



LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF
SEPARATED PARENTS AND STEPFAMILIES
IN QUEBEC

Measuring Family Relationships in an Era of Family Diversity: the Challenges of Developing an Interdisciplinary Population Study

Saint-Jacques, M.-C., Robitaille, C. & Baude, A.
9th Congress of the European Society on Family Relations
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PRESENTATION PLAN

What we hoped to achieve

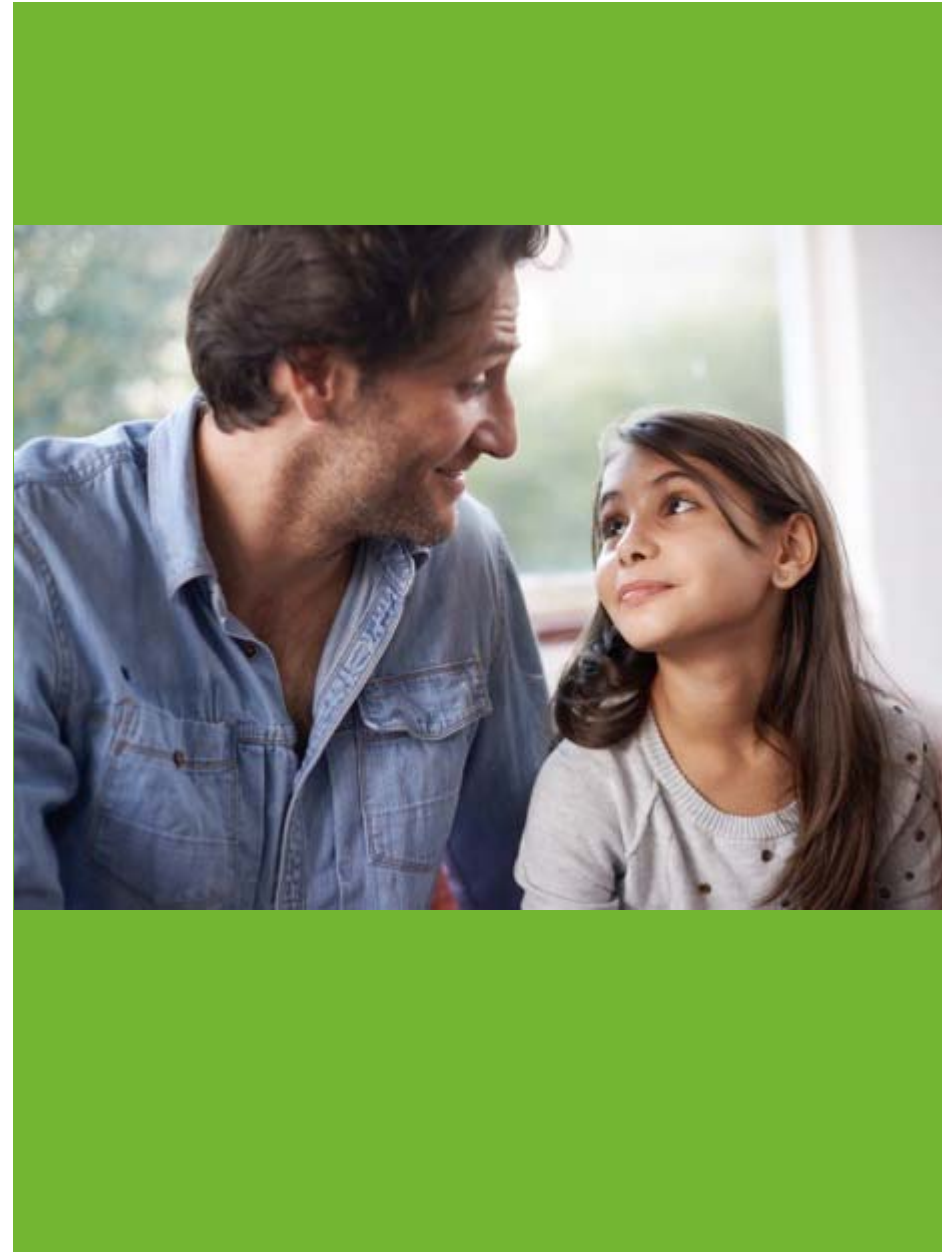
Conceptualization process

- Co-construction with team members
- Review of databases and studies

Challenges and facilitating elements

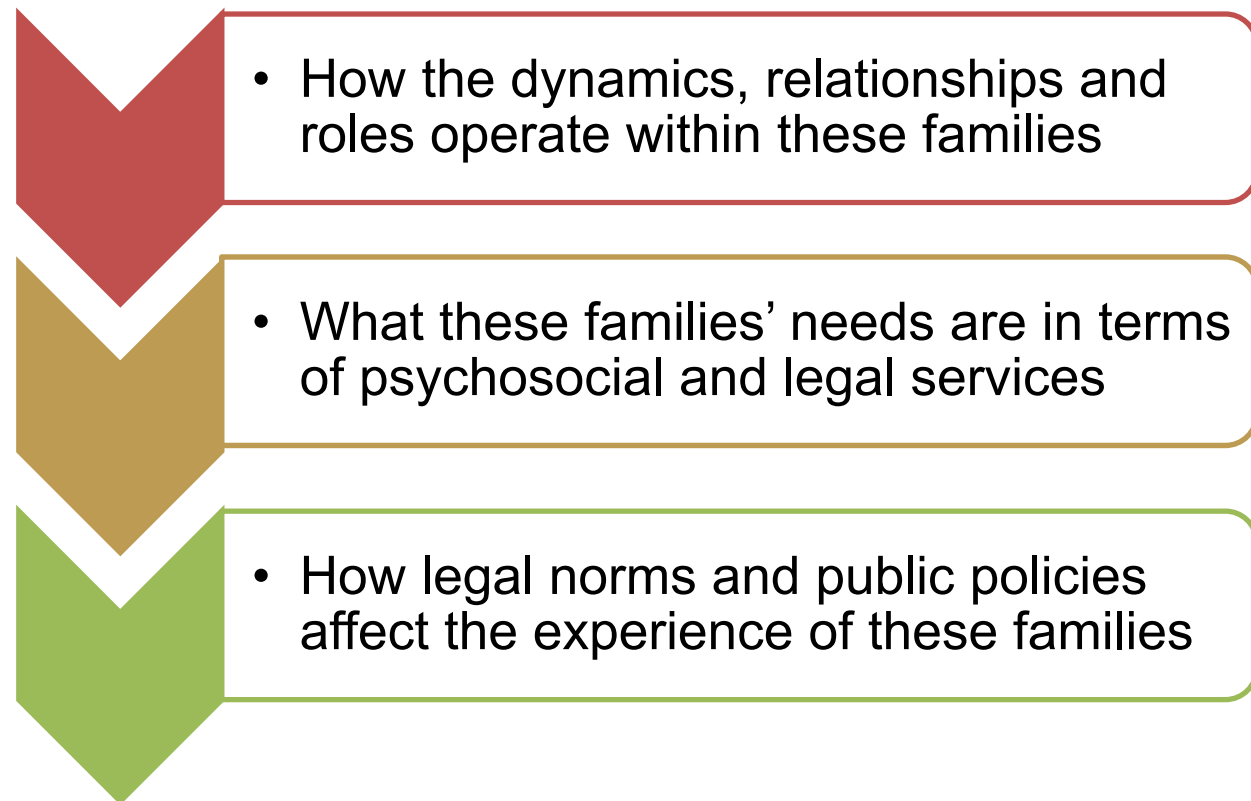
Brief presentation of study

- Theoretical foundations
- Methodological characteristics



STARTING POINT

The need for reliable empirical data in order to understand:



SPECIFIC GOALS

- Specialized and interdisciplinary study
- Population under study
- Representative sample of separated parents in Quebec
- Standardized instruments when possible; otherwise in-house measures



CO-CONSTRUCTION WITH TEAM MEMBERS

- Based on a partnership research model
- Considers what the issues of concern are, at both the fundamental level and on the ground
- Mutual influence of actors involved
- Joint development of:
 - Issues of concern
 - Questions to be prioritized
 - Concepts to be documented
 - Measures



REVIEW PROCESS

Learn from good examples



Avoid reproducing what has already been
(well) done



MAJOR FINDINGS

- Separated parents/stepfamilies: a socio-demographic or contextual variable that acts as a control variable;
- Development of the issue from a generalist perspective;
- Lack of data on fundamental variables relating to the study of these families;
- Bias:
 - Data often collected from one person only, most often the mother;
 - Generally cross-sectional data, making it impossible to grasp the highly dynamic nature of these transitions;
 - Sample sizes too small, limiting possible analyses.



A FEW EXCEPTIONS: SPECIALIZED SURVEYS

Title	Main interest	Population	Sample	Type of design	Stand. instruMs	Multi-actor
Family Pathways LSSF (Aus)	Experience and pathway of parents	Separated fathers/ mothers with child/ren under age 18	10,000 parents	Longit. 3 waves	N	Y
Divorce in Flanders (Bel)	Well-being of adults and quality of services	Married men and women, between 1971-2008	8,506 (incl. 6,004 div.)	Cross-sectional	Y	Y
Divorce in the Netherlands survey (Netherlands)	Causes and consequences of divorce for adults	Divorced men and women, between 1949-1998	2,223 (819 div./884 remar.)	Cross-sectional	NA	N
Leuvens Adolescents and Families Project (Bel)	Well-being of adolescents	Adolescents aged 12-18	7,035	Cross-sectional	Y	N





BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

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STUDY'S MODEL OF LOGIC

Experience

- Adult's adjustment
- Child's adjustment
- Parenting after separation
- Relationships within the family and with the other parent
- Raising child/ren
- Roles played and tasks shared
- Couple relationship in stepfamilies
- Desire to have children
- Managing finances
- Role of step-parent

Services

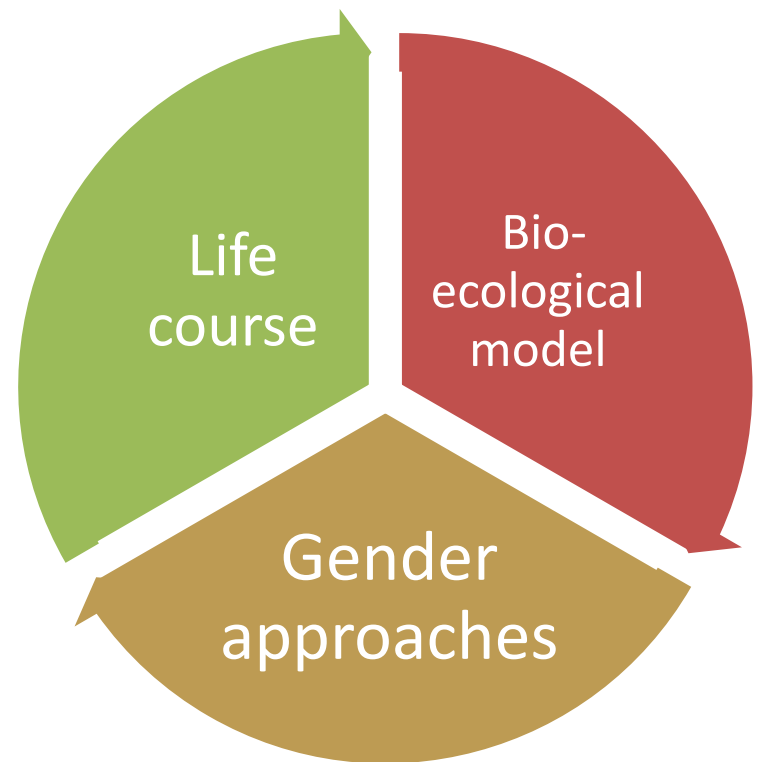
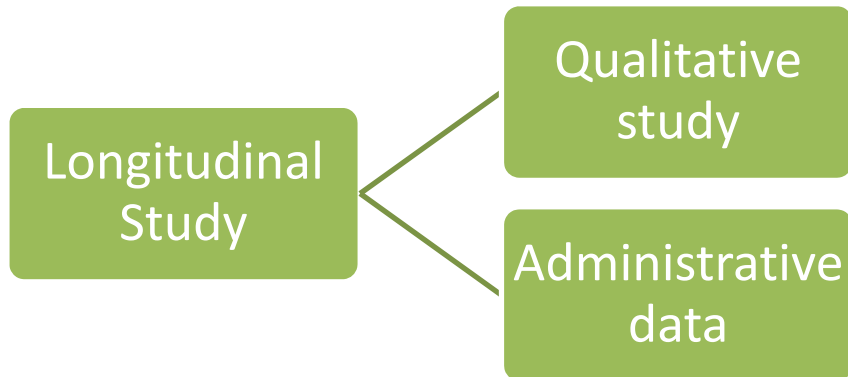
- Needs of separated parents and their children
- Use of services
- Pathway and context of use
- Satisfaction with these services
- Services or support they would have liked to receive

Legal and Public Policy Issues

- Legal protections put in place (life insurance, cohabitation agreement, etc.)
- Agreements worked out following the separation or once the stepfamily was formed
- Opinions on laws dealing with the family, separation and divorce
- Opinions on the roles and responsibilities of step-parents
- Financial repercussions of separation



CHARACTERISTICS AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS



METHODOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Longitudinal design with three measurement times
Separated parents:

- Separated for less than 2 years;
- With at least one child under age 14 from this relationship;
- Whether or not they have custody
- 50% fathers, 50% mothers

New partners, when applicable

Wave 1, 2018

Wave 3, 2022



Wave 2, 2020



CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

- Reconciling perspectives
- Synergy
- Balance between critical distance and field proximity
- Differing time and space logics
- Significant logistical challenges



PRACTICES CONDUCTIVE TO CO-CONSTRUCTION

- Actors mobilized around a common vision
- Clarification of partnership mechanisms
- Solid governance with wide experience in partnership and intersectoral work
- Flexibility and mediation skills





L'ENQUÊTE LONGITUDINALE AUPRÈS
DES PARENTS SÉPARÉS ET RECOMPOSÉS
DU QUÉBEC

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The Longitudinal Study of Separated Parents and Stepfamilies in Quebec is a large-scale study examining the experience of separated fathers and mothers – whether or not they have custody of their children – and their new partners, when applicable. In all, close to 2,000 parents and 300 new partners in Quebec will participate in the survey in 2018.

These parents and partners will then be invited to participate again in 2020 and 2022 to help us understand how their family situation is evolving.

Visit us!

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