) found that wives’ hours of employment tended to increase spouses’ perceptions of marital problems. The authors also found, however, that wives’ earned income improved other dimensions of marital quality by alleviating perceived economic hardship. In other words, wives’ employment had negative and positive consequences that offset one another, resulting in no net effect on marriage. These offsetting

effects may be responsible for many of the inconsistencies in the research literature on this topic. Second, although wives’ employment and income do not destabilize marriage, they make it easier for wives as well as husbands to leave unhappy marriages. For example, a longitudinal study by Schoen, Astone, Rothert, Standish, and Kim (2002) found that wives’ employment increased the risk of divorce in unhappy marriages but not in happy marriages.

Some studies have noted racial and ethnic differences in the predictors of divorce. Phillips and Sweeney (2005) found that premarital cohabitation was associated with marital disruption among non-Hispanic White women but not among non-Hispanic Black or Mexican American women. Sweeney and Phillips (2004) found that the effects of early marriage and having a premarital birth on divorce were weaker for Blacks than Whites. High educational attainment, however, was associated with a lower divorce risk among Blacks than Whites. Orbuch, Veroff, Hassan, and Horrocks (2002) found that educational attainment lowered the risk of divorce among White husbands, White wives, and Black wives but not Black husbands. These studies suggest that demographic traits interact with race/ethnicity in predicting divorce, but more research is necessary for a clearer pattern to emerge.

#### *Interpersonal Predictors of Divorce*

Rather than looking at broad demographic and economic factors, other researchers have focused on specific relationship characteristics that predict divorce. Longitudinal studies show that predictors of marital disruption include domestic violence, frequent conflict, infidelity, the number of perceived relationship problems, a weak commitment to marriage, and low levels of love and trust between spouses (Clements, Stanley, & Markman, 2004; DeMaris, 2000; Gottman & Levenson, 2000; Hall & Fincham, 2006; Kurdek, 2002; Lawrence & Bradbury, 2001; Orbuch et al., 2002; Previti & Amato, 2004).

Bradbury and Karney (2004) argued that prior research has not paid sufficient attention to the roles of positive affect and social support in marriage. Their evidence suggested that when spouses have poor relationships skills, couples experience negative relationship outcomes, but only when few expressions of positive affect are exchanged between partners.

In other words, positive affect (humor, affection, interest) appears to neutralize the potentially negative effect of unskilled behaviors. Similarly, Fincham, Stanley, and Beach (2007) argued that family researchers have paid too much attention to conflict and too little attention to positive interpersonal processes, such as forgiveness and sacrifice, in understanding marital quality and stability. A shift away from a focus on poor communication and conflict to positive aspects of marital interaction appears to be a promising direction for future research.

Although negative interactions and the absence of positive affect seem like obvious predictors of relationship dissolution, not all couples display a pattern of relationship dysfunction prior to divorce. Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007) conducted a cluster analysis of couples who divorced between two survey waves. Their analysis produced two distinct clusters. The first included couples who reported frequent arguments, physical aggression, thoughts of divorce, little marital happiness, and minimal interaction. The second cluster included couples who reported few arguments, little physical aggression, few thoughts of divorce, and moderate levels of marital happiness and interaction. The two groups, however, shared a variety of risk characteristics for marital dissolution, such as growing up in a divorced family, having a low level of religiosity, and being in a second- or higher order marriage. The authors concluded that an accumulation of risk factors can lead to divorce through two paths: (1) a high level of conflict and unhappiness and (2) a low level of commitment.

#### CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT TO DIVORCE

Research during the last decade continued to show that children with divorced parents, compared with children with continuously married parents, score lower on a variety of emotional, behavioral, social, health, and academic outcomes, on average (e.g., Frisco, Muller, & Frank, 2007; Hango & Houseknecht, 2005; Sun & Li, 2002). Similarly, adults with divorced parents tend to obtain less education, have lower levels of psychological well-being, report more problems in their own marriages, feel less close to their parents (especially fathers), and are at greater risk of seeing their own marriages end in divorce (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Barrett & Turner, 2005; Teachman, 2002; Wolfinger, Kowaleski-Jones,

& Smith, 2003). These findings indicate that, for at least some individuals, the effects of divorce appear to persist well into adulthood. Although many of these studies replicate earlier findings, they are useful in showing that the links between divorce and forms of child well-being have remained relatively constant across decades.

One advance during the last decade has been an increase in the number of studies that address whether the associations between divorce and child problems are because of selection factors—that is, variables that cause divorce as well as child problems. These methods fall into three groups: (1) genetically informed designs, (2) fixed-effects models, and (3) longitudinal comparisons of children's well-being before and after divorce.

#### *Genetically Informed Designs*

Some behavior geneticists have argued that a *passive genetic model* can account for the correlations between parental divorce and problematic child outcomes (Harris, 1998). This perspective assumes that some parents have genetic predispositions for traits such as aggression and antisocial behavior. Because children share 50% of their genes (on average) with each parent, children are likely to inherit these predispositions. These parental traits increase the risk of divorce. Correspondingly, children's genetically inherited traits increase the risk of conduct disorders, forming weak attachments to peers and classmates, and other problems. The result is a spurious correlation between parental divorce and children's problems. To distinguish between a passive genetic explanation and a divorce causation explanation, researchers must rely on genetically informed designs. Two types of designs appear in the literature: studies of children of twins and studies of adopted children.

Twins design involves studies of children of twin parents who are discordant for divorce. That is, one adult twin has divorced and the other has remained continuously married. The children of each adult twin (cousins) are then compared on a particular outcome. Because *monozygotic* twin parents have 100% of their genes in common, their children share 25% of their genes with their cousins. In contrast, *dizygotic* twin parents have 50% of their genes in common, so their children share only 12.5% of their genes with their cousins. Consequently, if the association between parental divorce and a

particular outcome is stronger among children of monozygotic than dizygotic twins, then some of the "effect" of divorce can be attributed to genetic factors. In contrast, if the association between divorce and a particular outcome is similar among children of monozygotic and dizygotic twins, then divorce or some environmental factor associated with divorce must play a causal role. In a series of studies based on this design, D'Onofrio and his colleagues found little support for genetic influences on drug and alcohol abuse, behavior problems, early sexual initiation, educational problems, and suicide ideation. The authors found mixed evidence for internalizing problems, with one study suggesting genetic influence and another study suggesting environmental influence. The authors also concluded that the intergenerational transmission of divorce is because of a mix of genetic and environmental influences (D'Onofrio et al., 2005, 2006; D'Onofrio, Turkheimer, Emery, Harden et al., 2007; D'Onofrio, Turkheimer, Emery, Hermine et al., 2007). Taken together, studies using this design suggest that most (but not all) of the associations between parental divorce and offspring outcomes cannot be attributed to passive genetic transmission.

Another design involves comparing children with biological and adoptive parents who divorce. In adoptive families, there can be no genetic transmission from parents to children. Consequently, if the estimated effects of divorce are similar for biological and adoptive children, then divorce or some environmental factor associated with divorce must be responsible. In contrast, if the estimated effects of divorce are significantly stronger for biological children than for adopted children, then genetic factors must be responsible. Several studies during the last decade have used an adoption design (Amato & Cheadle, 2008; Brodzinsky, Hitt, & Smith, 1993; O'Connor, Caspi, DeFries, & Plomin, 2000, 2003). In general, adoption studies and studies using the children of twins design led to similar conclusions. That is, some child outcomes observed among children with divorced parents may be because of genetic factors. But the majority of outcomes (including child health problems, behavior problems, substance abuse, life satisfaction, and internalizing problems) cannot be explained by passive genetic inheritance.

Although the notion of passive genetic inheritance has not received much support from

the divorce literature, a model based on Gene  $\times$  Environment interactions may turn out to be more useful. A recent study by Guo, Roettger, and Cai (2008) found that adolescents with a genetic polymorphism associated with antisocial behavior (DRD2\*178/304) were more likely than other adolescents to exhibit a high level of delinquency if they lived with a single parent but not if they lived with two married parents. This study suggested that living in a stable, two-parent household suppresses the negative influence of this gene, whereas living in a single-parent household allows this gene to be expressed. Future research on Gene  $\times$  Environment interactions may help to explain why some children are vulnerable and other children are resilient in response to parental divorce.

#### *Fixed-Effects Models*

A perennial difficulty involves controlling for variables that may be causes of parental divorce as well as child adjustment. Some studies have controlled for an extensive set of variables measured prior to divorce and still found associations between marital disruption and child outcomes (e.g., Painter & Levine, 2000). But even with a large number of control variables in the analysis, one cannot reach conclusions about causation because it is impossible to measure and statistically control *all* relevant variables. Fixed-effects models are useful for dealing with this limitation. These models eliminate unobserved sources of heterogeneity that are time invariant, such as gender, race, birth cohort, parents' personality, some genetic effects, and other selection factors. (These models do not control for time-varying factors, however.) Fixed-effects models are based on difference scores. Some studies measure child well-being at two or more times, with some observations occurring before divorce and other observations occurring after divorce (child fixed effects). In these studies, children essentially serve as their own controls. Other studies observe two siblings from the same family, with one living in a divorced single-parent household longer than the other (sibling fixed effects). This design controls for all unobserved time-invariant family variables that are shared by the two siblings. Another variation compares aggregate levels of child well-being in states prior to and after the adoption of particular

divorce legislation, such as no fault divorce (state fixed effects). This design controls for all unobserved time-invariant state-level variables.

Using a child fixed-effects model, Aughinbaugh, Pierret, and Rothstein (2005) found no associations between parental divorce and children's behavior problems or achievement scores. In a large Swedish study, Bjorklund and Sundstrom (2006) used a sibling fixed-effects model and found no link between divorce and young adults' educational attainment. Similarly, Powers (2005) used a sibling fixed-effects model and found no association between childhood family structure and the risk of a premarital birth among women. These studies are consistent with a selection perspective and suggest that the apparent effects of divorce are because of unmeasured variables.

In contrast, other studies employing fixed-effects models suggest that divorce may have a causal impact on children. Using a child fixed-effects model, Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, and McRae (1998) found that young adults with divorced parents scored significantly higher than young adults with continuously married parents on a measure of psychological distress. Using sibling fixed-effects models, Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) and Gennetian (2005) found that living in a single-parent family was associated with lower standardized test scores, less education as an adult, a heightened risk of having a nonmarital birth among women, and a greater likelihood of being a smoker. (A limitation of the latter two studies is that they included all children living with a single parent, irrespective of cause.) Gruber (2004) used a state fixed-effects model and found that the adoption of unilateral no-fault divorce was associated with lower educational attainment among children and an increase in youth suicide. These studies suggest that divorce (and living in a single-parent family) can affect children even after controlling for time-invariant unmeasured sources of heterogeneity. It is difficult to reach firm conclusions, however, because the number of studies is small and the results are contradictory.

#### *Measuring Child Outcomes Before and After Divorce*

Some longitudinal studies estimate the effects of divorce on child well-being while controlling for the same outcome measured prior to divorce, which is known as a lagged dependent variable

approach. These designs are similar to child fixed-effects models, although they do not control for time-invariant unmeasured variables. Two studies that used this method found that adolescents with parents who *later* divorced, compared with adolescents in continuously stable families, had lower scores on standardized achievement tests, more behavior problems at school, and lower self-esteem (Sun, 2001; Sun & Li, 2001). Moreover, these predivorce differences largely accounted for the postdivorce differences between groups of children.

In a sophisticated study using pooled time-series analysis, Sun and Li (2002) examined adolescent outcomes at four times: 3 years before divorce, 1 year before divorce, 1 year after divorce, and 3 years after divorce. Compared with children with continuously married parents, students with divorced parents had lower test scores 3 years prior to divorce and showed further declines during the postdivorce years. Social psychological measures such as self-esteem, in contrast, revealed a U-shaped pattern—declining as divorce approached and improving as divorce receded. Similarly, using a growth curve model, Strohschein (2005) found that even before marital dissolution, children whose parents later divorced exhibited higher levels of anxiety, depression, and antisocial behavior than did children whose parents remained married. Nevertheless, children exhibited a further increase in anxiety and depression (but not antisocial behavior) following divorce.

As with fixed-effects models, studies that included assessments of child well-being before and after divorce do not lead to clear conclusions. A limitation of these studies is that they are open to multiple interpretations. Consider a study that measures a child outcome twice: 2 years before the divorce and 2 years after the divorce. Assume that the two values are similar to one another but lower than comparable values for children with continuously married parents. Irrespective of whether a researcher uses a fixed-effects model or a lagged-dependent variable model, it is tempting to conclude that divorce did *not* have an effect on children. A common interpretation is that troubled family relationships increase children's problems *and* lead to divorce, resulting in a spurious association. But if one views divorce as a process that unfolds gradually rather than as a discrete event that happens on a specific day, then the troubled family relationships that often precede marital

dissolution can be conceptualized as part of the dissolution process. Because researchers can view marital discord either as a cause of divorce or as part of the divorce process, the question of what effects can be attributed to divorce is a theoretical rather than an empirical issue. A useful strategy for future longitudinal studies is to distinguish between low-conflict and high-conflict couples with children who divorce. Most studies that have adopted this strategy have found that marital discord and divorce are not competing explanations for child problems. Instead, predivorce marital discord *conditions* the effects of divorce on children. (See the discussion of moderation later in this article.)

#### *Clinical Problems Versus Psychological Pain*

A new perspective on thinking about children and divorce was advanced by Laumann-Billings and Emery (2000). They found that young adults with divorced parents did not score lower than young adults with continuously married parents on measures of clinical depression or anxiety. Nevertheless, young adults with divorced parents were especially likely to describe their childhoods as being difficult, wish that they had spent more time with their fathers, feel that their fathers do not love them, and worry about both parents attending important events such as weddings and graduations. The authors concluded that even children who do not have elevated scores on standardized measures of adjustment often deal with subclinical levels of *pain*. Similarly, Marquardt (2005) reported data from a qualitative and quantitative study of young adults with divorced parents. Few respondents in this study had a psychiatric diagnosis, an arrest record, or a nonmarital birth. Nevertheless, many offspring reported that they were forced to take on adult responsibilities as a child, felt lonely during childhood, experienced family events and holidays as stressful, felt unsafe at home because their fathers were not around, missed their fathers, and felt torn between their mothers' and fathers' households. Overall, this perspective suggests that standardized measures of well-being overlook many of the subtle consequences of divorce for children.

#### *Factors That Affect Children's Adjustment to Divorce*

During the last decade, a variety of theories have been used to understand children and divorce, including family systems theory, life course theory, and social capital theory. As in previous decades, however, most theoretical perspectives have drawn on the notions of stress, coping, risk, and resiliency. Amato (2000) argued that these constructs can be subsumed under a divorce-stress-adjustment perspective. According to this perspective, marital dissolution is a process that unfolds over time, beginning when couples are still married and ending years after the legal divorce. The legal divorce itself has few direct effects on children. Instead, the short-term stresses and long-term strains that precede and follow marital disruption increase the risk of a variety of behavioral, emotional, interpersonal, and academic problems among children. Because a large number of factors moderate children's reactions to divorce, adjustment can occur quickly, with few long-term negative consequences, or slowly, with negative consequences that persist well into adulthood. As in previous years, most research during the past decade can be interpreted within this broad framework.

Consistent with a divorce-stress-adjustment perspective, many studies have identified stressful circumstances surrounding divorce that account for the links between parental divorce and forms of child well-being. Three types of studies appear in the literature. First, some studies used samples of children with divorced parents and examine correlations between measures of child well-being and other relevant variables. Single-sample studies are appropriate if the variables of interest are relevant only to children with divorced parents, such as the frequency of contact with nonresident parents or the quality of coparenting following divorce. A second group of studies included samples of children with divorced and continuously married parents and locates variables that statistically mediate the association between parental divorce and child outcomes. A final group of studies examined interaction effects to identify variables that predict stronger or weaker links between parental divorce and child outcomes—that is, variables that moderate the effects of divorce.

With respect to the first two categories of studies, variables that appear to lower children's well-being following marital disruption include declines in household income,

poor psychological functioning among resident parents, ineffective parenting from resident parents, loss of contact with nonresident parents, and continuing conflict between parents and the absence of cooperative coparenting behavior (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Cavanagh, 2008; Fabricius & Luecken, 2007; King & Sobolewski, 2006; Martinez & Forgatch, 2002; Pruett, Williams, Insabella, & Little, 2003; Tein, Sandler, & Zautra, 2000). A limitation of some of these studies is that they mix children with divorced parents and children with never married parents. A preferred practice would be to determine if associations between variables are similar for these two groups before combining them in analyses.

Other studies examined variables that moderate the estimated effects of divorce. Researchers frequently use child gender as a moderator. Although some studies reported that the estimated effects of divorce are stronger for children of one gender (e.g., Hill, Yeung, & Duncan, 2001), most studies during the past decade reported few or no gender differences (Hetherington, 2006; Painter & Levine, 2000; Sun, 2001; Sun & Li, 2002; Woodward & Fergusson, 2000). Two studies found no racial or ethnic differences in the estimated effects of family structure on adolescent drug use (Broman, Li, & Reckase, 2008; Wolfinger et al., 2003). In contrast, Heard (2007) found that the links between family structure and adolescent school performance were weaker for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites. Sun and Li (2007) found that after marital disruption, White, Asian, and African American adolescents exhibited greater maladjustment than did their Hispanic counterparts. Although these studies suggest racial and ethnic differences in the consequences of divorce, it is difficult to reach conclusions because a critical mass of studies does not yet exist.

An important but understudied moderator is the quality of family relationships prior to marital dissolution. Research in the 1990s indicated that children tend to show relatively little change or even improvements in various forms of well-being if divorce ends a high-conflict marriage. In contrast, children tend to show declines in various forms of well-being if divorce ends a low-conflict marriage (Amato, 2000). A few studies conducted during the last decade have replicated this finding (Booth & Amato, 2001; Strohschein, 2005). Similarly, a study by Videon (2002) found

that adolescents who were strongly attached to the same-sex parent were especially likely to engage in delinquent behavior if divorce separated them from this parent. Adolescents who were weakly attached to the same-sex parent, in contrast, showed no corresponding increase in delinquency. Taken together, these studies suggest that the consequences of divorce depend on whether children are removed from an aversive or a supportive family environment.

### *A Multiple Transition Perspective*

Most studies have treated divorce as a single transition. An alternative approach is to treat divorce as one of a series of transitions that children may experience before reaching adulthood—a perspective that had its origins in the 1990s (Capaldi & Patterson, 1991; Wu & Martinson, 1993) and became increasingly influential during the last decade. In other words, divorce creates possibilities for future parental cohabitations, remarriages, and divorces. This perspective views the *number* of transitions, rather than divorce itself, as being the central variable that affects children's well-being. Several studies during the past decade have provided support for this perspective. The number of family structure transitions during childhood has been shown to be associated with children's behavior problems (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007), drug use (Cavanagh, 2008), externalizing problems and delinquent behavior (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007), academic achievement (Hill et al., 2001; Martinez & Forgatch, 2002), psychological well-being (Amato, 2003), having a nonmarital birth (Hill et al.), and relationship instability in adulthood (Wolfinger, 2000). The multiple-transition perspective represents a relatively new way of thinking about family structure, with a great deal of potential for future research.

### *Divorce Causation: An Interpretation*

In all likelihood, scholars will continue to debate whether divorce has a causal effect on children, partly because of the impossibility of doing experimental research on this topic. Nevertheless, it is self-evident that divorce changes children's lives in major ways. Around the time of divorce, one parent (usually the father) departs from the child's household. Nonresident parents (usually mothers) must adjust their childrearing



behaviors to compensate for the absence of the other parent. Many resident parents and children move following divorce, often to new neighborhoods and school districts. And parents' new partners and spouses introduce additional adults into children's everyday routines. Whether children welcome or resist these changes, children's lives are different after divorce.

Rather than ask *whether* divorce affects children, a more pertinent question may be *how* and *under what circumstances* does divorce affect children either positively or negatively? A reasonable assumption is that divorce can have varied consequences, with some children showing improvements in well-being, other children showing little or no change, some children showing decrements that gradually improve, and yet other children developing problems that persist well into adulthood. As Hetherington (2006) argued, "Although divorce leads to an increase in stressful life events, such as poverty, psychological and health problems in parents, and inept parenting, it also may be associated with escape from conflict, the building of new more harmonious fulfilling relationships, and the opportunity for personal growth and individuation" (p. 204). If a spread of outcomes following divorce is typical, then generalizing a single coefficient from a regression equation to most children is misleading. These considerations suggest that researchers should focus less attention on mean differences between children with divorced and continuously married parents and more attention on the factors that produce variability in children's adjustment following divorce.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF DIVORCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN

Studies conducted prior to 2000 have shown that divorced men and women report lower levels of physical and mental health, on average, than do their married counterparts (Amato, 2000). Research during the last decade has reinforced previous work by showing that divorced individuals, compared with married individuals, exhibit more symptoms of depression and anxiety, more health problems, more substance use, and a greater risk of overall mortality (Bierman, Fazio, & Milkie, 2006; Hughes & Waite, 2009; Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger, & Elder, 2006; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009; Williams & Umberson, 2004; Zhang & Hayward, 2006). The strength of associations between divorce and measures of

mental health appear to be comparable for women and men. Associations between divorce and measures of physical health and mortality, however, appear to be stronger for men than for women. In addition, Liu and Umberson (2008) found that the gap in self-reported physical health between divorced and married individuals increased since the 1970s, although the cause of this trend is not clear. Recent studies on this topic have routinely used longitudinal data, which represents a major advance over earlier studies that relied primarily on cross sectional data.

#### *Divorce Causation or Selection?*

Comparable to studies that attempt to estimate the effects of divorce on children, two theoretical perspectives appear in the literature on divorce and adult well-being. One perspective assumes that divorce has a causal effect on the well-being of former spouses, whereas the second perspective assumes that the association between divorce and well-being is because of selection factors.

With respect to the first perspective, some researchers have noted the fact that divorce is a stressful experience for most individuals. A large number of changes often occur around the time of marital dissolution, including ending a long-term relationship, dealing with feelings of anger or sadness, changing residences, experiencing a decline in standard of living, and adopting a single lifestyle. An assumption of stress theory is that a large number of changes concentrated within a short time can have adverse effects on mental and physical health (Pearlin, Schieman, Fazio, & Meersman, 2005). Moreover, a social support perspective points out that marriage provides many benefits, including companionship, everyday assistance, and emotional support. Similarly, spouses often encourage one another to engage in healthy behaviors, such as smoking less, eating well, and having regular medical checkups. Presumably, the loss of these benefits can affect physical and mental health negatively. Because stress and social support perspectives are complementary, it is not surprising that both have received support from existing studies.

Other studies have considered whether the association between divorce and negative outcomes is spurious, that is, because of selection factors. Although a few studies support

the notion that the link between divorce and problematic postdivorce outcomes is spurious (e.g., Overbeek et al., 2006), most studies found evidence of divorce causation. For example, Wade and Pevalin (2004) found that individuals who separated or divorced had poorer mental health prior to marital disruption. Mental health declined even more afterward, however, which suggests support for selection as well as divorce causation. In a German study, Brockmann and Klein (2004) used econometric methods to estimate simultaneously the entry to marriage and the effects of divorce on mortality—a procedure that adjusts for selection processes. They found that divorce increased the odds of mortality for men and women, net of selection. Similarly, using a fixed-effects model, Johnson and Wu (2002) found that divorce was associated with an increase in psychological distress, even with all unobserved time-invariant variables controlled. Although a degree of selection is likely to be operating, the bulk of the evidence supports the notion that marital dissolution negatively affects the mental and physical health of many adults. (See Wood, Goesling, & Avellar, 2007, for a review.)

#### *Divorce as Crisis or Chronic Strain?*

Researchers have continued to explore whether the negative consequences of divorce should be conceptualized as a crisis (a temporary phenomenon to which most people adjust) or a chronic strain (a phenomenon that persists more or less indefinitely). With respect to the latter perspective, although divorce involves a number of life events concentrated within a short time, it also can create strains that persist over the long haul. For example, many single resident mothers deal with the continuing strain of solo parenting and a lower standard of living. Correspondingly, many single fathers deal with the continuing strain of trying to maintain positive parent-child relationships within the context of limited access arrangements.

Studies from the 1990s provided support for both models (Amato, 2000), a situation that has persisted during the last decade. Consistent with a crisis model, a German longitudinal study (Hans-Jürgen & Bröckel, 2007) found that women tended to report declines in subjective well-being in the years prior to divorce and improvements in the years following divorce. In contrast, consistent with a chronic strain model,

a longitudinal study by Johnson and Wu (2002) found that the decline in psychological well-being following divorce did not improve until people remarried. Waite et al. (2009) found mixed support for both models, depending on the outcome and the degree of marital happiness prior to disruption. Lorenz et al. (2006) also found support for both models depending on the outcome. In their study, divorce was followed by an increase in psychological distress among mothers that later declined, presumably because of the crisis-like features of the event. In contrast, physical health problems (which take longer to emerge) were elevated a decade later, presumably because of years of dealing with chronic strains associated with single motherhood.

Given the continuing support for both the crisis and chronic strain models, it seems likely that each contains some truth. Presumably, divorce can have either short-term or long-term consequences, depending on a variety of moderating factors. This conclusion is consistent with longitudinal research by Hetherington (2003), who reported that divorce was generally followed by short-term declines in psychological, social, and physical well-being among parents. After a few years, most individuals had adapted well to their new lives, although a significant minority remained seriously troubled.

#### *Variability in Divorce Adjustment Among Adults*

A variety of factors appear to affect the strength and duration of divorce effects. For example, a longitudinal study by Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007) found that men and women in seriously distressed marriages reported improvements in happiness following divorce. In contrast, men and women in marriages that were not highly distressed reported decrements in happiness following divorce. Presumably, individuals in distressed marriages were relieved to escape from an aversive marriage, whereas individuals in nondistressed marriages may have underestimated the stress of marital disruption and the transition to a single lifestyle.

One study found that spouses who initiate divorce tend to show better postdivorce adjustment (Wang & Amato, 2000). Williams and Dunne-Bryant (2006) reported that the negative emotional aftermath of divorce was stronger for mothers than for childless women. Similarly,

Barrett (2000) found that experiencing a second (or higher order divorce) was followed by higher levels of depression than experiencing a first divorce. Another study by Barrett (2003) suggested that the mental health consequences are similar for Blacks and Whites. The latter study also found, however, that mental health problems were more pronounced among separated (but not yet divorced) Blacks than Whites—a finding that may reflect a trend for Blacks to remain separated for longer periods. Despite the usefulness of existing studies, the findings are somewhat scattered. A fuller picture of the factors that promote or impair divorce adjustment among adults will emerge when more research on this topic is available.

#### INTERVENTIONS AND POLICIES

Amato (2000) called for more research on interventions and policies for divorced children and adults. Although more work needs to be done, the number of studies in this area increased substantially during the past decade. Readers can turn to the following sources for discussions of Covenant Marriage (Nock, Sanchez, & Wright, 2008), children's postdivorce living arrangements (Kelly, 2007), parenting plans (Douglas, 2006), school-based programs for children (Geelhoed, Blaisure, & Geasler, 2001), parental relocation following divorce (Kelly & Lamb, 2003), therapeutic interventions for high-conflict divorcing couples (Lebow & Rekart, 2007), the role of parenting coordinators in high-conflict cases (Kirkland & Sullivan, 2008), the link between premarital education and marital stability (Stanley, Amato, Markman, & Johnson, 2006), and community policies to reduce divorce (Birch, Weed, & Olsen, 2004).

One topic of special interest involves divorce education classes for parents, which have become increasingly common in recent decades. By the end of the 1990s, about half of all court systems in the United States provided either court- or community-based education programs for parents (Blaisure & Geasler, 2006). These courses vary in content and length, but most are designed to inform parents about steps they can take to minimize the potential detrimental effects of divorce on children. Some states, such as Arizona, mandate these courses for all divorcing parents with minor children. In other states, such as Pennsylvania, state law does not require attendance at parenting classes, although

some county courts within the state mandate attendance. These courses vary in length from 90 min to a half day, and most are taught by individuals with backgrounds in family law, child welfare, or family studies. Early studies indicated that most parents find these classes to be useful, even when attendance was mandatory (Geasler & Blaisure, 1998).

Several evaluation studies have appeared during the past decade. One found that men and women who attended a divorce education program reported less conflict with their former spouses and were less likely to return to court (Criddle, Allgood, & Piercy, 2003). Another study found that resident mothers who attended a divorce education class reported more positive family functioning, fewer symptoms of psychological distress, and better divorce adjustment (Zimmerman, Brown, & Portes, 2004). Although these results are promising, many of these studies contain serious limitations. For example, although some studies have used quasi-experimental designs, few have randomly allocated families to education and no-education groups. Moreover, many studies use nonprobability samples that are not representative of any particular population. Importantly, little information exists about whether these classes actually benefit children. (See Douglas, 2006, for a full discussion.)

A second topic of special interest is the increasing use of nonadversarial dispute resolution procedures with divorcing parents, including various forms of mediation (Douglas, 2006; Sbarra & Emery, 2006). Mediation is a conflict resolution method that helps parents resolve disagreements over issues such as child custody, access arrangements, property division, and child support. Parents meet with trained mediators for several hour-long sessions, usually lasting from 6 to 9 hours. Mediators may have training in psychotherapy, counseling, law, or conflict resolution. Sometimes mediators also meet with children. Unlike divorce education classes, mediation is individually tailored for the needs and concerns of specific couples. The assumption underlying mediation is that if both parents are satisfied with the final agreement, then they are more likely to cooperate following divorce. For couples with disputes, mediation is now mandatory—or can be made mandatory at the discretion of the judge—in the majority of states in the United States.

In a review of the literature on mediation, Kelly (2004) reported that couples reach agreement between one half and three fourths of the time. Evaluation studies indicate that mediation decreases the likelihood that couples will pursue litigation, lowers the cost of divorce, and increases parents' satisfaction with the final outcome (Douglas, 2006). Emery, Sbarra, and Grover (2005) conducted the most rigorous study of mediation by randomly assigning couples to mediation and non-mediation groups and following these parents for over a decade. The researchers found that mediation resulted in greater satisfaction with postdivorce outcomes, more contact between nonresident fathers and children, more communication between divorced parents, and less conflict between divorced parents. Despite these beneficial outcomes, most research on mediation continues to be plagued by methodological limitations, including the use of small samples and the absence of appropriate comparison groups. Moreover, existing research has not provided evidence that mediation actually benefits children.

#### CONCLUSIONS

During the past decade, studies have consolidated and extended prior research on divorce. Studies also have become more sophisticated methodologically. For example, research on divorce has increasingly relied on longitudinal nationally representative samples. Moreover, structural equation models, growth curve analysis, propensity score analysis, pooled time-series analysis, genetically informed designs, and fixed-effects models are now common in this literature. In addition, new conceptual perspectives, such as the multiple transition perspective, have become prominent. But despite these advances, many gaps in our understanding remain. The current review ends by suggesting several new directions for research.

1. As mentioned in the introduction, few studies have focused on separation rather than divorce, and relatively little is known about this particular status. For example, why do some separated couples reconcile and others divorce? Why does a small percentage of couples remain separated indefinitely? And how does separation (as opposed to divorce) affect the well-being of spouses and children? New

research that focuses on this socially ambiguous status—not quite married, not quite divorced—would be of considerable interest.

2. The divorce rate in the United States has declined since the 1980s. Although a decrease in the proportion of children exposed to parental divorce might seem like good news, this trend has been offset by an increase in the number of children born to unmarried, cohabiting parents. Because these informal unions are less stable than marriages, the total proportion of children who experience family disruption (either through divorce or the ending of cohabiting unions) has changed relatively little during the last several decades. Yet we know little about how these two forms of union dissolution are similar or differ from one another with respect to adult and child adjustment.
3. During the past two decades, the crude divorce rate declined among couples with college educations but remained constant among couples with low levels of education. The reasons underlying this difference are unknown and deserve to be studied. Do these diverging trends reflect educational differences in economic resources, attitudes about marriage and divorce, communication and cognitive skills, or other factors?
4. The demographic and economic predictors of divorce are well established and have changed little during the last few decades. It is less clear, however, whether the predictors of divorce vary across racial and ethnic groups. And if differences exist, do they primarily reflect historical, economic, structural, or cultural factors? Unfortunately, the number of existing studies on this topic is too small to reach conclusions at this time. Perhaps in another decade a sufficient number of studies will have accumulated to allow a more definitive review of this topic.
5. Recent studies continue to show that divorce is associated with lower levels of well-being among children and adults, on average. But focusing on the average effects of divorce masks the substantial degree of variability that exists in people's adjustment. Future studies should focus on the heterogeneity of outcomes among children and adults. In particular, more

research that uses multiplicative terms to assess moderation effects (Divorce  $\times$  Risk or Protective Factors) would be valuable.

6. Genetically informed studies indicate that most of the links between divorce and problematic child outcomes cannot be accounted for by passive genetic inheritance. Few studies, however, have considered Gene  $\times$  Family Environment interactions. The increasing availability of genetic data has created new opportunities for researchers to study interactions between genetically based risk and resiliency factors and parental divorce.
7. Studies continue to suggest that the consequences of divorce for children and adults are contingent on the quality of family relationships prior to marital dissolution. Indeed, divorces that remove individuals from highly dysfunctional home environments appear to result in improvements rather than decrements in well-being. More longitudinal studies that address how the quality of the predivorce family environment moderates postdivorce outcomes would help us to better understand this phenomenon.
8. Many researchers have assumed that a gradual process of relationship deterioration precedes divorce. Yet many marriages that end in divorce do not appear to be highly distressed. Indeed, a few years prior to divorce, many spouses report little conflict and at least moderate levels of positive interaction and happiness. Do spouses in these unions lack commitment? Even though they are happy, do these individuals believe they would be even more fulfilled with different partners? Does a sudden and unanticipated event, such as an affair, unemployment, or illness, cause the marriage to unravel quickly? Or are these spouses simply in denial about the quality of their relationships? More research on why low-distress marriages end in divorce would provide a fuller understanding of the causes of marital dissolution.
9. Recent studies have examined how the number of family structure transitions may affect children's well-being. These studies represent a promising direction for future work, and more research along these is warranted. For example, it would be useful to know if the number of transitions is a better predictor of child outcomes than is a single divorce. The notion that stability benefits children, irrespective of family structure, has the potential to shift prevailing paradigms about children and divorce. Nevertheless, this perspective equally weights all transitions in forming a measure of instability. It is not clear, for example, whether the addition of a stepparent is equivalent to a divorce in affecting children's well-being. Future research needs to consider whether all transitions are equally stressful for children.
10. A large number of interventions and policies during the last decade have focused on making divorce less stressful for parents and children. Although a growing number of studies have assessed this topic, these interventions and policies have not yet been sufficiently evaluated. In particular, more studies that randomly allocate people to treatment and no-treatment groups are sorely needed.
11. At the time of this writing, same-sex marriage is permitted in several U.S. states (Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont), as well as a growing number of countries around the world (Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, and Spain). Although relatively little research on marriage and divorce among same-sex couples exists at this time, this topic has a great deal of potential for future work. Perhaps an article on same-sex marriage will appear in the next decade-in-review issue of this journal.

#### REFERENCES

- Amato, P. R. (2000). The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 1269–1287.
- Amato, P. R. (2003). Reconciling divergent perspectives: Judith Wallerstein, quantitative family research, and children of divorce. *Family Relations*, 52, 332–339.
- Amato, P. R., Booth, A., Johnson, D. R., & Rogers, S. J. (2007). *Alone together: How marriage in America is changing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Amato, P. R., & Cheadle, J. (2008). Parental divorce, marital conflict, and children's behavior problems: A comparison of adopted and biological children. *Social Forces*, 86, 1139–1161.
- Amato, P. R., & DeBoer, D. (2001). The intergenerational transmission of marital instability across

- generations: Relationship skills of commitment to marriage? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 1038–1051.
- Amato, P. R., & Hohmann-Marriott, B. (2007). A comparison of high and low-distress marriages that end in divorce. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 621–638.
- Amato, P. R., & Sobolewski, J. M. (2001). The effects of divorce and marital discord on adult children's psychological well-being. *American Sociological Review*, 66, 900–921.
- American Community Survey. (2007). *American community survey (ACS)*. Retrieved April 21, 2009, from [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en)
- Aughinbaugh, A., Pierret, C. R., & Rothstein, D. S. (2005). The impact of family structure transitions on youth achievement: Evidence from the Children of the NLSY79. *Demography*, 42, 447–468.
- Barrett, A. E. (2000). Marital trajectories and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41, 451–464.
- Barrett, A. E. (2003). Race differences in the mental health effects of divorce: A reexamination incorporating temporal dimensions of the dissolution process. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24, 995–1019.
- Barrett, A. E., & Turner, R. J. (2005). Family structure and mental health: The mediating effects of socioeconomic status, family process, and social stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 46, 156–169.
- Bierman, A., Fazio, E. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2006). A multifaceted approach to the mental health advantage of the married: Assessing how explanations vary by outcome measure and unmarried group. *Journal of Family Issues*, 27, 554–582.
- Birch, P. J., Weed, S. E., & Olsen, J. (2004). Assessing the impact of community marriage policies on county divorce rates. *Family Relations*, 53, 495–503.
- Bjorklund, A., & Sundstrom, M. (2006). Parental separation and children's educational attainment: A sibling analysis on Swedish register data. *Economica*, 73, 605–624.
- Blaisure, K. A., & Geasler, M. J. (2006). Educational interventions for separating and divorcing parents and their children. In M. Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution* (pp. 575–602). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Booth, A., & Amato, P. R. (2001). Parental divorce relations and offspring postdivorce well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 197–212.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. R. (2004). Understanding and altering the longitudinal course of marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 862–879.
- Bramlett, M. D., & Mosher, W. D. (2002). *Cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the United States*. Vital and Health Statistics, Series 23. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Bratter, J., & King, R. B. (2008). But will it last? Marital instability among interracial and same-race couples. *Family Relations*, 57, 160–171.
- Brockmann, H., & Klein, T. (2004). Love and death in Germany: The marital biography and its effect on mortality. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 567–581.
- Brodzinsky, D., Hitt, J. C., & Smith, D. (1993). Impact of parental separation and divorce on adopted and nonadopted children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 63, 451–461.
- Broman, C. L., Li, X., & Reckase, M. (2008). Family structure and mediators of adolescent drug use. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29, 1625–1649.
- Brown, S. L. (2004). Moving from cohabitation to marriage: Effects on relationship quality. *Social Science Research*, 33, 1–19.
- Capaldi, D. M., & Patterson, G. R. (1991). Relation of parental transitions to boys' adjustment problems. 1. A linear hypothesis. 2. Mothers at risk for transitions and unskilled parenting. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 489–504.
- Carlson, M., & Corcoran, M. E. (2001). Family structure and children's behavioral and cognitive outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 779–792.
- Cavanagh, S. E. (2008). Family structure history and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29, 944–980.
- Cavanagh, S. E., & Huston, A. C. (2006). Family instability and children's early behavior problems. *Social Forces*, 85, 551–585.
- Cherlin, A. J., Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & McRae, C. (1998). Effects of parental divorce on mental health throughout the life course. *American Sociological Review*, 63, 239–249.
- Clements, M. L., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2004). Before they said "I do": Discriminating among marital outcomes over 13 years. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 613–626.
- Criddle, M. N., Allgood, S. M., & Piercy, K. W. (2003). The relationship between mandatory divorce education and level of post-divorce parental conflict. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 39, 99–111.
- DeMaris, A. (2000). Till discord do us part: The role of physical and verbal conflict in union disruption. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 683–692.
- D'Onofrio, B. M., Turkheimer, E., Emery, R. E., Harden, K. P., Slutske, W. S., Heath, A. C., Madden, P. A. F., & Martin, N. G. (2007). A genetically informed study of the intergenerational transmission of marital instability. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 793–809.
- D'Onofrio, B. M., Turkheimer, E., Emery, R. E., Hermine, H., Maes, J. S., & Eaves, L. J. (2007).

- A children of twins study of parental divorce and offspring psychopathology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 48, 667–675.
- D'Onofrio, B. M., Turkheimer, E., Emery, R. E., Slutske, W. S., Heath, A. C., Madden, P. A., & Martin, N. G. (2005). A genetically informed study of marital instability and its association with offspring psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 114, 570–586.
- D'Onofrio, B. M., Turkheimer, E., Emery, R. E., Slutske, W. S., Heath, A. C., Madden, P. A., & Martin, N. G. (2006). A genetically informed study of the processes underlying the association between parental marital instability and offspring adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 42, 486–499.
- Douglas, E. M. (2006). *Mending broken families: Social policies for divorced families*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Emery, R. E., Sbarra, D. A., & Grover, T. (2005). Divorce mediation: Research and reflections. *Family Court Review*, 43, 22–37.
- Ermisch, J. F., & Francesconi, M. (2001). Family structure and children's achievements. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14, 249–270.
- Fabricius, W. V., & Luecken, L. J. (2007). Postdivorce living arrangements, parent conflict, and long-term physical health correlates for children of divorce. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21, 195–205.
- Fincham, F. D., Stanley, S. M., & Beach, S. R. H. (2007). Transformative processes in marriage: An analysis of emerging trends. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 275–293.
- Fomby, P., & Cherlin, A. J. (2007). Family instability and child well-being. *American Sociological Review*, 72, 181–204.
- Frisco, M. L., Muller, C., & Frank, K. (2007). Parents' union dissolution and adolescents' school performance: Comparing methodological approaches. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 721–741.
- Frisco, M. L., & Williams, K. (2003). Perceived housework equity, marital happiness, and divorce in dual-earner households. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24, 51–73.
- Geasler, M. J., & Blaisure, K. R. (1998). A review of divorce education program materials. *Family Relations*, 47, 167–175.
- Geelhoed, R. J., Blaisure, K. R., & Geasler, M. J. (2001). Status of court-connected programs for children whose parents are separating or divorcing. *Family Court Review*, 39, 393–4004.
- Gennetian, L. A. (2005). One or two parents? Half or step siblings? The effect of family structure on young children's achievement. *Journal of Population Economics*, 18, 415–436.
- Gottman, J. M., & Levenson, R. W. (2000). The timing of divorce: Predicting when a couple will divorce over a 14-year period. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 737–745.
- Gruber, J. (2004). Is making divorce easier bad for children? The long-run implications of unilateral divorce. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 22, 799–833.
- Guo, G., Roettger, M. E., & Cai, T. J. (2008). The integration of genetic propensities into social-control models of delinquency and violence among male youth. *American Sociological Review*, 73, 543–568.
- Hall, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (2006). Relationship dissolution after infidelity. In M. Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution* (pp. 153–168). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hango, D. W., & Houseknecht, S. K. (2005). Marital disruption and accidents/injuries among children. *Journal of Family Issues*, 26, 3–31.
- Hans-Jürgen, A., & Bröckel, M. (2007). Income and life satisfaction after marital disruption in Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 500–512.
- Harris, J. R. (1998). *The nurture assumption: Why children turn out the way they do*. New York: Free Press.
- Heard, H. E. (2007). The family structure trajectory and adolescent school performance: Differential effects by race and ethnicity. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28, 319–354.
- Heaton, T. B. (2002). Factors contributing to increasing marital stability in the United States. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23, 392–409.
- Hetherington, E. M. (2003). Intimate pathways: Changing patterns in close personal relationships across time. *Family Relations*, 52, 318–331.
- Hetherington, E. M. (2006). The influence of conflict, marital problem solving and parenting on children's adjustment in nondivorced, divorced, and remarried families. In A. Clarke-Stewart & J. Dunn (Eds.), *Families count: Effect on child and adolescent development* (pp. 203–237). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, M. S., Yeung, W. J., & Duncan, G. J. (2001). Child family structure and young adult behaviors. *Journal of Population Economics*, 14, 271–299.
- Hughes, M. H., & Waite, L. J. (2009). Marital biography and health at mid-life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 50, 344–358.
- Johnson, D. R., & Wu, J. (2002). An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time-series analysis of four-wave panel data. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64, 211–224.
- Kelly, J. B. (2004). Family mediation research: Is there empirical support for the field? *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 22, 3–35.
- Kelly, J. B. (2007). Children's living arrangements following separation and divorce: Insights from

- empirical and clinical research. *Family Process*, 46, 35–52.
- Kelly, J. B., & Lamb, M. E. (2003). Developmental issues in relocation cases involving young children: When, whether, and how? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 17, 193–205.
- King, V., & Sobolewski, J. M. (2006). Nonresident fathers' contributions to adolescent well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 537–557.
- Kirkland, K., & Sullivan, M. (2008). Parenting coordination (PC) practice: A survey of experienced professionals. *Family Court Review*, 46, 622–636.
- Kurdek, L. A. (2002). Predicting the timing of separation and marital satisfaction: An eight-year prospective longitudinal study. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64, 163–179.
- Laumann-Billings, L., & Emery, R. E. (2000). Distress among young adults from divorced families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 14, 671–687.
- Lawrence, E., & Bradbury, T. N. (2001). Physical aggression and marital dysfunction: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15, 135–154.
- Lebow, J., & Rekart, K. N. (2007). Integrative family therapy for high-conflict divorce with disputes over child custody and visitation. *Family Process*, 46, 79–91.
- Lillard, L. A., Brien, M. J., & Waite, L. I. (1995). Premarital cohabitation and subsequent marital dissolution: A matter of self-selection. *Demography*, 32, 437–457.
- Liu, H., & Umberson, D. J. (2008). The times they are a changin': Marital status and health differential from 1972 to 2003. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 49, 239–253.
- Lorenz, F. O., Wickrama, K. A. S., Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H. (2006). The short-term and decade-long effects of divorce on women's midlife health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 47, 111–125.
- Marquardt, E. (2005). *Between two worlds: The inner lives of children of divorce*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Martinez, C. R., & Forgatch, M. S. (2002). Adjusting to family change: Linking family structure transitions with parenting and boys' adjustment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16, 107–117.
- McLanahan, S. (2004). Diverging destinies: How children are faring under the second demographic transition. *Demography*, 41, 607–627.
- Nock, S. L., Sanchez, L. A., & Wright, J. D. (2008). *Covenant marriage: The movement to reclaim tradition in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- O'Connor, T. G., Caspi, A., DeFries, J. C., & Plomin, R. (2000). Are associations between parental divorce and children's adjustment genetically mediated? An adoption study. *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 429–437.
- O'Connor, T. G., Caspi, A., DeFries, J. C., & Plomin, R. (2003). Genotype-environment interaction in children's adjustment to parental separation. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 44, 849–856.
- Orbuch, T. L., Veroff, J., Hassan, H., & Horrocks, J. (2002). Who will divorce? A 14-year longitudinal study of Black couples and White couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19, 179–202.
- Osborne, C., & McLanahan, S. (2007). Partnership instability and child well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 1065–1083.
- Overbeek, G., Vollebergh, W., de Graaf, R., Scholte, R., de Kemp, R., & Engels, R. (2006). Longitudinal associations of marital quality and marital dissolution with the incidence of DSM-III-R disorders. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20, 284–291.
- Painter, G., & Levine, D. I. (2000). Family structure and youths' outcomes: Which correlations are causal? *Journal of Human Resources*, 35, 524–549.
- Pearlin, L. I., Schieman, S., Fazio, E. M., & Meersman, S. C. (2005). Stress, health, and the life course: Some conceptual perspectives. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 46, 205–219.
- Phillips, J. A., & Sweeney, M. M. (2005). Premarital cohabitation and marital disruption among White, Black, and Mexican American women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 296–314.
- Powers, D. A. (2005). Effects of family structure on the risk of first premarital birth in the presence of correlated unmeasured family effects. *Social Science Research*, 34, 511–537.
- Previdi, D., & Amato, P. R. (2004). Is infidelity a cause or a consequence of poor marital quality? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21, 217–230.
- Pruett, M. K., Williams, T. Y., Insabella, G., & Little, T. D. (2003). Family and legal indicators of child adjustment to divorce among families with young children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 17, 169–180.
- Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2009). The pre-engagement cohabitation effect: A replication and extension of previous findings. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23, 107–111.
- Rogers, S. J. (2004). Dollars, dependency, and divorce: Four perspectives on the role of wives' income. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 59–74.
- Sayer, L. C., & Bianchi, S. M. (2000). Women's economic independence and the probability of divorce: A review and reexamination. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21, 906–943.
- Sbarra, D. A., & Emery, R. E. (2006). In the presence of grief: The role of cognitive-emotional adaptation in contemporary divorce mediation. In M. Fine



- & J. Harvey (Eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution* (pp. 553–573). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Schoen, R., Astone, N. M., Rothert, K., Standish, N. J., & Kim, Y. J. (2002). Women's employment, marital happiness, and divorce. *Social Forces*, *81*, 643–662.
- Schoen, R., & Canudas-Romo, V. (2006). Timing effects on divorce: 20th century experience in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*, 749–758.
- Schoen, R., Rogers, S. J., & Amato, P. R. (2006). Wives' employment and spouses' marital happiness: Assessing the direction of influence using longitudinal couple data. *Journal of Family Issues*, *25*, 506–528.
- Stanley, S., Amato, P. R., Markman, H., & Johnson, C. (2006). Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *20*, 117–126.
- Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., & Markman, H. J. (2006). Sliding versus deciding: Inertia and the premarital cohabitation effect. *Family Relations*, *55*, 499–510.
- Strohschein, L. (2005). Parental divorce and child mental health trajectories. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *67*, 1286–1300.
- Sun, Y. (2001). Family environment and adolescents' well-being before and after parents' marital disruption: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*, 697–713.
- Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2001). Marital disruption, parental investment, and children's academic achievement: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Family Issues*, *22*, 27–62.
- Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2002). Children's well-being during parent's marital disruption process: A pooled time-series analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*, 742–762.
- Sun, Y., & Li, Y. (2007). Racial and ethnic differences in experiencing parents' marital disruption during late adolescence. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *69*, 742–762.
- Sweeney, M. M., & Phillips, J. A. (2004). Understanding racial differences in marital disruption: Recent trends and explanations. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *66*, 639–650.
- Tach, L., & Halpern-Meekin, S. (2009). How does premarital cohabitation affect trajectories of marital quality? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *71*, 298–317.
- Teachman, J. (2003). Premarital sex, premarital cohabitation, and the risk of subsequent marital dissolution among women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *65*, 444–455.
- Teachman, J. D. (2002). Stability across cohorts in divorce risk factors. *Demography*, *65*, 507–524.
- Tein, J., Sandler, I. N., & Zautra, A. J. (2000). Stressful life events, psychological distress, coping, and parenting of divorced mothers: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *14*, 27–41.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2008). *Statistical abstract of the United States: 2008*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Videon, T. M. (2002). The effects of parent-adolescent relationships and parental separation on adolescent well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*, 489–503.
- Wade, T. J., & Pevalin, D. J. (2004). Marital transitions and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *45*, 155–170.
- Waite, L. J., Luo, Y., & Lewin, A. C. (2009). Marital happiness and marital stability: Consequences for psychological well-being. *Social Science Research*, *38*, 201–212.
- Wang, H., & Amato, P. R. (2000). Predictors of divorce adjustment: Stressors, resources, and definitions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*, 655–668.
- Williams, K., & Dunne-Bryant, A. (2006). Divorce and adult psychological well-being: Clarifying the role of gender and child age. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*, 1178–1196.
- Williams, K., & Umberson, D. (2004). Marital status, marital transitions, and health: A gendered life course perspective. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *45*, 81–98.
- Wolfinger, N. H. (2000). Beyond the intergenerational transmission of divorce: Do people replicate the patterns of marital instability they grew up with? *Journal of Family Issues*, *21*, 1061–1086.
- Wolfinger, N. H., Kowaleski-Jones, L., & Smith, K. R. (2003). Double impact: What sibling data can tell us about the long-term negative effects of parental divorce. *Social Biology*, *50*, 58–76.
- Wood, R. G., Goesling, B., & Avellar, S. (2007). *The effect of marriage on health: A synthesis of recent research evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Woodward, L., & Fergusson, D. M. (2000). Timing of parental separation and attachment to parents in adolescence: Results of a prospective study from birth to age 16. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*, 162–174.
- Wu, L. L., & Martinson, B. C. (1993). Family structure and the risk of a premarital birth. *American Sociological Review*, *58*, 210–232.
- Zhang, Z., & Hayward, M. (2006). Gender, the marital life course, and cardiovascular disease in late midlife. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*, 639–657.
- Zimmerman, D. K., Brown, J. H., & Portes, P. R. (2004). Assessing custodial mother adjustment to divorce: The role of divorce education and family functioning. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, *41*, 1–24.