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PATTERNS AND PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN MARRIAGE

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A robust body of social science evidence points to the positive economic, health and social benefits of long-lasting marriage for men, women and children. Yet the benefits and advantages of marriage are not as broadly distributed or widely shared as they once were. In recent decades, there has been a dramatic change in marrying behavior. Today, as compared to thirty years ago, Americans are more likely to live together before and after marriage, to postpone marriage until older ages, to divorce more and to remarry less, and never to marry at all. At any given age, individuals are less likely to be, or have ever been, married. The marriage rate reflects these changes. Since 1970, the marriage rate has fallen by nearly fifty percent, from 76.5 per 1000 unmarried women to 39.9 per 1000 unmarried women in 2004.¹

The retreat from marriage has been most severe among African Americans. Until the mid-1960s, the African-American marriage rate was similar to the rate of other groups. Today, however, a “marriage divide” has opened up.² Blacks are the least likely to marry, to stay married, and to remarry. They are the most likely to cohabit, to divorce and to become unwed parents. This gap shows up in attitudes among the young as well. According to the 2002 findings in the National Survey of Family Growth, African American teenage boys are less likely to favor marriage and more likely to approve of divorce than either Hispanic or non-Hispanic White teen boys.³

Another marriage divide is opening up between the well-educated and less well-educated. Those with college education are likely to marry and to stay married. Those with lesser educational attainment are increasingly foregoing or failing at marriage. The educational divide raises the troubling possibility that marriage may be losing its broadly democratic character and becoming an arrangement achievable only by the privileged few.

Yet despite the general and group-specific retreat from marriage, nearly all Americans share a strong aspiration to marriage. People continue to value marriage as the *summum bonum* in intimate relationships. Even during the recent decades of high divorce and rising cohabitation, the valuation of marriage has remained remarkably persistent. The vast majority of men and women seek lasting marriage as a personal life goal. Indeed, the belief in marriage is stronger in the U.S. than in most other developed countries. In the World Values Survey conducted between 1999 and 2001, only 10 percent of Americans agreed with the statement “Marriage is an out-dated institution” compared to 22 percent of Canadians, 26 percent of the British and 36 percent of the French.⁴ Nor is there evidence that a “culture of poverty” has diminished low-income women’s aspiration

for a high quality marriage. A recent study finds that inner city African-American single mothers – the group least likely to marry – desire a successful marriage as fervently as their middle-class married peers.⁵

How then should we begin to understand the gap between the high aspiration to marriage and the diminished propensity to marry and to stay married? What accounts for the disparity between the personal goal of lasting marriage and the growing evidence of widespread social failure to achieve that goal? To put it plainly, why are so many Americans enchanted with the idea of marriage but increasingly disenchanted with being married?

This paper will try to shed light on that question by looking at recent social science research on patterns and predictors of marital success and failure. Social science is better equipped to make generalizations about groups than it is to provide guidance on the particular situation of an individual, couple or family. Therefore, this paper will focus on some sociodemographic characteristics that are well-known predictors of marital success or failure. It will also consider the broader social and cultural trends that have profoundly transformed the meaning, purpose and stability of contemporary marriage.

Select sociodemographic predictors of marital success/failure

Parental marriage/divorce: Individuals who grow in an married parent family are more likely to marry and to stay married than individuals whose families were broken by divorce or whose parents never married. Compared to individuals from disrupted family backgrounds, individuals who grew up with both married parents are more likely to have a positive experience of a marriage; to have a commitment to lifelong marriage; to have mothers who are more positive about marriage and less permissive of divorce; and to have greater emotional security and trust in their own future marriages.⁶ Given the high rate of divorce in today's society, however, it is increasingly common for one or both married individuals to come from divorced parent families. According to one study, the divorce risk nearly tripled if both individuals come from a broken home; if the wife alone had experienced parental divorce, however, the increased risk was significantly reduced.⁷

Age at first marriage: Marrying as a teen is the highest known risk factor for divorce. Teenagers who marry are two to three times more likely to have unhappy marriages and to divorce than people who marry in their twenties.⁸ According to a recent government study, 59 percent of marriages among women under age 18 end in divorce or separation within 15 years compared with 36 percent of those married at age 20 or older.⁹ Couples who wait until they are in their twenties to marry are more likely to have the maturity, opportunity and levels of educational attainment that are associated with better marital matching and more successful marriages. They also are more likely to be prepared for the responsibilities of parenthood.

At the same time, however, there may be disadvantages to waiting too long. Postponing marriage until older ages exposes sexually active young single adults to the risks of multiple failed relationships, cohabitation, and unwed parenthood. Sexual infidelity often figures in these broken relationships. As a result, women who have experienced several breakups in their late teens and early twenties have a hard time trusting the “next guy who comes along.” Low-income women are at high risk for this kind of gender mistrust and estrangement.¹⁰

A prolonged period of sexually active singlehood may also encourage a marriage-averse ethos among men. By living with a girlfriend, men can get many of the benefits of marriage without making a commitment to marriage. Also, some men regard marriage as “hard work” whereas the single life promises “fun and freedom.” Given this view of marriage, they seek to prolong the “fun and freedom” of the single life as long as they can.¹¹

Homogamy: According to the well-established rule of marital homogamy, the more similar people are in age, education, religion and race, the more likely they are to have a successful marriage. However, fewer Americans today are entering homogamous marriages. The proportion of interracial and interethnic marriages has increased among all groups in the society. This is a matter of concern because people in heterogamous marriages report less marital happiness and greater proneness to divorce. Overall, the increase in marital heterogamy may be one reason for lower levels of marital quality, satisfaction and duration.¹²

Educational Attainment: Men and women who are college educated are more likely to marry, to stay married and to report satisfaction in marriage than people with lower levels of educational attainment. Also, college-educated individuals are more likely to marry other college-educated individuals. In the future, however, it may become more difficult for college educated women to find similarly well educated men if more women than men continue to earn college degrees. The educational gender gap is already a serious problem for African-American female college graduates who greatly outnumber African American male college graduates.¹³

Religion: People who frequently attend religious services are more likely to marry and to remain married than those who are not religiously observant. A shared religious life is one of the most important predictors of a successful marriage. There are several reasons why this is true. Religious institutions provide a community of support and a cultural refuge for married couples and their children, and especially for recent immigrant families. This kind of institutional support may be especially important today. Compared to decades past, childrearing families are demographically less dominant, the public sphere is less oriented to families with children, and parents face a less hospitable childrearing culture.

Religious teachings offer strong normative support for marriage and for the norm of marital permanence. Belief in marital permanence is associated with higher levels of marital quality for both men and women. When couples see marriage as a lifelong

commitment, they tend to make high personal investments of time, attention and affection in their relationship with the expectation that they will mutually benefit over the long-term. They are less likely to indulge in day-by-day calculations of who is doing more and who is getting a better “deal,” a habit of mind that can lead to resentment, conflict and a withdrawal of emotional investment.¹⁴

Finally, shared religious observance promotes greater emotional investment in marriage by men. This is an important finding because today’s wives evaluate marital quality largely on the basis of emotional well-being. According to one recent study, husbands’ emotional investment in the marriage – meaning the high quality time men spend with their wives and the love and affection they show to their wives – is the most *crucial* determinant of women’s marital satisfaction. As the study further notes, wives’ assessment of their husband’s “emotion work” is more important in their overall happiness than a host of other traditional predictors of marital quality, including female labor force participation, childbearing, education, and perceptions of equity in housework.¹⁵

Economic predictors: Male employment, earnings and job stability are significant predictors of entry into marriage. Men who work more and earn more also marry more. Employed men are also more attractive as prospective husbands.¹⁶ Because men’s breadwinning capacity is so important to their marriageability, some sociologists have attributed the decline of high paying, low-skill jobs to a shortage of “marriageable men,” especially among African-American men in the inner city. Other scholars contend that the loss of high paying low skill jobs only partially explains the retreat from marriage. They also point to men’s sexual attitudes and behavior – particularly high levels of infidelity, promiscuity and paternal irresponsibility - as a key reason why women reject such men as unsuitable marriage partners.¹⁷

Changing economic expectations for marriage also play a role in divergent marital outcomes for the privileged and the poor. In the past, the economic barriers to entry into marriage were low. Through marriage, the young, poor and propertyless found a way to pool resources and to build a nest and a nest egg. Moreover, because most couples could expect a long-lasting marriage, they could be patient in their efforts to accumulate and share in marital assets. Today, however, the economic bar has been raised. Getting married is something couples feel that they are ready to do only after they have acquired their own nest and nest egg. In the minds of young people today, marriage is reserved for couples who are able to afford a “decent” wedding as well as a house with furniture, a nice car or two, and an occasional vacation or dinner out. Until young adults are able to afford these material goods, they are putting off marriage.¹⁸

The postponement strategy works for privileged women because they are able to meet and marry similarly advantaged and well-educated man. With their marital mergers, two such privileged individuals rise into the economic elite. The strategy works less well for women near the bottom of the income distribution. Low-income women put off marriage in order to get ahead economically but they may not put off childbearing. They have children with men who are not suitable marriage prospects. And after becoming young

single mothers, they have limited opportunities for the kind of school or work experience that would put them in a more favorable marriage market. For many low-income single mothers, therefore, marriage postponed is marriage foregone.

Couple characteristics associated with marriage success or failure

Nonmarital sex and unwed childbearing: Men and women who are virgins at marriage have dramatically more stable marriages than those who have nonmarital sex. This is largely due to the fact that those who abstain from nonmarital sex are also more likely to be religious and to have a strong commitment to lifelong marriage.¹⁹ Traditionally, women have been more likely than men to be virgins at first marriage. In recent decades, however, the percentage of women who wait to have sexual intercourse until they are married has plummeted. A majority of women who married in the 1990s first had intercourse five years or more prior to marrying. One consequence is that more women are having children outside of marriage but are not going on to marry the father of their child.

Nonmarital childbearing negatively affects a woman's chance of forming a successful marriage in the future. Once a woman has had a child outside of marriage, her chances of marrying drop dramatically. According to one recent study, that chance is almost 40 percent lower for those who had a first child outside of marriage and 51 percent for women who do not marry the biological father within six months of birth. By age 35, only 70 percent of all unwed mothers are married compared to 88 percent of those who have not had a child.²⁰ Further, when unwed mothers do marry, they are less likely to marry well. Compared to single women from similarly disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have children, single mothers are more likely to marry a high school dropout or someone without a job.

Cohabitation: In recent decades, living together has shifted from a stigmatized and marginal practice to a socially acceptable and mainstream practice for opposite sex couples. Between 1960 and 2004, the number of unmarried couples increased from less than 500,000 to more than five million. Over half of all first marriages are now preceded by a living together relationship. Cohabiting partnerships are highly unstable. Most break up within a year, either by ending altogether or converting to marriage.²¹

Although many young people believe that cohabitation will improve their chances for having a lasting marriage, there is no evidence to support that belief. On the contrary, a substantial body of evidence suggests that cohabiting couples are more likely to breakup up after marriage than those who do not live together before marriage. [One exception: a recent study based on a nationally representative sample of women concluded that premarital cohabitation, when limited to a woman's future husband, is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption.²²]

Compared to marital unions, cohabiting unions are also associated with poorer communication, lower relationship satisfaction, less support from family and friends, and

higher levels of domestic violence. Cohabiting couples lead more separate and independent lives than married couples. They experience more ambiguity and uncertainty about the level of commitment and investment in the relationship. Living together partners are more likely to be sexually unfaithful, and thus more prone to sexual jealousy and partner violence.

Much of the scholarly debate over cohabitation focuses on why people who cohabit are at higher risk for these negative outcomes, and particularly for the higher risk of divorce when they do marry. Part of the risk is attributed to “selection effect,” the fact that cohabiters have different characteristics from noncohabiters. For example, people who are less religious, divorced, high school dropouts, or have experienced childhood sexual abuse, high levels of marital discord or parental divorce during childhood are more likely to cohabit. However, not all of the negative effects of cohabitation are due to the selection effect. Some research suggests that cohabitation itself reduces commitment and esteem for marriage, especially among those who have more than one cohabiting experience.

Indeed, though cohabiting unions may look a lot like marriages, they are very different in their formation and orientation to commitment. Cohabitation is an agreement reached privately. Marriage is an event celebrated publicly. Cohabitation is entered into informally, sometimes casually. Marriage is entered into with all kinds of formal rituals and ceremonies. Cohabitation is a nonbinding commitment for an indeterminate period of time. Marriage sets forth a clear statement as to the binding nature and expected duration of the commitment.

Indeed, no one who marries in a state of sobriety can be confused about what he or she is doing on the wedding day or what he or she is committing to. There are multiple and overlapping ways in which the couple’s mutual agreement is announced, contracted, enacted, pledged and celebrated. It is such professions of commitment that help men and women to make the psychosocial transition to a new identity and to a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of their union. This is not the case with the experience of cohabitation. A cohabiting partnership has no larger public meaning; it can mean whatever each of the individual partners wants it to mean. As it happens, these individual meanings can differ sharply by gender. Young women tend to place cohabitation along a relationship continuum. Marriage stands at one end of the continuum, representing the highest level of commitment, while a one-night stand might occupy the lowest level at the opposite end. Cohabitation stands closer to the marriage end of the continuum. Women see cohabitation as part of an unfolding process of relationship development leading toward [or away from] a marriage commitment.

Young men’s view of commitment tends to be more binary. As they see it, commitment is not a continuum but a status. And there are two main statuses for men: single or married. To go from the status of “single” to “married” is not a matter of moving a few steps along the commitment continuum; it is a status-changing leap. And a man doesn’t make that leap when he moves in with his girlfriend; he makes it on the day that he says

“I do.” Consequently, for men, cohabitation isn’t necessarily a step on the road to marriage. It is often just another way of being single.

These gendered views of cohabitation may help explain why some cohabiting men are surprised, annoyed or mystified when their live-in girlfriend brings up the subject of marriage and why cohabiting men regard talk of future marriage as an unwanted “pressure.” On the other side, it is also why some cohabiting women feel cruelly deceived when their live-in boyfriends balk at marriage.²³

Such differences, researchers hypothesize, may persist after marriage. Cohabiting couples may “slide” into marriage rather than “decide” to marry.²⁴ In other words, they may fail to undergo the transition from the contingent commitment of a cohabiting partnership to the permanent commitment of marriage. By carrying a “cohabiting mindset” into marriage, they are then at greater risk for divorce. Other researchers contend that cohabitation may interfere with successful marital matching by prematurely entangling couples in relationships that foreclose opportunities to meet and date other prospective marriage partners. The loss of time and opportunity can be especially hazardous for women who want to marry and have children before they get to the age where they are at risk for infertility problems.

Beyond negative effects for the couple, there are other reasons to be concerned about the rise in cohabitation. More than forty percent of cohabiting couple households now include children. These households are less likely to convert to married parent households than in the past. The proportion of cohabiting mothers who eventually marry the fathers of their children has declined from 57 to 44 percent in the decade between 1987-97. Nor are these cohabiting parent households as stable as married parent households. At the five year mark, half of cohabiting couples with children will have broken up compared to 15 percent of married parents.²⁵ Children who live in cohabiting households with their biological mother and an unrelated male partner face a high risk of sexual abuse and physical violence.

Social and Cultural Factors Influencing Marriage

The Deinstitutionalization of Marriage

Most scholars agree that the last third of the twentieth century marked a watershed in the history of American marriage. Before that time, marriage served as the central social institution organizing and regulating licit sex, opposite sex living together partnerships, childbearing, parenthood and family life. Since then, however, all these aspects of adult life have become “unbundled” from marriage. For many Americans, and particularly for younger Americans, sex has no necessary connection to the expectation or promise of marriage. Living together as an unmarried couple is now a socially acceptable alternative to living together as a married couple. Procreation is increasingly separate from marriage and also, with the growing use of artificial reproductive technologies, separate from sex itself. Parenthood is more loosely connected to marriage. In sum, many of the

larger social, economic, religious and public purposes once associated with marriage are receding or missing entirely.

As one measure of this trend, consider the results of a 2001 national survey of single and married young adults, ages 20-29. Only 16 percent agree that the main purpose of marriage is to have children, while 62 percent agree that, while it may not be ideal, it's okay for an adult woman to have a child on her own if she has not found the right man to marry. More than four out of ten describe adults who choose to raise a child out of wedlock as "doing their own thing." Among the sample's singles, less than half (42 percent) agree that it is important to find a spouse who shares their own religious faith. Four out of ten (43 percent) agree that the government should provide cohabiting couples the same benefits provided married couples.²⁶

The Fragility of "Soulmate" Marriage

While marriage is losing much of its public and institutional character, it is gaining popularity as a "soulmate" relationship – an intensely private couple relationship whose main purpose is to promote the psychological well-being and emotional satisfaction of each adult. For example, ninety-four percent of never-married young singles agree with the statement that "when you marry you want your spouse to be your soulmate, first and foremost." Over eighty percent of all young women, married and single, agree that "it is more important to them to have a husband who can communicate about his deepest feelings than to have a husband who makes a good living."²⁷

Of course, there is nothing historically new in the desire for lasting friendship in marriage. Indeed, the vision of combining friendship, romantic love and mutual sexual fidelity in marriage is a distinctive feature of the western marriage tradition and arguably one of the most daring experiments in all of human experience. (Most societies, past and present, still prefer marriages arranged by kin or parents and many adhere to a sexual double standard.) Moreover, amid the dislocations of today's mobile society and dynamic economy, it is understandable that people would seek at least one deep emotional connection to another human being. Finally, it may be more important now than in the past for couples to enjoy each other's company. After all, couples today are having fewer children and living longer, healthier lives. Those who marry and stay married may spend 60 or more years together.

However, the exacting emotional requirements are likely to make marriages unhappier and potentially more fragile. When married couples cannot look to larger institutional forces, such as religion, law or social norms, to sustain their union, they bear the burden of maintaining a high-quality marriage on their own. Yet the demands of contemporary life make this difficult to do. At the very time that couples must invest heavily and routinely in nurturing their relationships, they have less time and support to do so. This is especially true for parents who have full-time jobs outside the home. They are often chronically time-starved, sleep-deprived, distracted and harried. This may explain why parents now report significantly lower marital satisfaction than nonparents.²⁸

Given higher expectation for couple intimacy, the “soulmate” ideal may contribute to marital discord among parents. Parenthood requires a shift in time and energy from the spousal relationship to the parent-child relationship. This is not to say that husbands and wives should neglect each other’s sexual or emotional needs when they become fathers and mothers, but it is to suggest that a more adult-centered focus on one’s own intimacy needs may lead to more disappointment, estrangement and even a search for a new intimate partner during the intense childrearing years.

The emphasis on more subjective and adult-centered measures of marital well-being also contributes to the persistently high rate of parental divorce. As many as two-thirds of the parental divorces in recent years occur, not because of domestic violence, drug addiction or other destructive behaviors, but because of “softer” forms of psychological distress and unhappiness.²⁹ Children in these situations would be better off if their parents were able to work out their problems and stay together. And there is some evidence that marriages that are unhappy at one point can become happy at a later point in time. One recent large-scale study indicates that 86 percent of people who said they were unhappily married in the late 1980s but stayed in the marriage indicated that they were happier when they were interviewed five years later. Indeed, three-fifths of the formerly unhappily married couples rated their marriages as either “very happy” or “quite happy.”³⁰

Last of all, a successful soulmate marriage requires more emotional “work” by men, and many men are not naturally inclined to express affection and appreciation in ways that women find most fulfilling. They need strong cultural and institutional supports to learn to do so, and those institutional supports are less available now.

A Culture of Divorce

Since its peak in the early 1980s, the divorce rate has continued to drop. It has fallen from a high of 22.6 per 1000 married women in 1980 to 17.7 per 1000 married women in 2004. However, the decline in the divorce rate has done little to erase the cultural legacy of divorce. The widespread social experience of divorce has led to attitudes and behavior that have now taken on a life and momentum of their own. Indeed, it could be argued that the habits of mind created by a culture of divorce have had more harmful effects on marriage than divorce itself.³¹

Whereas the older generation thought little about their personal risk of divorce, today’s younger generation thinks about it a lot. Fear of divorce is one of the reasons young people commonly cite for their decision to cohabit and for their [mistaken] belief that living together actually improves their chances of avoiding divorce. The fear of divorce has also eroded confidence in the permanence of marriage. People who worry a lot about the possibility of divorce are more likely to limit their investments in the marriage and to evaluate their satisfaction in the marriage on the basis of a short-term satisfaction – one of the predictors of poor marital quality. Divorce has also made young people more wary of marriage as an economic partnership. In a qualitative study of young single men conducted by Rutgers’ National Marriage Project, more than a few expressed the view

that cohabitation is a way to get the benefits of marriage without exposing themselves to the financial obligations of divorce, should the relationship break up.³² Women have their own reasons to be less trusting of marriage as a source of long-term economic security. Given the high rate of breakup, women believe that they must be able to earn enough on their own to have power in their relationships and to have enough to survive on their own should the relationships fail.³³

The Rise of Hyperindividualism

Cross-national studies of cultural trends point to the pervasive effects of a modern form of individualism that places high value on individual expressiveness, privacy, autonomy, and freedom from institutional controls over sex and family life. To a large degree, the value of personal freedom in private life overrides concerns for child well-being, family stability, and kin loyalty. Even economic self-interest takes a back seat to the quest for independent selfhood. As one scholar has observed, people will sacrifice a degree of economic well-being – even, in the extreme, cause themselves to be classified as poor - to achieve the autonomy and privacy that accompany independent living.³⁴

This pervasive form of individualism has negatively affected marriage and family life in very different kinds of advanced western societies. As sociologist David Popenoe points out, both the highly religious United States and the highly secular Sweden have experienced high levels of family breakdown over roughly the same time period. In the U.S., sixty-three percent of children under 18 live with their own biological parents, down from 85 percent as recently as 1970 and now the lowest percentage among all western industrialized nations. Sweden, at 73 percent, is the second lowest.³⁵

Conclusion

To conclude this discussion, let me offer a definition of successful marriage that is supported by social science evidence: namely, a long-lasting union in which both spouses express mutual satisfaction with their relationship; hold similar values, attitudes and beliefs; are sexually faithful to each other; have adequate resources to care for each other and their children; share a common commitment to the well-being of their children; live together peaceably without persistent conflict, abuse or violence; are embedded within a supportive social network of family, friends and community; and are sustained by the larger society's support for marriage as the favored institution for sex, procreation and parenthood.

To read this definition is to be reminded of how very challenging it is to achieve a successful marriage today. The turbulent market economy, the frazzled pace of daily life and the shallow relationships in a mobile society hardly offer a hospitable climate for marriage. And a popular culture that pushes images of sex without strings and relationships without rings hardly reflects the desires of most people for an enduring and satisfying marriage. Indeed, a happy and lasting marriage ranks as one of the most highly prized and hardest-to-achieve accomplishments in contemporary American life. It is also one of the most richly rewarding. Somehow, we must find ways to increase the

proportion of Americans who can meet its challenges and claim its riches for themselves and their children.

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² There is no significant difference between white non-Hispanic women and Hispanic women in the stability of first marriage. Available data suggest that first marriages of Asian women are more stable than among any other group. Matthew Bramlett and William D. Mosher, "First Marriage Dissolution, Divorce and Remarriage: United States," *Advance Data*, no. 323 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, May 31, 2005), 13.

³ *Science Says: Teens' Attitudes Toward Marriage, Cohabitation and Divorce*, no. 16 (Washington, D.C.: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, July 2005), 2-3.

⁴ Andrew J. Cherlin, "American Marriage in the Twenty-First Century," in *Marriage and Child Well-Being* available at: <http://www.futureofchildren.org>.

⁵ Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 6; Daniel T. Lichter, Christie D. Batson, J. Brian Brown, "Welfare Reform and Marriage Promotion: The Marital Expectations and Desires of Single and Cohabiting Mothers," *Social Service Review* (March 2004), 1-25.

⁶ Paul R. Amato, "What Children Learn From Divorce" *Population Today* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, January 2001); Nicholas Wolfinger, "Beyond the Intergenerational Transmission of Divorce," *Journal of Family Issues* 21-8 (2000), 1061-1086; Judith Wallerstein, Julia M. Lewis and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study* (New York: Hyperion, 2000); Elizabeth Marquardt, *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005).

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⁸ David Popenoe, *Ten Important Research Findings*; Naomi Seiler, *Is Teen Marriage A Solution?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, 2002).

⁹ *Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the U.S* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2002).

¹⁰ Edin and Kefalas, *Promises*, 131.

¹¹ David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage 2000* (New Brunswick, NJ: The National Marriage Project at Rutgers, 2000), 16-17.

¹² Paul R. Amato, David R. Johnson, Alan Booth, and Stacy J. Rogers, "Continuity and Change in Marital Quality Between 1980 and 2000," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (February 2003), 1-22.

¹³ Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (Washington, DC: Civitas, 1998, 147-149; Popenoe, *Ten Important Research Findings*, 1.

¹⁴ Amato et.al., *Continuity and Change*, 5; Linda J. Waite and Evelyn Lehrer, "The Benefits from Marriage and Religion in the United States: A Comparative Analysis," *Population and Development Review* 29: 255-275; Nicholas H. Wolfinger and W. Bradford Wilcox, "Happily Ever After? Religion, Marital Status, Gender and Relationship Quality in Urban Families," Paper prepared for the 2005 annual meeting of the Population Society of America.

¹⁵ W. Bradford Wilcox and Steven L. Knock, "What's Love Got To Do With It?: Gender Ideology, Men's Emotion Work and Women's Marital Quality," *Social Forces* TK; W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Steven L. Nock, *Marriage in Men's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Allen M. Parkman, "The Importance of Gifts in Marriage," *Economic Inquiry* 42, July 2004: 483-495.

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