Black Children's Adjustment to their Parents' Marital Disruption: An Examination of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY)

by

Jenell S. Clarke

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Work and Psychology)
in The University of Michigan
2008

Doctoral Committee:

        Professor Kristine A. Siefert, Co-Chair
        Professor Jacquelynne S. Eccles, Co-Chair
        Professor Linda M. Chatters
        Associate Professor Laura P. Kohn-Wood
        Assistant Professor Trina R. Shanks

Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but I will remember the name of the Lord [my] God. Psalm 20:7
Commit your ways to the Lord; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5
Trust in the Lord with all your heart; lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

DEDICATION

To my parents, Clement and Maureen Clarke

You have been the wind in my sail.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

This study employed data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to examine Black children's response to parental marital disruption over a four-year inter-survey period. Using a homogeneous sample of Black children, I examined 1) whether marital disruption in Black families has the same presumed adverse effects reported in the general literature, 2) whether family circumstances prior to the marital disruption modify the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment, and finally, 3) whether the effect of marital disruption varies by the particular child outcome under investigation. Two outcome domains were assessed—Behavioral Problem (BPI; externalizing and internalizing behaviors) and Achievement (PIAT; Mathematics and Reading). A sample of 405 children aged 4-11 were examined; however, a separate sub-sample of children aged 5-11 from this group was assessed on the PIAT subtests. Children's adjustment was assessed at Time 1, prior to divorce/separation, and later at Time 2, after the marriage ended. To investigate potential variability in children's response to parental divorce/separation, several factors preceding the actual divorce/separation were assessed, namely, parental conflict, parent-child relationship, poverty status, neighborhood problem, maternal depressive symptoms, mastery, education and employment. Results indicated pre-disruption group differences among youth in subsequently disrupted and continuously married households. These pre-separation/divorce differences were found for both samples on measures of parent-child

relationship, poverty, neighborhood problem, maternal depressive symptoms, and maternal education, with relatively small effect sizes. Marital disruption was associated with a significant effect for one of the four outcome variables of interest (i.e., reading), after accounting for several child and family characteristics. Moderation analyses examined the interaction between pre-disruption factors and marital disruption. Results revealed significant interaction effects of parent-child relationship, maternal depressive symptoms, and poverty status for behavior problems, and parental conflict for achievement. Overall the findings suggest that the scope of the effect of marital disruption is limited in the present sample of Black children, because a significant effect was found for only one of the four outcomes assessed. In addition, several of the pre-disruption factors predicted differential outcomes among the children and thereby indicate the need for future research to explain the heterogeneity of divorce/separation outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

The substantial increase in divorce rates during the latter half of the 20th century has prompted considerable interest in the consequences of marital dissolution for children (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991). Current trends indicate that one in two of every first marriage will dissolve (Raley & Bumpass, 2003). The national statistics, while they inform us of the marital behavior of the general American population, do not reveal important racial/ethnic differences that exist. Although there has been a leveling in the rate of marital disruption for White women since 1980, there is less evidence of stabilization among Black women (Sweeney & Phillips, 2004). Not only are Black women's divorce and separation rates higher than those of White women overall, but the rates began to rise beginning in the mid-1980s. These statistics suggest that the well-documented leveling in trends of marital disruption may not have been experienced equally across subpopulations. Moreover, the disparate racial profiles in rates of marital disruption may suggest differential outcomes for children and families.

What are the responses of Black children to their parents' marital disruption? Will they vary depending on factors that precede the divorce/separation? Does the particular indicator of well-being that is under investigation matter? These are the questions that guide the present dissertation. In general, research on marital disruption, which has focused predominantly on majority populations, suggests that children who experience their parents' divorce/separation fare more poorly across an array of academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional outcomes compared to their counterparts whose parents

1

remain married. The scarcity of research on racial/ethnic groups, however, limits our understanding of the diverse ways in which children and their families may respond to divorce/separation. Moreover, the lack of attention to pre-disruption family characteristics and prior child adjustment often renders the association of divorce/separation with child outcome nebulous. Existing studies have attempted to clarify this link by focusing on family-level variables such as parental conflict and parent-child relationship (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Peris & Emery, 2004; Videon, 2002). The present dissertation extends the current literature by identifying other factors that precede the divorce/separation that may influence children's adjustment in Black families. It is important to consider the quality of life prior to divorce/separation if we are to clarify the effects of marital disruption on children's adjustment.

This research will not only draw empirical attention to an understudied population, but it will advance our understanding of the potential differential effects of marital disruption. Moreover, systematic research on the variability in children's response to marital disruption may inform marriage promotion policy initiatives that have been proposed to improve children's well-being as well as guide our current child welfare practices.

Dissertation Layout

The literature review consists of three chapters, all of which are integral to this dissertation in different ways. First, it is important for researchers to have a contextual understanding of their study population. As such, Chapter I provides a detailed overview of the social context in which Black children and their families are embedded. This social context refers to the quality of male-female relationships, determinants of high levels of marital disruption among African Americans, and culturally adaptive approaches to

2

coping. The formulation of this discussion draws upon socio-historical and socio-cultural factors that have characterized the experiences of Black families in America, both past and present. Special attention is given to Black women's experiences because most children reside with their mother following divorce (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). The chapter also reviews three main models of research on Black families, and highlights the utility of the culturally variant approach as a lens for understanding the unique features of Black families. It is useful to mention here that the terms "African American" and "Black" will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation to refer to people in America who are of African descent.

Chapter II provides a detailed review of the extant social science findings on the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment. This chapter addresses several domains of child adjustment that have been studied in relation to marital disruption, and identifies various explanatory frameworks that have been proposed to understand the link between marital status and child well-being. These explanations emphasize factors such as family income, the psychological adjustment and quality of parenting of the custodial parent, level of parental conflict and parent-child relationships. The chapter discusses evidence for each mechanism. Lastly, as one of the primary objectives of this dissertation, the chapter identifies sources of variability among children whose parents divorce and addresses the need for further research.

The literature review concludes in Chapter III where attention is honed in on the differential profiles of marital disruption that emerge from recent statistics on Blacks and Whites. Continuing from the previous section, this chapter identifies specific sources of variability to be addressed in the dissertation and highlights the research questions

proposed for the present study. Subsequent chapters focus on study methods and results; the final chapter culminates the study with a culturally relevant discussion of the present findings. In paying attention to the unique history and cultural orientations of Black families, this dissertation helps to situate Black children and their families in the broad discourse on marital disruption.

CHAPTER I

Black Families and Marital Disruption: A Cultural Analysis

Introduction

The relation between marital status and well-being has received much attention, in large part, because of major transformations in demographic trends in marital behavior characterizing recent patterns of family formation and family structure within the general American population. The dramatic increase in divorce rates in the United States is well documented and current estimates project that at least half of all first marriages will end in divorce (Bumpass, 1990; Cherlin, 1992; Raley & Bumpass, 2003). Divorce rates for the general American population are among the highest in the world.

While these trends exist for the general population, they are more striking for Blacks who have a distinctive profile in relation to the general pattern. Based on recent statistics, more than half (51%) of the total U.S. population of Black children under the age of 18 are living in a mother-only household (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006). Of these children living with their mothers, approximately 18% of the mothers were divorced, 14% were separated, 3% were widowed, and 62% were never married. There have been some notable changes from earlier decades. For example, based on the 1960s census statistics, twenty percent of Black children under 18 were living with their

mothers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). The major feature that emerges from Blacks indicates that they are much less likely to marry and when they do marry, are more likely to divorce.

The general findings from decades of research suggest that children in single-mother families, for instance those who experience their parents' marital dissolution, are at great risk for detrimental outcomes. Recent research reveals that children with divorced parents continue to have lower average levels of cognitive, social, and emotional well-being, even though divorce has become common (Amato, 2001; 2005). Nevertheless, many of these children eventually adapt well to this transition (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). As mentioned above, African Americans have a higher rate of marital disruption than Whites; however, little research has focused on the variations of children's outcome by race, thus making it difficult to reach firm conclusions about racial differences in children's well-being in single-parent households. While the picture is less than optimistic for children's outcomes, many Black children survive, and even thrive in these family situations. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) suggest that academic deficits associated with living in a single-mother household were more pronounced for White than for Black children. It is possible therefore that Black children adjust better than White children to life in single-parent families, although the explanation for this difference has not been widely discussed in the social science literature. This literature has neglected to draw attention to the wider cultural and ecological contexts in which these families raise their children.

In this chapter, I discuss briefly the nature of male-female relationships among Black couples, which may help us understand their greater risk of marital disruption.

Secondly, I discuss three models that have guided empirical inquiry on Black families. This section is most important to my theoretical orientation for this dissertation. Finally, I discuss adaptive strengths that may serve as strategies for fostering optimal development in families experiencing marital disruption. Particular emphasis is placed on the cultural and historic roles of Black women because women are most often the primary caregivers of children in marriages and the custodial parent after divorce, raising their children in single-parent homes (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994).

Black Families--Black Couples

In order to understand how Black families experience marital disruption, it is necessary to examine the dynamics of male-female relationships. Generally, the research suggests that Black women may be more cautious about entering a new relationship because marriage is less integral to their sense of self and to their economic well-being (McKelvey & McKenry, 2000). The relevance of this relationship orientation to child and family well-being is complex and historical in nature.

Marital Well-Being among Blacks. When research is conducted on racially homogeneous samples and findings are widely generalized, researchers may exercise an unfounded assumption that factors explaining the dynamics of White marriages are the same as those explaining African American marriages (Goodwin, 2003). Important questions are therefore raised regarding the racial differences in married status and perceived well-being. Ball and Robbins (1986) brought up some very important questions: "…does marriage contribute to subjective well-being among Blacks, as it appears to for Whites, or have prejudice and discrimination brought different experiences within marriage, and therefore different meanings and relationships, to Blacks" (p.389).

It is possible that African Americans may conceptualize marriage differently from Whites. Though little research has been conducted on racial differences in marital satisfaction and well-being, the few studies that exist seem to suggest that Blacks, particularly Black women, are less satisfied with marriage.

Broman (1993), using national probability data from the American's Changing Lives survey (ACL), found that Blacks were significantly less likely than Whites to report their marriages as harmonious and Black women were less satisfied with their marriages than White women. Marital well-being was measured using four items designed to assess harmony in marriage: (1) There is a great deal of love and affection expressed in our marriage, (2) My spouse doesn't treat me as well as I deserve to be treated, (3) I sometimes think of divorcing or separating from my spouse, and (4) There have been things that have happened in our marriage that I can never forgive. Participants were asked to rate their agreement of these statements. Marital satisfaction was a single item question asking participants to rate how satisfied they were with their marriage.

In addition, sex, age and parental status were significant predictors of marital well-being for the overall sample, with older people reporting greater marital harmony than younger people and those with more children living in the home reporting lower marital well-being than non-parents and those with fewer children. More research is needed to understand premarital factors as well as factors within the marriage that disadvantage Blacks relative to Whites, which then may negatively influence marital well-being.

A variety of explanations have been offered for the lower marriage rates, the higher rates of divorce/separation, and the resulting increase of female-headed

households among Black families. Many researchers have posited the precarious

economic situation of Black men as an explanation for the higher rate of marital

separation and divorce, and lower rates of marriage among Blacks overall (see Tucker &

Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Wilson & Neckerman, 1986). Sociologist Julius Wilson was

among the first to argue that marriage rates respond mainly to the employment situation

of Black men (see Wilson, 1987). Recent statistics show that Black men (11.8%) have

high unemployment rates relative to Black women (9.7%) as well as the national average

(6.1%) (Census, 2004). As a structural factor, economic discrimination remains an

important obstacle that reduces the benefits traditionally associated with marriage.

Bernard (1966) found this racial discrepancy in divorce rates to be greatest at low status

levels but still present at highest status levels, the latter possibly due to sex-ratio effects

on marital behavior (see Guttentag & Secord, 1983; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995).

The sex-ratio hypothesis posits that decline in marriages among Blacks is related

to the imbalanced ratio of Black males to females; the shortage of viable Black men

presumably gives them an advantage in male-female relationships. The advantage that is

accorded the scarcer gender may then lead to husbands having a weakened commitment

to their marriage because of the increased availability of unmarried females. Researchers

have found support for this hypothesis after controlling for personal characteristics such

as age, education, and income (Kiecolt & Fossett, 1995).

Stressors of Marital Disruption

Despite its frequency and growing acceptance, divorce remains a traumatic life

change (Kazak, 1992). The uncoupling process typically sets into motion numerous

events that people experience as stressful. Prior researchers argued that divorce is a

single, discrete life event (Lavee, McCubbin, & Olson, 1987). However, concomitant stressors such as income reduction, child care, and residential mobility (Amato, 2000; Demo, Allen, & Fine, 2000; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Wang & Amato, 2000), are protracted experiences that are resolved only over time. Economic circumstances often deteriorate following marital disruption because the original family income may now be split across two households. Declines in women's standard of living are often more dramatic than men's. In addition, women who are the custodial parent often experience economic hardship (Kitson, 1992; Smock, Gupta, & Manning, 1999). Residential mobility is another stressful consequence of marital disruption, more so among single mothers as they tend to move more frequently than married mothers, and often because they cannot afford their current housing (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

These stressors, encountered singularly or in some combination, emerge during the time the marriage is ending and in the immediate post-divorce period. As such, they may constitute the primary mechanisms through which divorce affects people's functioning and well-being and operate as mediators that may predict psychological adjustment to divorce. Altogether, these disruptive life changes may overwhelm women's ability to cope, thus leading to decrements in their psychological well-being. However, individuals vary in their responses to these stressors with some improving quickly and others showing slow recovery. Factors such as education, employment and income are examples of personal resources that may help people cope with the stress of marital disruption. Employment, for instance, not only provides necessary income, but it also offers a sense of independence (Kitson, 1992). Well-educated people may feel a greater

sense of control which may prove helpful in the post-disruption period (Ross & Wu, 1995).

      Family Stress Theory. The foundation of family stress research can be traced back to the classic research of Reuben Hill, who formulated the oft-cited ABC-X model (Boss, 2002; Hill, 1958; McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, & Needle, 1980; McKenry & Price, 2005). This model provides a heuristic for the scientific inquiry of family stress that outlines a set of major variables and their inter-relationships. In his framework, the provoking event or stressor (A) interacts with the family's resources or strengths at the time of the event (B), which interact with the particular meaning attached to the event by the family (individually and collectively) (C), altogether producing the crisis (X) (Hill, 1958). The ABC-X framework proposes that the A, B, and C factors combine to determine the X (Burr & Klein, 1994). In the case of marital disruption and its implications for the family's adjustment, the ABC-X model would be understood as such: marital disruption (i.e., divorce), the stressor (A); interacts with family strengths and resources, some of which may be socio-cultural and socio-historical in nature (B); which interact with the family members' (e.g., the custodial mother/divorcee) appraisal of the event. Together, these variables and their interaction offer us an understanding of the crisis. A clear understanding of the divorce and the resources and strengths used to confront this primary stressor is important. However, from a practice or clinical perspective, the families' perception and appraisal of the stressful event is equally important as it explains the meaning attached to the event and helps explain how they cope.

Models of the Black Family Research

11

The discourse surrounding Black families and marital status is often one that is nuanced and viewed in conflict with majority norms. Much of the complexity can be attributed to the various perspectives from which Black families have been studied. In the following discussion, it is not my goal to provide a detailed historical analysis of Black family life, but rather to present some of the paradigms that have shaped this research over time. Since the emergence of empirical research on Black families in the late 1930s, several theoretical frameworks have been proffered as classifications by which to interpret research on Black families. Most notably are the three classifications of Allen (1978), who describes the scholarship on Black families based on their relative deviation from White families. These approaches to the study of Black families included *Cultural Equivalence*, *Cultural Deviance* and *Cultural Variance.*

The culturally equivalent perspective posits that Black family life is similar to that of Whites after controlling for socioeconomic factors (Fine et al., 1987). Proponents of this approach suggest that negative characteristics of Black families are in response to oppressive conditions such as poverty and historical slavery experiences. Both the culturally deviant and the culturally equivalent models assert that African customs did not survive slavery. As such, Black families were perceived primarily as products of American experiences. They were believed to have similar ideals as Whites—their main difference existed in their inability to access the values of American society. Researchers who utilize this particular approach minimize any emphasis on differences that might exist across families, focusing primarily on similarities.

In contrast to the culturally equivalent approach, proponents of the culturally deviant perspective not only focus on the differences of families, but rather they portray

these differences as inherent deficiencies. Black families were often assessed against a default standard of White middle-class families and deemed inferior, which is a pattern that continues in current research (Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992; Lewis, 1975). These older studies viewed Black families in terms of pathology whenever they deviated from White family norms (e.g., Moynihan, 1965), which created a very dismal view of Black families as a consequence (Hill, S., 1999). This deficit-oriented perspective has served to limit the scholarship on Black families. Based on Barnes (2001), the cultural deviance model is characterized by the following elements:

1. Prioritization of comparative analysis between Blacks and Whites to assess aspects of Black economic, political and social development;

2. Utility of White norms and values as the benchmark by which Black families should be judged;

3. Underestimation and overlook of the positive dimensions or features of Black family life;

4. Negative portrayal of culture and life within Black communities;

5. Presumption that certain Black cultural values should be adapted to reflect traditionally held White values (Fine et al., 1987).

The White family standard was (and to a certain extent continues) to be used as a basis of comparison for the family lives of Black families and children. As a result, much of the published work emphasized dysfunctional rather than positive characteristics of Black families. Fortunately, much of the new scholarship emphasizes the strengths within Black families.

Finally, the culturally variant perspective considers Black families as unique and viable. This approach is devoid of any attempt to devalue the differences of these families. It recognizes the differences of Black families from other groups and examines the possible influences of social, historical, and cultural phenomena on these families. Contrary to the perspective of the culturally equivalent model, African American scholar and activist W. E. B. Dubois during his early 20th century writings asserted that "there is a distinct nexus between Africa and America, which, though broken and perverted is nevertheless not to be neglected" (Fine et al., 1987, p. 12). Moreover, their framework portrays Black families in terms of strengths rather than deviance and pathology, or in comparison to White families (Allen, 1978). This work of the late 1960s and 1970s re-conceptualized Black families as being strong and adaptable although organizationally and culturally different from White families. Some unique features of these families that parallel African culture and practices include flexible gender roles, kinship ties/extended families, and a strong religious orientation (Barnes, 2001; Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Hill, S., 1999; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). Black family researchers have posited that Black families are more rooted in consanguinal (blood) rather than conjugal (marriage) bonds than are White families (e.g., Sudarkasa, 1997). Of great importance as well is the emphasis placed on religion/spirituality as a strengthening factor and a survival mechanism that dates back to Africa (Billingsley, 1992; Nobles, 1974).

This dissertation utilizes the culturally variant model as a lens through which to understand and interpret Black children's adjustment to marital disruption. This perspective is important because it links the histories of Black families to their current family experiences. In my analysis, I place Black families into a socio-cultural and socio-

historical context in an attempt to honor their adaptive characteristics. The study does not compare Black families to any other racial or ethnic groups. Rather it attempts to conduct an in-depth examination of the potential variation within a sub-sample of Black families and their children who experience marital disruption.

Resources of Black Mothers

Flexible gender roles: History bearing witness. Previous research found that Black mothers hold flexible roles and a long history of unpaid and paid work coupled with child-rearing (Hill, 2001; Landry, 2000). American slavery was an economic and political system by which Whites extracted as much labor as possible from enslaved Africans through the use or threat of force. In a historical volume examining women and their families in slave societies, historian Jacqueline Jones (1982) documented the gruesome toil that was the hallmark of women's lives under slavery. Enslaved Africans were viewed as property of economic utility (Frazier, 1930) and in order to ensure profit, the economic benefactors of slavery perpetuated a system on the antebellum plantation whereby women and men were seen as equal workers. As such, enslaved African women were expected to shoulder burdensome workloads in the field, harvesting cotton as well as cooking, ironing, and washing (Jones, 1982). Except in the context of reproduction, slave owners had a tendency to disregard gender differences in establishing work assignments in the fields. Black males and females were equal workers and they were equal in the sense that neither sex held economic power over the other. In this coerced labor force, the sort of work enslaved Africans performed, as well as the amount and regularity of that work was determined by slave owners. Both sexes were forced to work

15

long hours and little distinction was made between sexes when punishment was meted out for confrontations or rebellion to work demands.

During slavery, both males and females were defined primarily as laborers while the roles of husband, wife, father, and mother were secondary (Landry, 2000). While it was illegal for slaves to enter into a marriage contract, it appears that there were often times when slaves were able to secure permission from their masters to marry, if only nominally. At times, slave owners gave permission for the slave to marry the person of his choice, but the chosen partner had to be in accordance with the wishes of the master (Frazier, 1930). Such permissions were not arbitrary, but were economically motivated with the aim of ensuring reproduction among the slaves. Moreover, in the absence of legal validation, slave marriages, signified by the couples "jumping over the broom", were defenseless against the threat and reality of forced separations by sale, gift, or bequest, all at the slave owner's will. Forced separations led to the instability of Black families under slavery. Herein we see the enormous influence of slave-masters in general on the integrity of the slave family. As a family researcher, I have often questioned the influence of these forced separations on the current trends in Black male-female relationships and, in particular, Black women's general self-reliance. While relationship patterns may emerge among Blacks during enslavement and in freedom, we can only speculate because of the inability to establish causal links through observations or archival data.

Little consideration was given to gender differences on the plantation fields, but in their own quarters, enslaved Blacks seemed to demonstrate gender distinctions in labor. For example, enslaved women assumed primary responsibility for childcare and

household maintenance. Denied access to the patriarchy in the larger economic and political sense, enslaved men often shared many of the family responsibilities because their roles as protector and provider, though desired, remained difficult to attain. Instead of a matriarchy, historians suggest that enslaved males and females approximated a healthy sexual equality (Frazier, 1930). Given the absence of the means by which Black men could achieve economic superiority over their wives, the enslaved family developed into an egalitarian family form.

According to Landry (2000), when the institution of slavery was abolished, Black men and women looked forward to the opportunity to control their own destiny and to be free to live as they desired. During the post-emancipation period, many Black wives and mothers refused to work in the fields throughout the South, choosing instead to remain at home. This shift clashed with the economic interests of Southern planters who stood to suffer from any redefinition in the work roles of the former slaves. As such, Black women, unlike White women were exempt from the ideals of full-time domesticity. Black women's reluctance to return to the plantation fields was soon overcome by a variety of pressures from southern legislatures such as punitive vagrancy laws (Landry, 2000). These Black women also faced the onslaught of criticism for being "out of the field doing nothing"; they were ridiculed for "playing the lady," and considered "idle" and "lazy" (Gutman, 1976, pp. 167-168). Therefore both during and after slavery, while the ideology of domesticity was promoted for White women, Black women were condemned for desiring a similar existence.

Moreover, poverty of most Black families made it necessary for wives to work, and so they did to a far greater degree than their White counterparts. As such, labor,

whether unpaid and coerced as under slavery or paid and necessary during the post-emancipation period, has been a distinctive characteristic of Black women's social roles (King, 1988). The wages of Black husbands were often not enough to meet the needs of the family, so Black women had to assume economically productive roles, as well as retain domestic ones. This was the case whether families remained in the South or migrated to the urban cities in the North. Under harsh economic conditions, Black women's participation in the paid labor force was a necessary strategy for the family's survival (Landry, 2000).

According to Wallace (1980), slavery ensured 100 percent labor force participation by Black women. Percentages of married women in the labor force between 1940 and 1994 show that Black wives remained roughly 10 years ahead of Whites in their employment patterns (Landry, 2000). During the 1980s, there was a convergence in labor force rates, which was purportedly due to an acceleration of the pace at which White middle-class wives entered the labor force, and to some extent, from a slight decline in the rate of increase in the participation of middle-class Black wives (Landry, 2000). The historically high rate of employment of Black working-class wives compared with their White counterparts did not necessarily indicate a preference for employment among Black women in the early 1900s; rather, they worked because the difficult circumstances they faced made it imperative.

The story of Black women is one that portrays them historically "as productive members of [their] household economy [, helping] to fulfill the economic…needs of their families" (Jones, 1985, p. 84). Not able to confer upon their wives the comforts of domesticity endorsed by the wider White society at the time, Landry (2000) notes that

Black husbands often expected and encouraged their wives to seek employment, even if temporarily, in order to contribute to the household economy. Unlike Whites, Blacks did not suffer any loss in status within their community when their wives worked.

The long history of Black women's labor force involvement due to discrimination in earnings for Black men instilled within Black women the tendencies of self-reliance and independence, which further promoted their egalitarian relations with Black men within the family and community (Davis, 1971, as cited by King, 1988). Though this would eventually be pathologized, the "attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships…were adaptations to…the harsh realities of their environment" (Dill, 1979, p. 547).

While in the early years after emancipation some Black women took the ideology of domesticity as their model and refused to work in the field, declaring that their husbands should support them just as White husbands supported their wives, this conventional orthodoxy of true womanhood sanctioned by the wider society did not take a firm hold within Black families and community (Landry, 2000). Instead of a traditional family arrangement where the primacy of the husband as sole breadwinner was endorsed, working- and middle-class Blacks were often a part of dual-worker and co-breadwinner families, which exemplified their egalitarian arrangements. Black women fashioned a competing ideology of womanhood—one that supported the needs of an oppressed Black community and their own desire for gender equality. Women's involvement outside the home, in career and community, was further encouraged by progressive Black middle-class women.

How is the story of Black women's roles in their families and their participation in the labor force during slavery and freedom relevant to the central issue of this paper? Many women have been raised to view marriage and motherhood as their ultimate careers, but the lived experiences of Black women cast a different picture. The historical differences between Black and White families and the differential gender role socialization have implications for how women experience the process of marital divorce or separation (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977), and by extension the kind of environment they provide for their children. Due to the historical lack of economic opportunities for Black men that constrained them from assuming the traditional role as sole or primary breadwinner in the family, Black women were more likely to be "working mothers" instead of "housewives". Moreover, unlike their White counterparts, Black women do not tend to marry in pursuit of a secure financial status because of the often precarious nature of Black men's employment (Myers, 1980). In the interest of survival, they were socialized to be independent and self-reliant.

Given this historical background, it is expected that the ways in which Black and White women define and experience the stress of marital disruption may be different. With traditional gender-role fluidity (Hill, 1972; Gutman, 1976) and a strong work orientation (Jones, 1982; Landry, 2000), Black women may be more likely than White women to assume the instrumental role of family head and breadwinner at the end of a marriage. Since Black women's participation in the work force and contribution to the household economy tended to increase their decision-making power in their marriages (Landry, 2000), this may suggest an easier transition to self-sufficiency after the dissolution of their marriages.

Religion and spirituality. In light of these divorce rates, how do Black women

and their families cope? Research has found that spirituality is a fundamental coping

strategy employed by Blacks, particularly Black women. Distinct from religion,

spirituality refers to a belief in the transcendent nature of life—the notion that one's

existence is more than what is beheld or experienced in the physical world (Mattis, 2005).

Religion, on the other hand, refers to one's adherence to the core beliefs and rituals

associated with worship of a divine figure (e.g., God; Mattis, 2000). Though recent work

in sociology and psychology suggest the need to distinguish between the two constructs,

qualitative research shows that there is a tendency for respondents to use religion and

spirituality interchangeably (e.g., Mattis, 2002).

While there are a myriad of strategies that Black women employ to cope with

life's challenges, the most prevailing finding is that religion and spirituality are key

resources in these women's coping repertoires (Mattis, 2002; Njoku, Jason, & Torres-

Harding, 2005; Taylor, Mattis, & Chatters, 1999). Mattis (2000) noted that Black women

appear to exhibit greater overt focus on spirituality and religiosity than their Black male

and White male and female counterparts. This finding is supported by earlier work

conducted by Jagers and Smith (1996) and Taylor and Chatters (1991) demonstrating that

African American women are more likely to embrace spirituality and be more religiously

affiliated. The centrality of spirituality as a coping strategy is seen with various struggles

and adversities that they face, including stress related to racism, sexism, and classism;

family responsibility; financial hardship; work-related stress; illness both physical and

mental; and psychological distress. Moreover, the utility of spirituality/religion in dealing

with life's challenges and stressful events is also a historical phenomenon as enslaved

Africans appropriated the identity of the enslaved Israelites of the Bible who were eventually freed and delivered by God from their oppressor.

In their study on the relationship among coping styles and fatigue in an ethnically diverse sample, Njoku, Jason, and Torres-Harding (2005) reported that Blacks used turning to religion as an adaptive coping style more often than Whites and Latinos. Previous studies with both healthy and ill samples have consistently found that Blacks use religious coping more than Whites (Yates, Taylor, Woodrome, Wade, Stancin, & Drotar, 2002). In general, researchers note the effects of spirituality on sustaining Blacks, especially Black women, throughout the centuries. As such it has served a protective function in the lives of broad segments of the Black population.

Given a long history of oppression and both overt and covert discrimination that Blacks have faced in various domains of their lives, it is plausible that they learned to turn toward more readily available supports in religion and spirituality. For Blacks, the ability to turn to religion/spirituality could explain the minimized effects of social inequality due to discrimination, stigmatization, poverty, and decreased opportunities for advancement (Njoku, Jason, & Torres-Harding, 2005). Spirituality/religion has proven instrumental in the lives of Black Americans in helping them to transcend ever-present obstacles. Of note, this is not to minimize the adversities that Blacks experience by virtue of their disadvantaged, minority status; rather, it points to a kind of meaning-making upon which Blacks rely, allowing them to (re)appraise dire situations and resist their effects.

In the case of marital disruption and parenting in single-mother households, religion and spirituality also offer women strategies to cope with the strain and hardships

that accompany divorce. Mothers who parent alone confront multiple role demands, financial hardships, and child-rearing issues. These stressors are often cited as antecedents of depression. In her study examining how African American women of different economic and marital status (i.e., previously married and never-married) cope with the stresses they face as household head, McAdoo (1995) explored the importance of religion in the lives of these women. Religiosity was a subjective assessment of how religious the women felt they were and the importance of spirituality in their lives. The indicators of religiosity/spirituality included religious denomination membership, church attendance, frequency of prayer, and what religion does for the woman as an individual. The single mothers were recruited from the Baltimore area. The average age was 30.24 years, ranging from 20-50 years and all were employed and had full custody of their children who were under the age of 19. Among the single mothers, the majority was previously married, owing the end of their marriage to divorce. The majority of the women were working-class (69%), with the remaining one-third (31%) classified as middle-class. The findings indicate that most of the women reported that they were fairly religious (75%), with the remaining group stating that they were either very religious (19%) or not at all religious (6%). The importance of religion for the women seemed to lie in the emotional support it provided them. Overall, the findings suggested that African American single mothers face tremendous stress but they depend mainly on religious coping strategies, particularly prayer, to help them endure adversity.

Similarly, Brodsky (2000) found that religion facilitates coping among single mothers by shaping the meaning they attributed to their situations and, in turn, how they responded to the stresses they confronted. This study used a qualitative approach to look

at ten African American single mothers between the ages of 26 and 46 who had been

single mothers from between 6 and 26 years and were raising their children in risky,

urban neighborhoods in Washington, DC. Half of the women were affiliated with a

church, while the other half were not. Whether or not they were church affiliated, many

of the women were able to identify the impact of internalized religion on their lives as

linking them to emotional support and providing them with a sense of hope for example.

In their review, Levin and Chatters (1998) reported that a substantial number of previous

studies show support for the "salutary" effects of religion on mental health. Taken

together, these findings suggest that religion/spirituality may be operating as a moderator

between distress and global well-being.

      Kinship support. Another distinguishing feature of African American families is

that traditionally they have been based on an extended family model (Hays & Mindel,

1973; Stack, 1974; Sudarkasa, 1997; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis, 1990). Previous

research by Hays and Mindel (1973) showed that extended families were more common

among Blacks than among Whites. The extended network generally consists of family

members co-residing or living within proximity of each other (R. J. Taylor, 1986). A core

function of the extended family is social support, which takes on multiple forms. R. J.

Taylor (1986) identifies some of these forms as "instrumental or material aid (e.g., food,

money, transportation), cognitive aid (e.g., advice, counseling), and emotional assistance

(e.g., visiting, companionship)" (p.67). The transfer of these resources and services is

often characterized by mutual exchange and occurs in the contexts of close, affective

bonds. Though the exchange is often associated with families in economic deprivation

(see Stack, 1974), McAdoo's (1978) research on a sample of urban Black women

suggests that close kin networks persist even among upwardly mobile Black families. Previous research has shown that Black single mothers were more likely to live with other adults in the home than other ethnic groups (Hofferth, 1984; Hogan, Hao, & Parish, 1990; Smock, 1997). Black single-mothers also live in closer proximity to family and kin networks that could possibly be resources of needed childcare to children along with income and support (Hogan et al., 1990).

Existing research suggests a link between extended family support networks and psychological well-being. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, I look at the kin network as a potential mental heath resource for Black women who undergo marital disruption. Research has shown that social support from the kin network serves as a buffer for women and mothers who undergo feelings of psychological distress due to accompanying strains of disruptions and sole parenting. R. D. Taylor and Roberts, in their study (1995) of kinship support and maternal well-being in economically disadvantaged female-headed African American families, found that increased kinship support to these mothers/guardians of adolescents resulted in their increased well-being. Well-being was assessed with the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale (CES-D). The measurement of kinship support examined the areas of socialization and entertainment ("We often get together with our relatives for reunions and holidays"), advice and counseling ("When I'm worried about something, I look to my relatives for advice"), and problem solving ("We can count on our relatives to help when we have problems"). Kinship support enhanced mothers' psychological adjustment, which then enabled them to perform adequately in their parental role.

Socialization – "Strong Black Woman" Phenomenon. Another adaptive factor

is the socialization of Black women. The "superwoman" stereotype associated with Black

women casts them as independent, self-sufficient, and strong. Deconstructing the mantra

of the "strong Black woman" (Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 2004; hooks, 1993;

Collins, 1990) is useful in understanding how Black women cope under stressful

situations such as marital dissolution. Thomas, Witherspoon, and Speight (2004), in their

discussion of stereotypic roles among Black women, portray a nuanced picture of how

they are envisioned by themselves and others. She and her colleagues report that African

American women are regarded almost as impregnable fortresses, unyielding and

unbending to life's hardships. This conception of strength and resilience gave rise to the

"Superwoman" or the "Strong Black Woman" phenomenon, which is often associated

with Black women's survival.

The development of this image has no short history, however. Reviewing the

many cultural images that were associated with African American womanhood in U.S.

culture, I came upon several stereotypic portrayals such as "Mammy", "Aunt Jemima",

"Sapphire", and "Jezebel". These images emerged before the 1980s and were very

common portrayals of African American women by the wider culture in the U.S. (Jewel,

1993). In her research on cultural images and symbols of African American women,

Jewel (1993) reported that Mammy's emotional make-up reflected the conventional

gender roles associated with masculinity. Emerging during slavery, Mammy was

portrayed by Whites as "fiercely independent, aggressive and powerful" mostly among

fellow Blacks (p. 42). Further descriptions of Mammy show that she was also considered

by Whites to be "non-threatening, nurturing, and possessing selfless devotion to others"

(Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 1993, p. 429). She was also expected to be long-suffering and always equipped to solve whatever problems arose. Internalization of these symbols of womanhood may lend some explanation to the image of strength that almost seems synonymous with Black womanhood. For African American women, qualities of strength, endurance and problem solving have been necessary to ensure their survival and that of their community in the face of persistent social and economic hardships (Jewel, 1993). Moreover, Black women have been exposed to mothers, grandmothers, and other women who have either been the sole providers for, or contributed to the survival of the family. The lessons, therefore, of independence and self-reliance have been reinforced (Dickson, 1993).

Marital Status and Maternal Mental Health

Despite its frequency and growing acceptance, many researchers agree that divorce is still a traumatic life change. Whether or not this is explicitly stated, many of the studies that focus on marital disruption/status and mental health draw on a traditional framework of family stress and the stress-distress process (Coyne & Downey, 1991; Kessler, Price, & Wortman, 1985). This approach views divorce as a primary stressor that makes women susceptible to an array of (secondary) stressful life events. Research based on this general conceptualization of the relation between marital disruption and mental health consistently finds that women who have experienced or are experiencing separation or divorce have poorer mental health outcomes than women who are married (e.g., Aseltine & Kessler, 1993; Barrett, 2000; Hope, Rodger, & Power, 1999; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; Wade & Cairney, 2000; Wade & Pevalin, 2004).

Although cross-sectional, one of the few studies that give substantive attention to the association between marital status and depression among Blacks was conducted by Williams, Takeuchi, and Adair (1992). In addition, this study measured clinical psychiatric illness (i.e., major depression) instead of depressive symptoms. They used the first wave of interviews of community residents in the Epidemiologic Catchment Area (ECA) study. The ECA used the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS), a structured interview administered by lay interviewers, to measure psychiatric disorders. The DIS assessed recent episode (within six months of interview) of five psychiatric disorders including major depression. Respondents were divided into four groups based on their current marital status: married, widowed, separated/divorced, and never married. Other variables assessed included: age, household size, and composite SES. The results showed that married Black women were less likely to be diagnosed as having a psychiatric disorder than their unmarried peers. White women were more likely to be married than Black women, but similar to Black women, White women who were married showed lower rates of psychiatric illness than their unmarried counterparts. Some racial variation did emerge, however, in the rates of disorder among the unmarried groups. The findings show that the rates of disorder for separated/divorced White women were consistently higher than that of Black women.

Keith's (1997) review of the literature on psychological well-being among married and unmarried Blacks indicated that married Blacks showed higher levels of well-being than their counterparts who were unmarried. Keith reported that separated/divorced Blacks tended to experience greater unhappiness and psychological difficulties. Keith, in her cross-sectional study using data from the National Survey of

Black Americans (NSBA), found that compared to married Blacks, separated/divorced Blacks were more likely to be female, and this marital group experienced a greater amount of stress, unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life than married Blacks. Additionally, the author found that for each marital group (i.e., married, separated/divorced, widowed, and never married), availability of resources (e.g., social support) moderated the relationship between life stressors and psychological well-being. This study is the only one to use a national Black sample to investigate the relation between marital status and psychological well-being.

McKelvey and McKenry (2000) suggested that Black mothers have an advantage over White mothers in the divorce adjustment process. In their study of divorced or separated mothers (235 Black, 662 White) from the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Black mothers had higher levels of personal mastery and economic well-being and received greater formal support after their divorce, net of SES (as assessed by the family occupation index) and time since divorce. These mothers were not remarried and reported having at least one or more biological or adopted children, 18 or younger, living in the household. This sample of women ranged in age from 19 to 59 years, with a mean age of 35.27 years. With education ranging from 4 to 20 years, Black mothers had significantly less education than White mothers (12.3 vs. 12.6 yrs). A greater percentage of Black mothers were separated as compared to White mothers, and many had been divorced/separated significantly longer than White mothers (7yrs vs. 5yrs). Black mothers had significantly more children living in the household and had significantly lower total incomes than White mothers (11,987 vs. 15,296). Unlike previous studies, this study assessed religious orientation and found that Black mothers

attended church significantly more often than did White mothers. Using the CES-D, McKelvey and McKenry did not find a significant difference in depressive symptoms between Black mothers and White mothers. However, they found that economic well-being was related to more outcomes for White mothers than for Black mothers. Lastly, Blacks had fewer significant factors (i.e., self-esteem, overall happiness) related to depression when compared to Whites (i.e., self-esteem, personal mastery, overall happiness, economic wellbeing, parental satisfaction, parental distress, conflict with former spouse). These differences suggest cultural variation in the mothers' adjustment to marital disruption.

McKelvey and McKenry suggested that Black mothers' greater resilience (e.g., higher mastery after disruption) and independence could arise from normative expectations for marital disruption. Given the prevalence of single-mother families, Black women may have developed ways of adapting to accompanying stressors. Moreover, long-standing traditions involving egalitarian arrangements with their husbands and participation in the labor force may allow Black women to undergo a better transition to becoming household head and to assume greater economic responsibility for their families when disruptions occur. This study is insightful in that it provides a cultural basis for understanding of how mothers fare. Consistent with my theoretical approach in emphasizing the utility of culture in understanding responses to divorce, religion, kin support, labor force participation, and gender conventions within Black families are all factors that may explain the resilience of Black families, and by extension their children.

Conclusion

The focus on within-group variation among children of divorce/separation extends the little that we know about the experiences and consequences of parental divorce/separation for non-White children, specifically Black children. There are several intuitive reasons to believe that marital disruption will be different for Blacks and Whites. Some of these reasons were presented in the foregoing discussion. They included the high rate of marital disruption and low marriage rates among Blacks, precarious employment experiences of Black men that often deny them the opportunity to be major financial contributors to the household economy, and resources such as religiosity and extended family that may be differentially distributed and used across the two groups. As such this dissertation examines the effect of marital disruption and the factors that moderate divorce/separation effects in children's adjustment within a sample of Black families. Understanding of individual variation in adjustment to divorce/separation will enhance our ability to implement intervention programs for families and children who experience maladjustment associated with marital transitions. The next chapter will discuss findings from the social science literature on the effects of marital disruption on children.

CHAPTER II

Children's Adjustment to Marital Disruption: Review of the Social Science

Introduction

The sharp rise in the divorce rate during the 1960s and 1970s prompted social scientists to investigate how different family structures affect children's adjustment. Although the rates of divorce for the general population have decreased in recent decades, the rate has stabilized at a high level with 1 in 2 of all first marriages likely to dissolve (Bumpass, 2004; Cherlin, 1999; Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Raley & Bumpass, 2003; Schoen & Standish, 2001). This projection has sustained the ongoing interest in the consequences of this family transition as is evidenced by current research. Based on recent statistics, 1 in 5 of all children under the age of 18 has experienced some form of marital disruption in the form of divorce, separation or widowhood (Census, 2004a). Divorce (8%) is second to non-marital birth status (10%) in explaining why so many children under age 18 are being raised in single-mother households (Census, 2004a): of all the children living in single-mother households, 34 percent result from parental divorce (Census, 2004b).

Early studies supported the popular view that children who experience parental divorce are prone to a variety of academic, behavioral, and emotional problems. This conclusion has been based on studies looking at mean differences across family structures (single-parent vs. two-parent), predominantly among White samples. Despite these early

findings however, studies have challenged the dominant view that divorce is uniformly bad for children. For example, Hetherington (1979) in her study of preschool children found that children with divorced parents exhibited more behavioral and emotional maladjustment than did their counterparts with continuously married parents only during the first year assessment following the divorce. Two years after the divorce, a few difficulties lingered for boys, but as a group, the children with divorced parents on average no longer exhibited an elevated number of problems. This is an early study that attempted to demonstrate the potential variability in children's response to their parents' marital disruption. Certainly, time since divorce is a factor of variability but so are many other factors.

While the predominant view from the plethora of studies that have been conducted is that children who experience their parents' divorce/separation are at risk for maladjustment in a variety of domains, Amato (2005) aptly asserts that trying to make sense of this research literature can be difficult in large part because of the many different findings that emerge from individual studies. For instance, some of these studies suggest serious negative effects of divorce, whereby others suggest modest effects, and still others suggest no effects. In surveying this body of research, much of the inconsistency can be attributed to the variation in types of samples, the developmental stage of the children, the outcomes assessed, and the methods of analysis used.

In this chapter, I present an overview of the social science research on marital disruption and children's adjustment. The discussion will present findings on different outcomes that have been examined, followed by theoretical explanations that have guided this research in the social science literature and oft-cited child characteristics that have

been found to modify the association between parental marital disruption and children's adjustment. Finally, I argue for the need to recognize variability in children's response to their parent's marital disruption, as well as the need to identify the sources of this variability. Moreover, because of demographic changes and cultural differences, there is a need for greater research that focuses on the unique family experiences of all major racial and ethnic groups. Such studies on the consequences of parental divorce or separation are still rare. Of particular interest to this dissertation, are Black families and their children—how children adjust to their parents' marital disruption and what factors may moderate the link between parents' marital disruption and children's adjustment.

Children's Behavioral Adjustment

Studies consistently report that parental marital disruption negatively affects both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors of children and adolescents (e.g., Amato, 2000, 2001; Simons, Lin, Gordon, Conger & Lorenz, 1999). Comprehensive reviews have reported that effects though significant, tend to be modest. Compared to their peers who grew up in continuously married, intact families, children from divorced/separated parents are more likely to exhibit more delinquent and aggressive behavior (e.g., Emery et al., 1999), to have higher risk of for substance use (e.g., Flewelling & Bauman, 1990; Jeynes, 2001), and early sexual intercourse (e.g., Flewelling & Bauman, 1990).

Using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care, Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, and Booth (2000) explored the effects of marital separation on children in the first three years of life. They found that child in two-parent families performed better than children in one-parent

families on assessments of a variety of adjustment indicators, including problem behavior. However, once controls for mothers' education and family income were included, the differences were reduced and associations with marital status (separated/divorced vs. intact) were rendered non-significant. Arguably, any differences among children so young can be attributed to the nature of the parenting, and not necessarily the divorce itself.

Past research suggests that there may be gender differences in the type of conduct behavior that are exhibited in association with divorce. For instance, Simons, Lin, Gordon, Conger, and Lorenz (1999) examined the adolescent problems in households that experienced parental divorce and found that parental divorce is significantly associated with externalizing and internalizing behaviors, with externalizing behavior significant for girls only. One of the strengths of this study is its focus on two dimensions for child adjustment—externalizing and internalizing. The most prominent limitations as reported by the authors, however, are the composition of the sample and the cross-sectional nature of the data. All of the families in their sample were White and lived in relatively small communities. Moreover, as a consequence of the cross-sectional design, there was no information on children's adjustment prior to their parents' marital disruption.

In a study of predominantly Black urban middle-school youth (6th graders), Griffin, Botvin, Scheier, Diaz, and Miller (2000) found that children from single-parent families engaged in greater problem behavior (i.e., substance use, delinquency and aggression) than their peers living in two-parent households. There are some notable limitations of this study. First, it is cross-sectional and as such causality cannot be

inferred. Second, it uses the term single-parent family very liberally to include any non-intact family structure. Also, there is no indication of the reason for the parents' singlehood, whether never-married or divorced/separated.

Using panel data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS), Sun and Li (2007) examined the response to parents' marital disruption among European, Asian, African, and Hispanic American adolescents across a variety of well-being indicators. In general, Sun and Li found that marital disruption adversely influences the well-being of adolescents. In particular, during the post-disruption period, disruption effects are clearly observable in behavior problems (getting into trouble for not following rules, fighting with others, disruptive), either self-reported or teacher-reported, among all the racial groups except Hispanic adolescents. This is true even after controlling for prior levels of the outcome variables; however, there was no report of the size of the effect of marital disruption. The study also demonstrates that the post-disruption effects on adolescent well-being are either largely or partially attributable to pre-disruption factors including parent-child discussions, parental monitoring, annual household income, and parental educational attainment.

Children's Academic Performance

Previous researchers conducting comparative studies of the effects of different family structures and marital statuses suggest that some youth from intact households outperform their counterparts from single-parent households in academic achievement (Jeynes, 2000; Sandefur & Wells, 1999; Mulkey, Crain, & Harrington, 1992; Zimiles & Lee, 1991). Many of these studies have investigated academic achievement across various family structures by using grade point average (GPA), number of years in school,

36

standardized test scores, and high school attrition rates as indicators. Zimiles and Lee (1991) examined the association of adolescent family structure with educational progress and found that youth from intact families, with both biological parents, obtained higher grade point averages than youth raised in single-parent families. Although, the difference in GPA associated with family structure is reduced when socio-economic status (SES) is accounted for, the difference remains statistically significant. Mulkey, Crain and Harrington (1992) also estimated that living in a single-parent family lowers one's grades about a tenth of a grade point when family background is controlled (e.g., race/ethnicity, parent education). These are mean level differences, however, that reflect probablistic differences. Noteworthy however is that this analysis shows that the effect of single-parent upbringing is small relative to the effect of the student's own behavior (e.g., lateness, not doing homework, frequent dating). The authors noted that the negative impact of being in a single-parent home on students' grades is weak relative to the effects found by other researchers on high school attrition rates. It is important to note that in each of these studies there are children in single parent households who do much better than the average of the children in two parent intact households.

Moreover, research suggests that individuals reared in single parent households are also at greater risk of not graduating from high school (Painter & Levine, 2000; Zimiles & Lee, 1991). For example, Zimiles and Lee (1991) found that children from single-parent families were more than two times as likely to drop out of school as their counterparts from intact families (7% vs. 17%). This pattern persisted after accounting for variation in SES. Painter and Levine (2000), using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), provided further support for a causal link between divorce

during high school and youth academic disadvantage. Without controls included, divorce predicted five percentage points higher rates of attrition. When controls (i.e., 8th grade characteristics of the family and child) are included, the predicted effects of divorce on high school attrition were lowered to approximately four percentage points. A comparison of these two models (with vs. without controls) suggest that the pre-existing characteristics of the children and their family do reduce the gap in attrition but does not eliminate it entirely. This suggests that the remaining variance may be explained by the divorce itself or by omitted factors. Painter and Levine reported that the difference between the two estimates (with vs. without controls) was not statistically significant. Similarly, Wojtkiewicz (1993), using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), examined the association of family structure transitions on high school graduation, controlling for birth cohort, sex, race/ethnicity, number of siblings, and parental education. He found that the chances of graduating from high school were 33% lower among those who experienced a transition from mother-father to mother-only households, than among those who experienced no such change. A limitation of this study is that it did not examine factors associated with marital disruption that may further explain the finding. One of these factors is income, which was not controlled. Moreover, there is no control for academic achievement prior to the marital transition; so although this study discusses how different marital statuses or family arrangements may lead to reduced chances of high school graduation, the effect of the marital transition cannot be ascertained.

Sandefur and Wells (1999) found that living in a single-parent family or any other type of family arrangement other than a two-parent family predicted as much as one year

less total completed schooling after controlling for common family influences. While the proposed "effect" of family structure persisted after the introduction of controls, the authors noted that their study revealed only a modest effect. When compared with the whole array of family background variables, the disadvantage linked with family structure seemed relatively small. Sandefur and Wells adequately acknowledge the need to address other influences, such as family characteristics, but also noted the independent role of family structure; a role that they suggest should not be overlooked.   In their study on family structure, parental practices, and school failure, Astone and McLanahan (1991) estimated a set of change models to measure the effect of change in family structure (i.e., mother-father to mother-only household) on a change in parent and child behaviors over a two-year period between sophomore (1980) and senior year (1982). They found that marital disruption was accompanied by increases in truancy and more negative attitudes toward school even after controlling for race, socioeconomic status, sex, test scores, number of siblings and school drop-out rate.

Finally, Sun and Li (2007) in their study of disruption effects in a national sample of high school students examined five indicators in the area of academic success and aspiration. These indicators included students' math and reading test scores, a measure of education aspiration, a composite score of academic readiness, and teacher's report of homework completion. Even after controlling for baseline measures of these indicators, Asian American adolescents were adversely affected on three of the five academic indicators (i.e., math test, education aspiration, and completion of homework). European Americans fared poorly on slightly different academic indicators—math test, reading test and completion of homework. African American adolescents exhibited an adverse effect

of their parents' marital disruption on one academic indicator—completion of homework. After controlling for pre-disruption resources, African American adolescents still performed poorly on homework completion and the disruption effects among Asian Americans were now limited to education aspiration. European Americans on the other hands, still exhibited poor outcomes on three of the five indicators—math test, reading test and homework completion. Similar to these findings, Smith (1997) reported a weaker negative association between parents' marital disruption and children's school grades for African Americans than for European Americans. The author does not, however, report whether the magnitudes of the significant differences in the African American sample is significantly different from that of the European American sample. Along with earlier research, this study suggests that parents' marital disruption may impose a greater negative effect on European American children than children of other racial/ethnic groups.

Children's Emotional and Psychological Adjustment

Previous studies report that parental divorce in childhood is associated with eventual depression (Lauer & Lauer, 1991). Approximately 20-25 percent of children of divorce exhibit serious mental health or life adjustment problem (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). According to Zill, Morrison, & Coiro (1993), 41 percent of children of divorce report receiving mental health services between ages 18 and 22 compared with 22 percent of their peers from two-parent families. Additionally, a single depressive episode in childhood is likely to recur later, causing serious problems that persist into adulthood (Lauer & Lauer, 1991; Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995).

Doherty and Needle (1991) examined psychological adjustment in a sample of adolescents who were followed prospectively before and after the marital disruption of their parents. The families in this longitudinal study were selected at random from enrollees in a large health maintenance organization (HMO) in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Most of the families were first-married/never divorced couples at baseline, and they were primarily white and middle to upper-class. Results indicate that there were significant main effects for parent marital disruption on a variety of child psychological well-being indicators. Specifically, adolescents from disrupted families (mean age: 14 years) reported poorer psychological well-being (e.g., feelings of sadness, hopelessness, stress, anxiety, depression), lower self-esteem, and lower sense of mastery at both Time 1 and Time 2. Data were available at an average of 12 months before the separation/divorce and 5 months thereafter. Girls showed negative adjustment prior to the separation and did not appear to decline further after the divorce. As such, marital disruption did not engender more maladjustment for girls than they had already reported. Boys on the other hand, showed more negative adjustment after the divorce. Since the only post-disruption observation takes place at 5 months after the divorce, the results discussed here reflect immediate or short-term effects; it is not know how long the maladjustment persisted.

Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to examine the association between marital disruption and psychological well-being among a sample of children aged 6-14, Jekielek (1998) found that parental divorce/separation is significantly related to children's anxiety and depression. This significant effect remains even after child and family background variables (e.g., race, family income, mother's education) are considered. According to the authors, the "effect" of the disruption on children's well-

being was larger for children whose families were divorced in the past two years which constitutes the "crisis period". Children whose parents had been divorced for two years or more showed higher scores for psychological well-being. These results suggest that while there is an association between parental disruption and children's emotional well-being, it varies somewhat by time since marital disruption. The author's use of the word "effect" to describe the association between marital disruption and children's emotional well-being should be interpreted with caution however. One methodological flaw is that the analyses do not take into account the impact of the child's emotional well-being at baseline on the relationship between marital disruption and well-being. In the absence of this measure in the dataset for all the children at baseline, the strength of the author's results is rendered uninterpretable. She is unable to establish causality between parent marital disruption and children's emotional well-being.

Critique of Studies

The studies highlighted above provide some sense of the terrain of the research conducted on marital disruption. Notwithstanding their contribution to the field of family research on this topic, there are two notable limitations that I want to address. First, many of the studies are cross-sectional in their design, which prevents causal links from being drawn. Related to this issue is the absence of relevant control variables that include children's adjustment levels prior to their parents' divorce/separation. Our ability to interpret findings is further compounded when there is a misappropriation of causal language such as "effect" or "impact" in cross-sectional studies. Additionally, many studies fail to report effect sizes. Effect sizes in studies help to provide a benchmark for subsequent evaluation by other researchers of the magnitude of effects associated with

marital disruption. Despite the general neglect in reporting effect sizes, Amato (2001) and other researchers have noted the fairly modest/small effect of marital disruption.

Theoretical framework

In an attempt to account for the association between marital status and children's adjustment, various explanations have been proposed. These explanations emphasize factors such as family income, the psychological adjustment and quality of parenting of the custodial parent, level of parental conflict and parent-child relationships. Below I discuss evidence to support each of these mechanisms.

Family Income. Researchers have documented the profound implications of marital disruption for financial stability of women and children (Bartfeld, 2000; Hoffman & Duncan, 1988; Holden & Smock, 1991; Smock, Gupta, & Manning, 1999). According to estimates from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), mothers and children experience median losses of 35-45% of needs-adjusted income during the first year following separation (Bartfeld, 1997). Noteworthy is the discrepancies between the economic outcomes experienced by women and men who divorce. Bartfeld reported that 31% of mothers were poor one year following divorce/separation compared to only 9% of fathers. Similar findings from Bianchi, Subaiya, and Kahn (1999) indicate that wives who retain custody of children after separation have income levels 56% of those of their former husbands. In other words, women and children generally experience large declines in their standard of living after divorce, whereas men experience gains (Bianchi, Subaiya, & Kahn, 1999; Smock, 1993, 1994). This disproportionate economic hardship faced by divorced women relative to divorced men can be explained by gender inequality in earnings and the fact that upon divorce many women have physical custody of their

children. Custodial mothers often face the financial responsibility of childrearing (Bartfeld, 2000; Furstenberg, 1990). While the most common scenario is a decline in the economic resources available to custodial mothers, Bianchi and colleagues found that economically independent wives, those who were employed full-time and were major contributors to the household economy before marital disruption, demonstrate more equitable post-disruption financial arrangements.

In their meta-analysis of studies dealing with long-term consequences of parental divorce, Amato and Keith (1991) identified economic deprivation as one of the perspectives that researchers have used to understand differences in child adjustment related to family structure. Transitioning to a single-parent household typically involves a concomitant economic decline that is believed to have a negative impact on children and parents (Acock & Kiecolt, 1989; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994). For example, Jeynes (2000), using a nationally representative sample of eighth-grade students, found that the effect for family structure was reduced considerably once socio-economic status (SES) was controlled in the statistical models. Such findings lead researchers to question whether changes in economic resources indicated by socioeconomic status may be one major mechanism by which marital disruption influences children's adjustment (McLanahan, 1985).

There is an increased likelihood for children from divorced families to live in poverty (U.S. Census, 2006). According to recent statistics, more than 50% of Black children with a mother who was divorced/separated lived below the poverty line (U.S. Census, 2006). Alimony and child support are potentially important mechanisms for redressing the imbalances created by divorce (Furstenberg, 1990). Randolph (1995)

reports that over half of all single-parent African American families live in poverty. In addition, it is less likely that these single mothers will be awarded child support or actually receive child support and alimony in cases of divorce. More than 90% of Black children who live with a mother who has experienced divorce/separation will not receive child support (U.S. Census, 2006). Smith (1997) found that, whereas White children might be affected by stress from interpersonal conflicts, Black children appeared to be affected mainly by economic difficulty associated with disrupted families. Similarly, Sun and Li (2007) found that Black children are affected more by a shortage of financial/human resources (i.e., annual household income, parental education attainment) while Asian American children are more affected by a shortage of family social resources (i.e., parent-child discussion, parental monitoring).

      Psychological Adjustment. Researchers posit that the higher incidence of psychological problems among divorced, custodial parents compared with continuously married parents explains family structure differences in child adjustment. In most cases, mothers serve as custodial parents after divorce/separation. Lorenz, Simons, Conger, Elder, Johnson, and Chao (1997) examined the relation between divorce and psychological distress among a sample of women. Data were obtained from two studies—the Iowa Youth and Families Project (IYFP), which consisted of married mothers, and the Iowa Single Parent Project (ISPP), which consisted of divorced mothers and their adolescent children. For both these groups, this was either their first marriage or their first divorce. Both samples were also from essentially rural settings with similar socio-economic characteristics. Previous research using these samples indicates that the samples are predominantly White. Results show that the mean depressive symptoms

scores for married mothers declined slightly between study observations, whereas divorced mothers started at a dramatically and significantly higher score at Time 1 and then declined. The pattern reveals that individuals score high on depressive symptoms soon after divorce, but the score decreases over time. Compared to the married mothers, recently divorced mothers reported significantly higher levels of stressful life events and depressive symptoms, especially within the first years of the divorce.

Several studies have shown that parental depression has a disruptive effect on quality of parenting, which increases the likelihood of conduct problems among children (Simons, Lorenz, Wu, & Conger, 1993). In other words, "it is the parents' response to stress, rather than the stress itself, that is most salient for children's adjustment" (Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998, p. 174). Changes in parents' mental health and coping behavior due to the change in family structure presents a challenge to children's adjustment when these changes lead to less competent parenting practices. As noted above, marital breakup is often accompanied by other negative life events and economic strain, and these stressors account for the finding that divorced individuals are more depressed than those who are married. Simons et al. (1996) provide further support for this finding. They found that parental depression and ineffective parenting practices explained a significant proportion of the association between divorce and both adolescent internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors.

Research on African Americans suggests that their adjustment following divorce might be different from that of Whites. Particularly, Menaghan and Lieberman (1986) and Gove and Shin (1989), using probability samples, found that African American females had less depression and fewer adjustment difficulties than did divorced White

females. One explanation for why African Americans might experience the deviation from the normative triadic family model differently is because they have been exposed to single parenthood at higher rates over the recent decades or because their family configurations are generally marked by fluidity (Hunter & Ensminger, 1992). Given the magnitude and persistence of the exposure, it is likely that African Americans have developed strengths to adapt to these situations and will adjust better after divorce than people from other groups (Newman, 1999; McKenry & Fine, 1993). Another explanation is that the reliance on strong familial and extra-familial networks may have contributed to the resilience among African Americans experiencing marital disruptions (Hill, 1971). A more detailed discussion of these adaptive approaches available to Black mothers is covered in a separate chapter.

Parental Conflict. Family researchers have often hypothesized that parental conflict, rather than the actual marital disruption per se, explain the high prevalence of adjustment problems among children from divorced parents (see Amato & Keith, 1993a). Although sometimes described in the literature as a single event, marital disruption may be better conceptualized as a process that manifests before parents physically separate. According to Sun (2001), marital disruption is a "progressive, multistage process during which children may be influenced in different phases" (p.711). This process is often one of relationship decline and family dysfunction between parents that eventually culminates in separation or divorce. For many families, the relationship between parents is intensely conflictual. There are a number of studies that suggest that parental conflict is a strong predictor of harmful effects for children. As such, children will show few developmental

problems after divorce to the extent that their parents are able to establish a relatively congenial relationship with each other after divorce.

According to the stress-relief hypothesis, a stressful life event, such as parental divorce, may actually have beneficial effects on children when divorce represents escape from a noxious environment (Wheaton, 1990). In other words, if children live in families in which parents are openly hostile or abusive, parental divorce may be experienced as stress relief, leading to a post-divorce improvement in child adjustment. Research has shown that children appear to be better off in the long run if a marriage that was characterized by overt, intense conflict eventually ends (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Morrison & Coiro, 1999).

Parent-Child Relationship. The loss of favorable co-residential relationship may be particularly consequential for children. On the contrary, children who have troubled relations with a parent may benefit from residential separation if conflict between the parent and child is lessened. If parents are not supportive, or are even abusive to their children, then living apart could provide an escape from a stressful environment and improve children's well-being. According to Videon (2002), parent-child relationships prior to family- or marital-transition can essentially be characterized as resources and stressors that allow researchers to explore what children have to lose or gain when their parents separate. Such a conception lends an understanding to the variability that exists among children who experience their parents' marital disruption. In her study with a sample of adolescents from National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Videon showed that adolescents display great variation in their response to parental separation. Particularly, she found that quality of parent-child relationship prior to parental

48

separation was important for understanding their adjustment to that parent's absence. When adolescents were residentially separated from an unsatisfying same-sex relationship (i.e., daughter from mother, in the case of a single-father family, or son from father in the case of a single-mother family), their level of delinquent behavior is lower than adolescents who continued to reside with a same-sex parent with whom they had a poor relationship. Being residentially separated from a same-sex parent with whom you had poor relationship seems beneficial whereas the loss of a post co-residential relationship with a same-sex parent seems to function as a stressor by restricting children's access and proximity to parental contact, nurturance, and other parental resources. These findings contribute to our understanding of children's experience of their parents' marital disruption by specifying how parent-child relationships modify the effects of this family transition.

Variability in Children's Adjustment

Although there seems to be considerable consensus in the extant research literature that children in martially disrupted families, on average, show more problems than those in non-disrupted families, the vast majority do not exhibit severe or enduring behavior problems (Amato, 1993; Furstenberg & Seltzer, 1986). According to Amato (2000), divorce benefits some individuals, leads others to experience temporary declines in well-being that eventually improve over time, and forces others on a downward cycle from which they might never fully recover. This vulnerability of some and the resiliency of others when confronted with the changes and accompanying sequalae of marital disruption have led researchers to investigate the influence of children's own

characteristics on coping with their parents' marital disruption. Child characteristics such as gender and age have been most frequently studied.

Child Characteristics

Sex/Gender Differences. Past research suggests that boys display more adverse adjustment to parental divorce than do girls (Morrison & Cherlin, 1995; Seltzer, 1994). In their review, Amato and Keith (1991b) found that both male and female adolescents of divorced families show higher rates of conduct disorders and depression compared to adolescents from intact families. Still, girls and boys have been found to be differentially influenced in different domains of adjustment, rending the global finding inconclusive. Many researchers attribute this difference to methodological issues, such as the type of outcome under investigation. Moreover, extant research indicates that boys and girls manifest distress in different ways (Davies & Lindsay, 2004). According to Davies and Lindsay (2004), girls respond to stress by exhibiting internalizing behaviors (i.e., depression, anxiety), whereas boys exhibit increases in externalizing behaviors (i.e., delinquent behavior, aggression). These findings suggest that boys and girls may be similarly troubled by family difficulties, but they express their distress in dissimilar ways.

In their review of sex differences in children's response to stress across eight different contexts, Zaslow and Hayes (1986) offered three hypotheses to explain boys' greater tendency to exhibit non-compliant behavior. First, there may be physiological factors such as differences in physical vulnerability and maturity that account for greater difficulties among boys, or boys may be more biologically predisposed toward manifesting aggressive responses. Second, differences in socialization may account for greater antisocial responses among boys. For example, parents and teachers are more

tolerant of displays of emotion in girls than in boys, and the loss of a male role model associated with divorce may be more likely to expose boys than girls to stress in contexts of family difficulties. Furthermore, Zaslow and Hayes suggested that available measures may not be equally sensitive to the psychological manifestations of stress in the two sexes; it may be easier to detect externalizing than internalizing disorders. As such, the apparent gender differences are more an artifact of study designs that focus on certain gender biased behaviors such as aggression or depression, which may be more relevant for one gender as opposed to another. According to Jekielek (1998), internalizing behaviors are those associated with projection of problems onto oneself, such as anxiety, social withdrawal, and feelings of isolation, loneliness and depression. Externalizing behaviors are behaviors related to misconduct that are troubling to others, such as aggression against others and anti-social behaviors. These two types of behaviors are not mutually exclusive.

Researchers have offered other reasons for gender differences in children's adjustment to divorce. Another explanation is Bandura's social learning theory, which posits that people learn from each other through observation, imitation and modeling (Bandura, 1977; Grusec, 1992). Proponents of this theory argue that since the majority of children traditionally live with their mothers following marital disruption, the absence of a same-sex role model (i.e., fathers) accounts for boys' more negative outcomes in response to parental divorce/separation (Camara & Resnick, 1988). Without the same-sex parent to imitate or model, it is postulated that boys respond to the absence in more negative ways. Another interpretation of social learning theory is that children exhibit mother internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Videon, 2002). These mixed findings

underscore the importance of utilizing multiple indicators of children's well-being which is why the present study examines both internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Developmental Stages/Age Differences. Some researchers propose that marital disruption (i.e., divorce) has more adverse effects when it occurs during early childhood than during adolescence (see Hetherington et al., 1998). However, although the preschool years, for example, are described as a time of "egocentric reasoning" in which children are likely to think of divorce as a result of their own wrongdoing (Longfellow, 1979), the accumulated evidence regarding the particular vulnerability of young children is inconclusive. Some researchers have found that the effects of marital disruption are larger for children who are very young at the time of the separation (Allsion & Furstenberg, 1989); others have found no age effect (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999), or effects in the opposite direction (Acock & Demo, 1994).

Despite these findings, researchers posit that it may be more accurate to say that the effects of divorce vary qualitatively according to children's developmental stage. Adolescents may be better able to insulate themselves from divorce through peer relationships. Moreover, due to adolescents' greater cognitive development, they may be more proficient in appraising the cause of their parents' divorce, and are better able therefore to separate themselves from blame than are younger children (Hetherington et al., 1998).

Sources of Variability

Children's adjustment to marital disruption has been the subject of a large number of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies with findings to suggest that parental separation/divorce is associated with increased maladjustment (Amato, 2001; Amato &

Keith, 1991b; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). In the foregoing discussion, I presented several widely cited mechanisms in the social science literature that have offered as explanations for the association between marital disruption and children's well-being.

Just as important as the evidence of mean differences however, is the marked variation present among children whose parents divorce/separate. Investigating why some children show marked problems whereas others do not enhances our understanding of how children function in their varied contexts. This issue of variability among children has received little attention. Moreover, with existing evidence to suggest that there is marked variability in children's response to parental marital disruption, few studies identify the sources of their variation. Despite the few studies suggesting that Black children may respond to parental separation differently from Whites, no study to my knowledge has examined potential sources of variability not merely between the two groups, but more so within this minority group. In this dissertation study, I examine the factors that may modify Black children's adjustment to parental marital disruption.

To assess why some children exhibit a marked increased in behavioral /emotional problems following parental marital disruption while others do not, this study focuses on the moderators of children's adjustment. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), "…a moderator is a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent variable or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable" (p. 1174). Furthermore, Kraemer, Wilson, Fairburn, and Agras' (2002) definition as applied to a controlled treatment trial, suggests that a moderator is a variable that predates the treatment and interacts with treatment in predicting outcome. Certainly, there are design differences between treatment trial investigations and the current non-

experimental study of children exposure to parental marital disruption, for example, random selection. Nonetheless, I adopt this conceptualization of a moderator as a factor that predates parental marital disruption and interacts with marital disruption in predicting children's behavioral/emotional adjustment. With this conceptualization, I highlight factors that may describe the quality of life prior to parents' actual divorce/separation and examine how they explain variation in children's response. In the next chapter, I outline the present study in greater detail and present several factors that may moderate the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment.

CHAPTER III

The Present Study

Introduction

The substantial increase in divorce rates during the latter half of the 20th century has spurred much political and empirical attention as to the possible consequences of marital disruption for children (Amato, 2001). Recent trends from the Current Population Survey (CPS) data illustrate disparate racial profiles in rates of marital disruption, which may suggest differential outcomes for children and families. These data indicate that although there has been a leveling of the rate of marital disruption for White women since 1980, there is less evidence of stabilization among Black women (Sweeney & Phillips, 2004). Not only are Black women's divorce and separation rates higher than those of White women overall, but the rates began to rise beginning in the mid-1980s. Because of Black women's relatively lower propensity to legally divorce after separation (Sweeney & Phillips, 2004), these statistics rely on separation rates as a more appropriate measure of marital disruption. These findings suggest that the well-documented leveling in trends of marital disruption may not have been experienced equally across subpopulations.

A major catalyst behind the proliferation of research on marital dissolution has been its association with children's adjustment. The general notion that pervades this

research is that children of divorce are at risk for poorer outcomes across an array of academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional outcomes compared to their peers in intact homes (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Rogers & Pryor, 1998). These findings of mean differences for these two groups of children have served myriad purposes—empirical, clinical, and most notably political. For instance, one of the primary goals of the 1996 federal reform (the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act or PRWORA) was to influence family structure by encouraging marriage and the maintenance of two-parent families (Lichter, 2001; Schoeni & Blank, 2000; Parke & Ooms, 2002). The law, for the first time, emphasized marriage promotion (Bloom, 2001). Supporters of the pro-marriage agenda argue that such legal unions confer a variety of economic benefits and, as such, are useful in the fight against poverty. Previous research provides findings that corroborate this notion of economic enhancement through marriage (Bianchi & McArthur, 1991; Folk, Graham, & Beller, 1992; Besharov & Sullivan, 1996; Lerman, 2002c; Morrison & Ritualo, 2000). However, such an agenda is not without its concerns and its debate is beyond the scope of this paper.

The importance attached to differences between children of intact and subsequently divorced/separated families has prompted considerable research on child outcomes. However, fewer studies have investigated factors that may explain the marked variation in children's adjustment among those who experience parental separation/divorce. The extent to which these differences stem from divorce per se or the events that precede and accompany it remains unclear. Moreover, in parsing the effects of marital disruption, it has become increasingly important to consider the climate of the

home prior to divorce/separation. Despite limited attention to these issues, understanding why some children show maladjustment while others do not has important implications for developmental theory, public health and child welfare practice. In the present study, I examine the factors that may moderate children's adjustment to parental separation/divorce in a longitudinal study of Black mothers and their children.

Specific Aims

The present study is an extension of existing literature on divorce outcomes for children. I use longitudinal data from the 1992 and 1996 waves of the Child Supplement of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), matching it with data from mothers, to examine not only the consequences of divorce for children, but also individual variation in children's responses to marital disruption (i.e., divorce and separation). A fundamental premise of the present study is that divorce/separation should be viewed as a process characterized by a sequence of potentially stressful experiences that begin before physical separation/divorce and continue after it. Moreover, different groups may experience marital transitions differently, in particular Blacks, who show very high rates of marital disruption (Phillips & Sweeney, 2006; Raley & Bumpass, 2003; Sweeney & Phillips, 2004).

This dissertation goes beyond existing prospective studies in several ways. First, the sample used is composed exclusively of Black children. In the present study, I seek to explore within-group relationships, rather than making comparisons to other ethnic/racial groups whose experience of marital disruption may be different or have dissimilar meanings. Research examining the relationship between marital disruption and child adjustment has largely ignored non-White populations, despite evidence suggesting

57

possible differential experiences of marital dissolution. Much of the research

documenting adverse effects of marital disruption has been conducted with White

samples (e.g., Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, & Booth, 2000; Lorenz, Simons,

Conger, Elder, Johnson & Chao, 1997; Rodgers & Rose, 2001; Simons, Lin, Gordon,

Conger, & Lorenz, 1999). Further, research investigating the role of marital disruption in

Black children's development has been scarce, and the findings equivocal, at best. Some

studies find effects of marital disruption, while others do not. Furthermore, the studies

using samples of non-White families are too few and the sample sizes too small to form

any firm generalizations.

Findings from previous studies that are largely based on predominantly White

samples may not be wholly applicable to Black children and their families. Dunifon and

Kowaleski-Jones (2002) found that living in a single-parent family can have detrimental

influences on White, but not Black children, indicating that race is an important

consideration for understanding the effects of single-parenting on children. Though

limited, much of the research on family structure has focused on comparisons of (static)

family statuses (single-mother vs. two-parent families), as opposed to the effect of change

from one family status to another (continuously married vs. subsequently divorced).

Guided by the former approach, some researchers have found family structure effects for

Black youth. McLanahan (1985) found high-school attrition to be associated with

fathers' absence for Black youths. Dornbusch et al. (1985) found that living in a single-

parent home was associated with adverse outcomes regardless of race. In their study on

family structure effects among early adolescents, Flewelling and Bauman (1992) found

that family structure was related to substance use and sexual intercourse for both Whites and non-Whites, but the relation was less strong in non-Whites families.

In contrast, other researchers have not been able to establish an association between living with a single mother and adverse outcomes among Black children. Family structure was unrelated to delinquency (Austin, 1992; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1995), substance use (Ensminger, 1990; Thomas et al., 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1995) and school performance (Dornbusch, Ritter, & Steinberg, 1991) for Black youth. These studies raise the question of whether or not living in a single-mother household has the same meaning for Black children and White children. In the same vein, Black and White families' experience of marital disruption may be different. Given previous research, this dissertation will further our knowledge concerning Black children's experience of their parents' marital disruption by looking at continuously married and subsequently separated/divorced groups as opposed to comparing static family statuses (two-parent vs. single-parent).

A second innovation of the dissertation will be a focus on variability in child outcomes. The overall consensus from much of the literature is that divorce has adverse effects on children in a variety of domains, namely, behavioral, emotional, and academic. In reality, however, there are some children who fare poorly, while others do not. How do we explain this variation? In addition to the limited research examining the impact of marital disruption on Black families, few studies explore variation in children's adjustment to their parents' marital disruption in general and, among Blacks, in particular. What is it about the context in which disruption occurs that leads to certain outcomes? The question of individual differences, though not entirely new, has not been

explored with Blacks. Given the high divorce rates among Black women and the popular

notion of adverse outcomes linked to marital disruption, one would expect that the

children whose parents separate/divorce would all be doing poorly. However, previous

findings suggest differential vulnerability (Smith, 1997; Sun & Li, 2007). In this

dissertation, my goal is to build upon and advance empirical research on marital

disruption and child outcomes by examining the significant variation that characterizes

children's adjustment to parental separation and divorce, specifically among Blacks.

Much empirical study has focused on factors that mediate the association between marital

disruption and child adjustment (e.g., socioeconomic disadvantage, parental distress, etc.;

Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998), with less attention devoted to the different

circumstances that may moderate these associations. Whereas mediator models are

concerned with a process through which marital disruption operates to influence

children's development, moderator models, like those proposed in the present study, are

concerned with the conditions in which the process operates.

Marital disruption is viewed increasingly as not a single event, but rather as a

process of family change. Reflecting this, I examine the functioning of the family before

the separation/divorce as a possible explanation for variation in children's outcome

following the marital disruption. Because of the prospective nature of the NLSY data, I

am able to take into account the pre-disruption factors that affect children's adjustment to

marital disruption. These factors or indicators of functioning provide a depiction of the

family and their quality of life prior to physical separation. The moderators that provide

this illustration of the pre-divorce/separation family context include parental conflict,

parent-child relationship, poverty-status, maternal mental health and neighborhood

quality. While these factors are expected to provide part of the explanation for differences among children in disrupted families, children's gender, age, and the type of outcome also matter in our understanding of their adjustment.

Finally, research on families may have profound implications for American public policy, social service, and especially as it pertains to African Americans. For example, understanding how marital disruption trends affect the well-being of African American youth may influence decisions regarding child custody, where funding is allocated, and the type of therapy or services families should receive. To date however, the scientific and popular literature is uncertain in its suggestions about the actual effects marital disruption may have on African American children (Amato & Keith, 1991). As such, this dissertation systematically examines Black children's differential adjustment to their parents' marital disruption with the specific aim of providing guidance in the areas of practice and policy. Moreover, elucidating the factors that account for the widely reported variation in children's adjustment to parental divorce/separation is an important step toward devising effective, targeted intervention efforts. Parental separation/divorce is not a monolithic event/process. Therefore, understanding who is most likely to be affected by parental marital disruption will improve our conceptual models of risk and resilience and lead to more effective and better targeted interventions for Black children who demonstrate vulnerability to maladjustment.

Literature Review on Moderators

Parental Conflict as Moderator

Parental conflict has received considerable attention as a potential moderator of children's adjustment to marital disruption. Some researchers assert that in situations of

intense, chronic, and overt conflict between parents, separation may be associated with a reduction in problems insofar as it represents relief from an aversive home environment for parents and children. Others suggest that children in homes with parental conflict are likely to be at an increased risk for maladjustment (Cummings & Davies, 2002); as such, they may be more vulnerable to the effects of their parents' separation and its accompanying stressors. Still other researchers posit that the children most likely to show a change in behavior are those for whom the separation is most unexpected, namely, those children in families with a low-conflict, happy marriage (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Empirical evidence distinguishing these alternatives is mixed, particularly because the child's developmental stage may be an important explanatory factor in understanding susceptibility. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (AddHealth; Peris & Emery, 2004) indicated that those adolescents in homes with conflicted parents who eventually divorce showed fewer internalizing symptoms over time than those youths in home with low-conflict between parents who eventually separate. In contrast, research with young children, based on another large-scale U.S. survey, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, found that parental marital disruption was associated with an increase in behavior problems in both high-conflict and low-conflict marriages (Morrison & Coiro, 1999). In the current study, I examine whether parental separation/divorce is associated with an increase in adjustment problems, and whether that increase is moderated by pre-separation levels of parental conflict.

Mental Health as Moderator

Maternal Depressive Symptoms. Several other factors were considered as possible moderating factors. The first is maternal mental health. Depression and other mental health difficulties of parents have attracted attention, both before and after marital disruption (Aseltine & Kessler, 1993; Lorenz, Simons, Conger, Elder, Johnson, & Chao, 1997; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; McKelvey & McKenry, 2000; Wheaton, 1990). Furthermore, many researchers have posited maternal depression as one of the robust predictors of behavioral and emotional problems in children (for reviews see Cummings & Davies, 1994; Downey & Coyne, 1990; Goodman & Gotlib, 1999; Rutter, 1990). In a longitudinal study of 340 mothers and young children, Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, McCartney, Owen, and Booth (2000) found that maternal depression predicted children's behavior problems beyond the influences of maternal education and income and regardless of whether their parents were divorced. Similarly, a meta-analysis of 12 studies demonstrated that, within divorced families, maternal depressive symptoms were associated with more child behavior problems (Whiteside & Becker, 2000). Risk of adjustment problems for children of parents with sub-clinical depressive symptoms is somewhat tempered in comparison with risk for children of clinically depressed parents (Forehand, McCombs, & Brody, 1987), but it is still elevated compared with children of non-symptomatic parents.

Several theories have been advanced to understand the mechanisms through which maternal depression influences children's adjustment. One theory, focusing on parenting and interactional styles, suggests that depressed mothers or mothers with depressive symptoms are less able to function adaptively with their children and tend to

interact in a more negative and controlling fashion (Gelfand & Teti, 1990). Given this, in the dissertation I explore the hypothesis that maternal depressive symptoms prior to marital disruption modifies children's behavioral/emotional adjustment to marital disruption.

Maternal Mastery. Personal beliefs that one has control over outcomes are associated with the deployment of effective coping strategies, which mitigates negative reactions to stressful events (Pearlin et al. 1981). Over the years, coping has acquired a variety of conceptual meanings, often being used interchangeably with such concepts as mastery and adaptation (White, 1974). Mastery as an aspect of coping can be classified as a psychological resource. Psychological resources are those personal characteristics that people draw upon as an aid in times of strain or stress which, then help them to adapt (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Pearlin and Schooler posited that these resources are trait-like in that they reside within the self. In the face of social strain arising from one's marriage, parenting or occupation, mastery functions as a protective factor against stress.

Personal control and mastery have been widely recognized as being important for coping with stress and enhancing psychological outcomes (Mirowsky & Ross, 1990). Persons with high personal control believe that they can exercise control over problems by taking effective action, such as employing individual coping strategies. As such the self-attitude of control that one possesses as a trait influences one's actual coping responses—the behaviors, cognitions and perceptions in which people engage when confronted with life circumstances (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). While there may be periods of time when there are no active demands to cope, even during these interludes coping patterns are ready to be mobilized when the need arises. In the case of marital

disruption and its potential effects, mothers with high mastery may be able to draw on this resource as needed to be strong in the face of possible threats to their children's well-being. This psychological disposition would reduce the relationship between strain and stress, thereby enabling them to act as a resource to their children during the period of marital transition.

Economic Conditions as Moderator

In similar manner, socioeconomic status has been identified as a possible moderator of children's adjustment to marital disruption because children living in lower socioeconomic circumstances might be more vulnerable to the risks associated with separation/divorce (Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998); conversely, children at higher socioeconomic levels might be protected against the effects of marital disruption and its accompanying sequelae. In their study of socioeconomic status differences in vulnerability to undesirable life events among a sample of adults, McLeod and Kessler (1990) documented that low-SES vulnerability persists across a variety of personal events including ill-health, death of a loved-one and separation/divorce. They concluded that there is a significant inverse association between SES and vulnerability to negative life events, such that lower-status people develop more symptoms of distress than do upper-status persons after a serious, undesirable life event. Persons in lower-status groups are disadvantaged not only in the likelihood of experiencing undesirable events, but also in the resources that they have available to cope with those events (for review see Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

Children reared in low-income families are more likely to have poor outcomes in many areas of development (Luthar, 1999). Much of the research on economic hardship

in the lives of African American children has focused almost exclusively on single-parent families. Examining pre-disruption economic status helps us to better understand whether economic factors explain differential vulnerability to the effects of subsequent marital disruption. For the purposes of the present study, I posit that the effects of marital disruption as a significant life stressor are different for children from poor and non-poor families.

Parent-child Relationship as Moderator

According to Videon (2002), parent-child relationships prior to family- or marital-transition can essentially be characterized as a collection of resources and stressors that represent what children have to lose or gain when their parents separate. This conception provides a useful way of characterizing variability across children who experience their parents' marital disruption. In her study with a sample of adolescents from National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Videon showed that adolescents do indeed display great variation in their response to parental separation. Particularly, she found that the quality of the parent-child relationship prior to parental separation was important for understanding children's adjustment to that parent's absence. When adolescents were residentially separated from an unsatisfying relationship with the same-sex parent (i.e., daughter from mother, in the case of a single-father family, or son from father in the case of a single-mother family), their level of delinquent behavior was lower than adolescents who continued to reside with a same-sex parent with whom they had a poor relationship. Being residentially separated from a same-sex parent with whom the child had a poor relationship seems beneficial, whereas the loss of a positive co-residential relationship with a same-sex parent seems to function as a stressor by restricting children's access and

proximity to parental contact, nurturance, and other parental resources. These findings

contribute to our understanding of children's experience of their parents' marital

disruption by specifying how parent-child relationships interact with both parent and

child gender and how these relationships modify the effects of marital transition. In the

present study I depict the parent-child relationship by capturing mother-child relationship

as it is reported by an independent observer.

Neighborhood Quality as Moderator

Neighborhoods are commonly believed to influence behavior, attitudes, values,

and opportunities. In developmental psychology, neighborhood influences are a part of

ecological models (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) that view the individual in the context of a

series of environments or ecological systems, namely family, neighborhood, community,

and social institutions. Since development occurs within contexts, these models are based

on the premise that individuals cannot be studied without a consideration of the multiple

ecological systems in which they are embedded and operate. My goal here is to

investigate how perceived neighborhood quality moderates the relationship between

marital disruption and children's adjustment. Neighborhoods may affect child

development in different ways (Jencks & Mayer, 1990). In their comprehensive review,

Jencks and Mayer (1990) outline different mechanisms through which neighborhood

quality affects children. Among the various pathways that they posit, Jencks and Mayer

(1990) highlight the powerful effects of peer influences to spread problem behavior

which is based on "contagion theories". Secondly, they posited theories of "collective

socialization," in which neighborhood role models and monitoring are important

components in a child's socialization. Finally, they proposed theories of "relative

deprivation," in which individuals evaluate their situation or relative standing in comparison to their neighbors (or peers, classmates). Based on previous research on children's developmental stages and neighborhood effects (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealan, 1993), young children and adolescents have very different exposure to extra-familial influences and therefore are expected to be affected differently by neighborhood quality. In addition to the fact that neighborhood effects may vary across developmental stages, researchers have also noted that neighborhoods may influence each indicator of well-being differently (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). For example, in their comprehensive review, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2000), reports this differential effect of neighborhood affluence on cognitive and behavioral outcomes. Whereas neighborhood affluence has been consistently linked with cognitive and school outcomes (e.g., Chase-Landsdale, Gordon, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997; Duncan, 1994), this neighborhood effect is mixed for behavioral outcomes.

In summary, I examine the effects of marital disruption on Black children's adjustment to ascertain differences between children whose parents remain married and those whose parents subsequently separate/divorce. In order to understand which children are more vulnerable to their parents' marital disruption, I examine whether parental conflict, poverty status, parent-child relationship, maternal mental health and perceived neighborhood quality modify children's adjustment to their parent's marital disruption. Furthermore, these main effects and moderating effects are examined systematically by investigating variation by type of outcome. In this study, I investigate the effect of marital disruption on multiple outcomes, which adds to the contribution of this dissertation to the extant literature. Two main outcomes are explored. Behavior problems

are measured by the Behavior Problem Index (Achenbach, & Edlebrock, 1981) and

models are estimated separately for the externalizing and internalizing behavior

subscales. As a second type of outcome, cognitive performance is measured by the

Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT; Dunn & Markwardt, 1970); both the

Mathematics and the Reading Recognition subtests are investigated.

Research Questions

1. Do African American children who experience their parents' marital disruption
    have poorer outcomes than their counterparts in intact families?
    1a. Does the potential effect of the marital disruption vary depending on type of
    adjustment indicator measured—conduct problem (internalizing vs. externalizing)
    or cognitive development (performance on achievement tests)?

2. Do pre-disruption factors such as parental conflict, parent-child affective
    interaction, poverty status, neighborhood quality, and maternal mental health each
    moderate the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment?
    Hypothesis: Parental conflict, parent-child relationship, poverty status,
    neighborhood quality, and maternal mental health each explain variation in
    children's response to their parents' marital disruption.
    2a. Does the effect of the moderator vary depending on type of adjustment
    indicator measured—conduct problem (internalizing vs. externalizing) or
    academic achievement?

CHAPTER IV

Methods

Data

The data for the analyses presented in the dissertation are derived from the

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), which was sponsored by the

Department of Labor under a grant to the Center for Human Resource Research at the

Ohio State University (Center for Human Resource Research, 1999). The NLSY is a

nationally representative sample that consisted of 12,686 young men and women who

were 14-21 years old when they were first surveyed in 1979. These NLSY79 youth were

re-interviewed annually though 1994 and biennially thereafter. The original study design

included three independent probability samples including a cross-sectional sample of

respondents from the non-institutionalized civilian population, a supplemental sample of

civilian Hispanic, Black, and economically disadvantaged non-Hispanic, non-Black

youth, and a military sample aged 17-21. A portion of the military sample and the

disadvantaged non-Hispanic, non-Black youth were dropped from subsequent data

collection after the 1984 and 1990 interviews, respectively. Attrition from the original

sample has been comparatively low. Of the mothers who participated in the first round of

the study, 90% were re-interviewed in 1992 (Center for Human Resource Research,

2000). Beginning in 1986, the children born to female respondents of the NLSY79 youth

were assessed every two years or the first survey year after birth (Center for Human Resource Research, 2005).

In addition to having a large sample size representative of the U.S. population, the NLSY has several other advantages. First, the NLSY is a longitudinal dataset that consists of both mothers and their children. Secondly, the NLSY includes detailed measures of marital status/history, family financial condition (i.e., income, poverty status, employment), household composition, family background, child development and well-being, maternal characteristics and other socio-demographic factors. With these two advantages, the NLSY provides a unique opportunity to research children in the context of their family environments and characteristics. Finally, the timing of the follow-up assessments of the children (biennially) allows for the examination of the short-term/long-term effects of disruption that occurred to children who were in intact families in 1992.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the NLSY has limitations. First, the number of Black children experiencing their parents' marital disruption and who are four and older (for purposes for the BPI specification) is relatively modest ($n = 167$), which (might) constrain possibilities for analyses of particular subgroups, such as poverty status, income, etc. In addition, the children in the NLSY are not fully representative of all children in their age group because the NLSY is a random sample of young mothers, not of children. The children included in the present study represent a cross-section of children born to a sample of women who were between the ages of 27 and 35 on January 1, 1992; therefore, their mothers tend to be somewhat younger and more disadvantaged (especially mothers of the oldest children).

Sample

The subpopulation selected for this study comprised all Black children in the NLSY who were 1) four and older, 2) had a mother who reported that she was in her first marriage in 1992, and 3) the mother remained married or experienced separation/divorce by 1996. I consider disruption only in mothers' first marriages because stability is known to differ for first marriage and high order marriages (see Amato, 2000). A sample of 707 Black children resulted from these restrictions. As a part of my exclusion criteria, cases that were not present at both Time 1 (1992) and Time 2 (1996) were removed from the sample ($n = 302$). This reduced the total sample size to 405 children. Further description of the 302 cases that are excluded is presented in the next chapter.

The inter-survey period is anchored between 1992 and 1996 to assess immediate response to parental marital disruption among children whose mothers are similar in age (range from 27-35, $M = 30.64$, $SD = 2.24$). More importantly, data from 1992, along with child assessments in 1996, consist of certain variables of interest (e.g., the Pearlin Mastery Scale and the complete Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression [CES-D] Scale) that were only assessed in 1992. These variables are pertinent to the theoretical framework of the present study which examines the psychological characteristics that point to the mother's capacity to cope. These characteristics of the mother might render her more or less resilient to the potential stressors of marital disruption, thereby influencing her children's adjustment.

A separate sample was created to estimate models of children's cognitive development assessed by their performance on the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT), which is administered to children 5 and older ($n = 353$). This sample constituted

children 5 and older who were nested within the original sample of children whose ages were 4 and older ($n = 405$) in accordance with the BPI age specification. Separation of the two samples was required because of the centering that was performed on the predictor variables to reduce multicollinearity of the product terms (interaction variables). Boys and girls were evenly distributed for both samples (See Tables 3 and 4).

Sample Size Consideration

In order to determine the sample size that was needed to achieve adequate power in this investigation, I consulted a rule-of-thumb which specifies that the number of participants must be greater than or equal to $50 + 8m$ (m corresponds to the number of predictors; See Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Based on Tabachnick and Fidell's (1989) rule-of-thumb, the present study which included 25 to 29 variables in a given (final) regression model would have to have a minimum of 250 participants. The BPI and PIAT sub-sample sizes for the present study include 405 and 353 participants, respectively – exceeding the recommended sample size.

Measures

Independent Variables

Marital Disruption. Marital disruption is constructed from the information obtained from the 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1996 interviews. In the 1992 interview, respondents were asked to report the year in which their first marriage ended. Those who remained married were set apart for further investigation of marital transition during 1993 through 1996. During the post-1992 interviews, respondents were asked whether their marital status changed since the last interview and the kind of change (i.e., divorce or

separation). Since everyone included from the 1992 interview is married, marital disruption thus measures whether marital status changed to divorced or separated within the next four years. It is dichotomously coded with those who reported that they remained married in their original marriage coded as 0, whereas those who were married in 1992, but divorced or separated before the 1996 interview coded as 1.

Moderator Variables

Poverty Status. A dichotomous variable measuring family poverty status is derived from the 1993 interview. This NLSY-computed variable indicates whether a respondent's total family income for each previous calendar year (i.e., 1992) is above or below the poverty line. Individuals who reported their family income below the poverty level for 1992 are coded as 1 and 0 otherwise.

Parental Conflict. In 1992, mothers of the NLSY children were asked a series of questions about the quality of their relationship with their spouse or partner. The conflict scale consists of 10 items that measure how frequently mothers and their spouses/partners argue over a variety of issues deemed relevant to family life, namely, chores and responsibilities, children, money, showing affection, leisure, drinking, other women, his relatives and her relatives. Response categories ranged from 1 (*often*) to 4 (*never*). Items were reverse-coded so that once scores were summed, higher scores corresponded to higher conflict. When the responses are added there is possibility for a total score between 10 and 40. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the measure is .80.

The measure of parental conflict has several strengths. First, it captures frequency of conflict across several different domains. As such, it taps into conflict within the child's home environment which would be expected to be relevant and likely to affect

children. Despite these strengths, this measure of conflict comes from one rater, the mother. Ideally, a more complete assessment of marital conflict would include the father's perception of conflict, the child's perception of his/her parent's conflict, and/or an objective observer's assessment of conflict.

Parent-Child Relationship. The Home Observation and Measurement of the Environment-Short Form (HOME-SF) is an adaptation of the original HOME inventory created by Bradley and Caldwell (1984) for use in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth-Child Supplement (NLSY-CS; Baker & Mott, 1989). The HOME-SF assesses both the cognitive and emotional supportiveness of the mother and the home environment, from both maternal reports and interviewer observation. The inventory consists of different age versions: preschool, elementary, school age, and adolescents.   I was interested in the emotional stimulation subscale and more so in age-appropriate items that were repeated in consecutive interviews. Because questions were adapted or eliminated in later years due to children's age, three items that overlapped across the different age versions in 1992 and 1996 were selected. The reason for this selectivity was so that there would be comparable measures across age versions. The items include, "Mother conversed pleasantly with child," "Mother answered child without scolding," and "Mother's voice conveyed positive feeling about child". The internal consistency was .57 and .72 for the 3-5 and 6+ groups, respectively. These items were rated dichotomously with *yes* coded as 1 and *no* coded as 0. A composite score, ranging from 0 to 3, was created to include the three relationship items during the 1992 survey year.

Maternal Psychological Characteristics. Maternal psychological characteristics were represented by two indicators. Risk of depression was measured using the Center

for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) scale. The CES-D measure, assessed in 1992, is one of the most widely used scales, specifically designed for epidemiological investigations of depressive symptomatology in the general population aged 18 or older (Radloff, 1977). The standard CES-D is a self-descriptive questionnaire composed of 20 items selected from a pool of items taken from previously validated depression scales. On a scale ranging from 0 (*less than 1 day*) to 3 (*5 to 7 days*), respondents indicate how often each symptom occurred in the last week. Appropriate items were reverse-coded and summed to create a scale with a range from 0 to 60; higher scores indicate greater or more frequent depressive symptoms. The designated cutoff point has generally been set at 16, indicating the presence of significant depressive symptoms (Roberts, Rhoades, & Vernon, 1990). Cronbach's alpha for the present sample was .87.

The second indicator of maternal psychological characteristics was the Pearlin Mastery Scale (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). The scale items measure the mother's self-perception of control or mastery over forces that significantly impact her life. This scale has been shown to mediate the association between negative life events and actual stress (Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, & Mullan, 1981). Mothers who lack a sense of mastery may be more vulnerable to the stressors of marital disruption and feelings of distress, thereby impacting their children's adjustment. The 7-item scale ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). The responses are summed with a possible total score between 7 and 28. Negatively worded statements (1) there is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have, (2) sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life, (3) I have little control over the things that happen to me, (4) I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life, and (5) there is little I can do to change many of the

important things in my life, were reverse coded to reflect a positively oriented scale where higher scores represent the perception of greater mastery over one's environment. Cronbach's alpha on this measure for the present sample was .74.

Perceived Neighborhood Quality. Exposure to deteriorated neighborhood conditions, which could be confounded with poverty and behavior problems, consists of eight questions (alpha = .86) that document problems mothers perceive in their neighborhoods (such as prevalence of crime and violence, lack of respect for rules and laws, and lack of parental supervision, and lack of police protection, etc.). The scale consisted of eight items ranging from 1 (*big* problem) to 3 (*not a problem*). Items were reverse-coded so that higher scores indicate more neighborhood problems and thus poorer neighborhood quality. These items when summed result in a possible total score between 8 and 24.

Dependent Variables

Behavioral and Emotional Adjustment. Children's behavioral and emotional adjustment was measured using the Behavior Problem Index (BPI). Developed by Nicholas Zill and James Peterson as an adaptation of the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Edlebrock, 1981), the BPI includes 28 measures of child behavior and emotional problems that children aged four and older may have exhibited in the past three months, as reported by the child's mother. Together these items represent six areas of problem behaviors: antisocial behavior, anxiety/depression, headstrongness, hyperactivity, dependency, and peer conflict (CHRR, 2004). The items were selected for inclusion in the NLSY test battery because of their demonstrated ability to distinguish children referred for psychological treatment from non-referred children. Response

categories range from 1 (*often true*) to 3 (*not true*). Scores are summed for each item

with higher scores indicating a greater level of behavioral and emotional problems. Of

note, the BPI may be prone to subjectivity because responses are reported by the mother.

A stressful event, such as divorce may affect a mother's perception of her child's

behavior and the child's BPI scores, although the child's behavior may be unchanged.

The BPI has been employed in several national surveys which have included children

from a wide range of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. The BPI reflects both

externalizing and internalizing behavior problems.

I focus on two broad sets of behavior problems, internalizing and externalizing

problems which are the two widely used subscales that emerge from the Behavior

Problem Index (BPI). To facilitate comparison of measurements of behavior problems

across years, the Center for Human Resource Research (Columbus, Ohio) developed

standardized scores that have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. The NLSY

provide standard scores for the internalizing and externalizing behavior subscales, but

due to funding limitations the standardized scores for years prior to 1994 have not been

computed (P. Baker, personal communication, January, 22, 2008). As such, researchers

interested in these earlier years are advised to calculate the raw scores of each subscale

and control for age in the model in order for this computed score to be compatible with

the NLSY computation. In order to attain the 1992 baseline internalizing and

externalizing scores, I constructed the subscales based on how the 28 items were

categorized in NLSY Users' Guide (2004). The BPI consists of 10 internalizing (e.g.,

feels worthless or inferior; unhappy, sad, or depressed; withdrawn, does not get involved

with others; no one loves him/her) and 18 externalizing (e.g., argues too much; bullies or

78

is cruel/mean to others; has strong temper; disobedient at home) items. In addition, two externalizing items were asked only of children in school (i.e., disobedient at school; has trouble getting along with teachers). The school items were retained to maintain consistency with the NLSY externalizing score computation. However, to assess comparable measures between children who were in and out of school, I conducted a correlation between the raw composite score of externalizing items with and without these two items, and the correlation was quite high ($r = .97$). Thus, the 1992 baseline internalizing subscale was computed as the sum of 10 items, and the externalizing scale as the sum of 18 items. The items were recoded so that higher scores would reflect more problem behaviors. The two scales show adequate internal consistency levels. Cronbach's alphas for the internalizing dimension are .78 in 1992 and .79 in 1996. Cronbach's alphas for the externalizing dimension are .87 in 1992 and .85 in 1996. (I also estimated separate models for the BPI global scale, but these results are not presented in the dissertation because the subscales reveal significant findings which were undetected when the global scale is used.)

Cognitive Development. To represent children's academic ability, I used two subtests of the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT; Dunn & Markwardt, 1970), mathematics and reading recognition. The PIAT is a widely used measure of academic achievement for children aged 5 and older, and it is generally considered to be a highly reliable and valid assessment (Center for Human Resource Research, 2006). The math (PIAT-M) and reading recognition (PIAT-RR) subtests are more objective assessments and include numerous questions that increase in difficulty. In the NLSY, a child starts the test at a pre-assigned age-appropriate question. Depending on whether she or he

answers this first question correctly or incorrectly, the next question is either more difficult or less difficult. The math test (PIAT-M) measures basic math skills and concepts. The materials covered range from recognizing numerals to measuring advanced concepts in geometry and trigonometry. The reading recognition test (PIAT-RR) measures word recognition and pronunciation ability. Children are asked to read a word silently and then to say it aloud. The raw score for each subtest is normed by age and has a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. The subtests each have a range of 65 to 135.

Control Variables

A number of common antecedent variables are examined and they are all derived from the 1992 interview, with the exception of income change which is based on information reported at both interviews. First, previous level of BPI is controlled because individuals with already elevated levels of behavioral problems may have escalated levels in 1996 regardless of marital disruption. Number of children is controlled since adjustment to marital disruption may be, in part, outcomes of parents' role strain. As such, number of children is used as a proxy indicator of role strain. Child characteristics were also accounted for in the model estimation. Child sex is coded 0 for male and 1 for female. Child age was measured in years. Finally, income change from 1992 to 1995 (1996 survey year reports income for the prior year, 1995) was calculated after adjusting for inflation. Income in 1992 was adjusted to 1995 dollars using the CPI-U (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001; 2008). The income change dollar amount is then divided by $1,000 to reflect change by $1000-units. The rescaling of the control variable means that losses and gains in income level are on a $1,000-scale. Negative change scores represent

a decrease from the 1992 income; positive scores represent an increase in the 1992 income.

Analysis Plan

First, descriptive statistics and correlation analyses at Time 1 are reported. Second, mean differences in pre-separation/divorce variables will be examined based on whether or not marital disruption is experienced (continuously intact vs. subsequently divorced/separated) using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Third, analyses are conducted to assess the kind of change (in adjustment scores) that was associated with marital disruption.

Finally, to test the hypothesized model displayed in Figure 1 (conceptual model), a series of hierarchical multiple regression also referred to as sequential regression analyses were conducted. In hierarchical regression, the researcher adds a variable or a set of variables in stages or blocks (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) to evaluate the contribution of each variable or set of variables of interest to the prediction of the dependent variable, in this case child adjustment. Furthermore, this procedure provides a systematic examination of the extent to which various variables reduce the association between marital disruption and child adjustment. The order of entry for the predictors is predetermined by the researcher based on logical or theoretical considerations (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). In the present study, I wanted to examine the effect of marital disruption beyond the other variables that have been associated with children's adjustment. As such, I entered this important variable later while the controls and moderators are given higher priority for entry (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989).

In Step 1, the baseline measure of the criterion variable along with child gender, child age and number of children in household are entered as predictors of the 1996 measure of the respective outcome variable. These variables were entered first to control for their potential association with the outcome variable. In Step 2, the percent loss of income variable is entered because of its high association with children's adjustment indicators. In Step 3, the moderator variables (i.e., parental conflict, parent-child affective relationship, poverty status, neighborhood quality, maternal depressive symptoms and maternal mastery) are entered as main effect predictors of child adjustment. Subsequently, in Step 4, marital disruption is added as the variable of primary interest to determine whether it is associated with poorer child adjustment after all of the previous variables are considered. Finally, in Step 5, higher order (moderation) effects are examined.

Moderation is said to exist when the influence of a predictor variable (i.e., marital disruption) on the outcome variable (i.e., child adjustment) varies as a function of the level of the proposed moderator variable (i.e., parental conflict, poverty status, parent-child relationship, maternal psychological functioning, etc.). In statistical terms, moderation is present when there is a statistically significant interaction between two or more variables. At this step, a set of six interaction terms (marital disruption x parental conflict, marital disruption x parent-child relationship, marital disruption x poverty status, marital disruption x neighborhood quality, marital disruption x maternal depressive symptoms, and marital disruption x maternal mastery) are entered to assess whether the association between marital disruption and child adjustment varies by any of the select

pre-disruption variables (moderators). Moderators were centered prior to forming the product terms of the interaction to reduce multicollinearity among the predictors.

Exploratory analyses were also conducted with maternal education and maternal employment as moderators. Mother's education is measured by self-report of the highest grade attained by the survey year (1992). The scores range from 0, which indicates "no schooling," to 20, reflecting "8th year college or more." In addition, self-report of mother's employment is measured dichotomously, with those who are employed or on active duty as 1 and 0 for those who are not employed in1992.

Four hierarchical multiple regression models were estimated, one for each outcome measure which include: 1) the Externalizing Behavior subscale, 2) Internalizing Behavior subscale, 3) the PIAT-Math subset, and 4) the PIAT-Reading Recognition subtest. All the scores used from NLSY were nationally age-normed standard scores. All statistical assumptions for the proper use of multiple regression were met.

Child weights for 1996 are used to adjust for the minority oversamples and year-to-year attrition of mothers and their children (including the loss of the military and white oversamples). Using these weights translates the unweighted sample of children into a population that represents all children who have been born by that year to a nationally representative sample of women who were 14 to 21 in 1978. Weights are computed only for children who were interviewed in the given year (CHRR, 2004)

Imputation for Missing Data

In preliminary analyses, I found that approximately 50% of the cases would be eliminated from regression analyses due to non-response on either the dependent or predictor variables for 204 cases in the BPI sample and 170 cases in the PIAT sample

(See Table 1). Rather than excluding these cases, I used a technique known as multiple

imputation (MI) described by Rubin (1987) and Schafer (1999). Multiple imputation is

highly recommended as a strategy to address missing data resulting from item

nonresponse (Allison, 2000; Nordholt, 1998; Rubin, 1987; Schafer, 1999; Yuan, 2000)

The appeal derives from several notable advantages. For instance, it maintains the

multivariate distributions of the variables in the sample, it increases statistical power

relative to approaches (i.e., listwise case deletion) that delete cases with missing

information, and unlike single imputation which underestimates the uncertainty of the

missing values by failing to take into account variance in the imputed values, multiple

imputation accounts for this uncertainty (Little & Rubin, 1987; Rubin, 1988) by

incorporating between-imputation variance in terms of parameter estimates of interests.

The multiple imputation process involves three phases: 1) the creation of $m > 1$

imputed data sets to reflect $m > 1$ values being imputed for each missing data point, 2)

analysis of these data sets, and 3) combining the results across the m analyses (Allison,

2000; Rubin, 1988; Yuan, 2000). In the present study, five imputation ($m = 5$) are

performed. Empirical evidence has shown that there tends to be little or no practical

benefit to using more than five imputations (Schafer, 1999; Little & Rubin, 2002).

Essentially, MI repeats the process to capture variance/uncertainty in imputed values. MI

replaces missing values with multiply imputed values generated from a series of

regression analyses with random draws from predictive distributions (Raghunathan,

Lepkowski, Van Hoewyk, & Solenberger, 2001) that produce complete datasets. The

variation among the values reflects the uncertainty of the actual missing value (Rubin,

1996) and this is identified as one of the key features of multiple imputation. The MI

technique requires the use of special software packages. This study uses IVEware, developed by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center (for review, see Raghunathan, Solenberger, Hoewyk, 2000). Because of the multiple imputation procedure, all of the regression analyses are performed using the IVEware software. Descriptive statistics are conducted on both SPSS 16.0 and IVEware to present a comparison of non-imputed and imputed data, respectively.

CHAPTER V

Results

The purpose of this study was threefold: 1) to examine the association of parental marital disruption and children's adjustment among Black families, 2) to investigate pre-disruption factors that may modify the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment, and 3) to assess whether the potential effect of marital disruption varies by the type of outcome being considered. I first report descriptive statistics and correlations at Time 1 (pre-disruption). Second, mean differences in pre-disruption variables are examined as a function of subsequent marital disruption using analysis of variance and chi-square analyses. Third, I report descriptive data on overtime changes in children's adjustment both behavioral/emotional and cognitive. Fourth, analyses are presented to test the hypothesis that parental separation is associated with an decrease in children's adjustment; subsequent regression models examine whether the potential effect of marital disruption is independent of Time 1 risks and, finally, which Time 1 factors moderate the amount of change in children's adjustment over time. Four hierarchical multiple regression models are presented describing variation in the effect of marital disruption by type of outcome.

Descriptive Statistics

Description of Overall Sample

The means and standard deviations of the study variables at Time 1 are reported in Table 3. With regard to the dependent variables at Time 2, as a whole, the children scored slightly above the historic national average on the BPI internalizing ($M = 103.26$, $SD = 15.63$) and externalizing ($M = 105.02$, $SD = 15.08$) subscales. For the relevant sample, the children scored on average with the nationally prescribed mean level for PIAT reading recognition ($M = 100.51$, $SD = 15.76$) and slightly below average for the PIAT Math test ($M = 96.96$, $SD = 66$). The national mean is 100 with a standard deviation of 15.

With regard to the moderator variables, mothers on average reported low levels of conflict ($M = 21.09$, $SD = 5.71$), low levels of depressive symptoms ($M = 10.97$, $SD = 8.85$), and high levels of mastery ($M = 21.83$, $SD = 3.28$). They did not perceive their neighborhood as having major problems ($M = 12.79$, $SD = 4.03$). As for the interviewer observation of parent-child relationship, scores were higher, showing more engagement between mother and child ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .79$). A high proportion of the families were classified as not living in poverty (72%). A majority of the mothers were reportedly employed (70%) and, on average, they had a high school education ($M = 12.71$, $SD = 1.84$).

Finally, there is an approximately even distribution of boy and girls in the sample and children whose parents remain married outnumber their counterparts with subsequently separated/divorced families.

Description of Excluded Cases

Among the total 1025 Black children whose mother was in her first marriage in 1992 and either remained married or subsequently divorced/separated by 1996, 707 of the children met age criteria for the assessments (4 and older for BPI, 5 and older for PIAT). Of these 707 children, 302 (43%) were excluded because they were not present at Time 2 (1996). Significantly more children who experienced parental marital disruption were lost from the study than those children whose parents remained married (X^2 (1, 707) = 9.60, p < .01). Also, those not living in poverty left the study in greater numbers than those who were in poverty (X^2 (1, 578) = 3.91, p < .05). Compared to the 405 present at both time points, children who dropped out (n = 302) lived in neighborhoods with more problems (F (1, 704) = 5.31, p < .05, effect size = .01), and had mothers with lower mastery (F (1, 705) = 13.95, p < .001, effect size = .02), higher levels of depressive symptoms (F (1, 705) = 7.07, p < .01, effect size = .01), and lower levels of education (F (1, 705) = 33.32, p < .001, effect size = .05). Regarding outcome variables, children who dropped out had significantly lower Time 1 math (F (1, 589) = 7.76, p < .01, effect size = .01) and reading (F (1, 586) = 22.46, p < .001, effect size = .04) scores. According to Cohen (1988), these effect sizes would be considered small.

Correlation among Study Variables

Table 2 contains the intercorrelations between the variables (i.e., controls, baseline adjustment and moderators) at Time 1 (pre-disruption) and marital disruption. Staying married was related to an increase in income from Time 1 to Time 2 (r = -.21, p < .01). Children whose parents remained married experienced more parent-child interaction (r = -.11, p < .05), did not live in poverty (r = .53, p < .001), lived in

neighborhoods with fewer problems ($r = .17, p < .001$), had a mother who reported less depressive symptoms ($r = .19, p < .001$) and a higher level of education ($r = -.23, p < .001$). These children also performed better on the PIAT reading assessment at Time 1 ($r = -.11, p < .05$) and Time 2 ($r = -.14, p < .01$), and were less likely to exhibit internalizing problem behaviors.

High levels of externalizing problem behavior at Time 2 was related to less parent-child interaction ($r = .12, p < .05$), living in poverty ($r = .12, p < .05$), living in neighborhoods with more problems ($r = .17, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal mastery ($r = -.23, p < .001$), higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms ($r = .30, p < .001$), lower levels of maternal education ($r = -.13, p < .05$), and higher levels of externalizing problem behavior ($r = .57, p < .001$) at Time 1.

High levels of internalizing problem behavior at Time 2 was related to living in poverty ($r = .12, p < .05$), living in neighborhoods with more problems ($r = .17, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal mastery ($r = -.23, p < .001$), higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms ($r = .32, p < .001$), and higher levels of internalizing problem behavior ($r = .48, p < .001$) at Time 1.

Lower math scores at Time 2 were related to being older ($r = -.13, p < .05$), living in poverty ($r = -.15, p < .01$), living in neighborhoods with more problems ($r = -.15, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal mastery ($r = .16, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal education ($r = .25, p < .001$), and lower math scores ($r = .56, p < .001$) at Time 1.

Lower reading scores at Time 2 were related to being male ($r = .14, p < .01$), living in poverty ($r = -.21, p < .01$), living in neighborhoods with more problems ($r = -.18, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal mastery ($r = .16, p < .01$), higher levels of maternal

depressive symptoms ($r = -.14, p < .01$), lower levels of maternal education ($r = .25, p < .001$) and lower levels of reading scores ($r = .62, p < .001$) at Time 1.

Time 1 Differences According to Subsequent Marital Disruption

Table 3 provides data on the means and standard deviations for the variables in the two marital status groups for the subsample of children assessed for BPI ($n = 405$). The mean level of parent-child relationship among the families that would eventually divorce/separate was significantly lower ($M = 2.50, SD = .88$) than among those families that would remain married ($M = 2.68, SD = .72$). The mean level of neighborhood problems for the group of children who would later experience their parents' marital disruption ($M = 13.62, SD = 4.25$) was higher than the overall level ($M = 12.79, SD = 4.03$) and significantly higher than the mean level of neighborhood problems for their peers with continuously married parents ($M = 12.20, SD = 2.34$). Mean maternal depressive symptoms was significantly higher among subsequently divorced/separated families ($M = 12.95, SD = 10.08$) than among families that remained married ($M = 9.58, SD = 7.60$). Maternal education was significantly higher among continuously married families ($M = 13.07, SD = 1.82$) than among families that subsequently separated/divorced ($M = 12.21, SD = 1.75$). Families that subsequently disrupted experienced a loss in income ($M = -2.19, SD = 16.25$) between Time 1 and Time 2 whereas families that remained married experienced an increase in income ($M = 4.17, SD = 13.72$); this difference in inflation-adjusted income change was significant ($F (1, 256) = 11.43, p < .01$). The proportion of disrupted families that were in poverty was significantly higher than the proportion of intact families that are in poverty ($X^2 [1, 329] = 92.54, p < .001$). There was no significant difference in externalizing behavior ($F (1,$

400) = 2.20, $p > .05$) or internalizing behavior (F (1, 400) = 2.60, $p > .05$) between the two marital groups at Time 1.

Table 4 provides data on the means and standard deviations for the variables by marital disruption status for the subsample of children assessed with the PIAT ($n = 353$). The mean level of parent-child relationship was significantly lower for families that would eventually divorce/separate ($M = 2.48$, $SD = .89$) than for those families that remained married ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .74$). The mean neighborhood problem was significantly higher for families that would eventually divorce/separate ($M = 13.73$, $SD = 4.31$) than for those families that remained married ($M = 12.27$, $SD = 3.77$). Mean maternal depressive symptoms was significantly higher for families that subsequently separated/divorced ($M = 9.72$, $SD = 7.85$) than for continuously married families ($M = 13.05$, $SD = 10.34$). Maternal education was significantly higher for continuously married families ($M = 13.06$, $SD = 1.82$) than for families that subsequently experienced marital disruption ($M = 12.20$, $SD = 1.76$). Families that subsequently disrupted experienced a loss in income ($M = -1.37$, $SD = 15.67$) between Time 1 and Time 2 whereas families that remained married experienced an increase in income ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 13.02$); this difference in inflation-adjusted income change was significant (F (1, 218) = 8.66, $p < .01$). The proportion of disrupted families that were in poverty was significantly different from the proportion of intact families that were in poverty (X^2 [1, 286] = .83, $p < .001$). Performance of reading assessment at Time 1 was significantly higher for children whose parents remained married ($M = 104. 27$, $SD = 13.91$) than their peers whose parents eventually divorced/separated ($M = 101.17$, $SD = 13.09$). There was no significant

difference between the two groups on math performance at Time 1 (F (1, 326) = 1.98, $p >$ .05).

Summary. Together Tables 3 and 4 show mean differences in Time 1 variables as a function of subsequent separation/divorce using analysis of variance and chi-square statistics. As expected from previous research, significant differences are observed according to whether or not the family will experience marital disruption in the following approximately 3-year period. For both subsamples, there were differences in parent-child relationship, neighborhood problem, maternal depressive symptoms, maternal education, income change and the proportion reporting poverty status according to whether or not a separation/divorce would subsequently occur, with marital relationships that would later dissolve showing a higher level of risk. Effect sizes for the significant differences were small (i.e., .01 to .05) based on Cohen's (1988) classification. The greatest differences were observed for maternal depressive symptoms and maternal education, with effect sizes .04 and .05, respectively. Cohen classifies .01 as a small effect, .06 as a medium effect and .14 as a large effect. Collectively, these findings attest to the increased level of risk that is apparent before separation/divorce occurs. Also, there was no detected difference between the marital groups on three (i.e., externalizing behavior, internalizing behavior, math scores) of the four dependent variables at Time 1.

Longitudinal Patterns in Children's Adjustment

In order to examine longitudinal patterns for externalizing and internalizing behaviors, Time 1 and Time 2 scores were converted to z-scores. This was necessary because NLSY calculated standardized total scores for the subscales in 1996 (Time 2), but not in 1992 (Time 1). As such, I was advised by the NLSY data support group to

create the raw scores for the subscales based on the item classification in the User Guide, but the Time 1 and Time 2 scores would still be on a different scale. These Time 1 raw scores are useful in predicting Time 2 scores as is seen in the regression analyses. However, when examining differences between the time points, the Time 1 and Time 2 scores for the subscales had to be standardized so that the scores would be comparable. Results reveal no significant increase on the externalizing subscale from Time 1 to Time 2 (*M*=.001, *SD*=.98 at Time 1; *M*= -.006, *SD* = 1.00 at Time 2, *t* [*df*=370] = .15, *ns*). The same was true for internalizing behaviors (*M* = .002, *SD* = 1.00 at Time 1; *M* = -.003, *SD* = 1.00 at Time 2, *t* [*df* = 382] = .09, *ns*).

In contrast, there was an overall decrease on the total PIAT-reading score from Time 1 to 2 (*M* = 102.98, *SD* = 13.64 at Time 1; *M* = 100.51, *SD* = 15.76 at Time 2, *t* [*df* = 305] = 3.24, *p* < .001). Overall scores of PIAT-Math was stable from Time 1 to 2 (*M* = 96.37, *SD* = 13.21 at Time 1; *M* = 96.96, *SD* = 13.66 at Time 2, *t* [*df* = 306] = .55, *ns*).

Intraindividual Change in Children's Adjustment and Factors Moderating Change

Means (*SD*) of children's adjustment problems at Time 1 and Time 2 are reported in Table 5. Several findings stand out. First, when only adjustment at Time 1 was considered in relation to marital disruption, there were no significant differences detected in children's externalizing (*F* (1, 400) = 2.20, *ns*) or internalizing (*F* (1, 400) = 2.60, *ns*) scores. Second, repeated measures analysis of variance in which Time 1 and Time 2 measures of adjustment were dependent variables do not yield significant results for either between-subject effect of marital disruption (Externalizing: *F* (1, 369) = 1.61, *ns*), within-subject effects of time (Externalizing: *F* (1, 369) = .001, *ns*) or a time x marital disruption interaction (Externalizing: *F* (1, 369) = 1.06, *ns*). This indicates that there was

no significant change in externalizing behavior scores as a function of marital disruption over the two time points. Similar analyses were conducted for internalizing behaviors, revealing a significant effect of marital disruption (F (1, 381) = 4.46, $p < .05$), but no significant within-subject effects of time (F (1, 381) = .01, ns) or a time x marital disruption interaction (F (1, 381) = .98, ns).

Further analyses showed that there were no significant differences detected at Time 1 for PIAT-Math. Follow-up repeated measures analysis of variance did not yield any significant changes in Math performance as a function of marital disruption over the two time points. In contrast, there was a significant difference in children's PIAT-reading score at Time 1 according to whether or not they would eventually experience their parents' marital disruption (F (1, 324) = 4.12, $p < .05$). Follow-up repeated measures analysis of variance in which Time 1 and Time 2 measures of PIAT-reading scores were dependent variables yielded a significant between-subject effect of marital disruption (F (1, 304) = 6.54, $p < .05$, effect size = .02), and significant within-subject effects of time (F (1, 304) = 10.89, $p < .01$, effect size .04). These results indicate that there was a significant change in PIAT-reading scores between Times 1 and 2 as a function of whether or not a separation/divorce would subsequently occur. The interaction between time and marital disruption for PIAT-reading was not significant (F (1, 304) = .437, ns).

The final and key research questions were whether the absence or presence of an effect for parental marital disruption was accounted for by risks that preceded the separation/divorce, and whether the amount of change in children's adjustment associated with marital disruption was systematic and predictable. A series of hierarchical multiple

regression analyses were conducted to predict Time 2 externalizing behavior, internalizing behavior, math performance and reading performance.

Regression Results from Imputed/Weighted Data Analysis

Behavioral/Emotional Outcomes

Externalizing Behavior. In Model 1, Time 1 externalizing behavior was a significant predictor such that Time 1 levels of externalizing behaviors was positively associated with Time 2 levels of externalizing behaviors (B = 1.43, $p < .001$). Income change was added in Model 2 but was not significant (B = -.01, *ns*). Model 3 included those risks previously linked with children's adjustment problems (and likelihood of marital disruption). Results indicate that maternal depressive symptoms predicted an increase in children's externalizing problem behavior (B = .30, $p < .05$). Model 4 examined whether marital disruption was associated with an increase in externalizing problem behavior, after accounting for stability in children's problem behavior, control variables, income change, and moderators. Marital disruption was not a significant predictor of increase in children's externalizing problem behavior (B = .51, *ns*). Model 5 tests the moderation hypotheses. None of the interactions were significant at the .05 level; however, there was a marginal trend for the interaction between marital disruption and parent-child interaction (B = -4.00, $p < .10$; See Table 6).

I also estimated separate models including maternal education and employment; results did not reveal significant effects of these predictors or their interaction terms. Additionally, an interaction term with marital disruption and child sex was included; results did not show a significant interaction effect.

Internalizing Behavior. In Model 1, Time 1 internalizing behavior was

significantly associated with Time 2 levels of internalizing behavior (B = 2.28, p < .001),

such that high Time 1 levels of internalizing behaviors predicted high Time 2 levels of

internalizing behaviors. Income change when included in Model 2 did not significantly

predict internalizing problem behavior at Time 2. Results from Model 3 indicate that

neighborhood problems (B = .45, p < .05) and maternal depressive symptoms (B = .33, p

< .05) predicted an increase in children's internalizing behavior problems; previous

internalizing behavior problems (B = 1.93, p < .001) remained a significant independent

predictor and there was a marginally significant finding to indicate that fewer children in

the household was associated with an increase in internalizing behavior problems (B = -

1.32, p < .10). Model 4 included marital disruption in the equation and results indicated

no significant effect of this family transition (B = 1.18, ns); previous internalizing

behavior (B = 1.94, p < .001), neighborhood problems (B = .43, p < .05), and maternal

depressive symptoms (B = .32, p < .05) remained significant predictors. There was a

trend for number of children in the household. The final model showed no significant

interactions, not at the .05 level or the .10 level; previous internalizing behavior remained

significant (B = 1.93, p < .001; See Table 7).

I also estimated separate models including maternal education and employment,

but these factors did not predict problem behaviors and results did not reveal significant

interactions for these moderators. Additionally, an interaction term with marital

disruption and child sex was included; results did not show a significant interaction

effect.

Cognitive Ability/Achievement Outcomes

PIAT-Math and Reading. In Tables 8 and 9 I present results pertaining to cognitive outcomes, namely math and reading, respectively. Similar models to the previous behavioral outcomes are estimated with one exception, two moderators, maternal education and employment, and their respective interaction terms with marital disruption are included in the final models because of their association with children's academic outcomes (Jimerson, Egeland, & Teo, 1999; Sirin, 2005). As can be seen from these tables, achievement at Time 1 is significantly associated with achievement outcomes at Time 2, such that high Time 1 math and reading performance predicted high Time 2 performance for the respective academic outcomes (Math, B = .58, $p < .001$; Reading, B = .69, $p < .001$). Child age predicted math ability, such that younger children scored higher on the math test (B = -1.57, $p < .001$). Model 2 included income change in the equation which was not significantly related to the two cognitive outcomes. Model 3 included risks, in this case moderators, which have been linked to children's outcomes. Results indicate that none of the moderators were significant; there was a marginal effect of maternal depressive symptoms for math scores (B = .18, $p < .10$). Time 1 ability remained a significant predictor for both outcomes whereas child age remained a significant predictor for math performance. Results for reading scores also indicate a marginal effect of the number of children in the household such that more children corresponded to an increase in reading scores (B = 1.61, $p < .10$). Model 4 tests the effect of marital disruption after controls and moderators are included. Marital disruption does not have a significant effect on children's scores on math (B = -.57, *ns*) and reading (B = -.20, *ns*) tests. The final model tests the moderation hypotheses. No significant

interactions were detected for math and reading scores; child age remained a significant predictor for performance on the math test while Time 1 math and reading achievement scores remained predictive of their respective outcomes. For math scores, results show marginal effect of maternal mastery (B = .81, $p < .10$), such that high mastery predicted an increase in math performance.

I also conducted exploratory analyses including an interaction term with marital disruption and child sex; results did not reveal a significant interaction effect for math or reading performance.

Note on Interaction Effects

None of the interactions presented in the analyses with the imputed data were significant. One plausible reason for this is that the models are conservative, entering all of the interaction terms in at once in one single block. Such models are investigating the absolute unique effect of the interaction with all factors considered. In an attempt to relax some of the restrictions, I considered simpler models with each interaction term entered in a single block. This approach would help us evaluate the contribution of each interaction to the prediction of the respective dependent variables (i.e., externalizing behavior, internalizing behavior, math achievement, reading achievement). In these analyses, the base/initial model included significant control variables, along with the moderators and the marital disruption variable. Subsequent steps/blocks included one interaction term at a time. These exploratory analyses revealed no major differences from the earlier analyses presented above with the imputed data. In fact, the only exception from these earlier findings was the detection of a significant interaction between marital disruption and parent-child relationship (B = -3.99, $p < .05$). The plot for this interaction

indicated a strong negative association between parent-children relationship and externalizing problem behaviors for children whose parents would later divorce/separate, while externalizing behavior stayed stable at a high level for children whose parents remained married (See Figure 2.1).

Regression Results from Complete Case Analysis, Both Unweighted and Weighted (Refer to Tables 6.1-9.1)
Behavioral/Emotional Outcomes

Externalizing Behavior Problems. In Model 1, analyses for both approaches, unweighted and weighted, revealed a significant effect of pre-disruption externalizing problem behaviors, such that higher levels of externalizing problem behaviors at Time 1 predicted higher levels of externalizing problem behaviors at Time 2 (Unweighted: B = 1.50, $p < .001$; Weighted: B = 1.52, $p < .001$). In Model 2, income change was entered into the equation; however, no significant effect was detected of this variable (Unweighted: B = .02, *ns*; Weighted: B = .002, *ns*). Model 3 included those risks previously linked with children's adjustment problems (and likelihood of marital disruption). Both analyses show a significant effect of maternal depressive symptoms. Higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms at Time 1 were associated with higher levels of externalizing problem behavior in children at Time 2 (Unweighted: B = .39, $p < .01$; Weighted: B = .39, $p < .01$). Unweighted analyses showed a marginal trend for parent-child interaction (Unweighted: B = 2.55, $p < .10$) such that higher interaction related to higher externalizing behaviors. Similar to the previous findings, marital disruption added in Model 4 was not significant (Unweighted: B = .18, *ns*; Weighted: B =

-1.05, *ns*). The final model tested interaction effects of marital disruption and the

moderators. Results revealed significant interaction effects between marital disruption

and parent-child interaction (Unweighted: B = -26.29, *p* < .01; Weighted: B =-27.07, *p* <

.01), marital disruption and neighborhood problems (Unweighted: B = -1.62, *p* < .05;

Weighted: B = -1.41, *p* < .10) and between marital disruption and maternal depressive

symptoms (Unweighted: B = 1.03, *p* < .01; Weighted: B = .98, *p* < .01). Interactions are

probed using guidelines outlined by Aiken and West (1991). The plot for the interaction

between marital disruption and parent-child relationship indicated a strong negative

association between parent-children relationship and externalizing problem behaviors for

children whose parents would later divorce/separate, while externalizing behavior stayed

stable at a high level for children whose parents remained married (See Figure 2). The

interaction between marital disruption and neighborhood problems suggests that the

greatest difference between the two groups of children exist under conditions where the

perception of neighborhood problem is high (See Figure 3). The same is true from the

plot that shows the interaction between marital disruption and maternal depressive

symptoms. While both groups of children (i.e., those from subsequently disrupted and

continuously married parents) exhibited low levels of externalizing problem behavior

when the level of maternal depressive symptoms is low, the results indicated divergence

between the two groups when maternal depression risk is high. The children whose

parents remain married show a stable level of externalizing behavior while those children

whose parents subsequently divorce/separate show a sharp increase in externalizing

problem behavior (See Figure 4).

Separate exploratory models including maternal education and employment as moderators were estimated; results did not reveal significant effects of these predictors (Education, Unweighted: B = .76, *ns*; Weighted: B = 1.04, *ns*; Employment, Unweighted: B = .93, *ns*, Weighted: B = -.36, *ns*). However, both sets of analyses indicated a marginally significant interaction effect of maternal education (Unweighted: B = 9.98, p < .10; Weighted: B = -3.51, *p* < .10). The plot results indicated a strong negative association between maternal education and externalizing problem behavior among children whose parents subsequently separate/divorce whereas the externalizing behavior scores seem stable for children whose parents remain married (See Figure 5).

Internalizing Behavior Problems. In Model 1, analyses for both approaches, unweighted and weighted, revealed a significant effect of Time 1 internalizing problem behaviors, such that higher levels of internalizing problem behaviors at Time 1 predicted higher levels of internalizing problem behaviors at Time 2 (Unweighted: B = 2.62, *p* < .001; Weighted: B = 2.58, *p* < .001). In Model 2, income change was entered into the equation; however, no significant effect was detected for this variable (Unweighted: B = -.01, *ns*; Weighted: B = -.03, *ns*). The moderators were entered next with results from both analyses showing a significant effect of maternal depressive symptoms, such that higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms at Time 1 were associated with higher levels of internalizing problem behavior in children at Time 2 (Unweighted: B = .33*p* < .05; Weighted: B = .34, *p* < .05). Similar to earlier findings in the present study, marital disruption added in Model 4 was not significant (Unweighted: B = .92, *ns*; Weighted: B = .49, *ns*). The final model tested interaction effects of marital disruption and the moderators. Results revealed significant interaction effects between marital disruption

and poverty status (Unweighted: B = 12.45, $p < .10$; Weighted: B = 12.93, $p < .05$) and between marital disruption and maternal depressive symptoms (Unweighted: B = 1.16, $p < .01$; Weighted: B = 1.24, $p < .01$). The plot results indicated that there is greater difference between the two groups of children in conditions of poverty compared to those not living in poverty (See Figure 6). While both groups of children (i.e., those from subsequently disrupted and continuously married parents) exhibited similar levels of internalizing problem behavior when the level for maternal depressive symptoms is low, the results indicated divergence between the two groups when the level of maternal depressive symptoms is high. The children whose parents remain married show a stable level of internalizing behavior while those children whose parents subsequently divorce/separate show a sharp increase in internalizing problem behavior (See Figure 7). The plot for the interaction between marital disruption and maternal depressive symptoms indicated a stronger positive association between maternal depressive symptoms and internalizing problem behavior for children whose parents subsequently separate/divorce relative to children whose parents remain married. The pattern is similar to the corresponding interaction findings for externalizing problem behavior.

Exploratory analyses with maternal education and employment included as moderators revealed a significant main effect of education (Unweighted: B = 1.51, $p < .05$; Weighted: B = 1.72, $p < .05$). There was no significant main effect of maternal employment and no significant interaction effects.

Cognitive Ability/Academic Outcomes

PIAT-Math. In Model 1, analyses for both approaches, unweighted and weighted, revealed a significant effect of Time 1 math performance, such that higher levels of math performance at Time 1 predicted higher levels of math performance at Time 2 (Unweighted: $B = .53$, $p < .001$; Weighted: $B = .55$, $p < .001$). Similar to the analyses from the imputed/weighted data, the results also revealed that younger children outperformed their older counterparts (Unweighted: $B = -1.78$, $p < .01$; Weighted: $B = -2.11$, $p < .01$). Income change was entered next in Model 2, and no significant effect was detected from the two approaches. In Model 3, those risks and resiliency factors previously linked with children's adjustment were entered into the equation. Unlike the analyses from the imputed/weighted data, results show a marginal effect of Time 1 parental conflict. Higher levels of conflict was related to children's poorer math performance at Time 2 (Unweighted: $B = -.35$, $p < .10$; Weighted: $B = -.37$, $p < .10$). Consistent with earlier findings from the present study, there was no significant effect of marital disruption on math performance as is seen in Model 4 (Unweighted: $B = -2.67$, *ns*; Weighted: $B = -3.58$, *ns*). The final model revealed a significant interaction effect between marital disruption and marital conflict (Unweighted: $B = 1.13$, $p < .10$; Weighted: $B = 1.36$, $p < .05$). The plot results indicated that greatest difference between the two groups occurred when Time 1 conflict was high (See Figure 8). Results also show that Time 1 levels of parental conflict were significantly associated with math performance of children at Time 2 (Unweighted: $B = -.52$, $p < .05$; Weighted: $B = -.56$, $p < .05$) such that higher conflict predicted lower math scores. Additionally, weighted analyses revealed a significant interaction effect between marital disruption and maternal employment (Weighted: $B = -17.66$, $p < 05$). The two groups of children had similar

performance when mothers were employed; however, children whose parents would divorce/separate showed increased performance relative to their counterparts when mothers were not working (See Figure 9).

PIAT-Reading Recognition. In Model 1, analyses for both approaches, unweighted and weighted, revealed a significant effect of Time 1 reading performance, such that higher levels of reading performance at Time 1 predicted higher levels of reading performance at Time 2 (Unweighted: B = .88, p < .001; Weighted: B = .86, p < .001). Number of children in the household was significantly associated with an increase in reading scores, such that more children in the home predicted higher levels of reading performance (Unweighted: B = 2.69, p < .05; Weighted: B = 2.75, p < .05). Income change entered into the equation in Model 2 was not significant (Unweighted: B = -.08, ns; Weighted: B = -.06, ns). In Model 3, the moderators were included and Time 1 neighborhood problem was significantly related to children's reading performance at Time 2; children living in neighborhoods with more problems had decreased reading performance (Weighted: B = -.73, p < .05). This result was a marginal effect in the unweighted data (Unweighted: B = -.57, p < .10). For the weighted approach, results revealed a marginal effect of Time 1 poverty status; children who lived in poverty had decreased reading scores (Unweighted: B = -5.44, ns; Weighted: B = -5.41, p < .10). Maternal employment was also marginally related to children's reading; there was an increase in reading scores for children whose mother did not work (Unweighted: B = 5.40, p < .10; Weighted: B = -5.78, p < .10). Child sex was also marginally related to reading performance; girl showed higher levels of reading compared to boys (Weighted: B = 3.86, p < .10). Model 4 examined whether marital disruption was associated with

poorer reading performance, after accounting for stability in children's reading ability, control variables, income change, and moderators. Unlike previous results in this study, marital disruption was a significant predictor of reading performance in children at Time 2; children whose parents remained married showed an increase in reading scores (Unweighted: B = -7.46, $p < .02$; Weighted: B = -7.65, $p < .05$); Time 1 reading scores and neighborhood problems remained significant predictors. The final model revealed no significant interaction effects.

Multiply Imputed vs. Complete-Case Analyses

Compared to the complete-case analyses, the multiple imputation analyses are the most robust, providing multiple data sets with plausible values for the missing values and taking between-imputation variance into account when calculating the standard errors. The complete-case analysis of datasets with missing observations is in some ways inadequate because it may omit as many as half of the available cases which is evidenced by the small valid sample size that is used for the regression analyses. Cases are omitted because of non-response (i.e., missing values) on regression analysis variables. The multiple imputation analysis allows cases to be taken into account when otherwise they would have been dropped. The complete-case analyses assume that the complete cases are a completely random sample of all of the cases which very well may not be true; those cases providing complete responses may be quite different from those cases with incomplete responses. While missing data is a common problem for researchers conducting longitudinal studies, there are several reasons for non-response. Participants may be unavailable during one or more of the waves. Also, participants may be unwilling

to respond to some items or simply fail to complete segments of the questionnaire/interview due to lack of time or interest (Schafer & Olsen, 1998). In view of these considerations, it is expected that strong effects from the complete-case approach will be retained in the multiple imputation approach. This is seen with the main effects for maternal depressive symptoms, which is significant in both approaches (see Table 7.1, Model 3).

The differences in the results between the imputed and complete-case approaches are notable. In the multiple imputation analyses, fewer significant findings are expected because the standard errors of coefficients tend to be larger due to the fact that the analyses are taking into account between-imputation variance in the coefficients. In the complete case analyses, the standard errors are generally smaller, leading to a higher probability of significant findings and possibly a greater threat of making a Type I error--falsely rejecting the null hypothesis. Deviations from this pattern may arise from the fact that small sizes are small. The imputations may be somewhat unstable from one data set to another.

Despite the differences, there are some overlaps. Time 1 adjustment is a consistent, significant predictor of Time 2 adjustment; this is true across all the different approaches in all of the outcome domains. In contrast, marital disruption is consistently not significant across the different approaches, except for reading scores in the complete case approach. Each of the Time 1 moderators (entered in Model 3), except maternal mastery, was a (marginal or) significant predictor of children's adjustment in at least one set of analyses. For the imputed/weighted analyses, neighborhood problems and maternal depressive symptoms were common predictors for the behavioral measures of child

adjustment—externalizing and internalizing behaviors. When models were estimated with the complete-case data set, weighted and unweighted, then to some degree parental conflict, parent-child relationship, poverty status, maternal education and employment, were revealed as (marginal) predictors of children's adjustment. Neighborhood problems and maternal depressive symptoms are the only predictors that are revealed as significant predictors of children's adjustment in both imputed and complete-case analyses. Finally, the complete-case analyses revealed several significant interaction effects (i.e., marital disruption X parent-child relationship, marital disruption X maternal depressive symptoms, marital disruption X poverty status, marital disruption X parental conflict, and marital disruption X maternal employment) with a few marginal interaction effects (i.e., marital disruption x neighborhood problems and marital disruption x maternal education). No such significant interaction effects were detected in the imputed/weighted analyses.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

Prior research has suggested that parents' marital disruption is related to children's risk of experiencing maladjustment in a variety of domains. Many of these earlier studies have focused predominantly on majority populations, with few studies examining Black families. The present study goes beyond previous research in several ways: 1) it examines the association of parental marital disruption and children's adjustment with an exclusively Black sample, 2) it investigates pre-disruption factors that may modify the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment, and finally, 3) it assesses whether the potential effect of marital disruption varies by the type of well-being indicator being considered.

Findings from this study demonstrate that families that remained married and those that subsequently separated/divorced had notable differences at Time 1. Much of the extant literature overlooks pre-disruption differences; however researchers must pay attention to these differences if they are to determine the effect of divorce/separation, or the lack thereof. Secondly, the present findings indicated no differences between the two marital groups on three (i.e., externalizing behavior, internalizing behavior, and math performance) of the four well-being indicators that were examined. The exception was children's cognitive performance, specifically reading achievement, on which there was a decrease between Time 1 and Time 2 as a function of marital disruption; the pattern

persisted even after accounting for pre-disruption factors and prior reading levels. Finally, the study suggests that factors such as pre-disruption maternal depressive symptoms, neighborhood problems, parent-child relationship, poverty status, parental conflict, maternal employment and maternal education modify the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment depending on the outcome under investigation. Below I discuss these findings and their implications for theory, research, practice and policy.

Marital Disruption

Marital disruption is viewed increasingly as a process rather than a single event. This view however has not been widely incorporated into extant research, because there has been some degree of minimization of child and family experiences prior to marital disruption. An increasing number of researchers have emphasized the importance of viewing marital disruption as a continuous process capable of influencing children's adjustment. The present findings indicate that families who would subsequently separate/divorce had lower levels of parent-child relationship, higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms, lower levels of maternal education, were more likely to be in poverty and reported more neighborhood problems at Time 1 than those families who would remain married. Children whose parents would eventually separate also had lower reading scores at Time 1. These findings point to the fact that there are risks that may compromise the quality of a marriage, thereby leading to its dissolution. On the other hand, they suggest that the process of marital disruption involves a breakdown in parent-child relationship and a decrease in mothers' psychological well-being, for example, even before the actual divorce/separation. The former explanation refers to the theory of

"social selection" which posits that some families may divorce/separate because of their predisposition to greater risk. The latter explanation refers to the theory of "social causation" which suggests that divorce/separation is associated with stress and adversities. There is reason to believe that both of these frameworks offer plausible interpretations. For example, the high levels of maternal depressive symptoms at Time 1 may be the cause of the eventual breakdown of the marriage, or, the process of the marital disruption may affect maternal mental health even before the marriage ends. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to determine the specific cause of the disturbances, the findings strongly indicate that those families who eventually divorce/separate had more disturbances at Time 1. Therefore, the extent to which children look differently after divorce compared to their counterparts in families that remain married is due, in part, to what is going on in the entire process which does not begin with the actual divorce or even the aftermath of the divorce, but before.

The findings also suggest that the magnitude or scope of the effect of marital disruption may be modest. Of all the well-being indicators that were investigated, only reading performance seemed to decrease as a function of marital disruption. There are three interpretations that I propose for this general absence of an effect. The first is the prevalence of disadvantages in the lives of Black families and their children. Children from various racial groups fare differently in many domains of their lives regardless of whether their parents are married or divorced. Some of these domains in which we find differential exposure relate to their socioeconomic backgrounds, parental resources, etc. According to recent national statistics, the poverty rate for Black children in 2005 was 35 percent, much higher than that of White children (10%) or even the national rate (18%)

(Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007). In terms of food security, the proportion of Black children living in food-insecure households was 29 percent, more than 10 percent above the national average (17%) in 2005. In view of these disadvantages, it is possible that children confronted with a large number of disadvantages and inequalities from the inception may not have the same magnitude of adverse response to their parents' marital disruption (Amato & Keith, 1991; McLoyd, Harper, & Copeland, 2001). In other words, the experience of parent's separation/divorce may only have marginal effects over and above the existing disadvantages. In the general literature, these effects of family structure and marital disruption are somewhat attenuated for Blacks. Some researchers have not been able to establish an association between living with a single mother and adverse outcomes among Black children. Family structure was unrelated to delinquency (Austin, 1992; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1995), substance use (Ensminger, 1990; Thomas et al., 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1995) and school performance (Dornbusch, Ritter, & Steinberg, 1991) for Black youth. These studies raise the question of whether or not living in a single-mother household has the same meaning for Black children and White children. McLoyd, Harper and Copeland (2001) report that since non-Hispanic White children generally live in more favorable environmental and social contexts and enjoy greater opportunities for positive growth compared to ethnic minority youth, it is not surprising that the effects of marital dissolution may have more pronounced effects in the former than the latter. Moreover, Sun and Li (2007) in their national longitudinal study examining racial/ethnic differences in children's response to marital disruption, found support for this argument. When many children in a racial group are exposed to a disproportionate amount of

disadvantage as a part of their lived experience, family transitions such as marital disruption may have only a small effect above and beyond the original disadvantage. In their study of African American, Asian, European, and Hispanic adolescents, Hispanics on average stood out as having the largest amount of disadvantage and did not have the scope or magnitude of maladjustment after formal separation as their non-Hispanic counterparts. While there is need to see whether these findings are replicated among young children, their study, nonetheless, lends general support to the hypothesis of prevalence of disadvantage. Similar to Sun and Li, the present study which focuses exclusively on Black families does not demonstrate the scope or magnitude of marital disruption that the general research literature would indicate. As such a possible interpretation is that the potential effect of marital disruption may be muted in the face of other difficulties that families face.

The second interpretation for the limited scope in the effect of marital disruption is related to divorce prevalence. In their meta-analysis, Amato and Keith (1991) attribute the smaller disruption effect among African Americans to the prevalence of marital disruption within African American communities. This hypothesis lacks direct empirical support, but there is evidence to bolster its plausibility. Recent trends from the Current Population Survey (CPS) data illustrate disparate racial profiles in rates of marital disruption. These data indicate that although there has been a leveling in the rate of marital disruption for White women since 1980, there is less evidence of stabilization among Black women (Sweeney & Phillips, 2004). Not only are Black women's divorce and separation rates higher than those of White women overall, but the rates began to rise beginning in the mid-1980s. Additional statistics on children's living arrangements show

that 35 percent of Black children lived with two married parents in 2006 compared to a national average of 67 percent (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007). According to the divorce prevalence hypothesis, children's maladjustment to parental separation/divorce would be inversely related to the divorce rate in a given ethnic/racial group. Sun and Li (2007) found partial support for this hypothesis with Asian and European American adolescents demonstrating more maladjustment than Hispanic and African Americans. However, the prediction based on this hypothesis that Hispanics would show more maladjustment than African Americans because of the latter community's greater prevalence of divorce/separation was not supported. The line of reasoning consistent with this hypothesis is plausible but here again there is need for further systematic research.

Finally, I turn our attention to the discussion in chapter I where I highlighted adaptive strengths that may serve as strategies for fostering optimal developmental in families experiencing marital disruption. In that earlier chapter, I identified the culturally variant perspective as the salient framework for my interpretation of Black children's adjustment to marital disruption. The framework emphasizes the unique features of Black families including flexible gender roles, kinship ties/extended families, and a strong religious orientation (Barnes, 2001; Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Hill, S., 1999; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993) which may serve as strengthening factors or survival mechanisms for Black families facing the stressors that accompany marital disruption.

Moderating Effects of Pre-disruption Factors on Children's Adjustment

Regression analyses showed that changes over time in children's adjustment were predicted from a number of known family risks, including maternal depressive symptoms

and neighborhood problems, for example. Of all the pre-disruption factors, these two are highlighted because they show consistent, significant results in the present study. The findings indicate that all children benefit from living in households headed by mothers who demonstrate emotional and psychological health, as well as from living in communities where there were no real threat of neighborhood problems. This association stands regardless of whether children's parents would eventually divorce/separate. While this finding might not be novel, it replicates cross-sectional patterns in a longitudinal study.

One of the primary objectives of this study was to examine variability in children's adjustment. In particular, I wanted to understand the conditions under which marital disruption was likely to show a negative or positive effect, and for which outcomes. The findings suggest that divorce/separation is not a monolithic phenomenon, but rather that it is experienced differently among children and their families depending on other co-occurring factors.

For externalizing problem behavior, findings indicate that while both groups of children benefited from mothers' having lower levels of depressive symptoms, divergence between the groups emerged in situations of higher levels of maternal depressive symptoms; children whose parents eventually divorced showed a sharp increase in externalizing problem behaviors when mothers reported elevated symptoms levels. There was also greater difference between the groups in situations of neighborhood risks. Contrary to expectation, children who parents remained married showed a slight increase in externalizing behavior as levels of parent-child relationship increased, whereas for children whose parents divorced/separated, there was a sharp

decrease in problem behavior as parent-children relationship level increased. The interpretation for this unexpected pattern may relate to the items that define parent-child relationship. These items include whether the mother conversed with the child, answered child without scolding and lastly whether the mother's voice conveyed positive feelings about the child. Most of the items mentioned here pertain to parent-child interaction more so than the quality of relationship between the parent and child. One possible interpretation of this finding is that the child's externalizing problem behavior elicits interaction with or attention from the mother. In other words, this may be a child effect. A similar association is found by Grogan-Kaylor, Ruffolo, Ortega, and Clarke (2008) in their study of children in the child welfare system. They found that children who received more child welfare services were more likely to show higher levels of externalizing behavior problems. Given that child welfare services are provided to enhance the well-being of children, the authors reported that children with higher levels of externalizing behaviors required greater number of services thereby identifying this association as a child effect.

For internalizing problem behavior, the findings again indicate that the greatest difference between the two groups of children emerge under conditions of co-occurring risk. This was true in situations of poverty and increased levels of maternal depressive symptoms. It seemed as though children whose parents would eventually divorce/separate were more vulnerable to the effects of maternal depressive symptoms because their level of internalizing problem behavior showed a sharp increase as the level of maternal depressive symptoms increased. The same was true for those children in the study who were classified as poor.

For achievement, the findings suggest that pre-disruption conflict has differential effects depending on its level of frequency. Based on the present results, high levels of parental conflict at Time 1 was associated with high math scores at Time 2 for children whose parents eventually divorce/separate. While this finding seems contradictory, it conforms to extant findings. For instance, some researchers assert that in situations of intense, chronic, and overt conflict between parents, separation may be associated with a reduction in problems insofar as it represents a relief from an aversive home environment for parents and children. Others suggest that children in homes with parental conflict are likely to be at an increased risk for maladjustment (Cummings & Davies, 2002); as such, they may be more vulnerable to the effects of their parents' separation and its accompanying stressors. Still other researchers posit that the children most likely to show a change in behavior are those for whom the separation is most unexpected, namely, those children in families with a low-conflict, happy marriage (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). The empirical evidence for distinguishing among these alternatives is mixed, particularly because the child's developmental stage may be an important explanatory factor in understanding susceptibility. Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (AddHealth; Peris & Emery, 2004) indicated that those adolescents in homes with conflicted parents who eventually divorce showed fewer internalizing symptoms over time than those youths in home with low-conflict between parents who eventually separate. Despite the fact that these findings correspond most often to behavioral outcomes, the important point is that divorce/separation may be a relief for children who are living in high-conflict homes. The present findings corroborate earlier work showing children's positive adjustment to marital disruption in situations of

high pre-separation parental conflict; moreover, the present study extends research knowledge by identifying this pattern in the domain of cognitive performance/achievement.

Failure to detect an effect of parental conflict on children's externalizing and internalizing is notable; however, the absence of this effect is not new or without prior support. Nievar and Luster (2006), in their study of African American children's development, examined the link between marital conflict and children's outcomes in early and middle childhood using a sample of African American children from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth—the same survey used in the present study. Contrary to the findings for non-Hispanic White families, Nievar and Luster found that marital conflict was not predictive of behavior problems among their sample of African American children. They offered two plausible explanations for the unexpected finding. The first relates to the nature of the conflict. Hetherington, Bridges, and Insabella (1998), in their comprehensive review on marital disruption and children's adjustment, reported that frequency of conflict may be less important than the type of conflict. They explain that conflict in which children are involved may have more deleterious effects. Similarly, McLoyd, Harper, and Copeland (2001) indicated that the content and intensity of conflict may be more important than the frequency. In particular, they noted that parental conflict pertaining to the child or childrearing may be more stressful to the child than other types of conflict. They argued that dispute over child-related issues is likely to lead to inconsistency in parenting. Of similar importance to the content of parental conflict is the intensity of the arguments and whether the child is exposed to the conflict. Unfortunately,

the marital conflict items in the NLSY data assess frequency of arguments between parents; they do not assess the intensity or children's exposure to the disagreements.

The second explanation refers to culturally adaptive approaches common among African American families. Nievar and Luster (2006) suggested that since there is greater reliance on extended family among African American children than European American children, perhaps this greater involvement of the extended family and even fictive kin (non-biological relationships) relieves children of the potential harmful effects of marital conflict on problem behavior. The present findings suggest that there is need to explore further racial/ethnic differences in the effects of marital conflict on children's problem behavior. Moreover, further examination is warranted to investigate other outcomes besides child behavior. In the present study, marital conflict was related to children's achievement, so understanding the outcomes for and conditions under which marital conflict is more or less harmful is necessary.

Finally, the present findings indicate a significant interaction effect between marital disruption and maternal employment. The two groups of children had similar performance when mothers were employed; however, children whose parents would divorce/separate showed increased performance relative to their counterparts when mothers were not in the labor force. These results suggest a possible disadvantage of maternal employment for children whose parents eventually separate. Recent statistics show that approximately 70 percent of all mothers were in the labor force in 2006 compared to 50 percent of mothers in 1975 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). With this overall increase in labor force participation, how then should these findings be interpreted? Maternal employment may serve as a proxy for the amount of time the

mother has available to spend with the child. Muller (1995), using data on students and

parents from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, found that part-time

employed mothers generally have the highest level of involvement with their children.

Additionally, these children and those whose mothers were not employed performed

better on mathematics achievement tests than their counterparts with mothers who were

in full-time employment. It is possible that children whose parents eventually

divorce/separate benefit more from this available time with mothers during the process of

disorganization and reorganization that is occurring even before the marriage ends.

Child and Household Characteristics

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Jimerson, Egeland & Teo, 1999; Sun & Li,

2007), the present study demonstrates that early (Time 1) behavior problems and

achievement levels were associated with later behavior and achievement levels,

respectively. Despite marital disruption, there was a high degree of continuity in

adjustment such that high Time 1 scores predicted high Time 2 scores. Current findings

also showed consistent developmental differences for math achievement such that

younger children outperform their older counterparts on the PIAT age-appropriate math

assessment. One explanation for this age difference has to do with the changing

perception of competence as children mature. In their longitudinal study, Jacobs, Lanza,

Osgood, Eccles and Wigfield (2002) found that competence beliefs of children's math

ability was highest in first grade, but overtime there were declines for both for girls and

for boys. It is likely that the lower levels of competence beliefs influence actual

achievement over time. Additionally, current findings support previous research (e.g.,

which indicate that girls perform better than boys on reading assessments (e.g., Carlson &

119

Corcoran, 2001; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007). Furthermore, the number of children in the household was positively associated with reading achievement such that higher number of children at home was associated with increased reading levels. Existing research has consistently shown that the number of siblings has a small, negative correlation with achievement (e.g., Blake, 1989; Downey, 1995), however, this study finds no evidence of this. The underlying belief is that resources are diluted as the size of sibship increases. Recent research however has cast doubt on this widely held view (e.g., Guo & Van Wey, 1999). Guo and Van Wey (1999), using the data from the NLSY data, found that after controlling for the confounding effects (i.e., environmental and genetic effects) that the negative sibship effect disappeared. An alternate view in support of the current findings is that there are more opportunities for cognitive simulation through hearing and speaking language. Finally, there were no gender differences in behavior problems identified in the present analyses. This may be attributable to the relatively young ages of the children in my sample, or the shorter interval of time that elapsed since the disruption, or both.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the current study which future research can address. The findings here may not be generalizable to all African American families because of the range of maternal age and the historical cohort. The average age of the mothers in the current study at Time 1 is 30 years, so mothers who began childbearing later in life are not represented here. Also, this is not a nationally representative sample of children, only their mothers (who were the female respondents of the original NLSY). Future research would benefit from examining a nationally representative sample of

120

Black families which offers extensive investigation of marital history and a variety of child well-being indicators. It is certainly possible that the children in this study may be somewhat different from a randomly selected national sample of African American children. Also, nothing is known about the children of the male respondents of the NLSY.

Another limitation is the overwhelming reliance on maternal reports for multiple measures. This is an artifact of the NLSY design. The children in the NLSY data are children of the female respondents in the original survey. As such there are no reports from the father on such measures as marital conflict. In this study, the mother is not only providing the response of such factors as marital conflict and her own depression, but she is also rating the child behavior. There is a threat of overestimation of behavior problem for mothers who report higher levels depression risk. Also, it is possible that mothers may respond to the Behavior Problem Index (BPI) items in a manner that is consistent with the positive portrayal of their children thereby under-reporting behavior problems.

Additionally, the scales in the NLSY presented some limitation for the current study. The parent-child relationship is a composite variable of items selected from the emotional subscale of the HOME scale. Researchers have documented that psychometric analyses of the HOME short form within the NLSY and other samples reveal low to moderate internal consistency and construct validity of the HOME-SF subscales (i.e., Emotional Support and Cognitive Stimulation). Alphas for the emotional subscale range from .35 to .61 across the different age versions of the HOME-SF in the NLSY sample. Furthermore the research literature documents that factor analysis of the HOME-SF within NLSY fails to reproduce the two subscales which has prompted researchers to

refactor the data into smaller subscales than the two provided through NLSY (Moore, Halle, Vandivere, & Mariner, 2002; Mariner & Zaslow, 1998). Separate factor analyses of the emotional subscale for my Black sample resulted in the emergence of three subscales; this finding confirmed the overall finding in the literature on the HOME scale. Moreover, in terms of validation among Blacks, the HOME scale has only been validated on Black pre-schoolers (3-5yr-olds) using the long form (Bradley & Caldwell, 1981; McGroder, 2000). Most of the previous studies relying on the standard scores provided by the NLSY for the HOME scale often use the entire sample of children across all racial/ethnic groups. I did not follow this approach because the ratings of the items by the interviewer may be culturally subjective, possibly misrepresenting the parenting of mother or interaction between mother and child. In response to these statistical and cultural concerns, I selected items that were consistent across the age versions and that related to parent-child relationship. However, the items seem to correspond more with frequency of the parent-child interaction and may not be the best measure of the quality of the parent-child relationship. This likely explains the contradictory finding between externalizing behavior and parent-child relationship. Also, as was mentioned earlier, the marital conflict scale looks at the frequency of dispute while a measure of the intensity or extent of child's exposure or involvement with the conflict may be more strongly related to child behavioral outcomes.

In the absence of a material hardship scale, an inflation-adjusted income-change variable was computed, but there was a general lack of significant effects for this variable. Future replication of these analyses should include material hardship as an indicator of global economic well-being. Several researchers have relied on measures of

material hardship to assess the well-being of children and families (e.g., Corcoran, Heflin, & Siefert, 1999; Gershoff, Aber, Raver, & Lennon, 2007). While the items included in an index of material hardship may vary based on the individual researcher's selection, the following items are common indicators of economic hardship: experienced difficulty paying rent, difficulty paying utilities, did not see a doctor or a dentist when needed, did not have enough food to eat, expressed dissatisfaction with condition of housing, or reported no health insurance (Mayer & Jencks, 1989; Short, 2005). These indicators would complement an income-based measure because it provides a multi-dimensional representation of hardship in terms of the families' inability to meet several basic needs. According to Ouellette, Burstein, Long and Beecroft (2004), "…differences in household living standards are not fully explained by current income [and by extension, income change]. For example, income-based measures do not account for wealth, debt, or access to credit—all of which may be used to help meet families basic needs" (p.1). It is possible that even high income families with many members and burdensome expenses can have difficulty in meeting some of their basic needs. As such, material hardship is arguably a more reliable and sensitive measure of a families economic well-being.

Finally, there were more than 200 unique families in the current study, but a portion of these families had multiple children represented in the sample. For example, the BPI sample had 272 unique families and 85 of these had two children represented in the study. While most of families (61% in BPI subsample and 70% in PIAT subsample) had only one child represented in the sample, the failure to adjust for with-in family correlation in the analyses presumably would result in the under-estimation of the

standard errors. Future studies may use Hierarchical Linear Modeling to adjust for this kind of with-in family correlation. On a related note, I focused only on children who fit my race and family criteria, and who were present in the study at Time 1 and Time 2. As such, my eligibility criteria dictated that those present only at one time point be excluded. These excluded children while they do not directly affect my analyses, do serve to reduce the sample size and perhaps result in the retention of a more resilient group of children and their families.

Study Strengths

Despite the limitations, I believe that this study adds to the literature on marital disruption and children adjustment among Black families in significant ways. Because of the disproportionate number of Black families that experience marital disruption in the United States, it is important to understand how and why divorce/separation may or may not affect the lives of Black families and their children. While many studies have focused on the association between marital disruption and children's adjustment, few have focused on Black families. This study's exclusive attention on this group acknowledges and emphasizes the unique experiences of Black families. In fact, this study helps us to identify and empirically test factors that determine intra-group variation among children whose parents divorce/separate, namely education, poverty, neighborhood quality, and so on.

Implicit in my research orientation is the ecological framework that allows for an examination of a variety of issues and contexts in which the children and family are embedded. I hope that this approach is discernible by the various predictors that were included in the dissertation. No child or family can be adequately studied outside of the

contexts in which they are embedded. This context is not only physical, but rather it also represents culture. The study emphasizes the culture invariant perspective in understanding adaptive approaches available to ensure optimal development among children. This emphasis takes into account the roles of culture and history.

Moreover, the focus of this dissertation on Black families has important implications for the development of theory and the formation of policy strategies that are intended to ameliorate the hardships faced by these families. While there is empirical evidence to demonstrate the resilience of Black families, it is important not to minimize threats to well-being. It is still important to address the challenges that these families face. The approach we take in eradicating these hardships is dependent on our understanding of them and its influence on these families. Divorce and separation may not have the same kind of impact on Black families as is documented among other families, but it appears that this effect even if present may be muted by other hardships that these families confront. As such, this study extends the literature on marital disruption by drawing attention to factors that might overshadow the effect of marital disruption in different families, in this case Black families. Also, by including multiple variables that describe the context of families, the study draws attention to the multiple realities of families and the numerous contributors to well-being.

Finally, another strength of this dissertation lies in its approach to marital disruption as a process. Despite the immense focus on the aftermath of divorce/separation, many scholars have suggested that this process starts before the actual divorce/separation (e.g., Sun & Li, 2007). The current study attempted to magnify the

reality of this process by investigating risk and resilience pre-divorce/separation factors that may bear on the well-being of children and their families.

Research Implications

Many researchers have overlooked the differences that exist between families who remain married and families that would eventually divorce/separate. The current findings reveal, however, that it may not be the divorce/separation per se that contributes to adverse outcomes among children who experience their parents' marital disruption; rather, it is a compilation of stressors that may be induced by the dissolving marriage as well as external factors that put a strain on the marital relationship. Further research is needed to understand whether the general absence or reduced harmful effects of marital disruption among Blacks is an actual finding or whether this effect albeit small is being muted by other disadvantages. This attenuation hypothesis needs direct empirical attention. In addition, it is possible that the findings are an effect of age since the average age of the children is seven. Though the findings are mixed, researchers have suggested that older children are more adversely affected by marital disruption than younger children (Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). Future research is needed to examine whether these findings would be replicated in an adolescent sample, for example.

The focus on a 3-4 year inter-survey period permitted an examination of immediate or short-term effects of marital disruption. While the initial period following the divorce/separation is identified as the crisis period, future research should investigate the extended process of marital disruption by examining long-term effects. In particular, research is warranted that examines the developmental trajectories of Black youth who

experience marital disruption. Well-designed longitudinal studies are necessary to help us understand the dynamic interaction of risk and protective factors that influence the adjustment of children over time. Such studies will also allow us to examine diverse developmental patterns of outcomes associated with marital disruption and move us away for focusing on mean differences.

The current findings infer Black children's resilience in the face of marital disruption. Many of the studies that show similar findings of small effects of marital disruption among Black families have done so with quantitative data. A more in-depth study of children's understanding of and coping with stressors related to marital disruption would be attained from qualitative research. A handful of qualitative studies have focused on coping strategies and resources of Black single-mothers. However, qualitative research focusing on children would allow researchers to understand their perception of, and the meaning they attach to, the marital disruption and how they cope.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the effects of marital disruption may be domain specific, rather than global. This is evidenced by the fact that of the four well-being indicators that were assessed, only one showed change as a function of marital disruption. Future work should investigate the types of outcomes that are most vulnerable to the accompanying stressors of marital disruption and undertake systematic examination of why the differential vulnerability for each domain.

Finally, the findings from this study suggest that marital disruption is not a monolithic phenomenon, experienced identically by every family or every racial group. As such, it serves to extend the common conceptualization surrounding the well-being of children whose parents' divorce/separate. Special attention needs to be given to the

ethnic/racial attitudes and perceptions about divorce/separation as well as the expectation for children's behavior. It is possible that these orientations about marital disruption and expectations for child behavior may differentially influence children's adjustment. Given the extreme variation in the ecologies within which children develop, one might not find a uniform pattern of findings on the impact of marital disruption even if these children are within the same ethnic/racial group.

Policy Implications

The limited effects of marital disruption also have policy implications. As marriage promotion policies gain currency as a way to improve the well-being of children, it is important to gain a better understanding of the effects of living arrangements and more importantly to examine its effects in multiple domains of child well-being. The implementation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 was a policy response to trends of family change and concern for children's well-being. One of the provisions of the law was to influence family structure by encouraging marriage and two-parent families (Huston, 2002; Lichter, 2001; Schoeni & Blank, 2000). This law was accompanied by marriage promotion initiatives with the federal government investing millions to create programs that would promote health marriages. As a family researcher, I endorse the need to promote healthy marriages to strengthen families; however, the current findings indicate that these policy initiatives might not be far reaching. While there may be some evidence to suggest that children who live with married parents have better outcomes that those whose parents eventual separate, the findings are not global; instead they seem to vary by child well-being indicator. Moreover, the effect sizes are generally small. In view of all these

considerations, it is expected that the benefits of policies aimed to improve child well-being by encouraging marriage are likely to be modest. According to the ecological perspective, there are other factors that influence the well-being of children and families that need to be addressed along with marriage promotion. Some of these factors include unemployment, poor quality neighborhoods, and poverty.

Bryant and Wickrama (2005), in their discussion of the contextual approach to understanding marital relationships among African Americans, suggest that there are additional steps that need to be taken to strengthen marriage and families,

> Why waste money on more broad-based policies, such as those aimed at increasing the number of married couples? Such increases may be only temporary, because other factors (e.g., community context) are working against the success of those relationships. Instead of stepping *outside* the box, as we are so often challenged to do in developing solutions to social problems, we propose that policymakers step *inside* the box…Only by immersing ourselves in the social context of a particular group will we be able to adequately identify factors that have the greatest impact on their marital happiness…Let's acknowledge our differences and create policies sensitive to those differences. We know that African Americans are more likely to experience marital dissolution than any other racial/ethnic group….Let's determine why this disparity exists and create group-specific policies aimed at correcting a problem that [may have potential] consequences (pp. 129-130).

Therefore, as policymakers seek to improve children's well-being, there is a need to focus not just on promoting marriages, but also on other factors, particularly extrafamilial factors, that disadvantage families and strain their relationships.

Practice Implications

Social workers and other practitioners should be aware that the overall adjustment differences between children with divorced/separated and continuously married parents

are modest and depend on a variety of factors such as the quality of family life prior to the actual separation/divorce as well as the number of additional stressors to which children are exposed. They should also be aware of the possible differences that may exist among families of different racial/ethnic groups.

Central to the Social Work profession is the "Person-In-Environment (PIE)" concept (Hare, 2004; Karls & Wandrei, 1992; Weiss-Gal, 2008). The PIE orientation serves as a guideline for social worker practitioners intervening in the lives of clients. According to Hare (2004), the PIE approach views individuals and their environments as dynamic and interactive systems. Consistent with this systems approach, the goal of Social Work is to enhance the well-being of individuals by introducing change through the individual or through the context/environment that prevents well-being. Weiss-Gal (2008) says,

> The person-in-environment concept is manifested in the dual aspirations of the profession to provide personal care and further social justice. More specifically, the social work profession seeks to augment the ability of individuals, families, groups, and communities to solve their problems, realize their potential, and enhance their lives, while effecting social reforms intended to remove societal obstacles to the individual's well-being,[and] to reduce inequality… (p.65)

In order to attain these goals, social workers providing services to children and families must be aware of the physical and social contexts that are specific to different communities. More importantly, the must be mindful not to broadly apply default models to improve well-being for children and families experience marital disruption. Furthermore, those providing services to children and their families must be knowledgeable and possess an appropriate and sometimes specialized set of skills. Ethnic and racial cultural themes and orientations

130

permeate the family system and are incorporated into family life in ways that forge critical patterns of interaction and functioning (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1999). Practitioners who are responsible for providing services to children of color and their families must also be culturally aware and sensitive to the unique set of circumstances that they confront.

Moreover, as social work practitioners help families identify and mobilize their strengths, they must be mindful that the resiliency model has limitations. By focusing only on family resilience, practitioners face the risk of ignoring factors that play an important role in contributing to family stress.

Conclusion

I began this study asking 1) whether marital disruption in Black families has the same presumed adverse effects reported in the general literature, 2) whether family circumstances prior to marital disruption account for the negative association between marital disruption and child well-being, and finally, 3) whether the effect of marital disruption may vary by the child outcomes assessed. The findings indicate that the scope of the effect of marital disruption is limited and modest, but still notable because the co-occurring disadvantages of some Black families may mute the effects of this marital transition. Finally, the dissertation highlighted the unique history and cultural orientations of Black families to help situate them in the broader discourse on marital disruption. Maintaining this culturally variant approach will further advance the research on Black families and child development in the area of marital disruption and beyond.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Model: Black Children's Adjustment to their Parents' Marital Disruption: An Examination of the NLSY Data
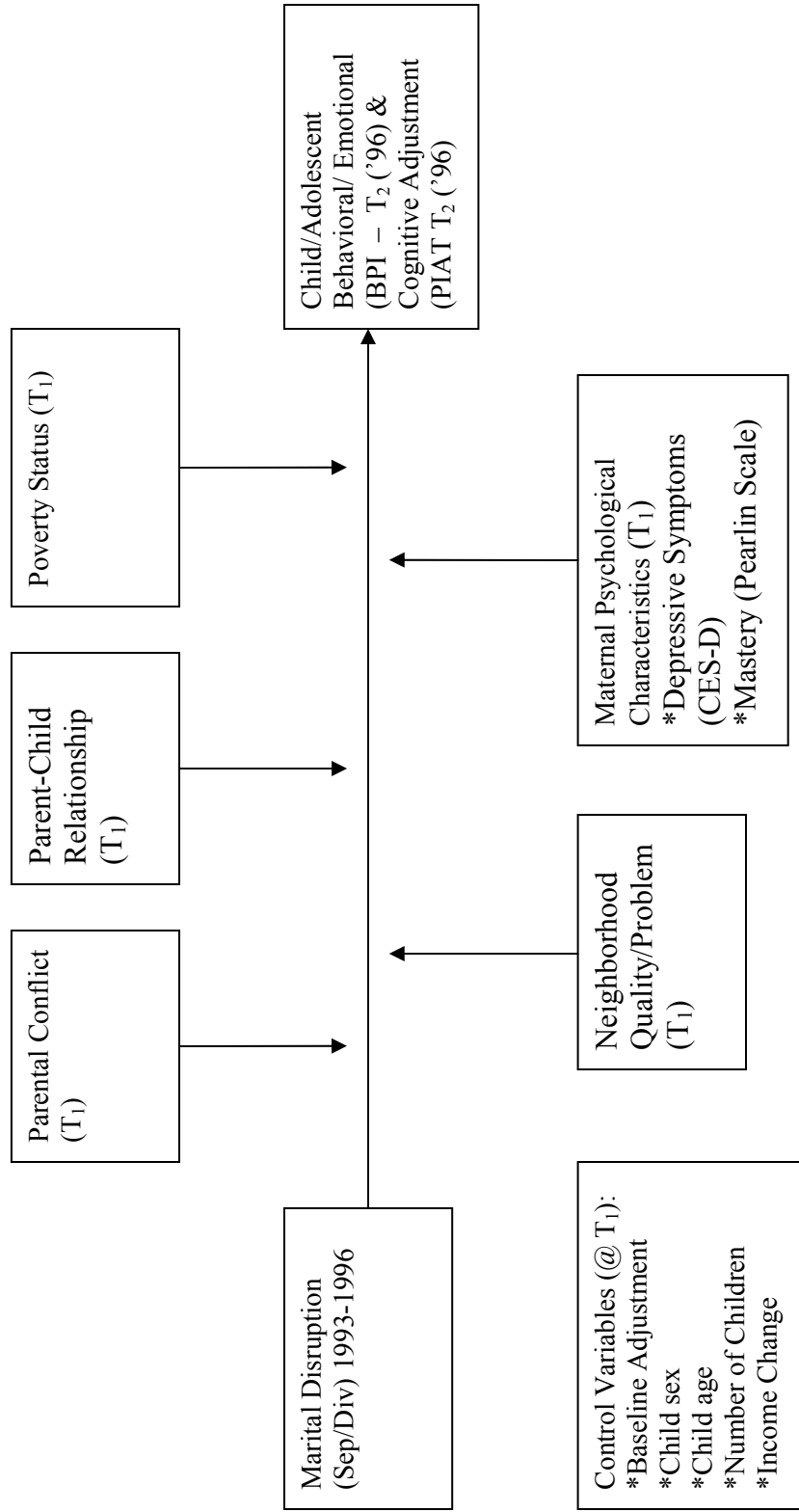
Figure 2. The Association Between Parent-Child Relationship and Externalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
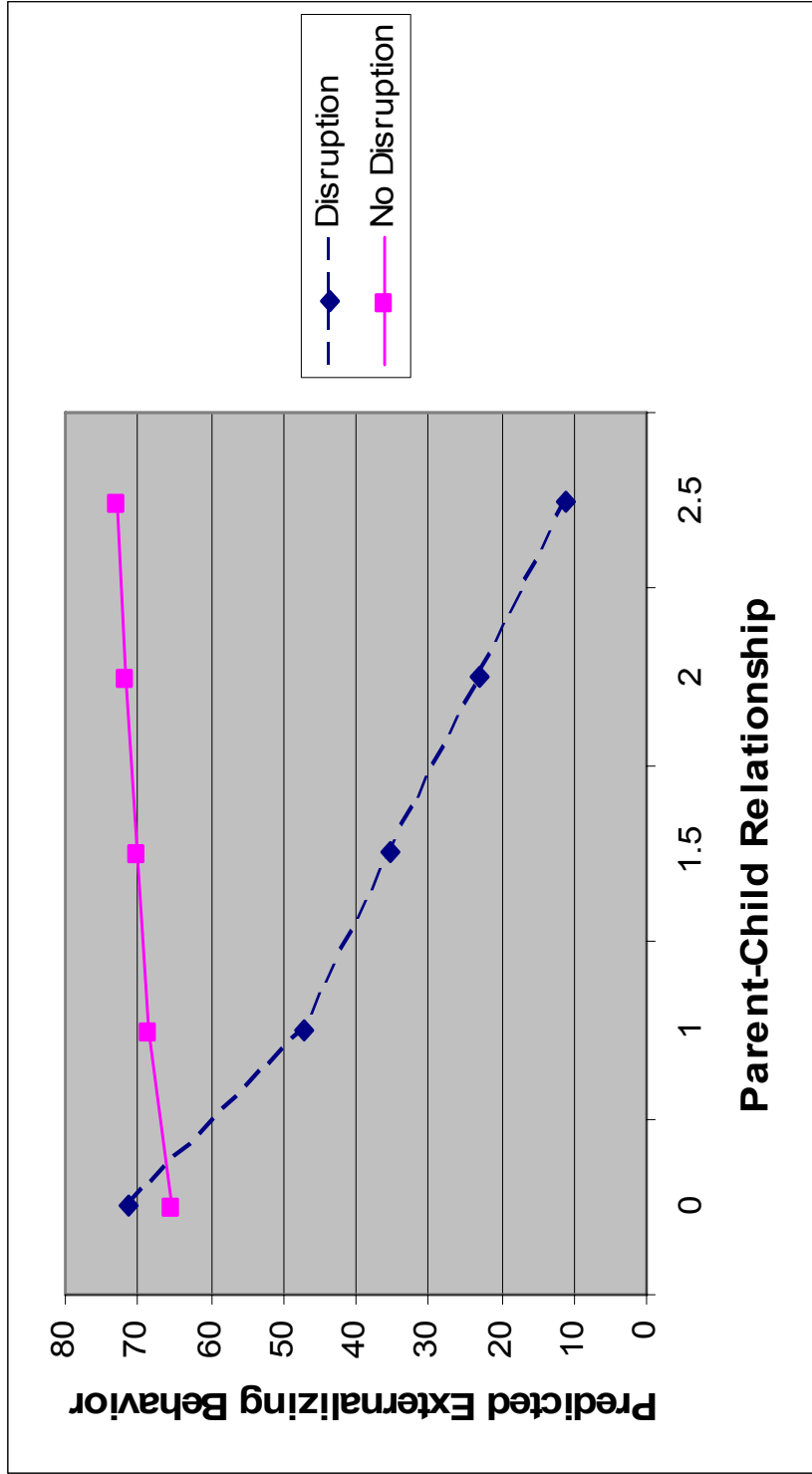
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .01

Figure 2.1. The Association Between Parent-Child Relationship and Externalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
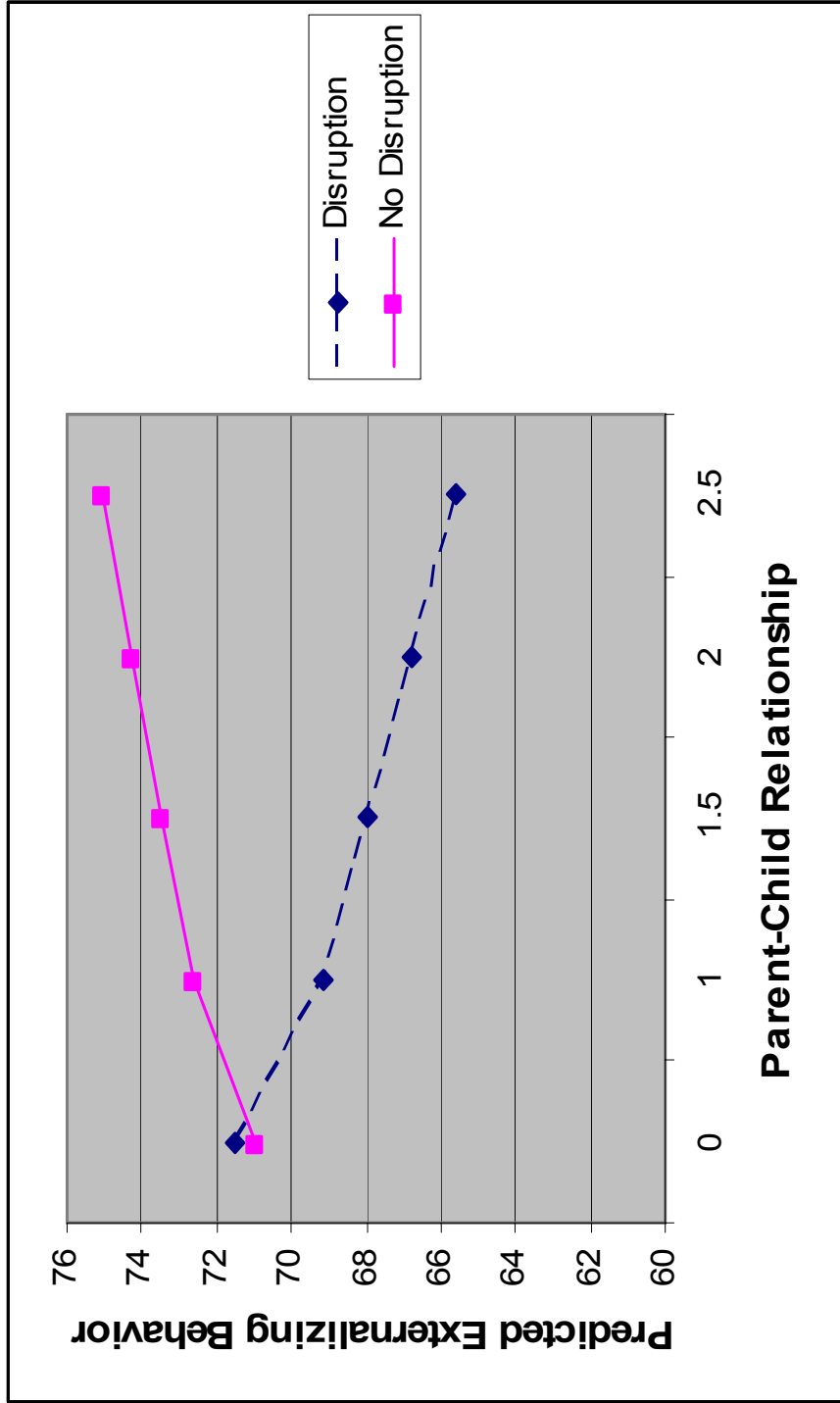
Note. Plot is based on multiple imputation analyses.
$p < .05$

Figure 3. The Association Between Neighborhood Problem and Externalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
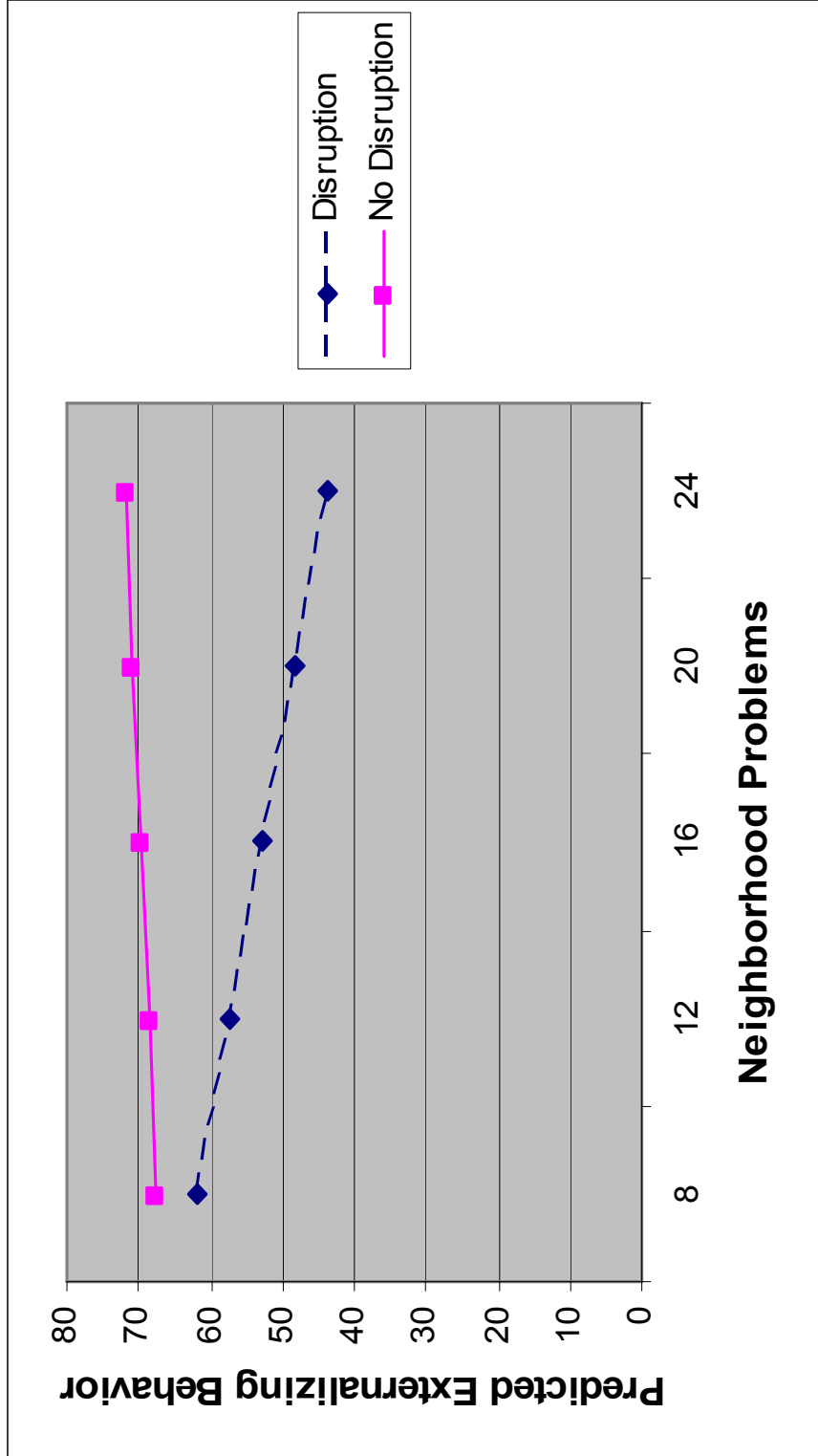
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
$p < .10$

Figure 4. The Association Between Maternal Depressive Symptoms and Externalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
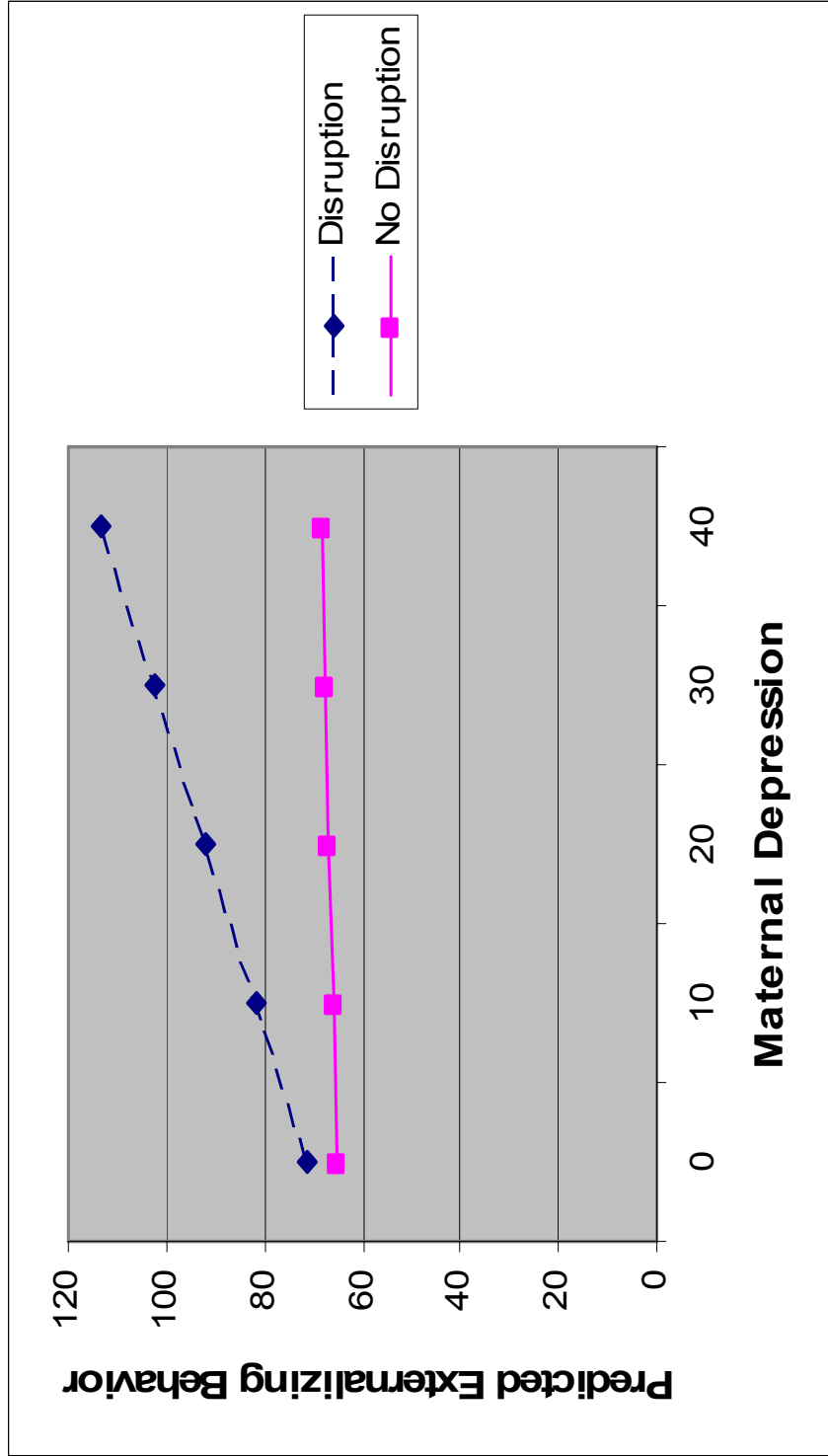
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .01

Figure 5. The Association Between Maternal Education and Externalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
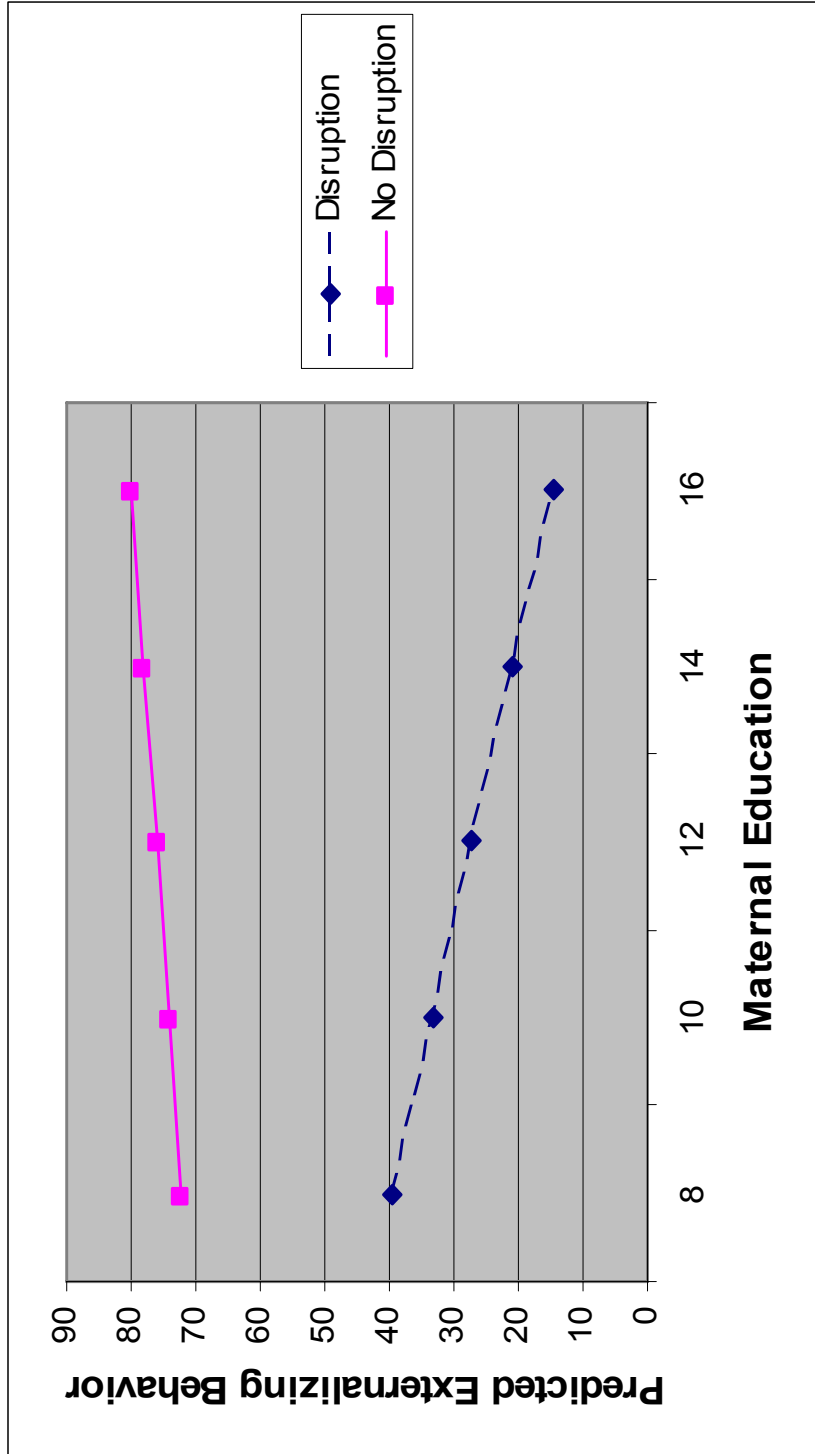
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .10

Figure 6. The Association Between Poverty Status and Internalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
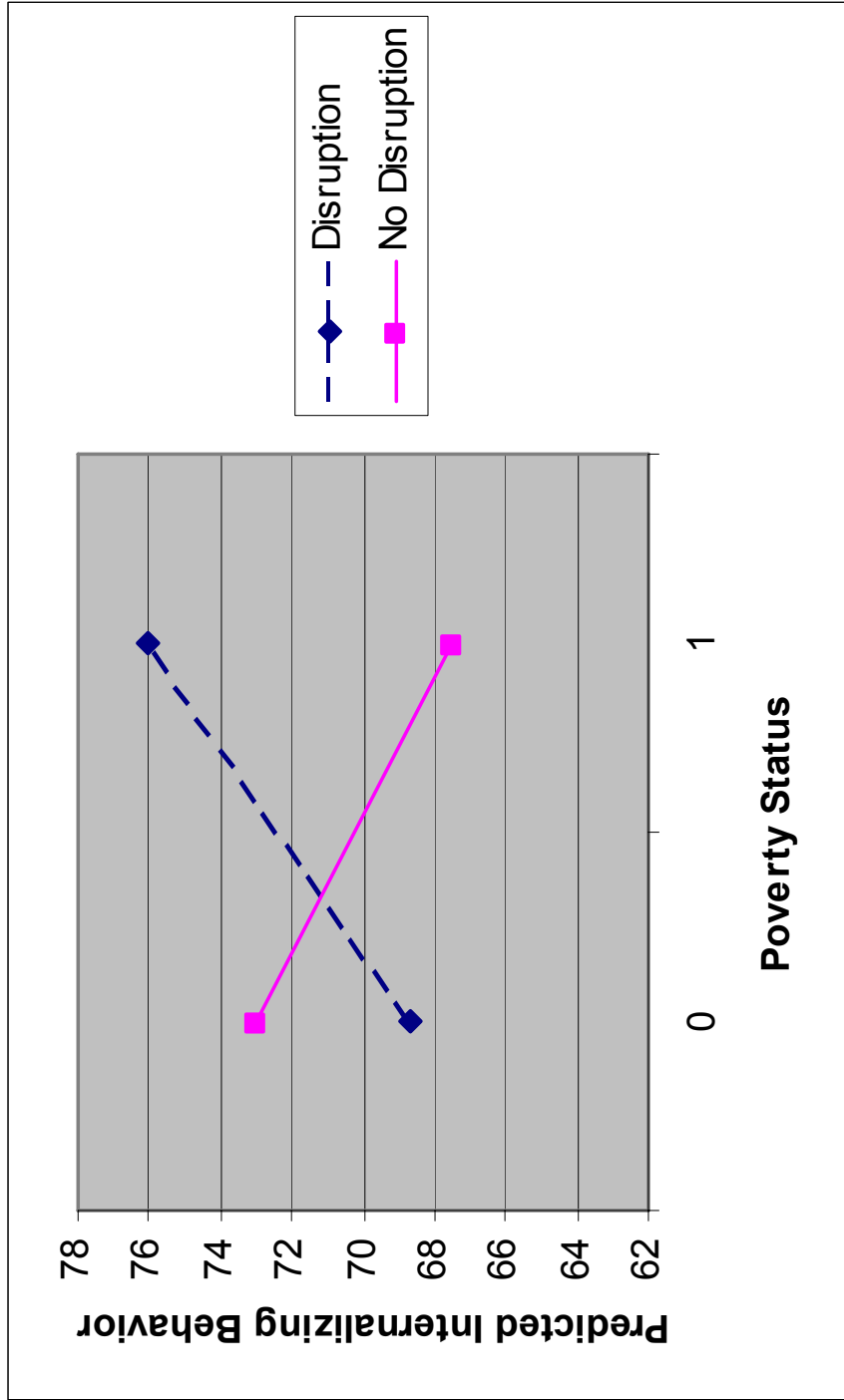
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .05

Figure 7. The Association Between Maternal Depressive Symptoms and Internalizing Problem Behavior by Marital Disruption
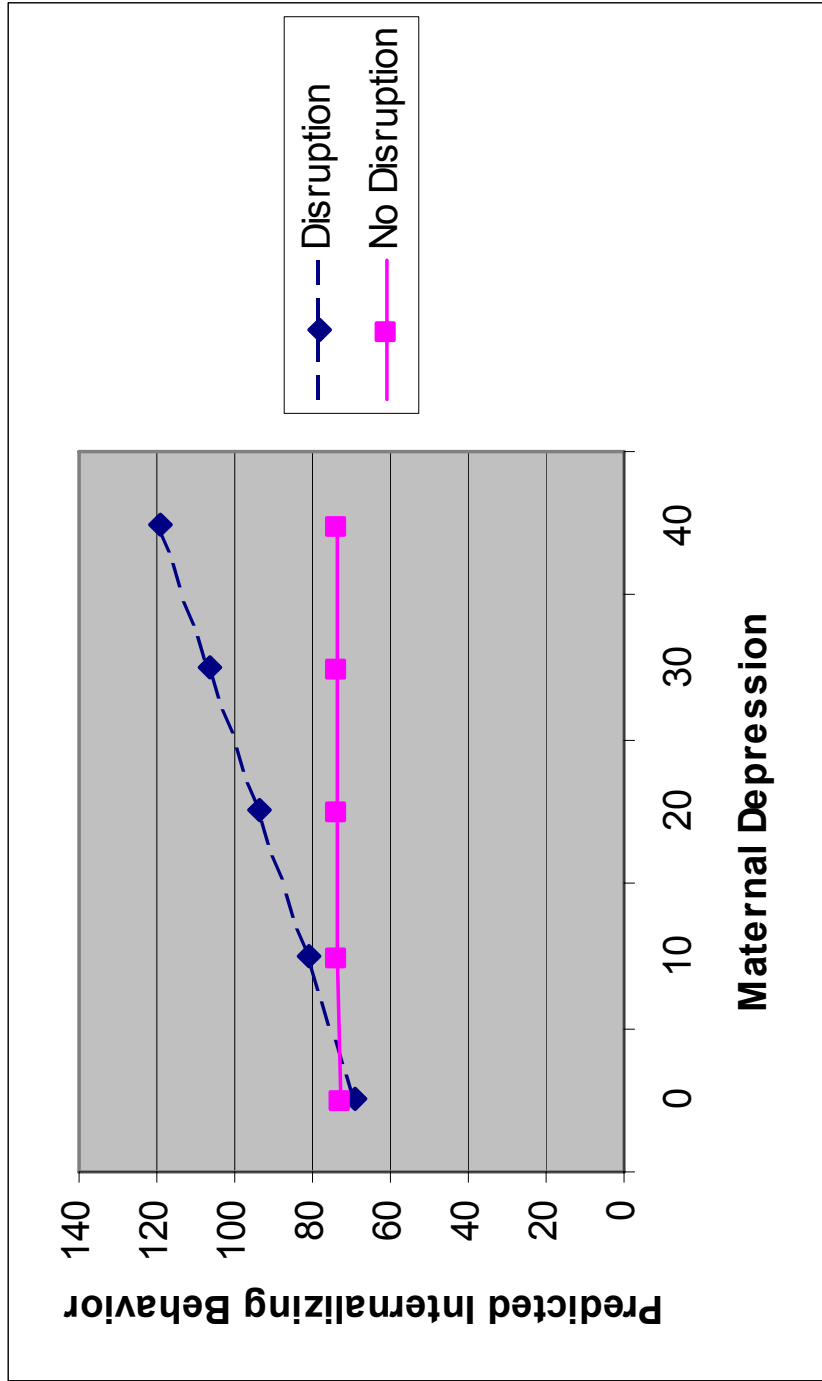
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .01

Figure 8. The Association Between Parental Conflict and PIAT-Math Score by Marital Disruption
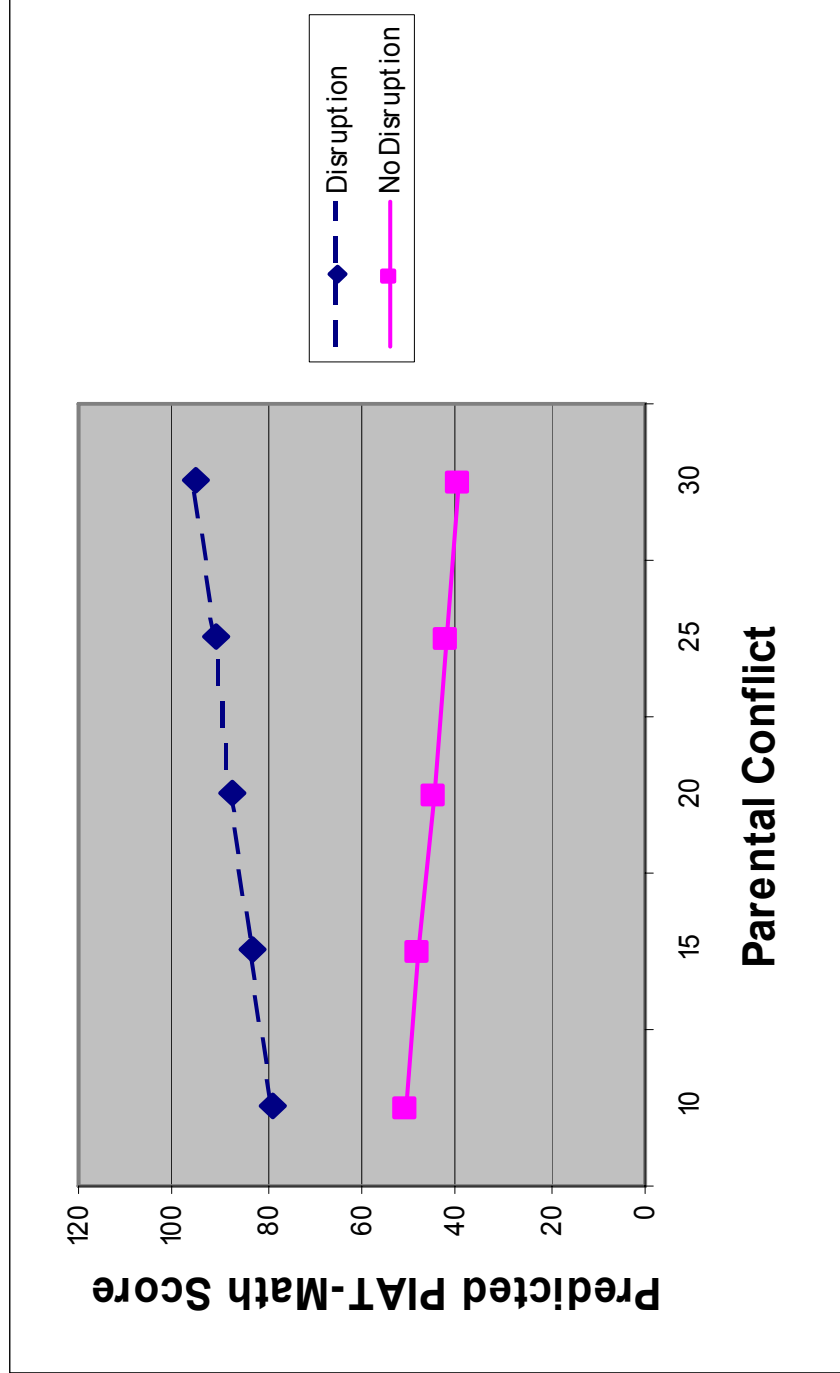
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
$p < .05$

Figure 9. The Association Between Maternal Employment and PIAT-Math by Marital Disruption
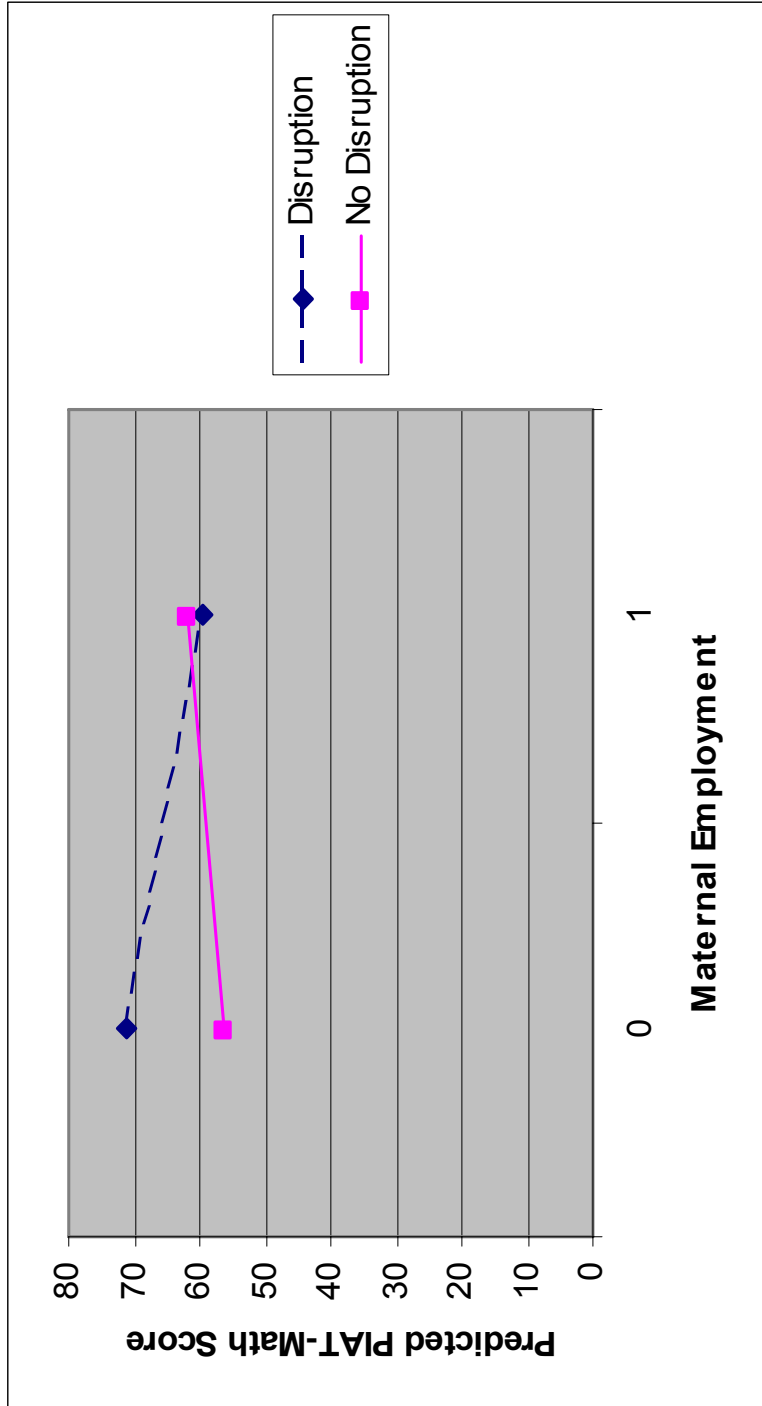
Note. Plot is based on complete-case analyses.
p < .01

TABLES

Table 1. Proportion of Cases with Missing Values by Variables

Variables	Behavioral/Emotional Adjustment (n=405) Missing (%)	Academic Adjustment (n=353) Missing (%)
Spousal Conflict	103 (25%)	92 (26%)
Percent-Child Relationship	63 (16 %)	52 (15%)
Poverty Status	76 (19%)	67 (19%)
Neighborhood Problem	1 (.25%)	1 (.28%)
Mastery	0	0
Maternal Depressive Symptoms	0	0
Maternal Education	0	0
Maternal Employment	0	0
Externalizing Beh. T1	3 (.74%)	--
Externalizing Beh. T2	32 (8%)	--
Internalizing Beh. T1	3 (.74%)	--
Internalizing Beh. T2	20 (5%)	--
PIAT-Math T1	--	25 (7%)
PIAT-Math T2	--	23 (7%)
PIAT-Reading T1	--	27 (8%)
PIAT-Reading T2	--	24 (7%)

144

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations Between Variables at Time 1 (Pre-disruption)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	Child sex	--															
2.	Child age	.05	--														
3.	# of Children	-.04	.08†	--													
4.	Income change	-.07	.06	-.01	--												
5.	Conflict	-.02	.07	.12^1	.01	--											
6.	P-C Relation	.03	-.07	-.02	-.13†	.07	--										
7.	Poverty Status	-.05	.03	.25^3	.14^1	.08	-.20^2	--									
8.	Neighborhood Problem	.03	.03	.17^2	-.17^2	.19^2	-.03	.23^3	--								
9.	Mat. Mastery	-.06	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.06	.14^2	-.16^2	.16^2	--							
10.	Mat. Dep. Sx	.003	-.01	.03	-.16	.30^3	-.13^1	.25^3	.16^2	-.44^3	--						
11.	Maternal Education	-.04	-.09†	-.21^3	-.01	.03	.14^1	-.40^3	-.29^3	.36^3	-.24^3	--					
12.	Maternal Employment	.02	.01	-.19^3	-.12^1	.19^2	.02	-.37^3	-.16^2	.05^2	-.16^2	.29^3	--				
13.	Ext. Beh. T1	-.11^1	.02	.04	.03	.16^2	-.15^2	.15^2	.18^3	-.23^3	.25^3	-.17^2	-.06	--			
14.	Int. Beh. T1	.07	-.04	.13^2	-.03	.01	-.18^2	.17^2	.12^1	-.23^3	.26^3	-.18^3	-.09†	.67^3	--		
15.	Math T1	.08	.06	-.06	.04	-.08	.25^2	-.14^1	-.08	.21^3	-.18^2	.24^3	-.02	-.24^3	-.29^3	--	
16.	Reading T1	.15^2	-.13^1	-.17^2	-.04	-.14^1	.20^2	-.19^2	-.16^2	.26^3	-.20^3	.31^3	.00	-.19^2	-.23^3	.52^3	--
17.	Disruption	.01	.05	.08	-.21^2	.04	-.11^1	.53^3	.17^3	-.03	.19^3	-.23^3	-.03	.07	.08	-.08	-.11^1

Note. Child sex is coded 0 = male, 1 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty; P-C Relation = Parent-Child Relationship; Mat. = Maternal; Dep. Sx = Depression Symptoms; Ext. Beh. = Externalizing Behavior Problem; Int. Beh. = Internalizing Behavior Problem
†p < .10. ^{1} *p* < .05. ^{2} **p** < .01. ^{3} ***p*** < .001.

145

Table 3. Time 1 Characteristics for Children 4 and older (BPI) whose Parents Remain Married and those whose Parents Subsequently Divorce/Separate by the Second Assessment (1996)

| | Multiple imputation (n=405) | | | | Complete cases (n=405) | | | | |
| | Overall | | Remained Married (n=238) | Subsequently Disrupted (n=167) | Overall | | Remained Married (n=238) | Subsequently Disrupted (n=167) | |
	M	(SE)			M	(SD)			F(df)
Moderator Variables									
Conflict	20.49	.45	20.67 (.37)	20.28 (.86)	21.09	5.71	20.98 (5.60)	21.48 (6.15)	.40 (1,300)
P-C Relationship	2.52	.05	2.59 (.06)	2.44 (.08)	2.61	.79	2.68 (.72)	2.50 (.88)	4.31 (1, 340)*
Poverty Status									$X^2(1,329)=.9$
Not in Poverty	N=269		N=191	N=78	N=238		N=176	N=62	
In Poverty	N=136		N=47	N=89	N=91		N=14	N=77	2.54***
Neighborhood Problem	12.62	.21	12.00 (.24)	13.39 (.34)	12.79	4.03	12.20 (3.77)	13.62 (4.25)	12.51 (1, 402)***
Maternal Mastery	21.98	.17	21.83 (.20)	22.16 (.29)	21.83	3.28	21.91 (3.01)	21.71 (3.65)	.36 (1,403)
Maternal CES-D	10.67	.45	9.62 (.51)	11.95 (.80)	10.97	8.85	9.58 (7.60)	12.95 (10.08)	14.70 (1,403)***
Maternal Education	12.71	.09	13.06 (.12)	12.28 (.13)	12.71	1.84	13.07 (1.82)	12.21 (1.75)	22.47 (1,403)***
Maternal Employment									$X^2(1,405)=.25$
Not Employed	N=123		N=70	N=53			N=70	N=53	
Employed	N=282		N=168	N=114			N=168	N=114	
Control Variables									
Externalizing (T1)	25.87	.29	25.45 (.35)	26.38	25.87	5.78	25.51	26.38	2.20

146

				(.47)			(5.47)	(6.17)	(1, 400)
Internalizing (T1)	13.41	.16	13.30 (.20)	13.54 (.25)	13.49	3.10	13.28 (3.02)	13.78 (3.20)	2.60 (1, 400)
Income Change	5.86	2.05	11.68 (3.31)	-1.21 (1.97)	1.68	15.05	4.17 (13.72)	-2.19 (16.25)	11.43 (1,256)**
Number of children in household	2.71	.05	2.64 (.07)	2.79 (.08)	2.72	1.00	2.66 (.99)	2.81 (1.03)	2.47 (1, 403)
Child age	7.37	.10	7.29 (.13)	7.47 (.15)	7.35	1.88	7.27 (1.90)	7.47 (1.85)	1.04 (1, 403)
Child sex	M= 202 F= 203		M=120 F=118	M=82 F=85	M= 202 F= 203		M=120 F=118	M=82 F=85	X^2(1,405) =.07
Number of cases (n)	Valid n=405		Valid n=238	Valid n=167	Valid n=154		Valid n=122	Valid n=32	

Note. P-C Relationship = Parent-Child Relationship; CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies—Depression; Valid n's refer to the total number of cases in the subsample that had no missing values on the study variables.
[†]p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 4. Time 1 Characteristics for Children 5 and older (PIAT) whose Parents Remain Married and those whose Parents Subsequently Divorce/Separate by the Second Assessment (1996)

	Multiple imputation (n=353)				Complete cases (n=353)				
	Overall		Remained Married (n=204)	Subsequently Disrupted (n=149)	Overall		Remained Married (n=204)	Subsequently Disrupted (n=149)	F(df)
	M	(SE)			M	(SD)			
Moderator Variables									
Conflict	20.74	.48	20.82 (.40)	20.63 (.90)	21.30	5.69	21.13 (5.62)	21.88 (5.94)	.80 (1, 259)
P-C Relationship	2.49	.05	2.58 (.06)	2.40 (.09)	2.59	.81	2.67 (.74)	2.48 (.89)	4.08 (1, 299)*
Poverty Status									
Not in Poverty	N=237		N=174	N=63	N=203		N=149	N=54	X^2 (1, 286)
In Poverty	N=116		N=30	N=86	N=83		N=12	N=71	=.83.18***
Neighborhood Problem	12.72	.22	12.07 (.27)	13.47 (.36)	12.89	4.06	12.27 (3.77)	13.73 (4.31)	11.42 (1, 350)**
Maternal Mastery	21.88	.18	21.68 (.21)	22.10 (.31)	21.72	3.34	21.77 (3.07)	21.64 (3.67)	.15 (1, 351)
Maternal CES-D	10.79	.50	9.78 (.57)	11.97 (.86)	11.12	9.12	9.72 (7.85)	13.05 (10.34)	11.86 (1, 351)**
Maternal Education	12.70	.10	13.07 (.13)	12.27 (.14)	12.70	1.84	13.06 (1.82)	12.20 (1.76)	19.64 (1, 351)***
Maternal Employment									
Not employed	N=108		N=59	N=49	N=108		N=59	N=49	X^2 (1, 353)=.64
Employed	N=245		N=145	N=100	N=245		N=145	N=100	
Control Variables									

148

PIAT									
Mathematics (T1)	96.46	.78	97.25 (1.05)	95.54 (1.18)	96.37	13.21	97.23 (13.41)	95.15 (12.86)	1.98 (1, 326)
Reading (T1)	102.91	.76	104.15 (1.07)	101.48 (1.08)	102.98	13.64	104.27 (13.91)	101.17 (13.09)	4.12 (1, 324)*
Income change	3.18	1.20	6.24 (1.86)	-.03 (1.41)	2.03	14.39	4.35 (13.02)	-1.37 (15.67)	8.66 (1, 218)**
Number of children in household	2.73	.05	2.68 (.07)	2.79 (.08)	2.74	.98	2.69 (.95)	2.81 (1.02)	1.42 (1, 351)
Child age	7.78	.09	7.77 (.12)	7.79 (.15)	7.77	1.63	7.74 (1.63)	7.82 (1.62)	.24 (1, 351)
Child sex	M=174 F=179		M=99 F=105	M=75 F=74	M=174 F=179		M=99 F=105	M=75 F=74	X^2 (1, 353) =.11
Number of cases (*n*)	Valid n= 353		Valid n=204	Valid n=149	Valid n=165		Valid n=131	Valid n=34	

Note. P-C Relationship = Parent-Child Relationship; CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies—Depression; PIAT = Peabody Individual Achievement Tests. Valid n's refer to the total number of cases in the subsample that had no missing values on the study variables.

[†]p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5. Means (SD) in Children's Adjustment at Time 1 and Time 2 According to Marital Disruption

Behavioral/Emotional Adjustment

	Externalizing Behavior		Internalizing Behavior	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Marital Disruption				
Remained Married	25.51 (5.47)	104.05 (13.72)	13.28 (3.02)	101.78 (14.09)
Subsequently Separated/Divorced	26.38 (6.17)	106.41 (16.79)	13.78 (3.20)	105.43 (17.45)

Academic Adjustment

	PIAT-Math		PIAT-Reading Recognition	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Marital Disruption				
Remained Married	97.23 (13.42)	97.72 (14.64)	104.27 (13.91)	102.18 (15.66)
Subsequently Separated/Divorced	95.15 (12.86)	95.89 (12.12)	101.17 (13.09)	98.16 (15.65)

Note. See text for report of significant differences. Time 1 and Time 2 externalizing behavior scores are based on raw and standardized scores, respectively. The same is true for internalizing behavior scores.

Table 6. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Externalizing Behavior Subscale Scores at Time 2 (N=405)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	**66.63** **(4.57)*****	**67.08** **(4.64)*****	**70.23** **(4.74)*****	**70.08** **(4.87)*****	**70.02** **(5.17)*****
Externalizing Behavior T1	**1.43** **(.15)*****	**1.43** **(.15)*****	**1.31** **(.16)*****	**1.31** **(.16)*****	**1.31** **(.16)*****
Child sex	.57 (1.24)	.62 (1.24)	.95 (1.25)	.95 (1.25)	.72 (1.26)
Child age	.003 (.34)	-.01 (.34)	.01 (.36)	.01 (.36)	-.04 (.36)
Number of Children	.26 (.64)	.21 (.65)	.18 (.71)	.19 (.71)	.43 (.74)
Income change		-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.004 (.02)	-.004 (.02)
Parental Conflict			-.17 (.12)	-.17 (.12)	-.12 (.16)
Parent-Child Relationship			-.35 (.90)	-.33 (.90)	1.62 (1.26)
Poverty Status			-1.26 (1.86)	-1.44 (2.04)	-1.81 (3.05)
Neighborhood Problem			.23 (.17)	.23 (.17)	.22 (.21)
Maternal Mastery			-.0004 (.22)	-.01 (.22)	-.0003 (.24)
Maternal Depression			**.30** **(.11)***	**.30** **(.12)***	.20 (.19)
Marital Disruption				.51 (1.57)	.66 (1.94)
Marital Disruption x					-.06 (.25)

Variable					
Conflict					
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship					-4.00 (1.79)+
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status					-.73 (3.65)
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem					-.08 (.33)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery					.05 (.48)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression					.16 (.24)
Model F test	3.74**	3.13*	.43	.38	.21
R^2	.31	.32	.35	.35	.36

Note. Child sex is coded 0 = male, 1 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. Results are based on imputed, weighted data.

[†]$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 7. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Internalizing Behavior Subscale Scores at Time 2 (N=405)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	**77.37** **(4.70)*****	**78.01** **(4.71)*****	**83.15** **(4.99)*****	**82.73** **(5.04)*****	**83.31** **(5.15)*****
Internalizing Behavior T1	**2.28** **(.32)*****	**2.26** **(.32)*****	**1.93** **(.35)*****	**1.94** **(.35)*****	**1.93** **(.35)*****
Child sex	.10 (1.41)	.15 (1.42)	.24 (1.38)	.24 (1.39)	.003 (1.38)
Child age	-.29 (.37)	-.30 (.37)	-.35 (.37)	-.36 (.37)	-.37 (.37)
Number of Children	-1.06 (.66)	-1.13 (.67)	-1.32 (.68)+	-1.30 (.68)+	-1.31 (.72)
Income change		-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.03)	-.01 (.02)
Conflict			-.12 (.13)	-.12 (.14)	-.17 (.17)
Parent-Child Relationship			-.27 (1.01)	-.22 (1.00)	1.72 (1.35)
Poverty Status			.22 (1.86)	-.19 (2.07)	-1.98 (3.29)
Neighborhood Problem			**.45** **(.18)***	**.43** **(.19)***	.19 (.25)
Maternal Mastery			-.11 (.27)	-.14 (.27)	.01 (.30)
Maternal Depression			**.33** **(.14)***	**.32** **(.14)***	.30 (.24)
Marital Disruption				1.18 (1.85)	.56 (1.94)
Marital Disruption x					.12 (.28)

153

Conflict					
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship					-3.38 (2.13)
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status					2.13 (4.10)
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem					.41 (.37)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery					-.27 (.57)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression					.001 (.28)
Model *F* test	8.31**	2.82*	.51	.41	.22
R²	.21	.21	.27	.27	.29

Note. Child sex is coded 0= male, 1= female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. Results are based on imputed, weighted data.

†p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 8. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Scores on the PIAT-Mathematics at Time 2 (N=353)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	**57.37 (7.12)*****	**53.38 (7.14)*****	**54.23 (7.88)*****	**55.25 (7.99)*****	**55.94 (8.55)*****
PIAT-Math T1	**.58 (.06)*****	**.58 (.06)*****	**.56 (.07)*****	**.56 (.07)*****	**.55 (.07)*****
Child sex	1.02 (1.46)	1.02 (1.46)	1.05 (1.50)	-1.05 (1.50)	-1.15 (1.52)
Child age	**-1.57 (.41)*****	**-1.56 (.41)*****	**-1.53 (.45)****	**-1.53 (.45)****	**-1.64 (.47)***
Number of Children	-.40 (.68)	-.40 (.68)	.21 (.76)	.20 (.76)	.22 (.74)
Income change		.004 (.04)	.02 (.05)	.02 (.05)	.01 (.05)
Conflict			-.16 (.17)	-.16 (.17)	-.24 (.21)
Parent-Child Relationship			-1.02 (1.10)	-1.05 (1.10)	.20 (1.56)
Poverty Status			-2.83 (2.05)	-2.50 (2.10)	-1.83 (3.55)
Neighborhood Problem			-.10 (.19)	-.09 (.19)	-.21 (.25)
Maternal Mastery			.45 (.25)	.46 (.25)	.81 (.40)+
Maternal Depression			.18 (.10)	.18 (.10)	.07 (.12)
Maternal Education			.56 (.48)	.55 (.49)	.28 (.64)
Maternal Employment			.44 (1.94)	.55 (1.97)	2.47 (2.30)

Marital Disruption				-.57 (1.63)	3.59 (3.73)
Marital Disruption x Conflict					.20 (.31)
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship					-2.51 (2.28)
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status					-2.30 (5.08)
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem					.04 (.39)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery					-.57 (.58)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression					.14 (.19)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Education					.33 (1.08)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Employment					-4.40 (3.65)
Model F test	4.94**	4.07**	.47	.41	.18
R^2	.34	.34	.37	.37	.40

Note. Child sex is coded 0= male, 1= female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. Results are based on imputed, weighted data.

[†]$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 9. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Scores on PIAT-Reading Recognition at Time 2 (N=353)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	**28.62 (8.33)****	**28.45 (.06)*****	**28.19 (9.14)***	**28.18 (9.17)***	**28.25 (9.47)***
PIAT-Reading T1	**.69 (.06)*****	**.69 (.06)*****	**.66 (.07)*****	**.06 (.07)***	**.67 (.07)*****
Child sex	-1.05 (1.53)	-1.05 (1.53)	-1.28 (1.45)	-1.28 (1.46)	-1.24 (1.48)
Child age	-1.07 (.57)	-.06 (.57)	-.03 (.58)	-.03 (.58)	-.04 (.58)
Number of Children	.90 (.75)	.91 (.75)	1.61 (.82)+	1.60 (.82)+	1.75 (.89)
Income change		.01 (.05)	-.004 (.06)	-.005 (.06)	-.01 (.06)
Conflict			-.25 (.20)	-.25 (.21)	.04 (.19)
Parent-Child Relationship			-.54 (1.00)	-.55 (1.01)	-.53 (1.50)
Poverty Status			-.06 (2.60)	.07 (2.81)	.82 (4.20)
Neighborhood Problem			-.25 (.32)	-.25 (.32)	-.19 (.25)
Maternal Mastery			.04 (.32)	.05 (.10)	.01 (.35)
Maternal Depression			.03 (.10)	.03 (.10)	.002 (.14)
Maternal Education			.79 (.52)	.79 (.52)	.65 (.68)
Maternal Employment			1.60 (2.25)	1.64 (2.24)	-.38 (2.53)

157

Marital Disruption			-.20 (1.84)	-3.00 (5.05)
Marital Disruption x Conflict				-.57 (.41)
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship				-.07 (2.21)
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status				-.57 (5.45)
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem				-.08 (.42)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery				-.001 (.59)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression				.06 (.20)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Education				.38 (1.04)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Employment				3.55 (4.51)
Model F test	3.51*	2.78*	.32	.29	.16
R^2	.35	.35	.38	.38	.39

Note. Child sex is coded 0= male, 1= female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. Results are based on imputed, weighted data.

[†]p < .10. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 6.1. Comparative Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Externalizing Behavior Subscale Scores at Time 2 (N=405)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	**66.63 (4.57)[3]**	**63.38 (6.90)[3]**	**63.56 (6.79)[3]**	**67.08 (4.64)[3]**	**63.31 (6.92)[3]**	**63.55 (6.79)[3]**	**70.23 (4.74)[3]**	**63.62 (7.19)[3]**	**64.66 (7.12)[3]**	**70.08 (4.87)[3]**	**63.59 (7.23)[3]**	**64.83 (7.16)[3]**	**70.02 (5.17)[3]**	**64.75 (6.89)[3]**	**65.36 (6.85)[3]**
Externalizing Behavior T1	**1.43 (.15)[3]**	**1.50 (.18)[3]**	**1.52 (.18)[3]**	**1.43 (.15)[3]**	**1.50 (.19)[3]**	**1.52 (.18)[3]**	**1.31 (.16)[3]**	**1.56 (.19)[3]**	**1.55 (.19)[3]**	**1.31 (.16)[3]**	**1.56 (.19)[3]**	**1.56 (.19)[3]**	**1.31 (.16)[3]**	**1.49 (.19)[3]**	**1.50 (.19)[3]**
Child sex	.57 (1.24)	.44 (1.93)	-.15 (1.90)	.62 (1.24)	.49 (1.94)	-.15 (1.91)	.95 (1.25)	.16 (1.93)	-.47 (1.91)	.95 (1.25)	.15 (1.95)	-.39 (1.93)	.72 (1.26)	.43 (1.85)	-.05 (1.84)
Child age	.003 (.34)	.09 (.52)	.24 (.51)	-.01 (.34)	.08 (.52)	.24 (.51)	.01 (.36)	.11 (.52)	.25 (.51)	.01 (.36)	.11 (.52)	.24 (.51)	-.04 (.36)	.17 (.50)	.27 (.49)
Number of Children	.26 (.64)	.19 (1.05)	-.30 (1.03)	.21 (.65)	.20 (1.06)	-.30 (1.03)	.18 (.71)	-.51 (1.12)	-.92 (1.11)	.19 (.71)	-.52 (1.12)	-.90 (1.12)	.43 (.74)	-.70 (1.08)	-1.05 (1.08)
Income change				-.01 (.02)	.02 (.06)	.002 (.06)	-.01 (.02)	.06 (.06)	.06 (.06)	-.004 (.02)	.06 (.07)	.05 (.07)	-.004 (.02)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.06)
Conflict							-.17 (.12)	-.23 (.18)	-.24 (.18)	-.17 (.12)	-.23 (.18)	-.25 (.18)	-.12 (.16)	.05 (.21)	-.03 (.21)
Parent-Child Relationship							-.35 (.90)	**2.55 (1.49)[+]**	2.42 (1.46)	-.33 (.90)	**2.54 (1.50)[+]**	2.45 (1.47)	1.62 (1.26)	**3.34 (1.44)[1]**	**3.08 (1.41)[1]**
Poverty Status							-1.26 (1.86)	1.70 (2.85)	.82 (2.73)	-1.44 (2.04)	1.63 (3.08)	1.24 (2.94)	-1.81 (3.05)	-1.21 (3.72)	-.45 (3.58)
Neighborhood Problem							.23 (.17)	.13 (.27)	.21 (.27)	.23 (.17)	.13 (.27)	.21 (.27)	.22 (.21)	.21 (.27)	.27 (.27)
Maternal Mastery							-.0004 (.22)	.30 (.37)	.38 (.37)	-.01 (.22)	.30 (.37)	.40 (.38)	-.0003 (.24)	.31 (.41)	.31 (.42)
Maternal Depression							**.30 (.11)[1]**	**.39 (.15)[2]**	**.39 (.15)[2]**	**.30 (.12)[2]**	**.39 (.15)[2]**	**.40 (.15)[2]**	.20 (.19)	.04 (.17)	.07 (.18)
Marital Disruption										.51 (1.57)	.18 (2.85)	-1.05 (2.72)	.66 (1.94)	5.44 (5.03)	5.73 (4.91)
Marital Disruption x Conflict													-.06 (.25)	-.31 (.52)	-.07 (.51)
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship													-4.00 (1.79)	**-26.29 (10.22)[2]**	**-27.07 (9.99)[2]**
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status													-.73 (3.65)	5.85 (5.93)	4.23 (5.71)

159

Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem										-.08 (.33)	-1.62 (.83)[1]	-1.41 (.79)+
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery										.05 (.48)	.96 (.92)	.85 (.94)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression										.16 (.24)	1.03 (.33)[2]	.98 (.35)[2]
Model *F* test	3.74[2]	17.31[3]	18.25[3]	3.13[1]	13.78[3]	14.50[3]	7.48[3]	7.73[3]	6.81[3]	7.06[3]	6.52[3]	6.53[3]
R^2	.31	.30	.31	.32	.30	.31	.43	.35	.32	.33	.36	.40

Note. Child sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. For each Model, columns 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the imputed, complete-case unweighted, and complete-case weighted approaches, respectively.

†p < .10. [1]*p < .05. [2]**p < .01. [3]***p < .001.

Table 7.1. Comparative Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Internalizing Behavior Subscale Scores at Time 2 (N=405)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)	B (SE)
Intercept	77.37 (4.70)[3]	68.80 (6.76)[3]	69.12 (6.66)[3]	78.01 (4.71)[3]	68.91 (6.80)[3]	69.40 (6.70)[3]	83.15 (4.99)[3]	69.85 (7.04)[3]	70.76 (6.92)[3]	82.73 (5.04)[3]	69.78 (7.06)[3]	70.71 (6.95)[3]	83.31 (5.15)[3]	72.24 (7.05)[3]	73.01 (6.92)[3]
Internalizing Behavior T1	2.28 (.32)[3]	2.62 (.33)[3]	2.58 (.33)[3]	2.26 (.32)[3]	2.61 (.33)[3]	2.57 (.33)[3]	1.93 (.35)[3]	2.62 (.34)[3]	2.57 (.34)[3]	1.94 (.35)[3]	2.62 (.34)[3]	2.57 (.34)[3]	1.93 (.35)[3]	2.40 (.35)[3]	2.31 (.35)[3]
Child sex	.10 (1.41)	1.92 (2.10)	1.20 (2.06)	.15 (1.42)	1.89 (2.12)	1.13 (2.07)	.24 (1.38)	1.90 (2.14)	1.15 (2.09)	.24 (1.39)	1.84 (2.15)	1.12 (2.11)	.003 (1.38)	2.05 (2.13)	1.56 (2.08)
Child age	-.29 (.37)	-.20 (.56)	-.03 (.55)	-.30 (.37)	-.20 (.57)	-.02 (.55)	-.35 (.37)	-.20 (.57)	-.06 (.56)	-.36 (.37)	-.19 (.57)	-.05 (.56)	-.37 (.37)	-.09 (.58)	.06 (.56)
Number of Children	-1.06 (.66)	-1.24 (1.19)	-1.46 (1.16)	-1.13 (.67)	-1.25 (1.20)	-1.48 (1.17)	-1.32 (.68)[+]	-1.70 (1.27)	-1.81 (1.26)	-1.30 (.68)[+]	-1.72 (1.28)	-1.83 (1.26)	-1.31 (.72)	-2.01 (1.28)	-2.02 (1.26)
Income change				-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.07)	-.03 (.06)	-.01 (.02)	.03 (.07)	.02 (.07)	-.01 (.03)	.04 (.08)	.03 (.07)	-.01 (.02)	.03 (.08)	.02 (.07)
Conflict							-.12 (.13)	-.12 (.20)	-.10 (.20)	-.12 (.14)	-.12 (.20)	-.10 (.20)	-.17 (.17)	.09 (.24)	.09 (.24)
Parent-Child Relationship							-.27 (1.01)	2.09 (1.64)	1.76 (1.60)	-.22 (1.00)	2.08 (1.65)	1.76 (1.60)	1.72 (1.35)	2.88 (1.70)[+]	2.54 (1.64)
Poverty Status							.22 (1.86)	-.46 (3.02)	-1.74 (2.87)	-.19 (2.07)	-.87 (3.35)	-1.94 (3.15)	-1.98 (3.29)	-4.48 (4.22)	-5.54 (3.95)
Neighborhood Problem							.45 (.18)[1]	.05 (.30)	.18 (.30)	.43 (.19)[1]	.05 (.30)	.18 (.30)	.19 (.25)	-.02 (.32)	.12 (.32)
Maternal Mastery							-.11 (.27)	.41 (.40)	.46 (.40)	-.14 (.27)	.39 (.40)	.45 (.40)	.01 (.30)	.16 (.47)	.12 (.48)
Maternal Depression							.33 (.14)[1]	.34 (.16)[1]	.34 (.16)[1]	.32 (.14)[1]	.33 (.16)[1]	.33 (.17)[1]	.30 (.24)	.04 (.19)	.02 (.20)
Marital Disruption										1.18 (1.85)	.92 (3.18)	.49 (3.01)	.56 (1.94)	-4.13 (4.64)	-4.34 (4.47)
Marital Disruption x Conflict													.12 (.28)	-.29 (.60)	-.19 (.58)
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship													-3.38 (2.13)	-2.82 (6.62)	-3.22 (6.41)
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status													2.13 (4.10)	12.45 (6.90)[+]	12.93 (6.51)[1]
Marital Disruption x													.41	.33	.04

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Neighborhood Problem													(.37)	(.92)	(.90)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery													-.27 (.57)	.90 (1.01)	.92 (1.01)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression													.001 (.28)	1.16 $(.39)^2$	1.24 $(.40)^2$
Model F test	8.31^2	16.24^3	15.46^3	2.82^1	12.92^3	12.36^3	.51	6.45^3	6.19^3	.41	5.88^3	5.64^3	.22	4.85^3	4.77^3
R^2	.21	.28	.27	.21	.27	.26	.27	.28	.27	.27	.27	.26	.29	.31	.30

Note. Child sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. For each Model, columns 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the imputed, complete-case unweighted, and complete-case, weighted approaches, respectively.
†$p < .10$. [1]*$p < .05$. [2]**$p < .01$. [3]***$p < .001$.

Table 8.1. Comparative Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Scores on the PIAT-Mathematics at Time 2 (N=353)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)		
Intercept	57.37 (7.12)[3]	60.32 (10.31)[3]	62.45 (10.68)[3]	53.38 (7.14)[3]	60.43 (10.33)[3]	62.85 (10.69)[3]	54.23 (7.88)[3]	61.26 (11.58)[3]	60.56 (12.13)[3]	55.25 (7.99)[3]	60.61 (11.61)[3]	59.34 (12.15)[3]	55.94 (8.55)[3]	58.56 (11.79)[3]	56.06 (12.24)[3]
PIAT-Math T1	.58 (.06)[3]	.53 (.08)[3]	.55 (.08)[3]	.58 (.06)[3]	.52 (.08)[3]	.54 (.08)[3]	.56 (.07)[3]	.47 (.09)[3]	.51 (.09)[3]	.56 (.07)[3]	.47 (.09)[3]	.51 (.09)[3]	.55 (.07)[3]	.47 (.09)[3]	.51 (.09)[3]
Child sex	1.02 (1.46)	1.58 (2.00)	1.18 (2.09)	1.02 (1.46)	1.75 (2.01)	1.37 (2.10)	1.05 (1.50)	1.93 (2.06)	1.76 (2.16)	-1.05 (1.50)	2.14 (2.08)	2.09 (2.17)	-1.15 (1.52)	1.66 (2.09)	1.69 (2.18)
Child age	-1.57 (.41)[3]	-1.78 (.59)[2]	-2.11 (.62)[2]	-1.56 (.41)[3]	-1.81 (.59)[2]	-2.15 (.63)	-1.53 (.45)[2]	-1.66 (.61)[2]	-2.11 (.64)[2]	-1.53 (.45)[2]	-1.72 (.62)[2]	-2.20 (.64)[2]	-1.64 (.47)[1]	-1.37 (.65)[1]	-1.72 (.68)[1]
Number of Children	-.40 (.68)	-1.13 (1.16)	-1.16 (1.22)	-.40 (.68)	-1.07 (1.16)	-1.08 (1.22)	.021 (.76)	-.31 (1.30)	.06 (1.38)	.20 (.76)	-.19 (1.31)	-.27 (1.39)	.22 (.74)	-.77 (1.37)	-.61 (1.45)
Income change				.004 (.04)	.06 (.07)	.07 (.07)	.02 (.05)	.06 (.07)	.07 (.07)	.02 (.05)	.04 (.08)	.04 (.08)	.01 (.05)	.05 (.08)	.03 (.08)
Conflict							-.16 (.17)	-.35 (.20)[+]	-.37 (.21)[+]	-.16 (.17)	-.37 (.20)[+]	-.40 (.21)[+]	-.24 (.21)	-.52 (.24)[1]	-.56 (.25)[1]
Parent-Child Relationship							-1.02 (1.10)	.14 (1.51)	.19 (1.56)	-1.05 (1.10)	.14 (1.51)	.18 (1.56)	.20 (1.56)	-.45 (1.56)	-.27 (1.60)
Poverty Status							-2.83 (2.05)	-3.36 (3.08)	-2.61 (3.12)	-2.50 (2.10)	-1.93 (3.50)	-1.78 (3.49)	-1.83 (3.55)	1.23 (4.62)	1.16 (4.53)
Neighborhood Problem							-.10 (.19)	-.18 (.28)	-.26 (.30)	-.09 (.19)	-.18 (.28)	-.27 (.30)	-.21 (.25)	-.29 (.30)	-.43 (.31)
Maternal Mastery							.45 (.25)	.29 (.44)	.36 (.47)	.46 (.25)	.31 (.44)	.42 (.47)	.81 (.40)[+]	.34 (.51)	.42 (.55)
Maternal Depression							.18 (.10)	-.01 (.15)	-.06 (.16)	.18 (.10)	.02 (.15)	-.03 (.17)	.07 (.12)	.04 (.18)	.01 (.20)
Maternal Education							.56 (.48)	.67 (.70)	.34 (.75)	.55 (.49)	.61 (.71)	.23 (.75)	.28 (.64)	.84 (.75)	.55 (.80)
Maternal Employment							.44 (1.94)	1.34 (2.78)	2.20 (2.99)	.55 (1.97)	2.04 (2.89)	3.26 (3.12)	2.47 (2.30)	4.18 (3.04)	5.95 (3.27)[+]
Marital Disruption										-.57 (1.63)	-2.67 (3.07)	-3.58 (3.07)	3.59 (3.73)	12.18 (10.18)	15.19 (10.32)

163

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Marital Disruption x Conflict	**1.36 (.65)[1]**	**1.13 (.65)+**	.20 (.31)												
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship	-3.55 (7.22)	-1.66 (7.15)	-2.51 (2.28)												
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status	-7.28 (8.01)	-6.68 (8.04)	-2.30 (5.08)												
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem	.21 (.93)	.42 (.87)	.04 (.39)												
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery	-.48 (1.11)	-.26 (1.09)	-.57 (.58)												
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression	-.18 (.40)	-.19 (.37)	.14 (.19)												
Marital Disruption x Maternal Education	-2.88 (2.43)	-3.05 (2.48)	.33 (1.08)												
Marital Disruption x Maternal Employment	**-17.66 (8.96)[1]**	-13.76 (9.23)	-4.40 (3.65)												
Model F test	**3.88[3]**	3.55[3]	.18	5.03[3]	4.78[3]	.41	5.30[3]	5.10[3]	.47	11.72[3]	11.28[3]	4.07[2]	14.36[3]	13.96[3]	4.94[2]
R^2	.33	.31	.40	.31	.29	.37	.30	.29	.37	.30	.29	.34	.30	.29	.34

Note. Child sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. For each Model, columns 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the imputed, complete-case unweighted, and complete-case, weighted approaches, respectively.
†p < .10. [1]*p < .05. [2]**p < .01. [3]***p < .001.

Table 9.1. Comparative Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Scores on PIAT-Reading Recognition at Time 2 (N=353)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)			B (SE)		
Intercept	28.62 (8.33)[2]	-2.94 (12.36)	-2.08 (12.15)	28.45 (.06)[3]	-2.83 (12.34)	-2.25 (12.16)	28.19 (9.14)[1]	8.34 (14.01)	7.20 (13.53)	28.18 (9.17)[1]	5.26 (13.79)	3.15 (13.30)	28.25 (9.47)[3]	2.53 (14.77)	.99 (14.29)
PIAT-Reading T1	.69 (.06)[3]	.88 (.08)[3]	.86 (.08)[3]	.69 (.06)[3]	.88 (.08)[3]	.86 (.08)[3]	.66 (.07)[3]	.82 (.09)[3]	.82 (.09)[3]	.06 (.07)[1]	.84 (.09)[3]	.85 (.09)[3]	.67 (.07)[3]	.85 (.10)[3]	.85 (.09)[3]
Child sex	-1.05 (1.53)	3.30 (2.14)	4.09 (2.12)+	-1.05 (1.53)	3.08 (2.14)	3.93 (2.12)+	-1.28 (1.45)	3.27 (2.19)	3.86 (2.16)+	-1.28 (1.46)	3.69 (2.16)+	4.39 (2.12)[1]	-1.24 (1.48)	3.69 (2.24)	4.27 (2.21)+
Child age	-1.07 (.57)	.06 (.65)	-.05 (.64)	-.06 (.57)	.11 (.65)	.003 (.65)	-.03 (.58)	.11 (.66)	.05 (.66)	-.03 (.58)	-.03 (.65)	-.12 (.64)	-.04 (.58)	-.04 (.70)	-.02 (.69)
Number of Children	.90 (.75)	2.60 (1.27)[1]	2.75 (1.26)[1]	.91 (.75)	2.52 (1.27)[1]	2.69 (1.27)[1]	1.61 (.82)+	2.39 (1.44)	2.72 (1.42)+	1.60 (.82)+	2.78 (1.43)+	3.23 (1.40)[1]	1.75 (.89)	3.18 (1.58)[1]	3.42 (1.58)[1]
Income change				.01 (.05)	-.08 (.07)	-.06 (.07)	-.004 (.06)	-.11 (.08)	-.11 (.07)	-.005 (.06)	-.17 (.08)[1]	-.17 (.07)[1]	-.01 (.06)	-.18 (.08)[1]	-.19 (.08)[1]
Conflict							-.25 (.20)	-.05 (.21)	.01 (.21)	-.25 (.21)	-.11 (.21)	-.06 (.21)	.04 (.19)	-.10 (.26)	-.06 (.25)
Parent-Child Relationship							-.54 (1.00)	.35 (1.54)	.07 (1.50)	-.55 (1.01)	.32 (1.51)	.03 (1.46)	-.53 (1.50)	.11 (1.63)	-.14 (1.58)
Poverty Status							-.06 (2.60)	-5.44 (3.25)	-5.41 (3.10)+	.07 (2.81)	-1.35 (3.63)	-1.42 (3.40)	.82 (4.20)	-.48 (4.97)	-1.50 (4.62)
Neighborhood Problem							-.25 (.32)	-.57 (.30)+	-.73 (.30)[1]	-.25 (.32)	-.58 (.29)[1]	-.74 (.29)[1]	-.19 (.25)	-.54 (.32)	-.67 (.32)[1]
Maternal Mastery							.04 (.32)	.32 (.46)	.20 (.47)	.05 (.10)	.34 (.46)	.28 (.46)	.01 (.35)	.81 (.55)	.71 (.56)
Maternal Depression							.03 (.10)	-.03 (.17)	-.05 (.17)	.03 (.10)	.06 (.17)	.04 (.17)	.002 (.14)	.13 (.21)	.14 (.21)
Maternal Education							.79 (.52)	.08 (.76)	.04 (.75)	.79 (.52)	-.09 (.75)	-.19 (.74)	.65 (.68)	-.39 (.82)	-.41 (.82)
Maternal Employment							1.60 (2.25)	-5.40 (3.00)+	-5.78 (3.00)+	1.64 (2.24)	-3.30 (3.05)	-3.37 (3.07)	-.38 (2.53)	-2.65 (3.29)	-2.52 (3.32)
Marital Disruption										-.20 (1.84)	-7.46 (3.16)[1]	-7.65 (2.98)[1]	-3.00 (5.05)	.71 (11.14)	4.27 (10.64)

165

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Marital Disruption x Conflict													-.57 (.41)	.14 (.70)	.32 (.66)
Marital Disruption x Parent-Child Relationship													-.07 (2.21)	-1.75 (7.31)	-3.07 (6.90)
Marital Disruption x Poverty Status													-.57 (5.45)	-3.56 (8.61)	-3.68 (8.12)
Marital Disruption x Neighborhood Problem													-.08 (.42)	-.34 (.92)	-.64 (.93)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Mastery													-.001 (.59)	-1.52 (1.12)	-1.38 (1.08)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Depression													.06 (.20)	-.51 (.40)	-.53 (.41)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Education													.38 (1.04)	1.20 (2.61)	.85 (2.42)
Marital Disruption x Maternal Employment													3.55 (4.51)	-6.35 (10.02)	-10.49 (9.32)
Model F test	3.51[1]	29.37[3]	29.91[3]	2.78[1]	23.82[3]	24.09[3]	.32	9.80[3]	10.37[3]	.29	9.95[3]	10.57[3]	.16	6.29[3]	6.75[3]
R^2	.35	.47	.48	.35	.47	.48	.38	.48	.49	.38	.50	.51	.39	.48	.50

Note. Child sex is coded 1 = male, 2 = female; Subsequent marital disruption is coded 1 = yes, 0 = no; Maternal employment is coded 1 = employed, 0 = unemployed; Poverty status is coded 1 = in poverty, 0 = not in poverty. For each Model, columns 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the imputed, complete-case, unweighted, and complete-case, weighted approaches, respectively.
†p < .10. [1]*p < .05. [2]**p < .01. [3]***p < .001.

REFERENCES

Achenbach, T. M., & Edlebrock, C. S. (1981). Behavioral problems and competencies reported by parents of normal and disturbed children aged four though sixteen. *Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development, 46* (Serial No. 188) Philadephia, PA: Temple University, Department of Psychology.

Achenbach, T. M., Howell, C. T., Quay, H. C., & Connors, C. K. (1991). National survey of problems and competencies among four- to sixteen-year-olds. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 56* (Serial No., 225).

Acock, A. C., & Demo, D. H. (1994). *Family diversity and well-being.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Acock, A. C., & Keicolt, K. J. (1989). Is it family structure or socioeconomic status? Family structure during adolescence and adult adjustment. *Social Forces, 68*, 553-71.

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions.* London, UK: Sage Publications, Inc.

Allen, W. (1978). Search for applicable theories of Black family life. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 40*, 117-129.

Allison, P. D. (2000). Multiple imputation for missing data: A cautionary tale, *Sociological Methods and Research, 28*, 301-309.

Allison, P. D., & Furstenberg, F. F. Jr. (1989). How marital dissolution affects children: Variations by age and sex. *Developmental Psychology, 25*, 540-49.

Amato, P. R. (2005). The impact of family formation change on the cognitive, social, and emotional well-being of the next generation. *The Future of Children, 15*, 75-96.

Amato, P.R. (2001). Children of divorce in the 1990s: An update of the Amato and Keith (1991) meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 355-370.

Amato, P. R. (2000). Consequences of divorce for adults and children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62*, 1269-1287.

Amato, P. R. (1993). Children's adjustment to divorce: Theories, hypotheses, and empirical support. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55*, 23-38.

Amato, P. R., & Keith, B. (1991a). Parental divorce and adult well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53*, 43-58.

Amato, P.R., & Keith, B. (1991b). Parental divorce and the well-being of children: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 110*, 26-46.

Amato, P.R., Loomis, L. S., & Booth, A. (1995). Parental divorce, marital conflict, and offspring well-being during early adulthood. *Social Forces, 73*, 895-915.

Anderson, S. A., & Sabatelli, R. M. (1999). *Family interaction: A multigenerational developmental perspective*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Aseltine, R. H., Jr., & Kessler, R. C. (1993). Marital disruption and depression in a community sample. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 34*, 237-251.

Astone, N. M., & McLanahan, S. S. (1991). Family structure, parental practices and high school completion. *American Sociological Review, 56*, 309-320.

Austin, R. L. (1992). Race, female headship, and delinquency: A longitudinal analysis. *Justice Quarterly, 9*, 585-607.

Baker, P. (personal communication, January 22, 2008).

Baker, P. C., & Mott, F. L. (1989). *NLSY child handbook 1989: A guide and resource document for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth*. Columbus, OH: Center for Human Resources Research.

Ball, R. E., & Robbins, L. (1986). Marital status and life satisfaction among Black Americans. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48*, 389-394.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Press.

Baron, R. M., & Kenney, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 1173-1182.

Barnes, S. (2001). Stressors and strengths: A theoretical and practical examination of nuclear, single parents and augmented African American families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 82*, 449-460.

Barrett, A. E. (2000). Marital trajectories and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 41*, 451-464.

Bartfeld, J. (1997). Post-divorce economic inequality between women and men: An assessment of the roles of children and child support. PhD dissertation, School of Social Work, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Bartfeld, J. (2000). Child support and the postdivorce economic well-being of mothers, fathers, and children. *Demography, 37*, 203-213.

Bernard, J. (1966). Marital stability and patterns of status variables. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 28*, 421-439.

Besharov, D., & Sullivan, T. (1996). Welfare reform and marriage. *Public Interest, 125*, 81-94.

Bianchi, S., & McArthur, E. (1991). *Family disruption and economic hardship: The short run picture for children*. U.S. Bureau of the Consensus, Current Population Reports, Series P-70, No. 23. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Bianchi, S., Subaiya, L., & Kahn, J. (1999). The gender gap in the economic well-being of non-resident fathers and custodial mothers. *Demography, 36*, 195-203.

Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African American families.* New York: Touch-stone Books.

Blake, J. (1989). *Family size and achievement*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Boss, P. (2002). *Family stress management: A contextual approach (2nd ed.)*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Boyd-Franklin, N. (2003). *Black families in therapy: Understanding the African American experience* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

Bradley, R. H., & Caldwell, B. M. (1984). *Home observation for measurement of the environment (Rev. ed).* Little Rock, AK: University of Arkansas.

Bradley, R. H., & Caldwell, B. M. (1981). The HOME inventory: A validation of the preschool scale for Black children. *Child Development, 52*, 708-710.

Bradley, R. H., & Corwyn, R. F. (2002). Socioeconomic status and child development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53*, 371-99.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological theories. *Annals of Child Development—Six theories of child development: Revised formulations and current issues*.

Brodsky, A. E. (2000). The role of religion in the lives of resilient, urban, African American, single mothers. *Journal of Community Psychology, 28,* 199-219.

Broman, C. L. (1993). Race differences in marital well-being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 55*, 724-732.

Brooks-Gunn, J., Duncan, G., Klebanov, P., & Sealand, N. (1993). Do neighborhoods influence child and adolescent development? *American Journal of Sociology, 99*, 353-395.

Brown, P., Perry, L., & Harburg, E. (1977). Sex role attitudes and psychological outcomes for Black and White women experiencing marital dissolution. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 39, 549-561.

Bryant, C. M., & Wickrama, K. A. (2005). Marital relationships of African Americans: A contextual approach. In V. C. McLoyd, N. E. Hill, and K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *African American family life: Ecological and cultural diversity* (pp. 111-134). New York: The Guilford Press.

Bumpass, L. L. (1990). What's happening to the family? Interactions between demographic and institutional change. *Demography, 27*, 483-498.

Bumpass, L. L. (2004). Social change and the American family. *Annals New York Academy of Science, 1038*, 213-219.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008). Consumer price index: All urban consumers – (CPI-U). Available at ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/cpi/cpiai.txt

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007). Charting the U.S. labor market in 2006. Available at http://www.bls.gov/cps/labor2006/home.htm

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2001). *How to use the consumer price index for escalation.* Available at http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpi1998d.htm

Burr, W. R., & Klein, S. R. (1994). *Reexamining family stress: New theory and research.* London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Camara, R. A., & Resnick, G. (1988). Interpersonal conflict and cooperation: Factors moderating children's postdivorce adjustment. In E. M. Hetherington & J. D. Arasteh (Eds.), *Impact of divorce, single parenting, and stepparents on children.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Carlson, M. J., & Corcoran, M. E. (2001). Family structure and children's behavioral and cognitive outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 779-792.

Center for Human Resources Research (2006). *NLSY79 child and young adult data users guide: A guide to the 1986-2004.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Center for Human Resources Research (2005). *NLS handbook.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Center for Human Resources Research (2004). *Child and young adult data users guide.* Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Center for Human Resources Research. (2000). *Child and young adult data users guide*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Center for Human Resources Research. (1999). *Child and young adult data users guide*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Chase-Landsdale, P. L., Cherlin, A. J., & Kiernan, K. E. (1995). The long-term effects of parental divorce on the mental health of young adults: A developmental perspective. *Child Development, 66*, 1614-1634.

Chase-Landsdale, P. L., Gordon, R. A., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Klebanov, P. K. (1997). Neighborhood and family influences on the intellectual and behavioral competence of preschool and early school-age children. In J. Brooks-Gunn, G. J. Duncan and J. L. Abers (Eds.) *Neighborhood poverty: Vol. 1. Context and consequences for children* (pp.79-118). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Cherlin, A. (1992). *Marriage, divorce, and remarriage.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Cherlin, A. J., & Furstenberg, F. F. (1994). Stepfamilies in the United States: A reconsideration. In J. Blake & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Annual review of sociology* (pp. 359-381). Palto Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Cherlin, A. J. (1999). Going to extremes: Family structure, children's well-being and social science. *Demography, 36*, 421-428.

Clarke-Stewart, K. A., Vandell, D. L., McCartney, K., Owen, M. T., & Booth, C. (2000). Effects of parental separation and divorce on very young children. *Journal of Family Psychology, 14*, 304-326.

Cohen, J., & Cohen, P. (1975). *Applied multiple regression/Correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. Perspectives on Gender, Vol. 2*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Corcoran, M. E., Heflin, C. M., & Siefert, K. (1999). Food insufficiency and material hardship in post-TANF welfare families. *Ohio State Law Journal, 60*, 1395-1422.

Coyne, J. C., & Downey, G. (1991). Social factors and psychopathology: Stress, social support, and coping processes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 42*, 401-25.

Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (1994). Maternal depression and child development. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, 35*, 73-122.

Cummings, E. M., & Davies, P. T. (2002). Effects of marital conflict on children: Recent advances and emerging themes in process-oriented research. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 43*, 31-63.

Davies, P. T., & Lindsay, L. L. (2004). Interparental conflict and adolescent adjustment: Why does gender moderate early adolescent vulnerability? *Journal of Family Psychology, 18*, 160-170.

Demo, D. H., Allen, K. R., & Fine, M. A. (Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of family diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dickson, L. (1993). The future of marriage and family in Black America. *Journal of Black Studies, 23*, 472-491.

Dill, B. T. (1979). The dialectic of Black womanhood. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 4,* 543-555.

Doherty, W. J., & Needle, R. H. (1991). Psychological adjustment and substance use among adolescents before and after a parental divorce. *Child Development, 62*, 328-337.

Dornbusch, S. M., Carlsmith, J. M., Bushwall, S. J., Ritter, P. L., Leiderman, H., Hastorf, A. H., & Gross, R. T. (1985). Single parents, extended households, and the control of adolescents. *Child Development, 45*, 326-341.

Dornbusch, S. M., Ritter, P. L., & Steinberg, L. (1991). Community influences on the relation of family statuses to adolescent school performance: Differences between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. *American Journal of Education, 99*, 543-567.

Downey, D. B. (1995). When bigger is not better: Family size, parental resources, and children's performance. *American Sociological Review, 60,* 746-761.

Downey, G., & Coyne, J. (1990). Children of depressed parents: An integrative review. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*, 50-76.

Duncan, G. J. (1994). Families and neighbors as sources of disadvantage in the schooling decisions of White and Black adolescents. *American Journal of Education, 103*, 20-53.

Dunn, L. M., & Markwardt, F. C. (1970). *Examiner's manual: Peabody Individual Achievement Test.* Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.

Dunifon, R., & Kowaleski-Jones, L. (2002). Who's in the house? Race differences in cohabitation, single parenthood, and child development. *Child Development, 73*, 1249-1264.

Emery, R. E., Waldron, M., Kitzmann, K. M., & Aaron, J. (1999). Delinquent behavior, future divorce or nonmarital childbearing, and externalizing behavior among offspring: A 14-year prospective study.

Ensminger, M. E. (1990). Sexual activity and problem behaviors among Black urban adolescents. *Child Development, 61,* 2032-2046.

Fagan, P. F., Patterson, R. W., & Rector, R. E. (2002). Marriage and welfare reform: The overwhelming evidence the marriage education works. *Backgrounder, 1606*, 1-14.

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2007). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Fine, M., Schwebel, A. L., & James-Myers, L. (1987). Family stability in Black families: Values underlying three different perspectives. *Journal of Comparative Studies, 18*, 1-23.

Flewelling, R. L., & Bauman, K. E. (1990). Family structure as a predictor of initial substance use and sexual intercourse in early adolescence. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52*, 171-181.

Folk, K., Graham, J., & Beller, A. (1992). Children support and remarriage: Implications for the economic well-being of children. *Journal of Family Issues, 13*, 142-157.

Forehand, R., McCombs, A., & Brody, G. H. (1987). The relationship between parental depressive mood states and child functioning. *Advances in Behavior Research and Therapy, 9,* 1-20.

Frazier, E. F. (1930). The Negro slave family. *Journal of Negro History, 15*, 198-259.

Furstenberg, F. F. (1990). Divorce and the American family. *Annual Review of Sociology, 16*, 379-403.

Furstenberg, F. F., & Seltzer, J. A. (1986). Divorce and child development. *Sociological Studies of Child Development, 1*, 137-160.

Gelfand, D. M., & Teti, D. M. (1990). The effects of maternal depression on children. *Clinical Psychology Review, 10*, 329-353.

Gershoff, E. T., Aber, J. L., Raver, C. C., & Lennon, M. C. (2007). Income in not enough: Incorporating material hardship into models of income associations with parenting and child development. *Child Development, 78*, 70-95.

Goodman, S. H., & Gotlib, I. H. (1999). Risk for psychopathology in the children of depressed mothers: A developmental model for understanding mechanisms of transmission. *Psychological Review, 106*, 458-490.

Goodwin, P. Y. (2003). African American and European American women's marital well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 65*, 550-560.

Gove, W. R., & Shin, H. (1989). The psychological well-being of divorced and widowed men and women: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Family Issues, 10*, 122-144.

Griffin, K. W., Botvin, G. J., Scheier, L. M., Diaz, T., & Miller, N. L. (2000). Parenting practices as predictors of substance use, delinquency, and aggression among urban minority youth: Moderating effects of family structure and gener. *Psychology of Addictive Behavior, 14*, 174-184.

Grogan-Kaylor, A., Ruffolo, M. C., Ortega, R. M., & Clarke, J. (2008). Behaviors of youth involved in the child welfare system. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32*, 35-49.

Grusec, J. E. (1992). Social learning theory and Developmental Psychology: The legacy of Robert Sears and Albert Bandura. *Developmental Psychology, 28*, 776-786.

Guo, G., & Van Wey, L. K. (1999). Sibship size and intellectual development: Is the relationship causal? *American Sociological Review, 64*, 169-187.

Gutman, H. G. (1976). *The black family in slavery and freedom, 1750-1925*. New York: Random House.

Guttentag, M. & Secord, P. F. (1983). *Too many women? The sex ratio question.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Hare, I. (2004). Defining Social Work for the 21st century. *International Social Work, 47*, 407-424.

Hays, W. C., & Mindel, C. H. (1973). Extended kinship relations in Black and White families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 35*, 51-57.

Hetherington, E. M. (1979). Divorce: A child's perspective. *American Psychologist, 34*, 851-58.

Hetherington, E. M., Bridges, M., & Insabella, G. M. (1998). What matters? What does not? Five perspectives on the association between marital transitions and children's adjustment. *American Psychologist, 53*, 167-184.

Hetherington, E. M., & Stanley-Hagan, M. M. (1999). The adjustment of children with divorced parents: A risk and resiliency perspective. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 40*, 129-140.

Hill, R. (1958). Generic features of families under stress. Social Casework, 49, 139-150.

Hill, R. (1971). *The strengths of Black families*. New York: Emerson Hall Publishers.

Hill, R. (1972). *The strengths of Black families*. New York: Emerson Hall Publishers.

Hill, S. (1999). *African American children: Socialization and development in families*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hill. S. (2001). Class, race, and gender dimensions of child rearing in African American families. *Journal of Black Studies, 31*, 494-508.

Hofferth, S. (1984). Kin networks, race, and family structure. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46*, 791-908.

Hogan, D., Hao, L., Parish, W. (1990). Race, kin networks, and assistance to mother-head families. *Social Forces, 68*, 797-812.

Hoffman, S. D., & Duncan, G. J. (1988). What are the economic consequences of divorce? *Demography, 25*, 641-645.

Holden, K. C., & Smock, P. S. (1991). The economic costs of marital dissolution: Why do women bear a disproportionate cost? *Annual Review of Sociology, 17*, 51-78.

hooks, b. (1993). *Sisters of the Yam: Black women and self-recovery*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Hope, S., Rodgers, B., & Power, C. (1999). Marital status transitions and psychological distress: Longitudinal evidence from a national population sample. *Psychological Medicine, 29*, 381-389.

Hunter, A. G., & Ensminger, M. E. (1992). Diversity and fluidity in children's living arrangements: Family transitions in an urban Afro-American community. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54*, 418-426.

Huston, A. C. (2002). Reforms and child development. *The Future of Children, 12*, 58-77.

Jacobs, J. E., Lanza, S., Osgood, D. W., Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Changes in children's self-competence and values: Gender and domain differences across grades one through twelve. *Child Development, 73*, 509-527.

Jagers, R., & Smith, P. (1996). Further examination of the Spirituality Scale. Journal of Black Psychology, 22, 429-442.

Jekielek, S. M. (1998). Parental conflict, marital disruption, and chidlren's emotional well-being. *Social Forces, 76*, 905-935.

Jencks, C., & Mayer, S. E. (1990). The social consequences of growing up in a poor neighborhood. In Laurence E. Lynn Jr. and Michael G. H. McGeary, *Inner-city poverty in the United States*, Washington, DC.: National Academy.

Jewel, K. S. (1993). From Mammy to Miss America and beyond: Cultural Images and the shaping of U.S. policy. New York: Routledge.

Jeynes, W. H. (2001). The effects of recent parental divorce on their children's consumption of alcohol. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 30*, 305-319.

Jimerson, S., Egeland, B., & Teo, A. (1999). A longitudinal study of achievement trajectories: Factors associated with change. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*, 116-126.

Jones, J. (1982). "My mother was much a woman": Black women, work and the family under slavery. Feminist Studies, 8, 235-269.

Jones, J. (1985). *Labor of love, labor of sorrow: Black women, work and the family, from slavery to the present*. New York: Vintage Books

Karl, J. M., & Wandrei, K. E. (1992). PIE: A new language for Social Work. *Social Work, 37*, 80-85.

Kazak, A. E. (1992). Stress, change, and families: Theoretical and methodological considerations. Journal of Family Psychology, 6, 120-124.

Keith, V. (1997). Life stress and psychological well-being among married and unmarried Blacks. In R. J. Taylor, J. S. Jackson, and L. M. Chatters (Eds.), *Family life in Black America* (pp. 95-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Kelley, M. L., Power, T. G., & Wimbush, D. D. (1992). Determinants of disciplinary practices in low-income Black incomes. *Child Development, 63*, 573-583.

Kessler, R. C., Price, R. H., & Wortman, C. B. (1985). Social factors in psychopathology: Stress, social support and coping processes. *Annual Review of Psychology, 36*, 531-72.

Kiecolt, K. J., & Fossett, M. A. (1995). Mate availability and marriage among African Americans: Aggregate- and individual-level analyses. In M. B. Tucker and C. Mitchell-Kernan (Eds.) *The decline in marriage among African Americans: Causes, consequences, and policy implications* (pp.121-135). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

King, D. K. (1988). Multiple jeopardy, multiple consciousnesses: The context of a Black feminist ideology. Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 14, 42-72.

Kitson, G. C. (1992). *Portrait of divorce: Adjustment to marital breakdown*. New York: Guilford Press.

Kraemer, H. C., Wilson, G. T., Fairburn, C. G., & Agras, W. S. (2002). Mediators and moderators of treatment effects in randomized clinical trials. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 59*, 877-883.

Landry, B. (2000). Black working wives: Pioneers of the American family revolution. London: University of California Press.

Lauer, R. H., & Lauer, J. C. (1991). The long-term relational consequences of problematic family backgrounds. *Family Relations, 40*, 286-290.

Lavee, Y., McCubbin, H. I., & Olson, D. H. (1987). The effect of stressful life events and transitions on family functioning and well-being. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49, 857-873.

Lerman, R. I. (2002). How do marriage, cohabitation, and single parenthood affect the material hardships of families with children? The Urban Institute.

Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighborhoods they live in: The effects of neighborhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*, 309-337.

Levin, J. S., & Chatters, L. M. (1998). Research on religion and mental health: An overview of empirical findings and the theoretical issues. In H. G. Koenig (Ed.) Handbook of religion and mental health (pp. 33-50). New York: Academic Press.

Lewis, D. K. (1975). The Black family: Socialization and sex roles. *Phylon, 36*, 221-238.

Lichter, D. T. (September, 2001). Marriage as public policy. *Progressive Policy Institute Policy Report.*

Little, R. J., & Rubin, D. B. (1987). *Statistical analysis with missing data*. New York: Wiley.

Littlejohn-Blake, S., & Darling, C. (1993). Understanding the strengths of African American families. *Journal of Black Studies, 23*, 460-471.

Longfellow, C. (1979). Divorce in context: Its impact on children. In G. Levinger, and O. C. Moles (Eds.), *Divorce and separation: Context, causes and consequences* (pp.287-306). New York: Basic Books.

Lorenz, F. O., Simons, R. L., Conger, R. D., Elder, Jr., G. H., Johnson, C., & Chao, W. (1997). Married and recently divorced mothers' stressful events and distress: Tracing change across time. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 59*, 219-232.

Luthar, S. (1999). *Poverty and children's adjustment*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

McClelland, G. H., & Judd, C. M. (1993). Statistical difficulties of detecting interactions and moderator effects. *Psychological Bulletin, 114*, 376-390.

McAdoo, H. P. (1978). Factors related to stability in upwardly mobile Black families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 40, 761-778.

McAdoo, H. P. (1995). Stress levels, family help patterns, and religiosity in middle- and working-class African American single mothers. Journal of Black Psychology, 21, 424-449.

McCubbin, H. I., Joy, C. B., Cauble, A. E., Patterson, J. M., & Needle, R. H. (1980). Family stress and coping: A decade review. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 42, 855-871.

McGroder, S. M. (2000). Parenting among low-income, African American single mothers with preschool-age children: Patterns, predictors, and developmental correlates. *Child Development, 71*, 752-771.

McKelvey, M. W., & McKenry, P. C. (2000). The psychosocial well-being of Black and White mothers following marital dissolution. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 24, 4-14.

McKenry, P. C., & Fine, M. A. (1993). Parenting following divorce: A comparison of Black and White single mothers. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 24*, 99-111.

McKenry, P. C., & Price, S. J. (2005). Family coping with change: A conceptual overview. In P. C. McKenry and S. J. Price (Eds.), *Families and change: Coping with stressful events and transitions* (3rd ed., pp. 1-24). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

McLanahan, S. (1985). Family structure and the reproduction of poverty. *American Journal of Sociology, 90*, 873-901.

McLeod, J. D., & Kessler, R. C. (1990). Socioeconomic status differences in vulnerability to undesirable life events. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 31*, 162-172.

McLoyd, V. C., Harper, C. I., & Copeland N. L. (2001). Ethnic minority status, interparental conflict, and child adjustment. In J. H. Grych and F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Interparental conflict and child development: Theory, research, and applications* (pp.98-128). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mariner, C. L., & Zaslow, M. J. (1998). *Don't leave HOME without it: A review of the evidence on the reliability and validity of the long and short forms of the HOME inventory, and discussion of implications for further survey work* (Methods Working Paper #98.1). Washington, DC: Child Trends, Inc.

Martin, T. C., & Bumpass, L. L. (1989). Recent trends in marital disruption. *Demography, 26,* 37-51.

Mattis, J. (2000). African American women's definitions of spirituality and religiosity. *Journal of Black Psychology, 26*, 101-122.

Mattis, J. S. (2002). Religion and spirituality in the meaning-making and coping experiences of African American women: A qualitative analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26,* 309-321.

Mattis, J. S. (2005). Religion in African American life. In V. C. McLoyd, N. E. Hill, and K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *African American family life: Ecological and cultural diversity* (pp.189-210). New York: The Guilford Press.

Mayer, S. E., & Jencks, C. (1989). Poverty and the distribution of material hardship. *Journal of Human Resources, 24*, 88-113.

Menaghan, E. G., & Lieberman, M. A. (1986). Changes in depression following divorce: A panel study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48*, 319-328.

Mirowsky, J., & Ross, C. E. (1990). Control or defense? Depression and the sense of control over good and bad outcomes. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 31,* 71-86.

Moore, K. A., Halle, T. G., Vandivere, S., & Mariner, C. L. (2002). Scaling back survey scales: How short is too short? *Sociological Methods & Research, 30*, 530-567.

Morrison, D. R., & Cherlin, A. J. (1995). The divorce process and young chidlren's well-being: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 800-812.

Morrison, D. R., & Coiro, M. J. (1999). Parental conflict and marital disruption: Do children benefit when high conflict marriages are dissolved? *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 61*, 626-637.

Morrison, D. R., & Ritualo, A. (2000). Routes to children's economic poverty after divorce: Are cohabitation and remarriage equivalent? *American Sociological Review, 65*, 560-580.

Moynihan, D. (1965). *The Negro family: The case for national action.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Mulkey, L. M., Crain, R. L., & Harrington, A. J. (1992). One-parent households and achievement: Economic and behavioral explanations of a small effect. *Sociology of Education, 65*, 48-65.

Muller, C. (1995). Maternal employment, parent involvement, and mathematics achievement among adolescents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *57*, 85-100.

Myers, L. W. (1980). On marital relations: Perceptions of Black women. In L. Rodgers-Rose (Ed.), The Black woman (pp. 161-174). London: Sage Publications.

Newman, K. S. (1999). *No shamein my game: The working poor in the inner-city*. New York: Knopf and Russell Sage Foundation.

Nievar, M. A., & Luster, T. (2006). Developmental processes in African American families: An application of McLoyd's theoretical model. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 68*, 320-331.

Njoku, M. G. C., Jason, L. A. & Torress-Harding, S. R. (2005). The relationships among coping styles and fatigue in an ethnically diverse sample. *Ethnicity and Health, 10*, 263-278.

Nobles, W. (1974). Africanity: It's role in Black families. *The Black Scholar, 5*, 10-17.

Nordholt, E. S. (1998). Imputation: Methods, simulation experiments and practical examples. *International statistical review, 66*, 157-180.

Ouellette, T., Burstein, N., Long, D., & Beecroft, E. (2004). Measures of material hardship: Final Report (Executive summary). Available at: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/material-hardship04/

Painter, G., & Levine, D. I. (2000). Family structure and youths' outcomes: Which correlations are causal? *The Journal of Human Resources, 35*, 524-549.

Parke, M., & Ooms, T. (October, 2002). More than a dating service? State activities designed to strengthen and promote marriage. *Center for Law and Social Policy Couples and Marriage Series, No.21.*

Pearlin, L., Liberman, M., Menaghan, E., & Mullan, J. (1981). The stress process. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 22*, 337-356.

Pearlin, L., & Schooler, C. (1978). The structure of coping. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 19*, 2-21.

Peris, T. S., & Emery, R. E. (2004). A prospective study of the consequences of marital disruption for adolescents: Predisruption family dynamics and postdisruption adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 33*, 694-704.

Phillips, J. A., & Sweeney, M. M. (2006). Can differential exposure to risk factors explain recent racial and ethnic variation in marital disruption? *Social Science Research, 35*, 409-434.

Radloff, L. S. (1977). The CES-D scale: A self report depression scale for research in the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement, 1*, 385-401.

Raghunathan, T. E., Solenberger, P. W., & Van Hoewyk, J. (2000). *IVEware: Imputation and Variance Estimation Software*. Ann Arbor, MI: Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Raghunathan, T. E., Lepkowski, J. M., Van Hoewyk, & Solenberger, P. (2001). A multivariate technique for multiply imputing missing values using a sequence of regression models. *Survey Methodology, 27*, 85-95.

Raley, R. K., & Bumpass, L. (2003). The topography of the divorce plateau: Levels and trends in union stability in the United States after 1980. *Demographic Research, 8*, 245-260.

Randolph, S. M. (1995). African American children in single-parent families. In B. J. Dickerson (Ed.), *African American single mothers: Understanding their lives and families* (vol. 10, pp. 117-145). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Roberts, E. R., Rhoades, H. M., & Vernon, S. W. (1990). Using the CES-D scale to screen for depression and anxiety: Effects of language and ethnic status. *Psychiatry Research, 31*, 69-83.

Rodgers, K. B., & Rose, H. A. (2001). Personal, family, and school factors related to adolescent academic performance: A comparison by family structure. *Marriage and Family Review, 33*, 47-61

Rogers, B., & Pryor, J. (1998). *Divorce and separation: The outcomes for children*. York, England: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Ross, C. E., & Wu, C. (1995). The links between education and health. *American Sociological Review, 60*, 719-745.

Rubin, D. B. (1987). *Multiple imputation for nonresponse in surveys*. New York: Wiley.

Rubin, D. B. (1988). An overview of multiple imputation. *American Statistical Association, Proceedings of Survey Research Methods Section*, 79-84.

Rubin, D. B. (1996). Multiple imputation after 18+ years. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 91*, 473-489.

Rutter, M. (1990). Commentary: Some focus and process considerations regarding effects of parental depression on children. *Developmental Psychology, 26*, 60-67.

Sandefur, G. D., & Wells, T. (1999). Does family structure really influence educational attainment? *Social Science Research, 28*, 331-357.

Schafer, J. L. (1997). Analysis of incomplete multivariate data. London: Chapman and Hall.

Schafer, J. L. (1999). Multiple imputation: A primer. *Statistical Methods in Medical Research, 8*, 3-15.

Schafer, J. L., & Olsen, M. K. (1998). Multiple imputation for multivariate missing-data problems: A data analyst's perspective. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 33*, 545-571.

Schoen, R., & Standish, N. (2001). The retrenchment of marriage: Results from marital status life tables for the United States, 1995. *Population and Development Review, 27*, 553-563.

Schoeni, R. F., & Blank, R. M. (March 2000). What has welfare reform accomplished? Impacts of welfare participation, employment, income, poverty, and family structure. NBER Working Paper No. W7627.

Seltzer, J. A. (1994). Consequences of marital dissolution for children. *Annual Review of Sociology, 20*, 235-266.

Short, K. S. (2005). Material and financial hardship and income-based poverty measures in the USA. *Journal of Social Policy, 34*, 21-38.

Simons, R. L., Lin, K., Gordon, L. E., Conger, R. D., & Lorenz, F. O. (1999). Explaining the higher incidence of adjustment problems among children of divorce compared

with those in two-parent families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 61*, 1020-1033.

Simons, R. L., Lorenz, F. O., Wu, C., & Conger, R. D. (1993). Marital and spouse support as mediator and moderator of the impact of economic strain upon parenting. *Developmental Psychology, 29*, 368-381.

Simons, R. L., & Associates (Eds.) (1996). *Understanding differences between divorce and intact families: Stress, interaction, and child outcomes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research, 75*, 417-454.

Smith, T. E. (1997). Differences between Black and White students in the effect of parental separation on school grades. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 27*, 25-43.

Smock, P. J. (1993). The economic costs of marital disruption for young women over the past two decades. *Demography, 30*, 353-371.

Smock, P. J. (1994). Gender and the short-term economic consequences of marital disruption. *Social Forces, 73*, 243-262.

Smock, P. (1997). Children's living arrangements in unmarried-mother families. *Journal of Family Issues, 18*, 526-545.

Smock, P. J., Gupta, S., & Manning, W. D. (1999). The effect of marriage and divorce on women's economic well-being. *American Sociological Review, 64*, 794-812.

Stack, C. (1974). *All our kin*. New York: Harper and Row.

Sudarkasa, N. (1997). African American families and family values. In H. McAdoo (Ed.), Black families (3rd ed.) (pp. 9-40). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

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. (2007). Racial and ethnic differences in experiencing parents' marital disruption during late adolescence. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69,* 742-762.

Sweeney, M., & Phillips, J. (2004). Understanding racial differences in marital disruption: Recent trends and explanations. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 66*, 639-650.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (1989). *Using multivariate statistics* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Taylor, R. D., & Roberts, D. (1995). Kinship support and maternal and adolescent well-being in economically disadvantaged African-American families. Child Development, 66, 1585-1597.

Taylor, R. J. (1986). Receipt of support from family among Black Americans: Demographic and familial differences. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48, 67-77.

Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., Tucker, M. B., & Lewis, E. (1990). Developments in research on Black families: A decade review. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52, 993-1014.

Taylor, R. J., & Chatters, L. (1991). Religious life. In J. S. Jackson (Ed.), Life in Black America (pp.105-123). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Taylor, R. J., Mattis, J. S., & Chatters, L. M. (1999). Subjective religiosity among African Americans: A synthesis of findings from five national samples. *Journal of Black Psychology, 25*, 524-543.

Taylor, R. J., Ellison, C. G., Chatters, L. M., Levin, J. S., & Lincoln, K. D. (2000). Mental health services in faith communities: The role of clergy in Black churches. *Social Work, 45*, 73-87.

Thomas, A. J., Witherspoon, K. M., & Speight, S. L. (2004). Toward the development of the stereotypic roles for Black women scale. *Journal of Black Psychology, 30*, 426-442.

Thomas, G., Farrell, M. P., & Barnes, G. M. (1996). The effects of single-mother families and non-resident fathers on delinquency and substance abuse in Black and White adolescents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 58,* 884-894.

Thomson, E., Hanson, T. L., & McLanahan, S. S. (1994). Family structure and child well-being: Economic resources vs. parental behaviors. *Social Forces, 73*, 221-242.

Tucker, M. B. & Mitchell-Kernan, C. (1995). *The decline in marriage among African Americans: Causes, consequences, and policy implications.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

U.S. Bureau of the Census (1998). Living arrangements of Black children under 18 years old: 1960 to present: January, 1999. *Current Population Reports* (Series P20-514). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000). *Population survey* (March Suppl. 2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census (2004). Employment status of the population 16 years and over in the civilian labor force by sex, for Black alone and White alone, not Hispanic: March 2004. *Current Population Survey* (Table 10). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Bureau of the Census (2006). Living arrangements of children under 18 years and marital status of parents, by age, sex, race, Hispanic origin and selected characteristics of the child for all children: May, 2007. *Current Population Survey* (Table C3). 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., & Cairney, J. (2000). Major depressive disorder and marital transition among mothers: Results from a national panel study. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 188,* 741-750.

Wade, T. J., & Pevalin, D. J. (2004). Marital transitions and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 45*, 155-170.

Wallace, P. A. (1980). Black women in the labor force. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wang, H., & Amato, P. R. (2000). Predictors of divorce adjustment: Stressors, resources, and definitions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62*, 655-668.

Weiss-Gal, I. (2008). The person-in-environment approach: Professional ideology and practice of social workers in Israel. *Social Work, 53*, 65-75.

Wheaton, B. (1990). Life transitions, role histories, and mental health. *American Sociological Review, 55*, 209-223.

White, R. W. (1974). Strategies of adaptation: An attempt at systematic description. In G. V. Coehlo, D. A. Hamburg and J. E. Adams (eds.), *Coping and adaptation* (pp. 47-68). New York: Basic Books.

Whiteside, M. F., & Becker, B. J. (2000). Parental factors and the young child's post-divorce adjustment: A meta-analysis with implications for parenting arrangements. *Journal of Family Psychology, 14*, 5-26.

Williams, D. R., Takeuchi, D. T., & Adair, R. K. (1992). Marital status and psychiatric disorders among Blacks and Whites. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 33,* 140-157.

Wilson, J. W. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, J. W., & Neckerman, K. M. (1986). Poverty and family structure: The widening gap between evidence and public policy issues. In S. M. Danzinger and D. H. Weinberg, *Fighing poverty: What works and what doesn't*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wojtkiewicz, R. A. (1993). Simplicity and complexity in the effects of parental structure on high school graduation. *Demography, 30*, 701-717.

Yeates, K. O., Taylor, H. G., Woodrome, S. E., Wade, S. L., Stancin, T. and Drotar, D. (2002). Race as a moderator of parent and family outcomes following pediatric traumatic brain injury. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 27,* 393–403.

Yuan, C. (2000). Multiple imputation for missing data: Concepts and new development. *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual SAS Users Group International Conference*, Paper 267. Cary, NC: SAS Institute.

Zaslow, M. S., & Haynes, C. D. (1986). Sex differences in children's responses to psychosocial stress: Toward a cross-context analysis. In M. Lamb, A. Brown, & B. Rogoff (Eds.), *Advances in developmental psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 289-337). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Zill, N., Morrison, D. R., & Coiro, M. J. (1993). Long-term effects of parental divorce on parent-child relationships, adjustment, and achievement in adulthood: Families in transition. *Journal of Family Psychology, 7*, 91-103.

Zimiles, H., & Valerie, L. (1991). Adolescent family structure and educational progress. *Developmental Psychology, 27*, 314-320.

Zimmerman, M. A., Salem, D. A., & Maton, K. J. (1995). Family structure and psychosocial correlates among urban African American adolescent males. *Child Development, 66*, 1598-1613.