A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty
of
Xavier University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Psychology
by
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April 1, 2005

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**Relationship Components and Nature of Postdivorce Parenting Responsibilities Among
Individuals Going Through a Divorce**

UMI Number: DP20343

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Acknowledgements

There are many individuals who have contributed to this dissertation. I must thank Jayne Zuberbuhler, Jan Chapman, Raymond Shannon, Judge Panioto, Judge Tolbert, and the courtroom staff at the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations for making this project possible. Thank you to Kate Grampp, Donald Kuchey, Natalie Kucia, and Tressa Judge, who were responsible for the data collection.

Thank you to Dr. Mike Nelson, Dr. Norm Barry, and Dr. Kathy Hart. I have told everyone my advice for sailing through a dissertation proposal and defense is to choose a great advisor and committee. I enjoyed working with you, and I thank you for your support and encouragement. I would like to extend a special thank you to Nicole Levasseur, my fellow graduate student and dissertation partner. This project was much easier knowing you were by my side and I am glad we were able to finish together.

I would like to thank my family. Mom and Dad, thank you for all of the love, support, and encouragement you have given me over the years. Tracy and Jake, thanks for your love and support and for always believing in me. I am blessed with wonderfully supportive extended family members and they deserve recognition also.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my husband, Brian. This dissertation would not be complete without recognizing your contribution. Your patience, encouragement, love, and support have made this possible. Thank you for making me laugh when I wanted to cry. This project is yours too and I thank you for the part you played in completing it.

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Introduction

Divorce has occurred in Ohio for well over 200 years. The earliest record is from March of 1794 and can be found in Ohio's earliest newspaper, *The Centinel of the North-Western Territory*, published in Cincinnati (Bell, 1994). Unfortunately, divorce has continued to impact society. While only about 5% of marriages ended in divorce in the middle of the 10th century, approximately 50% of all marriages now end in divorce or dissolution (Amato, 2000). According to some of the most recently compiled Center for Disease Control (CDC) data, which is from 1995, 20% of all first marriages will end in divorce or separation after five years. Thirty-three percent of first marriages end after 10 years. These divorced individuals go on in life, some remarrying and others staying single. The vast majority remarry (approximately 75% of divorced women). However, of those who remarry, 34-47% of those marriages end in divorce (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001).

Given how prevalent divorce is in society, it is important to understand how divorce impacts individuals. There is much speculation about why this occurs and how parents and children are affected. Although it is interesting to learn what may predict divorce, it is also important to understand what happens as a result of divorce.

Wang and Amato (2000) attempted to identify factors that facilitate divorce adjustment. By using national, longitudinal data they were able to examine factors operating during the marriage as well as changes after the divorce. Wang and Amato said that adjustment to divorce depends on the amount of stressful events post-divorce, peoples' resources for coping, and perceptions and definitions of divorce. Little evidence was found for the stressors income decline, loss of friends and moving. Education was

not predictive of divorce adjustment, but it was associated with greater attachment to the former spouse. Prior employment, welfare use, or the number of close friends were not related to adjustment either. Wang and Amato found support for their hypothesis that new relationships facilitate adjustment, which was consistent with prior studies. It was also found that people who held positive, accepting attitudes toward divorce while they were married reported less attachment to the ex-spouse and better overall adjustment. However, Wang and Amato primarily examined demographic variables rather than more psychologically related variables.

According to Amato (2000), a large number of studies published in the 1990s indicated that divorced individuals experience lower levels of psychological well-being, more health problems, a greater risk of mortality, more social isolation, less satisfying sex lives, more negative life events, and a lower standard of living. The current study focuses on only some of the many characteristics of postdivorce parental relationships such as communication, interaction, anger, guilt, and positive feelings about self and former spouse. In addition, unlike previous research, this study focuses on how conflict within the parental relationship leads to the level of court involvement, from high to low conflict divorces and dissolutions, further impacting these adjustment variables.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals experiencing conflict as measured by different levels of court involvement during their divorce. This relationship will be examined upon exit from the court system and six months after exiting the court system.

Chapter I

Review of the Literature

Legal Definitions: Divorce and Dissolution

In Ohio, marriages may be terminated in three different ways: divorce, dissolution, and annulment. In 1996, 44,918 marriages were terminated in the state of Ohio, 94 by annulment (less than 1%), 19,070 by dissolution (42%), and 25,754 by divorce (57%). Since annulments are relatively rare, they are not a focus of the present study (Gilchrist & Haman, 2001). A dissolution is granted when the couple agrees upon all aspects of the marriage's termination. First, both parties must agree they want to end the marriage. Then they must agree on how the property will be divided as well as assumption of debts. It also involves negotiating issues related to children such as custody, child support, visitation, and other parenting arrangements. Also, the couple must agree on alimony. The agreement of these issues must be recorded in a Separation Agreement and filed with the court system. The Separation Agreement becomes final in 30 days, at which point the marriage is considered terminated. Dissolutions in Ohio became legal in 1974 (Kitson, 1992).

Divorce is an adversarial procedure whereby one party must accuse the other of wrongdoing alleging grounds for the divorce. This procedure is utilized when couples cannot agree that they want to terminate their marriage and/or cannot agree on the issues presented above. The spouse filing for divorce must allege grounds for divorce. Ohio

law (Ohio Revised Code, Section 3105.01) provides eleven grounds for divorce as follows:

1. bigamy
2. willful absence of the adverse party for one year
3. adultery
4. extreme cruelty
5. fraudulent contact
6. any gross neglect of duty
7. habitual drunkenness
8. imprisonment of the adverse party in a state or federal correctional institution at the time of filing the complaint
9. procurement of divorce outside this state, but a husband or wife, by virtue of which the party who procured it is released from the obligation of the marriage, while those obligations remain binding upon the other party
10. on the application of either party, when husband and wife have, without interruption for one year, lived separate and apart without cohabitation; and
11. incompatibility, unless denied by either party

The last two grounds can be considered no fault divorce grounds. The no fault provision was added in Ohio in 1974 (Kitson, 1992). If the couple is unable to resolve the issues (including custody, assumption of debts, etc.) a judge is responsible for deciding on the contested issues (Gilchrist & Haman, 2001).

There are some demographic variables that relate to an increased probability of divorce and/or dissolution (Ahrons, 1999). Age is a strong predictor with couples marrying at age 20 or younger being more likely to end their marriage. Individuals with less education and lower socioeconomic status tend to divorce more often than those with more education and a higher SES. The exception to this is that women with five or more years of college tend to divorce more often than women with less education.

Geographically there are more divorces occurring in the west than in the east. African Americans are twice as likely to divorce than Whites and Hispanics. This may be related

to age, education level and SES. Religion plays a role as well as Catholics and Jews have lower rates than Protestants.

In addition, Kitson (1992) found that individuals who had been previously divorced were more likely to end subsequent marriages. People with no religious affiliation, who are of different ethnic and racial groups than their spouse, and who either conceived a child out of wedlock or have no children are at an increased risk for divorce. Kitson linked mental health to divorce. She found that people who had a suicide attempt at some point in their life or who were hospitalized for mental or emotional problems were more likely to divorce. Kitson found that women were more likely to actually file for divorce.

Reasons for Divorce

Hetherington and Kelly's (2002) 30-year study of divorcing families provides support for different reasons that couples decide to divorce. All marriages have good and bad periods and at some point most marriages will become somewhat conflictual. Support was found for Kaslow's (1995) notion that an "emotional divorce" actually occurs prior to any legal involvement. Hetherington and Kelly claim that by the time the legal system is involved, the disagreements and arguments have diminished for many couples.

The first main reason for divorce is relationship problems. Problems provided by men and women differed in some ways. Women described lack of communication and affection as big problems whereas men rarely found these areas to be problematic. This may be due in part to men and women defining affection differently. A third of the women in Hetherington and Kelly's (2002) study reported lack of shared interests and

unfair division of household chores as major sources of marital dissatisfaction. One quarter of the wives admitted that alcoholism, physical abuse, or extramarital affairs contributed to their decision to divorce. For men, the main relationship problems expressed were spousal faultfinding, nagging, and whining on the part of the wife. Men also blamed their divorce on their wife's immaturity or irresponsibility.

Money was found to be a frequent source of conflict leading to the termination of marriages. One third of the individuals in Hetherington and Kelly's (2002) study cited financial problems as a reason for their divorce. Wives cited their husband's inability to improve the family's financial situation as a main factor. This included the husband's inability to find and/or keep a job. This seemed to have a major negative impact in homes where the woman worked. Hetherington and Kelly posited that this involved a power shift, which then led to further conflict. Having an unemployed husband was related to increased sexual problems and physical violence in the home.

Sexual problems were listed as another major reason for divorce. Men complained about the frequency of sex whereas women complained about the quality of the sexual relationship. For women, the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction was not as strong as it was for men. Men admitted that the sexual relationship was central to their feelings about the relationship (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

Finally, the last major problem area identified in Hetherington and Kelly's (2002) study was violence. Physical violence directed toward the wife or their children contributed to women's decision to divorce. In Hetherington and Kelly's sample, one third of the couples experienced at least one instance of physical violence as compared

with 15% of the nondivorcing group. They found that women were almost as violent as men predivorce, but women's violence towards men was not as physically harmful due to the difference in body weight and size.

Stages of Divorce

Kaslow (1995) has developed seven stages of divorce based on a dialectic model of divorce. This model combines eclectic and dialectic models and focuses on human growth and development, marital dissolution, and family systems approaches. Kaslow's first stage is the emotional divorce. This begins as the couple becomes aware that their marriage is no longer happy. This stage can be brief or can last many years. Many couples seek therapy during this stage. Typical feelings associated with this stage include dissatisfaction, anxiety, disbelief, and ambivalence. The couple may avoid the issue or may confront each other. They may pretend that their marriage is happy.

Kaslow's (1995) second stage is the legal aspects stage. This begins when the couple determines that they will split up and legal action is initiated. Individuals may feel helpless and may try to bargain with their spouse. This is a time of emotional turmoil and some individuals may threaten the other spouse or threaten to kill themselves. Mediation is often utilized during this stage to begin the process of determining the settlement, specifically with regard to children.

Stages three and four deal with some of the issues that must be resolved for divorces to be finalized (Kaslow, 1995). Stage three is the economic divorce stage. This stage involves the discharge of debts, division of assets, child support, and alimony. Often individuals in this stage feel confused and angry. Stage four is the coparenting and

child custody issues stage. Individuals may feel concerned for their children and uncertain about how the issues will be resolved.

Stages five and six deal with how the divorcing individuals relate to others (Kaslow, 1995). Stage five is the community, social, and extended family aspects stage. Individuals may begin to feel more optimistic and excited for their new future. Others may feel regret and sadness recognizing that the end of the process is near. They may be concerned with finalizing the divorce, making new friends, and doing new activities. Individuals are preoccupied with balancing their new lifestyle and daily routine and helping their children adjust to the changes. Stage six is the religious aspects stage. Individuals may be concerned with obtaining approval from the church of their pending divorce. They may try to make peace with their spiritual self.

Finally, stage seven is the psychic divorce stage. Kaslow (1995) posits it takes anywhere from two to four years for typical functioning people to re-equilibrate following a divorce. The length of recovery is determined by a number of factors including, but not limited to, the following: who initiated the divorce and who was rejected, resiliency of personality, strength of support network, level of self-confidence and optimism. Kaslow found that when people were moderately to extremely dysfunctional prior to the termination of their marriage, the recuperation period is longer and accompanied by more bitterness.

Kitson (1992) found similar results in functioning postdivorce. She determined that after a period of turmoil that lasted approximately one year, most individuals were able to cope with the divorce. Four years after divorce, Kitson found that the individuals who were divorced differed little from married individuals in terms of their psychological

functioning. Pledge's (1992) study of coping strategies responding to divorce indicated that the time around the initial separation was the most stressful, especially for women in her study. The perception of increased stress at the time of divorce is a result of the impact of a number of different stressors occurring within a short period of time. Women tended to experience greater stress at the time of separation, while men experienced greater stress upon finalization of the divorce.

The individuals in the present study can be classified as having moved through stages three and four because they will be at the end of the court process. They have just ended the legal divorce stages and settled their disputes over child custody issues and are now moving through the period of relating to others and adjusting to the psychic divorce.

Psychological/Adjustment Variables Associated with Divorce/Dissolutions

Communication. Communication is one of the most important qualities of a relationship. Couples must be able to voice opinions and share thoughts and feelings. Without positive communication, relationships become difficult. After couples' separation, communication is still an important issue, especially if children are involved. Even after divorce, many couples are forced to talk in order to work out children's schedules and welfare. Given that this is an important issue, much research has been done on the topic.

Christensen and Shenk (1991) compared communication skills between nondistressed, clinic, and divorcing couples. They hypothesized that these three groups would have differing levels of conflicts and interaction patterns. Specifically, they believed that the divorcing group would have decreasing levels of constructive communication and increasing levels of avoidance of communication about problems.

They sampled couples who had separated within the previous 12 months, couples seeking marital therapy ("clinic" sample), and couples who were labeled "happy couples" meaning they had indicated they were satisfied with their relationship. Christensen and Shenk's results supported their hypotheses and findings indicated the divorcing group showed greater discrepancy in their desired closeness/independence than did the nondistressed couples. Christensen and Shenk further hypothesized that perhaps distressed couples had poorer communication because of incompatibility.

Studies have looked at the dual effects of attachment and communication on couples' relationships. Serovich, Price, Chapman and Wright (1992) hypothesized that greater degrees of attachment would be positively related to higher levels of communication and higher rates of involvement with children. They found that divorced men and women did not differ on attachment towards former spouse and likewise their communication did not differ. Women were more involved with their children, and though men were not as involved, they reported communicating with their former spouse regarding the children.

Fishel and Scanzoni (1989) examined how support and conflict are influenced by negotiation style and other contextual variables. They compared mothers and fathers and found that the more children a couple had, the less support the mother perceived she was receiving from the father postdivorce. Demographic variables like higher income, higher occupational status, and higher socioeconomic status were predictive of mothers who experienced the most support. Fishel and Scanzoni found that with a greater frequency of discussions between parents, mothers felt more supported. In addition, the more effective the negotiations at the time of the separation, the more support and less conflict were

reported in the postdivorce relationship. It was suggested that the way that childcare is negotiated by parents is the most important factor affecting conflict and support. Conflict is decreased and support increased when the strategies are more cooperative and less competitive.

Goldsmith (1980) looked at former spousal relationships. She found that in her sample the majority of former spouses reported they were satisfied with the amount of communication. There was some discrepancy between noncustodial and custodial parents with noncustodial parents being more dissatisfied with the communication, which is due in part to the feeling that more interest and involvement is desired from the noncustodial parent.

Ahrons (1981) attempted to describe the coparental relationship one year postdivorce. She found that 50% of the individuals in her study reported their relationship with their ex-spouse was conflictual at least some of the time. These couples reported that child-rearing practices and values as well as financial discussions were a source of much conflict. One quarter of the sample reported being dissatisfied with the quality of their relationship. Additionally, parents who very rarely or never communicated about child rearing decisions were more conflictual and less supportive in their relationship. Ahrons seemed to find a link between the quality of communication and coparental interaction.

These studies seem to indicate that there is some level of communication postdivorce, though satisfaction with that communication varies by study. There seems to be a link between the amount of conflict predivorce and communication postdivorce. Also, it appears that custody status plays a role in satisfaction with communication.

Interactions. Researchers often overlook the quality of relationships between ex-spouses as a factor in postdivorce adjustment. It is wrong to assume that just because a couple has split up, they no longer have any interaction with each other. This is especially true if children are involved. Ahrons (1981) found that the majority of the spouses in her sample continued to maintain contact with each other. Approximately half of her sample continued to interact regarding child-rearing one year postdivorce. Less interaction occurred regarding issues unrelated to the children. Parents who rarely or never shared child-rearing decisions were less supportive and more conflictual with each other.

Arditti and Kelly (1994) sought to identify factors related to the quality of the relationship between ex-spouses. They chose to specifically study fathers. Results showed the most important factor affecting the quality of coparental relationship is the father's satisfaction with the custody arrangement. Researchers also found that the more topics and wider range of topics discussed by former spouses, the better quality relationship postdivorce. It was also found that these satisfied fathers had more positive relationships with their children, took greater blame for their divorce, and reported more positive and cooperative relationships with the former spouse. Overall the coparental relationship was related to the number of topics discussed between former spouses.

Ahrons (1979) studied the relationship between divorced parents using the same questionnaire that will be used in the present study. She found that level of conflict was related to parental interactions. The lower the level of conflict between former parents, the higher the amount of involvement for nonresidential parents. Said another way, the more supportive the relationship, the more involvement. Former spouses who identified

themselves as enemies had little to no involvement with each other, and when they did, the interactions were conflictual and unsupportive.

Dozier, Sollie, Stack and Smith (1993) explored the influence of attachment on postdivorce relationships. Using the same Ahrons (1979) questionnaire, Dozier, Sollie, Stack and Smith determined that friendly attachment was related to more supportive and less conflictual interactions. Dependent attachment was not related to coparenting for males and showed a positive relationship for females.

Goodman (1993) studied relationships among former spouses who were in long-term marriages. Goodman found that more direct interactions that did not involve parenting issues yielded a greater sense of well-being and less distress. Psychological distress was related to willingness to provide support in that those less willing to provide support experienced greater distress than those willing to provide support. Better health and well-being was experienced by those couples that had greater involvement with each other. Overall, these participants did not interact much with the former spouse regarding nonparenting issues. Approximately two-thirds of the sample reported never being involved in this manner.

In general, interaction with the former spouse is limited to issues surrounding the children. The level of interaction seems to have some effect on the quality of the relationship. Again the custody arrangement plays a role in the number, quality, and satisfaction of interactions.

Anger and Guilt. The decision to divorce can be emotionally draining. Even after passing through the stages Kaslow (1995) described, individuals may remain emotionally charged. One major emotion associated with marital break-up is anger. Wallerstein

(1986) concluded from a 10-year follow-up study of women and men who had divorced that intense anger and bitterness remained high in women and men, especially those who felt exploited and rejected. Hurt and humiliation remained painful, and anger was played out through competition for children and stress over contact with the other parent. The results of Wallerstein's study are even more striking given that high-conflict families going through custody and/or visitation litigation were not included in the sample. Wallerstein linked this anger to loneliness and stress as well as psychological issues. She also examined perceived responsibility for divorce. Her findings indicated that not many individuals (especially women) reflect on their own role in marital failure 10 years postdivorce. Failure of the marriage was attributed to external factors such as infidelity, financial hardship, temper, and inattentiveness to needs and wishes.

Madden-Derdich and Arditti (1999) investigated the influence of selected variables including level of hostility of divorce process on postdivorce attachment to a former spouse. These researchers found that the more hostile the divorce, the higher the level of postdivorce conflict. Mothers' level of satisfaction with the financial arrangement was negatively related to conflict. In addition, hostile divorces and dissatisfaction with financial support impacted postdivorce coparenting in a negative manner through their effect on conflict. Higher levels of conflict and hostility throughout the divorce process led to an overall poorer relationship postdivorce.

In Goodman's (1993) previously described study, one quarter of the participants reported feeling quite or extremely angry with their former spouse and over half were at least a little angry. Most of the participants in her study did not feel guilty. Anger was positively related to psychological distress and negatively related to mental health.

Masheter (1997) researched the impact of friendship and hostility in the postdivorce relationship. Couples who demonstrated greater levels of anger and hostility had less contact, and were less likely to discuss personal topics with the ex-spouse. These high hostility couples frequently reported having too much contact with the ex-spouse.

Though as Wallerstein's (1986) study shows that many individuals do not reflect on their role in marital failure down the road, during the actual process of divorce reflection is more prevalent. During this reflection, guilt emerges as another major emotion associated with divorce. Walters-Chapman, Price, and Serovich (1995) hypothesized that divorced persons experiencing high levels of guilt would experience lower levels of postdivorce adjustment as measured by depression, role strain and continuing attachment. Global guilt correlated highly with the three adjustment variables possibly indicating that the meaning an individual attaches to the divorce is more predictive of adjustment than the feelings attached to the divorce. Positive adjustment required dealing with shame and inadequacy in order to gain self-acceptance.

Kitson (1982) assessed continuing attachment after divorce and guilt related to the divorce. She found that those who suggested the divorce were more likely to feel guilty about the divorce. The more attached individuals felt to their former spouse, the more reluctant they were to get a divorce. Low and moderate attachment individuals were more likely to feel guilt about the decision to divorce. Kitson then removed the effects of attachment and found that with these effects removed, the more distressed individuals felt about their decision to divorce, the more likely they were to feel guilt. This implies that in some ways, guilt can be a positive feeling. Anger and guilt are clearly related to

communication and interaction as well as a number of other variables. It is no surprise that anger is related to financial agreement in several studies (Madden-Derdich & Arditti, 1999; Wallerstein, 1986). It is possible that this is linked to the initial reason for divorce given that financial troubles are a reason Hetherington and Kelly (2002) highlighted in their study. As noted, guilt can be positive or negative depending on the situation. Although we might assume feeling guilty would make life more difficult for the individual, it could also be looked at as a positive thing. One could feel guilty they let a good relationship end and build on that in the future.

Positive Feelings and Attachment. It is wrong to assume that divorce is always a negative experience. However, there are negative feelings associated with divorce. Often this is due to attachment to the former spouse or positive feelings for them. One of the central components of postdivorce distress appears to be the loss of spouse resulting from the marital breakup. Berman (1988) hypothesized that continued positive feelings for the ex-spouse following divorce would be related to increased distress. Participants were subjected to one of three conditions. One group was asked to recall a memory of a positive interaction with the ex-spouse, one group recalled a conflictual interaction and the third group recalled a memory of positive interaction with a close friend. Positive mental images yielded increased thoughts of the ex-spouse, especially feelings of loss and distress.

In another study Berman (1985) sampled recently divorced people to identify characteristics of those who are able to divorce from the spouse psychologically with those who remain attached. He defined psychological divorce as “the destruction of the strong emotional bond characterized by involvement, concern, positive feelings, and

preoccupation” (p. 377). Berman found that the more positive feelings experienced prior to the separation, the more difficulty with the psychological separation. Ongoing attachment was greater for individuals who had less desire for a divorce. Participants who missed their spouse showed greater attachment. However, amount of conflict and contact with the spouse prior to divorce and postdivorce were not related to attachment.

Dozier, Sollie, Stack and Smith (1993) examined how positive feelings were related to postdivorce coparenting. The effect of attachment was positively related to coparenting. Friendlier attachment was positively related to more supportive coparenting relationship. Findings also suggested the greater the attachment with the ex-spouse, the more supportive and more shared interactions are received around parenting.

Mastekaasa (1994) researched the relationship between psychological well-being and subsequent marital dissolution. Mastekaasa found a strong relationship between well-being and separation. The level of well-being was particularly low in the months immediately preceding the formal separation. This may be further evidence for Kaslow’s (1995) emotional divorce stage.

In addition to researching hostility between spouses, Masheter (1997) also looked at well-being. Friendship and preoccupation with the ex-spouse were examined. Being friends with the ex-spouse seemed to have some effect on well-being. However, the effects of preoccupation with the former spouse mediate the friendship effects with individuals with high preoccupation with the ex-spouse having lower well-being.

Overall, being attached to one’s former spouse after divorce does not have to be a negative experience. In fact, attachment may lead to better communication and feeling

better about oneself. It is when the other person is not as equally attached that difficulties may arise.

Conflict as Measured by Court Involvement

The present study assumes that there is a difference between individuals ending their marriages by divorce and by dissolution. Conflict is hypothesized to play a significant role in that decision. Unfortunately, little research has been done in this area to date.

Kitson (1992) compared individuals who ended their marriage by dissolution with individuals who ended their marriage by divorce. Those individuals who terminated their marriage by dissolution were more likely to consider their separation from spouse as friendlier and less conflictual.

Toews and McKenry (2001) assessed the impact of court interventions on cooperation and conflict among divorcing parents. They looked at participation in education programs, mediation, custody arrangement, and means of terminating the marriage and their relationship to parental conflict. A path analysis indicated that parents participating in education programs and parents who were not involved with mediation reported less conflict postdivorce. Joint custody parents were less conflictual and more cooperative with their ex-spouses. Ending the marriage by means of a dissolution was not related to cooperation postdivorce. The use of mediation by couples was related to more conflict in that parents who participated in mediation programs had more conflictual relationships predivorce. In addition, there was a relationship between mediation and ending the marriage by means of divorce, which suggests that mediation may have been recommended more often for more conflictual couples.

Although there is much research on how mediation affects postdivorce relationship, it appears as though these two studies (Kitson, 1992; Toews & McKenry, 2001) are the only studies that directly attempt to link divorce and dissolution to the amount of conflict. Given this, the need for understanding how divorce and dissolution distinguishes between levels of conflict as well as other postdivorce relationship components is necessary. According to Toews and McKenry (2001), although it is presumed that dissolutions indicate decreased levels of conflict when compared to fault-based divorces, conflict has not been systematically studied.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals experiencing different levels conflict as measured by different levels of court involvement during their divorce. This relationship will be examined upon exit from the court system and six months after exiting the court system.

Chapter II

Rationale and Hypotheses

Understanding the effects of divorce on individuals is important given the rising divorce rates and sheer number of individuals who will go through the break up of a marriage at some point in their life. Much research has been done to examine demographic variables that relate to divorce (Ahrons, 1999). There have been a number of different reasons for divorce as well as stages to classify the divorce process when these reasons turn to action (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Kaslow, 1995). In addition, a large amount of research has looked at some of the more psychologically related variables including communication, interaction, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attachment. This research has mainly focused on differences between joint and sole custody families. Research also focuses on differences between mothers' and fathers' perceptions about their relationship. Only one study has attempted to understand parental or couple conflict as reflected in their level of court involvement in going through a divorce (as defined by means of terminating the relationship) to some of these psychological variables (Toews & McKenry, 2001) and one other study attempts to link conflict to court involvement (Kitson, 1992).

Level of court involvement insofar as it reflects differing levels of conflict is an area that has not been extensively researched to determine its impact on postdivorce parental relationships. It is possible that the amount of effort put into achieving the end

result of a divorce or dissolution (operationalized as the level of court involvement) may impact the relationship that ex-spouses have. It is also possible that the decision to file for divorce instead of dissolution reflects more conflict within the relationship. This can adversely impact postdivorce functioning. It is important to have an understanding of how individuals function in different custody arrangements and how mothers' and fathers' perceptions vary. It is also important, however, to better understand how the level of court involvement may reflect the intensity of conflict couples going through a divorce experience. If postdivorce functioning is related to the divorce process itself, judges and lawyers can help prepare their clients for what is to come. Given this information, the purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals experiencing different levels of conflict as measured by different levels of court involvement during their divorce.

It is expected that individuals going through dissolutions and low conflict divorces will report more positive relationships with their ex-spouse than individuals going through high conflict divorces. They will report better communication and interaction, less anger and guilt, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards their former spouse as a parent. It is expected that these results will be found immediately following the court proceedings and six months later. In addition, it is expected that there will be better communication and interaction, less guilt and anger, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards the former spouse across all four groups six months postdivorce.

The following null hypotheses will be examined:

Ho1: There is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire immediately following the final court hearing (Time 1).

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire six months after the final court hearing (Time 2).

Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in scores (from Time 1 to Time 2) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire among the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict).

Chapter III

Method

Power Analysis

In light of the fact that there are no similar studies to utilize in a power analysis, it was decided to determine the number of participants necessary for the present study using a power analysis based on Cohen's (1992) recommendations in his classic article on power analyses. He recommends using a medium effect size for research, which is an F value of .25 for the statistical test used for the present study. In order to find significance of .05, the power analysis calls for 45 participants per level of court involvement for the multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA). Thus the present study will utilize a sample size of at least 180 participants. However, if a sufficient number of participants cannot be obtained within a reasonable time, the committee will be approached to determine an acceptable number of participants.

Participants

The participants in this study will be 180 men and women with children under the age of 18 going through a divorce or dissolution through the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations. No attempts will be made to include and/or exclude participants of particular ages, races, or socioeconomic statuses.

Instrument

A modified version of the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire (BFRPQ) (Ahrons, 1981) will be used in this study (see Appendix A). Minor changes will be made to the questionnaire, including deleting the Nonresidential Parent-child Involvement Scale, which was the second scale of the original questionnaire. This will be deleted because the present study is not focusing on differences between the involvement of residential and nonresidential parents. Also, the Guilt, Anger, Positive Feelings and Attitudes Towards Former Spouse as Parent Scale were originally administered using a Q-sort technique. In this study, all will be administered to all participants because the study is interested in all of these variables. The Psychological Distance Scale will be deleted because this variable is not of interest to the present study. Finally, the original questionnaire was given in an interview format whereas this study will utilize a survey format. This questionnaire has demonstrated sound reliability (see Table 1). There does not appear to be any specific studies examining the validity of this questionnaire. Thus this information is unknown.

The BFRPQ has six scales. The Quality of Coparental Communication Scale contains two subscales—Coparental Conflict and Coparental Support. This scale contains a total of 10 items (questions 1-10 on the questionnaire) and participants respond on the basis of a five point Likert-type scale with the following labels: 1-*never*, 2-*rarely*, 3-*sometimes*, 4-*often*, and 5-*always*. Low scores on this scale indicate low support and high conflict. The Content of Coparental Interaction Scale also has two subscales—Nonparental Dimension and Parental Dimension. The Nonparental Interaction subscale has 13 items (questions 11-23) measured by a six point scale with 1-*never*, 2-*every few*

months, 3-once a month, 4-twice monthly, 5-once weekly, and 6-daily. The Parental Dimension has 10 items (questions 24-33) measured by the same five point Likert-type scale as the Communication Scale. Low scores on this scale indicate little interaction with each other regarding personal and parental affairs. High scores indicate a more involved relationship between parents. The Guilt Scale has five items (questions 34-38) and participants respond via the same five point Likert-type scale as above. Low scores indicate little to no guilty feelings about the divorce. The Anger Scale has eight items (questions 39-46) and participants respond using the five point Likert-type scale. Low scores indicate much anger. The Positive Feelings Scale has four items (questions 47-50) and the Attitudes Towards Former Spouse as a Parent Scale has four items (questions 51-54). Both are measured by the five point Likert-type scale. Low scores indicate few positive feelings towards the former spouse on the Positive Feelings Scale. Low scores on the Negative Attitudes Towards the Former Spouse as a Parent Scale indicates negative feelings towards the former spouse and their ability to parent.

The Coparental Conflict Subscale will require recoding for consistency in analysis. The scores of questions one through five will be reversed such that a score of one will become a five, two will become a four, and vice versa. One question on the Guilt Scale and the whole Anger Scale will require the same type of recoding. These include questions 35, and 39-46. Questions 51 and 53 from the Attitudes Toward Former Spouse as a Parent Scale will also be recoded in the same manner.

Demographic information will be obtained from the participants as well. Information gathered will include the following: gender, age, race, socio-economic status, education level, number of marriages, length of marriage, and number of children. This

information, along with the information provided by the court's computer database, will provide the basis for categorization of the participants. A copy of the demographic questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Procedure

Permission to conduct this study will be granted by the Court of Domestic Relations and the study will be reviewed by the Xavier University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants will provide their Domestic Relations case number on their questionnaire in order to track them and classify them via the computer system. Using the Court's computer database, information about divorce hearings will be obtained including the participants' demographic information and the level of court involvement. A master list will contain questionnaire numbers matched with Domestic Relations Case Numbers. This list will allow the research team access to contact information for the six month follow-up. The master list will be such that identifying information will be destroyed as soon as the six month follow-up information is received from the participant. There will be no way to identify individual responses after this.

Participants will be classified into four levels of court involvement in accordance with guidelines provided by the Court of Domestic Relations. These guidelines take into account whether or not the couple settled with the help of the courts and the need for special court intervention such as custody or visitation litigation. The groups, from least to most court involvement, will be as follows: 1) dissolution, 2) divorce with little conflict, 3) divorce with moderate conflict, and 4) divorce with much conflict. In group one, dissolutions are settled without court involvement and all division of property and finances as well as child arrangements are agreed upon by both parties through their

lawyers. Both parties are required to be present for the dissolution hearing. In group two, divorce with little conflict implies the divorce is obtained without court involvement and hearings. In group three, divorce with moderate conflict implies that the custody was not able to be decided and thus the parties are referred to mediation and custody is resolved there. In group four, divorce with much conflict implies that custody was unable to be resolved in mediation. Therefore the case requires a custody investigation. Participants will not be directly asked which group they fall into. Instead this will be independently determined through the use of the court's computer files. The information contained in the files will allow the participant to be placed into a category.

Divorce and dissolution hearings occur Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:00 am through approximately 11:00 am. Approximately 18 cases are heard each day. Lawyers who frequently represent individuals in this court will be informed of the project in advance so that they are aware of the situation when the research team approaches their clients. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, research assistants will approach couples as they enter the courtroom and are waiting for their hearing and ask them to participate in the study. An information brochure (see Appendix C), consent form (see Appendix D) and questionnaire will be available for them to read and fill out. The purpose of the study will be explained to the individuals and they will be encouraged to take a few moments to fill out the questionnaire before leaving the court. In addition, they will be informed that there will be a six-month follow-up questionnaire sent to their home. Participants will be thanked for their time. The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. If participants do not fill the questionnaire out in the courtroom and do not return the questionnaire within one week, a reminder phone call will be placed

to the participant. If the questionnaire is not returned within one week of this phone call, a second call will be placed. No further calls will be made to the participant if they do not return the initial questionnaire.

Six months after filling out the original survey, participants will receive a phone call from the research team reminding them of the questionnaire they filled out when their divorce/dissolution was final. They will be informed that a follow-up questionnaire will be mailed to them within the next two days and will be encouraged to fill it out to complete the research project. At this time, individuals will be told how they can obtain results of the research study when it is complete. They will again be thanked for their time and participation. Questionnaires will be mailed out and will include a prepaid, self-addressed envelop for easy return of the questionnaire. If the questionnaire has not been returned within one and a half weeks after mailing it to the participant, a follow-up phone call will be placed to remind the participant again. An additional phone call will be made one week after this follow-up phone call if the questionnaire has still not been returned. After this phone call, no other contact will be made with the participants.

The research team will keep track of how many individuals are approached in the courtroom, how many agree/disagree to participate, and how many reminder phone calls are made to participants for the initial questionnaire and six month follow-up.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals going through different levels of conflict as measured by court involvement during their divorce. In order to test the hypotheses, two one way multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA) and six one way repeated measures analyses of variances (ANOVA) will be performed.

First, demographic information will be analyzed to determine the compatibility of the four groups. The demographic data that will be collected from the participants includes the following information: gender, age, race, socio-economic status, education level, number of marriages, length of marriage, and number of children. Gender, race, and socioeconomic status are discrete variables and Chi-squares will be used to determine if there are differences among the groups. Age, education level, number of marriages, length of marriage, and number of children are continuous variables and ANOVAs will be performed for each of these four variables to determine if there are differences among groups. If there are differences between the groups on multiple demographic variables, multiple analyses of covariance (MANCOVA) will be performed instead of MANOVAs and analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) instead of ANOVAs.

The first hypothesis is, there is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with

moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire immediately following the final court hearing (Time 1). In order to test this hypothesis, a MANOVA will be performed and the relationship between the four groups and time one will be examined.

The second hypothesis is, there is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire six months after the final court hearing (Time 2). In order to test this hypothesis, a MANOVA will be performed and the relationship between the four groups and time two will be examined.

The third hypothesis is, there is no statistically significant difference in scores (from Time 1 to Time 2) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire among the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict). In order to test this hypothesis, six ANOVAs will be performed. The four groups will be compared with each of the six psychological/adjustment variables in separate repeated measures

ANOVAs to determine if there are changes from time one to time two for any of the groups.

If significant differences are found within the MANOVAs and ANOVAs, Tukey tests for simple effects will be run in order to probe for significance among the groups and between the two time periods. A Bonferroni t will be performed to determine appropriate alpha levels for the tests.

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals going through different levels conflict as measured by different levels of court involvement during their divorce.

The first hypothesis is there is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire immediately following the final court hearing (Time 1). The second hypothesis is, there is no statistically significant difference across the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire six months after the final court hearing (Time 2). If these hypotheses are rejected, this indicates that there are differences among the groups. Tukey tests of simple effects may show that individuals in the lower conflict groups (i.e.

dissolution and divorce with little conflict) have better communication, more interaction, less anger, less guilt and more positive feelings and attitudes towards the former spouse. If parents are less conflictual throughout the divorce process, they will be likely to be less conflictual after the divorce

The third hypothesis is, there is no statistically significant difference in scores (from Time 1 to Time 2) on the six psychological/adjustment variables (positive communication, positive interactions, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) as measured by the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire among the four levels of court involvement (dissolution, divorce with little conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with much conflict). If this hypothesis is rejected, it indicates that individuals tend to be at the most distressed level immediately following divorce, but are able to rebound several months later. This follows from research by Pledge (1992) and Kitson (1992) who found that the time of initial separation is the most distressing and individuals tend to better cope with the divorce after an extended period of time.

These results imply that there is a relationship between the type of divorce/dissolution proceedings chosen by couples and how well they get along postdivorce. It may be inferred that there are differences in relationships predivorce that translate into the type of proceeding chosen and eventual feelings postdivorce. With this knowledge, the court system may be better able to predict the types of difficulties individuals/ex-couples will have postdivorce. The courts may use these results to suggest programs and interventions for individuals as well as determining the ability to effectively co parent if that is the decision they are leaning towards. Suggestions for

future research include examining couples predivorce to determine if there are indications of what type of court involvement they will fall into. In addition, looking at shared and sole parenting and court levels might also help judges. Future research might also include taking the information from this study and creating intervention programs that the court can refer individuals to according to their level of court involvement. Finally, doing another follow-up a year or more down the road may give a more accurate picture of how thoughts and feelings change with time.

There are several limitations to this study. First, there is no way to be absolutely certain that the results are based on conflict related to level of court involvement rather than predivorce adjustment. The only way to be certain of this would be to follow couples from predivorce, through the court system and then postdivorce. Another limitation is that the measure used for this study was developed in order to assess shared parenting agreements and though it has been used in many different research studies (i.e. Ahrons, 1979; Ahrons, 1981; Dozier, Sollie, Stack, & Smith, 1993; Fishel & Scanzoni, 1989; Goldsmith, 1980; Goodman, 1993; and Madden-Derdich & Arditti, 1999) this study is the first to use it with conflict as measured by court involvement as the independent variable. Additionally, the questionnaire is a self-report measure and self-report measures are inherently biased. Individuals may pick and choose the things they want to disclose about themselves. The questionnaire has also been altered significantly from its original form. Therefore, the validity of this measure for this particular research study is questionable. By mailing the questionnaires for the six-month follow-up, there is likely to be a low return rate. Thus the number of participants in the time two condition is likely to be significantly lower than time one. The answers participants give may be

due to their satisfaction level with the court rather than true feelings. Because participants were approached during their final court hearing, their emotional state and focus of their attention is probably on the court proceedings. Their responses to the questionnaire may reflect that. A final limitation is the limited participant pool. All participants were from Hamilton County, a moderately large urban area. Due to this, results should be viewed cautiously and it is recommended that the study be replicated with a new group of participants, perhaps in another metropolitan area, to provide support for the findings.

As the number of marriages ending in divorce or dissolution continue to rise, it is important to continue research into the relevant aspects of divorce and dissolution. Kaslow (1995) indicates that individuals pass through a series of complex stages before the divorce process is complete. Individuals in this study have resolved their court involvement, but still are adjusting to relating to their friends, family and society in general as a single person. There are also many emotional and psychological variables that individuals must cope with as Kaslow's theory and the present study suggests. This study is but one small aspect of a very complex process. Not all courts are alike, so not all will be able to take the knowledge gained from this research and implement programs based on it. Helping parents cope with the challenges faced postdivorce can only benefit them and their children.

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Table 1

BFRPQ Reliability Values (Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha)

<u>Scale Name</u>	<u>Reliability</u>	
	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
Coparental Communication Scale		
Conflict Subscale	.86	.86
Support Subscale	.76	.76
Content of Coparental Communication Scale		
Nonparental Interaction Subscale	.90	.93
Parental Interaction Subscale	.95	.94
Guilt Scale	.64	.63
Anger Scale	.89	.84
Positive Feelings Scale	.84	.84
Attitudes Toward Former Spouse as Parent Scale	.87	.89

Note. From Binuclear Family Research Project, revised 5/84

PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please circle the answer that best applies to you and your relationship with your most current ex-spouse...

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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1. When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues how often does an argument result? 1 2 3 4 5
2. How often is the underlying atmosphere one of hostility or anger? 1 2 3 4 5
3. How often is the conversation stressful or tense? 1 2 3 4 5
4. Do you and your former spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing? 1 2 3 4 5
5. If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate? 1 2 3 4 5
6. Does your former spouse go out of the way to accommodate any changes you need to make? 1 2 3 4 5
7. Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a custodial (or non-custodial) parent? 1 2 3 4 5
8. When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse? 1 2 3 4 5
9. Would you say that your former spouse is a resource to you in raising the children? 1 2 3 4 5
10. Would you say that you are a resource to your former spouse in raising the children? 1 2 3 4 5

Think back over the past several months and tell me how often you and your former spouse have related in these ways...

Never	Every Few Months	Once a Month	Twice Monthly	Once Weekly	Daily
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11. Talking about old friends in common 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Discussing finances not related to children 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Talking about your past marriage to each other 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Talking about new experiences you are having in your present lives 1 2 3 4 5 6

	Never	Every Few Months	Once a Month	Twice Monthly	Once Weekly	Daily
15. Talking about personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Talking about reconciling (marrying each other again)	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Talking about why you got divorced	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Talking about your families (mother, father, etc. but not the children)	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Having sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Helping each other with household tasks not related to the children	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. "Dating" each other	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Physical contact (e. g. hugging, kissing) without sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Going out to dinner without the children	1	2	3	4	5	6

Which of the following have been shared between you and your former spouse?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
24. Making major decisions regarding your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Making day to day decisions regarding your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Discussing personal problems your children may be experiencing?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Discussing school and/or medical problems?	1	2	3	4	5
28. Planning special events in your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
29. Talking about your children's accomplishments and progress?	1	2	3	4	5
30. Talking about problems you are having in raising the children?	1	2	3	4	5
31. Discussing how the children are adjusting to divorce?	1	2	3	4	5
32. Discussing problems you are having with the coparenting relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
33. Discussing finances in regard to your children?	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions about you and your ex-spouse:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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34. I wish I had tried harder to make the marriage work	1	2	3	4	5
35. I do not feel any guilt about the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
36. I blame myself for the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
37. I feel guilty about the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
38. I wish I could make up for the hurt I have caused him/her	1	2	3	4	5
39. I feel angry for the hurt I have gone through	1	2	3	4	5
40. I hate him/her	1	2	3	4	5
41. I hope he/she has problems in new relationships	1	2	3	4	5
42. I think he/she should be punished	1	2	3	4	5
43. I want revenge for wrongs done to me	1	2	3	4	5
44. I want to get back at him/her for what's been done to me	1	2	3	4	5
45. I blame him/her for the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
46. I don't feel he/she deserves to be happy	1	2	3	4	5
47. I have warm feelings for my former spouse	1	2	3	4	5
48. I care about his/her welfare	1	2	3	4	5
49. I feel compassion for him/her	1	2	3	4	5
50. I love him/her	1	2	3	4	5
51. My former spouse is an irresponsible parent	1	2	3	4	5
52. My former spouse is a caring parent	1	2	3	4	5
53. My former spouse is an incompetent parent	1	2	3	4	5
54. My former spouse is a good parent to the children	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Demographic Information

Please fill out the following information:

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age:

Number of Marriages:

Length of This Marriage: years

Number of Children From This Marriage:

Number of Years You Have Been/Were In School:

Please check only one category for the following two questions:

Race: ☐ Caucasian ☐ African-American ☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Asian-American ☐ Native American ☐ Other

Total Annual Income: ☐ under \$20,000 ☐ \$20,000-\$40,000
☐ \$40,000-\$60,000 ☐ \$60,000-\$80,000
☐ \$80,000-\$100,000 ☐ over \$100,000

Appendix C

Research Study Information Brochure

Questions:

**If you have questions, please
contact one of the following
individuals:**

**Dr. W. Michael Nelson, Ph.D.,
Professor of Psychology,
Xavier University –
513-745-3298**

**Nicole Levasseur, M.A.,
Psychology Graduate
Student, Xavier University –
513-745-3533**

**Kelly Wesolowski, M.A.,
Psychology Graduate
Student, Xavier University –
513-745-3533**

**Jayne Zuberbuhler, LSW,
Court of Domestic Relations-
513-946-9079**

**Adjustment to Divorce:
Parents' and Children's
Perspectives:
A Research Study**

**Conducted by:
Xavier University Department of
Psychology with the Permission of
the Hamilton County Court of
Domestic Relations**

Purpose:

This research project is being conducted by the Xavier University Department of Psychology. The study has been approved by the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations. The purpose of the project is to examine the relationship between parents and to examine the adjustment of children. This is an important area of research given how many families are impacted by divorce each year. Results of this research may help families better deal with adjustment problems that sometimes arise when parents decide to divorce.

Who Is Eligible?:

Any parent going through a divorce or dissolution who has at least one child under the age of 18.

What Can I Expect?:

Participants will fill out questionnaires about themselves and/or their children. Children may be asked to complete questionnaires if they and their parents agree to do so. These questionnaires will take approximately 10 minutes and participants will fill these out before leaving the courtroom. A follow-up questionnaire will be mailed to the participants six months after the final court hearing. All information will be kept confidential. Results will be reported using group information rather than individual answers and your name will not be on your questionnaire. These results are for research purposes only and have no effect on your divorce or the decisions the court may render in this regard.

How Will I Participate?:

Inform the member of the research team that gave you this brochure that you are interested in being part of this research study. They will provide you with the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix D Research Study Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Xavier University and with the permission of the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. This is a research project designed to examine the postdivorce relationship between parents. Your participation in this experiment will involve filling out a questionnaire, designed to be completed in less than 15 minutes, at the final court hearing. In addition, another questionnaire to be filled out will be mailed to your house six months following your court hearing. You will receive a reminder phone call in six months before the questionnaire is sent to you and will receive follow-up phone calls if you do not return the form within a timely manner. The results of this study are for research purposes only and will have no effect on your divorce or the decisions the court may render in this regard.

There are minimal to no risks and discomforts to participate in this study. Some people may find it uncomfortable to fill out the questionnaire because it asks about your feelings and opinions of your ex-spouse. You are free not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Your name and results are strictly confidential. You will not be putting your name on the questionnaire and the identifying information will be destroyed as soon as the data has been collected. Reports of results will only be given in the form of average group scores, and no individual names or scores will be identified. The identification number that you generate for the questionnaires will allow us to match the first set of questionnaires with those you complete at six months, but will not allow us to match your answers with your name. The court will not have access to individual questionnaire answers.

If you have additional questions about the purpose of this study or the results we obtain from this study, please contact Dr. W. Michael Nelson at the Psychology Department (phone #513-745-3298).

You are under no obligation to participate in this study, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty for withdrawal from the study.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have. Feel free to ask questions now, during completion of the questionnaire, or after completion of the questionnaire. Your cooperation is essential to us. Therefore, we will be happy to answer any questions about the goals, implications, and procedures of this research.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign below in the presence of the person who explained this project to you. This person should be given a copy of this form to keep.

By signing this form and filling out the questionnaire I am indicating that I am willing to participate.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Chapter VI: Dissertation

Abstract

This study examined the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals going through different levels of conflict as measured by level of court involvement during their divorce and six months later. A modification of the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire was employed to examine communication, interaction, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitude towards former spouse as a parent for 110 parents of children under the age of 18 going through a divorce or dissolution. Participants were classified into one of four groups based on level of court involvement: dissolution, divorce with low conflict, divorce with moderate conflict, and divorce with high conflict. Results suggested that individuals going through dissolutions have better communication, more interaction, and a more positive attitude toward their former spouse than individuals going through high conflict divorces. Suggestions are offered for addressing postdivorce conflict and future research.

Relationship Components and Nature of Postdivorce Parenting Responsibilities Among Individuals Going Through a Divorce

Understanding the effects of divorce on individuals is important given the high divorce rates and sheer number of individuals who will go through the break up of a marriage at some point in their lives. While only about 5% of marriages ended in divorce in the middle of the 10th century, approximately 50% of all marriages now end in divorce or dissolution (Amato, 2000). Much research has examined demographic variables that relate to divorce (Kitson, 1992; Sweeney & Phillips, 2004), and a large amount of research has looked at some of the more psychologically related variables including communication, interaction, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attachment.

Communication is one of the most important qualities of a relationship. Couples must be able to voice opinions and share thoughts and feelings. Without effective communication, relationships become difficult. Even after couples separate, communication is still an important issue, especially if children are involved. After divorce, many couples need to communicate effectively in order to work out children's schedules and welfare. For example, communication frequently involves negotiating childcare and the way in which childcare is negotiated seems to affect conflict and support. Conflict is decreased and support increased when strategies are more cooperative and less competitive (Fishel & Scanzoni, 1989). Similarly, Ahrons (1981) found that parents who very rarely or never communicated about child rearing decisions were more conflictual and less supportive in their relationship. Christensen and Shenk (1991) found that divorcing couples had less constructive communication and an increasing level of avoidance of communication about problems than individuals in more

stable marriages. Thus, there appears to be a link between the quality of communication and coparental interaction.

Researchers sometimes overlook the quality of relationships between ex-spouses as a factor in postdivorce adjustment. It is erroneous to assume that just because a couple has ended their marriage, they no longer have any interaction with each other. Ahrons (1981) reported that individuals continued to interact regarding child-rearing one year postdivorce, although less interaction occurred regarding issues unrelated to the children. Arditti and Kelly (1994) found that the more topics and wider range of topics discussed by former spouses, the better quality relationship postdivorce.

The decision to divorce is often emotionally draining. One major emotion associated with marital break-up is anger. Wallerstein (1986) concluded that intense anger and bitterness remained high in women and men who had divorced, especially those who felt exploited and rejected. Higher levels of conflict and hostility throughout the divorce process have been shown to lead to an overall poorer relationship postdivorce (Madden-Derdich & Arditti, 1999). Guilt emerges as another major emotion associated with divorce. Kitson (1982) found that those who initiated the divorce were more likely to feel guilty about the divorce.

The way in which divorcing spouses view each other appears to impact the level of conflict they experience throughout the divorce process. Berman (1985) found that the more positive feelings experienced prior to the separation, the more difficulty with the psychological separation. Attachment also plays a role in adjustment to divorce. Being friends with the ex-spouse seems to have some effect on well-being (Masheter, 1997). Attachment may lead to better communication and feeling better about oneself.

However, difficulties in the relationship are more likely to arise when the divorcing spouses do not share the same level of attachment to each other (Masheter, 1997).

The above research has mainly focused on differences between joint and sole custody families. Previous research has also focused on differences between mothers' and fathers' perceptions about their relationship. The present study assumes that there is a difference between individuals ending their marriages by divorce and by dissolution. Conflict is hypothesized to play a significant role in that decision. Unfortunately, little research has been done in this area to date.

Only one study has attempted to understand parental or couple conflict as reflected in their level of court involvement in going through a divorce (as defined by means of terminating the relationship) and link it to some of these psychological variables. Toews and McKenry (2001) found that ending marriages by means of dissolution was not related to cooperation postdivorce. Additionally, couples who participated in mediation programs had more conflictual relationships predivorce. Mediation is recommended more often for more conflictual couples.

One other study attempted to link conflict to court involvement. Kitson (1992) found that individuals who terminated their marriage by dissolution were more likely to consider their separation from spouse as friendlier and less conflictual. It appears as though these two studies (Kitson, 1992; Toews & McKenry, 2001) are the only studies that directly attempt to link divorce and dissolution to the amount of conflict. Given this, the need for understanding how divorce and dissolution distinguishes among levels of conflict as well as other postdivorce relationship components is necessary. According to Toews and McKenry (2001), although it is presumed that dissolutions indicate decreased

levels of conflict when compared to fault-based divorces, conflict has not been systematically studied.

Likewise, level of court involvement insofar as it reflects differing levels of conflict is an area that has not been extensively researched to determine its impact on postdivorce parental relationships. It is possible that the amount of effort put into achieving the end result of a divorce or dissolution (operationalized as the level of court involvement) may impact the ex-spouses' relationships. It is also possible that the decision to file for divorce instead of dissolution reflects more conflict within the relationship, and as such, indicates an "at-risk" situation and adverse postdivorce functioning. It is important to better understand how the level of court involvement may reflect the intensity of conflict couples going through a divorce experience. If postdivorce functioning is related to the divorce process itself, judges, lawyers and counselors can help prepare their clients for what is to come.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals going through different levels of conflict as measured by different levels of court involvement during their divorce. It was expected that individuals going through dissolutions and low conflict divorces would report more positive relationships with their ex-spouses than individuals going through high conflict divorces. They would likely report better communication, more interaction, less anger and guilt, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards their former spouse as a parent. It was expected that these results would be found immediately following the court proceedings and six months later. In addition, it was expected that there would be better communication, more interaction, less anger

and guilt, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards the former spouse across all four groups six months postdivorce.

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were 110 men and women who met the following criteria: 1) have at least one child under age 18, and 2) going through a divorce or dissolution through a Court of Domestic Relations in a mid-size Midwestern city. The initial groups, from least to most court involvement, were as follows: 1) dissolution ($n = 53$), 2) divorce with low conflict ($n = 23$), 3) divorce with moderate conflict ($n = 18$), and 4) divorce with high conflict ($n = 16$). Of the original 110 participants, 54 completed the follow-up portion yielding the following group composition: 1) dissolution ($n = 26$), 2) divorce with low conflict ($n = 16$), 3) divorce with moderate conflict ($n = 8$), and 4) divorce with high conflict ($n = 4$). The data for initial participation were collected over a 12-month period from June 2003 through May 2004.

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations on five demographic variables for the four groups. For the initial time period, there were no significant differences among groups on age, education level, length of marriage, and number of children. However, differences were evident among groups on number of marriages, $F(3, 108) = 6.16, p < .001$, in that pairwise comparisons (Tukey HSD) indicated individuals going through moderate conflict divorces had a greater number of marriages than individuals going through low conflict divorces ($p < .002$), and dissolutions ($p < .001$). For the six month follow-up time period, there were no significant differences among groups on age, number of marriages, length of marriage, and number of children. However, a significant

difference was evident among groups on education level, $F(3, 52) = 3.16, p = .03$, as individuals going through a dissolution had more years of education than individuals going through low conflict divorces ($p = .03$).

Table 2 presents the distribution across groups for three additional demographic variables. Chi-Square tests indicated no significant differences among groups on sex, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for the initial time period. For the six month follow-up, there were no significant differences among groups on sex and race/ethnicity, although differences were found on socioeconomic status, Pearson's $\chi^2 (12, N = 53) = 21.34, p = .05$, with the dissolution group reporting a higher income than the divorce with low conflict and divorce with moderate conflict groups. Overall, the sample was comprised of predominantly Caucasian, lower-middle class individuals in their mid to late 30s who had completed high school. The majority of participants were ending their first marriage which had lasted slightly over 10 years, and individuals had an average of two children from that marriage.

Measure

A modified version of the Binuclear Family Research Project Questionnaire (BFRPQ) (Ahrons, 1981) was used in this study (see Appendix A). Minor changes were made to the questionnaire, including deleting the Nonresidential Parent-child Involvement Scale and the Psychological Distance Scale. Also, the Guilt, Anger, Positive Feelings and Attitudes Towards Former Spouse as Parent Scales were originally administered using a Q-sort technique. In this study, these scales were administered to all participants. Finally, the original questionnaire was given in an interview format whereas this study utilized a survey format. Participants answered the questionnaire by circling

their responses to a Likert-type scale in which higher scores indicate better communication and attitudes, and more interaction, anger, guilt, and positive feelings. All of the scales were measured using a five point scale with the exception of the interaction scale which utilized a six point scale. This questionnaire has demonstrated sound reliability (C. Ahrons, personal communication, September 8, 2001). There does not appear to be any specific studies examining the validity of this questionnaire, and thus this information is unknown.

Procedure

After approval for the study was obtained from both a university review board and county court (see Appendices B and C), approximately 230 individuals were approached to participate in the study when they entered the courtroom waiting area in preparation for their final divorce/dissolution hearing. An information brochure (see Appendix D), consent form (see Appendix E), and questionnaire were distributed to potential participants. Less than half of the individuals originally approached agreed to participate. Once agreeing to participate, the purpose of the study was further explained and they were encouraged to take approximately ten minutes to fill out the questionnaire before leaving court. In addition, they were informed that there would be a six-month follow-up questionnaire sent to their home. Individuals who agreed to participate, but were unable to complete the questionnaire while at the court hearing, were given an envelope in which to return the questionnaire. They were contacted via telephone to remind them to return the questionnaire if it had not been received within one week. Twenty-three individuals took the questionnaire home with them; however, only nine returned the questionnaire via the mail (39%).

Participants were then classified into four levels of court involvement in accordance with guidelines provided by the Court of Domestic Relations. These guidelines took into account whether or not the couple settled with the help of the courts and the need for special court intervention such as custody or visitation litigation. Dissolutions are settled without court involvement and all division of property and finances as well as child arrangements are agreed upon by both parties through their lawyers. Both parties are required to be present for the dissolution hearing. Divorce with low conflict implies the divorce is obtained without court involvement and hearings. Divorce with moderate conflict implies that the custody was not able to be decided and thus the parties are referred to mediation and custody is resolved there. Divorce with high conflict implies that custody was unable to be resolved in mediation. Therefore, the case required a custody investigation.

Six months after filling out the original survey, participants were mailed a follow-up questionnaire and prepaid, self-addressed envelope. Phone calls were made to participants prior to sending out the follow-up and again, after the questionnaire had been mailed out if it had not been returned within two weeks. The return rate of these questionnaires was 50% ($n = 54$), well above suggested return rates (Bordens & Abbott, 1996). Two of the original participants moved out of the country between the time of their divorce/dissolution and the six month follow-up and were not included in the follow-up mailing. No attempts were made to include and/or exclude participants of particular ages, races, or socioeconomic statuses. All participants were treated according to the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2002).

Results

The means and standard deviations of the six BFRPQ psychological/adjustment scales for the four groups at the initial and six month follow-up are presented in Table 3. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) found statistically significant differences across the four levels of court involvement on the six BFRPQ scales (communication, interaction, anger, guilt, positive feelings, and attitudes towards former spouse as a parent) for the initial time period, $F(18, 280) = 2.07, p = .01$.

In order to further ascertain where the group differences were across the six scales, ANOVAs were conducted across the four groups for each scale. Significant differences were found for communication ($F(3, 104) = 6.87, p < .001$), interaction ($F(3, 104) = 9.25, p < .001$) and attitude ($F(3, 104) = 6.90, p < .001$). The anger ($F(3, 104) = 1.99, p = .12$), guilt ($F(3, 104) = 2.40, p = .07$) and positive feelings ($F(3, 104) = 1.87, p = .14$) scales were not significant.

In order to test for simple effects for the significant differences found above, pairwise comparisons (Tukey HSD) were performed to determine differences among the four groups. The Dissolution group reported better communication than the Divorce with High Conflict group ($p < .001$). In addition, the Dissolution group reported more interaction than the Divorce with Low ($p = .04$) and Divorce with High ($p < .001$) Conflict groups. There was also a significant difference between the Divorce with Moderate Conflict and the Divorce with High Conflict groups ($p = .04$). Finally, analyses for the Attitude scale indicated a significant difference between the Dissolution group and Divorce with Low Conflict ($p = .01$) and Divorce with High Conflict ($p = .001$) groups

with the Dissolution group reporting a more positive attitude than the Divorce with Low Conflict and Divorce with High Conflict groups.

Another purpose of the study was to determine if there were differences among the group six months after court involvement. A MANOVA indicated no significant differences across the four levels of court involvement on the six BFRPQ psychological/adjustment scales, $F(18, 125) = 1.10, p = .36$. Because the MANOVA was not significant, no further analyses were conducted.

A third purpose of the study was to ascertain whether individuals, regardless of group membership, improved from time one to time two on the six BFRPQ psychological/adjustment scales. The means and standard deviations of the BFRPQ scales at the initial and six month follow-up are presented in Table 4. A MANOVA indicated no significant differences from time one to time two, $F(6, 154) = 1.50, p = .18$. Because the MANOVA was not significant, no further analyses were conducted.

In order to gain an overall understanding of the data, a post-hoc 4x2 MANOVA was conducted which indicated no significant interaction between level of court involvement and time ($F(18, 419) = .59, p = .91$) and no significant main effect for time period ($F(6, 148) = 1.14, p = .34$). The MANOVA indicated a significant main effect for level of court involvement ($F(18, 419) = 2.47, p = .001$) indicating that regardless of time period, there were significant differences among the four groups on the six BFRPQ psychological/adjustment scales. The results of the MANOVA are presented in Appendix F. In addition, Appendix G contains the frequency of responses for all of the BFRPQ items for the initial and six month follow-up time periods according to level of court involvement.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the relationship components and nature of postdivorce parenting responsibilities among individuals going through different levels of conflict as defined by different levels of court involvement during their divorce. It was expected that individuals going through dissolutions and low conflict divorces would report more positive relationships with their ex-spouses than individuals going through high conflict divorces. Specifically, they would report better communication, more interaction, less anger and guilt, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards their former spouse as a parent. These results were anticipated both immediately following the court proceedings and six months later. In addition, better communication, more interaction, less anger and guilt, and more positive feelings and attitudes towards the former spouse were expected across all four groups six months postdivorce. Results were mixed.

First, immediately following the divorce/dissolution hearing, individuals who went through a “low conflict” dissolution reported better communication (i.e., fewer arguments, conversations are not hostile or stressful, parents are accommodating of each other’s schedules, minimal differences of opinion in child-rearing), more interaction (i.e., discussing the children, finances, new experiences they are having, personal problems), and a more positive attitude (i.e., indicating their ex-spouse is a good, caring parent) than individuals who went through a “high conflict” divorce. These results suggest that at some level there may be distinct differences between individuals who seek a dissolution versus those who seek a divorce, specifically one that requires a significant amount of court involvement. It should be noted, however, that it may not be differences within the

individuals themselves, but the process of going through different “types” of divorces that accounted for all or some of the differences. Nevertheless, Ahrons (1981) suggested individuals who report better communication and more interaction appear to have a less conflictual relationship. Differences were found between the dissolution and divorce with low conflict divorce groups on both interaction and attitude, with the dissolution group reporting more interaction and a more positive attitude. These findings are consistent with Arditti and Kelly’s (1994) research indicating the more topics and wider range of topics former spouses discuss, the better quality relationship they have postdivorce. This may suggest that individuals who opt for a divorce, regardless of the amount of court involvement, are ending more conflicted relationships than individuals opting for a dissolution. Differences were found between the moderate conflict and high conflict divorce groups, with the moderate conflict divorce group reporting more interaction than the high conflict divorce group. No differences were found for anger (i.e., hating ex-spouse, thinking ex-spouse should be punished, desiring revenge), guilt (i.e., wishing I would have tried harder to make the marriage work, feeling guilty, blaming self), and positive feelings (i.e., warm feelings, caring about the ex-spouse, feeling love and compassion for the ex-spouse) which was inconsistent with similar previous research (Madden-Derdich & Arditti, 1999; Masheter, 1997).

In contrast to what was expected, six months postdivorce differences were not significant among the groups suggesting that the differences found immediately after court involvement disappear with time. However, fewer participants returned questionnaires for the six month follow-up than those who participated in the initial portion of the study (54 and 110 respectively). Although the overall follow-up rate for

the study was 50%, there were very few individuals in the high conflict divorce group with only 25% ($n = 4$) participants responding. It should be noted that follow-up phone calls were placed to participants who did not return their questionnaires with moderate results, as only 30% responded to the phone call by mailing in their questionnaire. Thus, the results need to be viewed in light of the relatively small sample.

It was expected that across all groups, the effects of time (six months) would improve relationships (i.e., better communication, more interaction, less anger and guilt, more positive feelings and attitudes). Results did not support this. Again, the number of individuals who mailed in the follow-up questionnaire across the groups was low. It may also be that the six month follow-up was not sufficient time for relationships to improve between ex-spouses. Kaslow (1995) suggested that it takes individuals between two to four years to recover from a divorce. The length of time necessary for “recovery” increased for individuals who were moderately to extremely dysfunctional prior to divorce. Kitson (1992) found similar results suggesting that the first year postdivorce is particularly tumultuous.

In understanding the results of this study, it is important to consider the impact that the legal system may have in the relationships reported by those going through a divorce. Friedman (2004) suggested that while the legal system can exacerbate conflict, “it is inaccurate and unfair to place all the responsibility with the system and its practitioners” (p. 105). He further suggested that accusations are ultimately the responsibility of the individual making them, and often one party is willing to attempt to “destroy” the other party. This may especially be the case during custody disputes. Friedman also suggested that individuals with Borderline and Narcissistic

psychopathology are more willing to enhance conflict during the divorce process and continue the conflict postdivorce. The personality make-up of the participants was not assessed in the present study.

Results of this study suggest that conflict, as operationalized by level of court involvement, likely affects postdivorce functioning, specifically with regard to communication, interaction, and attitude. Given this, it is important for individuals going through a divorce to understand how to manage conflict. This is particularly important given that the individuals in this study were parents who ideally would find some way to co-parent their children, even if they chose not to be friends. Walzer and Oles (2003) interviewed divorced people to learn how ex-spouses negotiated their postdivorce relationship and identified some obstacles to living a conflict-free postdivorce relationship. The interviewed couples suggested that lawyers often contribute to conflict, though this likely is related to the fact that lawyers are responsible for helping the couple divide belongings and negotiate finances. New partners also promote increased conflict. However, results of their research yield a number of suggestions for decreasing conflict. First, individuals would benefit from having a common understanding of why the marriage failed. The couple would ideally adopt a congruent narrative that reflects both parties' responsibility. Blaming each other for what happened is not useful. Second, individuals might redefine their relationship to account for the fact that they are no longer spouses. Labeling the relationship as a "friendship" rather than a "spousal relationship," as well as separating the parental relationships from the marital relationship often yields less conflict. Given the results of the present study, it is particularly important for lawyers and court officials to continue efforts to address the struggles that couples have

in going through a divorce, specifically in the high conflict group (as this group seems to be more “at risk”).

The present study is not without its limitations. Over 200 people were approached to participate in the study and less than half agreed. It is not known why these individuals did not agree to participate, but there may be factors that caused individuals to self select out of the study (i.e., individuals who were particularly angry about their situation and may have responded differently than those who participated). In addition, as mentioned above, significantly fewer participants completed the follow-up questionnaire. The individuals who did choose to respond to the follow-up may have misrepresented the initial sample such that those on the extreme end for any of the groups may not have returned questionnaires.

Originally, it was proposed that in order to have sufficient power for the present study, a total of 180 participants, 45 in each of the four groups, would need to be recruited. After 12 months of data collection, data from only 110 participants was available. While not meeting the goal of 180 participants may be considered a limitation of this study, it should be noted that typical sample sizes for similar research range from 20 to 40 participants. As such, the present study sampled significantly more individuals.

Another limitation of the study is the use of the BFRPQ, a self-report measure. The BFRPQ was developed in order to assess shared parenting agreements and though it has been used in a number of different research studies (e.g., Ahrons, 1979; Ahrons, 1981; Dozier, Sollie, Stack, & Smith, 1993; Fishel & Scanzoni, 1989; Goldsmith, 1980; Goodman, 1993; and Madden-Derdich & Arditti, 1999), the present study is the first to use it with conflict as measured by court involvement as the independent variable.

Additionally, the questionnaire is a self-report measure and individuals may pick and choose the things they want to disclose about themselves. There were no internal controls to account for consistency of responding. The questionnaire has also been altered significantly from its original form. Therefore, the validity of this measure for this particular research study needs to be considered.

With regard to the procedure utilized in this study, when individuals present for their final court hearing, they are required to sign a number of documents. Individuals typically meet with their attorneys prior to entering court and were not approached by the research team if they were with their attorney out of respect for the attorney and court process. Individuals who required more time with their attorneys and, as a result, were not approached to participate may have responded differently than those who required little time to finish paperwork. Time spent with the attorney may indicate increased conflict or inability to resolve divorce issues prior to the court date. Furthermore, there is no way to be absolutely certain that the results of this study are based on conflict related to level of court involvement rather than predivorce adjustment. Because participants were approached during their final court hearing, their emotional state and focus of their attention was likely on the court proceedings. Their responses to the questionnaire may also reflect that to some degree.

The results are also based on individuals in one mid-sized Midwestern city and involve primarily Caucasian, lower middle class, high school educated individuals in their mid to late 30s. Replication with a new group of participants, perhaps in another metropolitan area, would be helpful.

Results and limitations of the present study yield a number of possible follow-up research studies. One recommendation for future research would include developing a better system for recruiting participants, such as contacting the individuals prior to the final court hearing and either mailing the initial questionnaire or interviewing them at their homes or at a research facility. As mentioned above, the participants' relationships did not improve six months after their final court hearing. Kaslow (1995) suggested improvement in relationships takes two to four years and therefore, re-contacting the present study's participants in the next year to two years may provide significant results and lends itself to a potentially interesting follow-up to the present study. Friedman's (2004) research on the relationship between psychopathology and conflict during the divorce process yields an interesting follow-up study examining whether high conflict divorcing couples are more likely to have certain personality traits than couples going through dissolutions.

The present study provides another way of examining divorce and the ensuing relationships between parents by examining the level of court involvement as an independent variable. It may not be a direct causal factor, however, and may simply be more the result of other inter- and intrapersonal variables that exist within divorcing couples themselves. Furthermore, the long-term effects of the divorce process and the court's impact are unknown. Further research in this area is recommended given the large percentage of individuals who will experience a divorce at least once in their lifetime.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for the Demographic Variables for Dissolution, Low, Moderate, and High Conflict Divorce Groups (Initial Contact and Six Month Follow-Up)

<u>Continuous Variable</u>	<u>Dissolution</u> (<i>n</i> =53; <i>n</i> =26)	<u>Low</u> (<i>n</i> =23; <i>n</i> =16)	<u>Moderate</u> (<i>n</i> =18; <i>n</i> =8)	<u>High</u> (<i>n</i> =16; <i>n</i> =4)	<u>Total</u> (<i>n</i> =110; <i>n</i> =54)*
Age					
Initial	37.4 (6.6)	35.0 (7.3)	38.5 (6.8)	39.6 (6.8)	37.4 (6.9)
Follow-up	39.6 (7.4)	34.0 (6.5)	36.6 (8.0)	40.8 (7.8)	37.6 (7.5)
Education Level					
Initial	13.5 (4.4)	12.4 (3.7)	12.9 (1.8)	13.0 (3.4)	13.1 (3.8)
Follow-up**	14.7 (3.2)	11.4 (4.5)	13.1 (2.1)	14.8 (2.2)	13.5 (3.7)
Number of Marriages					
Initial**	1.1 (.34)	1.1 (.29)	1.7 (.91)	1.3 (.48)	1.2 (.52)
Follow-up	1.2 (.37)	1.0 (.00)	1.3 (.46)	1.5 (.58)	1.1 (.36)
Length of Marriage					
Initial	10.8 (6.1)	10.0 (6.4)	10.8 (5.9)	13.6 (7.5)	11.0 (6.4)
Follow-up	12.3 (7.0)	9.9 (6.3)	9.3 (5.2)	11.0 (5.1)	11.0 (6.4)
Number of Children					
Initial	2.1 (1.2)	2.0 (1.0)	2.2 (.86)	2.3 (.93)	2.1 (1.0)
Follow-up	2.2 (1.4)	1.9 (1.1)	1.8 (.71)	2.0 (.82)	2.1 (1.2)

Note. **n*=Initial participants; *n*=Follow-up participants for each group

** $p < .05$

Table 2

*Frequencies for Demographic Variables for Dissolution, Low, Moderate, and High
Conflict Divorce Groups (Initial Contact and Six Month Follow-Up)*

<u>Discrete Variable</u>	<u>Dissolution</u> (<i>n</i> =53; <i>n</i> =26)	<u>Low</u> (<i>n</i> =23; <i>n</i> =16)	<u>Moderate</u> (<i>n</i> =18; <i>n</i> =8)	<u>High</u> (<i>n</i> =16; <i>n</i> =4)	<u>Total</u> (<i>n</i> =110; <i>n</i> =54)*
Sex					
Male					
Initial	49%	35%	56%	50%	47%
Follow-Up	42%	25%	63%	75%	43%
Female					
Initial	51%	65%	44%	50%	53%
Follow-Up	58%	75%	38%	25%	57%
Race					
Caucasian					
Initial	77%	74%	65%	69%	74%
Follow-Up	92%	94%	75%	75%	89%
African-Am.					
Initial	17%	17%	29%	25%	20%
Follow-Up	8%	6%	13%	25%	9%
Hisp./Latino					
Initial	4%	4%	0%	7%	4%
Follow-Up	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian-Am.					
Initial	0%	0%	6%	0%	1%
Follow-Up	0%	0%	13%	0%	2%
Other					
Initial	2%	4%	0%	0%	2%
Follow-Up	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 2 Continued

Frequencies for Demographic Variables for Dissolution, Low, Moderate, and High Conflict Divorce Groups (Initial Contact and Six Month Follow-Up)

<u>Discrete Variable</u>	<u>Dissolution</u> (<i>n</i> =53; <i>n</i> =26)	<u>Low</u> (<i>n</i> =23; <i>n</i> =16)	<u>Moderate</u> (<i>n</i> =18; <i>n</i> =8)	<u>High</u> (<i>n</i> =16; <i>n</i> =4)	<u>Total</u> (<i>n</i> =110; <i>n</i> =54)*
Socioeconomic Status (Income)*					
Under \$20,000					
Initial	14%	35%	33%	7%	21%
Follow-Up	8%	40%	50%	0%	23%
\$20,000-\$40,000					
Initial	35%	30%	33%	27%	33%
Follow-Up	27%	20%	38%	50%	28%
\$40,000-\$60,000					
Initial	25%	26%	28%	40%	28%
Follow-Up	42%	33%	0%	25%	32%
\$60,000-\$80,000					
Initial	14%	4%	0%	7%	9%
Follow-Up	23%	0%	0%	25%	13%
\$80,000-\$100,000					
Initial	6%	0%	0%	7%	4%
Follow-Up	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Over \$100,000					
Initial	6%	4%	6%	7%	6%
Follow-Up	0%	7%	13%	0%	4%

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for BFRPQ Scales Across the Dissolution, Low, Moderate, and High Conflict Divorce Groups (Initial Contact and Six Month Follow-Up)

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Dissolution</u> (<i>n</i> =53; <i>n</i> =26)	<u>Low</u> (<i>n</i> =23; <i>n</i> =16)	<u>Moderate</u> (<i>n</i> =18; <i>n</i> =8)	<u>High</u> (<i>n</i> =16; <i>n</i> =4)*
Communication				
Initial***	3.33 (.62)	3.00 (.80)	3.01 (.82)	2.46 (.55)
Follow-Up	3.25 (.72)	2.84 (.66)	2.95 (.78)	2.18 (.93)
Interaction**				
Initial***	2.83 (.86)	2.29 (.88)	2.43 (.56)	1.69 (.58)
Follow-Up	2.39 (.72)	1.93 (.60)	2.44 (1.31)	1.49 (.34)
Guilt				
Initial	2.58 (.91)	2.18 (.77)	2.46 (.69)	2.04 (.68)
Follow-Up	2.20 (.97)	2.09 (.61)	2.37 (.86)	1.10 (.16)
Anger				
Initial	4.23 (.78)	4.03 (.88)	3.83 (.86)	3.70 (1.11)
Follow-Up	4.11 (.89)	4.16 (.72)	3.88 (.94)	4.12 (.60)
Positive Feelings				
Initial	3.14 (1.12)	2.74 (1.12)	2.81 (1.24)	2.41 (1.36)
Follow-Up	2.87 (1.31)	2.81 (1.14)	3.07 (1.15)	1.50 (.46)
Attitude				
Initial***	4.02 (.96)	3.20 (1.22)	3.47 (1.10)	2.84 (1.00)
Follow-Up	3.92 (1.01)	3.05 (1.27)	3.39 (1.50)	2.19 (.83)

Note. **n*=Initial participants; *n*=Follow-up participants for each group

**Rating was on a 6-point Likert-type scale while all others were on a 5-point scale.

*** $p < .05$

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for BFRPQ Scales for the Initial Contact and Six Month Follow-Up for the Four Groups

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Initial Contact</u> <i>n</i> =110	<u>Follow-Up Contact</u> <i>n</i> =54
Communication	3.08 (.74)	3.01 (.77)
Interaction*	2.48 (.87)	2.19 (.80)
Guilt	2.39 (.84)	2.11 (.86)
Anger	4.05 (.88)	4.09 (.81)
Positive Feelings	2.90 (1.19)	2.77 (1.23)
Attitude	3.59 (1.13)	3.45 (1.24)

Note. *Rating was on a 6-point Likert-type scale while all others were on a 5-point scale.

PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please circle the answer that best applies to you and your relationship with your most current ex-spouse...

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
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1. When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues how often does an argument result? 1 2 3 4 5
2. How often is the underlying atmosphere one of hostility or anger? 1 2 3 4 5
3. How often is the conversation stressful or tense? 1 2 3 4 5
4. Do you and your former spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing? 1 2 3 4 5
5. If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate? 1 2 3 4 5
6. Does your former spouse go out of the way to accommodate any changes you need to make? 1 2 3 4 5
7. Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a custodial (or non-custodial) parent? 1 2 3 4 5
8. When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse? 1 2 3 4 5
9. Would you say that your former spouse is a resource to you in raising the children? 1 2 3 4 5
10. Would you say that you are a resource to your former spouse in raising the children? 1 2 3 4 5

Think back over the past several months and tell me how often you and your former spouse have related in these ways...

Never	Every Few Months	Once a Month	Twice Monthly	Once Weekly	Daily
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11. Talking about old friends in common 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Discussing finances not related to children 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Talking about your past marriage to each other 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Talking about new experiences you are having in your present lives 1 2 3 4 5 6

	Never	Every Few Months	Once a Month	Twice Monthly	Once Weekly	Daily
15. Talking about personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Talking about reconciling (marrying each other again)	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. Talking about why you got divorced	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Talking about your families (mother, father, etc. but not the children)	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Having sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Helping each other with household tasks not related to the children	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. "Dating" each other	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Physical contact (e. g. hugging, kissing) without sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Going out to dinner without the children	1	2	3	4	5	6

Which of the following have been shared between you and your former spouse?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
24. Making major decisions regarding your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Making day to day decisions regarding your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Discussing personal problems your children may be experiencing?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Discussing school and/or medical problems?	1	2	3	4	5
28. Planning special events in your children's lives?	1	2	3	4	5
29. Talking about your children's accomplishments and progress?	1	2	3	4	5
30. Talking about problems you are having in raising the children?	1	2	3	4	5
31. Discussing how the children are adjusting to divorce?	1	2	3	4	5
32. Discussing problems you are having with the coparenting relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
33. Discussing finances in regard to your children?	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to the following questions about you and your ex-spouse:

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
-------	--------	-----------	-------	--------

34. I wish I had tried harder to make the marriage work	1	2	3	4	5
35. I do not feel any guilt about the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
36. I blame myself for the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
37. I feel guilty about the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
38. I wish I could make up for the hurt I have caused him/her	1	2	3	4	5
39. I feel angry for the hurt I have gone through	1	2	3	4	5
40. I hate him/her	1	2	3	4	5
41. I hope he/she has problems in new relationships	1	2	3	4	5
42. I think he/she should be punished	1	2	3	4	5
43. I want revenge for wrongs done to me	1	2	3	4	5
44. I want to get back at him/her for what's been done to me	1	2	3	4	5
45. I blame him/her for the divorce	1	2	3	4	5
46. I don't feel he/she deserves to be happy	1	2	3	4	5
47. I have warm feelings for my former spouse	1	2	3	4	5
48. I care about his/her welfare	1	2	3	4	5
49. I feel compassion for him/her	1	2	3	4	5
50. I love him/her	1	2	3	4	5
51. My former spouse is an irresponsible parent	1	2	3	4	5
52. My former spouse is a caring parent	1	2	3	4	5
53. My former spouse is an incompetent parent	1	2	3	4	5
54. My former spouse is a good parent to the children	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Xavier Institutional Review Board Approval

Institutional Review Board
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207-7361
Phone 513 745-2870
Fax 513 745-4267

June 5, 2003

Kelly L. Wesolowski, M.A.
2347 Madison Road #242
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Dear Ms. Wesolowski:

The IRB received the clarifications and revisions on your Protocol #0243-3, *Adjustment to Divorce: Parents' and Children's Perspectives*, on June 5. All points listed in the IRB's May 29 letter have been adequately addressed and your research is approved by XU's IRB in the Expedited Review category.

A Final Report is due upon completion of your study or, if not yet completed one year from this date, a Status Report must be filed one year from this date. A form is enclosed for your convenience. The form is also available at www.xu.edu/IRB/IRBforms.

If there are any adverse events or modifications to the research, please notify the IRB immediately.

We wish you every success with your research.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Baumiller, S.J.
IRB Chair and Administrator

RCB:nm

cc Dr. W. Michael Nelson, ML 6411

**Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas
Division of Domestic Relations
800 Broadway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513/946-9000**

Appendix C

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Court of Domestic Relations Approval

RONALD A. PANIOTO, Administrative Judge

PENELOPE R. CUNNINGHAM, Judge
SUSAN LAKER TOLBERT, Judge

May 14, 2003

Robert Baumiller, S.J.
IRB Committee
Xavier University
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Dear Fr. Baumiller and Committee Members,

I have enjoyed working with Kelly Wesolowski, M.A. and Nicole Levasseur, M.A. in their efforts to do their doctoral research. Ms. Wesolowski and Ms. Levasseur, along with Michael Nelson, Ph.D., have been diligent in their plans to conduct research here at the Court. They have met with Judge Ronald A. Panioto, Administrative Judge and Raymond J. Shannon, Court Administrator, to discuss their project and have obtained official permission of the Court to do so. In addition, Ms. Wesolowski and Ms. Levasseur have conferred with our Court's Information Systems Supervisor, Dave Huwel, to discuss their computer research needs. Ms. Wesolowski and Ms. Levasseur are slated to begin their research within several weeks and are conversant with our courtroom procedures and personnel. We are eagerly looking forward to the research gathering phase of the project and will be very interested in the results of the project. I believe the research may hold important implications for improving our services for the families of Hamilton County.

Very truly yours,

Jayne Zuberbuhler, LSW
Supervisor of Parenting Department

Appendix D

Research Study Information Brochure

Questions:

**If you have questions, please
contact one of the following
Individuals:**

**Dr. W. Michael Nelson, Ph.D.,
Professor of Psychology,
Xavier University —
513-745-3298**

**Nicole Levasseur, M.A.,
Psychology Graduate
Student, Xavier University —
513-745-3533**

**Kelly Wesolowski, M.A.,
Psychology Graduate
Student, Xavier University —
513-745-3533**

**Jayne Zuberbuhler, LSW,
Court of Domestic Relations-
513-946-9079**

**Adjustment to Divorce:
Parents' and Children's
Perspectives:
A Research Study**

**Conducted by:
Xavier University Department of
Psychology with the Permission of
the Hamilton County Court of
Domestic Relations**

Purpose:

This research project is being conducted by the Xavier University Department of Psychology. The study has been approved by the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations. The purpose of the project is to examine the relationship between parents and to examine the adjustment of children. This is an important area of research given how many families are impacted by divorce each year. Results of this research may help families better deal with adjustment problems that sometimes arise when parents decide to divorce.

Who is Eligible?:

Any parent going through a divorce or dissolution who has at least one child under the age of 18.

What Can I Expect?:

Participants will fill out questionnaires about themselves and/or their children. Children may be asked to complete questionnaires if they and their parents agree to do so. These questionnaires will take approximately 10 minutes and participants will fill these out before leaving the courtroom. A follow-up questionnaire will be mailed to the participants six months after the final court hearing. All information will be kept confidential. Results will be reported using group information rather than individual answers and your name will not be on your questionnaire. These results are for research purposes only and have no effect on your divorce or the decisions the court may render in this regard.

How Will I Participate?:

Inform the member of the research team that gave you this brochure that you are interested in being part of this research study. They will provide you with the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix E

Research Study Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Xavier University and with the permission of the Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. This is a research project designed to examine the postdivorce relationship between parents. Your participation in this experiment will involve filling out a questionnaire, designed to be completed in less than 15 minutes, at the final court hearing. In addition, another questionnaire to be filled out will be mailed to your house six months following your court hearing. You will receive a reminder phone call in six months before the questionnaire is sent to you and will receive follow-up phone calls if you do not return the form within a timely manner. The results of this study are for research purposes only and will have no effect on your divorce or the decisions the court may render in this regard.

There are minimal to no risks and discomforts to participate in this study. Some people may find it uncomfortable to fill out the questionnaire because it asks about your feelings and opinions of your ex-spouse. You are free not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Your name and results are strictly confidential. You will not be putting your name on the questionnaire and the identifying information will be destroyed as soon as the data has been collected. Reports of results will only be given in the form of average group scores, and no individual names or scores will be identified. The identification number that you generate for the questionnaires will allow us to match the first set of questionnaires with those you complete at six months, but will not allow us to match your answers with your name. The court will not have access to individual questionnaire answers.

If you have additional questions about the purpose of this study or the results we obtain from this study, please contact Dr. W. Michael Nelson at the Psychology Department (phone #513-745-3298).

You are under no obligation to participate in this study, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty for withdrawal from the study.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have. Feel free to ask questions now, during completion of the questionnaire, or after completion of the questionnaire. Your cooperation is essential to us. Therefore, we will be happy to answer any questions about the goals, implications, and procedures of this research.

If you decide to participate in this project, please sign below in the presence of the person who explained this project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep.

By signing this form and filling out the questionnaire I am indicating that I am willing to participate.

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix F

In order to gain an overall understanding of the data, a 4x2 MANOVA was conducted which indicated no significant interaction between level of court involvement and time ($F(18, 419) = .59, p = .91$) and no significant main effect for time period ($F(6, 148) = 1.14, p = .34$). The MANOVA indicated a significant main effect for level of court involvement ($F(18, 419) = 2.47, p = .001$), indicating that regardless of time period, there were significant differences between the four groups on the BFRPQ psychological/adjustment scales. The results of the MANOVA are presented in Table located in this Appendix.

Follow-up analyses (Tukey HSD) to the main effect for group (i.e., level of court involvement) among the four levels of court involvement on the six BFRPQ psychological scales were performed. Significant differences were found on the Communication scale with individuals going through a Dissolution reporting better communication than those going through a Low Conflict Divorce ($p = .04$) and a High Conflict Divorce ($p < .001$). The Low Conflict Divorce group reported better communication than the High Conflict Divorce group ($p = .03$). The Moderate Conflict Divorce group also reported significantly better communication than the High Conflict Divorce group ($p = .03$). Several significant differences also were found for the Interaction scale. Individuals going through a Dissolution reported more interaction than individuals going through a Low Conflict Divorce ($p = .01$) and a High Conflict Divorce ($p < .001$). Additionally, individuals going through a Moderate Conflict Divorce reported more interaction than those going through a High Conflict Divorce ($p = .01$). Participants in the Dissolution group reported more Guilt than individuals in the High Conflict

Divorce group ($p = .02$). On the Positive Feelings scale, significant differences were found with the Dissolution group reporting more positive feelings than the High Conflict Divorce group ($p = .03$). Finally, on the Attitude scale, individuals going through a Dissolution reported a more positive attitude than individuals in both the Low Conflict Divorce ($p = .001$) and High Conflict Divorce ($p < .001$) groups. No significant differences were found for the Anger scale.

Table (Appendix F)

Summary of 4x2 Multivariate Analysis

<u>Analysis</u>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Alpha</i>
MANOVA			
Interaction	.59	18, 419	.91
Group	2.47*	18, 419	.001
Time	1.14	6, 148	.34

Note. * $p < .05$

Appendix G

Frequency of Responses to the BFRPQ for the Initial and Follow-Up Time Periods According to Level of Court Involvement

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues how often does an argument result?					
Initial - Dissolution (<i>n</i> = 53)	13%	45%	28%	8%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict (<i>n</i> = 23)	13%	39%	17%	17%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict (<i>n</i> = 18)	17%	28%	22%	28%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict (<i>n</i> = 16)	0%	19%	38%	31%	13%
Follow-up - Dissolution (<i>n</i> = 26)	27%	27%	35%	12%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict (<i>n</i> = 16)	31%	31%	13%	19%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict (<i>n</i> = 8)	14%	29%	43%	0%	14%
Divorce with High Conflict (<i>n</i> = 4)	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%
2. How often is the underlying atmosphere one of hostility or anger?					
Initial - Dissolution	8%	51%	19%	23%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	26%	30%	17%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	11%	44%	17%	22%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	19%	25%	44%	13%
Follow-up - Dissolution	15%	35%	39%	8%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	25%	38%	19%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	14%	14%	43%	29%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	0%	25%	50%
3. How often is the conversation stressful or tense?					
Initial - Dissolution	0%	34%	40%	21%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	0%	30%	30%	30%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	44%	28%	22%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	6%	31%	38%	25%
Follow-up - Dissolution	8%	42%	23%	27%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	6%	31%	31%	19%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	29%	14%	43%	14%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%
4. Do you and your former spouse have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing?					
Initial - Dissolution	15%	26%	38%	13%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	9%	48%	22%	13%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	39%	28%	28%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	19%	44%	13%
Follow-up - Dissolution	12%	39%	19%	27%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	25%	19%	19%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	29%	29%	43%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
5. If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate?					
Initial - Dissolution	0%	8%	17%	37%	39%
Divorce with Low Conflict	9%	0%	13%	35%	44%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	6%	0%	28%	22%	44%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	13%	27%	27%	33%
Follow-up – Dissolution	0%	0%	8%	60%	32%
Divorce with Low Conflict	0%	0%	23%	46%	31%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	0%	29%	29%	43%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
6. Does your former spouse go out of the way to accommodate any changes you need to make?					
Initial - Dissolution	0%	23%	21%	31%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	17%	26%	17%	22%	17%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	17%	22%	22%	17%	22%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	60%	27%	13%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	4%	8%	29%	38%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	21%	29%	14%	14%	21%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	29%	29%	14%	14%	14%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%
7. Do you feel that your former spouse understands and is supportive of your special needs as a custodial (or non-custodial) parent?					
Initial - Dissolution	4%	19%	28%	23%	26%
Divorce with Low Conflict	26%	22%	22%	13%	17%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	11%	17%	28%	28%	17%
Divorce with High Conflict	18%	56%	13%	6%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution	4%	25%	38%	13%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	31%	31%	19%	13%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	43%	14%	0%	29%	14%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
8. When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse?					
Initial - Dissolution	8%	13%	32%	27%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	30%	26%	17%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	17%	33%	22%	17%	11%
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	44%	13%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	13%	29%	29%	13%	17%
Divorce with Low Conflict	31%	44%	19%	6%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	43%	0%	29%	29%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
9. Would you say that your former spouse is a resource to you in raising the children?							
Initial - Dissolution		8%	15%	23%	23%	32%	
Divorce with Low Conflict		22%	30%	13%	17%	17%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		11%	17%	28%	33%	11%	
Divorce with High Conflict		19%	25%	56%	0%	0%	
Follow-up – Dissolution		20%	20%	20%	24%	16%	
Divorce with Low Conflict		31%	38%	13%	19%	0%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		14%	14%	29%	14%	29%	
Divorce with High Conflict		50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	
10. Would you say that you are a resource to your former spouse in raising the children?							
Initial - Dissolution		2%	4%	12%	42%	40%	
Divorce with Low Conflict		0%	9%	14%	14%	64%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		6%	12%	24%	24%	35%	
Divorce with High Conflict		6%	6%	31%	25%	31%	
Follow-up – Dissolution		4%	4%	24%	28%	40%	
Divorce with Low Conflict		13%	0%	7%	40%	40%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		0%	14%	29%	57%	0%	
Divorce with High Conflict		25%	25%	0%	25%	25%	
11. Talking about old friends in common							
		Never	Few Months	Once/Mon.	Twice/Mon.	Once Week.	Daily
Initial - Dissolution		34%	34%	15%	9%	6%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict		48%	26%	0%	0%	17%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		72%	17%	0%	0%	6%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict		75%	19%	0%	6%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution		36%	36%	12%	16%	0%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict		44%	38%	0%	13%	6%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		88%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict		75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12. Discussing finances not related to children							
Initial - Dissolution		36%	19%	11%	11%	11%	11%
Divorce with Low Conflict		48%	22%	0%	9%	13%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		50%	17%	0%	6%	17%	11%
Divorce with High Conflict		56%	19%	13%	6%	0%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution		54%	27%	8%	8%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict		56%	19%	6%	13%	0%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict		63%	13%	13%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict		100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	Never	Few Months	Once/Mon.	Twice/Mon.	Once Week.	Daily
13. Talking about your past marriage to each other						
Initial - Dissolution	54%	15%	0%	19%	10%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	61%	17%	9%	4%	9%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	39%	28%	11%	0%	6%	17%
Divorce with High Conflict	88%	6%	0%	0%	6%	0%
Follow-up - Dissolution	50%	39%	0%	8%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	63%	25%	0%	13%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	25%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14. Talking about new experiences you are having in your present lives						
Initial - Dissolution	44%	19%	10%	12%	12%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	44%	26%	0%	0%	22%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	67%	17%	0%	6%	0%	11%
Divorce with High Conflict	88%	6%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up - Dissolution	46%	12%	27%	8%	4%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	31%	44%	19%	6%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	88%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15. Talking about personal problems						
Initial - Dissolution	47%	22%	6%	2%	12%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	46%	14%	5%	9%	18%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	61%	17%	6%	6%	11%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	81%	6%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up - Dissolution	50%	23%	8%	8%	8%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	67%	27%	0%	0%	0%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	75%	13%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
16. Talking about reconciling						
Initial - Dissolution	75%	17%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	67%	28%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up - Dissolution	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	75%	13%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
17. Talking about why you got divorced						
Initial - Dissolution	40%	25%	8%	15%	6%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict	50%	23%	5%	18%	5%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	39%	33%	11%	6%	11%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	81%	13%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up - Dissolution	58%	27%	0%	4%	8%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	87%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	13%	13%	0%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	Never	Few Months	Once/Mon.	Twice/Mon.	Once Week.	Daily
18. Talking about your families						
Initial - Dissolution	25%	33%	10%	10%	17%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict	23%	36%	5%	5%	14%	18%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	33%	39%	17%	0%	6%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	63%	31%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	15%	35%	19%	23%	4%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	27%	33%	7%	20%	13%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	50%	38%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
19. Having sexual intercourse						
Initial - Dissolution	88%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	78%	11%	0%	6%	6%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	92%	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	75%	13%	0%	0%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20. Helping each other with household tasks not related to the children						
Initial - Dissolution	64%	6%	8%	6%	10%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	73%	14%	0%	5%	5%	5%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	67%	17%	6%	6%	0%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	65%	23%	4%	4%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	80%	13%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	88%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
21. "Dating" each other						
Initial - Dissolution	84%	10%	0%	2%	4%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	89%	6%	0%	6%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	96%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	88%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
22. Physical contact without sexual intercourse						
Initial - Dissolution	64%	8%	2%	10%	14%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	82%	14%	0%	0%	5%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	67%	17%	6%	6%	6%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	81%	4%	4%	8%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	87%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	88%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	Never	Few Months	Once/Mon.	Twice/Mon.	Once Week.	Daily
23. Going out to dinner without the children						
Initial - Dissolution	79%	12%	2%	2%	6%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	83%	11%	0%	0%	6%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	81%	12%	0%	8%	0%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	88%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
24. Making major decisions regarding your children's lives?						
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
Initial - Dissolution	6%	8%	23%	29%	35%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	18%	32%	27%	14%	9%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	13%	31%	31%	25%	
Divorce with High Conflict	38%	44%	19%	0%	0%	
Follow-up – Dissolution	12%	12%	24%	24%	28%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	27%	27%	27%	13%	7%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	50%	0%	13%	25%	
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%	
25. Making day to day decisions regarding your children's lives?						
Initial - Dissolution	8%	19%	23%	29%	21%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	27%	27%	14%	18%	14%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	11%	22%	33%	17%	17%	
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	13%	38%	6%	0%	
Follow-up – Dissolution	19%	23%	19%	15%	23%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	33%	33%	27%	7%	0%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	25%	0%	13%	25%	
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	50%	25%	0%	0%	
26. Discussing personal problems your children may be experiencing?						
Initial - Dissolution	6%	8%	14%	40%	33%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	14%	23%	27%	27%	9%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	6%	17%	17%	39%	22%	
Divorce with High Conflict	38%	6%	38%	13%	6%	
Follow-up – Dissolution	4%	15%	31%	27%	23%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	20%	7%	47%	27%	0%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	25%	13%	13%	25%	
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%	
27. Discussing school and/or medical problems?						
Initial - Dissolution	2%	6%	12%	40%	40%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	23%	5%	32%	32%	9%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	11%	17%	17%	33%	22%	
Divorce with High Conflict	31%	13%	31%	6%	19%	
Follow-up – Dissolution	12%	8%	23%	27%	31%	
Divorce with Low Conflict	27%	0%	33%	33%	7%	
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	25%	0%	38%	25%	
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	0%	25%	25%	25%	

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
28. Planning special events in your children's lives?					
Initial - Dissolution	8%	17%	10%	37%	29%
Divorce with Low Conflict	32%	9%	23%	32%	5%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	6%	11%	44%	28%	11%
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	31%	13%	6%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution	19%	19%	23%	35%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	40%	20%	27%	7%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	25%	13%	13%	25%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
29. Talking about your children's accomplishments and progress?					
Initial - Dissolution	2%	4%	19%	37%	39%
Divorce with Low Conflict	9%	18%	23%	41%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	11%	22%	39%	29%
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	6%	25%	13%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	12%	8%	15%	31%	35%
Divorce with Low Conflict	20%	13%	27%	33%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	13%	13%	13%	38%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
30. Talking about problems you are having in raising the children?					
Initial - Dissolution	6%	14%	21%	29%	31%
Divorce with Low Conflict	18%	23%	23%	27%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	11%	17%	22%	33%	17%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	6%	25%	13%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution	27%	4%	31%	19%	19%
Divorce with Low Conflict	20%	27%	40%	7%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	50%	13%	13%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%
31. Discussing how the children are adjusting to divorce?					
Initial - Dissolution	8%	17%	27%	37%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	23%	27%	18%	23%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	17%	22%	39%	22%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	56%	13%	31%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	19%	23%	35%	19%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	40%	7%	40%	7%	7%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	38%	13%	13%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
32. Discussing problems you are having with the coparenting relationship?					
Initial - Dissolution	14%	37%	17%	25%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	27%	32%	14%	23%	5%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	28%	28%	39%	6%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	27%	35%	31%	8%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	29%	29%	29%	14%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	25%	25%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
33. Discussing finances in regard to your children?					
Initial - Dissolution	4%	17%	31%	33%	15%
Divorce with Low Conflict	23%	18%	14%	32%	14%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	22%	17%	28%	28%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	25%	25%	6%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	15%	39%	19%	15%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	47%	13%	13%	27%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	38%	25%	13%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
34. I wish I had tried harder to make the marriage work					
Initial - Dissolution	28%	19%	25%	23%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict	35%	31%	26%	4%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	28%	39%	11%	11%	11%
Divorce with High Conflict	38%	19%	31%	6%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution	35%	31%	19%	12%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	47%	33%	13%	7%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	50%	25%	13%	0%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
35. I do not feel any guilt about the divorce					
Initial - Dissolution	28%	25%	30%	8%	9%
Divorce with Low Conflict	26%	22%	26%	9%	17%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	22%	33%	33%	6%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	13%	13%	13%	38%
Follow-up – Dissolution	23%	27%	12%	8%	31%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	25%	19%	13%	19%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	0%	38%	0%	25%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
36. I blame myself for the divorce					
Initial - Dissolution	49%	10%	25%	13%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	61%	17%	22%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	44%	22%	28%	0%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	38%	13%	0%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	54%	19%	15%	0%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	63%	25%	13%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	13%	25%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
37. I feel guilty about the divorce					
Initial - Dissolution	49%	11%	21%	13%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict	57%	22%	13%	9%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	33%	17%	33%	11%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	44%	44%	6%	6%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	42%	27%	27%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	44%	25%	19%	13%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	50%	13%	38%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
38. I wish I could make up for the hurt I have caused him/her					
Initial - Dissolution	42%	13%	21%	10%	15%
Divorce with Low Conflict	48%	9%	30%	9%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	35%	24%	18%	18%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	18%	6%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	58%	15%	19%	0%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	56%	19%	13%	6%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
39. I feel angry for the hurt I have gone through					
Initial - Dissolution	25%	15%	26%	23%	11%
Divorce with Low Conflict	26%	17%	30%	13%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	18%	12%	35%	18%	18%
Divorce with High Conflict	13%	0%	50%	19%	19%
Follow-up – Dissolution	19%	15%	39%	15%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	27%	40%	7%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	38%	13%	38%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%
40. I hate him/her					
Initial - Dissolution	74%	9%	13%	0%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	39%	22%	26%	9%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	35%	24%	29%	12%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	31%	13%	44%	0%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	65%	15%	8%	12%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	44%	31%	19%	0%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	50%	13%	25%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%
41. I hope he/she has problems in new relationships					
Initial - Dissolution	74%	13%	8%	2%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	70%	4%	22%	0%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	47%	24%	24%	0%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	60%	20%	6%	13%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	73%	4%	12%	4%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	63%	25%	0%	6%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	13%	13%	13%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
42. I think he/she should be punished					
Initial - Dissolution	70%	17%	4%	8%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	65%	22%	9%	4%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	53%	12%	18%	12%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	47%	13%	7%	13%	20%
Follow-up – Dissolution	73%	12%	4%	8%	4%
Divorce with Low Conflict	75%	13%	6%	0%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	0%	13%	25%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
43. I want revenge for wrongs done to me					
Initial - Dissolution	76%	15%	6%	4%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	78%	13%	4%	4%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	65%	18%	18%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	63%	6%	19%	0%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	77%	15%	4%	4%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	75%	19%	0%	0%	6%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	13%	25%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	25%	0%	0%
44. I want to get back at him/her for what's been done to me					
Initial - Dissolution	77%	15%	4%	4%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	78%	13%	4%	0%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	65%	18%	12%	0%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	56%	13%	19%	0%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	77%	15%	4%	4%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	63%	13%	25%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
45. I blame him/her for the divorce					
Initial - Dissolution	32%	9%	25%	19%	15%
Divorce with Low Conflict	30%	0%	13%	26%	30%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	29%	6%	24%	24%	18%
Divorce with High Conflict	31%	13%	25%	19%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	23%	27%	15%	12%	23%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	13%	25%	13%	25%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	13%	50%	13%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	25%	0%	0%	25%
46. I don't feel he/she deserves to be happy					
Initial - Dissolution	77%	6%	13%	4%	2%
Divorce with Low Conflict	74%	4%	17%	4%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	25%	31%	6%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	63%	13%	13%	13%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	62%	15%	12%	0%	12%
Divorce with Low Conflict	69%	25%	6%	0%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%
Divorce with High Conflict	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%
47. I have warm feelings for my former spouse					
Initial - Dissolution	31%	15%	23%	17%	14%
Divorce with Low Conflict	26%	26%	35%	4%	9%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	35%	18%	24%	18%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	21%	14%	14%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	35%	19%	19%	12%	15%
Divorce with Low Conflict	31%	25%	25%	19%	0%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	38%	0%	25%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
48. I care about his/her welfare					
Initial - Dissolution	6%	6%	25%	39%	25%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	22%	9%	26%	30%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	12%	12%	12%	41%	24%
Divorce with High Conflict	19%	19%	31%	13%	19%
Follow-up – Dissolution	8%	12%	31%	19%	31%
Divorce with Low Conflict	6%	19%	25%	25%	25%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	0%	50%	38%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	25%	25%	50%	0%	0%
49. I feel compassion for him/her					
Initial - Dissolution	10%	14%	35%	21%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	22%	26%	13%	13%	26%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	29%	12%	18%	29%	12%
Divorce with High Conflict	40%	20%	20%	20%	0%
Follow-up – Dissolution	12%	35%	15%	19%	19%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	13%	19%	25%	19%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	13%	38%	25%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
50. I love him/her					
Initial - Dissolution	31%	10%	21%	17%	21%
Divorce with Low Conflict	39%	17%	35%	4%	4%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	35%	24%	18%	6%	18%
Divorce with High Conflict	60%	13%	7%	0%	20%
Follow-up – Dissolution	46%	15%	4%	19%	15%
Divorce with Low Conflict	31%	25%	25%	0%	19%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	13%	13%	25%	13%
Divorce with High Conflict	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
51. My former spouse is an irresponsible parent					
Initial - Dissolution	42%	21%	15%	15%	6%
Divorce with Low Conflict	26%	17%	17%	13%	26%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	24%	18%	18%	18%	24%
Divorce with High Conflict	13%	13%	25%	31%	19%
Follow-up – Dissolution	39%	23%	31%	0%	8%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	6%	25%	19%	25%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	25%	25%	13%	0%	38%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%
52. My former spouse is a caring parent					
Initial - Dissolution	2%	4%	25%	31%	39%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	22%	26%	13%	26%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	6%	6%	35%	29%	24%
Divorce with High Conflict	13%	13%	56%	6%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	0%	19%	12%	27%	42%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	13%	38%	13%	25%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	13%	50%	0%	25%
Divorce with High Conflict	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
53. My former spouse is an incompetent parent					
Initial - Dissolution	58%	19%	17%	6%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	35%	17%	30%	0%	17%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	35%	6%	47%	6%	6%
Divorce with High Conflict	19%	6%	50%	13%	13%
Follow-up – Dissolution	48%	12%	24%	16%	0%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	19%	19%	25%	13%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	38%	25%	0%	13%	25%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%
54. My former spouse is a good parent to the children					
Initial - Dissolution	0%	10%	23%	23%	44%
Divorce with Low Conflict	13%	22%	35%	9%	22%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	0%	12%	41%	12%	35%
Divorce with High Conflict	19%	19%	44%	13%	6%
Follow-up – Dissolution	0%	12%	23%	27%	39%
Divorce with Low Conflict	25%	13%	31%	13%	19%
Divorce with Moderate Conflict	13%	0%	38%	25%	25%
Divorce with High Conflict	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%

Note. Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number.