The Psychological Well-Being of Divorced Fathers: A Theoretical Model and Projection

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Recommended Citation
Bottom, Todd Lawrence, "The Psychological Well-Being of Divorced Fathers: A Theoretical Model and Projection" (2014). College of Science and Health Theses and Dissertations. 84.
https://via.library.depaul.edu/csh_etd/84
The Psychological Well-Being of Divorced Fathers: A Theoretical Model and Projection

A Dissertation
Presented in
Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Community Psychology

BY
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April 16, 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is dedicated to Claire, Layne, and Gwendolyn Bottom, for whom I strive to be a positive model personally, socially, and academically. Thank you, girls, for always giving me reasons to improve myself and others. Please never stop asking why.

Many thanks also to my dissertation committee for their guidance and support throughout this project. In particular, I owe much gratitude to Dr. Joseph R. Ferrari for his mentoring and advising for nearly five years. Thank you, Joe for encouraging my work throughout graduate school and for your professional and personal guidance.
VITA

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OVERVIEW

After escalating for several decades after World War II, the divorce rate in the United States finally reduced marginally in the 1980’s. Although the number of divorces decreased in the past decade, the number of marriages also decreased, causing the divorce rate to remain nearly unchanged from 2000 to 2010. The most frequently cited negative effect of divorce and separation is perhaps the loss of father-child contact, although much less research was dedicated to understanding the post-divorce outcomes of spouses and parents, especially with regard to their long-term outcomes. Furthermore, the database PsycINFO indexed only 9 peer-reviewed research articles published between 1900 and 2011 which reported on divorced fathers’ psychological well-being.

Despite the paucity of research attention given to divorced fathers, some researchers studied factors that might influence their well-being. For example, divorced fathers’ custody status was perhaps the most widely-reported factor to influence divorced fathers’ psychological well-being. Other researchers reported that these fathers’ well-being was influenced by the clarity of and satisfaction with their parenting roles, their perceived levels of parenting competence, parenting encouragement received by intimate others, and the amounts of control that they have over parenting issues.

Because fathers face many life-changing adjustments after divorce, it is important to understand factors that might help to explain or predict their psychological well being. Understanding factors which influence fathers’ post-divorce well-being may assist therapists, researchers and policy makers to
develop systems to prevent fathers from experiencing excessive negative outcomes. More importantly, it may be reasonable to suggest that fathers whose psychological well-being is adequately addressed would be able to parent more effectively.

The present study added to the very limited research and literature involving divorced fathers and their outcomes by assessing how each of the constructs described above relates to the psychological well-being of divorced fathers. Specifically, a path analysis was conducted in an attempt to delineate possible causal effects of several constructs on divorced fathers’ psychological well-being.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The divorce rate in the United States skyrocketed in past generations. While the rate remained steady (between 6% and 8%) from 1920 to 1935 (NCHS, 1983) it climbed to nearly 18% during and immediately following World War II. The rate then dipped below the 10% marker from the early 1950’s to the early 1960’s. However, starting in 1962 divorce rates escalated for 17 consecutive years, to nearly 23% by 1979, before finally reducing marginally in 1980. The most recent data from the National Center for Health Statistics showed that by 2009 the ratio of marriages to divorces in the United States was 2:1 (Tejada-Vera, 2010). While the percent of married couples who reach their 5th wedding anniversary leveled off in the past few decades, the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB, 2004) reported that couples who married between 1990 and 1994 were less likely to be together at the five-year mark than were those who were married between 1955 and 1959 (USCB, 2004).

Although estimates of marriages which end in divorce in the United States may be difficult to determine, data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicated that the ratio of marriages to divorces remained steady. For example, while the number of divorces declined from 944,000 in 2000 to 872,000 in 2010, the number of marriages also decreased, from 2,315,000 to 2,096,000 during that same period (CDC, 2012). This caused the divorce rate to remain nearly unchanged, from 2.45 marriages per divorce in 2000 to 2.40 marriages per divorce in 2010.
Perhaps the most salient and frequently cited negative effect of parental divorce and separation is the loss of father-child contact (Arditti & Prouty, 1999; Baum, 2004; Cooney, 1994; Guzzo, 2009; Kruk, 2010; Leite & McKenry, 2002; Shapiro, 2003; Swiss & LeBourdais, 2009). Lin and McLanahan (2007) reported that divorce among couples with children increased the number of children living in a residence outside of their fathers’ homes from about 33% in 1970 to over 50% in 2000. These children’s diminished contact with their fathers, along with many other psychological impacts of divorce, had profound negative effects regarding a myriad of these children’s relational, professional, and social outcomes (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004).

For example, studies reported that children of divorced and separated families engaged in increased rates of illicit behaviors (Mandara, Rogers, & Zinbarg, 2011; Mednick, Hocevar, & Baker, 1987) and suicide attempts (Lizardi, Thompson, Keys, & Hasin, 2009), experienced greater negative affect (Burns & Dunlop, 1999; Finley & Schwartz, 2010; Langenkamp & Frisco, 2008; Laumann-Billings & Emery, 2000), trusted others less (King, 2002) and experienced poorer personal relationships (Guttman & Rosenberg, 2003; Riggo, 2004). Additionally, the negative effects of divorce on children often continue into adult lives (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Bouchard & Doucet, 2011; Knox, Zuxman, & DeCuzzi, 2004).

ProBLEM STATEMENT

While much research attention was given to children of divorce, far less research was dedicated to spouses and parents, especially with regard to their
long-term outcomes (Arendell, 1992; Bottom, 2013; Hilton & Kopera-Frey, 2004; Stone, 2001). Additionally, divorce affects men and women differently (Hilton & Kopera-Frey, 2006). The experiences of divorced women and mothers were researched to a greater extent than were the outcomes of divorced men and fathers (Bokker, Farley, & Bailey, 2006; Erera & Baum, 2009; L. C. Hill & Hilton, 1999; Rettig, Leichtentritt, & Stanton, 1999; Umberson & Williams, 1993). For example, Bottom and Ferrari (2013) reported that in nearly 16,000 research presentations at 19 large regional psychology conferences from 2008 – 2011, only 15 presentations (0.0009%) included the key word father in both the title and abstract of program entries, and only 10 presentations (0.0006%) included the key word divorce in both the title and abstract.

Only five presentations reported by Bottom and Ferrari contained data that were supplied by fathers, and only two presentations were determined to include fathers’ outcomes as the focus of research. Moreover, of the nearly 16,000 presentations none included both father and divorce in either the title or the abstract. In other words, very few presentations at recent psychology conferences included studies which focused on divorce or fathers. Moreover, in a systematic review of the psychological literature, Bottom (2013) reported that the database PsycINFO indexed only 9 peer-reviewed research articles which were published between 1900 and 2011 which reported on divorced fathers’ psychological well-being. As evidenced, research dedicated to understanding divorced fathers was lacking in conference presentations and in the published literature.
As a result of the plethora of post-divorce transitions that they encounter, men experience many negative effects of divorce. Kposowa (2003) reported that divorced fathers were 2.4 times more likely to commit suicide than were men who never married. Yet, while research regarding both divorce and fatherhood may be thriving (Kruk, 1994), especially from a clinical perspective, substantial evidence showed that studying divorced fathers and factors that influence their well-being has to date been sparse.

Despite the overall scarcity of research regarding divorced fathers, some researchers studied factors that were theorized to influence divorced fathers’ well-being. The present study addressed several of these factors, as indicated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

*Theoretical Model of Factors Affecting Divorced Fathers’ Psychological Well-Being*
For instance, parenting factors dictated by divorced fathers’ *custody status* (e.g. amount of child “visitation” and contact) were perhaps the most widely-reported factors that influenced their psychological well-being. Regarding divorced fathers’ *parenting roles*, Stone (2001) hypothesized that the relationship between fathers’ *parenting role clarity* and psychological well-being would be mediated by their *satisfaction with parenting roles*. A few years later, the author assessed the effect of parenting role clarity on the quality of fathers’ relationships with their children (Stone, 2006).

*Parenting efficacy* also was thought to be an important factor to influence fathers’ well-being, although the relationship between the two constructs among divorced fathers has not received attention (Borgenschneider, Small, & Tsay, 1997; Murdock, 2012). Another factor thought to influence divorced fathers’ well-being was *parenting encouragement* from others. For example, Stone assessed the impacts of encouragement on divorced fathers’ psychological well-being (2001) and the quality of their relationships with their children (2006). Researchers also proposed that parents’ *locus of control* would affect several outcomes for both parents and children (Bugental, Caporael, & Shennum, 1980; Rosno, Steele, Johnston, & Aylward, 2008), although no studies assessed the relationship between locus of control and psychological well-being among divorced fathers.

In line with these previous reports, the purpose of the present study was to assess the relationships between each of these constructs (i.e. custody status, parenting roles, parenting efficacy, parenting encouragement, and locus of
control) and divorced fathers’ psychological well-being as indicated in Figure 1. Results were expected to add to the divorce literature by confirming or refuting results reported by previous authors, and by providing additional contributions to the theoretical understanding of factors that affect divorced fathers’ well-being.

The following review summarizes the published literature regarding each construct in the study’s model (Figure 1). A brief review of each construct is included below, first with regard to broad theoretical constructs, and then more narrowly as domain-specific constructs with regard to divorced fathers. The literature review is followed by the rationale for the present study. The chapter then concludes with the presentation of several Hypotheses and Research Questions relative to the constructs proposed in the theoretical model (Figure 1).

**Literature Review**

*Custody Status.* Child custody is generally viewed with regard to two separate yet overlapping issues. Having *residential custody* typically involves being the parent with whom children reside most of the time, while *legal custody* refers to having the legal authority to make decisions regarding children’s development, activities and care (e.g. where they go to school, medical decisions, etc.). Typically, which parent receives legal custody is determined and awarded by the courts by way of an order of custody, and physical custody is determined by way of additional and specific “visitation” stipulations that are outlined within the order of custody. In the present study, the relationship between fathers’ custody status and well-being was assessed as indicated in Figure 2 below.
Prior to the early 19th century, courts almost exclusively awarded custody to fathers. Near the end of the 1800’s, mothers were increasingly awarded custody until children reached age 7 under the “tender years” doctrine, and more recently the “best interest of the child” became the standard for determining which parent should receive residential custody of children (Braver, Ellman, Votruba, & Fabricius, 2011; Bruch, 1986). The best interest of the child standard aims to place children in the primary care of the parent deemed to be most fit to raise the child.

Figure 2

Theoretical Model Depicting Relationships between Custody Status, Parenting Role Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being
Additional aspects of child custody include awarding sole or shared custody to parents. Regarding legal custody, having sole custody typically provides one parent with the exclusive legal authority to make decisions regarding the children, while shared custody is intended to provide both parents with the legal authority to make decisions regarding their children. In their brief review of rates of custody awards among parents, Braver et al. (2011) reported that mothers were awarded primary residential custody between 68-88% of the time; fathers were awarded such custody in about 8-14% of cases; and shared residential custody among parents was rare.

Fathers’ custody status. In recent studies that assessed divorced fathers’ well-being, some authors attempted to determine associations between fathers’ negative affect (i.e., well-being) and factors associated with child custody. Indeed, perhaps the most salient relationships reported with regard to fathers’ levels of emotional well-being were those involving child custody (e.g. amount of fathers’ involvement and contact with their children).

Bokker, Farley, and Denny (2006) reported that divorced fathers who were more involved in their children’s lives and had increased levels of contact typically experienced less depression than fathers who were less involved and who had less contact with their children. The authors also reported that positive adjustment to divorce and the self-esteem of recently divorced fathers were positively correlated with amount of contact with children, and that levels of depression were negatively associated with amount of contact. Awareness of the association between fathers’ well-being and amount of contact and involvement
with their children is important because arrangements of residential child custody typically include alternating weekend and holiday “visitation” for the non-custodial parent, who, up to 84% of the time, is the father (Bokker, Farley, & Bailey, 2006; Braver et al., 2011).

Similarly, Bokker, Farley, and Bailey (2006) reported that divorced fathers’ well-being was lower when they were not awarded sole or joint physical custody of their children. Specifically, fathers with full custody expressed lower levels of depression than fathers with joint custody, who in turn reported lower levels of depression than those with no legal custody. The authors further posited that factors other than custody status (e.g. frustration with the legal system, the loss of children in fathers’ daily lives, confusion with their parental roles) may also contribute to recently divorced fathers’ emotional distress.

Stewart et al. (1986) reported that recently divorced (i.e. within two years) custodial fathers scored better on a depression inventory compared to those without custody; non-custodial fathers reported scores indicating they were mildly depressed. The authors also reported that divorced fathers who maintained custody of their children displayed nearly the same levels of emotional health as did their never-divorced counterparts, and contended that when children are present in a father’s life, his predisposition to emotional distress may decrease. However, the authors acknowledged that there has been debate about whether the presence of children (e.g. by way of paternal custody) in the life of recently-divorced fathers is the cause of his more positive post-divorce adjustment, or whether less distressed and more well-adjusted fathers were more inclined to
request and to receive custody of their children. Furthermore, Stone (2001) found that having sole custody of children had a significant and positive direct effect on divorced fathers’ well-being.

Umberson and Williams (1993) also reported on the relationship between fathers’ custody status and emotional well-being. The authors contended that divorced fathers may experience increased negative affect when they do not maintain custody, and that negative emotions may further increase when non-custodial fathers return their children to their former spouse after “visitation”. Additionally, Stewart et al. (1986) reported that non-custodial fathers expressed having less positive relationships with their children than did custodial fathers and fathers who were still married.

To add to the body of literature relative to custody status and well-being, the present study assessed the two constructs as indicated in Figure 2 above. Regardless of post-divorce custodial status, fathers’ parenting roles often undergo many changes as they adjust to post-divorce parenthood. While fathers who are awarded child custody may not experience a tremendous amount of disruption to their parenting roles, those who are not awarded custody often must adjust to the expectations that others have of them in their newly-defined roles as divorced fathers.

*Role Theory*

As indicated in Figure 3 below, relationships between divorced fathers’ *parenting roles* and psychological well-being were assessed in the present study. Cottrell (1933, 1942) wrote that *roles* are behavioral responses which individuals
are expected perform across social situations; one sees these expected behaviors as indicative of his role in any given situation. Twenty years later Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) proposed a well-received model, theorizing that if individuals do not know what they are expected to do within their given roles, then they are not able to act fittingly within that role. Consequently, feelings of futility of their efforts and dissatisfaction with the role emerged. Additionally, Burr (1973) clarified that role clarity was related to the degree to which explicit definitions of behaviors were expected of an individual, as opposed to vague or ambiguous definitions.

Figure 3

*Theoretical Model depicting Relationships between Parenting Role clarity.*

*Parenting Role Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being*
More recently, in studying roles and gender, researchers noted several constructs of gender roles and psychological outcomes associated with those roles, especially with regard to men. Pleck (1976) introduced gender role strain (GRS), contending that troubles of men’s roles were distinguished by individual and cultural identities as well as role strain associated with contradicting social expectations. Pleck (1995) later summarized men’s role strains as caused by discrepancy, trauma and dysfunction that were inherent in men’s roles. Similar to GRS, O’Neil (1981) introduced the construct of gender role conflict (GRC), asserting that strain and conflicts with gender roles were psychological states where gender-specific roles had negative outcomes on an individual. The overarching theme between GRS and GRC is that men often suffer adverse outcomes as a result of experiencing unclear or unattainable gender roles (e.g. as parents, romantic partners, financial providers).

**Role clarity and role satisfaction.** Role clarity describes the degree to which one understands his roles as described or expected by others (Cottrell, 1933; 1942). Cottrell (1942) suggested that role clarity may be increased when, 1) there are no discrepancies between verbal and behavioral expectations of others, 2) roles do not differ across cultural contexts, and 3) behaviors expected of an individual are consistent among individual members in his social world. Moreover, successful transition into new roles and maturation of current roles is aided when both prior and future roles are more clearly defined (Cottrell, 1942).

While much research on roles and role clarity was conducted with regard to gender issues, role clarity was also studied in a variety of social settings. For
example, researchers studied the construct in the workplace, in the military and in athletic settings. In the workplace, role clarity was associated with several positive outcomes, including increased perceptions of supportive feedback from supervisors (Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007) and increased role efficacy and job performance (Bray & Brawley, 2002; Fried et al., 2003). In military settings, Lang and colleagues (2007) reported that increased role clarity was associated with lowered physical and psychological strain among army cadets. Similarly, Bray and Brawley (2002), assessing 104 college athletes, found a pattern of positive correlations between role clarity, role efficacy, and effective performance. The authors reported that athletes who perceived increased clarity of their roles also reported being more efficacious in those roles than those who perceived lower role clarity.

Researchers also attended to the relationship between role clarity and satisfaction with roles. For example, Bray, Beauchamp, Eys, and Carron (2005) reported that a relationship between role clarity and role satisfaction was observed for athletes with a high need for role clarity but not for those with a low need for role clarity; those with a high need for clarity were less satisfied with their roles when roles were unclear. In a similar study Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, and Carron (2005) found that athletes’ baseline reports of role clarity accounted for a significant amount of variance when predicting later reports of role satisfaction even after controlling for demographic variables and baseline affective reports. Cottrell (1942) suggested that issues associated with roles (e.g. clarity, satisfaction) may be applied to any social role, including marriages and family
systems. In recent years some researchers assessed the relationship between role clarity and role satisfaction with regard to parenting.

*Parenting role clarity and parenting role satisfaction.* Parenting role clarity (PRC) indicates the degree to which individuals understand the behaviors that are expected of them as parents. Likewise, parenting role satisfaction (PRS) indicates the level of contentment that parents experience relative to their parenting roles. More than 25 years ago, Hill (1987) asserted that mothers’ and fathers’ satisfaction with their parenting roles were areas in which more research was needed to better understand the growth and development of families. In recent years researchers assessed the relationship between PRC and PRS, and both constructs were positively correlated with positive outcomes in family settings.

Specific to mothers, Katainen and colleagues (1999) reported that low satisfaction with the maternal role predicted hostile attitudes toward child-rearing three years later, as well as depressive child tendencies when the children reached adolescence. Isabella (1994) reported that mothers with higher levels of maternal satisfaction and prenatal levels of family support were more likely to report higher levels of role satisfaction four months post-natal, which in turn predicted optimal mother-child interactions and secure child attachments several months later.

Regarding fathers, increased PRS was associated with increased involvement with children (McKenry, Price, Fine, & Serovich, 1992; Stone, 2006). Also, Stone (2006) reported that among divorced non-custodial fathers, PRC highly influenced the quality of father-child relationships. As such, Stone
suggested that it would be rational to assume that having clear paternal roles would help fathers to have better relationships with their children. However, the author also acknowledged that whether having clear parenting roles directly impacts the quality of father-child relationships may be difficult to determine.

Despite these reports of parents’ role clarity and role satisfaction, little empirical research was reported regarding the relationship between the clarity of and satisfaction with parental roles. In perhaps the only study to assess the relationship between fathers’ PRC and their psychological well-being, Stone (2001) tested a theoretical model of PRC and PRS among 94 divorced non-custodial fathers. Similar to the theoretical model in Figure 3 above, the author hypothesized that, 1) fathers would experience increased stress as they transitioned into their newly-defined post-divorce parenting roles, 2) fathers typically would be less satisfied with parental roles that were unclear, and 3) the relationship between fathers’ perceived role clarity and distress (i.e. psychological well-being) would be mediated by satisfaction with their parenting roles.

Stone’s (2001) results showed that as divorced fathers’ parental roles became more clear, their levels of post-divorce distress decreased as a function of increased satisfaction with paternal roles. Additionally, psychological well-being and satisfaction with parental roles were higher for fathers who maintained sole custody of their children. The author further contended that assessing the clarity of divorced fathers’ parental roles was complicated by a lack of adequate measures to assess it.
As evidenced, little published research reported on the relationship between the clarity of parents’ roles and their satisfaction with those roles, especially with regard to fathers. While understanding how mothers and fathers view and perform their parenting roles is critical to understanding the family system (Mays, 1992), more research is needed to assess the relationship between the clarity of divorced fathers’ parenting roles and their satisfaction with those roles. As indicated in Figure 3 above, the present study partially replicated Stone’s (2001) research by assessing the direct effect of fathers’ PRC on their psychological well-being, as well as the indirect effects of role clarity through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

In addition to the clarity of parenting roles, the level of efficacy which fathers maintain regarding their roles as parents may also affect their satisfaction with their parenting roles, as theorized in Figure 1. That is, fathers also may experience increased satisfaction in their parenting roles when they believe that they possess the skills and knowledge necessary to parent effectively.

**Efficacy Theory**

The roots of efficacy theory are embedded in social cognition and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Murdock, 2012). Bandura (1977) wrote that self-efficacy reflects one’s level of confidence in successfully executing behaviors required to produce desired outcomes. An individual may believe that performing specific behaviors will produce a desired outcome, but he may not engage in those behaviors if he doubts his ability to perform them successfully. However, having adequate skills and incentives (i.e. increased efficacy), may lead an individual to
engage in more activities, to sustain their efforts for a longer time and to expend more effort toward reaching a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). In the present study, the construct of parenting efficacy was assessed as shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

*Theoretical Model Depicting the Relationships between Parenting Efficacy, Parenting Role Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-Being.*

*Self-efficacy.* The construct of general self-efficacy (GSE) addresses individuals’ perceived competency to successfully complete a task, independent of specific situations (Bandura, 1982). Furthermore, individuals’ ability to accomplish a task may be influenced more by how they *perceived* their ability than by their *actual* level of competence. Perceived GSE also may be a better
predictor of successive undertaking of a task than is actual prior task completion. Early studies showed that GSE predicted physiological arousal, stress reactions, regulation of addictive behaviors, striving for achievement and career development (Bandura, 1982).

GSE was studied to a great extent in recent decades with regard to many different populations, situations and outcomes. With regard to physical health, increased GSE was positively correlated with health-related quality of life for individuals who suffered a heart attack two years prior (Brink, Alsén, Herlitz, Kjellgren, & Cliffordson, 2012). Increased GSE was also positively correlated with intentions and actual engagement in exercise (Maddison & Prapavessis, 2004). Furthermore, among a sample of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, a general sense of hope was significantly related to self-efficacy, such that more hopeful individuals also reported increased GSE (Harris, Cameron, & Lang, 2011).

Regarding psychological health, GSE was negatively associated with adolescents’ psychopathological symptoms (e.g. depression, anxiety, somatization), and no differences in GSE were found between boys and girls (Alinia, Borjali, Jomehri, & Sohrabi, 2008). GSE also was negatively associated with poor psychological outcomes, including depressive symptoms and neuroticism (Bornstein et al., 2003; Cutrona & Troutman, 1986; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). GSE also significantly predicted drinking behaviors among a sample of alcohol dependent adults (Oei, Hasking, & Phillips, 2007), and it was a better
predictor of state anxiety than was perceived control over a specific activity (Endler, Speer, Johnson, & Flett, 2001).

Other studies showed that reduced GSE was associated with lower socio-economic status and subjective well-being (Yue-hua, 2003), increased symptoms of PTSD (Hirschel & Schulenberg, 2009) and lower exam grades (Imam, 2006), and was more highly related to motivation than was self-esteem (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2004). As evidenced, increased GSE was shown to be associated with many positive individual outcomes. Furthermore, the benefits of increased efficacy were not limited to those involving physical and psychological well-being, or to factors associated with socio-economic status. In recent years researchers also assessed the benefits of increased efficacy in family settings, including parenting roles.

**Parenting efficacy.** Parenting efficacy (PE) reflects individuals’ perceived competence in fulfilling their parental roles (Hess, Teti, & Hussey-Gardner, 2004; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2010; Warren, Brown, Layne, & Nelson, 2011) and authors reported positive relationships between parents’ general competence (i.e. GSE) and PE (Borgenschneider et al., 1997; Murdock, 2012). However, the majority of studies which investigated PE were designed to assess the outcomes of parents’ children. For example, Jones and Prinz (2005) posited that, through modeling behavior, parents who perceived increased levels of PE likely were more engaged in effective parenting behaviors, which would then lead to better academic and psycho-social outcomes in their children.
Additionally, Warren et al. (2011) reported that among parents whose children were in clinical psychological therapy, two of the three domains within their measure of PE (i.e. parental connection, psychological autonomy) were positively associated with children’s length of time in therapy, and all three subscales were associated with children’s outcomes at intake. Borgenschneider et al. (1997) reported that for both fathers and mothers, increased PE was associated with sons’ and daughters’ reports of increased parental monitoring and responsiveness. In addition, increased PE among fathers was positively correlated with less substance use and lower susceptibility to peer influence for both sons and daughters, and with higher school grades among sons.

In their review of the PE literature, Jones and Prinz (2005) delineated several positive outcomes associated with increased levels of PE, including parents’ increased warmth and control with toddlers, and appropriate limit setting and responsiveness as reported by adolescent children. Conversely, lower levels of PE were associated with callous discipline of younger children.

Despite research which reported on PE, some authors contended that studies which assessed fathers’ PE was sparse (Murdock, 2012). For example, Borgenschneider et al. (1997) reported that while some research focused on the effects of younger children’s behaviors and characteristics on their mother’s parenting, fathers and older children (i.e. adolescents) were virtually ignored even though children’s influence on parenting becomes more salient as children get older. Additionally, few studies assessed fathers’ PE and it’s associations with their well-being and parenting behaviors (Leerkes & Burney, 2007).
Based on Belsky’s (1984) model of parenting determinants, Borgenschneider et al. (1997) asserted that perceived parental competence was not stable and enduring, but it instead reflected an ability to adapt to changing parental demands as children grew older. This finding may be even more important as it relates to divorced fathers, who often go through many post-divorce parenting transitions and as their children age. Furthermore, fathers’ parenting competency was strongly predicted by the amount of support received from his partner or spouse (Borgenschneider et al., 1997), yet such support is often removed from fathers after divorce, leaving them to find other forms of support with regard to their parental roles and responsibilities.

As with many other measures and constructs, Jones and Prinz (2005) noted that assessing PE was often hindered by variability in operational definitions and conceptualizations, and by a lack of research which assessed causality. Because of these limitations and the limited amount of previous research which assessed fathers’ PE, the present study added to the body of divorce literature by assessing the relationship between divorced fathers’ PE and their psychological well-being as indicated in Figure 4 above. Unlike other constructs included in the proposed model (e.g., role clarity, parenting encouragement), efficacy includes perceptions of the self and is not typically influenced by others. As such, no direct impact of parenting efficacy on well-being was theorized, as depicted in Figure 4.

Moreover, single parents who maintain low levels of PE may benefit from receiving parenting support or encouragement from others. In this way, parents
whose well-being is reduced as a function of lowered PE may still maintain adequate well-being by way of support or encouragement from others.

**Parenting Encouragement**

In the present study, the relationship between fathers’ *Parenting Encouragement* (PEn) and psychological well-being was assessed as indicated in Figure 5 below. Overall, social support in any form may be an important moderator of potentially stressful events (Gore, 1981). As an institution, marriage may provide an additional form of social support to help buffer against the negative effects of stress (Miller, Lefcourt, & Ware, 1983). Some researchers reported on the role of social support in family settings; usually within the context of support between and among spouses. For example, Belsky (1984) suggested that quality of the marital relationship was the most salient influence on social support when assessing competent parenting. However, such support is often understandably removed from fathers after divorce, who must find other forms of encouragement whether from family, colleagues, social networks or some other source.
Figure 5

*Theoretical Model Depicting the Relationships between Parenting, Encouragement, Parenting Role Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-Being*

Despite the many advantages of receiving encouragement from others, little research assessed the relationship between encouragement received by divorced fathers and their psychological well-being. For instance, in his review of the literature which focused on divorced father’s well-being, Bottom (2013) identified only two such studies which also included measures of social support. In the first study, Buehler (1988) assessed informal forms of social support as a function of fathers’ satisfaction with social life, which was reported in more general terms of life satisfaction. In her study of 141 single mothers and 36 single fathers, participants were asked to report their satisfaction with several life areas
including love relationship, friends, and job. Results showed no differences between fathers’ and mothers’ overall satisfaction, with the exception of fathers’ higher satisfaction with their previous marriage.

More specific to receiving parenting support, in a sample of divorced non-custodial fathers, Stone (2001) assessed support with regard to receiving parenting encouragement from others. The author defined encouragement as support that divorced fathers received from relevant others, including co-workers, former spouse, parents and employers. Results showed that the presence of such encouragement had a positive effect on divorced fathers’ psychological well-being. Because there was a lack of attention to the relationship between parenting encouragement and well-being among divorced fathers, the present study added to the limited body of literature by assessing the relationship between the two constructs, as shown in Figure 5 above.

In addition to parenting encouragement and other constructs described above, an important factor concerning fathers’ role satisfaction and well-being may be the levels of control that fathers believe they have over issues of post-divorce child rearing. For example, in contrast to perceptions that divorced fathers often maintain animosity toward their former spouses, fathers often express more anger toward ‘the system’ which fathers believe to restrict their control over child rearing decisions and behaviors (Laasko & Adams, 2006).
**Control Theory**

As shown in Figure 6 below, the present study assessed the relationships between constructs of control and divorced fathers’ parenting role satisfaction and psychological well-being.

Figure 6

*Theoretical Model Depicting the Relationships between Locus of Control, Parenting Role Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-Being.*

The theoretical roots of *control theory* stem from the theory of planned behavior and social learning theory (Rotter, 1966). As Rotter explained, belief in *external control* is interpreted when reinforcement following a behavior is perceived to be contingent upon *chance* (e.g., *luck* or *fate*), or as under the control of *powerful others*. Alternatively, a belief in external control may result when an
event (i.e. reinforcement) is unpredictable because of complex forces surrounding the event. Conversely, an *internal control* belief is interpreted when reinforcement is believed to be contingent upon one’s own characteristics or behaviors. In this regard, individuals may be placed along a continuum of internal/external control beliefs.

Two important assumptions within Rotter’s (1966) conceptualization of control included: 1) that control was assessed along a dichotomous internal/external continuum on which individuals may be placed based on whether they believed that they controlled the presence of a reinforcer (i.e. internal) or the presence of a reinforcer was outside of their control (i.e. external); and, 2) that perceived control was limited to control over the presence of a reinforcer that follows a behavior. As Rotter (1966) explained, reinforcers strengthen the expectation that a given behavior will subsequently be followed by that reinforcement in the future, and failure of the reinforcer to present itself will likely reduce such an expectation.

*Locus of control.* In reviewing a series of studies regarding *locus of control* (LOC), Rotter (1966) wrote that individuals relied less on past experience when they perceived a task to be controlled by external forces (i.e. *chance* or *powerful others*) and, accordingly, one may learn less and perhaps learn incorrectly and develop maladaptive behavior patterns. Rotter also reported findings suggesting that task motivation decreased when outcomes were perceived as the result of chance rather than one’s skill at obtaining the desired outcome, and that externals were less likely to generalize outcomes from one task
to another. Positive outcomes associated with increased internal LOC included increased intention to earn a post-secondary degree, increased understanding of personal health conditions, increased intention to participate in civil rights movements, decreased defensive personality and abstinence from smoking.

Regarding whether it was best for individuals to maintain an internal or external LOC, Rotter (1966) suggested that while it was prudent to expect positive relationships between internality and positive adjustment, such expectations may not be true for extreme scores of internality. For example, an extreme propensity to believe in one’s self as having primary control over reinforcers may leave him with no one but himself to blame for undesired outcomes. Rotter continued by adding that externality may also be beneficial as it buffers against feelings of personal failure, although extreme externality may suggest defensive behaviors related to maladjustment. Taken together, it appears that the “healthiest” personality characteristic may be to subscribe to a moderate amount of both internal and external LOC, with slight preference given to increased internality. This assumption appears to have stood the test of time, as 27 years later Furnham and Steele (1993) advised that while internal LOC was most often associated with positive outcomes and external LOC was often described with regard to negative outcomes, examples did exist in which the opposite were true.

Early research showed many positive correlations between increased internal LOC and positive personal outcomes. For example, internals were more knowledgeable about their own health conditions, were more inclined to ask
questions of health care providers, and expressed more dissatisfaction with the amount of information that they were given about their condition (Seeman & Evans, 1962). Additionally, African American college students who intended to actively engage in civil action were significantly more internal than those who were not interested in attending or were interested in attending such events but not in being actively engaged (Gore & Rotter, 1963). Also, high school students who intended to pursue post secondary education were significantly more internal than students who did not have such intentions (Franklin, 1963).

Recent studies found increased internality to reliably predict positive social adjustment, increased academic achievement, increased faith in successfully managing difficult situations, and better physical and emotional health (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Chorpita, Brown, & Barlow, 1998; Tone, Goodfellow, & Nowicki, 2012). Additionally, Huntley, Palmer, and Wakeling (2012) found that a higher internal LOC was significantly and positively associated with effective problem-solving and self-esteem among a sample of male sex offenders in an English prison. Conversely, increased external LOC was associated with negative outcomes including higher levels of negative affect (Clark, Watson, & Mineka, 1994).

More recently, researchers moved away from conceptualizing LOC as a linear internal/external continuum by contending that external control factors may be further divided into distinct sources of external control (i.e. chance/fate and control by powerful others). Additionally, control is no longer studied only as it relates to perceived control over the presence of a behavioral reinforcer, but also
as it relates to control over processes of attainment. That is, individuals may perceive that they possess internal control over the process of attaining a reinforcer (internality for behavior), while at the same time believing that receiving any reinforcers is beyond their control (externality for outcomes). Despite these divergences, control theory continued to solidify itself as a well-established construct with regard to predicting positive psychological, work-related and relational outcomes as well as to behavioral intentions.

Relative to the theoretical model for the present study (Figure 6 above), two previous studies regarding the relationship between LOC and psychological well-being were published. In both studies, researchers compared the effects of negative life events on the psychological well-being of high-internal and high-external LOC individuals. In the first study, Lefcourt and colleagues (1981) reported that college students who maintained an increased external LOC appeared overall to experience more mood disturbances than internals, regardless of life experiences. However, when the students were asked to recall specific past negative life events, internals reported greater levels of mood disturbance than did externals, and the amount of disturbance was greater when participants recalled more recent events. These findings led the authors to assert that LOC was perhaps a better predictor of moods in the absence of stressors than as a buffer against stress.

In the second study, Specht, Egloff, and Schmukle (2011) found a pattern similar to that of Lefcourt and colleagues when assessing the relationship between LOC, affect, and experiencing a negative life event (i.e. death of a spouse). The
authors asserted that while having an external predisposition was typically associated with adverse outcomes, such a perspective may at times be beneficial. The authors subsequently theorized that externals were likely to have a more realistic expectation of outcomes when faced with events that truly were beyond their personal control. As a result, externals may be less affected by extremely stressful and uncontrollable events (i.e. death of a spouse) because they cope with the uncontrollable event more effectively. Specht et al. (2011) reported that having an internal LOC did indeed have a significant positive relationship with participants’ life satisfaction. However, when faced with a major and uncontrollable stressor (i.e. death of a spouse), participants with higher internal LOC experienced a significantly larger decrease in life satisfaction. In fact, upon experiencing the death of a spouse, life satisfaction of internals dropped to below that of externals, and all individuals who experienced the death of a spouse did not reach their baseline (i.e. pre-event) levels of life satisfaction until eight years after the event.

These findings were similar to those of Lefcourt et al. (1981) who three decades earlier reported that compared to externals, internals’ moods were more negatively affected by recent negative events, although internals’ disturbed moods dissipated more quickly over time. Taken together, findings from both reports indicated that the magnitude of negative events was much greater for internals than for externals. That is, having an external LOC belief was a protective factor indicating that there are benefits to having such a disposition, just as Rotter (1966) hypothesized.
As depicted in Figure 6 above, and similar to the studies by Specht et al. (2011) and Lefcourt et al. (1981), general LOC was measured in the present study to determine whether a recent negative life event (i.e. divorce) caused high-internal LOC fathers to experience greater reduced well-being than was experienced by high-external LOC fathers. Additionally, because fathers experience many changes during and after divorce, important factors of control may not be limited to those associated with the divorce itself. For instance, post-divorce parenting roles must be negotiated with former spouses, and fathers may express a range of beliefs regarding their control over family and child rearing circumstances.

*Parenting locus of control.* In addition to general LOC, researchers also assessed the construct with regard to family systems. For instance, both husbands and wives who maintained an internal marital locus of control reported higher levels of engaging in the solving of marital problems and significantly higher levels of satisfaction in their marriages (Miller et al., 1986). Based on findings from their study the authors suggested that their marriage-specific measure of LOC increased the accuracy needed to clarify its link to marital satisfaction, as suggested by earlier researchers.

In addition to studying control within the marriage relationship, some researchers also studied parenting locus of control (PLOC). The present study assessed the relationship between PLOC and psychological well-being among fathers, as indicated in Figure 6 above. That is, levels of control that parents believed they possessed over child rearing decisions and children’s behaviors and
outcomes. Specific to PLOC, studies typically assessed the construct using measures of general LOC (Rosno et al., 2008), which was often analyzed with regard to children’s outcomes. For example, parents’ general LOC was associated with child-adult communication patterns (Bugental et al., 1980), parent-child interactions (Chandler, Wolf, Cook, & Dugovics, 1980) and development of children’s own LOC (Barling, 1982).

More recently, two measures specific to PLOC were developed. First, Campis, Lyman, and Prentice-Dunn (1986) developed a five-factor measure of PLOC and reported that parents who maintained an internal PLOC experienced fewer parenting problems, less frustration and increased self-efficacy. Second, Furnham (2010) created four-factor measure of PLOC to assess the extent to which individuals believed that the shaping of children’s lives and futures were due to parental influence. His results showed that individuals who were in regular contact with their children and were favorably disposed toward them were more likely to maintain an internal PLOC. Furthermore, higher scores on the Fatalistic subscale (i.e. child outcomes are a matter of chance or fate) of Furnham’s measure were positively associated with individuals who were working-class or unemployed, had few siblings, and who did not like children.

As evidenced, PLOC was most often studied with regard to children’s outcomes. Furthermore, to the author’s knowledge no study to date assessed the relationship between perceived control over parenting decisions and behaviors (i.e. PLOC) and psychological well-being among divorced fathers. As indicated in Figure 6 above, the present study assessed the direct effect of PLOC on fathers’
well-being, as well as the mediating effect of parenting role satisfaction between PLOC and well-being.

Furthermore, very little research was conducted which reported on divorced fathers’ well-being. As such, little is known about the causes and effects of divorce-related issues which might influence these fathers’ levels of depression, anxiety, self-esteem and affective outcomes. This is especially true when comparing the bodies of literature relative to reports on the well-being of women and children of divorce. Furthermore, empirical studies which did focus on divorced fathers’ outcomes often lacked established theoretical frameworks to establish possible causal relationships.

**Rationale**

To summarize, several factors were theorized to impact divorced fathers’ psychological well-being. Perhaps the most influential factor regarding the well-being of divorced fathers was whether they maintained full custody of their children, shared custody with their former spouse, or had no legal custody at all. Because a lack of child custody often restricts the amount and quality of time that non-custodial fathers are with their children, such fathers often reported negative affective outcomes, such as increased depression.

The clarity of divorced fathers’ parenting roles also impacted their well-being, and the relationship was mediated by fathers’ satisfaction with their parenting roles. Specifically, divorced fathers’ levels of distress decreased as their parenting roles became more clear, and satisfaction with parenting roles mediated the relationship between role clarity and well-being (Stone, 2001).
Parenting Efficacy also positively impacted family systems, although most studies assessed the relationship between parents’ parenting competence and children’s outcomes. Additionally, studies involving Parenting Efficacy among divorced fathers was nearly non-existent despite its possible influence on fathers’ satisfaction with their post-divorce parenting roles (Murdock, 2012).

Little research also assessed the presence and impact of parenting support relative to divorced fathers’ well-being. For instance, only two studies reported on relationships between social support and well-being among divorced fathers (Buehler, 1988; Stone, 2001). However, those studies assessed neither how important fathers reported sources of encouragement to be, nor whether receiving such encouragement would be easy. Furthermore, reports of parenting locus of control also were lacking in research, and no studies were identified which assessed the impact of either parenting locus of control or general locus of control on divorced fathers’ well-being.

While some attention was given to divorced fathers’ post-divorce outcomes, most research involved assessing children’s outcomes. The present study was conducted to add substantial contributions to the literature involving divorced fathers and their outcomes by assessing how each of the constructs described above relate to the psychological well-being of divorced fathers, as shown in Figure 1 (see p. 4). Additionally, the study was expected to compliment previous work reported in the divorce literature and to provide a more solid theoretical foundation under which future research may be conducted.
Because many fathers experience negative outcomes as a result of divorce, it is imperative to conduct studies which may explain or predict their psychological well being. For example, understanding factors which influence fathers’ post-divorce well-being may assist therapists, researchers and policy makers to develop systems to prevent fathers from experiencing excessive negative outcomes. Moreover, it may be reasonable to suggest that fathers would be able to parent more effectively when their own well-being is attended to. As such, the following Hypotheses were presented with the intention of helping to more clearly understand fathers’ post-divorce well-being.
Statement of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: Fathers with shared custody will report higher levels of parenting role satisfaction and well-being than those fathers without custody, and fathers with sole custody will report higher levels of parenting role satisfaction and well-being than those with shared custody.

Hypothesis II: Parenting role clarity will have a direct effect on well-being, as well as an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

Hypothesis III: Parenting efficacy will have an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

Hypothesis IV: Parenting encouragement will have a direct effect on well-being, as well as an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

Hypothesis V: Parenting locus of control will have a direct effect on well-being and an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

Hypothesis VI: For recently divorced fathers (i.e. less than 12 months) there will be an inverse relationship between well-being and general locus of control, such that those with an increased internal general locus of control will report lower
levels of well-being than will those with an external general locus of control.

**Research Questions**

**Question I:** Does the proposed theoretical model (Figure 1) demonstrate acceptable fit for the relationships between each of the exogenous variables and the endogenous variable of well-being, and for the mediating role of parenting role satisfaction as presented?

**Question II:** Is it possible to identify participants’ perceived sources of external control (i.e., *powerful others*) over child rearing issues?
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Participants recruited for the present study included biological fathers. Although the specific focus of study was the outcomes of divorced biological fathers, recruitment and participation of all fathers was expected to decrease any possible bias resulting from self-selection into the study. Recruitment of biological and non-biological fathers also will allow for additional between-group comparisons outside the scope of the present study. Kline (1998, p. 111) suggested that an adequate sample size to determine the fit of models within structural equation modeling, such as depicted in Figure 1, is to include 10 participants for each parameter included within the model. Because the structural model for the proposed study includes 23 parameters, 230 participants were needed to adequately determine the fit of the statistical model for the study.

Demographic characteristics of the final sample were expected to be similar to those reported by Bottom (2013). For instance, Bottom reported that previous research with divorced fathers showed that participants most often were White, aged 30-40, completed 12-14 years of formal education, and earned lower-to middle-class incomes (Bokker, Farley, & Bailey, 2006; Bokker, Farley, & Denny, 2006; Rettig et al., 1999; 2001; Umberson & Williams, 1993).
Psychometric Measures

Demographic Items. Several items were included in the online questionnaire to assess relationships between participants’ demographic characteristics and the constructs presented in Figure 1. Examples of demographic items included participants’ custody status (e.g. full, shared, none), age, current romantic relationship status (e.g. single, remarried, cohabitating), level of education, number and ages of children, time since divorce, annual income, and geographic location (see Appendix A, pg. 120, for a complete list of demographic items).

Parenting Role Satisfaction. Regarding parenting role satisfaction (PRS), the most relevant available published literature to the current study was Stone’s (2001) report in which the author utilized an adapted version of Bentelspacher’s (1984) 14-item measure. Similar to Bentelspacher’s measure, participants in Stone’s study were asked to rate 9 items from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied) to indicate how satisfied they were with different aspects of their parenting roles. Sample items included: Satisfaction with the amount of influence over my child’s growth and Satisfaction with quality of time with my child. Total scores could range from 9 to 36, and Stone reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 for the measure in his sample, although the author failed to report the sample mean and standard deviation.

Because Stone’s entire 9-item measure (2001) could not be identified even after contacting the author, the present study assessed PRS using 10 of the 14 items in Bentelspacher’s (1984) measure. However, Bentelspacher reported
neither means nor standard deviations or a Cronbach alpha for his 10 item measure. For the present study, items were rated from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied), for total scores that could range from 10 to 40. The items were presented with the anchor statement, How satisfied are you with….; sample responses included, Your performance as a father when you compare it to other fathers you know and The sense of value and purpose you feel in being a parent. The entire measure is listed in Appendix B (pg. 126).

Parenting Role Clarity. Fathers’ reports of parenting role clarity (PRC) was assessed as a partial replication of studies conducted by Stone (2001, 2006). In both of his reports, Stone wrote that no satisfactory measure of fathers’ parenting role clarity was previously developed, and a thorough search of the literature confirmed that to date no well-established measure was reported. Stone (2001) subsequently created and reported on responses to a 7-item unidimensional measure to assess fathers’ perceived clarity of their parenting roles. Stone reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.70 for his measure, although he did not provide a mean or standard deviation for his data.

However, because Stone’s measure assessed fathers’ views of all fathers in general (e.g. A father should be a continuing part of their child’s life….), the present study utilized a newly-developed measure of PRC as it relates to fathers’ own specific experiences. For example, sample items in the newly-developed measure in the present study included, My childrearing decisions are often wrong or criticized (R) and My roles as a father are clear to me. In this way, the measure was expected to more accurately capture fathers’ reports relative to their
own personal experiences rather than reflecting their beliefs relative to all fathers. Similar to Stone’s (2001) measure of PRC, the present study used a unidimensional instrument including 5 items rated from 1 (very uncertain) to 6 (very certain). Total scores for the measure could range from 5 to 30, with higher scores indicating increased clarity of parenting roles. A complete list of items in the measure is listed in Appendix C (pg. 128).

**Parenting Efficacy.** Parenting efficacy (PE) was assessed using a 5-item unidimensional measure first reported by Dumka, Stoerzinger, Jackson, and Roosa (1996). Sample items in the measure included, *I feel sure of myself as a mother/father and I know I am doing a good job as a mother/father.* Items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 7 (always), with higher scores indicating increased PE. Although Dumka et al. (1996) did not report total mean scores for the measure, the authors reported Cronbach alphas of 0.70 (item $M = 5.55, SD = 0.65$) for a sample of Anglo American mothers and 0.68 (item $M = 5.62, SD = 1.10$) for a sample of Mexican immigrant mothers. The entire list of items is listed in Appendix D (pg. 130).

**Parenting Encouragement.** The present study measured fathers’ parenting encouragement with a 13-item, unidimensional measure which assessed how encouraging certain people were of participants’ efforts to be a good parent (Stone, 2006). In Stone’s study, participants reported how encouraging 13 sources (e.g. former spouse, minister, workplace, lawyers, therapists) were of their efforts to be a good father, by rating each source from 1 (very discouraging) to 6 (very encouraging). Participants also were given an opportunity to respond
“not applicable” if a particular source of encouragement was not relevant or available to them. Total scores could range from 13 to 78. Although Stone did not report a mean or standard deviation for his sample, he did report a Cronbach alpha of 0.79. The 13-item measure is provided in Appendix E (pg. 132).

Two additional subscales of the parenting encouragement measure also were used in the present study. Specifically, each of the 13 items of the measure of parenting encouragement were re-worded to assess how important (i.e. Importance subscale) and how easy (i.e. Ease subscale) fathers believed it was to receive encouragement from each of the 13 sources in Stone’s (2006) original measure. These two additional subscales may be used for supplementary post-hoc analyses to provide context for whether participants receive encouragement from sources that are important to them, and whether important sources of encouragement are readily available. As such, the entire measure of parenting encouragement for the present study included 3 subscales, each with 13 items, for a total of 39 items. The two additional subscales of this measure are listed in Appendix E (pp. 134-135).

General Locus of Control. Because Rotter’s (1966) I-E Scale continues to achieve adequate reliability and validity across samples and situations (see Furnham, 1987; Halpert & Hill, 2011), the current study assessed fathers’ general locus of control (LOC) with the I-E Scale. The original I-E Scale contained 29 items, of which 6 were filler items. Each item was presented as a pair of statements such that one statement reflected a belief in internality and the other reflected a belief in externality, and respondents were asked to select the
statement which most accurately reflected their personal belief. For example, one sample item was presented as:

1. A. Many of the unhappy things in people’s lives are partly due to bad luck.
   
   B. People’s misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

   Each item pair included one item which indicated a belief in external LOC and one item which indicated a belief in internal LOC. Items were coded such that external responses were scored as 1 and internal responses were scored as 0; total scores could range from 0 – 23, and higher scores indicated increased belief in externality.

   In a series of initial studies which utilized the I-E Scale, Rotter (1966) reported sample means between 7.31 (SD = 3.64) within a sample of 32 female 12th-grade college applicants and 10.00 (SD = 4.20) for a sample of 32 18-year-old males in the Boston area. Cronbach alphas ranged from 0.65 to 0.76 and test/retest reliability ranged between \( r = 0.60 \) and \( r = 0.88 \). More recently, researchers reported sufficient internal reliability of the I-E Scale in a variety of samples and cultures, including Cronbach alphas of 0.90 among a sample of first-time DUI offenders (Cavaiola & Strohmetz, 2010), 0.71 among a sample of Turkish teachers (Kesici, 2008), and 0.76 among a sample of German citizens (Specht et al., 2011). The entire measure is listed in Appendix F (pg. 138).

   **Parenting Locus of Control.** A search of the literature showed that only two domain-specific measures of parenting locus of control (PLOC) were reported; first by Campis et al. (1986), and more recently Furnham (2010). Through factor analysis Campis et al. (1986) found good fit for a 47-item, 5-
factor measure (i.e. parental efficacy, parental responsibility, child control over parents’ life, parental belief in fate/chance, parental control of child’s behavior). Similarly, through factor analysis Furnham (2010) reported good fit for a 60-item 4-factor (i.e. fatalistic, responsibility, fate/denial, self-efficacy beliefs) measure.

However, these measures assessed neither parents’ beliefs about control over parenting decisions (e.g. bed times, childcare, amount of time with children), nor possible sources of external control of such decisions (e.g. powerful others). Additionally, distinguishing who divorced fathers believe to maintain control of such decisions is important because fathers often express more anger toward “the system” than they do toward mothers who may interfere with their being with their children (Laasko & Adams, 2006).

Because no such measures of PLOC were developed, the present study utilized a newly-developed 24-item, 3-factor measure to assess who fathers believe to possess control over parenting decisions (i.e. Internal-Self, External-Mother, External-System). Each subscale included 8 similarly-written items rated from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true), and possible scores for each subscale could range from 8 to 40. Sample items included: My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are determined by me (Internal-Self subscale), My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by their mother (External-Mother subscale), and My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by the legal system (External-System subscale).

Because no psychometric properties of the newly-developed measure were available for the measure prior to the present study, an exploratory factor analysis
of the measure was conducted, as described in Chapter III. Additionally, only the Internal-Self subscale was included when testing the fit of the model (i.e., Figure 1). A complete list of items in each of the three subscales of the PLOC measure is listed in Appendix G (pg 141).

Psychological Well-Being. In his review of the divorced father literature, Bottom (2013) reported that studies involving divorced fathers most often utilized the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Bokker, Farley, & Bailey, 2006; Bokker, Farley, & Denny, 2006; Hilton & Kopera-Frey, 2004; Umberson & Williams, 1993). As such, the present study also utilized the CES-D to measure divorced fathers’ psychological well-being.

The CES-D (Radloff, 1977) is a 20- item unidimensional measure designed to measure overall psychological well-being. Sample items included: I felt that people disliked me and I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing. Participants indicated how often they experienced the feelings described in each item in the past week, and available responses ranged from 0 (rarely or none of the time; less than 1 day a week) to 3 (most or all of the time; 5-7 days a week), for total scores which could range from 0 to 60.

Radloff (1977) reported that initial studies with the CES-D showed sufficient internal consistency for both clinical samples (Cronbach alpha = 0.90; \( M = 7.94 – 9.25, SD = 7.53 – 8.58 \)) and non-clinical samples (Cronbach alpha = 0.85; \( M = 24.42, SD = 13.51 \)). Additionally, the measure displayed sufficient validity, with a 2-week test-retest correlation of 0.51 and an 8-week test-retest correlation of 0.59. The entire CES-D is provided in Appendix H (pg. 145).
Procedure

Participants were recruited through several methods. One method included contacting organizers of non-profit and divorce support organizations and asking that they inform their members about the research study and to provide members with a link to the online questionnaire. As an incentive to promote the online questionnaire to their clients or members, the author offered to provide these organizations with an overview of descriptive statistics after the data were collected. Also, snowballing techniques were utilized in which participants were asked to inform other fathers about the study and to encourage them to also participate. Finally, participants were recruited by word-of-mouth in which the author personally asked fathers to participate and to encourage their father friends to also participate. When possible, data were coded according to recruitment method to allow for supplementary post-hoc between-group comparisons. Recruitment materials (i.e. emails) sent to appropriate organizations and individuals included either a direct hyperlink to the online questionnaire, or information about how to link to the online questionnaire through an easily identifiable web address.

Before beginning the questionnaire, participants were provided with a letter of informed consent which outlined their rights as participants, any risks and benefits of participation, and confidentiality of collected data. Participants were asked to electronically indicate their consent to participate by clicking on a hyperlink embedded within the online consent form, and clicking on the link
directed participants to the online questionnaire. Data were collected via Qualtrics, an online data collection tool.

The entire questionnaire included approximately 150 items. Based on pilot testing with 3 fathers, it was expected that answering all items would take approximately 20-30 minutes. After completing the questionnaire participants were provided with a debriefing statement informing them of the intention of the study. To help reduce any response biases or “survey fatigue” that participants might experience while completing the questionnaire, some measures included reverse-scored or filler items.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Data Preparation

Power analysis. Adequate sample sizes for testing the fit of the structural equation model included having 10 participants for each of the 23 parameters in the model (Kline, 1998, p. 112). Therefore, 230 participants were needed to adequately test the fit of the model. To account for participants who began the survey but did not complete it or who did not qualify for inclusion in the final analysis (i.e. women, non-divorced men and fathers), the total sample was overestimated and the online survey was terminated after attaining a total initial sample size of 591.

Data cleaning. Data then were downloaded from the online collection site and saved in an SPSS file. Data cleaning included removing responses from women \((n = 33)\) and participants who did not indicate their sex \((n = 27)\) or their relationship status \((n = 10)\). A listwise deletion then was performed to remove cases in which participants did not respond to the final item of the questionnaire \((n = 126)\). Of the 126 cases removed by listwise deletion, it was observed that a considerable number did not provide responses beyond the demographic items or did not complete a substantial number of complete measures within the survey. After removing these 126 cases, the sample size was 405.

Missing values. Next, missing values analyses were performed to ensure that an acceptable number of missing values (i.e. responses to individual items) was achieved to run the intended analyses. The analyses showed that the number
of missing values by measure ranged from 0.18% (Parenting Role Satisfaction) to 1.42% (Parenting Encouragement). Because no measure (and, in turn, the entire data set) received no more than 5.0% missing data, it was determined that the entire data set was acceptable for the intended analyses (Cohen et al. 2003).

Finally, cases for the present study’s analyses were removed for participants ($n = 165$) who reported never being divorced (i.e. were never married, were still married, or were separated at the time of data collection).

Thus, the final dataset used for analyses was reduced to only participants who were male, who had at least one biological child, and who were divorced. The final sample for the current study was 230 participants, which satisfied the number recommended by others (Kline, 1998; Schreiber et al. 2006).

**Preliminary Analyses**

The final sample included 230 divorced fathers ($M$ age = 44.9 years, $SD = 9.3$) with an average of 3.4 biological children. After cleaning and organizing data, several descriptive and preliminary analyses were conducted and those results are presented below. As shown in Table 1 below, modal characteristics of participants indicate that they were most frequently single, maintained joint/shared custody, self-identified as White/Caucasian ethnicity, Christian, attended at least some college, and earned incomes over $25,000 per year.
Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Divorce Relationship Status:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>106 (46.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a Relationship</td>
<td>62 (27.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarried</td>
<td>62 (27.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Custody Status:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole</td>
<td>11 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared</td>
<td>129 (56.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>61 (26.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>10 (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15 (6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>202 (87.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>6 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>9 (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12 (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>96 (41.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Count (Percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>44 (19.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>6 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>83 (36.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS Degree</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Degree or GED</td>
<td>25 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates or Some College</td>
<td>78 (33.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>69 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>41 (17.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Level Degree</td>
<td>16 (7.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual Income:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Count (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$15,000</td>
<td>25 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,001-$25,000</td>
<td>18 (7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001-$50,000</td>
<td>70 (30.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001-$75,000</td>
<td>49 (21.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $75,000</td>
<td>66 (28.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Totals may not add to 100% due to missing data.

Additionally, means, standard deviations, and internal reliabilities (i.e. Cronbach’s alpha) were calculated for each of the measures included in the model. Table 2 below shows the Pearson correlations between all measures and
Table 3 reports the mean, standard deviation, and Chronback alpha for each measure in the present study.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRS</th>
<th>PRC</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>PS-E</th>
<th>PS-I</th>
<th>PS-Ease</th>
<th>PLOC-Self</th>
<th>PLOC-Mother</th>
<th>PLOC-System</th>
<th>WB</th>
<th>LOC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS-E</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS-I</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS-Ease</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOC-Self</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOC-Mother</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.75**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOC-System</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$n = 230; * = 0.05 (2-tailed), ** = 0.01 (2-tailed)

*Note. PRS = Parenting Role Satisfaction, PE = Parenting Efficacy, PRC = Parenting Role Clarity, PS-E = Parenting Support Encouragement, PS-I = Parenting Support Importance, PS-Ease = Parenting Support Ease, PLOC = Parenting Locus of Control, WB = Well-Being, LOC = General Locus of Control.*

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Skew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Satisfaction</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Efficacy</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Role Clarity</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>18.47</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Locus of Control</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-Being</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $n = 230$

**Primary Analyses**

Because the proposed study assessed factors that were expected to affect divorced fathers’ well-being, the primary statistical analysis was that of *path analysis*. Unlike statistical tests of significance (e.g. *ANOVA*, *regression*), path analysis allows for the relationships among each of the variables to correlate while being assessed simultaneously (Kline, 1998). Furthermore, predictive analyses (i.e. *multiple regression*) do not adequately assess mediating effects of
variables; any assumptions of causality of one variable on another are more appropriately assessed in path analysis than with parametric tests (i.e., t-test, F-test; Kline, 1998).

Prior to determining the goodness of fit of the hypothesized model (i.e. how well the model fit the data), covariances among the exogenous variables were computed and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Covariance Estimates Between Exogenous Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Custody Status</th>
<th>Parenting Role Clarity</th>
<th>Parenting Efficacy</th>
<th>Parenting Encouragement</th>
<th>Parenting Locus of Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Custody Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Role Clarity</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Efficacy</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>21.62**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Encouragement</td>
<td>-2.80**</td>
<td>23.28*</td>
<td>27.75**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Locus of Control</td>
<td>-1.98**</td>
<td>12.39**</td>
<td>11.21**</td>
<td>40.14**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:* * = 0.05 (2-tailed), ** = 0.01 (2-tailed)

The fitness of the overall structural model as presented in Figure 1 was assessed using *maximum likelihood estimation (MLE)*. Kline (1998) claimed that
MLE is the default estimation method utilized in many statistical programs and that it is the typical estimation procedure used when path models are analyzed.

An effects decomposition table (Table 5) is shown below, which displays the direct and indirect effects of each of the exogenous (i.e. independent; causal) variables on the endogenous (i.e. dependent) variable. Additionally, the direct effects are provided in the hypothesized model for the current study in Figure 7 below. More detailed explanations of these results are provided below relative to specific hypotheses that were offered for the present study.
### Table 5

**Decomposition of Standardized Effects on Psychological Well-Being**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous Variable</th>
<th>Parenting Role Satisfaction (PRS)</th>
<th>Psychological Well-Being (WB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Custody Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>2.26**</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect via PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Role Clarity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect via PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect via PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Encouragement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect via PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect via PRS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Locus of Control</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Role Satisfaction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.36*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *n = 230; * = .05; ** = .01
Direct Effects of Exogenous Variables on Parenting Role Clarity and Psychological Well-Being

Hypothesis I: Fathers with shared custody will report higher levels of parenting role satisfaction and well-being than will fathers without custody; fathers with sole custody will report higher levels of parenting role satisfaction and well-being than will fathers with shared custody.

Two one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine group differences in parenting satisfaction and well-being based on fathers’ custody status. The first ANOVA was a 1 (parenting satisfaction) by 3 (custody status; sole, shared, none) analysis to assess whether there were

\[ n = 230; \ * = .05; \ ** = .01 \]
differences in Parenting Role Satisfaction (PRS) scores by comparing mean scores on the measure among fathers grouped according to the three types of custody status. Mean scores and standard deviations for the measure by custody are presented in Table 6 below.

The overall model was significant, $F(2, 197) = 17.24, p < 0.01$. A Scheffe post-hoc test further indicated that participants with Full Custody reported significantly higher levels of PRS than did participants with No Custody ($p < 0.01$). Additionally, participants with Joint Custody also reported significantly higher levels of PRS than did participants with No Custody ($p < 0.01$). However, no significant difference in PRS scores was found between participants with Full Custody and those with Joint Custody ($p = 0.80, ns$). Taken together, these findings partially supported Hypothesis I, regarding Parenting Role Satisfaction and Custody Status.

Table 6

*Mean Scores for Parenting Role Satisfaction by Custody Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custody Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Parenting Role Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Custody</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28.09 (8.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint/Shared Custody</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>26.44 (8.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Custody</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19.36 (7.49)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: n = 198; Values in parentheses are standard deviations*
The second ANOVA for Hypothesis I was a (psychological well-being) by 3 (custody status: sole, shared, none) analysis to assess whether there were differences in Well-Being (WB) scores by comparing mean scores on the WB measure among fathers grouped according to the three types of custody status. Mean scores and standard deviations for the WB measure by custody status are presented in Table 7 below.

Mean scores for WB by custody status were in the direction expected such that participants with full custody reported experiencing better WB outcomes than those with shared or no custody, and those with shared custody experiencing better WB outcomes than those with no custody. However, mean differences between these groups did not reach statistical significance and therefore the overall model was not significant, $F(2, 161) = 2.00, p = 0.14$. As such, these findings did not support this portion of Hypothesis I.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Well-Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Custody</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.33 (10.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint/Shared Custody</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>18.76 (13.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Custody</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22.61 (14.65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $n = 162$; Values in parentheses are standard deviations
Hypothesis II: Parenting role clarity will have a direct effect on well-being, as well as an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

The direct and indirect effects of the exogenous variable Parenting Role Clarity (PRC) on the endogenous variable of Well-Being (WB) was assessed using path analysis as described above. As shown in Figure 7 above, PRC had a negative but non-significant direct effect on participant’s well-being. Because increased scores on the measure of PRC indicate increased clarity of parenting roles, and higher scores on the WB indicated increased negative well-being, the negative relationship between the two variables indicates that as clarity of parenting roles increased, negative well-being decreased (i.e. positive well-being increased). Although the anticipated direction of influence of PRC on WB was observed in the sample, the strength of its influence did not reach statistical significance, and therefore did not support this part of Hypothesis II.

Regarding the indirect effect of PRC on well-being through the mediating variable of Parenting Role Satisfaction (PRS), results showed a negative but non-significant indirect effect of PRC on WB through the mediating variable of PRS (Table 5). Again, although it was expected that PRC would have an indirect effect on WB through the mediating variable of PRS, the expected direction of influence was observed although the strength of the influence did not reach statistical significance, and therefore did not support this part of Hypothesis II.

Hypothesis III: Parenting efficacy will have an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.
The indirect and indirect effects of the exogenous variable of *Parenting Efficacy* (PE) on *Well-Being* was assessed with path analysis, and the relationship between PE and WB was expected to be mediated by *parenting role satisfaction* (PRS). As shown in Figure 7 and Table 5 above, increased levels of parenting efficacy had a positive and significant direct effect on PRS, indicating that as participants’ levels of parenting efficacy increased their satisfaction with their parenting roles also increased. Additionally, through the mediating variable of PRS, the total effect of PE on WB showed that increased parenting efficacy produced lower levels of negative well-being which supported Hypothesis III. *Hypothesis IV: Parenting Encouragement will have a direct effect on well-being, as well as an indirect effect on well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.*

The direct effects of the exogenous variable *Parenting Encouragement* (PEn) on the endogenous variable of *Well-Being* (WB) was assessed using path analysis as described above. Additionally, the path analysis assessed the indirect effect of PEn on WB through the mediating variable of *parenting role satisfaction* (PRS). As shown in Figure 8 above, the expected direction of direct influence of PEn on WB was supported, although the finding was not statistically significant. Additionally, no indirect effect of PEn through the mediating variable of PRS was observed (Table 5), indicating that PRS did not mediate the relationship between PEn and WB. As such, these findings did not support Hypothesis IV.
**Hypothesis V:** Parenting locus of control will have a direct effect on well-being and an indirect effect on psychological well-being through the mediating variable of parenting role satisfaction.

The direct effects of the exogenous variable *Parenting Locus of Control* (PLOC) on the endogenous variable of *Well-Being* (WB) was assessed using path analysis as described above. For this analysis, only the *Internal-Self* subscale of the PLOC measure was included in the analysis. As shown in Figure 7 above, PLOC had a negative but non-significant direct effect on WB. This indicated that as participants’ perceived control over parenting decisions increased, their negative well-being decreased (i.e. positive well-being increased) only marginally. In addition, the direct effect of PLOC on *Parenting Role Satisfaction* (PRS) was significant at $p = 0.01$ (Figure 7), indicating that as perceived control over parenting decisions increased, their levels of satisfaction with their parenting roles also increased at a statistically significant rate. Furthermore, the indirect effect of PRC on WB was also negative (Table 5), and the relationship was moderately mediated by the mediating role of PRS, which provided support for Hypothesis V.

**Hypothesis VI:** For recently divorced fathers (i.e. less than 12 months) there will be a positive correlation between positive well-being scores and external general locus of control.

The relationship between *General Locus of Control* (LOC) and *Well-Being* (WB) was assessed by computing the *Pearson correlation* between scores on the measures of WB and LOC for participants $(n = 18)$ who reported being
divorced for less than 12 months and who completed all items on both measures. Results showed a positive but non-significant correlation ($r = 0.30, p = 0.27$; 2-tailed) between WB and LOC for these participants, indicating that those with a higher external LOC also reported decreased psychological well-being. As such, this finding was in the opposite direction than that expected and did not support Hypothesis VI.

Research Question I: Does the proposed theoretical model demonstrate acceptable fit for the relationships between each of the exogenous variables and the endogenous variable of well-being, and for the mediating role of parenting role satisfaction as presented?

Several fit indices were calculated to determine how well the model fit the data for the present study. First, acceptable model fit for path analysis is typically interpreted when $\chi^2$ is non-significant. Results for the present study produced $\chi^2 (7) = 15.08, p = 0.035$. Although this statistic is significant at the 0.05 level, Kline (1998) indicated that it is highly influenced by sample size. Because larger sample sizes are required to compute path analyses, the observed $\chi^2$ statistic may be significant even though there is a slight difference between the model’s observed and model-implied covariances. Second, acceptable statistics of fit indices for path analyses also include a Normed Fit Index (NFI) and a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) greater than 0.90. The present path analyses produced NFI = 0.97 and CFI = 0.98, indicating that the model produced a good fit for the data. Finally, a path model is perceived to have acceptable fit to the data when the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less than
The present analysis produced RMSEA = 0.07 (90% CI = 0.02 – 0.12), again indicating that the model showed acceptable fit for the data.

**Research Question II: Is it possible to identify participants’ perceived sources of external control over child rearing issues?**

To determine whether it was possible to identify divorced fathers’ perceived sources of control of child rearing issues, an *Exploratory Factor Analysis* (EFA) of all 24 items in the measure of Parenting Locus of Control (PLOC) was conducted. It was expected that results would support a 3-factor measure (i.e. Internal-Self, External-Mother, External-System), with each subscale indicating the extent to which fathers believed each source maintained control over child rearing decisions.

The factorability of 24 total items in the PLOC measure was examined by a *Principle Axis Factor Analysis* (PAFA). The *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy* was 0.91, which was above the recommended value of 0.60. Additionally, *Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity* (BTS) was conducted, which assessed whether items were related and therefore suitable for inclusion in the structure analysis. The BTS was significant ($\chi^2 [276] = 4813.81, p < .01$), indicating that the variables assessed in the PAFA were related well enough to produce a suitable structure of the included items.

Because three subscales (i.e. Internal-Self, External-Mother, External-System), were hypothesized apriori, each of the 24 total items in the newly-developed measure of PLOC were entered and the fixed number of factors to extract was set to 3. In addition, a *Promax Rotation* (which allowed for factors to
correlate with one another) was performed, with a maximum 25 iterations before reaching convergence. Results showed that for the 3-factor solution, six iterations were required to reach convergence and the first factor produced an eigenvalue of 11.04 and explained 44.60% of the variance for the entire measure. The second factor produced an eigenvalue of 3.56 and explained an additional 12.98% of the measure’s variance. The third and final factor produced an eigenvalue of 1.51 and explained an additional 4.9% of the measure’s variance. In all, the three extracted factors explained 62.50% of the variance for the entire 24-item, 3-factor measure.

The factor structure matrix for all items within the 24-item, 3-factor structure that was produced is shown below in Table 8. Here, the *Factor Loadings* represent correlations between each item and its associated factor, and *Communalities* represent the proportion of variance of each item that was explained by its associated factor that was extracted.
Table 8

*Factor Loadings and Communalties of a Principle Components EFA with Promax Rotation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Self (Internal)</th>
<th>Mother (External)</th>
<th>System (External)</th>
<th>Communality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are determined by me.</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time I am with my child(ren) is up to me.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s social lives, such as where, when and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules that I make.</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I determine my child(ren)'s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much money is spent on my child(ren) is my choice.</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I decide when I will be with my child(ren).</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who pays for my child(ren)'s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment, is my decision.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make the decisions about my child(ren)'s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care.</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time I am with my child(ren) is up to the mother of my children.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s social lives, such as where, when, and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules set by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons is decided by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much money is spent on my child(ren) is determined by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s mother decides when I will be with them.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who pays for my child(ren)'s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment, is decided by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions about my child(ren)'s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care, are made by their mother.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>LOC Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by the legal system.</td>
<td>Self (Internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much time I am with my child(ren) is determined by the courts.</td>
<td>Mother (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s social lives, such as when, where, and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules that are influenced by the legal system.</td>
<td>System (External)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child(ren)'s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons is decided by the courts.</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much money is spent on my child(ren) is determined by the legal system.</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I will be with my child(ren) is determined by the courts.</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who pays for my child(ren)'s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment is decided by a judge.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions about my child(ren)'s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care, are influenced by the legal system.</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Factor loadings < .20 are suppressed*
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The present study expanded previous studies both theoretically and empirically which assessed the well-being of divorced fathers. After determining what parenting constructs were previously studied regarding the target population, analyses determined how the constructs might offer both unique and combined contributions to participants’ psychological well-being.

Major Findings

The primary analysis for the present study was that of path analysis. Based on a thorough review of the literature several exogenous variables were selected with the expectation that they would influence the endogenous variable of Psychological Well-Being. The overall path analysis was significant, indicating that the observed data were a good fit for the proposed model.

Hypothesis I proposed that divorced fathers would report improved levels of Psychological Well-Being (WB) and higher levels of Parenting Role Satisfaction (PRS), if they maintained shared or full custody of their children. As expected, participants who were awarded full custody of their children reported significantly higher levels of PRS than did those participants with no custody. This finding was consistent with that of Stone (2001), who reported that divorced fathers who had sole custody of their children experienced higher levels of parenting satisfaction than did fathers who did not maintain sole custody.

Hypothesis I was a partial replication of Stone’s (2001) study, and similar findings between the two studies is important for understanding divorced fathers’
parenting roles. Specifically, because comparable findings were observed between the present study and in Stone’s (2001) study despite differences in participant characteristics and methods used to recruit participants, it appears that the relationship between PRS and WB is stable among varying samples of divorced fathers.

However, unlike Stone’s (2001) report, the present study also assessed levels of PRS among fathers who maintained shared custody of their children. While few children of participants in the present study likely resided full-time with their fathers, fathers with shared custody typically are provided with legal authority to be included in parenting decisions. In the present study, a follow-up analysis showed that fathers with shared custody reported similar levels of PRS than did fathers with full custody, and also reported significantly higher levels of PRS than did fathers with no custody. As an addition to the literature of understanding divorced fathers’ outcomes, this present finding may have important implications for both policy efforts and for mental health professionals. That is, by understanding that fathers who are awarded any level of custody of their children (i.e. full or shared) may experience increased PRS, helping them to be more satisfied with their parenting roles may be a simple matter of providing them with legal authority to make parenting decisions.

Additionally, results from the present study’s path analysis showed that custody status produced a non-significant effect on WB. However, custody status did produce a significant direct effect ($p < 0.05$) on the mediating variable of PRS, which in turn showed a significant effect on WB. The finding that PRS
significantly affected WB was similar to that of Stone’s (2001) study, in which satisfaction with parenting roles had a significant total direct effect on fathers’ psychological distress. Consequently, the effect of custody status may affect WB by way of influencing PRS, and understanding the relationships between custody status and PRC may help professionals to increase divorced fathers’ psychological Well-Being.

*Hypothesis II* proposed that increased Parenting Role Clarity (PRC) would have a direct and non-direct effect on Well-Being (WB). Results showed a negative but non-significant association between PRC and WB, such that clearer parenting roles indicated marginally improved levels of WB. In addition, similar to custody status described above, while PRC did not have a significant direct effect on WB, it did produce a significant direct effect on the mediating variable of PRS. This finding indicates that as parenting roles became clearer, satisfaction with parenting roles also increased, and is similar to that of Stone (2001) who found significant direct effects of PRC on both PRS and WB.

Data from the present study showed that as few as 15% of fathers may retain residential custody of their children after divorce, which may explain why many of them experience reduced clarity of their parenting roles. Additionally, because positive transition into new roles may increase when both prior and future roles are more clearly defined (Cottrell, 1942), careful attention must be given to how divorced fathers perceive their roles within their post-divorce family systems.
Furthermore, 26% of participants in the present study reported that the choice to divorce was their sole decision. Consequently, it may be feasible that many fathers did not anticipate or plan for changing parenting roles. While many resources may be available to better understand issues relative to raising children after separation and divorce (Cookston, Braver, Griffin, De Lusé, & Miles, 2007; Stahlschmidt, Threlfall, Seay, Lewis, & Kohl, 2013), very few resources are available to help fathers clearly understand their place within their post-divorce families relative to their parenting roles.

Lupo and Bottom (2013) reported that the clarity of divorced fathers’ parenting roles decreased in years following divorce, and because PRC in the present study had a significant positive effect on PRS, divorced fathers may in turn become less satisfied with their parenting roles over time. Improved PRS also was linked to increased involvement with children (McKenry et al., 1992; Stone, 2006) and the quality of father-child relationships. For this reason, Stone (2006) suggested that it would be rational to assume that having clear parenting roles would help fathers to have better relationships with their children.

Hypothesis III anticipated that participants’ increased Parenting Efficacy (PE) would be associated with higher levels of both PRS and WB, through the mediating variable of PRS. As expected, results showed that PE did have a positive and significant effect on PRS, which in turn had a significant effect on WB. Outside of the family system, increased role efficacy was positively associated with improved task performance (Bray & Brawley, 2002; Fried et al., 2003) and may lead an individual to be more engaged, to sustain efforts for a
longer time, and to expend more effort to reach desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Research also showed that within family systems, parents who reported increased PE also reported an array of positive child outcomes. For example, increased PE was associated with engaging in more effective parenting behaviors that led to improved social and academic outcomes (Jones & Prinz, 2005), reduced duration of therapy sessions for children (Warren et al., 2011), and reduced substance use among children (Borgenschneider et al., 1997).

Findings from the present study indicated that increasing divorced fathers’ PE may lead to positive outcomes for themselves in addition to positive child outcomes as reported by previous researchers. Ways in which PE may be increased among divorced fathers may be by improving their parenting abilities by way of parenting skills training programs, or by providing them with additional opportunities to receive validation of their positive approaches to parenting. While some parenting programs were developed to help men to be better fathers (Cookston et al., 2007), such programs may run the adverse risk of creating perceptions or stereotypes such that fathers are not knowledgeable about best practices of parenting. That is, these programs may be presented from a deficit perspective, giving fathers the impression that their parenting skills are inadequate even when those skills were not questioned prior to divorce.

By implementing parenting programs which maintain or increase divorced fathers’ parenting efficacy by way of reinforcing their parenting strengths and which empower them to parent in a manner similar to their pre-divorce circumstances, it may be possible to help them to preserve higher levels of
satisfaction with their parenting roles. These programs may take the form of structured support groups in which divorced fathers receive positive reinforcement from mental health professionals or from other divorced fathers. Furthermore, because fathers’ self-reported parenting aptitude was strongly and positively associated with amount of support received from the mother of their children (Borgenschneider et al., 1997), it may be prudent to develop programs which inform post-divorce custodial mothers of ways to also reinforce the positive parenting capabilities of their former husbands. These findings and implications regarding PE add considerable contributions to understanding the outcomes of divorced fathers, as most previous research reported on the relationship between parents’ PE and children’s outcomes (Jones & Prinz, 2005; Leerkes & Burney, 2007)

Hypothesis IV was based on the assumption that receiving increased levels of Parenting Encouragement (PEn) would be positively associated with increased levels of both PRS and WB. In the present study, the direction of association between PEn and both PRS and WB were within the predicted trend, although both effects were statistically non-significant.

Only two previous studies were identified which reported on relationships between social support, parenting satisfaction and well-being among divorced fathers (Buehler, 1988; Stone, 2001). Stone (2001) reported parenting encouragement had a positive effect on divorced fathers’ levels of psychological distress. Additionally, Buehler (1988) reported that parenting support from a former spouse was positively associated with increased PRS. However, this
assessment was limited to support received from the former spouse, whose levels of support may be subject to limitations associated with emotional contention during or after divorce. This finding was contrary to those of the present study and may be the result of a measurement error, in that the measure of PS used here was not previously well-established and showed only moderate psychometric properties.

Specifically, the measure of PS used in the present study was previously published only by Stone (2001), who failed to report mean and standard deviation parameters. Additionally, the measure was assessed in the present study using a likert-type scale which also included an option for participants to indicate that one or more of the available 13 sources of encouragement (e.g. therapist, schools and ministers) did not apply to their circumstances. In the present study, 166 of 230 participants (72%) reported that one or more sources of the 13 potential sources of parenting encouragement did not apply to them. That is, nearly ¾ of participants may have been at a disadvantage for receiving parenting encouragement because of limited access to such encouragement, or because such encouragement did not exist from potential sources such as employers or an intimate other.

A closer assessment of the present data indicated that while receiving parenting encouragement from some of the 13 sources (i.e. their own parents, their friends, their intimate others and other father friends) was important to fathers, it was less important for them to receive encouragement from other potential sources (i.e. their former in-laws, lawyers and ministers). Participants also reported that parenting encouragement was easier for them to receive from
some of the sources than from others. For example, sources from which parenting encouragement was easiest to receive included from participants’ own parents, their friends, their intimate others and other father friends. Among the least easy sources from which to receive parenting encouragement were participants’ former spouses, their former in-laws, lawyers and social workers.

Taken together, the present study added substantial contributions to the understanding of how sources of parenting encouragement might affect divorced fathers’ psychological well-being. First, it appears that many divorced fathers experienced a lack of potential sources from which parenting encouragement might be available. Divorce is often reported as one of the most stressful life events, second only to death of a loved one (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) and the event may be more stressful for men who, most often, are left when a marriage ends. Consequently, it is imperative to ensure that these men have access to personal and parenting support during and after divorce.

Second, participants in the present study indicated that it was much more *important* than it was *easy* to receive parenting encouragement from their former spouses. As with efforts to increase divorced fathers’ co-parenting skills and interparental conflict by way of post-divorce parenting classes (Cookston et al., 2007), similar classes would do well to include ways in which mothers may learn to encourage the parenting efforts of their former husbands. Because additional sources and higher levels of perceived parenting encouragement received by divorced fathers was moderately associated with increased reports of *Parenting Satisfaction* (PS), which in turn moderated the exogenous variable of *Well-Being*
(WB), efforts described above to increase parenting encouragement for divorced fathers may have distal effects on their improved WB.

*Hypothesis V* assessed the relationship between participants’ *Parenting Locus of Control* (PLOC) and their *Parenting Satisfaction* (PS) and *Psychological Well-Being* (WB). As expected, scores on the measure of PLOC displayed a positive and significant direct effect on PS. This finding is perhaps intuitive in nature, suggesting that divorced fathers were more satisfied with their parenting roles when they believed that they were provided with increased authority regarding parenting decisions. Furthermore, data from the present study indicated that participants with *shared* custody or *no* custody of their children believed that both their former wives and the court system maintained more control over child rearing decisions than did they themselves.

As with custody status, the finding that PLOC displayed a significant direct effect on PRS may have important implications for professionals in the legal field. Specifically, if family court judges were to more frequently award divorced fathers with shared custody (and thereby increased authority in making parenting decisions), we may anticipate that fathers then would be more satisfied with their parenting roles. Additionally, we may expect these fathers’ psychological well-being to increase by way of the moderating role of PRS. Educational efforts to help these fathers’ former wives and legal professionals such as judges and attorneys to understand the impact of increased PLOC by way of post-divorce parenting classes or continuing education courses may be beneficial.
However, because control over parenting decisions (i.e., PLOC) typically is associated with custody status (which is determined by the courts) it is likely that post-divorce parenting classes would be insufficient in helping divorced fathers to have more authority in making parenting decisions. For example, although no laws exist which explicitly suggest that fathers should be denied legal or residential custody, only 4.8% of participants in the present study reported having full legal custody of their children, 72.6% reported pursuing custody litigation, and 47.8% reported that their children stayed in their homes seven or fewer days each month. These figures may be a result of liberal discretion given to family court judges who determine custody awards, and who are not legally bound to award joint custody agreements. By enacting and enforcing more clearly defined shared parenting laws which provide fathers with increased PLOC, it may be reasonable to assume that they would experience increased WB by way of PRS.

To the author’s knowledge, the present study was the first to report on divorced fathers’ levels of PLOC. As such, it is not possible to compare findings of parenting control from the present study with those of previous studies. However, based on previous reports of general locus of control (LOC), it may be prudent to offer implications of the importance of increased PLOC. For example, increased internal LOC was associated with positive outcomes such as increased motivation to complete tasks (Rotter, 1966) and more effective problem-solving skills (Huntley, Palmer, & Wakeling, 2012). Under the assumption that such findings hold true regarding parenting behaviors, it may be reasonable that
divorced fathers would be more motivated and skillful parents if they experienced higher levels of control over parenting decisions.

Based on findings reported by Specht et al. (2011) and Lefcourt and colleagues (1981), Hypothesis VI proposed that there would be a negative correlation between participants’ General Locus of Control (LOC) and psychological Well-Being (WB). Specifically, the authors reported that for individuals who experienced the death of a spouse, having an external LOC predisposition was associated with better WB outcomes at the time of death than was having an internal LOC predisposition. Additionally, individuals with an internal LOC took longer to return to baseline levels than did those with an external LOC.

In the present study, the direction of association between LOC and WB was opposite of that expected, such that participants with an external LOC predisposition reported reduced levels of WB. This finding failed to replicate results reported by Specht et al. (2011). Reasons for conflicting findings may include that the present study did not assess participants’ WB over time, as was done by Specht and colleagues. For this reason, the present study did not account for participants’ LOC predisposition prior to divorce, and it may be reasonable to assume that for many participants their reports LOC would be very different before and after divorce. Additionally, the analysis for Hypothesis VI included responses from only 18 participants who were divorced for 12 months or less and who completed both measures in full.
Although the analysis for *Hypothesis VI* did not produce conclusive results, data collected for the present study may still be helpful in assessing the relationship between divorced fathers’ LOC and WB over time. Because participants provided information about how long ago their divorce occurred, it may be possible to determine whether reports of LOC and WB change as a function of time following divorce. Furthermore, data collected for the present study included responses from still-married (i.e. never divorced) fathers, and it is possible to assess between-group differences regarding LOC and WB.

*Research Question II* asked whether it was possible to determine who participants believed to have control over post-divorce parenting decisions. A three-factor measure of *Parenting Locus of Control* (PLOC) was developed to determine whether participants believed that control over parenting decisions was under their control (*Internal-Self*), or under the control of their former spouse (*External-Mother*) or the court system (*External-System*). Each subscale included eight items, for a total of 24 items in the entire measure.

Results showed that the newly-developed measure of PLOC displayed acceptable discriminant validity by clearly identifying three subscales that theoretically were expected to not be related to each other. The measure also displayed acceptable internal reliability for each subscale identified (subscale alphas = 0.89 – 0.95).

Supplemental analyses using the measure of PLOC showed that there were between-group differences regarding *Internal-Self PLOC*, such that fathers with sole custody reported increased control over parenting decisions than did those
with joint/shared custody, and fathers with joint/shared custody reported higher
Internal-Self PLOC than did those with no custody. This finding may not be
surprising because many fathers who are not awarded full or shared custody of
their children have no legal authority to make parenting decisions. Furthermore,
with the exception of fathers who had full custody (n = 11), participants reported
that both their former wives and the legal system maintained more control over
parenting decisions. Similar to this finding from the present study, Hallman et al.
(2007) contended that non-residential fathers perceived that their parental
influence was secondary to that of other external sources including child care
providers and extended family.

These reports deserve continued investigation because according to
learning theories, fathers may discontinue pro-active parenting involvement if
they are not provided with opportunities to receive positive reinforcement (e.g.
praise and encouragement) for their active involvement by way of legal authority
in child rearing decisions. Hallman et al. (2007) also contended that fathers’
amount of influence (e.g. control) that they have in their children’s lives may be
proportionate to the amount of time that they are allowed to be with their children,
and Erera and Baum (2009) reported that a lack of child contact led non-
residential fathers to feel as if their ability to play meaningful roles in the lives of
their children was severely limited. Previous research also showed that fathers
with restricted child contact and influence reported a variety of negative outcomes
(Bottom, 2013), and these restrictions often are the result of court ordered custody
arrangements and ‘visitation’ schedules.
As evidenced, divorced or non-custodial fathers closely associate levels of parenting control with amount of time that their children are with them, and in the present study parenting control had a positive and significant effect on fathers’ satisfaction with their parenting roles. Because so little research reported on the outcomes of divorced fathers (Bottom, 2013), it is imperative to continue assessing factors relevant to their parenting experiences and their psychological outcomes.

Implications of the Present Study for Community Psychology

Since its origins decades ago, the field of community psychology emphasized strong social responsibility with the aim of improving outcomes of underrepresented and disadvantaged populations. For example, recent research reports in the American Journal of Community Psychology showed that these populations included Asian immigrants, Arab American adolescents, African American youth, Latina/o children, the elderly, mothers and women. Research topics regarding men in general are slowly finding a home in community psychology, as noted by The American Journal of Community Psychology’s recent special section (Volume 45, Issue 1/2), which was devoted to an historical and conceptual understanding of the psychology of men and masculinity.

However, to date, community psychologists overlooked the population of divorced and non-custodial fathers, who represent an estimated 11.4 million citizens in the U.S (Grall, 2011). Indeed, publications in community psychology journals rarely included topics of family matters or the experiences of men, and
reports of fathers’ experiences and outcomes was virtually non-existent in the community psychology literature.

Studying divorce as a community construct is important for numerous reasons, and many of the fundamental principles of the field are relevant to studying divorce and how it affects fathers. Furthermore, findings from the present study indicated that many of divorced fathers’ negative post-divorce experiences may be improved by attending to their needs with regard to community psychology’s values and principles (see Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007, pp. 22-29, for more information). The following text addresses how several of the values and principles were addressed in the present study, and how they might be applied improve the outcomes of divorced fathers.

Social justice. One salient principle of community psychology is social justice, which includes evidence that resources, power, obligations and opportunities within a setting or population are fairly and equitably allocated. Previous research attention was given to perceptions of the unequal distribution of post-divorce rights, opportunities and obligations of men and women, and both sexes expressed the belief that family law courts more slanted in favor of mothers (Braver & Griffin, 2000), especially within the context of child custody. Recognizing this disparity nearly four decades ago, the American Psychological Association’s Council of Representatives officially recognized, “…suitable promulgation of the fact that it is in violation of human rights, to discriminate against men because of their sex in assignment of children’s custody…,” (Conger, 1977).
Contrary to perceptions that divorced fathers maintained animosity toward their former spouses, fathers often expressed more anger toward ‘the system’ than toward mothers whom may interfere with fathers being with their children (Laasko & Adams, 2006). So engrained is a perceived lack of justice to some fathers, many did not even attempt to be awarded custody of their children for fear of fighting a losing battle, even when welfare professionals agreed that children would be better placed in their primary care (Salk, 1977).

In the present study, participants awarded no or joint legal custody reported that both their former spouse and the court system maintained more control over child rearing decisions than they did themselves. This finding indicates that aspects of social justice (i.e. equal opportunities and obligations in raising children) may not be evident in fathers’ post-divorce roles, and community psychologists may add considerable contributions to helping this population by attending to these matters.

*Distributive justice.* One form of social justice concerned with the equitable allocation of resources among members of a population is *distributive justice* (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2007). Lin and McLanahan (2007) explored this construct when determining differences regarding post-divorce parenting *equality* and *equity*. The authors operationalized the *equity* rule of distributive justice by suggesting that proponents of fathers’ rights perceive decisions regarding custody and visitation to be rewards for acceptable behaviors, which many advocates of fathers contend to be unfair. Further, the authors indicated that mothers and fathers maintained differing views of fathers’
obligations and rights concerning children, such that divorced fathers viewed paternal obligations and rights as separate factors, while mothers perceive them to be linked. This difference in beliefs may result in a ‘pay to play’ philosophy in which fathers are more likely to be ‘allowed visitation’ with their children when they provide increased financial assistance to their former spouses.

*Procedural justice.* Another form of social justice is *procedural justice,* which concerns processes of collective decision making, including fair representation of stakeholders. In the present study, non-custodial participants’ perceptions of unequal procedural justice was indicated by their belief that both their former spouses and the court system maintained more control over parenting decisions than they did themselves. Fathers also have indicated that even after establishing and maintaining their post-divorce financial obligations, in addition to legally establishing time to be with their children, they must rely on the mother’s cooperation in order to see their children (Laasko & Adams, 2006). In such circumstances, procedural justice may be all but ignored by both the former spouse and the courts, as fathers struggle to achieve fair representation in decision-making processes.

Findings from the present study indicated that overall divorced fathers did not experience social justice, especially in the form of collective child rearing decision making. Because divorced fathers experienced limited control over raising their own children, community psychologists may make substantial contributions to improving their well-being by helping to restore these fathers’ sense of distributive and procedural justice after divorce.
Individual wellness. Another principle of community psychology, *individual wellness*, includes broad topics associated with personal well-being and individuals’ ability to attain personal goals. Topics relevant to individual wellness include levels of psychological distress, life satisfaction, the strengthening of families, and individual resiliency. For example, community psychologists explored aspects of individual wellness in the form of prosocial development among youth who changed residence (O’Brien, Gallup, & Wilson, 2012), empowering disenfranchised populations (Christens, 2012), and depression among victims of physical abuse (Beeble, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2011).

The present study attended to participants’ individual wellness by way of personal satisfaction with parenting roles and levels of Psychological Well-Being (WB). Results showed that participants’ ability to attain personal parenting goals may be less than desirable, as indicated by the negative association between control of parenting decisions and satisfaction with parenting roles. Although the present study made no attempt to increase participants’ levels of satisfaction with parenting roles, analyses indicated that increased levels of child custody may lead to increased control over parenting decisions, which in turn was positively associated with satisfaction with parenting roles.

Additionally, although none of the independent variables in the present study (i.e. custody status, parenting role clarity, parenting efficacy, parenting encouragement, parenting locus of control) significantly affected WB, nearly all of them significantly impacted satisfaction with parenting roles, which in turn showed a significant effect on WB. This indicates that attempts to improve
divorced fathers’ well-being may be most effective by attempting to improve several issues relative to their parenting experiences.

Some previous research reported on divorced and non-custodial fathers’ well-being. For example, fathers expressed symptoms of reduced well-being when they were not able to provide child support, or when they were absent from their children for extended periods (Laasko & Adams, 2006). Fathers who did not live with their children full-time expressed that their divorces required them to undergo many difficult and life-altering transitions, yet it is the diminished father-child relationship that is most salient. Fathers’ post-divorce negative well-being also may be exacerbated more severely than that of mothers’ because women are be more likely than men to petition for divorce (Mackey, 1993), indicating that many fathers may be required, against their wishes, to be away from their children. In the present study, most (59.1%) participants reported that the decision to divorce was made by their former spouse.

While community psychology’s commitment to individual wellness provides a relevant forum in which address the experiences and outcomes of divorced fathers, a paucity of research was conducted regarding the individual wellness of divorced men and fathers. With the exception of Hoard and Anderson’s (2004) study, a review of the community psychology literature did not produce any articles which indicated that the non-residential father’s personal well-being might increase his capacity to fulfill his paternal roles. Additionally, many research reports pertaining to fathers did not address their strengths, or suggest ways in which their well-being might be improved.
Citizen participation and collaboration. Citizen participation and collaboration are two hallmarks of community psychology which call for community involvement in the development and implementation of research studies and programs, especially by those who are directly affected by the research or program. These processes include the development of relationships and shared values between professional researchers and target populations. Unfortunately – including the present study – collaboration between professionals and divorced fathers is nearly non-existent in the development, implementation, and dissemination of research and programs that focus on divorced fathers.

However, the present study addressed relationships between participants and others by asking how encouraging professionals (e.g. therapists, attorneys, social workers) were of participants’ parenting efforts. Simple frequency counts showed that receiving encouragement from these professionals did not apply to the lives of as many as 107 (46.5%) of the 230 participants. This finding may lead to fathers’ unwillingness or reduced opportunity to participate in the development of services which might help improve their post-divorce well-being.

Furthermore, supplemental descriptive analyses from the present study provided context relative to participants’ perceptions of engaging with mental health professionals such as social workers and therapists. First, participants indicated that some professionals (e.g. social workers and therapists) were less encouraging of their parenting efforts than were other individuals such as friends and family. Second, participants reported that it was more difficult to receive encouragement from professionals (e.g. social workers and therapists) than from
others such as friends, family and workplace. If therapists, social workers and other professionals wish to provide the best possible services and outcomes for divorced fathers, it is important that they actively encourage and seek collaboration with these men, and to ask for their feedback and participation.

Some services and programs exist to provide fathers with support such as career development, budgeting classes, minimizing parental conflict, and legal advocacy (Cookston et al., 2007; Cowan, Cowan, Pruett, Pruett, & Wong, 2009; Hoard & Anderson, 2004). However, no programs identified in the literature were designed in collaboration with fathers regarding processes or outcomes, or with attention to fathers’ explicit needs and desires. For example, the Dads for Life (DFL) Intervention (Cookston et al., 2007) had a goal of reaching proximal outcomes of: 1) increasing father-child relationships, and 2) decreasing parental conflict. However, pre-program self-reports of co-parenting (which was believed to mediate the second proximal outcome) indicated substantial differences between participating mothers and fathers, such that fathers did not perceive the ‘parenting team’ to be problematic.

Additionally, fathers’ perceptions of functioning as a parenting team were unaffected by the eight-session program at two-year follow-up, even when their former spouses also participated in the DFL program. In such situations, fathers may perceive that they are simply in the program to increase their (former) spouse’s well-being rather than their own. Furthermore, reports of participating fathers’ personal satisfaction with DFL were neither requested nor provided. For each of the few fatherhood programs represented in the community psychology
literature, it appears as though participating fathers were required to fit into a program that was designed by ‘outsiders’ without regard to their own needs.

While collaboration with fathers in research and program development has not yet been realized, Wilcox and colleagues (1998) suggested that interviewing fathers to explore their post-divorce experiences would be helpful in the development of fatherhood programs, and Kruk (1994) constructed an interview to include nonresident fathers’ feelings, experiences, and perceptions regarding divorce when discussing implications for future work in the clinical setting. These suggested methods are in line with community psychology’s commitment to giving voice to populations in which they serve by way of citizen collaboration (Dalton et al., 2007; Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Deacon, Nievar, & McCann, 2005; Harper et al., 2004).

*Respect for diversity.* Community psychology’s value of respecting *diversity* honors social identities such as gender, ethnic or racial identity, sexual orientation, age and physical ability. Professionals in community psychology called for, and subsequently witnessed, increased attention to diverse populations that were traditionally under-represented, oppressed or otherwise discriminated against. Community psychologists attended to the needs of some types of men as indicated in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*’s special interest editions which focused on the psychology of men (Vol. 45, Iss. 1/2) and the LGBT community (Vol. 31, Iss. 3/4). For example, Harper and Schneider (2003) argued for increased research to meet the unattended needs of the LGBT community, and offered ways in which community psychology is poised to meet
those needs. However, community psychologists often ignored the experiences of men unless assessing them relative to some additional ‘minority’ status such as non-heterosexual identity or low socio-economic status.

The present study addressed respect for diversity by assessing the experiences and outcomes of divorced fathers relative to individual characteristics (e.g. present marital status, custody status) that are not often associated with diversity. Findings from the present study showed that despite some similarities in personal characteristics, this population was not homogeneous in their post-divorce outcomes and experiences. For example, participants who were awarded joint custody of their children expressed having more control over child rearing decisions than those who were not awarded joint custody. Although these men may not appear to be a diverse group by traditional aspects of diversity (e.g. race, age, physical ability), it is clear that they experienced different post-divorce outcomes based on custody status. As another example, participants reported substantial differences regarding sources from which they received parenting encouragement and how important it was for them to receive encouragement from different sources. These findings indicate the importance of assessing men and fathers according to non-traditional diversity factors. By respecting and attending to the diverse experiences of divorced fathers, community psychologists may be in a position to develop services to help improve their outcomes.

*Sense of community.* Having a sense of community (SOC) refers to individuals’ perceptions of interdependence, belonging, and mutual commitments within a given setting. SOC received much attention in the past four decades due
in part to Sarason’s (1974) book on the topic and more recently community psychologists such as McMillan and Chavis (1986) added considerable insight as to how the construct is measured and understood. Much like participant collaboration and participation, the present study was limited in scope in that it did not attempt to improve participants’ SOC. However, some aspects from the present study may be relevant regarding divorced fathers’ SOC.

First, in the present study participants were recruited in part by online social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, and several opportunities existed for individuals within men’s online communities to engage in dialogue about the need to better understand their experiences. Consequently, it is possible that fathers, who may not otherwise have had an opportunity, were able to engage in continued discussion about their experiences as fathers. Second, although participants’ SOC was not measured in the present study it may be possible to more closely analyze responses to the three subscales of the Parenting Encouragement measure to determine ways to increase the sense of community that fathers experience within various aspects of their lives. For example, by knowing how important and how easy it is for fathers to receive parenting encouragement at their workplace, community psychologists may design programs or policies that help fathers to experience increased belongingness and unity at their workplace.

Limitations of the Present Study

While the present study may add context to researchers’ understanding of divorced fathers’ experiences and outcomes, some limitations of the study are
noted. Perhaps most pervasive is that the sample was substantially homogenous, especially with regard to reported racial/ethnic identification. Of the 230 participants assessed in the study, 202 (87.8%) identified as White/Caucasian. Because so few ethnic minority (e.g. African American, Hispanic) fathers participated in the study, findings from the present study may not be helpful in identifying experiences of such divorced fathers.

The recruitment method employed for the present study may also limit generalizability of findings and may help to explain the racial/ethnic homogeneity of the sample. All participants were recruited by way of electronic notifications (e.g. email, social media, organizational email newsletters) and the study questionnaire was only available online. Although several large well-established organizations such as Fathers4Justice and The Good Men Project assisted in recruiting participants by way of their online presence, potential participants were limited to those who had access to online resources during the time of data collection. Additionally, this process likely restricted many divorced fathers within specific demographic classifications such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, those who did not have computers in their homes, or those with limited reading skills.

Most previous research assessed the outcomes of divorced fathers from samples with modal annual incomes of approximately $20,000 - $30,000 (Bottom, 2013). However, 81.1% of participants in the present study reported having incomes greater than $25,000 and 50.4% reported earning more than $50,000 per year. Similarly, 54.8% of participants in the present study reported
having at least a Bachelor’s Degree, while a substantial number of participants in previous studies within the population reported having approximately 12-14 years of formal education. Participants’ reports of income and education in the present study appear to be considerably higher than those of previous studies (Bottom, 2013), which may be considered as an extension of previously reported findings, or as a limitation under the assumption that potential participants who could afford readily-available internet resources were more likely to participate.

A couple of measures used in the present study may have contributed methodological limitations. In particular, measures used to assess Parenting Role Clarity and Parenting Locus of Control were not previously well-established, and measures to assess these constructs in the present study were either developed specifically for the study or were modified substantially. Additionally, the measure used to assess Parenting Encouragement included an option for participants to respond N/A if a particular source of support (e.g. ministers, therapists, teachers) did not apply to their individual circumstances. A considerable number of participants indicated that one or more of these potential sources of encouragement did not apply, and their scores on the measure were subsequently removed from analyses which assessed parenting encouragement. Further investigation of individual and group-level responses to items within the measure of parenting encouragement may provide a better understanding of the relationship between parenting encouragement and well-being outcomes.

It also is possible that the exogenous variables included in the path analysis were not comprehensive in explaining what constructs most strongly
affect the population’s psychological well-being. Consequently, the theoretical framework of the present study may have excluded one or more personality or parenting variables that might directly or indirectly affect the moderating variable or the endogenous variable of Well-Being. In addition, with the exception of general locus of control, the present study included only parenting variables as predictors of well-being, and the study therefore relied heavily on the assumption that being a father was a central personal identity by which participants viewed themselves. It may be that other factors not associated with parenthood (e.g. income, individual personality traits or current relationship status) may be more influential in affecting participants’ well-being.

In addition, follow-up iterations of the path analysis performed for the present study were not performed, although it is possible to perform additional analyses in follow-up studies. It is possible that adding or removing exogenous variables from the proposed model and then re-running the path analysis would help to more clearly identify the strength of association between the exogenous variables and divorced fathers’ well-being.

*Directions for Future Research*

Despite these limitations, findings from the present provided ample direction for researchers and community psychologists to continue developing studies and other efforts which improve the outcomes of divorced fathers. Because no previous research identified well-being outcomes of fathers from racial/ethnic minorities, there is much potential to develop or replicate studies to expand knowledge of post-divorce outcomes of such minority fathers. In addition
to expanding knowledge to other subpopulations, future research also might replicate past studies as a way of refining measures that were used to assess the experiences and outcomes of both minority and non-minority divorced fathers.

Results from the present study also provided opportunities to help develop both clinical approaches to helping divorced fathers, and programs which might be beneficial to their well-being. Because men and fathers experience many severe negative outcomes during and after the dissolution of their romantic relationships, it is imperative that mental health professionals begin to develop clinical approaches which are tailored specifically for the needs of divorced fathers. Additionally, the development and implementation of evidence-based post-divorce programs for fathers is needed. As noted, few programs exist to help men to cope with or to improve their post-divorce circumstances. Moreover, many programs were designed with the purpose of helping men to improve the outcomes of others, namely their children and former spouses. Newly developed coping or informational programs designed specifically for divorced or non-custodial fathers may provide valuable social support that these fathers might not otherwise be exposed to.

Additional efforts by researchers and community psychologists also might include using empirical findings to educate policy makers and to advocate for legislative reform efforts in family law. For example, custody rulings are nearly always determined with regard to the best interest of the children. That is, judges are charged with the responsibility of placing children in the primary residence of the parent who is expected to provide the best outcomes of the children. While it
might be expected that such gender-neutral laws would not favor one parent over another, mothers are awarded with primary residential custody in approximately 84% of custody cases. For fathers who are not awarded primary residential custody of their children, standard ‘visitation’ agreements stipulate that their children may reside with them 14% of the year, including on alternating weekends, occasional weekday hours, and alternating holidays.

These typical arrangements severely limit fathers’ time with and influence over their children, which may be further reduced if a mother does not abide by a court ordered ‘visitation’ agreement. Despite substantial evidence that reduced father-child contact has negative impacts on children and fathers alike (Bottom, 2013; King, 2002; Mandara et al., 2011), little effort was made to educate judges about the potential benefits of increasing the amount of time that children live with their fathers.

While research and programs to understand divorced fathers may be useful in helping them to help them cope with their post-divorce experiences, reforming family law policies and practices may prevent these men from experiencing many pervasive post-divorce outcomes such as restricted access to their children, limited control of childrearing decisions and lack of encouragement for their parenting efforts. In this way, community psychologist may provide prevention efforts which would potentially reduce the need for intervention services such as support programs or individual and group counseling.
An estimated 11.4 million non-incarcerated fathers in the United States do not live in the same homes as their collective 24 million children. Consequently, research indicated that, overall, both fathers and their children suffer many negative outcomes. Reviews of both peer-reviewed research literature and psychology conference programs showed that studies on divorced fathers’ outcomes were virtually non-existent in both the general psychology literature and in the community psychology literature.

Therefore, the present study assessed the relationships between constructs pervasive in fathers’ post-divorce lives (e.g. custody status, parenting roles, parenting efficacy, parenting encouragement, and parenting locus of control) and their psychological well-being. Participant recruitment included contacting several fathers’ organizations and social media outlets to invite all fathers (i.e. never married, never divorced, and divorced) to complete an online questionnaire. All participants provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire; analyses were limited to responses provided by 230 divorced fathers who responded in full to each measure within the questionnaire.

A path analysis assessed the effects of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variable of psychological well-being. Results indicated that the data fit the proposed model and that some but not all hypotheses were supported. Overall, four of five target variables (i.e. custody status, clarity of parenting roles, parenting efficacy, control over parenting decisions) affecting Parenting Role
Satisfaction yielded significant results, in the anticipated direction of influence. Furthermore, Parenting Role Satisfaction moderated the relationship between these variables and participants’ psychological Well-Being.

The present study contributed to the literature of divorced fathers and their outcomes by assessing how each of the constructs described above relate to the psychological well-being of divorced fathers. Additionally, the present study complimented previous work reported in the divorce literature and also provided a more solid theoretical foundation under which future research may be conducted. Results are expected to provide additional contributions to the theoretical understanding of factors that affect divorced fathers’ well-being. Despite limitations associated with participant selection and with assessing a homogeneous sample, the present study may help improve clinical and legislative efforts to improve the outcomes of divorced fathers.

Furthermore, the principles and values of community psychology suggest that much work may be done within the field to help improve the outcomes of divorced fathers. These efforts include developing post-divorce coping and support programs, informing mental health providers about the needs and experiences of the population, and assisting with policy or legislative efforts that might reduce the number of negative post-divorce experiences of fathers. Ultimately, by attending to and improving the well-being of divorced fathers, it may be possible to improve the long-term outcomes of their children.
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and coparenting in the two years after divorce. *Family Process, 46*(1), 123-137. doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2006.00196.x


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Appendix A

Demographic Items
Demographic Items

1. How did you hear about this research study?
   a. A friend told me about it
   b. I received a letter or email
   c. From an agency or organization
   d. Other

2. What is your current age in years? Please enter the number in the box below.

3. How would you describe your race/ethnicity?
   a. White/Caucasian
   b. Black/African American
   c. Latino or Hispanic
   d. Multiple Races or Other

4. On average, how many times per month do you attend a spiritual or religious service? Enter the number of times in the box below.

5. Is English your primary language?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Were you in a relationship with your child(ren)’s mother when the child(ren) were born?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. In what geographic region do you live?
   a. East
   b. South
   c. Midwest
   d. West

8. How much formal education have you earned?
   a. Less than a High School Degree
   b. High School Degree or GED
   c. Associates Degree or Some College
   d. Bachelor’s Degree
9. What is your current household income?
   a. $0 - $15,000
   b. $15,001 - $25,000
   c. $25,001 - $40,000
   d. $40,001 - $60,000
   e. More than $60,000

10. How many children do you have?
   a. 0
   b. 1
   c. 2
   d. 3
   e. 4 or more

   IF ‘A’, END SURVEY

11. Which of the following best describes your parental relationship with your child(ren)?
   a. They are my biological children
   b. They are my step-children
   c. They are my adopted children
   d. They are my foster children
   e. More than one of these is true

12. Which of the following best describes your current romantic relationship status?
   a. Single, never married
   b. Married, never divorced
   c. Married and separated
   d. Divorced and single
   e. Divorced and in a significant relationship
   f. Divorced and remarried

13. If you are divorced, who first suggested or initiated the divorce process?
   a. It was my decision/suggestion
   b. It was my former spouse’s decision/suggestion
   c. I am not divorced
14. **If you are divorced, for how long were you married to your child(ren)’s other parent?** Enter the number of years and months of your marriage in the boxes below. If you were never married, or are still married to your child(ren)’s other parent, please type NA in both boxes.

____ Years   ____Months

15. **If you are divorced, how long ago did you get divorced?** Enter the number of years and months since your divorce in the boxes below. If you were never married, or are still married to your child(ren)’s other parent, please type NA in both boxes.

____ Years   ____Months

16. If you are divorced, for how long did you live in the home with your children? Enter the number of years in the box below.

17. For the figures below, please indicate the picture (1 – 4) that best describes the closeness of your relationship with your child(ren). In the pictures, \(S\) represents yourself and \(C\) represents your child(ren).

18. What is the gender and age of each of your children?

   a. Gender: ____ Age:____
   b. Gender: ____ Age:____
   c. Gender: ____ Age:____
   d. Gender: ____ Age:____

19. What is your current *physical* (residential) custodial status?

   a. Full custody (my children live primarily with me)
   b. Joint/shared custody
   c. No custody
   d. Unsure

20. What is your current *legal* custodial status?

   e. Full custody
   f. Joint/shared custody
   g. No custody
21. On average, how many nights per month do your children stay with you?
Enter the number of nights in the box below.

22. Please indicate which forms of child support you pay.
   a. Informal support (Not ordered, and paid directly to the other parent)
   b. Formal support (As ordered by a judge or court)
   c. Both informal and formal support
   d. None

23. If you are divorced, for which of the following legal issues are you currently engaged?
   a. Child support
   b. Custody/visitation
   c. Child support and Custody/visitation
   d. Other
   e. None

24. If you are divorced but not currently engaged in legal action, for which of the following legal issues did you previously engage?
   a. Child support
   b. Custody/visitation
   c. Child support and Custody/visitation
   d. Other
   e. None – I was never engaged in legal action
   f. None – I was engaged in legal action but not at this time

25. If you engaged in legal action for any of the issues listed above, how would you describe the process overall?
   a. It was a civil process – mostly done as a formality.
   b. A few issues are/were a source of contention but for the most part there are/were no hard feelings.
   c. Several issues are/were hotly contended.
   d. Many issues caused severe contention

26. If you engaged in legal action for any of the issues listed above, how would you describe the process overall?
   a. It was a civil process – mostly done as a formality.
b. A few issues are/were a source of contention but for the most part there are/were no hard feelings

c. Several issues are/were hotly contended.

d. Many issues caused severe contention
Appendix B

Parenting Role Satisfaction Scale
Parenting Role Satisfaction Scale

Please rate the following statements from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied). How satisfied are you with....

1. The amount of influence you have over your child(ren)’s growth and development?
   1  2  3  4

2. The degree to which your expectations of being a parent have come true?
   1  2  3  4

3. The amount of time you spend with your child(ren)?
   1  2  3  4

4. The quality of the time you spend with your child(ren)?
   1  2  3  4

5. Your performance as a father when you compare it to other fathers you know?
   1  2  3  4

6. Your ability to help your child(ren) solve his/her problems?
   1  2  3  4

7. The sharing of personal feelings with your child(ren)?
   1  2  3  4

8. Your child(ren)’s overall response to you as his/her parent?
   1  2  3  4

9. The recognition you receive for your achievements as a parent?
   1  2  3  4

10. The sense of value and purpose you feel in being a parent?
    1  2  3  4
Appendix C

Parenting Role Clarity Scale
**Parenting Role Clarity Scale**

Please rate the following statements between 1 (*very uncertain*) and 6 (*very certain*) as they relate to your parenting.

1. Sometimes I am not sure what people expect from me as a father. (R)  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  

2. I often receive positive feedback about how I handle my parenting roles.  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  

3. My childrearing decisions are often wrong or criticized. (R)  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  

4. I understand what is expected of me as a father.  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  

5. My roles as a father are clear to me.  
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6
Appendix D

Parenting Efficacy Scale
Parenting Efficacy Scale

Please rate the following statements between 1 (Rarely) and 7 (Always), based on your parenting experiences.

1. I feel sure of myself as a father.
   Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

2. I know I am doing a good job as a father.
   Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

3. I know things about being a father that could be helpful to other parents.
   Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

4. I can solve most problems between my child and me.
   Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always

5. When things are going badly between my child and me, I keep trying until things begin to change.
   Rarely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always
Appendix E

Parenting Encouragement Inventory
Parenting Support Inventory: Quantity Subscale

Please circle your response to each item below, rated from 1 (very discouraging) to 6 (very encouraging), to indicate how encouraging each person or persons are regarding your parenting efforts. Please circle NA if the listed support source is not available to you.

*Overall, how encouraging have the following individuals in your life been when it comes to your efforts to be a good father?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Discouraging</th>
<th>Very Encouraging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your former spouse</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your parents</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your former in-laws</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other relatives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ministers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intimate others</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Social workers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lawyers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Therapists</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other father friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Your workplace</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Support Inventory: Importance Subscale

Please circle your response to each item below, rated from 1 (not at all important) to 6 (very important), to indicate how important it is for you to receive parenting support from each person or persons listed below. Please circle NA if the listed support source is not available to you.

How important is it for you to receive parenting support from the following sources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your former spouse</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your parents</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your former in-laws</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate others</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapists</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other father friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your workplace</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Support Inventory: Ease Subscale

Please circle your response to each item below, rated from 1 (*not at all easy*) to 6 (*very easy*), to indicate how important it is for you to receive parenting support from each person or persons listed below. Please circle NA if the listed support source is not available to you.

*How easy is it for you to receive parenting support from the following sources?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Easy</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Your former spouse</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your parents</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your former in-laws</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other relatives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ministers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intimate others</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Social workers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Lawyers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Therapists</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Teachers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Other father friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Your workplace</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

General Locus of Control Measure
General Locus of Control

Internal-External Control of Reinforcement (I-E Scale)

The following 29 statement pairs involve the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a and b. Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true and not necessarily the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief; obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

Please answer the items below carefully but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for every choice. Click on the button next to each statement in the pair (a or b) which you believe to be more true. In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the one you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Also try to respond to each item independently when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

1. A. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
   B. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy on them.

2. A. Many of the unhappy things in people’s lives are partly due to bad luck.
   B. People’s misfortunes result from the mistakes that they make.

3. A. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don’t take enough interest in politics.
   B. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. A. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
   B. Unfortunately, an individual’s worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

5. A. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
   B. Most students don’t realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
6. **A.** Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.

**B.** Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. **A.** No matter how hard you try some people just don’t like you.

**B.** People who can’t get others to like them don’t understand how to get along with others.

8. **A.** Heredity plays the major role in determining one’s personality.

**B.** It is one’s experiences in life which determine what they’re like.

9. **A.** I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.

**B.** Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

10. **A.** In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such thing as an unfair test.

**B.** Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

11. **A.** Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.

**B.** Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12. **A.** The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.

**B.** This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13. **A.** When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.

**B.** It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
I-E Scale (continued)

14. A. There are certain people who are just no good.
   B. There is some good in everybody

15. A. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
    B. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin

16. A. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
    B. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it.

17. A. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
    B. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18. A. Most people don’t realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
    B. There really is no such thing as “luck”.

19. A. One should always be willing to make mistakes.
    B. It is usually best to cover up one’s mistakes.

20. A. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
    B. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. A. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
    B. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. A. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
    B. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
I-E Scale (continued)

23. **A.** Sometimes I can’t understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.

    **B.** There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.

24. **A.** A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.

    **B.** A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. **A.** Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

    **B.** It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26. **A.** People are lonely because they don’t try to be friendly.

    **B.** There’s not much use in trying too hard to please people; if the like you, they like you.

27. **A.** There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.

    **B.** Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28. **A.** What happens to me is my own doing.

    **B.** Sometimes I feel that I don’t have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. **A.** Most of the time I can’t understand why politicians behave the way they do.

    **B.** In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national level as well as on a local level.
Appendix G

Parenting Locus of Control Inventory
Parenting Locus of Control Inventory (PLOC): Internal Subscale

Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following statements to be true by rating each statement between 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true).

1. My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are determined by me.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

2. How much time I am with my child(ren) is up to me.

   1  2  3  4  5

3. My children’s social lives, such as where, when, and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules that I make.

   1  2  3  4  5

4. I determine my child(ren)’s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons.

   1  2  3  4  5

5. How much money is spent on my children is my choice.

   1  2  3  4  5

6. I decide when I will be with my children.

   1  2  3  4  5

7. Who pays for my child(ren)’s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment is my decision.

   1  2  3  4  5

8. I make the decisions about my child(ren)’s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care.

   1  2  3  4  5
Parenting Locus of Control Inventory (PLOC): External-Mother Subscale

Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following statements to be true by rating each statement between 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true).

1. My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

2. How much time I am with my child(ren) is up to the mother of my children.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

3. My children’s social lives, such as where, when, and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules set by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

4. My child(ren)’s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons is decided by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

5. How much money is spent on my children is determined by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

6. My children’s mother decides when I will be with them.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Who pays for my child(ren)’s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment is decided by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Decisions about my child(ren)’s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care, are made by their mother.
   
   1 2 3 4 5
Parenting Locus of Control Inventory (PLOC): External-System Subscale

Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following statements to be true by rating each statement between 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true).

1. My child(ren)’s daily activities, such as bed times and diets, are decided by the legal system.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

2. How much time I am with my child(ren) is determined by the courts.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

3. My children’s social lives, such as where, when, and with whom they can hang out, is based on rules that are influenced by the legal system.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

4. My child(ren)’s involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and music lessons is decided by the courts.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

5. How much money is spent on my child(ren) is determined by the legal system.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

6. When I will be with my child(ren) is determined by the courts.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

7. Who pays for my child(ren)’s needs such as schooling, clothing, childcare, and entertainment is decided by a judge.
   
   1  2  3  4  5

8. Decisions about my child(ren)’s medical care, such as who pays for and provides the care, are influenced by the legal system.
   
   1  2  3  4  5
Appendix H

Psychological Well-Being Measure
Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)

Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way during the past week, based on the scale of 0 – 3 below.

**During the Past Week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)</th>
<th>Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)</th>
<th>Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)</th>
<th>Most or all of the time (5-7 days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I was bothered by things that usually don’t bother me.
2. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.
3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with help from my family or friends.
4. I felt I was just as good as other people.(R)
5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.
6. I felt depressed.
7. I felt that everything I did was an effort.
8. I felt hopeful about the future.(R)
9. I thought my life had been a failure.
10. I felt fearful.
11. My sleep was restless.
12. I was happy.(R)
13. I talked less than usual.
15. People were unfriendly.
16. I enjoyed life.(R)
17. I had crying spells.
18. I felt sad.
19. I felt that people disliked me.
20. I could not get “going”.