

Is Adaptation to Marriage Rapid and Complete?

Anke Zimmermann and Richard A. Easterlin*

University of Southern California

January 2006

Abstract

The answer is no. An analysis of 20 waves of the German Socio Economic Panel indicates that marriage has a lasting impact on life satisfaction, equal in magnitude to the effect of cohabitation prior to marriage. In the year of marriage and that immediately following there is also an additional boost in life satisfaction, a “honeymoon period” effect. Contrary to the conclusion of an earlier analysis of the same panel by several psychologists, our findings are consistent with the “social support” interpretation of the benefits of marriage, and reject the “selection” hypothesis. The difference is because we use an expanded model, one taking account of cohabitation and special characteristics of the sample. Our results also contradict the strong “setpoint” model of psychology, which sees life circumstances as having a negligible impact on life satisfaction.

*We are grateful to the University of Southern California for financial support, and to Jeffrey B. Nugent, Vincent Plagnol, Merrill Silverstein, and John Strauss for comments.

Introduction

A recent article by Linda Waite and Evelyn Lehrer (2003) exemplifies the substantial consensus in demography and sociology that marriage has a positive and enduring effect on well-being (cf. also Waite 1995). Almost concurrently with the publication of that commentary, however, a jarring challenge to this consensus was presented in an award-winning article by several psychologists (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, and Diener [hereafter LCGD] 2003). In a panel study covering 15 years they find that there is a temporary positive “honeymoon period” effect of marriage, but typically people revert two years after marriage to the same “baseline” level of life satisfaction that prevailed two years before. The psychologists’ “take-home message” is that “on average, people adapt quickly and completely to marriage” (p. 536).

The significance of this conclusion goes well beyond the important issue of whether marriage has lasting benefits. There is a theory in psychology, the “setpoint model”, that in its strong form sees individuals as adapting fully to all kinds of life circumstances – job promotion, serious accident, death of a partner, and so on (Kamman 1983, Lykken and Tellegen 1996, Myers 1992, 2000). This model is in fact being tested in the LCGD article. In this theory a person’s subjective well-being [SWB] tends to center around a setpoint given by genetics and personality, and major life transitions and events merely deflect a person temporarily from this level. David G. Myers (2000, p.60), an enthusiastic proponent of setpoint theory, quotes favorably the view expressed by the late Richard Kamman (1983, p.18): “Objective life circumstances have a negligible role to play in a theory of happiness”. (In what follows, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and happiness, though not identical, are treated as reasonably interchangeable terms).

A disturbing implication of this model is that little can be done by personal action or public policy to improve individual well-being. Ed Diener and Richard E. Lucas, two of the authors of the panel analysis, are quite explicit about this. In an earlier article they state: “The influence of genetics and personality suggests a limit on the degree to

which policy can increase SWB. . . .Changes in the environment, although important for short-term well-being, lose salience over time through processes of adaptation, and have small effects on long-term SWB” (Diener and Lucas 1999, p.227)¹. Clearly if, in the population as a whole, adaptation to life circumstances in general is rapid and complete, then any measure aimed at improving average well-being is fruitless (cf. Easterlin 2003).

In this article, we analyze the same body of data as in the LCGD study (the German Socio Economic Panel [GSOEP]), but cover 20 waves (1984-2003) compared with the 15 waves (1984-1998) of the psychologists’ analysis². We study the same sample of persons, those who got and remained married during the time period covered, and we use the same methodology, hierarchical linear modeling. However, we construct an expanded version of their model, one that incorporates cohabitation and takes account of the special characteristics of their sample of new marriages. Our primary purpose is to see whether in this expanded model their conclusion still holds – that adaptation to marriage is rapid and complete.

The Waite and Lehrer article relies for the most part on objective indicators of well-being, as is typical in demography, and the psychologists’ result might be dismissed by some on the grounds that it is based on a subjective measure of well-being, one obtained via self-reports. But subjective measures are gradually finding acceptance in demographic research (Kohler, Behrmann and Skyttthe forthcoming, Bernhardt and Fratzak 2005) and Waite and Lehrer in their article reference several studies using such measures (Horwitz et al 1996, Marks and Lambert 1998, Simon 2002). Elsewhere these measures play a central role in Waite’s collaborative work on the well-being effects of dissolution of marital unions (Waite et al 2002, Waite and Luo, 2003).

¹A gradual retreat by these authors from the view expressed in this 1999 quotation is apparent in later work. In the 2003 article cited here the authors find that adaptation to widowhood takes eight years. Elsewhere, they conclude that unemployment has a lasting effect on well-being, changing the happiness setpoint (Lucas et al 2004).

²The data used in this publication were made available to us by the German Socio-Economic Panel Study at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), Berlin.

Moreover, analyses of the effects of marriage using measures of subjective well-being have heretofore supported the consensus. These studies are typically point-of-time analyses of the relation of SWB to marital status, with controls for factors such as income, health, and work status. The repeated conclusion of these cross sectional studies is that marriage has a positive impact on life satisfaction (Argyle 1999, Blanchflower and Oswald 2004, Frey and Stutzer 2002). The few panel studies that have been done other than that of LCGD have also usually supported the consensus (Johnson and Wu 2002, Mastekaasa 1995). However, these panel studies like those of Waite and her collaborators have not included a pre-marriage baseline period, and therefore do not address the issue of whether well-being in the post marriage period returns to the pre-marriage baseline level.

The usual explanation of the benefits of marriage – whether measured in terms of objective or subjective indicators – is in terms of “social support”, that is the beneficial effects of companionship, emotional support, sustained sexual intimacy, and so on (Coombs 1991, Johnson and Wu 2002, Laumann et al 1994, Waite and Joyner 2001). There is also recognition that there may be some selection effect at work – that persons, say, with “happier” personalities are more likely to marry – but such effects are typically considered to be unable to account for much of the positive association. In contrast to the prevailing view, LCGD argue that their results reject the “social support” or “social role” hypothesis. Rather, their findings imply that the positive relation of SWB to marriage in the cross section is due, not to any lasting benefits of marriage, but to selection into marriage based on personality traits, and also, that when the cross section surveys are conducted some recently married individuals are still in their “honeymoon” period.

In what follows we first describe our model, data and methodology, and then report our findings. Our principal conclusion is, contrary to LCGD, that adaptation to marriage is neither rapid nor complete, and that the “social support” explanation of the benefits from marriage is sustained.

Model, data, and methodology

The LCGD model consists of an intercept and two terms. The intercept reflects an individual’s average life satisfaction (LS) in the “baseline period” – all years that are at least 2 years before marriage (t_{-2} and before). The first term is a “reactivity” term, average LS in the year of marriage (t_0) and the two adjacent years (t_{-1} and t_{+1}), reflecting the immediate impact on LS of marriage. LCGD include in their reactivity period the year before marriage, because in their data there is a substantial bump in LS in that year, which they attribute to anticipation of marriage. The second term is the “adaptation” term, average life satisfaction in the second year after marriage and all subsequent years (t_{+2} and thereafter). It is the result for this term that is the core of their conclusion about rapid and complete adaptation to marriage; they find no significant difference between the value of this term and the baseline value.

We expand their model by adding first, a term that reflects LS of those cohabiting in any year prior to marriage. There is considerable evidence that the formation of a cohabitating union has a positive impact on LS similar to marriage, though the magnitude of effect is sometimes not as great (Stack and Eshleman 1998, Frey and Stutzer 2002). Cohabitation is fairly prevalent among young adult Germans, and hence it is possible that the LCGD estimates of life satisfaction in the baseline period and the year before marriage already include a considerable part of the impact on LS of the benefit of forming unions.

Fortunately the GSOEP contains questions (given here in Appendix A) which, though varying slightly over time, permit us to examine the extent of cohabitation in the sample. In the year before marriage two respondents out of three were cohabiting. Among the sample observations two or more years prior to marriage, over one-fourth are for persons who are cohabiting. Clearly, cohabitation is an important behavior in the sample of persons who got and stayed married.

We hypothesize that the bump in LS in the year before marriage that LCGD observe

is due, not to anticipation of marriage, as they suggest, but to the fact that cohabitation is extensive in the year before marriage. Consequently, we confine the reactivity period in our model to the year of marriage and that immediately following (t_0 and t_{+1}). We test subsequently for an “anticipation” effect.

In order to focus our comparison with LCGD on the analytical model, we follow them in selecting a sample of persons who began the study unmarried, subsequently married, were still in that marriage at the time of the last survey year, and have at least 5 years of observations. This group is not a random sample of the German population. Not surprisingly, they are younger, by 12.5 years on average (Table 1, line 2). Younger people are more likely to be better educated, working, and healthier than average, and this is true for this sample (lines 3 - 5). The sample is considerably higher too on religiosity (line 6).

Life satisfaction tends to vary directly with education, health, and religiosity (Argyle 1999, Blanchflower and Oswald 2004, Frey and Stutzer 2002), and controls are therefore needed for these characteristics. In what follows, we omit health because questions on health status were not asked before 1992, but we include age, which as will be seen, largely proxies for health. In the results reported here we also omit college education, which turns out to be not significant in the regression analysis.

Our data are from waves 1-20 of the GSOEP (Haisken-DeNew and Frick 2003). To our knowledge this is the longest duration panel study available that includes a measure of subjective well-being. The specific question asked is: “How satisfied are you with your life all things considered”. Responses are on a scale from 0 = completely dissatisfied to 10 = completely satisfied. We follow LCGD in using hierarchical linear modeling, generally considered to be the statistical technique most appropriate for analysis of panel data (Luke 2004).

Findings

The results of estimating our model are presented in Table 2. The model equation is given in Appendix B. The main findings are as follows:

(1) Life satisfaction in the baseline period for the marriage sample does not differ significantly from that for the GSOEP sample population generally (line 1). Although the sample of newly married persons differs in several important ways from the whole GSOEP sample, the intercept term is not significant when controls for these special characteristics are included in the regression.

(2) Cohabitation has a significant positive effect on well-being, increasing life satisfaction by almost one-quarter of a point over the baseline value (line 2). As expected, cohabitation largely or wholly explains the bump in LS in the year before marriage that LCGD interpret as due to anticipation of marriage. If, in our model, we replace the cohabitation term with a year before marriage term, we find that the coefficient on year before marriage (.235) is essentially the same as that on cohabitation (.232), and significance levels are virtually identical.

(3) There is a substantial temporary boost in life satisfaction at the time of marriage (line 3). LS in the year of marriage and that following, the “reactivity period”, is four-tenths of a point above the baseline level, significantly greater than the boost in LS due to cohabitation and close to double in magnitude the effect of cohabitation.

(4) Although adaptation to marriage does occur, marriage has a lasting effect on well-being, increasing LS by the same magnitude as does cohabitation before marriage (line 4). The magnitude of the coefficient on the adaptation term is not significantly different from that on cohabitation. However, the coefficient on the adaptation term is significantly less than that on the reactivity term, implying that adaptation to marriage does occur once the “honeymoon period” is over.

Both our model and that of LCGD show a temporary “honeymoon period” effect and that adaptation to marriage does occur. But in other respects the results of our

model differ in major ways from those of LCGD. First and foremost, we do not find that adaptation to marriage is quick and complete; rather, we find an enduring effect of marriage comparable in magnitude to that of cohabitation. Second, whereas LCGD suggest that there is a boost in LS in the year before marriage due to anticipation of marriage, we find that effect is due to the fact that two out of three persons in the sample were cohabiting in the year before marriage. Third, whereas LCGD find support for selection into marriage of persons who are happier than average, we do not. Their evidence for selection is a significant positive baseline coefficient of about one-quarter of a point, and they interpret this coefficient as reflecting happier personality dispositions among those who eventually get married. Our analysis, however, indicates that their baseline result is due, not to personality, but to special socio-economic characteristics of the marriage sample – their youth, higher employment, and greater religiosity. Once controls for these characteristics are included in the regression, the baseline coefficient is no longer significant. We estimate that the total effect of the differences in sample characteristics is to raise the baseline value of the marriage sample by about .26, just about what LCGD estimate for the baseline coefficient (Table 3).

As Table 3 makes clear, the age variable is especially important in accounting for the difference in baseline values between our results and those of LCGD. The significant negative coefficient on age (Table 2) means that life satisfaction is higher at young ages after controlling for partnership status, employment, and religiosity. It is likely that age is partly proxying in the regression of Table 2 for health, which typically deteriorates with age (Reynolds, Crimmins, Saito 1998).

In the GSOEP, health status is reported by respondents in 10 of the 11 waves since 1992. To test whether age may be proxying for health in the 20 wave regression, we ran our model on the ten waves that include health first, with age, as in Table 2, then replacing age with health, and finally, with both age and health included. The model in which health replaces age is not significantly different from that with age alone. When age alone is included, as in the 20-wave regression, the coefficient on age is

negative and significant. When health replaces age in the regression, the coefficient on health is positive and significant (greater LS going with better health). In the model in which age and health are both included, health remains significant with about the same coefficient as when health alone is included, but age is no longer significant. This is evidence that in the 20 wave regression, age is probably largely a proxy for health.

Discussion

Do people, on average, adapt “quickly and completely to marriage”? Our analysis of 20 waves of the GSOEP suggests that the answer is “no”. Marriage has a lasting impact on life satisfaction, equal in magnitude to the effect of cohabitation prior to marriage. In the year of marriage and that immediately following, there is also a significant additional boost in life satisfaction, a “honeymoon period” effect.

Our results contradict the conclusion of Lucas et al (2003) that life satisfaction two years after marriage returns to the “baseline” level that prevailed two years before. The difference in our conclusion is because we use an expanded model that takes account of cohabitation and special characteristics of the LCGD marriage sample. The difference is not due to sample selection or methodology – these are the same in both studies. Nor is it due to the fact that we analyze 20 waves of panel data versus 15 of LCGD – if we run our model on their 15 waves, the same difference in results is found. By failing to control for the greater health, employment, and religiosity of their marriage sample compared with the GSOEP population generally, LCGS obtain an inflated baseline estimate of life satisfaction in the marriage sample, which they mistakenly attribute to selection into marriage of those who by virtue of personality start with greater life satisfaction in the baseline period. Our analysis shows that their result for the baseline value is due to the differentiating socio-economic characteristics of the marriage sample, and that once these are taken into account, there is no evidence of selection based on personality. Our analysis also shows that the boost in LS in the year before marriage

that they attribute to anticipation of marriage is really due to the high prevalence of cohabitation.

Our findings, therefore, are consistent with the interpretation commonly offered for the positive cross sectional association between life satisfaction and marriage – the social support hypothesis - and our results reject the “selection” interpretation stressed by LCGD. Moreover, our findings run counter to the strong setpoint model of psychology, that rapid adaptation to life transitions and events is pervasive, and that happiness centers around a setpoint given by genetics and personality. Instead, we find that marriage has an enduring effect. Personality and genetic heritage doubtless also affect subjective well-being. However, a model that analyzes well-being in terms of life circumstances as well as personality and genetic characteristics seems preferable to one burdened by the notion of a fixed happiness setpoint.

Our focus here has been on whether marriage has a lasting impact on subjective well-being, and to what extent the evidence we have studied favors the social support compared with selection hypotheses common in the literature. But much remains to be done. For example, are the findings here of cohabitation and marriage effects on well-being supported by other panel studies? Does re-marriage have the same well-being effect as first marriage? What is the effect of children on the well-being of married persons? These are questions of pressing research interest.

Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of GSOEP Population and Marriage Sample^a

Line	Sample size or variable	GSOEP population	Marriage sample
1	Number of persons ^b	36,345	1,492
2	Mean age, years	42.9	30.4
3	College education, percent	24.3	29.5
4	Employed, percent	67.8	97.9
5	Mean health (1 = low, to 5)	3.47	3.73
6	Religiosity, percent	33.7	49.9

a. See Appendix A for variable descriptions. Omitted from the table are two characteristics for which the sample differences are fairly small – gender and income.

b. Sample size is somewhat smaller for employed, religiosity, and health.

Table 2: HLM Regression of Life Satisfaction on Cohabitation, Marriage and Specified Control Variables

Model term	(1) Coefficient (t-value in parentheses)
1. Intercept β_{0i} : (intercept) γ_{00}	-.072 (-1.301)
(religiosity) γ_{01}	.212 (4.280)
2. Cohabitation β_{1i} : (intercept) γ_{10}	.232 (5.861)
3. Marriage reactivity period ^a β_{2i} : (intercept) γ_{20}	.414 (9.983)
4. Marriage adaptation period ^b β_{3i} : (intercept) γ_{30}	.201 (4.420)
Time-variant covariates:	
5. Employed β_{4i} : (intercept) γ_{40}	.189 (5.418)
6. Age β_{5i} : (intercept) γ_{50}	-.014 (-4.524)
n	1,482

a. Year of marriage and following year.

b. Second year after marriage and thereafter.

Table 3: Marriage Sample (MS) Compared with Whole sample (WS): Estimated Difference in Regression Estimate of Baseline Value due to Special Characteristics of MS

Characteristic	(1) Coefficient on characteristic (Table 2)	(2) Mean difference in characteristic (MS-WS) (Table 1)	(3) Difference in baseline value due to characteristic (MS-WS) (1) x (2)
Age	-.014	- 12.5	+.17
Employment	+.189	+.301	+.06
Religiosity	+.212	+.162	+.03
Total, all three			+.26

A Description of Variables

Satisfaction:

In conclusion, we would like to ask you about your satisfaction with your life in general. Please answer according to the following scale: "0" means completely dissatisfied, "10" means completely satisfied.

How satisfied are you with your life all things considered?

Marital status:

What is your marital status?

- *Married, living together with spouse*
- *Married, living (permanently) separated from my spouse*
- *Single*
- *Divorced*
- *Widowed*
- *Spouse living in different country* (This marital status category is only asked of foreigners in a different section of the survey, but it is given in the marital status variable. The marital status variable was generated by the survey institute.)

Cohabitation:

1984: question missing (but cohabitation can be derived from retrospective question in 1985 survey)

1985:

- *Has your family situation changed since the beginning of [the year that was 2 years before the current survey]? Please answer whether any of the following applies to you, and if so, when*
 - *moved in with partner*

If answer to (a) is yes, cohab. = 1; otherwise = 0.

1986-1990:

- *Are you living with someone in a long-term relationship?*
- (if yes) *since when have you lived together?*
- (or) *live in separate apartments since*
- *Has your family situation changed since the beginning of [the year that was 2 years before the current survey]? Please answer whether any of the following applies to you, and if so, when*
 - *moved in with partner*

If answer to (a) or (d) is yes, cohab. = 1; otherwise = 0.

1991-1997:

- *Are you living with someone in a long-term relationship?*
- (if yes) *Does your partner live in your household?*
- *Has your family situation changed since the beginning of [the year that was 2 years before the current survey]? Please answer whether any of the following applies to you, and if so, when*
 - *moved in with partner*

If answer to (b) or (c) is yes, cohab. = 1; otherwise = 0.

1998-2003:

- *Are you in a serious/permanent relationship?*
- (if yes) *Does your partner live in the same household?*
- *Has your family situation changed after December 31, [year that was 2 years before the current survey]? Please indicate if any of the following apply to you and if so, when this change occurred.*
 - *I moved in with my partner* (if the respondent marks "yes", he/she also indicates whether this event took place in the year of the survey or the year preceding the survey.)

If answer to (b) or (c) is yes, cohab. = 1; otherwise = 0.

Employed:

Are you currently engaged in paid employment? Which of the following applies best to your status?

- [1] Full-Time Employment
- [2] Reg. Part-Time Employment
- [3] Vocational Training
- [4] Marginal Part-Time Employment
- [5] Maternity leave (not available 1984-1990, 1999-2003)
- [6] Military, Community Service
- [7] Not Employed
- [8] Unemployed (only available in 1984)
- [9] Disabled employment (only available in 1998-2003)
- [10] Near Retirement, Zero Working Hours (only 2002-2003)

Creation of a dummy variable “employed”: “Employed” has a value of one in a given survey year if [1] Full-Time Employment, [2] Regular Part-Time Employment, [3] Vocational Training [6] Military, Community Service, or [9] Disabled employed = 1.

Religiosity:

Religiosity is measured by church attendance and the importance of religion.

Church attendance:

1 = daily, 2 = weekly, 3 = monthly, 4 = less frequently, 5 = never

Importance of Religion:

1 = very important, 2 = important, 3 = less important, 4 = very unimportant Religiosity = 1 if church attendance = 1 or 2 or importance of religion = 1 or 2 at some point during the years surveyed; otherwise religiosity = 0.

Health status: (available 1992, 1994-2003)

How would you describe your current health? Very good (5), Good (4), Satisfactory (3), Poor (2), Bad (1) [original coding reversed]

College education:

Generated variable: completed college education at some point during the years surveyed.

B The Model

The multilevel model used in this paper is as follows:

Level 1:

$$\begin{aligned} (\text{Life satisfaction})_{it} = & \beta_{0i} + \beta_{1i}(\text{cohabitation})_{it} + \beta_{2i}(\text{reactivity})_{it} + \beta_{3i}(\text{adaptation})_{it} \\ & + \beta_{4i}(\text{employed})_{it} + \beta_{5i}(\text{age})_{it} + r_{it} \end{aligned}$$

Level 2:

$$\begin{aligned} \beta_{0i} &= \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{religiosity})_i + u_{0i} \\ \beta_{1i} &= \gamma_{10} + u_{1i} \\ \beta_{2i} &= \gamma_{20} + u_{2i} \\ \beta_{3i} &= \gamma_{30} + u_{3i} \\ \beta_{4i} &= \gamma_{40} \\ \beta_{5i} &= \gamma_{50} \end{aligned}$$

The intercept, cohabitation, reactivity and adaptation variables are entered as random variables. The variables “employed” and “age” are included as level-1 variables, because they are both time-variant covariates. Age is grand-mean centered so that the intercept value reflects the life satisfaction of a person of mean age in the marriage sample. Employed is uncentered because it is a dummy variable. “Religiosity” is a time-invariant covariate and is therefore included in the level-2 equation. It is also a dummy variable and therefore uncentered. Religiosity has a significant effect on the intercept, but not on the remaining slopes. We therefore only included religiosity in the estimation of the intercept. Our results concerning adaptation do not change if religiosity is included in the estimation of the slopes for cohabitation, reaction and adaptation. The software used is HLM (Raudenbush et al 2000).

References

- [1] Michael Argyle. *Causes and correlates of happiness*, chapter In D. Kahneman, E. Diener and N. Schwarz (Eds.). *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, pages 353–373. Russell Sage, New York, 1999.
- [2] Eva Bernhardt and Ewa Fraczak. Family status and subjective well-being: Comparing Poland and Sweden. *Presented at the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Conference, Tours, France*, 2005.
- [3] David G. Blanchflower and Andrew Oswald. Well-being over time in Britain and the USA. *Journal of Public Economics*, 88:1359–1386, 2004.
- [4] Robert H. Coombs. Marital status and personal well-being: A literature review. *Family Relations*, 40(1):97–102, 1991.
- [5] Ed Diener and Richard E. Lucas. *Personality and subjective well-being*, chapter In D. Kahneman, E. Diener and N. Schwarz (Eds.). *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, page 227. Russell Sage, New York, 1999.
- [6] Richard A. Easterlin. Explaining Happiness. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 100(19):11176–11183, May 2003.
- [7] Bruno S. Frey and Alois Stutzer. *Happiness and Economics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 2002.
- [8] John P. Haisken DeNew and Joachim R. Frick. Desktop companion to the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP). *Berlin: DIW (German Institute for Economic Research)*, 2003.
- [9] Allan V. Horwitz, Helene Raskin White, and Sandra Howell-White. Becoming married and mental health: A longitudinal analysis of a cohort of young adults. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58:895–907, 1996.
- [10] David R. Johnson and Jian Wu. An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress; A pooled time series analysis of four-wave panel data. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 64:211–224, 2002.
- [11] Richard Kammann. Objective circumstances, life satisfactions, and sense of well-being: Consistencies across time and place. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 12:14–22, 1983.
- [12] Hans-Peter Kohler, Jere Behrman, and Axel Skyttke. Partner + Children = Happiness? Effects of partnership and fertility on subjective well-being. *Population and Development Review*, forthcoming.
- [13] Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. *The social organization of sexuality: Sexual practices in the United States*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994.
- [14] Richard E. Lucas, Andrew E. Clark, Yannis Georgellis, and Ed Diener. Reexamining Adaptation and the Set Point Model of Happiness: Reactions to Changes in Marital Status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(3):527–539, 2003.

- [15] Richard E. Lucas, Andrew E. Clark, Yannis Georgellis, and Ed Diener. Unemployment alters the set point for life satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 15(1):8–13, 2004.
- [16] Douglas A. Luke. *Multilevel Modeling. Series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences; 143*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2004.
- [17] David Lykken and Auke Tellegen. Happiness is a Stochastic Phenomenon. *Psychological Science*, 7:186–189, 1996.
- [18] Nadine F. Marks and James D. Lambert. Marital status continuity and change among young and midlife adults: Longitudinal effects on psychological well-being. *Journal of Family Issues*, 19:652–686, 1998.
- [19] Arne Mastekaasa. Marital dissolution and subjective distress: Panel evidence. *European Sociological Review*, 11(2):173–185, 1995.
- [20] David G. Myers. *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Avon, New York, 1992.
- [21] David G. Myers. The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55(1):56–67, 2000.
- [22] Stephen Raudenbush, Anthony Bryk, and Richard Congdon. *HLM 6*. Scientific Software International, Lincolnwood, IL, 2000.
- [23] Sandra L. Reynolds, Eileen M. Crimmins, and Yasuhiko Saito. Cohort differences in disability and disease. *The Gerontologist*, 38:576–590, 1998.
- [24] Robin W. Simon. Revisiting the relationship among gender, marital status, and mental health. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107:1065–1096, 2002.
- [25] Steven Stack and J. Ross Eshleman. Marital Status and Happiness: A 17-Nation Study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(2):527–536, 1998.
- [26] Linda J. Waite. Does marriage matter? *Demography*, 32(4):483–507, 1995.
- [27] Linda J. Waite, Dan Browning, William J. Doherty, Maggie Gallagher, Ye Lou, and Scott M. Stanley. *Does divorce make people happy? Findings from a study of unhappy marriages*. Institute for American Values, New York, 2002.
- [28] Linda J. Waite and Kara Joyner. Emotional satisfaction and physical pleasure in sexual unions: Time horizon, sexual behavior and sexual exclusivity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63:247–264, 2001.
- [29] Linda J. Waite and Evelyn L. Lehrer. The benefits from marriage and religion in the United States: A comparative analysis. *Population and Development Review*, 29(2):255–275, 2003.
- [30] Linda J. Waite and Ye Luo. Marital happiness and marital stability: Consequences for psychological well-being. *Presented at the 97th meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL*, 2003.