

Wang, Hongyu and Paul Amato. 2000. "Predictors of Divorce Adjustment: Stressors, Resources, and Definitions." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62:655-668.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The authors argue that stressors (declines in standard of living, losing friends and moving) are relatively poor predictors of post-divorce adjustment, in contrast to the impact that social resources and definitions of divorce have in facilitating better adjustment.

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Stress and Coping Theory: The perspective that people adjust to stressful family events depending on three factors (accumulation of stressors, resources, and definitions of such events).
- Stressors: These are factors that come into play both during the process of divorcing and after the divorce that may affect an individual's adjustment to the divorce. Examples include loss of income, losing social resources, and having to change homes.
- Indicators Of Adjustment: these might be positive (life happiness, self-esteem), negative (psychological distress, substance use), or operate on a scale (self-reported health)

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. In contrast to employed individuals, unemployed people are more likely to be impacted by the effects of income decline, loss of friends, and moving. The effects of such factors did not have a significant impact for employed respondents.
2. Social resources had a greater impact to divorce adjustment compared to other factors. In specific, new intimate relationships such as dating or cohabiting led to better adjustment to divorce.
3. For individuals who initiate the divorce, they are more likely to feel relieved over the ending of the marriage compared to those who seek to avoid dissolution. The perception of greater problems in the marriage might allow for feeling relieved, in contrast to those who did not find issues in the relationship, making it more difficult to adjust afterwards.
4. Gender seems to have a significant impact on post-divorce adjustment. For women, disadvantages in terms of becoming sole caretakers and standard of living impact their adjustment with their new marital status.

KEY QUOTE: "Given this way of measuring adjustment, it is not surprising that the best adjusted individuals are those who initiated the divorce and are in a new relationship. Spouses who initiate divorce have completed all or most of their mourning for the marriage by the time the physical separation and legal divorce occurs. In contrast, spouses who resist the divorce must do most of their mourning after the marriage ends." (667)

QUESTION: Does religion play a role in how people approach divorce adjustment? Perhaps, because of religious values, people hold on to marriage in order to protect their religious beliefs?