THE INTERPLAY OF PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND DIVORCE IN YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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THE INTERPLAY OF PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND DIVORCE IN YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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THE INTERPLAY OF PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND DIVORCE IN YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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Tianyi Yu, daughter of Kewen Yu and Zhilan Zhu, was born November 26, 1973, in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China. She graduated from No.14th High School of Harbin in 1991. She attended Beijing University in Beijing, China, for five years and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in July 1996. She entered Graduate School at Auburn University, in August 2001, and obtained a Master of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Auburn University in May, 2004.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

THE INTERPLAY OF PARENTAL MARITAL CONFLICT AND DIVORCE IN YOUNG ADULT CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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A substantial body of literature has documented the effects of parental divorce and marital conflict on adult children's interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners. However, few studies have tested the interaction between parents' marital conflict and divorce, and even fewer have considered interpersonal relationship quality as outcomes. The present study builds on previous research by examining both main effect and interactive models of the relations between parental marital conflict, divorce, and young adults' interpersonal relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners. This study also examines the role of child's gender as a factor in the interplay of parental marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners.

Data were drawn from the Child Development Project, a prospective longitudinal study of a community sample of children and their families (N = 585) who were initially recruited the summer before the children's entry into kindergarten, with follow-up assessments conducted annually through age 25. Parental marital conflict and parental divorce were measured from childhood through adolescence. The measures of mother-child and father-child relationships during the young adulthood included closeness-support, conflict-control, and perceived filial self-efficacy. The measures of young adults' romantic relationships included relationship quality, relationship insecurity, and perceived relationship self-efficacy.

Results indicate that both growing up with parents who had chronic conflict in their marital relationships and experience of parental divorce were associated with multiple problematic outcomes for young adult offspring's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Divorce was also found to moderate the links between marital conflict and subsequent negativity in mother-adult child relationships, with the estimated effects of marital conflict being more detrimental in the families in which parents remain married than in the families in which parents divorced later. This moderation effect was stronger for females than for males. Results of the present study generally support the assumption that parental divorce may ameliorate some of the negative effects of marital conflict on children's adjustment by removing children from dysfunctional, conflict-ridden families. On the other hand, divorce still appears to be associated with less closeness and support between fathers and adult children and with lower quality and higher insecurity in children's romantic relationships, even beyond the effects of marital conflict.

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last quarter of the 20th century, the composition of families, the marital status of adults, and the living arrangements of children in the United States underwent remarkable changes (Fields & Casper, 2000). The proportion of the population made up of married couples with children decreased, while the proportion of single-parent families increased. A significant contributor to this phenomenon is the increase in divorce. Rates of divorce have more than tripled in the past 50 years, and the lifetime probability of a first marriage ending in divorce approaches 50% (Goldstein, 1999; Teachman, Tedrow, & Crowder, 2000). The trends in divorce have changed the experience of family life in America for both children and young adults. About half of all dissolving marital unions consist of families with children (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Forty percent of children will experience parental divorce in their growing years, with nearly 90% placed primarily in the physical custody of their biological mother (Amato, 2001). Parental divorce has been a central event in the growth process of a significant number of American youth.

Many studies have documented the short-term negative effects of parental divorce for children. Most research finds that children of divorced parents are more likely, on average, to have behavioral and emotional problems than are children in two-biological-parent families (for reviews see Amato, 2000, 2001; Grych & Fincham, 1999;

Hetherington & Stanley-Hangan, 1999a; Kelly, 2000). Compared with children with never-divorced parents, children of divorced parents are found to be at more risk of drug use, teen pregnancy, and engagement in antisocial behaviors. Parental divorce has also been associated with lower academic achievement and higher school dropout rate for children.

Looking beyond a child's developing years, studies have also focused on the long-term effects of parental divorce on young adult children's adjustment. The early adult period represents a critical developmental period in the life course: success or failures in the transition to independent living and in the establishment of intimate relationships outside the family of origin may set the stage for social and emotional functioning in the future (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003). Parent-adult child relationships still play a significant role during these critical years. Young adult children may receive many potential benefits from parents, such as emotional support, companionship, advice with educational plans, jobs, and family life, and financial help (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). On the other hand, youth devote an increasing amount of time to interactions with persons outside of the families, and these extra-familial relationships serve many functions that were exclusive to familial relationships during childhood (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Specifically, close and romantic relationships have become primary settings for youth to acquire interpersonal skills, such as problem-solving skills and communication skills (for reviews, see Collins, 2003). Therefore, establishing and maintaining successful interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners become one of the indicators of developmental success in this period.

The experience of parental divorce during childhood has been found to be associated with weak ties between parents and adult children. Compared with those whose parents remained continuously married, adult children with divorced parents had been found to have less frequent contact with parents, show less affection for their parents, and engage in fewer exchanges of assistance with parents (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991, 1996, 1997; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Aquilino, 1994; Cooney, 1994; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Parental divorce may also affect children's experiences and beliefs about close relationships, and may impact the romantic relationships of adult children. Children of divorced parents, as young adults, are generally found to have earlier marriage, poorer marital relationships, and a greater likelihood of divorce (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990; Johnston & Thomas, 1996; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999). Hetherington (2003) also found that young adults from divorced families, compared to those from non-divorced families, were less likely to use effective problem-solving strategies and showed more hostility in their interactions with romantic partners.

Divorce does not occur in isolation from other family processes, however. It is clear that interparental conflict is prevalent throughout separation and divorce (Thompson & Amato, 1999), and it can be viewed as an important stressor that typically accompanies divorce. Therefore, as children observe and experience the process of their parents' divorce, they also are likely to observe and experience dysfunctional family conflict. This raises an obvious research question about whether it is divorce per se, or the marital conflict that goes hand in hand with divorce, that has stronger influences on children.

As in the experience of divorce, exposure to chronic interparental conflict has been found to be associated with a range of negative parent-child relationship attributes in later life (e.g., Amato & Afifi, 2006; Amato & Booth, 1997, 2001; Booth & Amato, 1994; Riggio, 2004). These negative outcomes include lower levels of social support, greater emotional distance, and less overall contact. However, there are other research findings that indicate that parental divorce might be problematic for parent-child relationships beyond the negative effects of interparental conflict (Riggio, 2004). First, divorce usually makes it difficult for noncustodial parents to maintain close relations with their children, resulting in disruption of a primary relationship for children as well as losses in emotional and practical support (Lamb, 1999). Second, a variety of stressful circumstances following divorce can disrupt the quality of interactions between custodial parent and the child (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Booth and Amato (1994) found that both divorce and low parental marital quality had largely independent effects on later parent-child relationships. Specifically, marital unhappiness and instability were found to weaken relationships between child and parents even those factors did not result in divorce. However, if a divorce occurred, it was followed by a further deterioration in child-parent relationships.

Growing up with highly conflictual parents also appears to be a risk factor for offspring's later romantic relationships. Several cross-sectional studies have shown that people who report high conflict in their parents' marriages tend to report less happiness, more conflict, and more problems in their own marriages (Belsky & Isabella, 1985; Booth & Edwards, 1990; Overall, Henry, & Woodward 1974). Kirk (2002) found that high levels of perceived conflict in the childhood homes negatively affected young

adults' fears of intimacy and satisfaction in romantic relationships. Westervelt and Vandenberg (1997) further found it was not the parental marital status, but conflictual parental relationships in the family that was significantly associated with less intimacy in romantic relationships for young adult children. These research findings indicate that divorce and conflict between parents are either independently or redundantly associated with adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners.

A common question in current divorce research is whether it is better for parents who are involved in conflictual, acrimonious, and unsatisfying marriages to stay together for the well-being of their children or to divorce. The findings from the studies that investigated both divorce and pre-divorce marital conflict indicate that the impact of divorce is not inevitably negative. Although divorce may usually be viewed as a stressful event in both an adult's life and a child's developmental processes, it may also present a new chance for adults to pursue more harmonious, fulfilling relationships, and a new opportunity for children's personal growth, individuation, and well-being in a new family situation (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999b). Specifically, the Stress Relief Hypothesis (Wheaton, 1990) contends that a stressful life event, such as parental divorce, may actually have beneficial effects on children when it presents escape from a more stressful environment. Children of parents who engage in a long-term process of overt, unresolved conflict are at risk for a variety of developmental and emotional problems (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Emery, 1999). Under such a condition, when a divorce occurs, these children are freed from a dysfunctional family environment and may genuinely welcome the shift to a calmer single-parent family (Booth & Amato, 2001). In other words, children who were living with high-conflictual parents may experience

parental divorce as a stress relief event, which in turn, may lead to a post-divorce improvement in child outcomes (Strohschein, 2005).

Research findings from studies based on children's reports have suggested that children who perceived their parents' marriage as high in conflict demonstrated better long-term adjustment if their parents divorced later than those whose parents did not divorce (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Hanson, 1999; Jekielek, 1998; Morrison & Coiro, 1999; Strohschein, 2005). When divorce is associated with a move to a more harmonious, less stressful home environment with an authoritative parent, children in divorced families are similar in adjustment to children in low-conflict, non-divorced families and demonstrate better adjustment than children in high-conflict, non-divorced families (Amato et al., 1995; Hetherington, 1999). Conversely, children who viewed their parents' marriage as having low levels of conflict showed poorer long-term adjustment if their parents divorced than those whose parents did not divorce (Amato et al., 1995). They suggested that when parents exhibit a relatively low level of marital conflict, children might experience parental divorce as an unexpected, inexplicable, and unwelcome event. In these circumstances, divorce is likely to create a good deal of stress and instability in children's lives (Amato, 2003).

Most of the previous studies that have examined the interaction of parental marital conflict and divorce have focused on offspring's psychological well-being, such as anxiety and depression (Jekielek, 1998), overall happiness and psychological distress (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995), and antisocial behaviors (Strohschein, 2005). Further, most research focuses on short-term effects for children and adolescents. Few prospective longitudinal studies have examined long-term effects (e.g., those persisting through early

adulthood) and even fewer have considered interpersonal relationship qualities as outcomes. In fact, only one study, by Booth and Amato (2001), has focused on the effects of interaction between parental marital conflict and divorce on adaptation in multiple relational domains of early adulthood, including the offspring's kin support networks, friend support networks, quality of intimate relationships in general, and affection for parents. In this study, parental divorce and marital conflict were found to interactively predict young adult children's psychological well-being, friend support, and intimate relations, but not parent-adult child relations. Decomposing the interaction effect revealed that at the typical level of marital conflict that existed prior to divorce, marital divorce was associated negatively with offspring's psychological well-being, friend support, and quality of intimate relations. In contrast, when conflict was relatively high, marital dissolution was associated positively with these offspring's outcomes. Although Booth and Amato (2001) did not interpret the interaction effect as the moderation of divorce in the links between marital conflict and young adult children's outcomes, the figures demonstrating the regression lines for participants from divorced and non-divorced families in this study indicated that for children from non-divorced families, marital conflict was negatively associated with children's well-being, friend networks, kinship networks, and intimate relations. For children from divorced families, however, marital conflict was positively associated with children's outcomes. On the other hand, for parent-adult child relations, parental divorce appeared to have a negative influence on the quality of parent-adult child relations regardless of the level of conflict preceding the divorce.

Although the Booth and Amato's (2001) findings are intriguing, the picture is incomplete. First, the measure of parent-child relations assessed only the positive aspects of closeness and affect. The measures of intimate relations assessed only overall happiness and the frequency of interaction. Recently, some researchers in the behavioral and social science (e.g., Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000; Collins, 2003) have proposed a five-feature framework (involvement, partner selection, relationship content, quality, and cognitive and emotional processes) in the research of interpersonal relationships. These features have been argued to be essential considerations when describing the interpersonal relationships and their developmental significance. In particular, high-quality close relationships are characterized by intimacy, affection, and nurturance; whereas low-quality relationships are characterized by irritation, antagonism, and notably high levels of conflict and controlling behavior (Collins, 2003). Research findings also suggest that the qualities of supportiveness and intimacy in relationships are associated with measures of functioning and well-being for the individuals. In contrast, the more negative qualities of relationships, such as conflict and control, appear to be linked to a variety of negative outcomes (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). In the previous study that have investigated the interaction effects of parental marital conflict and divorce, positive aspects of supportiveness and involvement, and negative aspects of conflict, disagreements, and control in young adults' interpersonal relationships have not been researched. Furthermore, studies have suggested that young adults' competencies in interpersonal relationships, such as the capacity to maintain open communication, to manage conflictive situations, and to provide effective mutual support, have been likely to foster high-quality interpersonal relationships (Caprara, Regalia, Scabini, Barbarnelli,

& Bandra, 2004). However, these perceived interpersonal competencies have not been examined in previous studies.

A second issue with respect to the Booth and Amato (2001) study is that mother-child and father-child relations were not separately examined. The findings from studies that have examined relations between parental divorce, marital conflict, and parent-adult child relationships showed different results for mother-child and father- child relationships. In general, the father-child relationship has been found to be negatively influenced by both divorce and parental marital conflict (Amato & Booth, 1996; Cooney & Kurz, 1996; Osborne & Funcham, 1996; Rodgers, 1996). However, the findings regarding the impact of divorce and conflict on the mother-child relationship have been mixed (Richardson & McCabe, 2001). Some studies have found significant negative effects of divorce on relationships between mothers and adult children (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Other studies have reported no significant effects of divorce for mother-adult child relationships (e.g., Aquilino, 1994; Burns & Dunlop, 1998; Cooney, 1994). Findings are inconsistent when some results suggested an increase in closeness between mothers and adult children following divorce (Arditti, 1999; Cooney, Smyer, Hagstad, & Klock, 1986; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000, Riggio, 2004). These inconsistencies raise an important question: can research indicating that mothers developed a close relationship with their adult children following divorce be explained by the fact that divorce moved them from a high-conflictual family situation? Many divorced mothers have been found to report greater personal growth, autonomy, and attainments and decreased depression in comparison to those who have remained in high-conflictual marriages (Acock & Demo, 1994; Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington &

Kelly, 2002; Riessman, 1990). These changes in stress and psychological well-being may also be reflected in improvements in mother-child relationships after a high-conflict marriage divorced. However, no study has specifically examined the effects of the interaction between parental marital conflict and divorce on mother-child and father-child relationships separately.

The third limitation of Booth and Amato's (2001) study is that adult child's gender was treated only as a control variable, not as a factor that might condition or qualify the divorce and conflict interactive effects. However, research has indicated that genders are effected differently in the effects of parental marital conflict and divorce on adult children's later romantic relationships. In general, the effects of parental divorce appear to be stronger among females than males (e.g., Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson, & Fryer, 1999; Huurre, Junkkari, & Aro, 2006; McCabe, 1997). On the other hand, the evidence of gender variation in the effects of parental marital conflict is inconsistent. Some studies reported greater influences for males than females (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004); other studies have found that the influence of parental marital conflict was especially stronger for females than males (Herzong & Cooney, 2002; Levy, Wamboldt, & Fiese, 1997). A few studies have also revealed gender differences in positive outcomes following divorce. Specifically, some girls in divorced families, when they had the support from a competent, caring adult, have been found to demonstrate exceptional resiliency enhanced by confronting the challenge and responsibilities that follow divorce (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Such resiliency, however, is less likely to be found for boys in divorced families (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). However, there is no previous study examining whether the moderating impact of

divorce on parental marital conflict for adult children's interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners differs as a function of respondents' gender.

Drawing from the Child Development Project (e.g., Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 1997) dataset, the present study built on previous research by examining both main effect and interactive models of the relations between parental marital conflict, divorce, and young adults' interpersonal relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners. In particular, the present study provides an opportunity to replicate, extend, and further explore the influential research of Booth and Amato (2001).

The Child Development Project is a prospective longitudinal study of a community sample of children and their families who were initially recruited at children's age of 5. Follow-up assessments have been conducted annually and continue until the child is 25. In this dataset, parental marital conflict and parental divorce were measured from childhood through adolescence. The measures of mother-child and father-child relationships during the young adulthood included closeness-support, conflict-control, and perceived filial self-efficacy. The measures of young adults' romantic relationships included relationship quality, relationship insecurity, and perceived relationship self-efficacy.

The present study examined whether parents' marital conflict and divorce independently, redundantly, or interactively predicted young adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners. The core hypothesis of this study was that parental divorce would serve as a moderator of the links between parents' marital conflict and adult children's relationships with mothers and romantic partners. Specifically, for children from non-divorced families, marital conflict was expected to be negatively

associated with the quality of relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners. Conversely, for children from divorced families, divorce was expected to attenuate the relations between marital conflict and the quality of children's relationships with mothers and romantic partners. In other words, for children from divorced families, parents' marital conflict was expected not to correlate to subsequent relationship qualities. The current study also examined the role of a child's gender as a factor in the interplay beween parental marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The late adolescent-early adult period are critical developmental periods in the life course: success or failures in the transition to independent living and in the establishment of intimate relationships outside the family of origin may set the stage for social and emotional functioning in the future (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003). An ability to effectively establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with parents, peers, and romantic partners is an indicator of developmental success in this period of maturation. Although familial relationships remain salient throughout adolescence, an increasing proportion of time is devoted to interactions with persons outside of the families, and these extra-familial relationships serve many functions that were exclusive to familial relationships during childhood (Collins & Laursen, 2004).

Adolescents have been found capable of recognizing relationships with parents, friends, and romantic partners and able to identify the functions of these different relationships as becoming both more diverse and more differentiated (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992; Hunter & Youniss, 1982). Compared to childhood relationships, adolescents' peer relationships show less distance and greater intimacy, which may both satisfy their affiliative needs and prepare them for relations among equals. On the other hand, the intimacy with parents may provide nurturance and support but may be less important than peer relationships for conforming to social roles and expectations in later adolescence (Collins, 1997; Laursen & Bukowski, 1997).

The developmental perspective proposes that the persons' experiences in the family of origin, such as their parents' marital relationships, have long-lasting consequences for the interpersonal functioning of adolescents and young adults (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, & Conger, 2005). Several longitudinal studies have produced evidence that a child's earliest experiences in relationships – whether as observer or participant – appear to function like a template for the nature and quality of later relationships (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). Particularly significant, emotional and behavioral aspects of the parental marital relationship may exert a longer-range influence on offspring's attitudes and behavior in their own interpersonal relationships during later adolescence and adulthood. For example, parental conflict negatively affects children's attachment to parents and subsequent feelings of security in relationships (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Parental divorce has been found to be associated with more problems in offspring's intimate relationships and the increasing likelihood of offspring to be in unstable marriages (Amato, 2000; Christensen & Brooks, 2001). Parents' marital quality has also been found to be associated with offspring's marital quality assessed more than ten years later (e.g., Feng, Giarusso, Bengston, & Frye, 1999). Because of the importance of the person's interpersonal relationships to social and psychological functioning during early adulthood, studying the effects of parental marital conflict and divorce on young adult offspring's interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners is particularly important.

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Marital Conflict and Divorce Effects on Children

Researchers have employed a variety of theories and conceptual perspectives to explain how marital conflict and divorce affect children. The theories that are relevant to

this particular study include stress theory (Amato, 1993), social learning theory (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000), and developmental perspective (Amato & Booth, 1997; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999a). The majority of studies begin with the assumption that marital conflict and divorce were stressors for children and many researchers link their work to established stress perspectives. The most commonly accepted theoretical model of marital conflict and divorce involves a process perspective that addresses stress, risk, and resilience (Hetherington, 1999).

Social Leaning Theory

According to social learning theory, children learn a variety of interpersonal behaviors through observation and imitation of adult models (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, children who are living with chronically conflicted or divorced parents are assumed to learn ineffectual coping skills in relationships by modeling parents' interactions within their marital relationships (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Conflictual parents may provide children with models of angry, aggressive, or hostile behaviors and fail to provide models of warmth, caring, and productive problem solving (Margolin, Oliver, & Medina, 2001). Parents' attitudes toward marriage and divorce also can be internalized by children and manifest in a child's future relationships (Amato, 1996, 2001). Therefore, the children with chronically conflicted or divorced parents may reach adulthood with poorly developed relationship skills and a repertoire of interpersonal behaviors that undermine the relationship quality and stability.

Research findings show support for this theory. For example, Davis, Hops, Alpert, and Sheeber (1998) found that interparental conflict had a strong sequential relation to children's aggressive behavior and also was the strongest predictor of increased

aggressive child functioning. Marcus, Lindahl, and Malik (2001) also found that experience of parental conflict and divorce shaped children's social information-processing skills and normal beliefs about aggression. Stocker and Youngblade (1999) further found that both marital and parental hostility and children's interpretations of parents' conflict mediated the associations between interparental conflict and children's problematic sibling and peer relationships.

Developmental Perspective

Many current researchers take a life course, or developmental perspective in studying marital transitions. This perspective views the divorce as a step in a series of family transitions that will affect family relationships and child development. Children's experiences in the family prior to parental divorce, and life in a single parent family and possibly further in a stepfamily, will impact children's adjustment (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999a). Moreover, marital conflict and divorce are also a cumulative experience for children, and the effects of parental marital conflict and divorce change over time. At different developmental stages, children are affected by marital conflict and divorce in different ways (Jekielek 1998; Margolin, Oliver, & Medina, 2001). That is, there are great differences among children's vulnerability and resiliency during different life course periods of development. Children may be more sensitive to the stresses associated with a family transition when a transition occurs concurrently with a normative developmental transition, such as entry into adolescence. From this perspective, parental divorce is assumed as a stressful life event; its effects depend on the interactions among varied individual, family, and extrafamilial factors, as well as the

diverse developmental trajectories of children and family (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999a; Jekielek, 1998).

Several investigators have used longitudinal studies of child development to study the effects of parental divorce on children's outcomes. A number of studies found that many of children's adjustment problems after divorce actually were present prior to the marital separation (Amato & Booth, 1996; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). In addition, consequences of parental divorce were also found to persist well into adulthood, such as lower educational attainment (Amato & Keith, 1991), increased marital problems (Johnson & Thomas, 1996; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999), and a greater likelihood of believing their own marriages will end in divorce (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990). Children's age at the time of separation is another moderator of children's adjustment to parental divorce. Based on developmental perspectives and emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1994), parental divorce and conflict are assumed to have more negative effects on younger children's adjustment than on older children, because younger children may be less cognitively equipped to accurately understand the circumstances surrounding their parent's marital disruption, and they may be particularly prone to fears of abandonment by parents and feelings of self-blame and guilt over their parents' divorce. Children who experience parental divorce during adolescence were also found to experience special challenges and struggles because of adolescence's emphasis on increasing autonomy (Hetherington, 1993). Also, experiencing parental divorce during early adulthood is difficult when children begin to make decisions about education attainment, employment, and to establish their own romantic relationships (Amato, 1999).

Stress (Risk & Resilience) Perspective

Parental marital conflict and divorce are usually viewed as stress events in a child's developmental processes. The family stress theory emphasizes the accumulation of negative events, not only a single stressor, which may result in problems for children (Amato, 1993). Therefore, a stress perspective views marital dissolution as a process that begins while parents are still living together and ends long after legal divorce is concluded. The disruption process typically sets into motion numerous events that most children experience as stressful (Booth & Amato, 2001). The stress theory is often useful to explain the experience of children in parental divorce in a way that suggests possible variables that mediate the negative impact of parental divorce on child well-being (Amato, 1993; Frosh & Mangelsdorf, 2001; Gohm, Oishi, Darlington, & Diener, 1998; Grych & Fincham, 1997; Jekielek, 1998; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). This theory is supported by evidence that showed parental divorce is associated with family dysfunction, including marital conflicts prior to and during the divorce process (Gohm et al., 1998; Jekielek, 1998), inconsistent or harsh parenting practices (Frosch & Mangelsdorf, 2001; Krisnakumar & Buehler, 2000), and problematic parent-child relationships (Frosch & Mangelsdorf, 2001). The accumulation of dysfunction and stresses is also associated with negative outcomes for children, such as more internalizing and externalizing disorder, lower social competence and academic achievement, and lower level of well-being (Amato, 2000).

The stress and coping model of family (Boss, McCubbin, & Lester, 1979) identifies the factors that could explain the differences among families in their adaptation to stressful events and situations. Support of coping and resiliency perspective is found in

evidence that showed having supportive friends (Hetherington, 1989), having positive school experience (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1991; Rodgers & Rose, 2002), and having support from other nonparental adults (Emery & Forehand, 1994) could serve as protective functions to children who experienced marital transitions.

Some researchers have argued that stress perspectives tend to focus exclusively on the negative influence of divorce and ignore positive outcomes for children (Barber & Eccles, 1992). However, the notion that some children may benefit from their parental divorce is not inconsistent with the stress perspective (Booth & Amato, 2001). Specifically, The Stress Relief Hypothesis (Wheaton, 1990) contends that a stressful life event, such as parental divorce, may actually have beneficial effects on children when divorce presents escape from a more stressful environment. Children in the families in which parents engage in a long-term process of overt, unresolved conflict are at risk for a variety of developmental and emotional problems (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Emery, 1999). Under such condition, when a divorce occurs, these children are freed from a dysfunctional family environment and may genuinely welcome the shift to a calmer single-parent family (Booth & Amato, 2001). In other words, children who were living with high-conflictual parents may experience parental divorce as a stress relief event, which in turn, may lead to a post-divorce improvement in child outcomes (Strohschein, 2005).

Only a few studies examined the stress relief hypothesis on children with divorced parents (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Booth & Amato, 2001; Hanson, 1999; Jekielek, 1998; Morrison & Coiro, 1999; Strohschein, 2005) and the findings of these studies confirmed the Stress Relief Hypothesis. For example, Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995)

found that in high-conflict families, well-being was higher among young adults whose parents divorced compared to those whose parents remained married. Jekieiek (1998) also found that when marital conflict was high, children showed better adjustment in terms of levels of anxiety and depression if a divorce occurred than if parents remained married. Strohschein (2005) further found the higher the level of family dysfunction prior to divorce, the greater the reduction in child antisocial behavior after a parental divorce.

Marital Conflict and Divorce Effects on Parent-Adult Child Relationships

Divorce

Several studies have examined relations between parental divorce and quality of relationships between parents and adult children. Parental divorce has been found to be associated with weak ties between parents and adult children. Compared with those whose parents remained continuously married, adult children with divorced parents have been found to have less frequent contact with parents, show less affection for their parents, and engage in fewer exchanges of assistance with parents (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991, 1996, 1997; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Aquilino, 1994; Cooney, 1994; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). In a meta-analysis, Amato and Keith (1991) found that parental divorce was significantly associated with poorer relationships with both parents, although mean effect sizes were stronger for father (-.26) than mother (-.19). Divorced parents, compared with parents who did not divorce, also reported providing less support to their adult children. In particular, ever-divorced fathers were found to give their children 20% to 25% less support compared to non-divorced fathers and ever-divorced mothers were found to give 10% to 15% less support compared to non-divorced mothers. In addition, the lower levels of support from divorced parents to their adult children were

associated with poorer quality of the relationships between parents and children, including less contact and long distances, and these differences could not be accounted for by the lack of resources (White, 1992).

Parental divorce is also associated with early home leaving among young adult children; this is another indicator of the tension between parents and children (Amato & Booth, 1997; Cooney, 1994). Using the two waves of longitudinal data from a sample of 257 White young adults aged 18 to 23, Cooney, Hutchinson, and Leather (1995) found that children's involvement in the parental divorce process, such as involvement in court hearing and mediating divorce-related parental disputes, was associated with low levels of parent-child intimacy. Drawing from a 17-year longitudinal panel study of the Marital Instability over the Life Course, Myers (2005) found that earlier mobility occurring in a divorced family was harmful to the quality of parent-adult child relations. For males, a childhood move in a divorced single-parent family was found to have a negative effect on later relations with both mothers and fathers. For females, an adolescent move made in a divorced family had a negative effect on later relations with fathers. Myers (2005) further argued that the parental and family social capital variables might serve as a potential explanatory link between family mobility and parent-adult child relations.

Marital Conflict

The marital conflict between parents also appears to have lasting effects on parent-adult child relationships (e.g., Amato & Afifi, 2006; Amato & Booth, 1997, 2001; Booth & Amato, 1994; Riggio, 2004). In an early study, Peterson and Zill (1986) reported that within intact marriages, the relationship between the child and each parent, especially the father, suffered as the level of conflict raised. Among youths in their study,

62% of those in low-conflict families were classified as having a positive relationship with parents, compared to only 29% of those in persistent high-conflict situation. More recently, using adult children's reports of their parents' marital conflict, Riggio (2004) found the recalled parental conflict was associated with low quality of parent-adult child relationships and also associated with low perceived social supports between parents and children.

Using parental reports of marital conflict obtained 12 years earlier, Booth and Amato (1994) found that marital conflict was associated with less contact and greater emotional distance between parents and their adult children, irrespective of whether the parents divorced or not. Amato and Afifi (2006) further found that children with highly conflictual (but not divorced) parents were especially likely to feel "caught in the middle" and that these feelings were associated with poorer quality relationships with both parents. In this study, adult children with divorced parents were found to be no more likely to report feeling caught in the middle of their divorced parents. Feeling caught appeared to fade in the years following divorce. However, adult children with chronically conflicted parents who did not divorce were more likely than those with divorced parents to feel caught in the middle, which in turn, was associated with poor quality relationships of adult children with mothers and fathers.

The Interplay of Marital Conflict and Divorce

There are other research findings that indicate that parental divorce might be problematic for parent-child relationships beyond the negative effects of interparental conflict. First, divorce usually makes it difficult for noncustodial parent to maintain close ties with his or her children and often results in disruption of a primary relationship for

children as well as losses in emotional and practical support (Lamb, 1999). An early study reported the diminished contact between adult children and their non-custodial parent regardless of mother or father custody (Amato & Booth, 1991). In Peterson and Zills' (1986) national sample, 55% of youths from intact families reported a positive relationship with both parents, but only 25% of those living with their mothers and 36% of those living with their fathers did so. Furthermore, the relationship with the non-custodial parent was found to be especially likely to suffer. While 60% of youths living with a custodial mother reported a positive relationship with her, only 36% of them reported a positive relationship with the non-custodial father. Similarly, 69% of youths living with a custodial father reported a positive relationship with him, compared with 57% of youths having a positive relationship with the non-custodial mother.

Second, a variety of stressful circumstances following divorce can disrupt the quality of interactions between custodial parent and the child. Studies have revealed that divorced custodial parents, compared to continuously married parents, tend to show less warmth toward their children, engage in harsher discipline, and monitor their children less effectively (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). And the developmental perspective suggests that adult child-parent relationships should be affected by the quality of these relationships when offspring were young. Several longitudinal studies have used prospective designs to examine effects of parent-child relations during adolescence upon intergenerational relations in young adulthood. For example, using the longitudinal data from the National Survey of Families and Households, Aquilino (1997) found the long-term effects of earlier parent-child relations on the emotional closeness and control-conflict between parents and young adult children. Especially, parents who reported

warm, involved, and helping relationships with adolescent children also reported higher levels of emotional closeness, shared activities, and support from their adult children. Parents who reported higher levels of yelling, arguing, shouting, and disagreements with their adolescents reported lower levels of emotional closeness, lower levels of support, and higher levels of conflict with young adult children.

Booth and Amato (1994) found that both divorce and low parental marital quality had largely independent effects on later parent-adult child relationships. In their longitudinal study of marital instability over the life course, marital unhappiness and instability were found to weaken relationships between child and parents even if the marital instability did not result in divorce. However, if a divorce occurred, it was followed by a further deterioration in child-parent relationships. The study further found that parental support during adolescence mediated the impact of parental marital quality and divorce on the closeness and contact between adult children and their parents. Recently, they (Booth & Amato, 2001) also found that parental divorce was associated with low quality of relations between parents and adult children regardless of the level of conflict preceding the divorce. They suggested that marital conflict lowered children's closeness to parents, but divorce lowered it even further.

Gender Differences

A few studies also propose that the effects of parental marital conflict and divorce on parent-adult child relations may differ depending on gender of the parent and child. Research indicates that the father-child relationship is negatively influenced by both divorce and parental marital conflict (Amato & Booth, 1996; Cooney & Kurz, 1996; Osborne & Funcham, 1996; Rodgers, 1996). However, the findings regarding the impact

of divorce on the mother-child relationship have been mixed (Richardson & McCabe, 2001). Some studies have found significant negative effects of divorce on adult children's relationships with both parents (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993). Other studies have reported no significant effects of divorce for mother-adult child relationships (e.g., Aquilino, 1994; Burns & Dunlop, 1998; Cooney, 1994).

Amato and Booth (1991) found that both parental divorce and recollections of parental marital unhappiness were associated with decreased contact with both parents, but the associations were stronger for fathers than mothers. Similar findings have been reported in studies of college students in Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel's study (1983). In this study, the college students from divorced families were found to perceive their relationships with their parents, and particularly their fathers, less positively than those from intact families. Especially, the parent-child relationships of the college students in divorced families, as contrasted with those in intact families, were characterized as having greater distance, poorer communication, less affection and warmth, and less positive feeling in general. Based on a national sample, a recent study (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997) also found that marital disruption weakened the strength of both maternal and paternal bond, but the magnitude of the effects of marital disruption were more pronounced in relations with fathers than in relations with mothers. Adult children were found to be more likely to have obligatory and detached relations with divorced/separated mothers and fathers than with married mothers and fathers, and furthermore, the effect of parental divorce/separation on the likelihood of having detached relations was about 5 times greater with fathers than it was with mothers. Zill, Morrison, and Coiro (1993) also reported that young adults from disrupted families were

twice as likely as other youths to have poor relationships with their mothers and fathers. However, in mother-child relationships, a significant effect of divorce was evident only in adulthood, whereas none have been found in adolescence. In contrast, the poorer relationships that youths from divorced families had with their fathers were already evident in adolescence. Amato and Sobolewski's study (2001) further found that, for fathers, marital discord and divorce had independent effects on father-adult child relations. In particular, divorce was associated with more negative father-child relations in adulthood beyond the effects of pre-divorce marital discord and pre-divorce father-child relations. However, for mothers, the effects of divorce on their relations with adult children were largely accounted for by discord that preceded marital dissolution, with that the link between divorce and weak mother-child relations was not significant when pre-divorce marital discord was controlled.

In a cross-sectional study, Rossi and Rossi (1990) found that parents' marital unhappiness negatively affected both parents and children's rating of father-child affection but not mother-child affection. Parental divorce, in contrast, had little effect on either mother-child or father-child relationship. Conney (1994) further found that the experience of parenting divorce within the past 15 months was predictive of reduced intergenerational intimacy and contact, but this association was only for fathers and children. Drawing the data from the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households, Aquilino (1994) also found that young adults who lived in a single-mother family after parental divorce reported only slightly lower relationship quality than those from intact families and there were no differences in contact between the two groups. Recently, a longitudinal study of mothers and children (Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000) also

reported that parental divorce was not predictive of mother-child relationships quality at age 18 as perceived by both mothers and children. In contrast, divorce was significantly related to children's perceptions of father-child relational quality. Further still, the financial resources in single-mother families, rather than mothers' commitment and religious participation, were found to account for most of the negative relationship between divorce and father-child bonds.

The gender of the child also may be related to how parent-adult child relationships are affected by parental divorce and marital conflict (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 1998). Both Aquilino (1994) and Cooney (1994) found that negative effects of divorce on parent-adult child relationship were stronger for daughter-father relationships than for son-father relationships. Myers (2005) further found that a childhood move in a divorced family had a negative effect on sons' later relations with both mothers and fathers, whereas for daughters, an adolescent move made in a divorced family had a negative effect on later relations with fathers, but not with mothers. Based on the data from a 12-year longitudinal study of marital instability over the life course, Booth and Amato (1994) reported that parental marital quality had more significant association with sons' closeness to mothers than with daughters' closeness to mothers. However, for closeness to fathers, parental marital quality was found to yield more significant associations for daughters than for sons. On the other hand, parental marital dissolution did not affect closeness and contact between sons and fathers. In contrast, divorce was associated with a large decline in closeness and contact between daughters and fathers. Later, they also reported that parental divorce reduced the closeness between mothers and sons, but not between fathers and sons (Amato & Booth, 1996). They

suggested that parental marital quality and divorce might have stronger consequences for the opposite-sex parent-child relations than for the same-sex parent-child relations.

Further inconsistency in the literature about the associations between parental divorce and conflict and young adult children's relationships with their parents is provided by results that suggested, under some conditions, that divorce can lead to an increase in closeness between single mothers and their adult daughters (Amato & Booth, 1997; Arditti, 1999; Cooney, Smyer, Hagstad, & Klock, 1986; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000). In a study by Cooney, Smyer, Hagestad, and Klock (1986), college students who experienced recent parental divorce claimed an improvement in several aspects of their relationships with parents following divorce, such as communication, understanding, mutual respect, and intergenerational friendship, with these improvements predominantly found in the relationship between young adults and their mothers. Recently, based on detailed interviews with young adults of divorced families, Arditti (1999) described predominantly close and satisfying relationships between mothers and young adults. In this study, the single mothers' relationships with their adult children were characterized by greater equality, more frequent interaction, more discussion, and greater intimacy and companionship. Mothers' leaning on their children for emotional support and advice contributed to the child's sense of equality, closeness, and friend status. The young adults in this study reported feeling close to their mothers, acknowledging and appreciating aspects of their mother's involvement and support, understanding the necessity of mothers' role shifts, and enjoying the benefits of greater independence, decision-making, and support provision.

Summary

In sum, the literature suggests that both parental divorce and marital conflict are associated with the quality of parent-adult child relations. There are some research findings that indicate that parental divorce might be problematic for parent-child relationships beyond the negative effects of interparental conflict. Furthermore, it appears that these factors affect adult children's relationships with fathers more strongly than mothers. And the association between divorce and mother-daughter relationships may be positive rather than negative.

However, there are also inconsistencies among the various studies that examined the effects of parental divorce on parent-child relationships in young adulthood. These inconsistencies may be attributable to the fact that divorce was described as a unidimentional construct as children who had experienced or not experienced divorce. Recently, some researchers began to argue that divorce should be viewed as a multidimentional construct (Shulman, Cohen, Feldman, & Mahler, 2006). The response to divorce is influenced by the quality of family relations in the pre-divorce marriage, the circumstances of marital disruption, and the experiences and changes that follow divorce (Hetherington, 1999). However, it is not clear in the literature whether parental marital conflict and divorce interactively affect adult children's relationships with mothers and fathers differently. Although there is research evidence that suggests an increase in closeness between mothers and adult children following divorce (Arditti, 1999; Cooney, Smyer, Hagstad, & Klock, 1986; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000), no previous study has specifically examined whether this finding might be explained by the fact that divorce moved mothers and children from a high-conflictual family sitation.

Marital Conflict and Divorce Effects on Adult Children's Romantic Relationships

Divorce

Divorce may affect children's experiences and beliefs about relationships, and may impact the romantic relationships of adult children. Overall, most studies have found that parental divorce has negative effects on intimate relationships of adult children; however, some suggest no significant effects, and others indicate that effects being either negative or positive depend on situations of families and individuals. The conclusion of some research is that adult children with divorced parents may be impaired in their ability to have healthy, happy, and long-lasting romantic relationships. Adult children of divorced parents are more likely to marry young, divorce and remarry several times, and less likely to trust others (Ross & Mirowsky, 1999). They are also more likely to fear being rejected in romantic relationships (Johnson & Thomas, 1996), and more likely to believe that they will have a less successful future marriage (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990).

Amato (1996) found that interpersonal behavior problems of divorced parents mediated the largest share of the association between parental divorce and the later marital dissolution of their offspring. He suggested that parents who exhibit problematic parental marital behaviors, such as jealousy, imperiousness, intrusiveness, moodiness, and unwillingness to communicate, were the most significant predictors for offspring's marital disorder. Moreover, he concluded that the poor parental models of dyadic behaviors to which adult children of divorce were exposed increased the likelihood that adult children would not learn the skills and attitudes that can facilitate successful functioning within marital roles. However, Amato and Deboer (2001) further used data

from a 17-year longitudinal investigation of married individuals in two generations to examine whether the transmission of relationship skills and interpersonal behaviors or the transmission of marital commitment could explain the intergeneration transmission of marital instability. They found the commitment to be the stronger predictor. Moreover, the study suggested that the odds of thinking about divorce were three times higher for children of divorced parents than for children with never-divorced parents, and the odds of seeing their own marriages end in divorce were almost twice as high as those with continuously married parents. They suggested that observations of parental divorce undermined children's commitment to the general norm of marriage and faith in marital permanence, which in turn increased the risk of children's divorce in their own marriages. Although the conclusions of these studies are inconsistent, Amato and Deboer (2001) argued that the two explanations were not mutually exclusive. It is possible, therefore, that both the deficit of relationship skills and the weak commitment to the marriage norm played a role in divorce transmission across generations.

Recently, Hetherington (2003) used the combination of observations of couples' interactions and the reports from self and partner to examine the intergenerational transmission of relationship quality. She found that parental divorce in the family of origin contributed to couple instability in offspring. In particular, when either the female or the male came from a divorced family, the risk of couple instability was greater than the couples comprised of partners from non-divorced families. In addition, the risk of marital instability was even greater when the female came from a divorced family than when the male came from a divorced family. And couples in which both partners came from divorced families had the highest risk of couple instability among all the groups. In

Hetherington's (2003) study, the young adults from divorced families were also found to have more frequent conflicts in their relationships. They were less likely to use effective problem-solving strategies, such as presenting information or alternative solutions, considering the partner's position, compromising, and reaching final agreement. They also showed more hostility in their interactions with romantic partners.

Other researchers argue that parental divorce should not be simply viewed as a negative event. The individual personality factors, including factors like the perception of their family background and the reaction to the parents' relationship, also affect the adjustment of children to parental divorce and the development of a person's beliefs about romantic relationships. Usually, individuals who view their parents' divorce as resulting in positive changes are more likely to judge their parent's relationship as a bad example of a romantic relationship and thus attempt to avoid these negative qualities within their own relationships. So those adult children may have a greater understanding of romantic relationships than people from intact families (Mahl, 2001).

There are other studies, however, that found no significant differences in the attitudes about marriage and commitment, relationship beliefs, and intimacy between adult children of divorced parents and those with never-divorced parents (Clark & Kanoy, 1998; Landis-Kleine, Foley, Nall, Padgett, & Walters-Palmer, 1995; Sinclair & Nelson, 1998). These studies found that most adult children of divorced parents indicate a desire for and a strong commitment to marriage, do not have a more positive attitude toward divorce, and do not anticipate divorcing.

Marital Conflict

Exposure to chronic parental marital conflict also appears to have long-term consequences for adult children's romantic relationships. The parental marital relationships are considered as a prototype of romantic relationships for children. Adults who recall a high level of conflict between parents while growing up tend to report a disproportionately large number of psychological and marital problems in their own lives (Amato and Booth, 1991; Booth and Edwards, 1990; Kessler and Magee, 1993; Overall, Henry, and Woodward, 1974). Kirk (2002) also found that high levels of perceived conflict in the childhood homes negatively affected young adults' self-esteem, fears of intimacy and satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Growing up with highly conflictual but continuously married parents also appears to be a risk factor for offspring's later marital discord and instability. Several cross-sectional studies have shown that people who report high conflict in their parents' marriages tend to report less happiness, more conflict, and more problems in their own marriages (Belsky & Isabela, 1985; Booth & Edwards, 1990; Overall et al., 1974). In a longitudinal study, Caspi and Elder (1988) found that parents' ratings of marital conflict were positively associated with children's later reports of conflict in their own marriages. Based on the 17-year longitudinal study of marital instability over the life course, Amato and Booth (2001) also found that parents' reports of their marital discord when the child was 13 years old predicted offspring's reports of his or her own marital discord and harmony at age 30. And these significant links between parents' marital discord and offspring's marital discord and harmony persisted after controlling for a variety of parental characteristics such as education, family income, religiosity, age when married,

and prior divorce. Parental divorce and parent-child relationships in this study were found not to mediate the transmission of marital discord. Amato and Booth further found that not only the level of discord in parents' marriages at a single point in time, but also the shifts in parental marital discord over time predicted offspring's marital discord and harmony.

The Interplay of Marital Conflict and Divorce

It is clear that interparetal conflict is prevalent throughout separation and divorce (Thompson & Amato, 1999) and it can be viewed as an important stressor that typically accompanies divorce. Some researchers had proposed that the interparental conflict before and during divorce might have more influence on adult children's later romantic relationships beyond divorce itself (Amato, 2000). An earlier study found that parental conflict during the course of marital dissolution was related to higher heterosexual activity, more cohabitation, less stability of romantic relationships, and less happiness with romantic relationships in college students of divorce (Booth, Brinkerhoff, & White, 1984). Westervelt and Vandenberg (1997) further found it was not the parental marital status, but conflictual parental relationships in the family that was significantly associated with less intimacy in romantic relationships for the students. Gabardi and Rosen (1992) also found that parental marital conflict was a significant predictor of the total number of sexual partners and negative attitudes toward marriage. They suggested that greater parental conflict was more important than whether parents are married or divorced in affecting college students' attitudes toward marriage.

Similarly, a recent study (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003) also found that childhood family conflict was a stronger predictor of the quality of marital relationships in young

adulthood than parental divorce. Particularly, childhood family conflict was found to be associated with young adults' lower levels of marital support, higher levels of marital dissatisfaction, and more frequent disagreement with spouse. Having experienced parental divorce prior to age 18, in contrast, was found to be associated only with more frequent disagreement with spouses, but not with marital support or dissatisfaction. Doucet and Aseltine (2003) suggested that the level of conflict in families, either associated with or independent of divorce, appeared to be most detrimental to offspring's marriage.

Hayashi and Strickland (1998) also found that college students who experienced parental divorce did not report being more insecure in their romantic relationships. But those who reported high frequency of argument between their parents in the past and present were more likely to report feelings of jealousy and fears of abandonment in their own romantic relationships. Additionally, another study (Franklin, et al., 1990) found that parental conflict was associated not only with decreased trust in parents and decreased optimism about both dating and marital relationships, but also with more negative assumptions about the benevolence of others and the world.

Recently, Segrin, Taylor, and Altman (2005) further found that family-of-origin conflict partially mediated the relationship between parental divorce and the offspring's likelihood of being in a romantic relationship. Family-of-origin conflict was also found to partially mediate the relationship between parental divorce and more negative marital attitudes in adult offspring. They suggested that it might not be parental divorce per se that entirely influenced the offspring's avoidance and fear of close relationship and their

negative attitudes against life-long marriage, but rather the family conflict that went hand and hand with parental divorce.

Gender Differences

Gender differences also are relevant to the area of the interplay of parental marital conflict and divorce in child adjustment. Many studies have suggested that boys may be more vulnerable than girls for family adversity in childhood (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1997). Early studies commonly reported that boys showed higher rates of behavior problems following divorce (Hetherington, 1989), whereas girls showed high rates of anxiety and depression (Rutter, 1971; Emery, 1988). Others also suggested that the reactions of girls to parental conflict and divorce in adolescence may be stronger (Cooney et al., 1986). Some studies on the long-term effects of parental divorce on adult offsprings' well-being have found parental divorce to be a greater risk for adult females than males (Cooney & Kurz, 1996; Glenn & Kramer, 1985; McLeod, 1991; Rogers, 1994). However, more recent studies have reported less pronounced and inconsistent gender differences in response to parental divorce and marital conflict (e.g., Amato, 2001; Rogers, Power, & Hope, 1997). Some researchers also suggest that males may have more problems in some domains of life situation and well-being, and females in other domains (Amato & Keith, 1991; Zaslow, 1989).

There were also gender differences reported in the research of intergenerational transmission of divorce and marital quality. In general, the effects of parental divorce on young adult children's later romantic relationships appear to be stronger among females than males. McCabe (1997) found females from divorced families reported higher levels of relationship difficulties than females from intact families, whereas males from

divorced families did not report significant differences on relationship difficulties compared to males from intact families. He further suggested that this gender difference in the effects of parental divorce on adult children's romantic relationships may be due to the fact that, after divorce, males are generally raised by the opposite sex parent, while females are usually raised by the same sex parent. As a result, males may be better socialized to form positive relationships with members of the opposite sex. Similarly, Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson, and Frye (1999) also found that daughters of divorced parents were more likely to consider divorce if their marriages were not satisfactory or if marital problems were present. Aro and Palosaari (1992) reported higher rates of conflict in intimate relationships among females from divorced families compared to these from intact families, but not among young males. More recently, these researchers (Huurre, Junkkari, & Aro, 2006) further found that the women with divorced parents reported more interpersonal problems, such as increased conflict in intimate relationship and increased conflict with parents, friends, and colleagues, than did women with non-divorced parents. But there were no differences in interpersonal problems among males of the two groups.

On the other hand, the evidence of gender variation in the effects of parental marital conflict is inconsistent. Some studies reported greater influences for males than females (Doucet & Aseltine, 2003; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004), while others have found that the influence of interparental conflict was significantly stronger for females than for males (Herzong & Cooney, 2002; Levy, Wamboldt, & Fiese, 1997). For example, Doucet and Aseline (2003) found that exposure to childhood family conflict has a particularly strong effect on frequency of marital disagreements among males, but a negligible effect

on marital disagreements among females. Kinsforgel and Grych (2004) also found that boys' reports of interparental conflict was significantly associated with their own aggression toward their dating partners. Interparental conflict, however, was not associated with girls' reports of dating aggression. They suggested that this gender difference may be due to the different socialization patterns between boys and girls. Girls may to be taught to emphasize communal (relationship-oriented) goals, whereas boys may be taught to emphasize agentic (individual focused) goals. If so, girls who witness parental conflict may be more sensitive to the potential harm that conflict may cause to relationships and may perceive aggression as something that is damaging to relationships. In contrast, boys who witness parental conflict may focus on the functionality of aggression and may interpret aggression as a way to achieve one's aims in a relationship.

Herzog and Cooney (2002) found that females in their study reported significantly higher levels of interparental conflict than did males. They further found that females who reported high levels of interparental conflict also displayed poorer communication in their own relationships. But these differences were not significant for males. They suggested that this gender difference may be explained by the fact that females spend more time with their families than do males during their teen years (Youniss & Smollar, 1985) and the fact that females are more likely than males to be directly involved in parental interaction by assuming a mediating role in parental conflict (Vuchinich, Emery, & Cassidy, 1988).

Summary

Basically, research evidence suggests that growing up either in a high-conflict two-parent family or in a divorced family appears to be a risk factor for young adult

children's romantic relationships. Children of divorced parents, as a group, are found to be less likely to maintain a healthy, happy, and long-lasting romantic relationship (Christensen & Brooks, 2001). Some research evidence also suggests that it is not divorce per se, but the dysfunctional family conflict that goes hand in hand with divorce, that has negative consequences for young adult children's later romantic relationships.

Gender differences also are relevant to researching the transmission of relationship processes across generations. Specific studies have indicated that female adult children of divorce experience more difficulties in their romantic relationships than males. In contrast, the evidence of gender variation in the effects of parental marital conflict on young adult children's later romantic relationships is inconsistent. Some of evidence indicated stronger influences for males, whereas other data indicated stronger influences for females.

Positive Effects of Parental Divorce

Research on the impact of divorce on families has shown that divorce has an overall detrimental effect on the adjustment of children and young adults. However, the findings from the studies that have investigated divorce and other family variables, such as pre-divorce marital conflict, indicate that the impact of divorce is not inevitably negative. On the one hand, when marital conflict is overt, intense, chronic, and unresolved, children appear to experience better long-term adjustment if parents divorce than if parents remain together. On the other hand, when parents engage in relatively little overt conflict, children appear to be worse off following parental divorce (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Hanson, 1999; Jekielek, 1998; Morrison & Coiro, 1999).

Jekieiek (1998) drew on the two waves (1988 and 1992) of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to examine the effects of parental conflict and marital disruption on children's emotional well-being. She used Ordinary Least Squares regression and included a parental conflict by divorce interaction term in the analysis. The results revealed the significant interactions, with that the impact of divorce varied by levels of parental marital conflict. When marital conflict was high in 1988, children were found to score lower on scales of anxiety and depression in 1992 if their parents had divorced or separated than if their parents remained married. Even after taking into account the levels of child anxiety and depression in 1988, this result was still consistent. Jekieiek suggested that children benefited emotionally from parental marital disruptions because they were removed from high conflict family situations.

More recently, Strohschein (2005) also examined the effects of the interaction between family dysfunction and the time-varying variable of parental divorce on long-term adjustment of children. The results of the study showed a significant interaction for child antisocial behavior outcome, but not for child anxiety/depression. The interpretations of the interaction suggested that the higher the level of family dysfunction at initial interview, the greater the reduction in child antisocial behavior associated with the experience of parental divorce.

Drawing on the three waves (1983, 1988, and 1992) of the Marital Instability Over the Life Course study and using the similar analyses, Amato, Loomis, and Booth (1995) also found that offspring from high-conflict families reported higher levels of overall happiness, higher levels of marital happiness, more close kin and friends, and lower levels of psychological distress if a parental divorce occurred than if it did not

occur. Recently, Booth and Amato (2001) replicated and extended the Amato et al.'s (1995) study by using a larger sample and a more sophisticated method of analysis based on structural equation modeling. In particular, their major analysis involved a model in which the offspring outcomes on psychological well-being, kin support, friend support, the quality of intimate relationships, and affections for parents were predicted simultaneously by marital conflict, divorce, and the interaction between marital conflict and divorce. The interaction term was found to be significant for psychological well-being, friend support, and intimate relations. Decomposing the interaction effect revealed that at the typical level of marital conflict that existed prior to divorce, marital disruption was associated negatively with these offspring's outcomes. However, when conflict was relatively high, marital dissolution was associated positively with these offspring's outcomes.

The evidence in these studies suggests that some children may benefit from parental divorce when parental divorce provides them the chance to escape from a high-conflict or abusive family situation (Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Although divorce may usually be viewed as a stressful event in both an adult's life and a child's developmental processes, it may also present a new chance for adults to pursue more harmonious, fulfilling relationships, and a new opportunity for children's personal growth, individuation, and well-being in a new remarried family (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999b). When divorce is associated with a move to a more harmonious, less stressful home environment with an authoritative parent, children in divorced families are similar in adjustment to children in low-conflict, non-divorced families and demonstrate better adjustment than children in high-conflict, non-divorced families

(Amato et al., 1995; Hetherington, 1999). Conversely, children who viewed their parents' marriage as having low levels of conflict showed poorer long-term adjustment if their parents divorced than those whose parents did not divorce (Amato et al., 1995). These researchers found that young adults whose parents had low-conflict marriages and then divorced had more problems with romantic relationships, less social support of friends and relatives, and lower psychological well-being compared with children whose high-conflict parents divorced (Booth & Amato, 2001). They suggested that when parents exhibit a relatively low level of marital conflict, children might experience parental divorce as an unexpected, inexplicable, and unwelcome event. Under this condition, divorce is likely to create a good deal of stress and instability in children's lives (Amato, 2003).

Interestingly, studies have also revealed gender differences in positive outcomes following divorce (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Many divorced mothers reported greater personal growth, autonomy, and attainments and decreased depression in comparison to those who have remained in high-conflictual marriages (Acock & Demo, 1994; Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Riessman, 1990). Some researchers reported that, by two years following divorce, three fourths of divorced women reported that they were happier in their new situation than in the last year of their marriage, and most, in spite of the stresses, found rearing children alone easier than with a disengaged, undermining, or acrimonious spouse (Hetherington, 1993). Many divorced women comment on the independence, self-fulfillment, and new competencies they developed in response to the challenges of divorce and being a single parent (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Some girls in divorced single-mother families

also demonstrated exceptional resiliency enhanced by confronting the challenge and responsibilities that follow divorce when they had the support from a competent, caring adult (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Such enhancement and resiliency, however, are less likely to be found for fathers or boys in divorced families (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). However, there is no previous study that further examines whether the effects of interactions between divorce and parental marital conflict on adult children's interpersonal relationships differ as a function of child gender.

Child's Age at Divorce

Children's age at the time of divorce is another key factor to consider when examining the impact of parental divorce and marital conflict on children's subsequent adjustment and well-being (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). However, there are inconsistent results in studies of long-term effects of parental marital conflict and divorce based on child's age. Early studies commonly reported that the younger the children were at the time of parental divorce, the lower their self-reported attachment to parents (Woodward, Fergusson, & Belsky, 2000), the less closeness in adult children's relationship with non-residential parents (Aquilino, 1994), the less contact of adult children with their fathers (Booth & Amato, 1994), and the more problems that children had with adult romantic relationships (Gabardi & Rosen, 1992; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978; Oderberg, 1986). More recently, this view has been challenged by evidence from several longitudinal studies suggesting that there were few effects for age at the time of divorce on the adjustment of children (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Hetherington, 2003). For example, Amato and Sobolewski reported that the child's age at parental

divorce, as well as amount of time that passed since the divorce, were not related to young adult children's psychological well-being in their longitudinal study.

Theoretically, based on developmental perspectives and emotional security hypothesis (Davies & Cummings, 1994), parental divorce and conflict are assumed to have more negative effects on younger children's adjustment than on older children, because younger children may be less cognitively equipped to accurately understand the circumstances surrounding their parent's marital disruption, and younger children may be particularly prone to fears of abandonment by parents and feelings of self-blame and guilt over their parents' divorce. On the other hand, the "psychometric" perspective emphasizes the likely greater impact of developmentally more recent experiences in relation to young adult children's outcomes (Belsky, Jaffee, Hsieh, & Silva, 2001). Based on this perspective, children who experienced parental divorce and conflict at older ages are expected to be more negatively impacted on their later romantic relationships than those whose experiences were at younger ages.

To be related to child's age at divorce and time since divorce, in this study, parental divorce was coded in two ways. To identify children of parental divorce, parental divorce was coded as a dummy variable that distinguishes between children whose parents divorce before age 17 and children whose parents remain married. Parental divorce was also coded as three time-varying dummy variables that evaluates if and when parents divorce (coded as divorce before age 5, at age 6 to 10, and at age 11 to 17, with non-divorce as the reference category).

Purpose of Study

Although there is a substantial body of literature documenting the impact of divorce and marital conflict on adult children's interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners, few studies have been able to demonstrate the interplay of these experiences in offspring's adjustment during adulthood. Further, the focus of previous studies has been to explore the interaction of marital conflict and divorce but investigated mainly offspring's psychological well-being. Booth and Amato's (2001) study is the only one in the literature that has focused on adaptation in key relational domains of early adulthood, such as kin and friend support networks, intimate relationship quality, and affection for parents.

However, the measures of young adults' interpersonal relationships in Booth and Amato's (2001) study assessed only the positive aspects of closeness, affect, happiness, and interaction. Other positive aspects of supportiveness and involvement, and negative aspects of conflict, disagreements, and control in young adults' interpersonal relationships, as well as the competencies in these relationships remain until now unexamined. Furthermore, mother-child and father-child relations were not separately examined in Booth and Amato's (2001) study. And the adult child's gender was treated only as a control variable. There is no previous study that has specifically examined gender differences in the interplay of parental marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. The present study seeks to build on previous research by examining both main effect and interactive models of the relations between parental marital conflict, divorce, and young adults' interpersonal relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners. This study also examines the

role of child's gender as a factor in the interplay of parental marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationships with mothers, fathers, and romantic partners.

The measures of parent-adult child relationships include closeness-support, conflict-control, and perceived filial self-efficacy. The measures of adult children's romantic relationships include relationship quality, relationship insecurity, and perceived relationship self-efficacy with romantic partners. These data are used to address the following hypotheses and research questions:

Hypothesis 1: Both levels of conflict in parental marital relationships and the experience of parental divorce will be negatively associated with closeness-support and perceived filial self-efficacy in parent-adult child relationships, as well as with relationship quality and perceived relationship self-efficacy in adult child romantic relationships. Parents' marital conflict and divorce will also positively correlate with conflict-control in parent-adult child relationships, as well as relationship insecurity in adult child romantic relationships.

Research Question 1: Are the effects of parental divorce and marital conflict additive or redundant in predicting adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners? The independent-additive model will be supported if marital conflict and divorce uniquely explain variance in adult children' relationship outcomes, and the variance explained by the two will be greater than that explained by either one considered by itself. In contrast, the redundancy model will be supported if marital conflict and divorce are highly correlated and do not explain unique portions of variance in adult children's relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between marital conflict and adult children's relationship qualities with mothers and romantic partners will be moderated by divorce. For children from non-divorced families, marital conflict will be negatively associated with their relationship qualities. Conversely, for children from divorced families, divorce will attenuate the relationship between marital conflict and children's relationship qualities. In other word, for children from divorced families, parental marital conflict will not be correlated to subsequent relationship qualities.

Research Question 2: Does the interplay of marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners differ by participants' gender? The pattern most often suggested in the literature is that the main effect of divorce and marital conflict may be stronger for the opposite-sex parent-adult child relations than for the same-sex parent-child relations. And the main effect of divorce on adult children's later romantic relationships may be stronger for females than for males. However, it is not clear in the literature whether there are gender differences in the effects of interaction between marital conflict and divorce on young adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners. The present study also explores these possibilities.

3. METHOD

Participants

The young adults and their families in this study are the participants in the Child Development Project, an ongoing, multi-site longitudinal study of child development (Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 1997). Participating families were recruited from three geographical areas (Nashville and Knoxville, Tennessee, and Bloomington, Indiana) when the children entered kindergarten in 1987 (cohort 1) and 1988 (cohort 2). At kindergarten pre-registration, parents were approached at random and asked if they would participate in a longitudinal study of child development. About 15% of children at the targeted schools did not pre-register. These participants were recruited on the first day of school or by letter or telephone. Of those so contacted, approximately 75% agreed to participate. The initial sample of 585 participants was diverse in terms of child sex (52% boys and 48% girls) and ethnicity (81% European American, 17% African American, and 2% other ethnic groups). Although the sample was predominantly middle class, as indicated by an average Hollingshead (1979) score of 40.4 (SD = 14), a range of socioeconomic status was represented, with 9%, 17%, 25%, 33%, and 16% of the families classified in Hollingshead's five classes (from lowest to highest).

At age 22, 467 participants in the present investigation were contacted, 458 of them completed assessments about their relationships with their mothers, and 451 of

them completed assessments about their relationships with their fathers. Furthermore, 314 participants reported that they were currently involving in a romantic relationship for at least 2 months, and completed assessments about their romantic relationships. The demographic profiles of the sample are summarized in Table 1. The majority of participants were from non-divorced families (47.5%, $n = 222$), while 23.3% ($n = 109$) were from families in which parents divorced before child's age of 5, 14.8% ($n = 69$) were in a family in which parents divorced between child's age of 6 to 10, and about 9.9% ($n = 46$) were in a family in which parents divorced between child's age of 11 to 17. Two hundred and ninety eight of the participants (63.8%) were currently single, 93 (19.9%) were living with a partner, only 65 (13.9%) were married, and 8 (1.7%) were separated or divorced. The average length of current romantic relationship was 30 months ($SD = 24.1$) and the majority of participants reported being in a serious committed relationship (91%).

Procedure

During the summer before children started kindergarten, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents in their homes. Parents provided detailed information about their children's developmental history, family stressors, marital conflict, parenting behavior, and current child behavior. In each subsequent year, mothers completed a battery of questionnaires including instruments designed to assess their marital status. In addition, parental marital conflict data were also collected from mothers in data collection 9 and 12 (children's age 13 and 16).

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Demographic Information for Participants

Parental Marital Status	Non-Divorced	Divorced Before 5	Divorced at 6 to 10	Divorced at 11 to 17	Cannot Determined	Total Sample
Demographic Variables	(n = 222)	(n = 109)	(n = 69)	(n = 46)	(n = 21)	(N = 467)
Parental SES	44.85 (10.9)	32.50 (12.9)	35.37 (10.3)	41.25 (9.5)	35.75 (10.9)	39.83 (12.4)
Parental Remarriage Status[1]	0 (0)	.45 (.50)	.61 (.49)	.37 (.49)	0 (0)	.24 (.43)
Child Sex[2]	.47 (.50)	.54 (.50)	.55 (.50)	.57 (.50)	.43 (.51)	.51 (.50)
Child Ethnicity[3]	.03 (.17)	.32 (.47)	.19 (.39)	.04 (.21)	.19 (.40)	.13 (.34)
Child Romantic Relationship						
Current partner[4]	.62 (.48)	.69 (.46)	.74 (.44)	.65 (.48)	.71 (.46)	.67 (.47)
Going out as couple	2.49 (.61)	2.19 (.75)	2.31 (.71)	2.37 (.72)	2.20 (.68)	2.36 (.68)
Length (months)	28.20 (23.2)	34.30 (28.6)	31.52 (21.1)	24.54 (21.1)	31.27 (21.7)	30.04 (24.1)
Serious commitment	.95 (.21)	.89 (.32)	.86 (.35)	.93 (.25)	.87 (.35)	.91 (.28)
Child Marital Status[5]						
Single	170 (76.6%)	60 (55%)	30 (43.5%)	27 (58.7%)	11 (52.4%)	298 (63.8%)
Cohabiting	23 (10.4%)	22 (20.2%)	26 (37.7%)	15 (32.6%)	7 (33.3%)	93 (19.9%)
Married	26 (11.7%)	20 (18.3%)	12 (17.4%)	4 (8.7%)	3 (14.3%)	65 (13.9%)
Separated or divorced	2 (0.9%)	5 (4.6%)	1 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (1.7%)
Missing	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.8 %)	1 (1.4 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.6%)

Notes. [1]Parental remarriage status (1 = yes, 0 = no) coded through annually mother's reports about whether she had remarried in the last 12 months; [2]Child Sex (0 = female, 1 = male); [3]Child Ethnicity (1 = African American, 0 = other); [4]Current partner (1 = yes, 0 = no) coded through youth's reports about whether they were currently involving in a romantic relationship for at least two months; [5]Numbers for Child Marital Status refer to *n*s and percentages (in parentheses).

During the summer in 2005 when the young adult children were 22 years old, the investigators contacted the young adults and asked them whether or not they would be willing to complete a instruments that measured young adults' relationships with parents and romantic partners were mailed to the participants. After they received these questionnaires, a phone interview was conducted. The measures of young adults' relationships with parents and romantic partners were derived from those interview items. Only participants in a current romantic relationship for a minimum of 2 months were interviewed about their current romantic relationships.

Measures

Divorce or separation. In data collection year 1, parents reported their marital status. In each subsequent year (until child's age of 17), mothers were asked if they had divorced or separated from their spouses in the last 12 months. Consistent with most empirical studies (e.g., Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993), parental divorce and separation were not distinguished. The large majority of marital separations end in divorce within three years (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002). Parental divorce was coded in two ways to be related to child's age at divorce. To identify children of parental divorce, parental divorce was coded as a dichotomous variable that distinguished between children whose parents divorced before age 17 and children whose parents remained married. Parental divorce was also coded as three time-varying dummy variables that evaluate if and when parents divorce (coded as divorce before age 5, at age 6 to 10, and at age 11 to 17, with non-divorce as the reference category). If mothers reported experiencing a divorce or separation in multiple years, only the first

divorce/separation reported was considered because this event represented the dissolution of the children's biological parents' marriage.

Marital conflict. In data collection year 1, 9, and 12 (children's age at 5, 13, and 16), marital conflict was assessed using the 9-item subscale of the Conflict Tactic Scale (Straus, 1979). Mothers were asked to recall in the last 12 months (for data collection year 1, mothers were asked to recall during the child's age 1 to age 4 and during the child's age 4 to age 5) and to answer the question: "All couples have disagreements. What kind of disagreements has your child seen between you and your spouse in the last year?" Following this question, mothers were asked to rate the conflict tactics that they and their spouses used with a 6-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (almost every day). Items included (a) verbal aggression: argued heatedly but did not yell; yelled, insulted or swore (2 items, α = .87, .86, .72, and .74 for child age of 1-4, 4-5, 13, and 16 respectively); (b) psychological aggression: sulked or refused to talk about it; stomped out of the room or house; threatened to throw something (3 items, α = .79, .75, .74, and .69 for child age of 1-4, 4-5, 13, and 16 respectively); and (c) physical aggression: pushed, grabbed, or shoved; and hit (2 items, α = .82, .81, .93, and .68 for child age of 1-4, 4-5, 13, and 16 respectively). Based on the mothers' reports, the scores for both mother-to-spouse and spouse-to-mother are averaged to create the final marital conflict variables. For parents who remained continuously married, the marital conflict score is calculated as the mean of the scores for child's age of 1-4, 4-5, 13, and 16 to reflect the general level of conflict in the marriage. In cases of divorce, however, conflict was based on the mean of all conflict scores obtained before the separation (an alternative scoring

procedure also was used in which the conflict was measured as the score closest in time to separation for marriages that ended in divorce).

Parent-adult child relationships (age 22). At age 22, youths were interviewed about their relationships with their parents. Some of the items assessing young adults' relationships with their parents were adapted from year 12 (age 16) assessments of the CDP. New items added were drawn from the interview with young adult focal children conducted as part of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH; Sweet & Bumpass, 1996), as well as the Perceived Filial Self-Efficacy Scale (Caprara, Regalia, Scabini, Barbarnelli, & Bandra, 2004). These items were factor-analyzed to guide scale development (maximum likelihood estimation with oblique rotation). Two latent constructs were identified:

Closeness-support: Closeness-Support construct was measured by three indicators: parental support, involvement, and the global parent-child relationship quality. *Parental support* was indexed by young adult interview responses to three items: "how much does your mother (father) provide for your emotional needs;" "how much does your mother (father) take care of your practice needs;" and "how much does your mother (father) act as an advisor/mentor." Participants rated parental support on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = a lot of the time. Three items were averaged to produce a youth's report of the mother's ($\alpha = .71$) and the father's ($\alpha = .81$) support score. *Parental involvement* was measured by young adult interview responses to six items: "how often does your mother (father) talk with you about ordinary daily events in your life; things with which you are happy or satisfied; and problems with which you may be concerned;" and "how often does your mother (father) know about your personal/romantic

relationships; your activities at work/school; and when you are sick or have other health problems." Participants rated parental involvement on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very frequently. Six items were averaged to produce a youth's report of the mother's (α = .88) and the father's (α = .91) involvement score. In addition to these summary measures, young adults were also asked to rate the *quality of their relationships* with each parent on an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (really bad) to 10 (absolutely perfect).

Conflict-control: Conflict-Control construct was also measured by three indicators: frequency of disagreement, frequency of conflict, and parental psychological control. *Frequency of disagreement* between parents and young adult children included frequency over the last 3 months of open disagreements about dress, dating partner, friends, jobs, sexual behavior, substance abuse, money, helping around the house, staying out at night, romantic partner, and raising the children. Participants rated eleven items as yes (1) or no (0). These items were summed to produce a youth's report of the mother's (α = .78) and the father's (α = .72) disagreement scores. *Conflict* between parents and young adult children was measure by one item: "how often you argue or fight or have a lot of difficulty with your mother/father." Participants rated this item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = more than once a week. An index of youth-reported *parental psychological control* was derived from three items suggested by the work of Barber (1996). These items (e.g., my mother/father tries to change how I feel or think about things; makes decisions for me or tell me how to run your life; and brings up my past mistakes when he/she criticizes me") were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = never to 3 = occasionally to 5 = very frequently. These ratings were averaged to produce

a youths' report of the maternal (α = .71) and paternal (α = .76) psychological control scores.

Perceived filial self-efficacy. To assess the extent of a young adult's belief in his or her capabilities to effectively manage their relationships with their parents, a subject's perceived filial self-efficacy was measured by 16 items (Caprara, et al., 2004). The young adults were questioned as to whether or not they perceived they could: discuss with their parents personal problems even under difficult circumstances, express positive feelings and manage negative emotional reactions toward them, get parents to see their side on contentious issues, and influence constructively parental attitudes and social practices. Caprara et al. (2004) argued that the construction of this scale was guided by knowledge concerning competencies that are likely to foster a good parent-child relationship, including the capacity to maintain open communication, to manage different and conflictive situations, and to voice one's own opinion. For each item, participants rated their perceived efficacy on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = not well at all to 7 = extremely well. These ratings were average to produce a youth's reports of perceived filial self-efficacy score (α = .94).

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of maximum likelihood estimation with subsequent oblimin rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. The results supported one to three factors. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was further conducted to verify the single factor structure and three-factor structure of this scale. Both models provided a good fit to the empirical data. Results of the mono-factorial structure yielded a significant χ^2 (104) = 423.44 (N = 457), $p < .001$, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .92, and RMSEA of .08 ($p < .001$). Results of three-

factorial structure yielded a significant χ^2 (101) = 291.75 (N = 457), $p < .001$, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .95, and RMSEA of .06 ($p < .001$). At the same time, however, the chi-square difference between the two models was significant ($\Delta \chi^2 = 131.7$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .001$). And the three-factorial structure yielded better model fit indexes than did the mono-factorial structure.

The first factor consisted of 7 items (e.g., "Handle your parent's intrusions into your privacy without irritation and resentment" and "Prevent differences of opinions with your parents from turning into arguments"), and was labeled *problem-solving efficacy*. Reliability of this subscale was good ($\alpha = .87$). The second factor also consisted of 7 items (e.g., "Maintain communications with your father or your mother even when your relationship is tense" and "Talk with your parent about your personal problems"), and was labeled *communication efficacy*. It was also internally consistent ($\alpha = .89$). The third factor consisted of 2 items (e.g., "Increase your parent's trust and esteem for you" and "Get your parents to trust your sense of responsibility and critical thinking"), and was labeled *getting trust efficacy*. Like the other factors, this subscale was internally consistent ($\alpha = .83$).

Adult children's romantic relationships (age 22). Measures of young adult children's romantic relationships included assessments of (a) romantic relationship quality (Dyadic Adjustment Scale, Spanier, 1976), (b) romantic relationship insecurity (Preoccupied and Fearful Attachment Scale, Bartholomew and Horowita, 1991; Fear of Abandonment scale, Choca and Van Denburg, 1997; and Interpersonal Jealousy Scale, Mathes and Severa, 1981), and (c) perceived relationship self-efficacy (Perceived Relationship Self-Efficacy Scale, Caprara at al., 2004).

Romantic relationship quality. The 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) is a very widely-used and standard measure of relationship satisfaction. This measure reviews possibilities for disagreement on the areas including friends, finances, and household tasks, frequency of conflict, regrets, affection, and other positive exchanges, and overall level of satisfaction and commitment. Using the maximum likelihood, confirmatory factory-analysis procedure, Spanier and Thompson (1982) suggested that the full form of 32-item Dyadic Adjustment Scale included four subscales regarding the level of agreement between partners on important issues (Dyadic Consensus Subscale, 13 items, e.g., "Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner when handling family finances, mattes of recreation, religious matters, friends, conventionality, philosophy of life, ways of dealing with parents or in-laws, amount of time spent together, making major decisions, household tasks, leisure time interests and activities, and career decisions;" $\alpha = .84$), amount of shared activity (Dyadic Cohesion Subscale, 5 items, e.g., "Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?" $\alpha = .71$), degree of expressed affection (Affectional Expression Subscale, 4 items, e.g., "Indicate if either item caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks: being too tired for sex or not showing love," $\alpha = .61$), and level of satisfaction with the relationship (Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale, 10 items, e.g., "In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?" $\alpha = .87$).

Romantic relationship insecurity. Three instruments, adapted by Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman, and Stuart (2000), were used to indicate the

relationship insecurity construct. These included (a) the Preoccupied and Fearful Attachment scale, derived from the Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) Relationship Styles Questionnaire(e.g., "I find it difficult to depend on other people"; eleven items; α = .88); (b) the Fear of Abandonment scale, derived from the MCMI (Choca & Van Denburg, 1997) (e.g., "I worry a great deal about being left alone and having to take care of myself"; five items; α = .76); and (c) the Interpersonal Jealousy scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981, but modified for the current study; e.g., "if my boyfriend/girlfriend were to help someone of the opposite sex with work or homework, I would feel suspicious;" seven items; α = .86).

Perceived relationship self-efficacy. To measure participants' perceived relationship self-efficacy, the participants completed a 12-item Perceived Relationship Self-Efficacy Scale (Caprara et al., 2004, but modified for the current study). This scale assesses the young adult's belief in their capabilities to communicate openly and confide in, share feelings, aspirations, and worries with their romantic partners, provide partners with emotional support, cope jointly with relationship problems, work through disagreement, and share common activities and social relations. Caprara et al. (2004) argued that the guiding criteria in constructing these items concerned spouses' efficacy to nurture feelings of mutual trust and loyalty, provide effective mutual support, avoid having disagreements turn into hostility, improve adequate communication, and promote and use dyadic coping strategies to face daily stresses and to operate in concert toward the achievement of common goals. For each items, participants rated their efficacy to manage the relationship with their romantic partners on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 =

not well at all to 7 = extremely well. Twelve items were averaged to produce a youth's reports of perceived relationship self-efficacy score (α = .86).

Similar to the Filial Self-Efficacy scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of maximum likelihood estimation with subsequent oblimin rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the Relationship Self-Efficacy scale. The results supported one to three factors. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was further conducted to verify the single factor structure and three-factor structure of this scale. The mono-factorial structure model provided poor model fit to the empirical data. Specifically, this model test yielded a significant χ^2 (54) = 165.61 (N = 314), $p < .001$, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .88, and RMSEA of .08 ($p < .001$). In contrast, the three-factorial structure model provided a good fit to the empirical data. This model test yielded a significant χ^2 (51) = 75.07 (N = 314), $p < .05$, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .97, and RMSEA of .04 ($p = ns$). The chi-square difference between two models was significant ($\Delta \chi^2 = 90.54$, $\Delta df = 3$, $p < .001$).

The first factor consisted of 5 items (e.g., "Prevent disagreements from turning into insults and open hostility" and "Respect partner's personal beliefs even though you disagree with them"), and was labeled *problem-solving efficacy*. Reliability of this subscale was good (α = .77). The second factor also consisted of 4 items (e.g., "Create the time to talk together about your worries and aspirations" and "Support partner in handling conflict with parents"), and was labeled *providing support efficacy*. It was also internally consistent (α = .76). The third factor consisted of 3 items (e.g., "Get partner to agree on how to deal with problems with your child" and "Support partner when the child

does not do what he/she is told to do"), and was labeled *dealing with issues of child efficacy*. Like the other factors, this subscale was internally consistent (α = .82).

Control variables. This study also controlled for other personal and social factors that have been found to influence the effects of parental divorce and conflict on adult children's later interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners. These factors included parents' socioeconomic status, the young adult children's ethnicity, the young adult children's current relationship status, and parental remarriage status. Parents' socioeconomic status was measured by the average Hollingshead (1979) scores based on parental education, family income, and occupational status across data collection Y1 (child's age of 5) to Y13 (child's age of 17). Participants' ethnicity was a dichotomous variable coded as 1 = African American and 0 = others. The participants' current romantic relationship status was measured by four indicators: how often they go out as a couple (1 = very seldom, 2 = sometimes, and 3 = usually or always); how many months they have been seeing the romantic partner; whether they have some kind of serious commitment in the relationship (1 = yes and 0 = no); and the participants current marital status (coded as two dummy variables of cohabitating and married, with single status as the reference category). Parental remarriage status was measured as a dichotomous variable (1 = yes and 0 = no) through annually mothers' reports about whether she had remarried in the last 12 months. If mothers reported experiencing a remarriage in multiple years, only the first remarriage reported was considered.

Treatment of Missing Data

This study used Full Information Maximum-Likelihood estimation (Allison, 2002) with missing data. The Expectation-Maximization algorithm (EM algorithm) was

employed to obtain maximum likelihood estimators. This method provides accurate estimates of missing data and also allows the use of all cases and the computation of fit indices of the models. One of the issues in this study is that the sample size for participants' romantic relationship outcomes ($N = 314$) is smaller than the sample size for participants' relationship outcomes with their parents ($N = 462$), because the present study only measures the romantic relationship outcomes for those participants who are currently involved in a relationship (for at least two months). Therefore, analyses were run to compare the mean differences between the participants who were currently in a romantic relationship and those who were not on the major variables of divorce, marital conflict, and mother-child and father-child relationship qualities. The results are illustrated in Table 2. In general, the participants who were currently in a romantic relationship reported to have less disagreement with their mothers and fathers and less conflict with their fathers. No other significant differences were found.

Plan of Analyses

The purpose of this study was to examine both main effect and interactive models of the relations between parental marital conflict, divorce, and young adults' interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners, as well as the gender differences among these models (see Figure 1). The first hypothesis of this study was that both levels of conflict in parental marital relationships and the experience of parental divorce would be negatively associated with closeness-support and perceived filial self-efficacy in parent-adult child relationships. In addition, this hypothesis predicted that levels of conflict in parental marital relationships and the experience of parental divorce would be negatively associated with relationship quality and perceived relationship self-

Table 2

Mean (Standard Deviation) for Demographic, Parental Divorce, Marital Conflict, Mother-Child Relationship and Father-Child Relationship Variables by Romantic Relationship Status

Relationship Status	No Partner		Having Partner		
Variables	*M* (*SD*)		*M* (*SD*)		*t*
Parental Marital Relationships					
Divorce	.45	(.50)	.53	(.50)	-1.675
Divorce before 5	.22	(.42)	.26	(.44)	-.814
Divorce at 6 to 10	.12	(.33)	.17	(.38)	-1.545
Divorce at 11 to 17	.11	(.31)	.10	(.30)	.151
Marital Conflict (average/closest)					
Verbal aggression	.01/-.02	(.71/.83)	.04/.07	(.79/.91)	-.345/-.926
Psychological aggression	.02/.04	(.58/.71)	.02/.07	(.62/.88)	.043/-.284
Physical aggression	.00/.10	(.64/.84)	.01/.07	(.71/.93)	-.049/.388
Mother-Child Relationships					
Relationship quality	7.77	(1.79)	7.78	(2.06)	-.039
Received support	3.46	(.93)	3.33	(1.04)	1.419
Positive involvement	3.61	(.84)	3.63	(.97)	-.243
Conflict	1.76	(.83)	1.69	(.92)	.718
Disagreement	2.00	(2.15)	1.50	(2.03)	2.451*
Psychological control	2.09	(.88)	2.00	(.95)	.951
Father-Child Relationships					
Relationship quality	6.73	(2.74)	6.72	(3.01)	.034
Received support	2.93	(1.19)	2.81	(1.17)	.996
Positive involvement	3.09	(1.09)	2.99	(1.14)	.884
Conflict	1.53	(.78)	1.38	(.71)	2.043*
Disagreement	1.21	(1.61)	.80	(1.54)	2.497*
Psychological control	1.84	(.89)	1.68	(.78)	1.837
Filial Self-Efficacy	5.11	(1.00)	5.06	(1.07)	.428

Note. Ns = 118 to 148 for no-partner group; Ns = 246 to 309 for having-partner group.
*$p < .05$

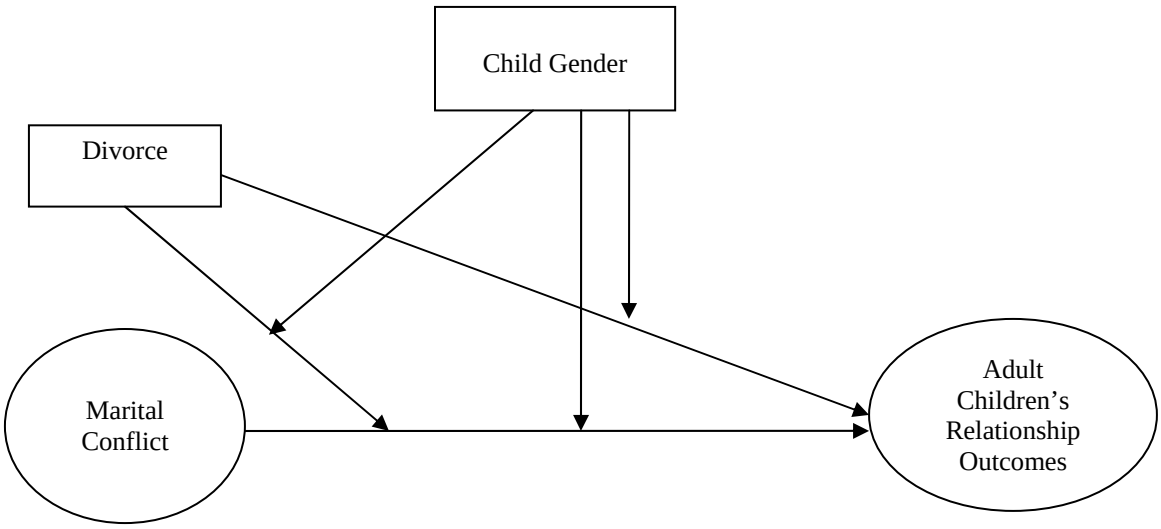

Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of the Study

efficacy in adult child romantic relationships. Parents' marital conflict and divorce would also positively correlate with conflict-control in parent-adult child relationships and also positively correlate with relationship insecurity in adult child romantic relationships. To test it, Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the relationships among levels of parental marital conflict, parental divorce, parent-adult child relationship outcomes, and adult child romantic relationship outcomes.

The first research question in this study was whether the effects of parental divorce and marital conflict were additive or redundant in predicting adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners. To address this issue, Structural Equation Modeling analyses were conducted in which marital conflict and divorce will simultaneously predict adult children's relationship outcomes. The independent-additive model would be supported if marital conflict and divorce uniquely explained variance in adult children' relationship outcomes, and the variance explained by the two would be greater than that explained by either one considered by itself. In contrast, the redundancy model would be supported if marital conflict and divorce were highly correlated and did not explain unique portions of variance in adult children's relationship outcomes.

The second hypothesis in this study was that the relationship between marital conflict and adult children's relationship qualities with mothers and romantic partners would be moderated by divorce. For children from non-divorced families, marital conflict would be negatively associated with the children's relationship outcomes. Conversely, for children from divorced families, divorce would attenuate the relationship between marital conflict and children's relationship outcomes. In other words, for children from divorced families, parental marital conflict would not correlate to their subsequent relationship

qualities. To test this hypothesis, the multi-group Structural Equation Modeling analyses were conducted, in which marital conflict was used to predict children's relationship outcomes for divorced vs. non-divorced groups. To validate the usual assumption that groups are equivalent, groups were required to have identical estimates for all parameters for one model. That was the full-constrained model. The differences between groups were evaluated by "freeing" the parameters in the other model (group-specific model) so that groups were allowed to vary all parameters. The differences of chi-square values between the two models were used to test whether or not the two models were significant differences. The expectation was that the model fit of the group-specific model would show significant improvement than the model fit of the full-constrained model. The coefficients of the structural paths from marital conflict to children's outcomes in each model for divorced vs. non-divorced groups were further examined.

Similarly, multi-group Structural Equation Modeling analyses were conducted to examine the last research question in this study: whether or not the effects of marital conflict and divorce on the adult children's relationships with their parents and romantic partners differed by gender of adult children.

4. RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to testing the fit of the specific hypothesized models, latent variables were constructed for marital conflict, mother-child closeness and support, mother-child conflict and control, father-child closeness and support, father-child conflict and control, perceived filial self-efficacy, romantic relationship quality, romantic relationship insecurity, and romantic relationship self-efficacy. The initial descriptive statistics for the measured indicators were then computed. These statistics are presented in Table 3; they include means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and reliabilities for each of the measures. Absolute values of skewness index less than 3.0 and kurtosis index less than 10.0 suggest acceptable univariate normality (Weston & Gore, 2006).

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that both levels of conflict in parental marital relationships and the experience of parental divorce would be negatively associated with closeness-support and perceived filial self-efficacy in parent-adult child relationships, and that this negative association would apply also to relationship quality and perceived relationship self-efficacy in adult child romantic relationships. Parents' marital conflict and divorce would also positively correlate with conflict-control in parent-adult child relationships and would also positively correlate to insecurity in adult child romantic relationships. Pearson correlations were computed among main study constructs of

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis, and Reliabilities for All Measures

Constructs	Indicators	Means (*SD*)	Skewness	Kurtosis	Reliabilities
Marital Conflict	Verbal	.06 (.79)	.49	-.32	.72 - .87
	Psychological	.06 (.66)	1.49	2.33	.69 - .79
	Physical	.06 (.78)	3.21	11.23	.68 - .93
Mother-Child	Relationship quality	7.77 (1.98)	-1.51	2.86	_a
Closeness-	Received support	3.37 (1.01)	-.45	-.44	.71
Support	Positive involvement	3.62 (.93)	-.65	.22	.88
Mother-Child	Conflict	1.72 (.89)	1.32	1.54	_a
Conflict-	Disagreement	1.67 (2.08)	1.53	2.16	.78
Control	Psychological control	2.04 (.93)	.87	.15	.71
Father-Child	Relationship quality	6.73 (2.92)	-1.11	.21	_a
Closeness-	Received support	2.85 (1.18)	-.18	-1.01	.81
Support	Positive involvement	3.02 (1.13)	-.47	-.74	.91
Father-Child	Conflict	1.43 (.74)	1.99	4.30	_a
Conflict-	Disagreement	.94 (1.58)	2.17	5.08	.72
Control	Psychological control	1.73 (.82)	1.26	1.26	.76
Filial Self-	Problem solving	4.77 (1.10)	-.55	.49	.87
Efficacy	Communication	5.26 (1.15)	-1.00	1.19	.89
	Getting trust	5.52 (1.20)	-1.14	1.56	.83
Romantic	Dyadic consensus	3.78 (.54)	-.17	.05	.84
Relationship	Dyadic cohesion	3.50 (.65)	-.61	1.01	.71
Quality	Satisfaction	3.95 (.61)	-1.50	4.22	.87
	Affectional expression	.01 (.67)	-1.08	1.17	.61
Romantic	Intimate jealousy	4.09 (1.62)	.29	-.24	.86
Relationship	Preoccupied attachment	2.37 (.69)	.37	-.58	.88
Insecurity	Fear of abandonment	1.59 (.64)	1.32	2.22	.76
Relationship	Problem solving	5.66 (.87)	-.66	.06	.77
Self-Efficacy	Providing support	6.13 (.72)	-.93	1.08	.76
	Dealing with child	5.97 (1.22)	-1.53	1.86	.82

Note. [a]One-item measure, no alpha available.

parental marital conflict, divorce, mother-child and father-child relationships, child filial self- efficacy, child romantic relationship quality and insecurity, and child relationship self-efficacy. Table 4 shows the correlation coefficients among these measures.

Parent-child relationship outcomes. Parental divorce was modestly associated with lower mother-child relationship quality and lower levels of communication efficacy in parent-child relationships. Parental divorce was also moderately associated with lower father-child relationship quality, less received support from fathers, and less positive involvement from fathers. In addition, counter to the hypothesis, parental divorce was modestly associated with lower levels of conflict, fewer disagreement, and less psychological control in father-child relationships.

Higher levels of psychological aggression in parents' marital relationships were significantly associated with less received support from mothers. For father-child relationship outcomes, both higher levels of psychological aggression and higher levels of physical aggression in parents' marital relationships were modest-to-moderately associated with lower father-child relationship quality, less received support and less positive involvement from fathers. In addition, parents' marital conflict was also significantly associated with lower levels of conflict between fathers and children. Higher levels of verbal aggression were also significantly associated with lower father-child relationship quality. For young adult children's filial self-efficacy outcomes, higher levels of psychological aggression in parents' marital relationship were associated with lower levels of communication efficacy and lower levels of getting trust efficacy for young adult children.

Table 4

Correlations among Parental Marital Conflict, Divorce, Parent-Adult Child Relationships

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Divorce[1]	-													
Marital Conflict														
2. Verbal	.22***	-												
3. Psychological	.27***	.62***	-											
4. Physical	.24***	.43***	.68***	-										
Mother-Child														
5. Relationship quality	-.11*	-.03	-.10˜	-.04	-									
6. Received support	-.06	-.04	-.11*	.00	.61***	-								
7. Positive involvement	-.07	.01	-.08	-.10˜	.56***	.60***	-							
8. Conflict	.05	.04	.02	.05	-.38***	-.11*	-.09˜	-						
9. Disagreement	.02	.02	.03	-.03	-.11*	-.01	-.04	.40***	-					
10. Control	.05	-.00	.02	-.07	-.32***	-.10*	-.10*	.52***	.51**	-				
Father-Child														
11. Relationship quality	-.42***	-.13*	-.20***	-.12*	.16**	.03	.05	-.15**	-.19***	-.16**	-			
12. Received support	-.42***	-.06	-.20***	-.19***	.11*	.28***	.17**	-.02	-.12*	-.07	.69***	-		
13. Positive involvement	-.36***	-.07	-.19***	-.14**	.11*	.13**	.40***	-.03	-.19***	-.09˜	.72***	.73***	-	
14. Conflict	-.18***	-.01	-.11*	-.12*	-.06	.08	.01	.38***	.16**	.11*	-.02	.16**	.13**	-

Table 4 (continued)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15. Disagreement	-.17**	-.03	-.03	-.06	-.06	.01	-.09˜	.23***	.57***	.22***	.04	.12*	.04	.43***
16. Control	-.15**	.00	-.09˜	-.10˜	-.10*	-.02	-.04	.18***	.18***	.36***	.09˜	.20***	.21***	.55***
Romantic Relationships														
17. Dyadic consensus	-.15*	-.07	-.09	.01	.08	.08	.19**	-.05	-.16**	-.17**	.18**	.24***	.26***	.05
18. Dyadic cohesion	.08	.12	-.03	.02	.20**	.16**	.26***	-.14*	-.04	-.16**	.02	.09	.14*	-.04
19. Dyadic satisfaction	-.16**	.05	-.07	.01	.11˜	.06	.18**	-.07	-.21***	-.15*	.21***	.25***	.30***	-.06
20. Affection expression	-.01	.03	-.00	.01	-.05	.00	.02	.04	-.07	-.03	-.04	.05	.05	.05
21. Intimate jealousy	.02	.04	.00	-.03	-.06	-.01	-.09	.04	.09	.15*	.02	.03	-.07	-.00
22. Preoccupied	.17**	.05	.05	.05	-.23***	-.11˜	-.18**	.25***	.26***	.20***	-.14*	-.15*	-.20**	.15*
23. Fear of abandon	.09	.10	.05	.06	-.14*	-.03	-.06	.20***	.24***	.17**	-.05	-.03	-.08	.13*
Filial Self-Efficacy														
24. Problem solving	-.04	-.04	-.06	-.01	.43***	.32***	.43***	-.32***	-.23***	-.35***	.26***	.22***	.29***	-.17***
25.Communication	-.11*	-.04	-.11*	-.05	.53**	.50**	.62***	-.24***	-.19***	-.31***	.32***	.34***	.45***	-.13**
26.Getting trust	-.05	-.05	-.10*	-.00	.44**	.33***	.46***	-.31***	-.33***	-.35***	.24***	.27***	.32***	-.21***
Relationship Efficacy														
27. Problem solving	-.10	-.01	-.06	.04	.09	.05	.16**	-.05	-.10˜	-.11˜	.07	.10˜	.19**	-.02
28. Providing support	-.18**	-.04	-.09	-.02	.08	.13*	.22***	-.02	-.01	-.05	.04	.16*	.22***	.09
29. Dealing with child	.13	.08	-.01	.12	.12	.12	.23*	-.15	-.27*	-.31**	.10	.24*	.39**	-.01

Table 4 (continued)

Variables	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
15. Disagreement	-													
16. Control	.46***	-												
Romantic Relationships														
17. Dyadic consensus	-.07	-.08	-											
18. Dyadic cohesion	-.11˜	-.11˜	.34***	-										
19. Dyadic satisfaction	-.15*	-.09	.51***	.52***	-									
20. Affection expression	-.05	-.06	.48***	.21***	.39***	-								
21. Intimate jealousy	.05	.16**	-.33***	-.17**	-.26***	-.29***	-							
22. Preoccupied	.23***	.20**	-.31***	-.06	-.20**	-.20**	.34***	-						
23. Fear of abandon	.20***	.19**	-.31***	-.11˜	-.23***	-.29***	.46***	.57***	-					
Filial Self-Efficacy														
24. Problem solving	-.19***	-.23***	.27***	.29***	.25***	.10˜	-.23***	-.20**	-.14*	-				
25.Communication	-.17***	-.20***	.29***	.32***	.28***	.11˜	-.14*	-.19**	-.12*	.77***	-			
26.Getting trust	-.29***	-.27***	.27***	.30***	.30***	.16**	-.10˜	-.17**	-.18**	.72***	.73***	-		
Relationship Efficacy														
27. Problem solving	-.14*	-.16*	.57***	.37***	.55***	.42***	-.48***	-.30***	-.34***	.35***	.26***	.27***	-	
28. Providing support	.01	-.10	.49***	.35***	.48***	.37***	-.26***	-.15*	-.19**	.24***	.27***	.26***	.66***	-
29. Dealing with child	-.18	-.01	.31**	.30**	.31**	.10	-.18˜	-.16	.00	.29**	.37**	.33**	.40***	.42***

Notes.[1]Divorce (1 = yes, 0 = no). Ns = 366 to 530 for marital conflict and divorce; Ns = 360 to 437 for mother-child relationships; Ns = 339 to 422 for father-child relationships; Ns = 362 to 437 for filial self-efficacy; Ns = 227 to 269 for child romantic relationships; Ns = 228 to 313 for relationship self-efficacy.

˜p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Romantic relationship outcomes. Parental divorce was modestly associated with lower levels of dyadic consensus and satisfaction in adult child romantic relationships. Parental divorce was also associated with higher levels of adult child's preoccupied and fearful attachment style. Regarding the young adult children's relationship self-efficacy outcomes, parental divorce was associated with lower levels of providing support efficacy in young adult children's romantic relationships. However, not one of these three measures of parental marital conflict was associated with young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes.

In sum, parental divorce was associated with lower levels of mother-child and father-child closeness and support and lower levels of young adult children's filial self-efficacy. Parental divorce was also associated with lower quality of and higher insecurity in young adult child romantic relationships and parental divorce also correlated to lower levels of young adult children's relationship self-efficacy. Higher levels of marital conflict, on the other hand, were associated with lower levels of closeness and support in mother-child and father-child relationships and also with lower levels of young adult children's filial self-efficacy. However, there were no associations between parental marital conflict and mother-child conflict and control, no associations between parental marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity, nor was there a correlation between marital conflict and young adult children's relationship self-efficacy. Furthermore, the opposite pattern of associations was found between parents' marital conflict and divorce and conflict-control in father-child relationships. It should also be noted that for mother-child relationships, higher levels of closeness-support was modest-to-moderately associated with lower levels of conflict-

control. For father-child relationships, however, higher levels of closeness-support were modestly associated with higher levels of conflict-control.

Research Question 1

The first research question of this study was whether the effects of parental divorce and marital conflict were additive or redundant in predicting adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners. To explore this question, structural equation modeling analyses were conducted to examine the fit of the model in which the adult children's relationship outcomes were predicted by marital conflict, divorce, and the control variables (parents' socioeconomic status and remarriage status, and the young adult children's ethnicity and relationship status). The first set of models included conflict but excluded divorce, the second set of models included divorce but excluded conflict, and the third set of models included conflict as well as divorce. The latent variables of close-support and conflict-control in mother-child and father-child relationships were correlated with each other and the latent variables of relationship quality and insecurity in young adult romantic relationships were correlated with each other as well. Because of the possibility that other factors not explicitly included in the model may affect these endogenous variables and the correlations among them, the residual factor variances of these latent factors were allowed to be correlated (Hargens, 1988). The standardized coefficients appear in Table 5.1 (divorce measured as a dichotomous variable) and Table 5.2 (divorce measured as three dummy variables). All three sets of models included the full set of control variables. Models were estimated using Amos 6.0 program. Amos uses full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML) with missing data resulting in unbiased parameter estimates and appropriate

Table 5.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dichotomous), and Young Adult Children's Relationship Outcomes

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships		Romantic Relationships		Self-Efficacy	
	N = 458		*N* = 451		*N* = 314		*N* = 457/314	
Predictors	Close-support	Conflict-control	Close-support	Conflict-control	Quality	Insecurity	Filial	Relationship
Sole								
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.21**)	.03 (.04)	-.16** (-.18**)	-.08 (-.06)	-.08 (-.06)	.04 (.10)	-.10˜ (-.16*)	-.09 (-.08)
SMC	.020 (.050)	.014 (.014)	.149 (.156)	.047 (.045)	.194 (.188)	.130 (.133)	.030 (.044)	.104 (.107)
Divorce	-.08	.08	-.49***	-.18*	-.56*	.57*	-.03	-.30
SMC	.012	.016	.261	.059	.183	.133	.021	.105
Simultaneous								
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.20**)	-.06 (.03)	-.11* (-.15*)	-.06 (-.05)	-.07 (-.06)	.04 (.10)	-.10˜ (-.15*)	-.08 (-.07)
Divorce	-.06 (-.06)	.07 (.07)	-.47***(-.47***)	-.17* (-.18*)	-.51*(-.51*)	.52*(.52*)	-.01 (-.01)	-.28 (-.31)
SMC	.023 (.051)	.017 (.017)	.270 (.280)	.062 (.061)	.188 (.187)	.133 (.138)	.030 (.043)	.109 (.111)

Notes. Numbers in parentheses refer to marital conflict scores closest in time to divorce.
˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 5.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dummies), and Young Adult Children's Relationship Outcomes

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships		Romantic Relationships		Self-Efficacy	
	N = 458		*N* = 451		*N* = 314		*N* = 457/314	
Predictors	Close-support	Conflict-control	Close-support	Conflict-control	Quality	Insecurity	Filial	Relationship
Sole								
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.21**)	.03 (.04)	-.16** (-.18**)	-.08 (-.06)	-.08 (-.06)	.04 (.10)	-.10˜ (-.16*)	-.09 (-.08)
SMC	.020 (.050)	.014 (.014)	.149 (.156)	.047 (.045)	.194 (.188)	.130 (.133)	.030 (.044)	.104 (.107)
Divorce before 5	-.08	.09	-.55***	-.19*	-.49*	.48*	-.07	-.21
Divorce at 6 to 10	-.15*	.03	-.31***	-.16*	-.28	.33	-.03	-.14
Divorce at 11 to 17	.02	.04	-.21***	-.07	-.34*	.33*	.03	-.24˜
SMC	.026	.017	.291	.062	.198	.138	.025	.120
Simultaneous								
Marital conflict	-.12˜ (-.22**)	.03 (.04)	-.08 (-.13*)	-.06 (-.05)	-.04 (-.04)	.01 (.08)	-.09 (-.15*)	-.09 (-.07)
Divorce before 5	-.04 (-.03)	.08 (.08)	-.52***(-.52***)	-.16* (-.17*)	-.22*(-.43*)	.21˜ (.43*)	-.04 (-.04)	-.18 (-.22)
Divorce at 6 to 10	-.14* (-.15*)	.03 (.03)	-.31***(-.32***)	-.15* (-.16*)	-.07 (-.24)	.10 (.30˜)	-.03 (-.04)	-.13 (-.16)
Divorce at 11 to 17	.03 (.03)	.04 (.04)	-.21***(-.21***)	-.07 (-.07)	-.16*(-.30*)	.15˜ (.30*)	.03 (.04)	-.23˜(-.25*)
SMC	.037 (.068)	.018 (.019)	.296 (.305)	.065 (.064)	.197 (.198)	.131 (.140)	.033 (.046)	.126 (.126)

Notes. Numbers in parentheses refer to marital conflict scores closest in time to divorce.
˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

standard errors when data are missing randomly (Arbuckle & Worthke, 1999).

Usually, the overall fit of a SEM model is determined by the chi-square statistic that directly assesses how well a model fits the observed data (Bollen, 1989). This statistic measures absolute fit but is sensitive to sample size and the complexity of the model (Byrne, 2001). So, other goodness-of-fit indices were used to provide additional information on the adequacy of fit of the proposed model. There is a broad array of indices provided by the AMOS program. Following the recommendations of McDonald and Ho (2002), three indices in addition to the model chi-square were presented in this study: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the chi-square ratios (χ^2/df). CFI index compares the improvement of the fit of the proposed model over an independent model which specifies no relationships among variables (Bentler, 1990). CFI ranges from 0 to 1.0, with values closer to 1.0 indicating better fit. RMSEA index corrects for a model's complexity (Steiger, 1990). The simpler model will therefore have the more favorable RMSEA value compared to the complex model. A RMSEA value of .00 indicates that the model exactly fits the data. The chi-square ration statistic adjusts for the chi-square statistic's sensitivity to sample size and the complexity of the model. In general, chi-square ratios between 1 and 3 indicate good fit (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). Recent empirical research (e.g., Hu and Bentler, 1998; 1999; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004) has suggested that, when sample sizes are smaller than 500 and models are not complex, the minimum cutoff of .90 for CFI and the maximum cutoff of .08 for RMSEA are acceptable (Weston & Gore, 2006).

The first set of models in which marital conflict was the sole predictor fit the data adequately ($\chi^2(42) = 189.11$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .088 for mother-child relationships;

$\chi^2(42) = 123.25$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .066 for father-child relationships; $\chi^2(20) = 54.8$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .062 for filial self-efficacy; $\chi^2(94) = 196.75$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .059 for romantic relationships; and $\chi^2(45) = 75.25$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .046 for relationship self-efficacy). The results of this set of models revealed that higher levels of marital conflict were associated with lower levels of father-child closeness and support, but not with the other outcomes. The patterns of the associations between marital conflict and young adult children's relationship outcomes were similar when conflict was measured as the average score across years or as the score closest to the time of divorce. However, the magnitudes of the associations between marital conflict measured as the score closest to the time of divorce and young adult children's relationship outcomes were stronger than were marital conflict measured as the average score across years before divorce. Specifically, higher levels of marital conflict were also associated with lower levels of mother-child closeness and support and young adult children filial self-efficacy when martial conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce.

The second set of models in which divorce (as a dichotomous variable) was the sole predictor also fit the data adequately ($\chi^2(24) = 121.93$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .094 for mother-child relationships; $\chi^2(24) = 95.73$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .081 for father-child relationships; $\chi^2(8) = 11.18$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .030 for filial self-efficacy; $\chi^2(63) = 153.64$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .068 for romantic relationships; and $\chi^2(23) = 50.50$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .062 for relationship self-efficacy). The results of this set of models revealed that divorce was associated with lower levels of father-child closeness-support and conflict-control and with lower quality and higher insecurity in young adult children's romantic relationships, but not with the other outcomes.

The further analyses in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables revealed that divorce before child's age 5 was associated with lower levels of father-child closeness-support and conflict-control and associated with lower quality and higher insecurity in young adult children's romantic relationships; divorce at child's age 6 to 10 was associated with lower levels of mother-child and father-child closeness and support and with lower levels of father-child conflict and control; and divorce at child's age 11 to 17 was associated with lower levels of father-child closeness and support and with lower quality and higher insecurity in young adult children's romantic relationships.

The results of the third set of SEM analyses in which parental divorce (measured as a dichotomous variable) and parental marital conflict simultaneously predicted adult children's relationships outcomes revealed that in general, parental divorce and marital conflict were significantly correlated with each other in all models (β = .131 to .224, $p <$ .001). For mother-child relationship outcomes, the model fit was considered acceptable (χ^2 (48) = 193.54, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .081) and explained 2.3% of the variance in mother-child closeness and support and 1.7% of the variance in mother-child conflict and control. Notably, however, marital conflict was only related to mother-child closeness and support when marital conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce. For father-child relationship outcomes, the model fit was considered good (χ^2 (48) = 153.16, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .070) and explained 27% of the variance in father-child closeness and support and 6.2% of the variances in father-child conflict and control. Parental divorce accounted for a large amount of variance in father-child closeness and support. In addition, parental divorce was also related to less father-child conflict and control. Marital conflict, on the other hand, was associated with less father-child

closeness and support, but not with father-child conflict and control. For young adult children's filial self-efficacy outcome, the model fitted fairly well (χ^2 (24) = 63.71, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .060), but only a small percentage of the variance was explained (SMC = .03). Similar to mother-child relationship outcomes, marital conflict was only related to child filial self-efficacy when marital conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce.

For young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes, the model fits were also considered good (χ^2 (105) = 216.86, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .058 for relationship quality outcomes; χ^2 (54) = 93.12, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .048 for relationship self-efficacy outcomes). The models explained 18.8% of the variance in relationship quality, 13.3% of the variance in relationship insecurity, and 10.9% of the variance in relationship self-efficacy. Divorce was associated with lower quality and higher insecurity of young adult children's romantic relationships. Marital conflict, in contrast, was related neither to relationship quality and insecurity nor to young adult children's relationship self-efficacy.

The further analyses in which parental divorce, measured as three dummy variables, and parental marital conflict simultaneously predicted adult children's relationships outcomes revealed that in general, parental marital conflict was significantly correlated with parental divorce before child's age of 5 in all models (β = .289 to .319, p < .001). For mother-child relationship outcomes, the model fit was considered acceptable (χ^2/df = 3.64, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .08) and explained 3.7% of the variance in mother-child closeness and support and 1.8% of the variance in mother-child conflict and control. Parental divorce at child's age 6 to 10 was related to less mother-child closeness and support. In addition, marital conflict was only related to mother-child closeness and

support when it was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce. For father-child relationship outcomes, the model fitted the data fairly well ($\chi^2/df = 3.0$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .07) and explained 29.6% of the variance in father-child closeness and support and 6.5% of the variance in father-child conflict and control. All three dummy variables of parental divorce were significantly associated with father-child closeness and support. Counter to expectations, both parental divorce before child's age 5 and divorce at child's age 6 to 10 were also associated with less father-child conflict and control. Parents' marital conflict, however, was only related to father-child closeness and support when it was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce. For young adult children's filial self-efficacy outcome, the model fit was considered good ($\chi^2/df = 2.73$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .06), but only a small percentage of the variance was explained (SMC = .033). None of the dummy variables of parental divorce was significantly associated with young adult children's filial self-efficacy. Parents' marital conflict, however, was only related to adult children's filial self-efficacy when it was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce.

For young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes, the model fits were also considered acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 2.14$, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .06 for relationship quality outcomes; $\chi^2/df = 1.66$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05 for relationship self-efficacy outcomes). The models explained 19.7% of the variance in relationship quality, 13.1% of the variance in relationship insecurity, and 12.6% of the variance in relationship self-efficacy. Both divorce before child's age 5 and divorce at child's age 11 to 17 were associated with lower quality of young adult children's romantic relationships. Divorce before child's age 5 and divorce at child's age 11 to 17 were associated with higher

insecurity of young adult children's romantic relationships when marital conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce. In addition, divorce at child's age 11 to 17 was also associated with lower levels of relationship self-efficacy for young adult children when marital conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce.

In general, these results suggested that divorce had more implications than marital conflict for young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes, whereas marital conflict had more implications than divorce for young adult children's filial self-efficacy. With regard to parent-child relationships, however, parents' marital conflict and divorce had independent estimated effects. For father-child relationships, results suggested that divorce was not only associated with less closeness and support between fathers and children but also with less conflict and control between fathers and children. Although parents' marital conflict was not associated with young adults' romantic relationship quality, insecurity, or relationship self-efficacy, there were still possibilities that parents' marital conflict might be associated with these relationship outcomes for the young adults from non-divorced families, but not associated with these relationship outcomes for these from divorced families. In other words, there might be still potential moderation effects of divorce in the links between marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis in this study predicted that the relationship between marital conflict and adult children's relationship qualities with mothers and romantic partners would be moderated by divorce. For children from non-divorced families, marital conflict was anticipated to be negatively associated with their relationship

outcomes. Conversely, for children from divorced families, divorce was anticipated to attenuate the relationship between marital conflict and children's relationship outcomes. In other words, for children from divorced families, parental marital conflict would not correlate to their subsequent relationship qualities. To test whether the hypothesized models in which marital conflict predicted children's relationship outcomes fit the data equally across divorced and non-divorced groups (controlling for SES, ethnicity, and children's relationship status variables), a stacked SEM procedure was used where a model constraining measurement and structural models to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups was compared with a model where the factor loadings and structural paths were allowed to vary. The results of model comparison were shown in Table 6. In general, the fits of the models in which measurement and structural paths were constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups were significantly worse than the fits of the models in which these paths were unconstrained. This result suggested that the hypothesized models did not fit the data equally well across parents' marital status groups.

For mother-child relationship outcomes, the unconstrained models did fit the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.77$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .064). The models are presented in Figure 2. As predicted, higher levels of marital conflict were related to more mother-child conflict and control but only for the non-divorced group and not for the divorced group, yet marital conflict was not related to mother-child closeness and support for either group. Subsequent examination of the structural paths parameter by parameter revealed that the path from marital conflict to mother-child closeness and support was not significantly different for young adults from divorced and non-divorced families. However, the path

Table 6

Multi-Group Nested Model Comparison by Divorce Status (dichotomous): Marital Conflict Predicting Relationship Outcomes

Dependent Variables	Mother-Child Relationship	Father-Child Relationship	Filial Self-Efficacy	Romantic Relationship	Relationship Self-Efficacy
Nested Models	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
Measurement weights	63.47*** (6)	62.49*** (6)	53.64*** (4)	49.79*** (6)	46.91*** (3)
Measurement intercepts	77.70*** (15)	91.52*** (15)	66.32*** (10)	78.30*** (16)	55.98*** (9)
Structural weights	105.57*** (23)	163.60*** (23)	88.03*** (15)	119.62*** (34)	76.21*** (19)
Structural means	187.43*** (25)	240.09*** (25)	172.89*** (17)	193.91*** (41)	150.78*** (26)
Structural covariances	331.98*** (28)	378.37*** (28)	316.06*** (20)	308.00*** (69)	266.43*** (54)

***p<.001

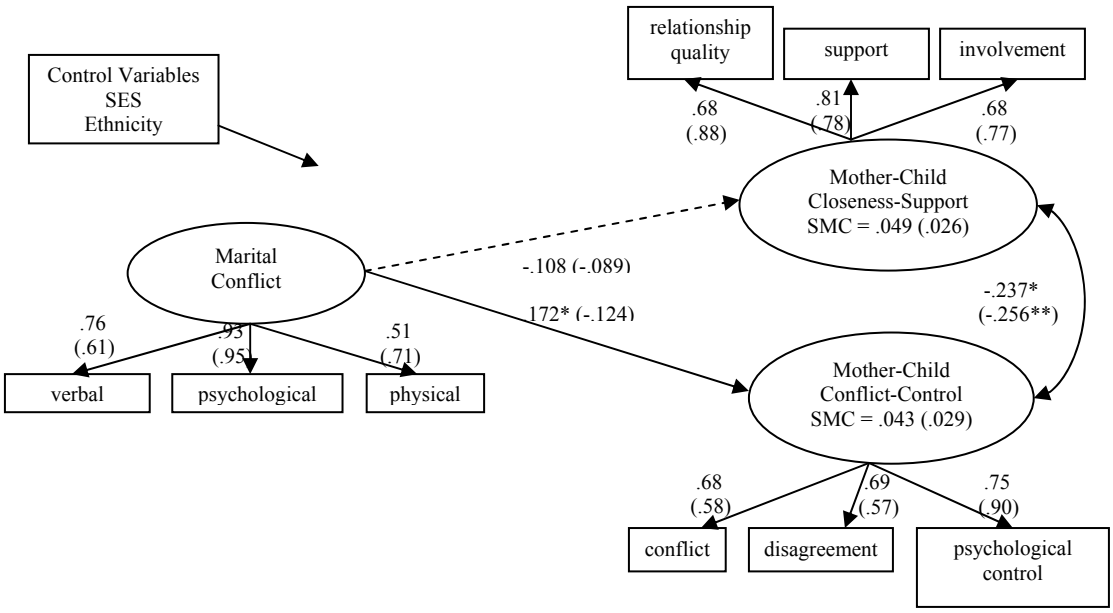

Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients of the multi-group structural equation model: Marital conflict predicting mother-child relationships (N = 220 for non-divorced group, 218 for divorced group). Numbers in parentheses refer to coefficients for divorced group. Fit indices of unconstraint model: χ^2 (72) = 199.83, p < .001, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .064. Model accounted for 4.9% of the variance in mother-child closeness-support and 4.3% of the variance in mother-child conflict-control for non-divorced group; model accounted for 2.6% of the variance in mother-child closeness-support and 2.9% of the variance in mother-child conflict-control for divorced group. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and mother-child closeness-support was constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .045, p = ns. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and mother-child conflict-control was constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 5.89, p = .015.

from marital conflict to mother-child conflict and control was significantly different for non-divorced and divorced groups. The hypothesis was partially supported. The moderation effect of divorce was found in the links between parents' marital conflict and conflict-control in mother-child relationships, but not in the links between marital conflict and closeness-support in mother-child relationships.

For father-child relationship outcomes, the unconstrained models fit the data fairly well ($\chi^2/df = 2.31$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .055). The models are presented in Figure 3. Marital conflict was not related to either father-child closeness and support or father-child conflict and control when conducting these analyses separately by each of the groups. Subsequent examination of the structural paths parameter by parameter revealed that the path from marital conflict to father-child closeness and support, and the path from marital conflict to father-child conflict and control were not significantly different for young adults from divorced and non-divorced families. In sum, divorce did not moderate the links of parents' marital conflict with closeness-support and conflict-control in father-child relationships.

For adult child filial self-efficacy outcomes, the unconstrained models provided excellent fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 1.74$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .041). The models are presented in Figure 4. Marital conflict was not related to adult child filial self-efficacy when conducting these analyses separately by each of the groups. Subsequent examination of the structural paths parameter by parameter also revealed that the path from marital conflict to filial self-efficacy was not significantly different for young adults from divorced and non-divorced families. Therefore, the results indicated that divorce did not moderate the links between parents' marital conflict and children's filial self-efficacy.

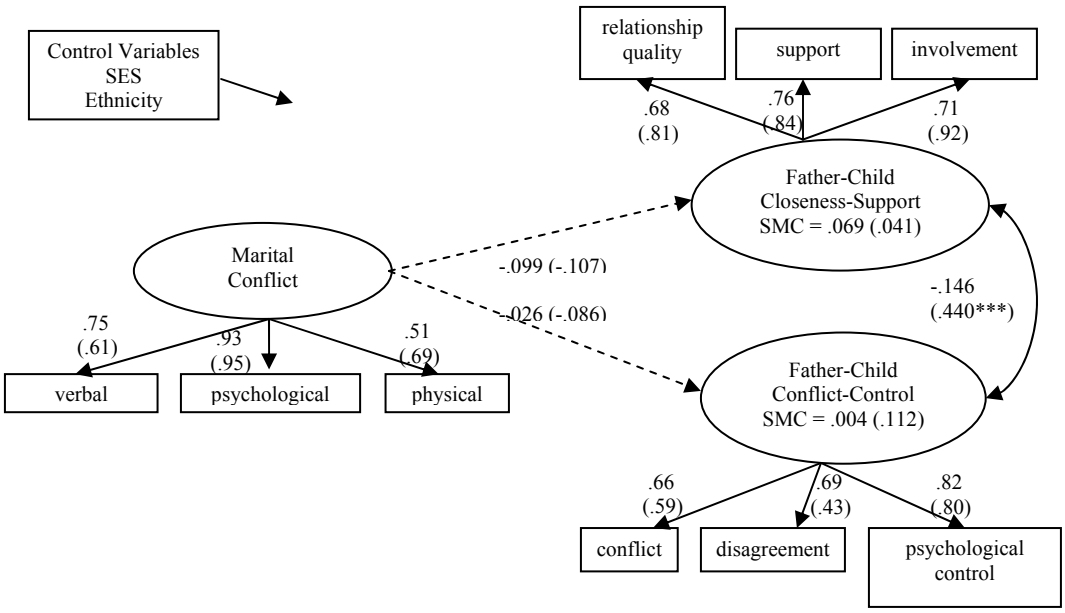

Figure 3. Standardized path coefficients of the multi-group structural equation model: Marital conflict predicting father-child relationships (N = 219 for non-divorced group, 213 for divorced group). Numbers in parentheses refer to coefficients for divorced group. Fit indices of unconstraint model: χ^2 (72) = 166.27, p < .001, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .055. Model accounted for 6.9% of the variance in father-child closeness-support and 0.4% of the variance in father-child conflict-control for non-divorced group; model accounted for 4.1% of the variance in father-child closeness-support and 11.2% of the variance in father-child conflict-control for divorced group. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and father-child closeness-support was constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .078, p = ns. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and father-child conflict-control was constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .052, p = ns.

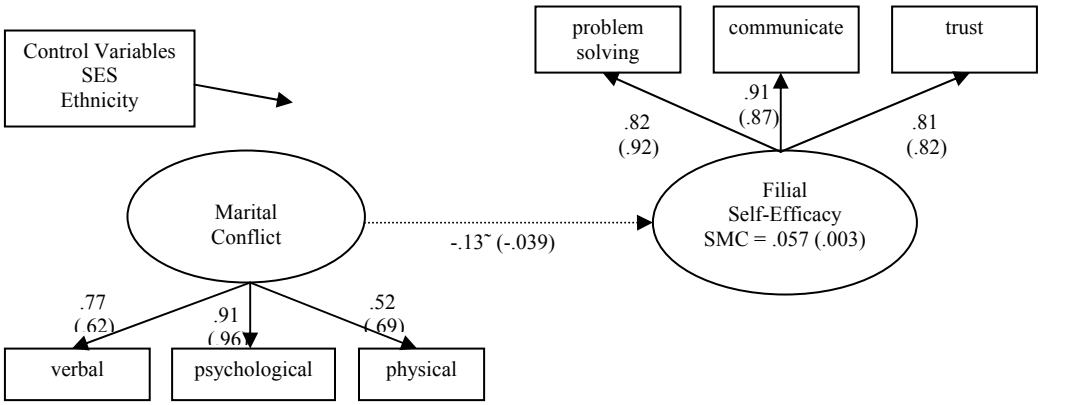

Figure 4. Standardized path coefficients of the multi-group structural equation model: Marital conflict predicting filial self-efficacy (N = 219 for non-divorced group, 218 for divorced group). Numbers in parentheses refer to coefficients for divorced group. Fit indices of unconstraint model: χ^2 (32) = 55.66, p = .006, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .041. Model accounted for 5.7% of the variance in filial self-efficacy for non-divorced group and 0.3% of the variance for divorced group. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and filial self-efficacy was constrained to be equal across divorced and non-divorced groups: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.153, p = ns.

For romantic relationship quality outcomes, the unconstrained model fit the data well on two of the three fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 1.65$, RMSEA = .047). However, the model fit indices of CFI (.89) suggested that the models might be a poor fit to the data. The models are presented in Figure 5. When analyses were conducted separately for each group, marital conflict was not associated with either relationship quality or relationship insecurity in young adult child romantic relationships. The autocorrelations accounted for a large amount of the variance in relationship quality and insecurity, instead. Further examination of the structural paths parameter by parameter revealed that the path from marital conflict to relationship quality and the path from marital conflict to relationship insecurity were not significantly different for young adults from divorced and non-divorced families. Taken together, the results provided no support for the hypothesis. Moderation effect of divorce was not found in the links between parents' marital conflict and adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity.

For romantic relationship self-efficacy outcome, the model fits of the unconstrained models were fairly well ($\chi^2/df = 1.44$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .039). The models are presented in Figure 6. Marital conflict was not related to young adult child romantic relationship self-efficacy when conducting these analyses separately by each of the groups. Subsequent examination of the structural paths parameter by parameter also revealed that the path from marital conflict to relationship self-efficacy was not significantly different for young adults from divorced and non-divorced families. The hypothesis was not supported. The moderation effect of divorce was not found in the links between marital conflict and adult children's relationship self-efficacy.

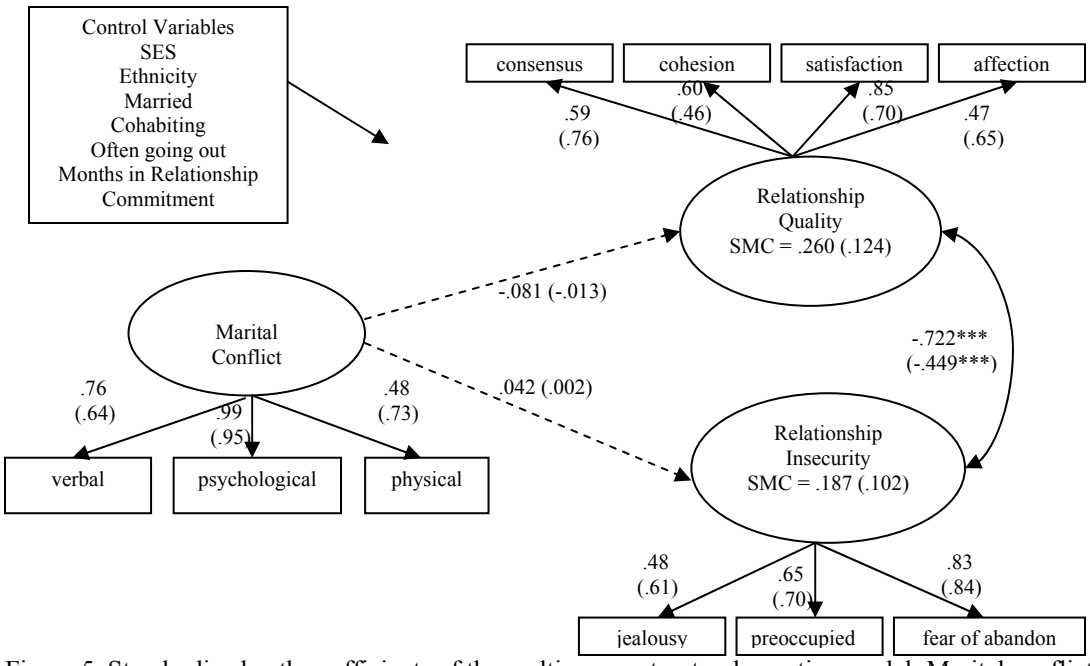

Figure 5. Standardized path coefficients of the multi-group structural equation model: Marital conflict predicting romantic relationship quality (N = 141 for non-divorced group, 158 for divorced group). Numbers in parentheses refer to coefficients for divorced group. Fit indices of unconstraint model: χ^2 (173) = 285.54, $p < .001$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .047. Model accounted for 26% of the variance in relationship quality and 18.7% of the variance in relationship insecurity for non-divorced group; model accounted for 12.4% of the variance in relationship quality and 10.2% of the variance in relationship insecurity for divorced group. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and relationship quality was constrained: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .426, p = ns. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and relationship insecurity was constrained s: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .103, p = ns.

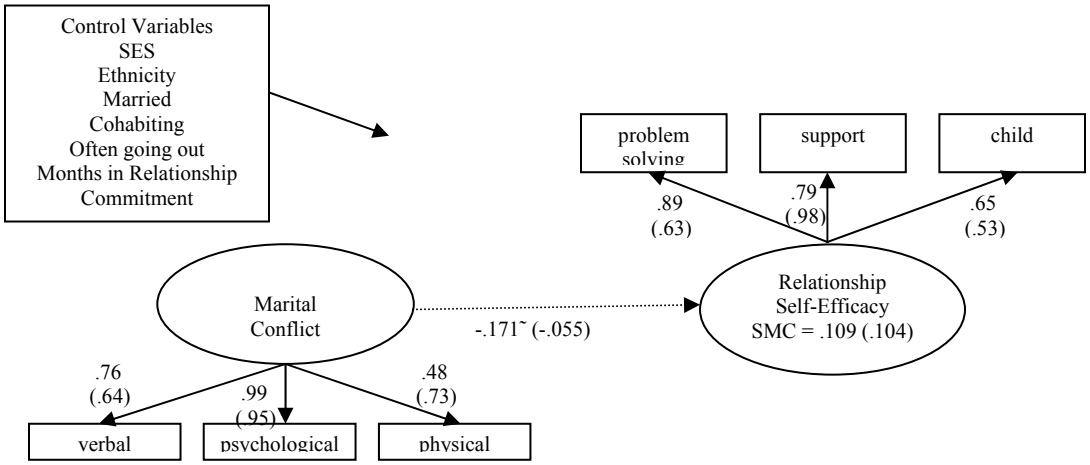

Figure 6. Standardized path coefficients of the multi-group structural equation model: Marital conflict predicting relationship self-efficacy (N = 141 for non-divorced group, 158 for divorced group). Numbers in parentheses refer to coefficients for divorced group. Fit indices of unconstraint model: χ^2 (83) = 119.72, p = .005, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .039. Model accounted for 10.9% of the variance in relationship self-efficacy for non-divorced group and 10.4% of the variance for divorced group. Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path between marital conflict and relationship self-efficacy was constrained: $\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.611, p = ns.

In sum, the moderation effect of divorce was found only in the link between marital conflict and mother-child conflict and control. The hypothesis regarding divorce moderation therefore was only partially supported. Specifically, for young adults from non-divorced families, higher levels of marital conflict were associated with higher levels of conflict and control in mother-child relationships. For participants from divorced families, marital conflict had no relations with these relationship outcomes. However, the moderation effects of divorce were not found in father-child relationships, in adult children's filial and relationship self-efficacy, or in adult children's romantic relationships. A similar pattern of associations was found when marital conflict was measured as the score closest the time of divorce.

Research Question 2.1

The second research question in this study was whether or not the effects of marital conflict and divorce on adult children's relationships with their parents and romantic partners differed by gender of adult children. To test whether the hypothesized models in which marital conflict and divorce predicted children's relationship outcomes fitted the data equally for both males and females (controlling for SES, ethnicity, parental remarriage, and children's relationship status variables), a stacked SEM procedures was used where a model constraining measurement and structural models to be equal for both gender groups was compared with a model where the factor loadings and structural paths were allowed to vary. The results of model comparison were shown in Table 7.1 (divorce as a dichotomous variable) and Table 7.2 (divorce as three dummy variables). For parent-child relationship outcomes, the fits of the models in which measurement and structural paths were constrained to be equal across gender groups were significantly worse than

Table 7.1

Multi-Group Nested Model Comparison by Gender: Divorce (dichotomous) and Marital Conflict Predicting Relationship Outcomes

Dependent Variables	Mother-Child Relationship	Father-Child Relationship	Filial Self-Efficacy	Romantic Relationship	Relationship Self-Efficacy
Nested Models	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
Measurement weights	17.39*** (5)	15.59** (5)	7.90˜ (4)	5.82 (5)	5.72 (4)
Measurement intercepts	81.67*** (14)	44.40*** (14)	38.58*** (10)	13.17 (15)	8.72 (10)
Structural weights	105.77*** (30)	60.87*** (30)	45.03** (21)	35.10 (39)	32.25 (26)
Structural means	111.02*** (34)	65.80*** (34)	50.13** (25)	57.71 (49)	53.96* (35)
Structural covariances	124.18*** (40)	76.47*** (40)	62.49** (31)	118.65** (84)	109.41** (71)

˜p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 7.2

Multi-Group Nested Model Comparison by Gender: Divorce (dummies) and Marital Conflict Predicting Relationship Outcomes

Dependent Variables	Mother-Child Relationship	Father-Child Relationship	Filial Self-Efficacy	Romantic Relationship	Relationship Self-Efficacy
Nested Models	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
Measurement weights	18.08*** (5)	16.18** (5)	9.36˜ (4)	11.75 (7)	8.51˜ (4)
Measurement intercepts	82.04*** (14)	44.63*** (14)	39.76*** (10)	18.43 (17)	14.41 (10)
Structural weights	126.47*** (40)	83.81*** (40)	65.64*** (29)	65.95 (52)	50.28 (34)
Structural means	132.35*** (46)	89.13*** (46)	71.23*** (35)	86.81* (63)	72.16** (45)
Structural covariances	145.52*** (52)	99.80*** (52)	83.60*** (41)	143.69** (99)	127.55** (81)

˜p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

the fits of the models in which these paths were free to be estimated and this result suggested that the hypothesized models did not fit the data equally well across gender groups. For young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes, however, the difference in the chi- squares between the fits of the constrained models and the fits of the unconstrained models was not significant. This result suggested that the hypothesized models did fit the data equally across gender groups.

For mother-child relationship outcomes, the fits of the unconstrained model were considered acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 2.74$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .062 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable; $\chi^2/df = 2.51$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .058 for the model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables). The standardized parameter estimations show in Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 (the first column). Marital conflict was related to less mother-daughter closeness and support. The follow-up analyses in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables revealed that divorce before child's age 5 was associated with less mother-son closeness and support and also with more mother-son conflict and control. The subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter revealed, however, that neither the paths from divorce to mother-child close-support and to mother-child conflict-control, nor the paths from marital conflict to mother-child close-support and to mother-child conflict-control were significantly different for males and females.

For father-child relationship outcomes, the unconstrained models fit data fairly well ($\chi^2/df = 2.27$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .053 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable; $\chi^2/df = 2.18$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .051 for the model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables). The standardized

Table 8.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dichotomous), and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Males vs. Females

Models	Mother-Child Relationships[2]		Father-Child Relationships[3]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	N = 225	*N* = 233	*N* = 221	*N* = 230
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.72	.63	.72	.62
Psychological	.91	.99	.91	.99
Physical	.67	.68	.66	.66
Close-Support				
Relationship quality	.87	.83	.77	.90
Received support	.69	.80	.87	.83
Positive involvement	.58	.83	.86	.88
Conflict-Control				
Conflict	.75	.56	.67	.74
Disagreement	.62	.59	.58	.61
Psychological control	.79	.84	.86	.71
Structural Path				
Conflict – Close-Support	-.017	-.161*	.009	-.20**
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .986, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.304, *p* = .069	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.085	.095	.031	-.107
Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.869, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .714, *p* = ns	
Divorce – Close-Support	-.171˜	.005	-.465***	-.489***
Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.414, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .533, *p* = ns	
Divorce – Conflict-Control	.143	.027	-.217*	-.103
Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .512, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .955, *p* = ns	
SMC[5]				
Close-Support	.026	.058	.305	.273
Conflict-Control	.039	.021	.099	.040

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For mother-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (97) = 265.43, *p* < .001, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .062. [3]For father-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (97) = 220.05, *p* < .001, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .053. [4]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across males and females. [5]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model. ˜*p* < .1, **p* < .05, ** *p*< .01, ****p* < .001

Table 8.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dummies), and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Males vs. Females

	Mother-Child Relationships[2]		Father-Child Relationships[3]	
Models	Males *N* = 225	Females *N* = 233	Males *N* = 221	Females *N* = 230
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.73	.63	.73	.62
Psychological	.92	.99	.92	.99
Physical	.70	.68	.69	.66
Close-Support				
Relationship quality	.85	.83	.77	.90
Received support	.69	.80	.88	.83
Positive involvement	.59	.83	.87	.87
Conflict-Control				
Conflict	.75	.55	.66	.74
Disagreement	.62	.58	.57	.61
Psychological control	.79	.85	.87	.72
Structural Path				
Conflict – Close-Support	.015	-.169*	.10	-.192**
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.461, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 6.075, *p* = .014	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.149	.099	.011	-.097
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.929, *p* = .087		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .317, *p* = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Close-Support	-.234*	.06	-.637***	-.498***
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.403, *p* = .065		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .414, *p* = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Close-Support	-.14	-.135	-.271***	-.326***
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .00, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .566, *p* = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Close-Support	-.027	.023	-.177**	-.246***
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .186, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .718, *p* = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Conflict-Control	.25*	.014	-.174	-.113
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.909, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .352, *p* = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Conflict-Control	.052	.004	-.161˜	-.103
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .108, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .386, *p* = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Conflict-Control	.059	.033	-.111	-.024
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .037, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .743, *p* = ns	
SMC[5]				
Close-Support	.037	.082	.365	.288
Conflict-Control	.054	.022	.098	.043

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For mother-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (121) = 304.06, *p* < .001, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .058. [3]For father-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (121) = 263.52, *p* < .001, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .051. [4]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across males and females. [5]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
˜*p* < .1, **p* < .05, ** *p*< .01, ****p* < .001

parameter estimations show in Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 (the second column). Marital conflict was related to less father-daughter closeness and support. Divorce, on the other hand, was associated with less father-child closeness and support for both males and females. In addition, divorce was also associated with less father-son conflict and control. The follow-up analyses in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables revealed that all three dummies were associated with less father-child closeness and support for both males and females. The subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter revealed, however, only the path from marital conflict to father-child closeness and support was significantly different for males and females.

For young adult children's filial self-efficacy outcome, the fits of the measurement weights model were not significantly worse than the fits of unconstrained model. This result implied that the two gender groups did not differ significantly in their underlying factor structure, but the two groups did differ significantly in their structural paths. The fit indices of measurement weights model were considered good ($\chi^2/df = 2.32$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .054 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable; $\chi^2/df = 2.29$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .053 for model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables). The standardized parameter estimations show in Table 9.1 and Table 9.2 (the first column). However, neither marital conflict nor divorce was significantly associated with adult children's filial self-efficacy for both males and females. The subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter also revealed that the paths from marital conflict to self-efficacy and from divorce to self-efficacy were not significantly different for males and females.

Table 9.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dichotomous), and Young Adult Children's Self-Efficacy: Males vs. Females

	Filial Self-Efficacy[2]		Relationship Self-Efficacy[3]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Models	*N* = 225	*N* = 232	*N* = 139	*N* = 175
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.65	.67	.65	.71
Psychological	.98	.99	.99	.99
Physical	.58	.71	.61	.70
Self-Efficacy				
Problem solving	.89	.86	.74	.74
Communication/Support	.89	.88	.89	.89
Trust/Child	.83	.81	.42	.54
Structural Path				
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.114	-.073	-.070	-.081
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .323, *p* = ns			
Divorce – Self-Efficacy	.057	-.086	-.315˜	-.327˜
Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.128, *p* = ns			
SMC[5]				
Self-Efficacy	.041	.032	.095	.133

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For filial self-efficacy outcome, fit indices of measurement weights model: χ^2 (52) = 120.61, $p < .001$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .054. [3]For relationship self-efficacy outcomes, fit indices of structural weights model: χ^2 (134) = 188.43, $p = .001$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .036. [4]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across males and females. [5]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
˜$p < .10$

Table 9.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dummies), and Young Adult Children's Self-Efficacy: Males vs. Females

	Filial Self-Efficacy[2]		Relationship Self-Efficacy[3]	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Models	*N* = 225	*N* = 232	*N* = 139	*N* = 175
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.66	.67	.66	.72
Psychological	.98	.97	.98	.99
Physical	.60	.71	.62	.71
Self-Efficacy				
Problem solving	.90	.86	.73	.73
Communication/Support	.89	.88	.91	.89
Trust/Child	.83	.81	.42	.53
Structural Path				
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.065	-.08	-.079	-.094
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .000, *p* = ns			
Divorce before 5 – Self-Efficacy	-.077	-.041	-.158	-.185
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .088, *p* = ns			
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Self-Efficacy	.064	-.139	-.130	-.139
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.255, *p* = ns			
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Self-Efficacy	.101	-.047	-.199*	-.272*
Model Comparison[4]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.922, *p* = ns			
SMC[5]				
Self-Efficacy	.061	.039	.104	.156

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For filial self-efficacy outcome, fit indices of measurement weights model: χ^2 (68) = 155.63, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .053. [3]For relationship self-efficacy outcomes, fit indices of structural intercepts model: χ^2 (181) = 267.72, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .039. [4]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across males and females. [5]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
*$p < .05$.

For young adult children's romantic relationship outcomes, the fits of the constrained models were not significantly worse than the fits of unconstrained models, suggesting that the two gender groups did not differ significantly either in their underlying factor structure or in their structural paths. For young adult children's relationship self-efficacy outcome, the structural weights models had excellent fit statistics ($\chi^2/df = 1.41$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .036 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable; $\chi^2/df = 1.48$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .039 for model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables). The standardized parameter estimations show in Table 9.1 and Table 9.2 (the second column). Marital conflict was not associated with children's relationship self-efficacy for both males and females. Divorce at child's age 11 to 17, however, was associated with lower relationship self-efficacy for both males and females. For young adult children's romantic relationship quality outcomes, the structural means model fit the data well on two of the three fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 1.68$, RMSEA = .047 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable; $\chi^2/df = 1.70$, RMSEA = .047 for model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables). However, the model fit indices of CFI (.85 for the model in which divorce was measured as a dichotomous variable and .84 for model in which divorce was measured as three dummy variables) suggested that models might be a poor fit to the data. The standardized parameter estimations show in Table 10.1 and Table 10.2. However, for both males and females, neither marital conflict nor divorce was significantly associated with young adult children's romantic relationship quality or insecurity.

Table 10.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dichotomous), and Young Adult Children's Romantic Relationships: Males vs. Females

	Romantic Relationships[2]	
	Males	Females
Models	*N* = 139	*N* = 175
Factor Loadings[1]		
Marital Conflict		
Verbal	.66	.71
Psychological	.99	.99
Physical	.61	.69
Relationship Quality		
Consensus	.61	.66
Cohesion	.56	.56
Satisfaction	.84	.82
Affection	.55	.51
Relationship Insecurity		
Intimate jealousy	.53	.56
Preoccupied attachment	.65	.68
Fear of abandonment	.82	.86
Structural Path		
Conflict – Relationship Quality	-.064	-.069
Conflict – Relationship Insecurity	.036	.032
Divorce – Relationship Quality	-.054	-.054
Divorce – Relationship Insecurity	.052	.042
SMC[3]		
Relationship Quality	.158	.224
Relationship Insecurity	.154	.109

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For romantic relationship outcome, fit indices of structural means model: χ^2 (265) = 448.00, $p < .001$, CFI = .85, RMSEA = .047. [3]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.

Table 10.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce (dummies), and Young Adult Children's Romantic Relationships: Males vs. Females

	Romantic Relationships[2]	
	Males	Females
Models	*N* = 139	*N* = 175
Factor Loadings[1]		
Marital Conflict		
Verbal	.67	.72
Psychological	.97	.99
Physical	.63	.70
Relationship Quality		
Consensus	.62	.67
Cohesion	.55	.57
Satisfaction	.83	.82
Affection	.56	.52
Relationship Insecurity		
Intimate jealousy	.52	.56
Preoccupied attachment	.64	.68
Fear of abandonment	.83	.87
Structural Path		
Conflict – Relationship Quality	-.041	-.044
Conflict – Relationship Insecurity	.036	.031
Divorce before 5 – Relationship Quality	.036	.037
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Relationship Quality	.164	.167
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Relationship Quality	.016	.020
Divorce before 5 – Relationship Insecurity	-.022	-.019
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Relationship Insecurity	-.149	-.124
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Relationship Insecurity	-.037	-.038
SMC[3]		
Relationship Quality	.179	.241
Relationship Insecurity	.181	.124

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For romantic relationship outcome, fit indices of structural weights model: χ^2 (312) = 531.63, $p < .001$, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .047. [3]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.

In sum, marital conflict was associated with lower levels of closeness and support in father-daughter relationships but not in father-son relationships. No other gender differences were found in the associations between parental divorce and marital conflict and mother-adult child relationships, young adult children's filial and relationship self-efficacy, and young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity.

Research Question 2.2

The last objective of this study was to explore the gender differences in the effects of interaction between marital conflict and divorce on young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partner. To examine the extent to which the hypothesized models in which marital conflict predicted children's relationship outcomes fit the data equally across gender and parents' marital status groups after controlling for SES, ethnicity, and children's relationship status variables, a series of four-group (non-divorced males, divorced males, non-divorced females, and divorced females) SEM analyses was conducted. The models constraining both measurement and structural paths to be equal across four groups were compared with the models in which the factor loadings and structural paths were allowed to vary. The results of model comparison are pictured in Table 11. In general, the fits of the models in which measurement and structural paths were constrained to be equal across gender and divorced groups were significantly worse than the fits of the models in which these paths were free to be estimated, suggesting that the hypothesized models did not fit the data equally well across gender and divorced groups.

For mother-child relationship outcomes, the unconstrained model did fit the data well ($\chi^2/df = 1.87$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .045). The standardized estimations of

Table 11

Multi-Group Nested Model Comparison by Gender and Divorce Status (dichotomous): Marital Conflict Predicting Relationship Outcomes

Dependent Variables	Mother-Child Relationship	Father-Child Relationship	Filial Self-Efficacy	Romantic Relationship	Relationship Self-Efficacy
Nested Models	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (Δdf)
Measurement weights	92.30*** (16)	94.33*** (16)	64.39*** (10)	81.01*** (18)	85.19*** (6)
Measurement intercepts	188.10*** (43)	172.37*** (43)	112.21*** (28)	132.31*** (48)	104.90*** (18)
Structural weights	244.16*** (67)	267.77*** (67)	142.52*** (43)	199.66*** (102)	146.94*** (48)
Structural means	327.05*** (73)	345.38*** (73)	228.94*** (49)	301.96*** (123)	249.55*** (69)
Structural covariances	476.15*** (82)	488.19*** (82)	376.86*** (58)	482.64*** (207)	431.13*** (153)

***p<.001

parameters show in Table 12. Marital conflict was related to less mother-daughter closeness and support and more mother-daughter conflict and control in non-divorced families. Marital conflict was not associated with either mother-child closeness and support or mother-child conflict and control for the other three groups. Subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter revealed, however, that only the path from marital conflict to mother-daughter conflict and control was significantly different for divorced and non-divorced groups. It should be noted that the other significant findings in the moderator analyses all had *p*-values lower than .015. The *p*-value for this particular finding – of parental marital status differences in mother- daughter conflict-control – was significant only at a .05 level. Because of the number of analyses (five model comparisons based on five different outcomes) conducted in the present study, there was increased possibility for potential type I error. Greater caution should be exercised in the interpretation of this particular significant finding.

For father-child relationship outcomes, the unconstrained model also fitted the data well ($\chi^2/df = 1.68$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .040). The standardized estimations of parameters show in Table 13. Marital conflict was associated with less father-daughter closeness and support in divorced families. Marital conflict was not associated with either father-child closeness and support or with father-child conflict and control for the other three groups. Subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter revealed, however, that neither the path from marital conflict to father-daughter or father-son closeness and support nor the path from marital conflict to father-daughter or father-son conflict and control was significantly different for divorced and non-divorced groups.

Table 12

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Mothers: Non-Divorced Males vs. Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Females

	Mother-Child Relationships[2]			
	Non-Divorced Males *N* = 115	Divorced Males *N* = 98	Non-Divorced Females *N* = 105	Divorced Females *N* = 120
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.87	.66	.70	.57
Psychological	.82	.85	.99	.99
Physical	.48	.77	.54	.72
Close-Support				
Relationship quality	.74	.93	.73	.90
Received support	.77	.65	.76	.81
Positive involvement	.63	.57	.78	.85
Conflict-Control				
Conflict	.77	.72	.58	.50
Disagreement	.82	.59	.58	.57
Psychological control	.68	.86	.86	.87
Structural Path				
Conflict – Close-Support	-.004	-.041	-.229*	-.104
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .028, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .602, *p* = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.113	-.215	.265*	-.061
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.00, *p* = .083		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.32, *p* = .038	
SMC[4]				
Conflict – Close-Support	.019	.036	.177	.026
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.067	.045	.067	.028

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For mother-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (146) = 272.72, *p* < .001, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .045. [3]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across the two groups. [4]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
*$p < .05$

Table 13

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Fathers: Non-Divorced Males vs. Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Females

	Father-Child Relationships[2]			
	Non-Divorced Males $N = 114$	Divorced Males $N = 96$	Non-Divorced Females $N = 105$	Divorced Females $N = 117$
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.90	.68	.70	.55
Psychological	.79	.87	.99	.99
Physical	.48	.73	.54	.69
Close-Support				
Relationship quality	.65	.71	.74	.94
Received support	.75	.88	.75	.81
Positive involvement	.69	.94	.77	.89
Conflict-Control				
Conflict	.71	.46	.63	.85
Disagreement	.64	.44	.75	.51
Psychological control	.78	.96	.85	.56
Structural Path				
Conflict – Close-Support	-.045	.078	-.15	-.236*
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .478, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .719, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.104	.099	-.104	-.117
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .080, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .182, p = ns	
SMC[4]				
Conflict – Close-Support	.028	.209	.147	.060
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.047	.190	.036	.054

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For father-child relationship outcomes, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (146) = 245.38, $p < .001$, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .040. [3]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across the two groups. [4]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
*$p < .05$

For adult children's filial self-efficacy outcomes, the unconstrained model fit the data quite well ($\chi^2/df = 1.63$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .038). The standardized estimations of parameters show in Table 14. Marital conflict was not associated adult children's filial self-efficacy when conducting these analyses separately by each of the groups, however. Subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter also revealed no significant differences on the path from marital conflict to males' or females' filial self-efficacy for divorced and non-divorced groups.

For adult children's romantic relationship quality outcomes, the unconstrained model fit the data well on two of the three fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 1.46$, RMSEA = .039). However, the model fit indices of CFI (.84) suggested that models might be a poor fit to the data. The standardized estimations of parameters are provided in Table 15. Only for the non-divorced males group, marital conflict was associated with lower adult children's romantic relationship quality. Marital conflict was not associated with either adult children's romantic relationship quality or insecurity for the other three groups. Subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter revealed, however, that neither the path from marital conflict to males' and females' romantic relationship quality nor the path from marital conflict to males' and females' romantic relationship insecurity was significantly different for divorced and non-divorced groups.

Finally, for adult children's romantic relationship self-efficacy outcomes, the model fits of the unconstrained model were considered good ($\chi^2/df = 1.32$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .033). Because the small proportion of participants in non-divorced males group (n = 9) and non-divorced females group (n = 11) reported on the subscale of dealing with child issues in the relationship self-efficacy scale, the simplex model was

Table 14

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Filial Self-Efficacy: Non-Divorced Males vs. Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Females

	Filial Self-Efficacy[2]			
	Non-Divorced Males *N* = 114	Divorced Males *N* = 99	Non-Divorced Females *N* = 105	Divorced Females *N* = 119
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.89	.67	.70	.57
Psychological	.80	.87	.99	.99
Physical	.47	.73	.54	.71
Self-Efficacy				
Problem solving	.87	.92	.77	.94
Communication	.93	.89	.87	.86
Trust	.82	.82	.79	.82
Structural Path				
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.16	-.084	-.166	.021
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .678, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.674, *p* = ns	
SMC[4]				
Filial Self-Efficacy	.046	.033	.115	.007

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For filial self-efficacy outcome, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (66) = 107.44, *p* = .001, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .038. [3]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across the two groups. [4]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.

Table 15

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Romantic Relationships: Non-Divorced Males vs. Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Females

	Romantic Relationships[2]			
	Non-Divorced Males *N* = 69	Divorced Males *N* = 62	Non-Divorced Females *N* = 72	Divorced Females *N* = 96
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.85	.64	.76	.65
Psychological	.93	.85	.99	.99
Physical	.44	.79	.51	.72
Relationship Quality				
Consensus	.57	.99	.50	.76
Cohesion	.34	.43	.81	.34
Satisfaction	.90	.51	.89	.70
Affection	.67	.49	.21	.70
Relationship Insecurity				
Intimate jealousy	.49	.65	.44	.60
Preoccupied attachment	.66	.77	.58	.68
Fear of abandonment	.77	.72	.96	.86
Structural Path				
Conflict – Relationship Quality	-.243*	-.122	-.080	.102
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.207, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .770, *p* = ns	
Conflict – Relationship Insecurity	.129	.013	-.055	.043
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .302, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .299, *p* = ns	
SMC[4]				
Relationship Quality	.465	.192	.194	.239
Relationship Insecurity	.224	.122	.146	.129

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]Fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (347) = 505.48, $p < .001$, CFI = .84, RMSEA = .039. [3]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across the two groups. [4]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model; the autocorrelations accounted for a large amount of variance in relationship quality for non-divorced males group (-.61).
*$p < .05$

estimated in which the composite variable of relationship self-efficacy served as a single indicator of the latent variable and the reliability of this scale was used to estimate the error variance. The standardized estimations of parameters appear in Table 16. Marital conflict was not associated with adult children's relationship self-efficacy when conducting these analyses separately by each of the groups, however. Further, subsequent examination of the paths parameter by parameter also revealed no significant differences on the path from marital conflict to males' or females' relationship self-efficacy for divorced and non-divorced groups.

In sum, parental divorce was found to moderate the links between marital conflict and mother-child conflict and control but only for females, not for males. Specifically, for females from non-divorced families, higher levels of marital conflict were associated with higher levels of conflict and control in mother-daughter relationships. For those females from divorced families, however, marital conflict had no linkage with these relationship outcomes. A similar pattern of associations between marital conflict and mother-child conflict and control was found when conflict was measured as the score closest to the time of divorce.

Table 16

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Romantic Relationship Self-Efficacy: Non-Divorced Males vs. Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Females

	Relationship Self-Efficacy[2]			
	Non-Divorced Males *N* = 69	Divorced Males *N* = 62	Non-Divorced Females *N* = 72	Divorced Females *N* = 96
Factor Loadings[1]				
Marital Conflict				
Verbal	.91	.64	.51	.72
Psychological	.87	.83	.99	.99
Physical	.37	.80	.76	.64
Self-Efficacy				
Self-Efficacy	.93	.92	.96	.94
Structural Path				
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.207	-.011	-.235˜	.057
Model Comparison[3]	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.157, *p* = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.339, *p* = .068	
SMC[4]				
Relationship Self-Efficacy	.190	.134	.169	.181

Notes. [1]All factor loadings are significant. [2]For relationship self-efficacy outcome, fit indices of unconstrained model: χ^2 (86) = 113.28, *p* = .026, CFI = .93 RMSEA = .033. [3]Model comparison between unconstrained model and the model in which the structural path was constrained to be equal across the two groups. [4]SMC, percentage of the variance in latent outcome variables accounted by the model.
˜*p* < .10

5. DISCUSSION

The primary research goals of this study were two-fold. First, the present study sought to examine whether parental marital conflict and divorce independently, redundantly, or interactively predicted young adult children's relationship qualities with parents and romantic partners. The core hypothesis of this study was that parental divorce would attenuate the links between parents' marital conflict and adult children's relationships with mothers and romantic partners. Second, the present study sought to investigate the role of child gender in the interplay of parents' marital conflict and divorce in adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Results of the present study lead to several conclusions.

First, growing up in the families in which parents had chronic conflict in their marital relationships appears to increase the risk of children's interpersonal relationships in adulthood, including less closeness and less support from mothers and fathers, as well as children's beliefs in their capabilities to manage their relationships with parents. Second, divorce, like parents' marital conflict, is associated with multiple problematic outcomes for young adult offspring's interpersonal relationships, including less closeness and less support from mothers and fathers. In addition, young adult children of divorced parents experienced lower quality and higher insecurity in their romantic relationships. Moreover, young adults whose parents divorced were more likely to report feeling less conflict and less control from their fathers. This result, however, might reflect the fact of

diminished contact and increased detachment between adult children and their non-custodial fathers after parental divorce. Third, additional analyses revealed few gender differences in the estimated effects of parents' marital conflict and divorce on young adult children's interpersonal relationships, although one finding suggested that marital conflict was more likely to be associated with father-daughter relationships than with father-son relationships. Finally, divorce moderated the link between marital conflict and conflict and control in mother-adult child relationships. Notably the estimated effects of marital conflict were more detrimental in the families in which parents remain married than in the families in which parents divorced later. Additional analyses revealed that this moderation effect of divorce was found only for female young adults but not for males. Each of these sets of findings will be discussed, and then followed by a discussion of implications and limitations of the present study and future research directions.

Are There Associations between Parental Marital Conflict and Divorce and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners?

The first focus of the present study was to replicate and re-examine the links of parents' marital conflict and divorce with young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Results of correlation analyses indicate that parental divorce was associated with lower levels of mother-child and father-child closeness and support and also with lower levels of young adult children's filial self-efficacy. Additionally, parental divorce was found to be associated with lower quality of and higher insecurity in young adult children's romantic relationships and with lower levels of young adult children's relationship self-efficacy. These results are consistent with the past research findings that indicate a link between experience of parental divorce and

children's later relationships with parents (Amato & & Booth, 1991, 1996, 1997; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Aquilino, 1994; Cooney, 1994; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993) and romantic partners (Franklin, Janoff-Bulman, & Roberts, 1990; Hetherington, 2003; Johnson & Thomas, 1996; Ross & Mirowsky, 1999). Parental marital conflict was found to be associated with low levels of mother-child and father-child closeness and support. Further associations were found between parental marital conflict and lower levels of young adult children's filial self-efficacy, especially for psychological aggression and physical aggression in parental marital relationships. These results also are consistent with previous research that found a link between exposure to chronic interparental conflict and a range of negative parent-child relationship attributes in later life (Amato & Afifi, 2006; Amato & Booth, 1997, 2001; Booth & Amato, 1994; Riggio, 2004). The findings of the present study also support the developmental perspective that proposes the person's experiences in the family of origin have long-lasting consequences for the interpersonal functioning of young adults (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, & Cogner, 2005).

One of the findings counter to expectations is that parental divorce and marital conflict were found to be associated with less conflict and control in father-adult child relationships. This finding is not unique for the present study, however. One recent study by Walper and Beckh (2006) also found that adolescents from divorced families reported less nurturance seeking but also reported less fear of love-withdrawal in relation to their fathers than those from intact families. It should be noted that, in the present study, closeness-support and conflict-control in mother-child relationships were negatively associated with each other. For father-child relationships, however, closeness-support and

conflict-control were positively associated with each other. The solidarity and conflict in the parent-adult child relationships have mostly been studied separately and the underlying assumption is that these two constructs are each others' opposites on one continuum, ranging from high solidarity and low conflict to low solidarity and high conflict (Gaalen & Dykstra, 2006). This assumption, however, ignores the common fact that there is still a high probability of coexistence of harmony and conflict in parent-adult child relationships. It is possible that the closeness-support and conflict-control in parent-adult child relationships could be conceptualized and measured as separate, although related, dimensions. Especially, father-adult child relationships with higher levels of closeness and support may not be simply characterized by the absence of conflict and control. Furthermore, factors that lead to decease of closeness and support in father-child relationships may not be the simple inverse of the factors that lead to increase of conflict and control. It also should be noted that, in the present study, the effect sizes of parental divorce and marital conflict for father-child closeness and support were substantially larger than the effect size for father-child conflict and control. Considered in the context that young adults were living with high conflictual parents or living with divorced single-mothers, children's reports of less conflict and control from fathers may not indicate a particular positive, secure relationship but are more likely to reflect reduced contact and increased detachment between young adult children and their fathers.

The present study also found no associations between parents' marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity. These results contradicts the findings from other previous studies (Hayashi & Strickland, 1998; Kirk, 2002; Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997) that found young adults who experienced high

parents' marital conflict were more likely to report less happiness and intimacy and more feelings of jealousy and fears of abandonment in their own romantic relationships. This difference, however, is likely due to the measurement of the marital conflict and the outcomes considered. Much of the evidence for the links between parents' marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationships was found when marital conflict was measured as the young adult children's retrospective reports of conflict in their parents' marital relationship during childhood (e.g., Hayashi & Strickland, 1998; Kirk, 2002; Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997). Most of the findings from longitudinal studies in which parental marital conflict was measured as prospective reports from parents suggest associations between parents' marital conflict and young adult children's adjustment in their own marital relationships (e.g., Amato & Booth, 2001; Caspi & Elder, 1988; Doucet & Aseltine, 2003). Some researchers (Burn & Dunlop, 2002; Hetherington & Elmore, 2003) also argue that children's own perceptions of their parents' marital relationships may have more influence on children's later adjustment than does the parents' perception of their marital relationships.

Does Parental Marital Conflict and Divorce Have an Additive or Overlapping Effect on Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners?

Another focus of the present study was to examine the possible additive and overlapping effects of parents' marital conflict and divorce on young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. The previous research has indicated that both divorce and low parental marital quality had independent effects on later parent-adult child relationships (Booth & Amato, 1994, 2001). These findings suggested that parental divorce might be problematic for parent-child relationships beyond the negative

effects of interparental conflict. Furthermore, it also appears that both divorce and marital conflict affect adult children's relationships with fathers more strongly than with mothers (Amato & Booth, 1991; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Fine, Moreland, & Schwebel, 1983; Orbuch, Thornton, & Cancio, 2000; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

Consistent with the previous research (Booth & Amato, 1994, 2001), results of the present study indicate that parents' marital conflict and divorce both have unique effects on mother-child and father-child relationships. For mother-child relationships, only parental divorce during middle childhood had the unique effects on mother-child closeness and support beyond the influence of parental marital conflict. For father-child relationships, however, parents' marital conflict and divorce had independent estimated effects on father-child closeness and support. Furthermore, the minor decline in the divorce coefficient between the model in which divorce served as a sole predictor and the model in which divorce and marital conflict simultaneously predicted parent-child relationship outcomes suggested that the total estimated effect of divorce was not due to the conflict that preceded divorce. In other words, these results suggested that divorce had a unique effect on mother-child and father-child closeness and support above and beyond effects of the parents' marital conflict. These associations were stronger for father-child relationships than for mother-child relationships. Divorce usually makes it difficult for non-custodial parents (90% of them are fathers; Amato, 2001) to maintain close ties with their children (Lamb, 1999). Further, the stressful circumstances following divorce may disrupt the quality of interactions between custodial parents and their children, which in turn, may affect the quality of the relationships between parents and children in young adulthood (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992).

Regarding the young adult children's beliefs about their capabilities to manage their relationships with parents, the results of the present study suggested that parents' marital conflict had a unique effect but divorce did not. This finding supports the social learning theory that assumes children learn coping skills in their own interpersonal relationships by modeling parents' interaction within their marital relationships (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Conflictual parents may provide children with models of angry, hostile, and aggressive behaviors and may fail to provide models of warmth, caring, and productive problem solving (Margolin, Oliver, & Medina, 2001). Therefore, children with chronically conflicted parents may be less likely to learn the skills that can facilitate successful interpersonal relationships in later adulthood (Amato, 1996).

Previous research evidence also suggested that being raised either in a high-conflict two-parent family or in a divorced family appeared to be a risk factor for young adult children's romantic relationships (e.g., Amato, 1996; Amato & Deboer, 2001; Hetherington, 2003). Other researchers also proposed that parents' marital conflict might have more influence on adult children's later romantic relationships beyond divorce itself (e.g., Amato, 2000; Hayashi & Strickland, 1998; Segrin, Taylor, & Altman, 2005; Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997). The findings from their studies suggested that it is not divorce per se, but the dysfunctional family conflict that accompanying or preceding divorce, that had more negative consequences for young adult children's later romantic relationships. Results of the present study, however, indicate that divorce, not parents' marital conflict, had a unique effect on the young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity. Furthermore, neither marital conflict nor divorce was found to have a significant effect on young adult children's relationship self-efficacy. Caution

should be exercised in drawing conclusions from the unexpected non-significant relations between marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationships found in the present study. As mentioned in the previous section, this different result may due to the measurement of the marital conflict and the outcomes considered. Much of the evidence for the links between parents' marital conflict and young adult children's romantic relationships was found when marital conflict was measured as the young adult children's retrospective reports of conflict in their parents' marital relationship during childhood (e.g., Hayashi & Strickland, 1998; Kirk, 2002; Westervelt & Vandenberg, 1997). Most of the findings from longitudinal studies in which parental marital conflict was measured as prospective reports from parents pertain to associations between parents' marital conflict and young adult children's adjustment in their own marital relationships (e.g., Amato & Booth, 2001; Caspi & Elder, 1988; Doucet & Aseltine, 2003). It is possible that children's own perception of parents' marital conflict matters rather than their parents' perception of these matters (Burn & Dunlop, 2002; Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). Furthermore, not all types of parental conflict have equal influence on child adjustment. Conflict that directly involves the child, or conflict in which the child feels caught in the middle may have more adverse consequence for the adjustment of children than conflict to which children are not directly exposed (Amato & Afifi, 2006; Buchanan, Maccoby, & Dornbusch, 1991, 1996).

Are There Gender Differences in the Links of Parents' Marital Conflict and Divorce with Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners?

The third focus of the present study was to examine the possible gender differences in the links of parents' marital conflict and divorce with young adult

children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. A few previous studies had examined this issue and the findings generally suggested that the effects of parental divorce on young adults' romantic relationships was stronger among females than males (e.g., Aro & Palosaari, 1992; Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson, & Fryer, 1999; Huurre, Junkkari, & Aro, 2006; McCabe, 1997). On the other hand, the evidence of gender variations in the effects of parents' marital conflict is inconsistent. Some studies reported greater influences for males than females (e.g., Doucet & Aseltine, 2003; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004); others have found that the influence of marital conflict was especially stronger for females than males (e.g., Herzong & Cooney, 2002; Levy, Wamboldt, & Fiese, 1997). A few studies also suggest that the effects of parents' marital conflict and divorce on parent-child relations differed depending on gender of the parent and child. The general pattern most often suggested in this research is that the main effect of divorce and marital conflict may be stronger for the opposite-sex parent-adult child relations (mother-son and father-daughter) than for the same-sex parent-child relations (mother-daughter and father-son) (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1996; Aquilino, 1994; Booth & Amato, 1994; Conney, 1994; Myers, 2005).

Results of the present study indicate that parents' marital conflict was associated with lower levels of closeness and support in father-daughter relationships but not in father-son relationships. This finding is consistent with research showing that the opposite-sex parent-adult child relations were more vulnerable to parents' marital conflict than the same-sex parent-child relations. Research has shown that parents are more involved with and spend more time with the children of their own gender (Lamb, 1981). Further, research evidence also shows that the socialization patterns were different

between boys and girls. Girls are more likely to be taught to emphasize relationship-oriented goals, whereas boys are more likely to be taught to emphasize individual-focused goals (Kinsforgel & Grych, 2004). And girls, compared to boys, also have been found to be more directly involved in parental interaction by assuming a mediating role in parental conflict (Vuchinich, Emery, & Cassidy, 1988). Thus following, girls who witness parental conflict may be more sensitive to the potential harm of conflict and may be more likely to form a coalition with mothers against the fathers (Booth & Amato, 1994).

No other gender differences were found in the associations between parental divorce and marital conflict and mother-adult child relationships, young adult children's filial self-efficacy, children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity, and children's relationship self-efficacy. However, this finding corresponds with other recent longitudinal studies (Amato, 2001, 2006; Hetherington, 2006; Roger, Power, & Hope, 1997; Walper & Beckh, 2006) that also found that in general, most of the long-term consequences of parents' marital conflict and divorce appeared to be similar for sons and daughters.

Does Divorce Moderate the Links of Marital Conflict with Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners?

The central goal of the present study was to investigate whether divorce moderates the links of marital conflict with young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Few prospective longitudinal studies have examined this issue. And most of the previous studies that have examined the interaction of parents' marital conflict and divorce have focused on offspring's psychological well-being. Even

less research has considered interpersonal relationship qualities as outcomes. In fact, only one study, by Booth and Amato (2001), has focused on the effects of interaction between parents' marital conflict and divorce on adaptation in multiple relational domains of early adulthood. In their study, parental divorce and marital conflict were found to interactively predict young adult children's psychological well-being, friend support, and intimate relations, but not parent-adult child relations. Decomposing the interaction effect revealed that at the typical level of marital conflict that existed prior to divorce, marital divorce was associated negatively with offspring's psychological well-being, friend support, and quality of intimate relations. In contrast, when conflict was relatively high, marital dissolution was associated positively with these offspring's outcomes. For parent-adult child relations, however, parental divorce and marital conflict were found to have independent effects not interactive effects. However, mother-child and father-child relations were not separately examined in Booth and Amato's (2001) study.

Results of the present study indicate that divorce moderated the links of parents' marital conflict with conflict and control in mother-child relationships. Specifically, for young adults living with non-divorced parents, higher levels of marital conflict were associated with higher levels of conflict and control in mother-child relationships. For those living with divorced parents, however, marital conflict was found to have no relations with these relationship outcomes. These findings support the Stress Relief Hypothesis (Wheaton, 1990) that contends that parental divorce, even as a stressful life event, may actually have beneficial effects on children if divorce presents escape from the more stressful environment of a high-conflict family. Although it often is assumed that most divorces are preceded by a prolonged period of marital conflict, this pattern

does not occur for most people (Amato, 2006; Hetherington, 2003). Furthermore, not all high-conflict marriages end in divorce. For young adults whose parents had overt and chronic conflict in a marriage that remained intact, parents' marital conflict was found to be associated with young adult children's feeling of less close and support and more conflict and control with their parents. Conversely, for young adult children from divorced families, divorce attenuated the relationship between marital conflict and mother-adult child conflict and control. In other words, for these young adults, parents' earlier marital conflict was not associated with subsequent conflict and control experienced with their mothers. In this sense, divorce among high-conflict parents appears to have a protective effect for young adult children's relationships with mothers.

It should be noted that the findings of the present study contradict results reported by Booth and Amato (2001) in which conflict and divorce were found to have additive, not interactive, effects on adult children's relationships with parents. However, in their study, the mother-child and father-child relationships were not separately examined. And further, the measures of young adults' interpersonal relationships in Booth and Amato's (2001) study assessed only the positive aspects of closeness, affect, happiness, and interaction. Other negative aspects of conflict, disagreement, and control in young adults' relationships and the competencies in these relationships have not been examined. The present study extends the Booth and Amato's (2001) research by examining the effect of interaction between marital conflict and divorce not only on mother-child and father-child closeness and support during young adulthood but also on mother-child and father-child conflict and control. Results of the present study indicate that when high-conflict parents divorced, young adult children no longer reported more conflict and control from

their mothers. No previous study has found this moderation effect of divorce on the links between marital conflict and mother-child conflict and control.

The moderation effect of divorce, however, was not found in father-child relationships, in young adult children's beliefs in capability to manage their relationships with parents and romantic partners, nor in young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity. Instead, for father-child relationships and young adult children's romantic relationships, the estimated effects of parental divorce were substantially stronger than the estimated effects of marital conflict. It is possible that divorce is more likely to have negative effects on father-child relationships because divorce disrupts the relationships between children and non-custodial parents who are usually the biological fathers. The findings from previous research (Amato & Booth, 1996; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Osborne & Funcham, 1996; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997; Zill, Morrison, & Coiro, 1993) also suggested that the relationship between children and the non-custodial fathers were particularly likely to suffer after divorce. Regarding young adult children's romantic relationship quality and insecurity, it is possible that children who experienced parental divorce are more likely to develop an insecure attachment style (Barber, 1998; Sprecher, Cate, & Levin, 1998). Parental divorce may also symbolize for children that romantic relationships are not always secure and provide children with a template for their own romantic relationships (Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998).

It also should be noted that the factor loadings of parents' marital conflict were found to be different across divorced and non-divorced groups. Verbal aggression consistently showed higher loading for non-divorced group than for divorced group, yet

physical aggression consistently showed higher loading for divorced group than for non-divorced group. This result suggests that physically violent, threatening, or abusive marital conflict is more likely to lead to divorce and is more influential in child adjustment following divorce than is mild and non-violent conflict. This result also supports the assumption that when divorce is associated with a move from a violent or abusive family situation to a more harmonious, less stressful family situation, children in divorced families may actually experience divorce as a stress relief event, and demonstrate better adjustment following divorce than those whose high-conflictual parents remain married.

Are There Gender Differences in the Moderation Effect of Divorce on the Links between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners?

A final goal of the present study was to explore the gender differences in the effects of interaction between marital conflict and divorce on young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. No previous study has examined this issue. Results of the present study indicate that parental divorce moderated the links of marital conflict with conflict and control in mother-child relationships. But this moderation effect was found only for females and not for males. Specifically, for females from non-divorced families, higher levels of marital conflict were associated with higher levels of conflict and control in mother – daughter relationships. For those females from divorced families, however, marital conflict was found to have no relations with this relationship outcome. This finding is consistent with research showing that divorced mothers and girls in divorced single-mother families are more likely to demonstrate

positive outcomes following divorce than the fathers and boys in divorced families (Acock & Demo, 1994; Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington & Elmore, 2003; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002; Riessman, 1990). This finding also supports the assumption that when mothers were moved from dysfunctional, conflict-ridden marriages by divorce, they are more likely to develop a positive (in this case, not a closer, but a less conflictual and less controlling) relationship with their adult daughters. However, it also should be noted that this particular finding was significant only at a *p*-value of .05. Given the number of analyses conducted in the present study and the increased possibility of potential type I error, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from this finding.

Child's Age at Time of Divorce

As noted earlier, child's age at the time of divorce is another key factor to consider when examining the impact of parental divorce and marital conflict on children's subsequent adjustment and well-being (Hetherington & Elmore, 2003). However, there are inconsistent results in studies of long-term effects of parental marital conflict and divorce based on child's age. Several longitudinal studies suggested that there were few effects for age at the time of divorce on the adjustment of children (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Hetherington, 2003).

To examine the effects of child's age at the time of divorce, in the present study, parental divorce was also coded as three time-varying dummy variables that evaluates if and when parents divorce (coded as divorce before age 5, at age 6 to 10, and at age 11 to 17, with non-divorce as the reference category). Results of the present study revealed that divorce during middle childhood was associated with less closeness and support in

mother-adult child relationships, whereas divorce during early childhood and during adolescence were associated with lower quality and higher insecurity in adult children's romantic relationships. It is not clear why divorce during the particular developmental period has influence for some domains of outcomes in young adults' relationships but not the other domains. A possible explanation is that effect of the children's age at the time of divorce was confounded with the effect of the timing since divorce. Conceptually, divorce may have stronger effects on younger children's adjustment than on older children, because younger children may be less cognitively equipped to accurately understand the circumstances surrounding their parents' marital disruption (Davies & Cummings, 1994). On the other hand, divorce may have stronger effects on children's adjustment at older ages than at younger ages because more recent experiences are likely to have greater impact in relation to young adult children's outcomes (Belsky, Jaffee, Hsieh, & Silva, 2001). The findings of the present study do not lead to a simple conclusion that parental divorce may be more or less difficult for child adjustment at particular ages. It is also possible that divorce affects children's adjustment in different ways and in different domains during the different developmental stages. One limitation of the present study is that the sample participants are only from two cohorts with one-year-age difference. Future longitudinal research with large sample size from multiple cohorts of the participant on different development stages may be able to distinguish the effects of child's age at time of divorce from the effects of timing since divorce on child adjustment. Another limitation of the present study is that children's adjustment in terms of their interpersonal relationships with parents and romantic partners was measured at

one point in time. Future research needs to include trajectories of family change and child adjustment rather than focusing on the status of the family at one point in time.

Divorce was also found to be associated with less closeness and support in father-child relationships no matter when it occurred. However, the magnitudes of the associations of father-child closeness-support with divorce during the child's younger age were stronger than with divorce during child's older age. Perhaps when divorce occurred during the preschool years, it was difficult for fathers and children to form close relationships because of the physical separation early in children's lives. But when divorce occurred during adolescent, children and fathers may have spent more time living together and may already have established close emotional bonds before divorce (Amato, 2006).

Implications for Policy and Practices

Findings from the present study provide some useful information for both policy-makers and prevention and intervention programs. Responding to the findings about effects of parental marital transitions on child well-being, there is increasing concern by policymakers and the public about the negative effects of single parenthood on children (Parke, 2003). The promotion of healthy marriages and an increase in barriers to divorce are now on the policy agenda. Since the mid-1990s, state and community leaders have instituted a range of legal, cultural, educational, and economic strategies to promote marriage, reduce the frequency of divorce, and encourage the continued involvement of both parents (Ooms, Bouchet, & Parke, 2004). However, the findings of the present study, in line with the other recent research (Amato, 2006; Booth & Amato, 2001), suggest that there is no "one size fits all" divorce policy (Clarke-Stewart, 2006). On the

one hand, divorce may increase the probability of negative outcomes for most children, especially for father-child relationships and adult child romantic relationships. On the other hand, divorce may also be a better choice for both parents and children if parents are in an intractable high-conflict marriage. Divorce, in these cases, may mitigate some of the negative influence of marital conflict for mother-child relationships because it removes children from high-conflictual or abusive family situation. In general, these results suggest that it is family process rather than family structure that is critical for children's well-being. The policies that constrain or encourage people to remain in hostile, conflictual, violent marriages may harm rather than help children.

The findings of the present study also inform the design of nuanced strategies for preventing and intervening with high conflict or divorced families so as to promote children's positive interpersonal relationships. First, as suggested by the other researchers (Amato, 2006; Hetherington, 2006), results of the present study also indicated that support should be provided for prevention programs that target to strengthen young couples' competencies to cooperate and communicate before conflict and incompatibilities escalate to violence. Second, parents whose marriages are marked by mutual disengagement rather than dysfunctional discord may choose to strengthen their relationships through counseling or therapy if they wish to minimize the risks to their children. Third, divorce education programs have become broadly available in the United States (Geasler & Blaisure, 1998). The current emphasis in the content of these programs is on promoting co-parenting relationships between two parents after divorce. However, the results of the present study introduce the potential for a different area of focus in these divorce education programs, which is to assist parents in focusing on the parent-child

relationship as least as much as focus on the co-parenting relationships. Finally, the results of the present study also suggest that families and parent-child relationships still play a significant role as developmental contexts in adolescence and young adulthood. Most intervention programs, however, address families with young children (Layzer, Goodson, Bernstein, & Price, 2001). The findings of the present study suggest that even in young adulthood, children who experienced family adversity may still struggle with their own interpersonal relationships. Support should also be given to intervention programs designed to help adolescents and young adults to build or maintain positive, reliable interpersonal relationships.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations to the present study warrant discussion. First, one of the underlining assumptions of the present study is that divorce, in some of the cases, may become a protective factor for child adjustment if dissolution of the marriage reduces the risk for children to expose to more overt marital conflict between parents. The limitation of the present study is that conflict between parents was measured as pre-divorce marital conflict. The present study cannot examine whether or not there are changes (or decreases) in levels of conflict between parents before and after divorce. Future studies need to use data on parental conflict measured consistently at multiple points in time before and after divorce to examine this assumption.

Second, although the findings of the present study, in line with the other previous research (Booth & Amato, 2001), suggest that children from high-conflict and violent marriages may derive the most benefit from their parents' divorces as a result of no longer enduring the conditions that are associated with significant adjustment problems in

children, there is still a need in future research to discover and describe the processes of family influence underlying these individual differences (Kelly & Emery, 2003). One important aspect in family processes is the quality of parenting. The quality of parenting provided by custodial parents has been suggested as one of the best predictors of children's well-being after divorce (Kelly & Emery, 2003). Parenting during the early period following divorce is often characterized by increased irritability and coercion, as well as decreased communication, affection, consistency, control, and supervision (Hetherington, 1993; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Simons & Associates, 1996). Still however, the parenting of custodial parents was found to improve after the first year following divorce (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 2002). Other researchers also found that divorced women on the average are less depressed, show less state anxiety, and have fewer health problems than those in unhappy, acrimonious, or emotionally disengaged marriages (Hetherington, 1993). These changes in stress and psychological well-being may also be reflected in improvements in parent-child relationships and parenting behaviors after a high-conflict marriage divorced. However, most studies of parenting in divorced families are cross-sectional research and generally compared parenting among different family structures. Few studies have examined changes in parenting quality across time and directly compared parenting between non-divorced families and divorced families with a consideration of conflict level in both contexts. Future studies need to compare the changes in parenting in high-conflict divorced families and low-conflict divorced families, and to examine whether the changes in parenting may explain the better adjustment of children in high-conflict but later divorced families from those in low-conflict divorced families and those in high-conflict non-divorced families.

Third, in the present study, less is known about the continuing changes brought about by parental remarriage and the effects on children and their later relationships because parents' remarriages status is only treated as a control variable. Although the impact of remarriage on children's development (i.e. under age 18) has been examined (for review see Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000), comparatively little is known about the effects of parental remarriage on adult children's later relationships and the individual factors related to adult children's relational functioning. One recent study (Yu & Adler-Baeder, 2007) has found that young adult children's perceptions about their parental remarriage quality had more influence on adult children's current relational dimensions than the quality of their parents' first marriage, suggesting that for adult children's romantic relationships, a parental remarriage might provide the more current model of marital interactions. Given the fact that the vast majority of adults who divorce remarry (Kreider & Fields, 2002), future research is necessary to explore the potential moderation influence of parents' remarriage and the family processes within stepfamilies in the links between divorce and child adjustment.

Fourth, although the sample of the present study is diverse in terms of child sex and ethnicity, the sample is still predominantly middle class. Further, the overall sample size is substantial, but the sub-samples in each group when analyses were conducted on four-group comparison (non-divorce males, divorce males, non-divorce females, and divorce females) are relatively small. It will be necessary for future researchers to extend samples to a broader range of sub-populations including families of color and low-income families. With a larger, more diverse sample, researchers may be able to examine

the extent to which the effects of parents' marital relationship on child adjustment vary across different social classes or different cultures.

Finally, multi-method studies are needed to examine the effects of parental divorce and marital conflict on child adjustment. In the present study, marital conflict was measured by parents' prospective reports, and young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners were measured by children's self-reports. Information from a single informant may just reflect that individual informant's perception of family dynamics. Obviously, a longitudinal study using both parents' and children's reports and the use of observational measures of behaviors would provide the rigor necessary to document specific processes of intergenerational transmission of aspects of relationship quality. Combining data from multiple informants and methods, and combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches will provide deeper understanding about why and how particular experiences, such as parents' marital conflict and divorce, are risky or protective, and why and how there is a large range of individual variations in child adjustment.

Conclusion and Contribution

The primary contribution of the present study is that it builds on and extends the previous research of Booth and Amato (2001) to examine whether parents' marital conflict and divorce independently, redundantly, or interactively predicted young adult children's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Moreover, this study includes the role of child's gender as a factor in the interplay of parents' marital relationship in adult children's own interpersonal relationships. Both growing up with parents who had chronic conflict in their marital relationships and experience of parental divorce were

associated with multiple problematic outcomes for young adult offspring's relationships with parents and romantic partners. Divorce was also found to moderate the links between marital conflict and conflict and control in mother-adult child relationships. And this moderation effect of divorce was found only for females but not for males. The findings of the present study support the developmental perspective that assumes that the experiences in the family of origin have long-lasting consequences for individual's interpersonal functioning in adulthood (Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000). Furthermore, the findings that divorce moderated the links between parents' marital conflict and mother-daughter conflict and control also support the Stress Relief Hypothesis (Wheaton, 1990) and add new information to the research of links between interaction of marital conflict and divorce and adult children's adjustment (e.g., Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Booth & Amato, 2001; Hanson, 1999; Jekielek, 1998; Morrison & Coiro, 1999; Strohschein, 2005). Results of the present study replicate and extend the findings of the previous research of Booth and Amato (2001). On the one hand, results of the present study generally support the assumption that parental divorce may ameliorate some of the negative effects of marital conflict on children's adjustment by removing children from dysfunctional, conflict-ridden families (in this case, these children may develop a less conflictual and less controlling relationship with their mothers). On the other hand, divorce still appears to be associated with less closeness and support between fathers and adult children and with lower quality and higher insecurity in children's romantic relationships even beyond the effects of marital conflict. In this sense, divorce may be seen as a mixed blessing even in high-conflict families.

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APPENDICES

A. Additional Tables

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Mother-Child Relationship Variables by Maternal Status

Maternal Status / Variables	Biological Mothers (n = 429)	Adoptive or Step Mothers (n = 18)	Others (n = 6)	F
Relationship quality	7.86[1] (1.85)	6.00[2] (3.24)	6.50 (3.62)	8.75***
Received support	3.43[1] (.98)	2.50[2] (1.04)	2.55[2] (1.17)	9.91***
Positive involvement	3.68[1] (.87)	2.82[2] (1.23)	2.75[2] (.99)	10.68***
Conflict	1.17 (.89)	2.11[1] (1.02)	1.00[2] (.00)	3.74*
Disagreement	1.64 (2.04)	2.53 (2.37)	1.50 (3.67)	1.53
Psychological control	2.03[1] (.92)	2.53[2] (1.16)	1.39[1] (.33)	3.90*
Filial Self-Efficacy	5.11 (1.03)	4.66 (.99)	4.83 (.88)	1.88

*p < .05, ***p < .001

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Father-Child Relationship Variables by Paternal Status

Paternal Status / Variables	Biological Fathers (n = 363-372)	Adoptive or Step Fathers (n = 39-43)	Others (n = 10-15)	F
Relationship quality	6.98[1] (2.67)	6.38[1] (3.06)	2.73[2] (3.90)	17.58***
Received support	3.02[1] (1.11)	2.49[2] (1.14)	1.62[3] (1.06)	14.22***
Positive involvement	3.15[1] (1.04)	2.76[2] (1.22)	1.57[3] (1.02)	16.73***
Conflict	1.45 (.75)	1.46 (.74)	1.13 (.35)	1.33
Disagreement	.94 (1.56)	1.10 (1.46)	1.00 (2.83)	.20
Psychological control	1.75 (.83)	1.82 (.73)	1.40 (.87)	1.35
Filial Self-Efficacy	5.12 (1.01)	4.94 (1.13)	5.20 (.83)	.66

***p < .001

Table 3

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict, Divorce, and Young Adult Children's Relationship Outcomes (biological parents)

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	N = 429		*N* = 372	
Predictors	Close-support	Conflict-control	Close-support	Conflict-control
Sole				
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.17*)	.06 (.08)	-.19** (-.20**)	-.06 (-.03)
SMC	.019 (.034)	.018 (.021)	.137 (.143)	.036 (.034)
Divorce	-.06	.12	-.51***	-.14˜
SMC	.010	.023	.255	.044
Simultaneous				
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.16*)	.05 (.08)	-.11˜ (-.14*)	-.04 (-.02)
Divorce	-.04 (-.04)	.11 (.11)	-.48*** (-.48***)	-.12 (-.13˜)
SMC	.025 (.035)	.076 (.028)	.266 (.273)	.045 (.044)
Sole				
Divorce before 5	-.08	.13˜	-.52***	-.13˜
Divorce at 6 to 10	-.10	.05	-.33***	-.14˜
Divorce at 11 to 17	.03	.07	-.22***	-.04
SMC	.019	.025	.281	.049
Simultaneous				
Marital conflict	-.11˜ (-.17*)	.05 (.08)	-.10 (-.14*)	-.05 (-.03)
Divorce before 5	-.04 (-.04)	.11 (.11)	-.48*** (-.48***)	-.11 (-.12)
Divorce at 6 to 10	-.10 (-.11)	.05 (.05)	-.32*** (-.32***)	-.14˜ (-.14˜)
Divorce at 11 to 17	.03 (.03)	.07 (.07)	-.21*** (-.21***)	-.03 (-.03)
SMC	.029 (.044)	.028 (.031)	.289 (.297)	.050 (.050)

Notes. Numbers in parentheses refer to marital conflict scores closest in time to divorce.
˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 4

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict (closest score) and Young Adult Children's Relationships: Non-Divorced vs. Divorced Groups

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	Non-Divorced	Divorced	Non-Divorced	Divorced
Structural Path	$N = 220$	$N = 218$	$N = 219$	$N = 213$
Conflict – Close-Support	-.203*	-.185*	-.226*	-.115
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .119, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .000, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.163˜	-.153	-.042	-.068
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 5.314, p = .021		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .021, p = ns	
	Filial Self-Efficacy		Relationship Self-Efficacy	
	Non-Divorced	Divorced	Non-Divorced	Divorced
Structural Path	$N = 219$	$N = 218$	$N = 141$	$N = 158$
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.207*	-.070	.017	-.120
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.022, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .752, p = ns	

	Romantic Relationship Quality	
	Non-Divorced	Divorced
Structural Path	$N = 141$	$N = 158$
Conflict – Quality	.011	-.026
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .009, p = ns	
Conflict – Insecurity	.046	.059
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .032, p = ns	

˜$p < .10$, *$p < .05$

Table 5

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Non-Divorced vs. Divorced Groups (biological parents)

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	Non-Divorced	Divorced	Non-Divorced	Divorced
Structural Path	$N = 212$	$N = 202$	$N = 204$	$N = 154$
	Conflict as Average Score			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.087	-.080	-.075	-.129
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .033, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .343, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.173*	-.098	-.006	-.063
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.82, p = .028		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .080, p = ns	
	Conflict as Closest Score			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.179˜	-.099	-.139	-.160
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .055, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .450, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.182˜	-.093	-.006	-.043
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.671, p = .055		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .045, p = ns	

˜$p < .10$, *$p < .05$

Table 6.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict (closest score), Divorce, and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Males vs. Females

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Structural Path	$N = 225$	$N = 233$	$N = 221$	$N = 230$
	(divorce as a dichotomous variable)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.115	-.270**	-.020	-.240**
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .343, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.647, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.061	.104	-.036	-.064
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.267, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .000, p = ns	
Divorce – Close-Support	-.160˜	.003	-.461***	-.493***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.221, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .652, p = ns	
Divorce – Conflict-Control	.133	.035	-.208*	-.115
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .353, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .724, p = ns	
	(divorce as dummy variables)			
Conflict – Close-Support	.105	-.271*	.043	-.239**
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .491, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.655, p = .031	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.097	.110	-.060	-.062
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.874, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .032, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Close-Support	-.186˜	.051	-.604***	-.509***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.417, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .101, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Close-Support	-.15	-.146	-.271***	-.342***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .00, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .819, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Close-Support	-.017	.030	-.170**	-.232**
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .171, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .596, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Conflict-Control	.209˜	.027	-.147	-.130
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.204, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .122, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Conflict-Control	.051	.012	-.165˜	-.112
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .068, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .365, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Conflict-Control	.050	.032	-.107	-.022
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .017, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .705, p = ns	

˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 6.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict (average score), Divorce, and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Males vs. Females (biological parents)

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Structural Path	$N = 208$	$N = 221$	$N = 182$	$N = 190$
	(divorce as a dichotomous variable)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.037	-.162*	-.073	-.168*
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .615, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .291, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.050	.112	.088	-.098
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.590, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.351, p = ns	
Divorce – Close-Support	-.166˜	.070	-.465***	-.494***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.583, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .261, p = ns	
Divorce – Conflict-Control	.188˜	.067	-.134	-.095
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .366, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .170, p = ns	
	(divorce as dummy variables)			
Conflict – Close-Support	.019	-.167*	.018	-.179*
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.331, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.858, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.123	.116	.054	-.094
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.786, p = .095		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .642, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Close-Support	-.236*	.102	-.625***	-.431***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.313, p = .038		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.361, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Close-Support	-.12	-.050	-.299***	-.330***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .292, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .247, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Close-Support	-.044	.067	-.140˜	-.277***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .862, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.669, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Conflict-Control	.304*	.038	-.069	-.107
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.010, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .002, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Conflict-Control	.060	.014	-.111˜	-.115
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .077, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .028, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Conflict-Control	.085	.075	-.063	-.001
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .003, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .299, p = ns	

˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 6.3

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict (closest score), Divorce, and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Males vs. Females (biological parents)

	Mother-Child Relationships		Father-Child Relationships	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Structural Path	$N = 208$	$N = 221$	$N = 182$	$N = 190$
	(divorce as a dichotomous variable)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.124	-.203*	-.109	-.177*
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .005, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .091, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.014	.169*	.011	-.038
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.452, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .064, p = ns	
Divorce – Close-Support	-.159	.057	-.468***	-.491***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.191, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .234, p = ns	
Divorce – Conflict-Control	.180˜	.075	-.111	-.108
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .244, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .038, p = ns	
	(divorce as dummy variables)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.096	-.206*	-.047	-.193*
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .085, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .848, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.070	.174*	-.024	-.045
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.303, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .000, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Close-Support	-.188	.084	-.597***	-.441***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 2.928, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .870, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Close-Support	-.134	-.064	-.298***	-.340***
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .295, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .354, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Close-Support	-.035	.059	-.134˜	-.258**
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .621, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.390, p = ns	
Divorce before 5 – Conflict-Control	.269*	.045	-.031	-.126
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.451, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .151, p = ns	
Divorce at 6 to 10 – Conflict-Control	.060	.021	-.110	-.121
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .049, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .016, p = ns	
Divorce at 11 to 17 – Conflict-Control	.078	.083	-.054	.001
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .039, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .229, p = ns	

˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 7.1

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict (closest score) and Young Adult Children's Relationships: Non-Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Males vs. Divorced Females

	Non-Divorced Males	Divorced Males	Non-Divorced Females	Divorced Females
		Mother-Child Relationships		
Structural Path	$N = 115$	$N = 98$	$N = 105$	$N = 120$
Conflict – Close-Support	-.173	-.032	-.208*	-.276*
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .203, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .922, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.209˜	-.243	.237*	-.083
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.67, p = .031		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.29, p = .070	
		Father-Child Relationships		
Structural Path	$N = 114$	$N = 96$	$N = 105$	$N = 117$
Conflict – Close-Support	-.129	.085	-.287*	-.209˜
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .847, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .187, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.043	.092	-.080	-.112
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .462, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .003, p = ns	
		Filial Self-Efficacy		
Structural Path	$N = 114$	$N = 99$	$N = 105$	$N = 119$
Conflict – Filial Self-Efficacy	-.203˜	-.039	-.218*	-.070
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .715, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .525, p = ns	
		Romantic Relationship Quality		
Structural Path	$N = 69$	$N = 62$	$N = 72$	$N = 96$
Conflict – Quality	-.078	-.099	-.022	-.042
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .000, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .003, p = ns	
Conflict – Insecurity	.215	-.028	-.060	.084
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .448, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .617, p = ns	
		Relationship Self-Efficacy		
Structural Path	$N = 69$	$N = 62$	$N = 72$	$N = 96$
Conflict – Self-Efficacy	-.129	-.023	.015	-.166
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .178, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.115, p = ns	

˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$

Table 7.2

Standardized Coefficients Showing Associations between Parents' Marital Conflict and Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents: Non-Divorced Males vs. Non-Divorced Females vs. Divorced Males vs. Divorced Females (biological parents)

	Mother-Child Relationships			
	Non-Divorced Males	Divorced Males	Non-Divorced Females	Divorced Females
Structural Path	$N = 108$	$N = 91$	$N = 104$	$N = 111$
	(conflict as average score)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.030	-.067	-.227*	-.100
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .232, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .815, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.103	-.168	.262*	-.066
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) =2.099, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.404, p = .036	
	(conflict as closest score)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.101	-.064	-.208˜	-.142
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .003, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .001, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.293˜	-.193	.234*	-.014
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 4.461, p = .035		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.693, p = ns	
	Father-Child Relationships			
	Non-Divorced Males	Divorced Males	Non-Divorced Females	Divorced Females
Structural Path	$N = 103$	$N = 70$	$N = 101$	$N = 84$
	(conflict as average score)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.140	-.027	-.085	-.223˜
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .130, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 1.038, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	.137	.108	-.119	-.058
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .058, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .579, p = ns	
	(conflict as closest score)			
Conflict – Close-Support	-.188	-.057	-.149	-.218˜
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .007, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .763, p = ns	
Conflict – Conflict-Control	-.018	.113	-.095	-.075
	$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .409, p = ns		$\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = .165, p = ns	

˜$p < .1$, *$p < .05$

B. IRB Approval Letter

Auburn University

Auburn University, Alabama 36849

Office of Human Subjects Research
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November 10, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Tianyi Yu
HDFS

PROTOCOL TITLE: "The Interplay of Parental Marital Conflict and Divorce in Young Adult Children's Relationships with Parents and Romantic Partners"

IRB FILE NO.: #06-227 EX 0611

APPROVAL DATE: November 9, 2006
EXPIRATION DATE: November 8, 2007

The referenced protocol was approved "Exempt" from further review under 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(4) by IRB procedure on November 9, 2006. You should retain this letter in your files, along with a copy of the revised protocol and other pertinent information concerning your study. If you should anticipate a change in any of the procedures authorized in this protocol, you must request and receive IRB approval prior to implementation of any revision. Please reference the above IRB file number in any correspondence regarding this project.

If you will be unable to file a Final Report on your project before November 8, 2007, you must submit a request for an extension of approval to the IRB no later than October 20, 2007. If your IRB authorization expires and/or you have not received written notice that a request for an extension has been approved prior to November 8, 2007, you must suspend the project immediately and contact the Office of Human Subjects Research for assistance.

A Final Report will be required to close your IRB project file

If you have any questions concerning this Board action, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Research at 844-5966.

Sincerely,

Niki L. Johnson, JD, MBA, Director
Office of Human Subjects Research
Research Compliance Auburn University

C. Measures in Child Development Project

Conflict Tactic Scale (age 5, 13, & 16)

Family Conflicts:
All couples have disagreements. Here is a list of kinds of disagreements that TC may have seen or heard between you and your partner in the last year. How frequent have these conflicts been?

(0=never; 1=less than once a month; 2=about once a month; 3=2-3 times a month; 4=once a week; 5=2-3 times a week; 6=almost every day)

a. ____ tried to discuss an issue calmly
b. ____ did discuss an issue calmly
c. ____ argued heatedly, but didn't yell
d. ____ yelled, insulted or swore
e. ____ sulked or refused to talk about it
f. ____ stomped out of the room or house
g. ____ threatened to throw something
h. ____ pushed, grabbed, or shoved
I. ____ hit

Parent-Child Relationship (age 22)

First I'd like to ask you some questions about your relationship with your parents.

1. a) Approximately how many miles from here does your mother live? _____
(code 99999 if mother deceased)

b) Approximately how many miles from here does your father live? _____
(code 99999 if father deceased)

2. a) Over the last 12 months, about how often did you see your mother?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	About once a year	Several times a year	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week	Currently living with mother

b) Over the last 12 months, about how often did you see your father?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	About once a year	Several times a year	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week	Currently living with father

3. a) Over the last 12 months, about how often did you communicate with your mother by telephone, letter, or e-mail?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	About once	Several times	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week	Currently living with mother

b) Over the last 12 months, about how often did you communicate with your father by telephone, letter, or e-mail?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	About once a year	Several times a year	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week	Currently living with father

4. a) How much does your mother take care of your practical needs (e.g., giving you money when you need it, giving you rides places, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

b) How much does your father take care of your practical needs (e.g., giving you money when you need it, giving you rides places, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

5. a) How much does your mother provide for your emotional needs (e.g., respects you, listens to you, cares for you, understands you, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

b) How much does your father provide for your emotional needs (e.g., respects you, listens to you, cares for you, understands you, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

6. a) How much does your mother act as an advisor/mentor (e.g., provide you with guidance and advice on how to handle problems, give you advice about your future goals, career, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

b) How much does your father act as an advisor/mentor (e.g., provide you with guidance and advice on how to handle problems, give you advice about your future goals, career, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Only a little	Sometimes	Often	A lot of the time

7. In the last 3 months, have you and your mother/father had open disagreements about:

		MOTHER		FATHER	
a)	How you dress?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
b)	Who you were dating?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
c)	About your friends?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
d)	About your getting a job or a better job?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
e)	About your sexual behavior?	Yes	No……	Yes	No
f)	About your drinking, smoking, or drug use?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
g)	About money?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
h)	About your helping around the house?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
i)	About how late you stay out at night?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
j)	About your husband/wife/partner?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No
k)	About raising your children?.....	Yes	No……	Yes	No

8. a) In the last 3 months, how often did you argue or fight or have a lot of difficulty with your mother?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Less than once a month	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week

b) In the last 3 months, how often did you argue or fight or have a lot of difficulty with your father?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Less than once a month	1 to 3 times a month	About once a week	More than once a week

9. Please use the following scale in responding to the next statements:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Hardly ever	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently

How often does your mother/father…

MOTHER	FATHER	
_____	_____	a. Talk with you about ordinary daily events in your life?
_____	_____	b. Try to change how you feel or think about things?
_____	_____	c. Know about your personal/romantic relationships?
_____	_____	d. Talk with you about things you are happy or satisfied with?
_____	_____	e. Bring up your past mistakes when he/she criticizes you?
_____	_____	f. Know about your activities at work/school?
_____	_____	g. Talk with you about problems you may be concerned with?
_____	_____	h. Try to make decisions for you or tell you how to run your life?
_____	_____	i. Know when you are sick or have other health problems?

10. a) Taking things all together, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is really bad and 10 is absolutely perfect, how would you describe your relationship with your mother? _____ with your father? _____

11. Thinking now about your relations with both parents, how well can you:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not well at all	Not too well	Sort of not well	In between	Sort of well	Pretty well	Extremely well

_____ a. Maintain communications with your father or your mother even when your relationship is tense
_____ b. Talk with your parent about your personal problems
_____ c. Handle your parent's intrusions into your privacy without irritation and resentment
_____ d. Prevent differences of opinions with your parents from turning into arguments
_____ e. Talk with your parents about your feelings toward them
_____ f. Get your parents to understand your point of view on a matter even when it differs from theirs
_____ g. Recognize openly your gratitude to your parents for their efforts for you
_____ h. Express your disagreement and disapproval without irritation and resentment
_____ i. Get your parents to listen to your needs even when they are absorbed by their problems
_____ j. Involve your parents in important decisions about your future
_____ k. Consider your parents' suggestions when they differ from your opinions and preferences
_____ l. Admit you are wrong during a discussion and change your opinion
_____ m. Accept your parent's criticism of you without feeling hurt and offended
_____ n. Increase your parent's trust and esteem for you
_____ o. Get your parents to trust your sense of responsibility and critical thinking
_____ p. Avoid irritation when your parent doesn't satisfy your demands of attention

12. When you were answering the previous questions, who were you thinking of as your "mother"?

_____biological mother
_____adoptive mother
_____step-mother, father's romantic partner
_____grandmother
_____aunt
_____other (please describe): _____

13. When you were answering the previous questions, who were you thinking of as your "father"?

_____biological father
_____adoptive father
_____step-father, mother's romantic partner
_____grandfather
_____uncle
_____other (please describe): _____

Romantic Relationship (age 22)

We are going to ask some questions about your romantic relationships. Just as in other sections of this study, some of the items will not apply to you, but they might apply to some of the other people in our study, and we will appreciate your responses to the items. Please circle the correct answers for you.

1. Do you currently have a romantic partner? Yes No

2. When you go out with him/her, do you sometimes go out just as a couple? Yes No

3. How often do you go out just as a couple?
    1. very seldom (most of the time in a group)
    2. sometimes (around 50-50)
    3. usually or always

4. How long have you been seeing him/her? _____months

    If 2 months or longer, please answer the following questions:

5. Do you have, or are you or she/he thinking about having, any kind of serious commitment in your relationship?

    Yes No

A. Dyadic Adjustment

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

n/a	0 Always disagree	1 Almost always disagree	2 Frequently disagree	3 Occasionally disagree	4 Almost always agree	5 Always agree

1. Handling family finances
2. Matters of recreation
3. Religious matters
4. Demonstrations of affection
5. Friends
6. Sex relations
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct)
8. Philosophy of life
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important
11. Amount of time spent together
12. Making major decisions
13. Household tasks
14. Leisure time interests and activities
15. Career decisions

Please tell us how often the following things happen by circling a number.

0 All the time	1 Most of the time	2 More often than not	3 Occasionally	4 Rarely	5 Never

16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?

19. Do you confide in your mate?
20. Do you ever regret that you married/lived together?
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?
23. Do you kiss your mate?

0	1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Almost every day	Every day

24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

0	1	2	3	4
None of them	Very few of them	Some of them	Most of them	All of them

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often

25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas
26. Laugh together
27. Calmly discuss something
28. Work together on a project

There are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Circle yes or no)

29. Being too tired for sex.....YES (0) NO (1)

30. Not showing love.....YES (0) NO (1)

31. The numbers on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, 3, or "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Zero on the scale means "extremely unhappy" and 6 means "perfectly happy."
Please <u>circle the number</u> which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship. The scale below is used for question #31 only.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely unhappy	Fairly unhappy	A little unhappy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	Perfect

Circle the number above that best describes the degree of happiness of your relationship.
---

32. Please check the line next to the statement which best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship. *<u>Please check ONE statement only</u>.*

(5) _____ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and <u>will go to almost any length</u> to see that it does.
(4)_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and <u>will do all I can</u> to see that it does.
(3)_____ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and <u>will do my fair share</u> to see that it does.

(2)_____ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
(1)_____ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
(0)_____ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.

B. IJS

When answering the questions below, please think of your relationship with your current romantic partner. These items present several situations. For each situation, please picture yourself and your romantic partner in the situation. For each situation, circle the number that indicates how true the statement is for you, using the scale below.

Answer Scale:
1 = absolutely false; disagree completely
2 = definitely false
3 = false
4 = slightly false
5 = neither true or false
6 = slightly true
7 = true
8 = definitely true
9 = absolutely true; agree completely

1	If my partner were to help someone of the opposite sex with work or homework, I would feel suspicious.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2	If my partner and I went to a party and I lost sight of him/her, I would become jealous.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3	If my partner were to become very close to someone of the opposite sex, I would feel very unhappy and/or angry.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4	It would bother me if my partner flirted with someone of the opposite sex.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5	If someone of the opposite sex were to pay attention to my partner, I would become possessive of my him/her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6	I like to find fault with my partner's old dates.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7	I feel possessive toward my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

C. Doing Things With Your Romantic Partner

In your relationship with your **romantic partner**, how well can you:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not well at all	Not too well	Sort of not well	In between	Sort of well	Pretty well	Extremely well

_____ a. Create the time to talk together about your worries and aspirations
_____ b. Prevent disagreements from turning into insults and open hostility
_____ c. Respect his/her personal beliefs even though you disagree with them
_____ d. Face problems together without recriminations

_____ e. Accept criticism without feeling hurt and offended
_____ f. Win his/her support when serious personal problems arise
_____ g. Make him/her feel important and respected
_____ h. Preserve the privacy of your relationship
_____ i. Support him/her in handling conflict with parents

If you have a child:

_____ j. Get him/her to agree on how to deal with problems with your child
_____ k. Involve him/her in important decisions about how to run the family
_____ l. Support him/her when the child does not do what he/she is told to do

D. Shortened Relationships Styles Questionnaire

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which it describes your feelings about romantic relationships, using the scale below.

	Not at all like me				Very Much like me
1. I find it difficult to depend on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I find it difficult to trust others completely.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I want emotionally close relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.	1	2	3	4	5
9. People are never there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I prefer not to depend on others.	1	2	3	4	5

Using the same scale, please answer these additional questions.

	Not at all like me		Somewhat like me		Very Much like me
1. I worry a great deal about being left alone and having to take care of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I'll do something desperate to prevent a person I love from abandoning me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Being alone, without the help of someone close to depend on, really frightens me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that most people think poorly of me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I seem to create situations with others in which I get hurt or feel rejected.	1	2	3	4	5