

Social Effects of Divorce on Children

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Abstract

Divorce is compared to an epidemic in any society it infiltrates. Currently, it is spreading at an alarming rate. Frequently, offspring are most affected. Various researches on the relationship of divorce and its social effects in children are compared and contrasted by this study. Three researches were scrutinized namely: Parental Study 1993, Institute's Parents and Children after Marriage Breakdown 1992 and Loyola University New Orleans 2006 studies. Aims, methods, recommendations and conclusions of these named researches would be evaluated. This is give us a better view of divorce's probable societal effects to children as reflected in these studies. Also, we would divulge into the history of divorce and its concepts. These would be connected to the three studies. From this, a thorough investigation would be done. The thesis statement is that there would be disparities among these selected studies due to the time periods, agency which conducted the study, participants, culture and others. The problem statement focuses on the similarities and differences generated in this main study. Moreover, the endeavor is to point out means of conducting a research on specific to a society to have an in-depth understanding on divorce's consequences to children. In doing so, the succeeding explorations would be improved. Recommendations generated in this examination focus on suggested methods for future studies and highly commended uniform adults' techniques to help children to cope during the unfortunate event of divorce. In conclusion, societal effects of divorce on children could be lessened with the help of procedures advocated and revealed in this core study.

Introduction

Divorce is extremely common in today. In fact, one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. Numerous children are raised in single-parent homes. This has an influence on the way children develop as time pass. Divorce affects life aspects. Children have to adjust to new situations and feelings. When parents divorce, the children's development is interrupted and coping may differ in the degree of difficulty. Children of divorcees have carried with them divorce related problems. Divorce is a vastly interesting and imperative as a topic. Through the identification of its impacts and how it brought about to offspring is the initial step to be able to minimize the negative effects of divorce. This main study focuses on the analysis of three researches on divorce. Its purpose of this study is to add to the existing body of knowledge in this area for divorce is such a widespread difficulty in society. Further, the disparities and resemblances of the studies scrutinized could bring greater truths. Parallelisms would be promoted and deviations would be treated with caution.

According to writings, people who have experienced high anxiety life events, such as divorce, develop problems during adolescence. When problems such as depression develop during adolescence, these problems persist into adulthood. Family relations and their quality may alter the onset of puberty and adolescents who come from higher conflict environments will mature earlier and faster. Early maturation and puberty leads to early sexual relations and shorter and unstable relationships. Children differ in test scores depending on whether or not they come from an intact home. Studies have shown that divorce affects both short-term and long-term adjustment. For obvious reasons, children perceive divorce as something very traumatic, frequently concerned with their security. Following are usual queries asked by children or lingers

in their mind. What if they both leave me? What is it that I did wrong? Did I cause the divorce? Now what's going to happen to me? Children react in different ways with the onset of divorce. Some will be extremely sad and show signs of depression and even sleeplessness. Anxiety levels peak as they feel they are going to be abandoned or rejected by one or even both parents. Some divorce situations may make the child feel lonely. This may be due to a long absence of one of the parents. No matter what the situation, the child will be affected in some way by a divorce.

Review of Related Literature

Divorce is the ending of a marriage before the death of either spouse. It could be contrasted with an annulment. This is a declaration that a marriage is void, though the effects of marriage may be recognized in unions such as spousal support or alimony, child custody, child support and distribution of property.

Henry VIII of England is recognized as founder of the Anglican Church partly in order to obtain a divorce. Divorce is a failure of couple's commitment to marital and family roles. In history, divorce dates back to ancient Mesopotamia. Athenian forefathers liberally permitted divorce, however the person requesting divorce had submit a request magistrate in order to determine if reasons given were insufficient. As oppose to Athens, divorce was uncommon in early Roman culture. Still, the Roman Empire embraced the law with the principle marriages ought to be free either husband or wife could abandon the marriage at will. Serious investigation is implemented prior to granting a divorce. Emperors Constantine and Theodosius limited the grounds for divorce to severe causation. Nevertheless, in the 6th century, this was relaxed by Justinian. After the fall of the empire, familial life was regulated further by ecclesiastical authority than civil authority. In the 10th, the frequency of divorce had been greatly reduced by the Christian church. The latter regarded marriage as a sacrament instituted by God. After the 10th century, divorce was prohibited in general. Other actions allowing the separation of marriages such as annulment took place. Legal separation was termed "divorce a mensa et thoro" which means divorce from bed and board. Husband and wife physically were literally forbidden to live together; but their marital did not end. Due to the latter, the husband had a continuing duty to support his wife called alimony. Since then until the 18th century, annulment was the only means wherein

marriage could be dissolved. Moreover, the conditions under which annulment permitted are within the province of ecclesiastical courts. Common law courts had no power over marriage since it was a status granted by the Church. Annulment was recognized as divorce “a vinculo matrimonii” meaning divorce from all the bonds of marriage. In cases of total divorce, the marriage is declared null. Sacrament of Marriage states that by marriage the husband and wife is one person in law. In effect, marriage cannot be dispelled. It is considered a civil contract wherein public authorities steadily asserted their power to decree divorce. They heavily relied on the previous determinations of the ecclesiastic courts and freely adopted the requirements set down by those courts. Divorce was considered contrary to public policy. The courts strictly interpret those circumstances under which they would grant a divorce. Courts were very strict prior to granting a divorce. It is solely permitted if evidence revealed any hint of complicity between the husband and wife to divorce or if they attempted to manufacture grounds for a divorce. Divorce was granted only because one party to the marriage had violated a sacred vow to the innocent spouse. In cases wherein both husband and wife were guilty, neither would be allowed to escape the bonds of marriage. In the long run, the idea that a marriage could be dissolved in cases parties violated the holy vow gradually allowed expansion of the grounds upon which divorce could be granted from those grounds which existed at the time of the marriage to grounds which occurred after the marriage, but which exemplified violation of that vow, such as abandonment, adultery or extreme cruelty.

In the 20th century, developed countries divorce rates increased remarkably. Here are specific countries: United States, South Korea, and members of the European Union. Malta is excluded for civil divorce is banned. In USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and other developed Commonwealth countries, divorce boom became prevalent in the last half of the twentieth

century. Single parent family was accepted by the society. This has resulted in many women deciding to have children outside marriage. Unfortunately, there is still remaining social stigma attached to unwed mothers in some societies. Japan maintains lesser divorce rate; this has increased in recent years. Divorce is a social phenomenon considered in sociology. As a matter of fact, more than 50% divorced couples cited money tribulations as cause of divorce. It must be certified by law as a legal action. In terms of the divorce, spouses must have to agree on privately. Frequently, spouses disagree about the terms of the divorce which can lead to stressful and expensive litigation. Mediation is an attempt to negotiate mutually acceptable resolution to conflicts. There are several types of divorce namely: at-fault, no-fault divorces and summary divorce. No-fault is a divorce system wherein a marriage partner requires neither husband nor wife agreement to obtain divorce. Common reasons for no-fault divorce include incompatibility, irreconcilable differences and irremediable breakdown of the marriage. Since 1975, no fault divorce has been in operation in Australia wherein the applicant needs separation or deemed disjoining for 12 months. Divorce application can be made by both parties jointly. Fault divorces used method to break a marriage and couples were prevented from legally remarrying. Here are defenses to prevent a fault divorce: condonation, connivance, provocation and collusion. Most divorces are granted, especially when the public is not interested in forcing people to remain married. Comparative rectitude is a doctrine used to determine which spouse is more at fault when both spouses are guilty of breaches. Fault divorce could affect the distribution of properties and enables an immediate divorce in states where there is a waiting period required for no-fault divorce. Requirements may per location. A spouse may separate, move to a state with divorce laws of their choice to establish residency and eventually file an application. This naturally unchanged the state in which property and other issues are decided. A summary divorce

is used when spouses either meet certain eligibility requirements or can agree on key issues beforehand. Key factors are short marriage under 5 years, no children, minimal marital property and a spouse's property is under threshold. An estimate 95% plus of divorces in the US are unchallenged for two parties are able to come to an agreement about the property, children and support issues. When the parties present to the court with an equitable agreement, approval of the divorce is almost guaranteed. On the other hand, a couple may ask the court to decide how to split property, deal with children and others.

In 2004, the main causes of divorce were: extramarital affairs, family strains, emotional or physical abuse, mid-life crisis, vices addiction such as alcoholism or gambling and workaholism. Emotional and physical abuses were more evenly split with women affected in 60% and 40% in men cases. In 70% of workaholism related divorces, it was 70% men and 30% women. The 2004 survey found that 93% of divorce initiations were done by women, 53% of divorces were of marriages that had lasted 10 to 15 years, with 40% ending after 5 to 10 years. The first 5 years are relatively divorce-free, and if a marriage survives more than 20 years it is unlikely to end in divorce.

In 2005 there were 7.5 new marriages per 1,000 people and 3.6 divorces per 1,000 at the US alone. These ratios have been present since 1960s. It is extremely difficult to determine divorce rates for a couple could get back together in that same year. Nevertheless, the assertion that half of all marriages end in divorce is commonly accepted in the US since 1970s. Actual divorce rate requires tracking and analyzing important samples of actual marriages through decades. In the 2005, a study confirmed that 60% of all marriages that result in divorce in the first decade and

more than 80% within the first 20 years. Further, the percentage of all marriages that eventually end in divorce is at about 41% around 1980s and has been slowly declining until 2002.

According to US census report of 2003, millions of dollars are used in alimony and child support arrangements, which commonly result from divorces, with 43.7% of custodial mothers and 56.2% of custodial fathers, are divorced or separated. In 2002, \$40 billion had been paid in support arrangements by 7.8 million payers, 84% of whom were men. States also collected federal incentives to collect support payments, with a potential incentive pool of up to \$454 million in fiscal 2004.

Thesis Statement

Divorce studies would have similar and dissimilar conclusions which would further aid future researches on divorce.

Statement of Problems

Which among the three studies is most accurate and could best benefit following researches on societal effects of divorce on children?

Methodology

Three studies would be compared to examine the parallels and deviations. Findings in the study would be used to establish a benchmark. Parental Study 1993, Institute's Parents and Children after Marriage Breakdown 1992 and Loyola University New Orleans 2006 studies would be given comprehensive scrutiny. Following is the discussion of every study.

Parental Study, 1993

Statistics from two surveys were analyzed, one British and the other American. National samples of children and their families for several years were examined. About 12,000 seven year old British children and 800 American children whose parents were married at the beginning of the survey period were tracked for the next five years. Each interview with the parent of a seven-year-old was conducted by a Local Authority Health Visitor; a trained nurse employed by the municipality. The Health Visitor's questionnaire included a checklist that noted any family difficulties or use of social-welfare services. Relatively few problems were noted for the families that later divorced. Health Visitors checked "domestic tension" for 17 percent of later-divorced families, "financial difficulties" for 16 percent, contact with the child-welfare department for 8 percent, mental illness or neurosis for 7 percent, and alcoholism for 1 percent. To be sure, the Health Visitors may have been unaware of many problems. Still, the reports do not suggest that these families were in great conflict. As a result, children whose divorced displayed more behavior problems and performed more poorly in school than children whose parents remained married. This research concluded that evidence suggests that much of the effect of divorce on children can be predicted by conditions that existed well before the separation occurred, British and U.S. longitudinal studies proposes that those concerned with the effects of divorce on

children should consider reorienting their thinking. At least as much attention needs to be paid to the processes that occur in troubled, intact families as to the trauma those children suffer after their parents separate.

Institute's Parents and Children after Marriage Breakdown 1992

by Kate Funder and Simon Kinsella

Parents and Children after Marriage Breakdown studied the household income and family change of 55 former couples with 105 children were tracked in the five to eight years after parental separation. Parents divorced between 1981 and 1983, about two years after separation, were interviewed in 1984 and 1987. Psychological wellbeing measures were recorded from interviews with the children. Children rated the atmosphere at home and the atmosphere at the non-resident parent's home, how well they got along with their siblings, and how socially involved they were. They completed the Offer Self- Image Inventory of 1982 which considers self-image as a global measure and in terms of different aspects of self psychological, social, coping and familial. Finally, they indicated how anxious or depressed they had felt in the last month. From these data it was possible to explore the effect on children's psychological happiness changes over time. Three main questions were asked. First, what are the effects on child outcomes of material resources available to the child in the home before separation, independently of family changes and current family resources? Second, how do family changes and different family types over the period after separation affect children, independently of material resources of the family before separation and currently? Lastly, how does poverty in the current family affect outcomes for children?

This analysis tracked family changes and household income in the five to eight years after parents had separated, enables the relative impact of these factors on children's lives to be examined. Children in this research are teenagers with an average age of 14 years, the sorts of observable effects are those associated with that period of their development. In Australia, indices of psychological wellbeing in adolescence may be precursors of the children's attainment in adult life. The economic consequences of divorces are family changes in terms of the household economy, post-separation family change and chain effects. In terms of household economy, the financial resources for children are lessened. Step fathers are less willing in contributing for the welfare of children not their own. Further, there are conflicts and difficult adjustment with new father and step families. Chain effects are train events responsible for later events in the lives of family members. Through the lack of resources mentioned, children may be deprived of educational and social opportunities. These limits may be with respect to tertiary education diminishing the opportunities for children to develop their self-esteem and competence by reducing opportunities to participate in social and educational activities. Children may be encouraged to leave an uncongenial home with either relatively few resources or relatively high levels of conflict. This has been linked with early sexual experiences and early childbearing associated with lower attainment in adult life.

This study suggests that future work on the effect of divorce on children's wellbeing should beware of the possible confounding of pre-existing conditions in the marriage with the effects of the breakdown and subsequent changes. Furthermore, the pejorative connotations of sole- mother families receive no support here. Children in these families appear to suffer no discernible disadvantage compared with children who reside once again in two-parent families. They are poorer, however, and perhaps the efforts of their mothers to maintain them on a par with other

children will not carry through into later vocational opportunities. Investment in assuring these children a future seems well warranted.

Loyola University New Orleans 2006

by Lancy Chandler

Rapports between coming from a non-intact home and different social, academic and relationship development were evaluated. The participants were 100 undergraduate students at Loyola University New Orleans. All genders and races were represented, and the participants were a minimum of 18 years.

All of the participants volunteered and some received extra credit for participating. The participants were recruited in classes where the researchers briefly explained the study and then passed around a sign-up sheet. Participants were reminded the day before by the researchers when and where the study would be taking place for the time that they signed up for. Also a sign-up sheet was also posted on the human resources subject pool bulletin board in the psychology department of Loyola University. Convenience sampling was used in this study.

Participants were given a survey on the academic, social, family, and relationship aspects in their lives. The results showed that there was no significant difference between participants from intact and non-intact homes in the characteristics of social, academic, family and relationships. The hypothesis of this study was if participants came from a divorced home, then they would exhibit a lower level of relationship maturity and secure attachment and increased social activity and academic drive when compared to participants from intact families. The focus of this study is how growing up in a non-intact home affects relationships, social functioning, and academic

functioning. For relationships, we were interested in both parental relationships and interpersonal relationships. Social functioning was defined through measures of how social a person is, how much they like to go out and be with people, and how important it is to maintain a social life. Academic functioning was defined through measures of grades, how much a person enjoys school, how important school is to a person, and how much a person strives to do well in school. Parental relationships were defined through how close a person is with their parent/s, how much a person depends on his parents for support, and how important a person's relationship with his parents is to him. Interpersonal relationships were defined through how much a person enjoys meeting new people or having friends, how a person acts within a relationship. For instance, how attached and secure a person is or how much a person values being in a relationship

Analysis

This part would attempt to criticize the studies elaborated in the preceding chapter. In the Parental Study, the data from children followed from 1965 to 1968 is incomparable to the present day for divorce in the said period is lower. Also, there is a question on the sample population studied; perhaps the children were already troubled prior to the divorce. In this study, British families wherein divorce occurred prior to the 7th birthday of the child were eradicated. This was conducted for the intact families were more willing to provide information. Further, in the parent interview, the interviewer did not observe thoroughly. He just visited before and after the child was born. What if the difficult family times were not witnessed?

In terms of the Institute study, the location is a mere representation of Australians. The disadvantages on the extent of disadvantages attributed to alterations in family structures and resources are not elaborated.

For the Loyola research, the measures are relatively refined measures of the household income at each interview. Second, family members' participation and children's psychological wellbeing measures are independent of the parental information. Second, results are biased by having more educated and higher income members. Thus, the failure to report effects of poverty may be because the very poor or multiple-disadvantaged were under-represented. Further, numbers are rather small for making reliable estimates of effects and no estimates are reported here. Finally, small numbers and limitations in measures may mean that significant effects are not apparent. Certainly, each study has determined weaknesses. However, all studies share the aim of identifying the divorce situation's effect on children. More importantly, these researches aspire to investigate thoroughly to be able to come up with coping commendations for the society to be

able to help children. Studies unify in recognizing that divorce could produce terrible effects to children if uncontrolled. Here are other general understandings focused researches in this paper. First, children who grow up in an intact meaning in two parent family with both biological parents present perform better on a wide range of outcomes than children who grow up in a single parent family. Single parenthood is likely to cause higher rates of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and other negative outcomes. However, it does contribute independently to these problems. Single parenthood does not guarantee that children would not succeed. Second, all suggests that marital education, family counseling and related services can improve middle-class couples' communication and problem-solving skills, resulting initially in greater marital satisfaction and reduce divorce. Third, low income populations confront a wide range of stressors that middle class families do not. Lastly, to find out whether and what types of policies and programs might successfully strengthen marriage as an institution among low-income populations as well as among a wide variety of ethnically and culturally diverse populations, national focus should be on the design, implementation and rigorous evaluation of these initiatives. In the next chapter, recommendations on future studies on the societal effects of divorce in children as well as coping up skills that adults in broad-spectrum could practice.

Recommendations

Future studies on societal effects of divorce on children should be performed by credible professionals or students guided by professors from either government or private institutions with proper procedures and guidance. Also, due budget should be allocated and time schedule should be determined. The sample population for the study should be well defined. If possible, each state in the United States and other countries could conduct a similar study to be able to conduct a cross cultural comparison. Through the coordination of various country or states representative, these studies could be compiled at a single book or website to be accessed by other researches on the subject for future use. This could also be an instrument to update and communicate with one another specifically for psychologists, sociologists, doctors, social workers and others. The information here could be used as benchmark by all nations to be properly guided on the matter and addressing it. To be able to help a child cope in the occurrence of a divorce, following are suggestions. It is good for the sake of the child that a divorce not to mark the end of a family. It is beneficial for children to keep close ties with relatives other than parents. In the event of birthdays and holidays, the family would feel more comfortable with new environments and up-to-the-minute ways to celebrate. It is unethical for a parent to deny the other parent the pleasures of spending holidays and birthdays with their children. In terms of step family, each member must look at things from the other step-family member's point of view. The new family must take things very slowly, and each family member must carefully think things out before they act. Marriage education programs could help. This refers to services that assist couples who are married or planning to marry to strengthen their communication and problem-solving skills and thus their relationships. Models range from those that adopt a skills-based instructional approach to those that use a therapeutic "hands on"

approach that addresses the specific marital problems facing individual couples. Also, it is a proposal to combine marital education with strategies that would directly tackle the poverty-related stressors on family life such as help in finding a job, income supplements, child care assistance and medical coverage. Financial stress could promote marital stability. There are also seminars on divorce and coping. Therapies are popular nowadays for step families. Other variants are individual and small group. In the latter, children could be with of the same age group wherein they would be oriented on the fact that their parents' divorce is not their fault. This could re-build their self esteem. Art therapy, role playing and verbalization are often conducted.

Following is a discussion on parents' strategies. Parents could read from a book which serves as a non-threatening buffer to stress. This strategy works for both older and younger children, by taking time to read or tell stories together, a child feels safe and close even after a divorce. Play could also be a primary means of expressing feelings. Sometimes parents can tell how children are feeling by watching their play or playing with them. In terms of verbal communication, here are some conversation starters to help you describe what is happening in the family. A separation is when parents decide to live apart from each other and figure out what to do about their marriage. A separation is a hard thing to talk about. It's not always easy telling people that your mom and dad are not living together anymore. We are not alone. We have other friends and family, too. Usually children want their parents to stay together. But sometimes things feel so bad that children wish their parents would separate. My leaving is not connected to loving you. I am leaving because your mother or father and I do not get along. I love you as much as ever, and I always will. A divorce is when two people decide they no longer want to be married. They can't

live together happily anymore. They decide to stop being husband and wife. They just have different ideas about things. We will always be parents to our children. And others.

There are mixed and inconsistent outcomes comparing children's adjustment by age, although most counselors say that children who cope best with divorce are those who, after divorce, continue to have a stable, loving relationship with both parents and regular, dependable visits from the nonresidential parent. Following are some typical reactions and suggestions for how parents can help children cope. Infants could not comprehend divorce but may react to changes. Possible reactions are loss of appetite and anxiousness. In this regard, parents could keep normal routines and keep calm in front of a child. A toddler may understand that a parent has moved away, but doesn't understand why. Possible reactions are more crying, problems sleeping. Strategies for parents are to stick to the routines and spend time alone with the child. For other child development stages, the same principle applies. Spend quality time with child; explain suitably meaning according to the child's level of understanding and no drastic changes as well as confrontations in front of the child. Support of friends and other family members would also help in the child's coping.

Conclusion

Divorce could have a significant and life-altering impact on the well being and subsequent development of children and adolescents. Studies focused on in this paper have resemblances and disparities which could be used in developing better researches in the future. Each study is good in its own right in terms target participant group, method and area. More significant than the latter are the recommendations made by these studies which influence the coping up skills of children in the event of divorce. Future researches on the societal effects of divorce could be done through comparative studies such as this paper.

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