



Family & Child Well-Being
Research Network



Measurement Issues in Family Demography Conference

November 13-14, 2003

Natcher Center
NIH Campus
Bethesda, MD



Day 1

8:00-8:30 Registration

8:30-9:00 Welcome and Highlights of Counting Couples Workshop

Presenters: Sandy Hofferth, University of Maryland at College Park
Lynne Casper, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, U.S. DHHS

Session 1

9:00-10:30 Measuring Marriage and Cohabitation

Organizer: Kathleen Mullan Harris, University of North Carolina

Presenters: Paul Amato, Pennsylvania State University
Studying Marital Interaction and Commitment With Survey Data
Wendy Manning, Bowling Green State University, and Pamela Smock, University of Michigan
Measuring and Modeling Cohabitation: New Perspectives from Qualitative Data
Jean Knab and Sara McLanahan, Princeton University
Michael Pollard and Kathleen Mullan Harris, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Discussant: Linda Waite, University of Chicago

This session will draw upon current studies that collect information on relationships to explore the ways in which cohabitation is measured and to contrast relationship quality and commitment in cohabiting and marital relationships. Paul Amato will present data on commitment in marital relationships; Wendy Manning and Pamela Smock will present results from their on-going qualitative studies of cohabiting relationships; Jean Knab and Sara McLanahan will explore ways to measure cohabitation in The Fragile Families Study and its implications for other relationship measures, such as quality; and Michael Pollard and Kathleen Mullan Harris will explore measurement of cohabiting relationships in Add Health and contrast the quality of relationships between marital and cohabiting relationships. Whenever possible, subgroup differences by age, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status will be presented. Linda Waite will discuss the findings presented in light of their contribution to measurement strategies and research knowledge. Data sets represented in this session represent the most recent studies in the field that examine marriage and cohabitation, whose designs were influenced by the first Counting Couples Conference in 2001.

Session 2 Measuring the Quality of Couple Relationships: The State of the Art and Implications for Evaluating Interventions
10:45-12:15

Organizer: Naomi Goldstein, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. DHHS

Presenters: Kristin Moore, Child Trends
Healthy Marriages and Healthy Relationships: Conceptualization and Measurement
Alan Hawkins, Brigham Young University and Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. DHHS
Conceptualizing and Measuring a Construct of Marital Virtues
Scott Stanley, University of Denver
Assessing Marital and Couple Relationships: Beyond Form and Toward a Deeper Knowledge of Function

Discussant: Matthew Stagner, The Urban Institute

The session will discuss how measures of relationship quality are or can be designed to capture the effects of interventions; to be applicable across a range of relationship types; to be applicable across diverse populations; and to capture aspects of relationships that are related to child well-being. Kristin Moore and colleagues from Child Trends will present a summary of current practice and recommendations for the conceptualization and measurement of healthy marriage and couple relationships, based on a review of publications, measures, and memos solicited from researchers and practitioners representing a range of disciplines and familiarity with diverse populations, including minority populations, prison populations, and cohabiting couples, as well as married couples. Alan Hawkins and Scott Stanley will describe the concepts and measures they have developed and used in evaluating interventions to promote healthy marriage, and discuss areas for further development. Matt Stagner will provide reactions to the presentations, bringing to bear information gathered from a systematic review of experimental interventions to promote healthy marriage.

Session 3

1:30-3:00 Measuring Men's Fertility

Organizer: Freya Sonenstein, Johns Hopkins University

Presenters: Frank Mott, Ohio State University

Male Relationship and Fertility Data in the NLSY79

Freya Sonenstein, Johns Hopkins University

William Marsiglio, University of Florida

Qualitative Insights for Studying Male Fertility: Assessing the Procreative Man

Discussant: Christine Bachrach, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, U.S. DHHS

This session will examine why it is important to measure men's fertility and how well current surveys collect information about this experience. Topics to be addressed include: the measures used, their reliability and validity, and differences in results obtained across surveys by age, race/ethnicity, education and income. The data sets to be examined are Add Health, NLSY (1979 and 1997) by Frank Mott, NSAM by Freya Sonenstein, and NSM by Koray Tanfer. Insights about measurement drawn from qualitative work will also be discussed by William Marsiglio.

3:00-3:15 Coffee Break Sponsored by Child Trends and MPRC

Session 4

3:15-4:45 Measuring Divorce and Separation

Organizer: Gary Sandefur, University of Wisconsin- Madison

Presenters: Larry Bumpass, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Measuring Divorce and Separation: Issues, and Comparability of Estimates Across Data Sources.

Kelly Raley, University of Texas-Austin

Discussant: Martin O'Connell, U.S. Census Bureau

In this session, Larry Bumpass and Kelly Raley will review existing measures of separation and divorce available in three major data sets: the National Survey of Family and Households (NSFH), the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), and the Current Population Survey (CPS). They will discuss the conceptual and methodological difficulties involved in gathering information on separation and divorce, and propose ideas for improvement. Martin O'Connell will act as discussant.

Day 2

8:30-9:00 Registration

Session 5

9:00-10:30 Measuring Household Composition

Organizer: Peter Brandon, University of Massachusetts, and Lynne Casper, National Institutes of Health

Presenters: Donna Morrison, Georgetown University
Philip Cohen, University of California-Irvine
Children and Living Arrangements in the Current Population Survey
Wendy Manning and Ron Bulanda, Bowling Green State University
Cohabitation and Measurement of Family Trajectories
Gary Gates, The Urban Institute
Same-Sex Unmarried Partner Couples in Census 2000: How many are Gay and Lesbian?
Peter Brandon, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and Rosalind King, National Institutes of Health
Using 'Relationship Matrices' for More Accurate Identification of Children's Living Arrangements and Circumstances

Discussant: Jason Fields, U.S. Census Bureau

The aim of this session is to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of existing surveys of measuring household relationships at one point in time. Papers will focus on issues such as the enumeration of persons within household, use of sample weights, and the capacity of surveys to precisely identify whether both biological parents of children are present within the household. The people and sources of data involved in this session include: Donna Morrison using the NLSY; Wendy Manning using the NSFG; Philip Cohen and Lynne Casper using the CPS; and Peter Brandon using the SIPP. Gary Gates (pending) will discuss measurement issues around same-sex couples. Jason Fields will act as discussant.

Session 6

10:45-12:15 Measuring Father Involvement and Social Fathering

Organizer: Sandy Hofferth, University of Maryland

Chair: Seth Sanders, University of Maryland

Presenters: Sandy Hofferth, University of Maryland
Measuring Father Involvement and Social Fathering: An Overview
Randy Day, Brigham Young University
Natasha Cabrera, University of Maryland
Biological Resident Fathers in Early Head Start by Type of Father Involvement
Marcy Carlson, Columbia University
Rebekah Levine Coley, Boston College

Discussant: Frances Goldscheider, Brown University

The objective of this session is to compare estimates of father engagement, accessibility, responsibility, and positive emotional involvement across several recent data sets. Natasha Cabrera will focus on Early Head Start, Marcy Carlson on Fragile Families, Rebekah Coley on the Three-City Study, Randy Day on the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, and Sandy Hofferth on the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement. The focus is on residential fathers, that is, fathers living with their children. The presenters examine differences by the following variables: marital status and biological relationship of father to child, educational level of father, income of father, age of child, race/ethnicity, and proportion of time lived with the child from birth. The focus is on young children.

Session 7**1:30-3:00 Measuring Family and Household Relationships Across Time and Space**

Organizer: Sandy Hofferth, University of Maryland at College Park

Presenters: John Iceland, University of Maryland at College Park

Poverty Estimates Using Alternative Units of Analysis

Martha Hill, University of Michigan

Is 'Single-Parent Family' a Misnomer Misdirecting Research and Policies?

Barbara Downs, U.S. Census Bureau

The Children's Residential History Calendar: Data Collection Using Multiple Methods

Bill Mosher, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. DHHS

Including the Military and the Incarcerated in Surveys

Discussant: Alison Aughinbaugh, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Close family interactions cut across households and institutions. This is especially critical given the extent of coparenting across households and the fluidity of living arrangements of young men. Large distances between family members and the reasons for separate residences can affect these interactions. John Iceland will discuss the family versus household as the unit of analysis, especially as it affects poverty estimates. Barbara Downs will describe how children's living arrangements over time are determined as family members move in and out of different households. Martha Hill will present a new framework for studying families, especially focusing on how to treat family members that split their living arrangements across households. Bill Mosher will discuss the effects of institutionalization (military and jail) on estimates of living arrangements.

3:00-3:15 Coffee Break Sponsored by Child Trends and MPRC

Session 8**3:15-4:45 Measuring Nonresidential Parenting**

Organizer: Elizabeth Peters, Cornell University

Presenters: Laura Argys, University of Colorado-Denver

Elaine Sorensen, The Urban Institute

Steven Garasky, Iowa State University

Steven Cook, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Maureen Waller, Cornell University

Elizabeth Peters, Cornell University

Discussant: Linda Mellgren, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Our session will address two broad categories of non-residential father involvement: time and money. Specifically, we investigate measures of formal and informal child support and the timing of that support over a child's life-cycle. We also compare different measures of father-child contact, including days of contact, number of overnights, and physical and legal custody across several different data sets. Our analysis emphasizes the point that the complex and dynamic nature of families makes it difficult to capture non-resident father's involvement in a consistent way across children and time. In particular, we point out (1) the prevalence of families with multiple child support agreements due to the children in the household having different fathers; (2) differences between legal (formal) and informal arrangements; (3) changes in family circumstances that lead to the need to modify agreements; and (4) difficulties in capturing the nature of father-child contact due to variations in the type of contact and its timing. To illustrate these complexities and to show how different surveys are able to capture the complexities, we present data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY 1979 and 1997 cohorts), the National Survey of American Families (NSAF), Fragile Families, and several survey and administrative data sets from Wisconsin.

