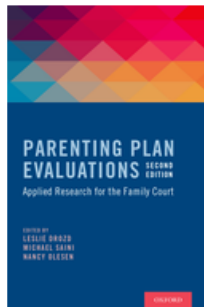


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Empirical Studies of Alienation

Chapter: (p. 374) Empirical Studies of Alienation

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Key Points

- The lack of consensus on the definitions of alienation and the use of varying nonstandardized measures and procedures limit the ability of researchers to undertake methodologically sound research in this area.
- Studies of alienation have generally used small, nonrandom samples with no comparison group; there is a need for large-scale empirical studies to inform the field.
- Many of the studies employ cross-sectional or retrospective research designs to test simple hypotheses; there is a need for prospective longitudinal studies to disentangle complex interactive effects and compare outcomes over time.

Introduction

The dilemma posed by a child's strident rejection of one parent, generally accompanied by strong resistance or refusal to having contact with a parent after separation or divorce, has increasingly troubled family courts, professionals and parents. Definitions of the problem vary in the literature. "Parental alienation" (PA) is a generic term used broadly to refer to a child who has been influenced to reject one parent, in extreme cases "brainwashed" or indoctrinated by an embittered/malicious other parent. PA can also refer to those behaviors by a parent that negatively influence or poison the child's relationship with the other parent (Darnall, 1998). More specifically, Gardner (1998) proposed the concept of parental alienation syndrome (PAS) and defined it as a child's unjustified campaign of denigration against a parent resulting from the combination of two contributing factors: programming or brainwashing by one parent and the child's own contributions to the vilification of the target parent. Kelly and Johnston (2001) defined an alienated child as one who expresses, freely and persistently, unreasonable negative feelings and beliefs (such as anger, hatred, rejection, or fear) toward a parent that are disproportionate (p. 375) to the child's actual experience with that parent. By contrast, children who have reasonable cause to have such rejecting behaviors and attitudes (e.g., due to parental neglect or abuse) are termed "estranged" and categorically excluded in all of the aforementioned conceptualizations. Others, avoiding all reference to cause, define the problem in behavioral terms as a child who resists or refuses visitation (Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Johnston, 1993).

While there is a rapidly growing body of literature on "alienation" and parent-child contact problems within "high-conflict" child custody disputes, there remains significant debate whether the current body of evidence is sufficiently robust to accurately make assertions about the etiology, prevalence, consequences of alienation for children and families, or about appropriate interventions for specific cases. The majority of academic literature documenting the presence and sources of alienation remains based on clinical illustrations and expert opinions. There are also books by parents reporting on their own experiences (Adams, 2009; Baldwin & Tab, 2008; Jeffries & Davies, 2009; Richardson, 2006). Turkat (2002) opines that if clinical observations "receive attention in the literature from others, that is usually a sign that the idea has some degree of merit" (p. 155). Clinical observations and first-person accounts are important building blocks for an emerging field of inquiry, but alone they do not constitute "empirical evidence." In contrast, evidence from empirically tested methods provides the confidence to make assertions from the findings across multiple samples. This helps to build a solid knowledge base, which is transparent and highlights the strengths and limitations of the evidence to accurately depict the generalizability of findings across populations. In this chapter we update our review of the incipient collection of empirically based studies, searched and retrieved up to the spring of 2015, to help to shape the knowledge base about alienation with these noted goals in mind.

This chapter provides a cautious review of the findings for making sensible, responsible generalizations across studies. The overall lack of empirical quality of individual studies necessitates restraint in making inferences based on a limited number of known studies. Rather, it is important to consider the consensus or concordance across studies in making generalized knowledge claims by paying particular attention to the methodological weight, the strengths and

limitations, and the overall contribution of each study for generating generalizable statements across studies.

In summary:

- There remains no consensus for a single definition for alienation (parental alienation, child alienation, parental alienation syndrome, etc.).
- The existing research on the etiology, prevalence, characteristics, and interventions for alienation has significant methodological limitations, and much of the writing on the subject is based on clinical opinions or personal impressions.
- High-conflict separations may be characterized in part by parental alienating behaviors, and this conduct may be harmful to children and their long-term development.
- Although the literature uses the concept of the “severity” of abuse, there are no reliable instruments to classify or establish the severity of alienation. (p. 376)
- Research also supports recognition that a child’s rejection of a parent or resistance to contact may be “justified estrangement” due to parental abuse or neglect, though there are no validated and reliable instruments to distinguish these from alienation cases.
- Further research is needed on a range of issues related to alienation, including being able to reliably distinguish alienation from other types of strained parent-child relationships, and to determine the most appropriate responses to individual cases.

Criteria for Inclusion of Empirical Research Studies

A systematic protocol for information retrieval was developed by the authors to search, screen, and independently assess the methodological quality of included studies. Relevant published and unpublished studies (e.g., dissertations) were retrieved using an iterative electronic search strategy of applying and modifying key terms, as this allows for locating studies with both null and significant findings.

The inclusion criteria included empirical studies of alienation. Studies needed to be written in English. Both unpublished (e.g., dissertations) and published studies were considered.¹ The topic of the study pertained to children who had negative, rejecting attitudes and beliefs about one parent that appeared to be, wholly or in part, unjustified. This phenomenon has been variously described in the literature as “alienation,” “parental alienation,” “parental alienation syndrome,” “child reluctance or refusal to visit,” “child alienation,” the “Medea syndrome,” and “malicious mother syndrome.” It also included studies of the psychological tactics used by one parent to instill negative attitudes and beliefs about the other parent in the child (referred to as alienating, indoctrinating, or brainwashing behaviors, relationship distancing) often associated with high-conflict, intimate partner violence; parental abduction; and hostage taking.

Both qualitative and quantitative research designs were included, but studies needed to report, at minimum, sample size; the method for sample selection; data-gathering procedures noted; details about data analysis procedures; and a report on the findings. This means numerous clinical and opinion articles on parental alienation that may offer valuable insight into the

causes, consequences, treatment, or management of the problem were not included since these did not provide information about research design to evaluate their findings.

Criteria for Rating the Quality of the Research Report

Since the publication of the original chapter, some queries have been made about the protocol for information retrieval used by the authors to systematically search, screen, and evaluate the methodological quality of included studies. The instrument developed for grading the studies for this review was adapted from others developed for the purpose of ensuring common standards for scientific reporting of research (GRADE).² The benefit of using a systematic rating system across studies is that it should help minimize bias in grading the strength and limitations of each (p. 377) study, and provide a standard approach for making clinical and policy decisions based upon the quality of evidence available. In particular, the protocol helps mitigate the problem in politically charged areas of divorce and child custody, and especially in the domain of parental alienation, where social scientists and legal scholars along with practitioners may—wittingly or unwittingly—be seduced into becoming advocates for political positions, specific intervention programs, or social policies rather than objective or balanced reporters and consumers of research findings.

What follows is some clarification of the criteria we have chosen for evaluating research reports on parental alienation to point out some common and prevailing misunderstandings of research methodology, which in turn introduce misinterpretations about the value of the findings and other knowledge claims made by authors or critics.³

1. Did the study use a comparison or control group that helps to verify the hypothesized preconditions or presence of the effect? Alternatively, did it undertake systematic intragroup comparisons to test hypotheses?

Hypotheses testing, not research questions, are basic steps in accumulating empirical knowledge. Both social sciences and expert testimony in court require empirical knowledge claims be derived from hypotheses capable of being tested and potentially falsified.⁴ The evidence supporting a hypothesis grows stronger when it withstands repeated tests ruling out alternative hypotheses. Technically, the affirmative hypothesis is deemed to be supported when the null hypothesis (i.e., no differences between groups) is rejected. It is important to note that if the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, it cannot be concluded that there are no differences between groups.⁵

2. Did the study use uniformly consistent methods of gathering the data? Were standardized measures applied to or developed for the dependent and independent variables with reported psychometric properties (e.g., evidence of construct, concurrent and predictive validity and of interrater or test-retest reliability)?

The consistency of data collection and analysis is important to ensure variables are not broadened or mutated within the research report or by reviewers of the report without exploring the conceptual and empirical differences between the different definitions.⁶ Assuming concepts relevant to parental alienation are similar and comparable across raters and studies without explicit, well-defined measures of variables is perilous. Standardized measure is a term reserved for measures with established psychometric properties and norms on their incidence/prevalence

under different conditions. Standard measures refer to standard instrument use typically developed by the researcher to gather data systematically

3. *Are data gathered from multiple sources of informants (versus a single source) so that different perspectives of relevant observers are considered (e.g., mothers, fathers, child, clinician, etc.)? This is called “triangulation” of the data gathering and is especially important when different informants have widely discrepant perceptions of the same issue, as is likely within the networks of parental alienation cases.*

(p. 378) Biases are particularly likely when data are gathered primarily from one parent (either the one who is the favored parent or the one who is the target of alienation). Similarly, bias is commonly a concern when research-clinicians evaluate treatment outcomes for cases drawn from their own practices.

4. *Did the study systematically control for extraneous variables that may have influenced the magnitude of the effect (e.g., influence of siblings, age, gender, severity of alienation) and/or alternative explanatory factors for the effect (e.g., interparental conflict that might explain long-term outcomes or problematic/abusive parenting that might explain child’s attitudes to the rejected parent)?*

The field has often simplified the complexities of parental alienation with insistence that either an alienating parent or an abusive one caused children to reject a parent. The problem with absolute thinking is that the complexity of potential factors influencing outcomes, both positively and negatively, is missed. The field of implementation science, for this reason, has moved from reporting absolute effects to relative effects. It is now common practice, for example, to choose random effect modeling (rather than fixed effects) in meta-analysis to test the heterogeneity of effect sizes across studies, and then to perform meta-regression to explore the influence of these contextual factors. To legitimately advocate policy reform, social scientists need to show policymakers that most knowledge claims about parental alienation have empirical support under certain conditions or within a certain context. Expert testimony should also be framed in conditional terms. Testimony framed by “it depends” is both refreshing and useful for better understanding of how to apply evidence to individual cases. While judges and policy makers should be informed by the existing social science research, at present there is a lack of reliable evidence on which to form a clear basis for individual decisions or policy about cases where children are rejecting a parent.

5. *Did the study design establish a temporal order between the dependent and independent variables to test for direction of effects or causality?*

Longitudinal studies, wherein the same sample of subjects is studied periodically over time with waves of data collected using standardized measures at each follow-up and compared to a control group, are the “gold standard” because they are able to more definitively establish causality. Hypotheses about the causes and effects of parental alienation, and the effectiveness of treatment and interventions require longitudinal data. However, the collection of retrospective data on subjects should not be confused with longitudinal data collection because the former is subject to distortions due to faulty recall and observers’ knowledge of future outcomes. Beware also of studies wherein only one wave of longitudinal data is subjected to the

analyses because these data can no longer lay claim to being longitudinal; rather, they are no different from cross-sectional data that yield correlational and not causal findings.

6. *Were the selection and exclusion criteria, response rates, and subject attrition explicitly defined and explained so the kind of sample the findings pertain to is clear?*

(p. 379) All research reports should provide a description of the subjects studied and how they were selected for study. Did large numbers decline to participate or drop out of the study? If so, the study sample could be biased and no longer representative of the population from which it was drawn. Were they systematically selected using a standard polling technique (the best choice), or is the sample of unknown origin, collected from convenient, sundry sources using snowballing techniques (e.g., volunteers from ads in the media; acquaintances of friends; recruits from one's private practice)?

7. *Did the study use a random selection from the population parameters allowing one to generalize the results of the study widely to other similar populations?*

"Random" should not be confused with haphazard selection. Rather, it is defined as each subject in the total population having an equal chance of being selected. All subjects must be selected independently of one another. This means studies of alienated children should include only one child per family; and separate analyses need to be undertaken for mothers and fathers. Randomly drawn, unbiased samples are essential for estimating incidence and prevalence statistics.

8. *Sample size: Is there sufficient sample power to be able to detect findings that are robust (consistent across repeated tests), statistically significant (unlikely to have occurred by chance), and clinically important (sufficiently large to be meaningful for persons or policymakers)?*

Sample power is a mathematical calculation based in part on the magnitude of the expected effects of the independent and control variables on dependent variables and the number of variables in the analysis. Generally, at least age and gender need to be controlled along with multiple other background variables that explain variance in the dependent variable.⁷ Beware of presentations of misleading statistics (like percentages in total sample sizes less than 100, especially where the sample is heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, custody, and where siblings have been included in the same analyses).

In rating the evidence across study designs, it is important to consider the unique methodological considerations for each of the methods used, as there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach for assessing the ability to make inferences based on the findings. The assessment tool used in this chapter, therefore, has been adapted from conventional quality appraisal tools to provide sufficient flexibility in rating studies across designs (see Table 13.1). We acknowledge, however, that this assessment tool favors quantitative designs because of its ability to produce the empirical generalizations needed for making sound evidence-based policies and programs in response to the impact of alienation on children and families.

Table 13.1 Checklist for Rating the Quality of Alienation Studies

Methodological Issues to Consider	Addressed	Comments
1. Did the study use a comparison or control group that helps to verify the hypothesized preconditions or presence of the effect (or conduct systematic intragroup comparisons)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
2. Did the study use standard measures (those consistently applied within the study) or standardized measures with reported psychometric properties (those consistently applied across studies) for the dependent (DV) and independent variables (IV)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
3. Are data gathered from multiple sources of informants (versus a single source) so that different perspectives of relevant observers are considered (e.g., mothers, fathers, child, clinician, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
4. Did the study systematically control for extraneous variables that may have influenced the magnitude of the effect (e.g., influence of siblings, age, gender, severity of alienation) and/or alternative explanatory factors for the effect (e.g., interparental conflict that might explain long-term outcomes or problematic/abusive parenting that might explain child's attitudes to the rejected parent)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
5. Did the study design establish a temporal order between the dependent and independent variables to test for direction of effects or causality?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
6. Were the selection and exclusion criteria, response rates, and subject attrition explicitly defined and explained so the kind of sample the findings pertain to is clear?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	

7. Did the study use a random selection from the population parameters to allow one to generalize the results of the study widely to other similar populations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	
8. Is there sufficient sample power (as determined by sample size and magnitude of expected effects for independent and control variables) to detect robust, statistically significant, and clinically important findings?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear	

Overall Findings

A total of 45 published papers and 13 doctoral dissertations met these criteria (total sample of included studies is 58). Table 13.1 provides a summary of the purpose, (p. 380) (p. 381) research design and methodology, principal findings, limitations, and ratings of each empirical study in alphabetical order.

A major limitation of the empirically based studies of alienation is that many lack the critical design elements permitting generalizability of their findings. Rather, they are characterized by small, nonrandom samples, data analyzed retrospectively, the use of descriptive statistics rather than mathematically calculated comparisons, a lack of consensus on the definitions of alienation, and the use of varying nonstandardized measures and procedures. Although the number of empirical studies has grown since the last revision of this chapter (from 39 to 58), many of these same methodological limitations continue to plague the generalizability of the findings. The review of empirical evidence clearly suggests that research in this area remains in its infancy. Noting the methodological limitations of the research is not a criticism of those who have done work in this field; it reflects the fact it is very challenging (and expensive) to do this research in a methodologically sound fashion (see Table 13.2). It is also true that it is difficult to fund this kind of research—as the cases that the family courts adjudicate often have a lower priority for public policy compared to dependency, juvenile, and criminal court matters.

Table 13.2 Empirical Evidence of Alienation Studies

No.	Source of Research and Purpose of Study	Study Design: Recruitment of Participants and Research Methodology	Principal Findings	Study Strengths, Limitations, and Explanation of Ratings
1.	<p>Altenhofen, Biringer, & Mergler (2008) <i>Etiology</i> As part of a study that explores postdivorce adjustment of parents and children in families with shared parenting time arrangements, the authors test a hypothesis to examine the relation between interparental hostility and child alienation.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 30 divorcing parents with children aged 12 to 59 months old Recruited through the divorce transitioning parenting class Gender: 15 male, 15 female Age: children are between 12 and 59 months old Ethnicity: Not stated but all Caucasian SES: Not stated Semistructured telephone interviews using the Postdivorce Family Adjustment Interview (PFAI) The measure of parent-child alienation was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from high to low levels of parent-child alienation.</p>	<p>Parental interviews revealed both overt and covert child alienation that increased as the level of hostility between parents increased.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Standard measures used 3. Data gathered from single source 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors 5. Unable to test for direction of effects 6. Not a random sample, inability to generalize 7. Selection criteria somewhat clear, but exclusion criteria vague 8. Insufficient sample power
2.				

	<p>Baker (2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006) <i>Diagnosis/assessment of alienating parents' personality traits, patterns of alienation, and parental behavioral strategies that turn child against other parent. Prognosis and long-term effects on child victims as adults.</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 40 adults Recruited by word of mouth and from postings on Internet message boards, including PAS. Criteria for inclusion were an adult who self-defined as having been turned against other parent as a child. An additional two subjects dropped out and two tapes were inaudible. Age: 19–67 years (M = 40.5, SD = 11.5) Gender: 15 male, 25 females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Mothers more often were alienating parents. Qualitative semistructured interviews, transcribed. All retrospective accounts. Compared subjects' accounts to general findings about behavior of followers of cult leaders.</p>	<p>In Baker (2005a) subjects described alienating parent as narcissistic, requiring excessive devotion, loyalty. Used emotional manipulation to maintain their dependency. Researcher conceptualized phenomena as similar to cult involvement. In Baker (2005b) subjects attributed their negative feelings and behavior to long-term effects of parent alienation. Seven major themes: (1) Low-self-esteem; (2) Depression; (3) Drug/alcohol use; (4) Lack of trust; (5) Alienation from own children; (6) Divorce; (7) Other, including not having a sense of belonging and low achievement. Baker (2005c) reported the strategies the alienating parent used to effectively turn the subjects against the other parent:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Standard(ized) measures not used 3. Alienated child (now adult) was the single source informant 4. No systematic controls for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors for subjects' views, beliefs, and feelings 5. Retrospective design is unable to ensure temporal ordering of dependent and independent variable nor test for direction of effects. 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results low
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			<p>(1) General bad-mouthing; (2) Limiting contact; (3) Withdrawal of love; (4) Saying other does not love child; (5) Forcing to choose; (6) Saying other is dangerous; (7) Confiding in child; (8) Limiting mention of other; (9) Forcing to reject other; (10) Limiting contact; (11) Exposure to belittling other; and (12) Inducing conflict between child and other parent.</p> <p>Findings of Baker (2006) pertain to the process of alienation from the target/rejected parent. Three patterns of alienation: (1) Narcissistic alienating mothers in divorce families; (2) Narcissistic alienating mothers in intact families; and (3) Abusive/ rejecting mothers and fathers.</p>	<p>7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion criteria vague 8. Sample power insufficient</p>
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<p>3.</p>	<p>Baker (2007) <i>Professional views of PAS: its importance to assess in custody evaluations, its admissibility as evidence in court, and its prevalence as an allegation in custody cases</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 104 custody evaluators Recruited from a total professional membership of 140 (PACE) Age: M = 56 years, SD = 6.9 Gender: 77 males, 27 females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Experience ranged from 1 to 49 years.</p>	<p>Almost all subjects were “mostly” or “somewhat” familiar with PAS as a concept and endorsed the importance of assessing for alienation in custody evaluations; 3/4 believe it is possible for a parent to turn children against the other parent. No consensus on whether PAS should be included in <i>DSM-5</i> and whether PAS meets Daubert standard. Estimates of proportion of alienation cases ranged from 1% to 55% with an average of 11%.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standard measure 3. Single source informant 4. Some control for extraneous variables 5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine causal direction 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power
<p>4.</p>	<p>Baker (2010) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 253 adults working in New York child welfare agency (50% response rate) Age: 20–79 years Gender: 202 females, 47 males Ethnicity: Not stated SES: At least 2 years college</p>	<p>Results revealed one fourth of the full sample reported some exposure to parental alienation, which itself was associated with greater likelihood of reporting psychological maltreatment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No comparison or control group 2. Use of standard measures 3. Single source of informants

	<p>This study was designed to answer two main questions: (a) what proportion of adults would report being exposed to parental alienation efforts on the part of one or both parents, and (b) would people who reported exposure to parental alienation also report experiencing components of psychological maltreatment</p>	<p>A survey was created as part of a larger study comparing six scales of adult recall of childhood psychological maltreatment</p>	<p>There was no association between gender and parental alienation. There was no association with educational status or number of children. There was an association with both age and marital status. Those with a stepparent were more likely to report parental alienation (44.4%) than those without a stepparent (26.5%).</p>	<p>4. Explored effects of variables such as education, age, marital status, gender, stepparent 5. Unable to test for direction of effect 6. Nonrandom sample, ability to generalize results limited 7. Selection criteria clear, exclusion criteria unclear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
5.	<p>Baker & Ben-Ami (2011) <i>Long-term effects</i> To examine direct and indirect effects of exposure to 19 parental alienation strategies in 118 adult children of divorce</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 118 individuals who responded to the survey Age: 18–66 years (above 18 years of age whose parents divorced before they were 15) Gender: 1/3 male Ethnicity: Primarily Caucasians SES: Not stated</p>	<p>The greater number and frequency of alienation strategies children are exposed to, the lower their self-esteem. When children are told a parent is not a good person, does not love them, and does not care about them, children appear to conclude the cause lies within themselves.</p>	<p>1. No comparison or control group 2. Standardized measures used 3. Single source informant 4. Controlled for histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and psychological maltreatment.</p>

		<p>Recruited from flyers and postings on various Internet support groups related to divorce Computer survey, including the Baker Strategy Questionnaire (BSQ), a standard measure to assess the perception of the frequency of 17 alienation tactics while the subject was growing up. Internal consistency of the summary score was determined with a Cronbach's alpha of .96.</p>	<p>The negative effects extended beyond self-esteem to include reduced self-sufficiency and higher rates of depression and insecure attachments.</p>	<p>5. Unable to test for direction of effects due to retrospective self-reports 6. Nonrandom sample, low ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria somewhat clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
6	<p>Baker, Burkhard, & Albertson-Kelly (2012) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> To identify children who were referred for reunification therapy (RT) from the other children (not-RT group) based on their self-reported feelings and beliefs regarding their parents.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 40 children Age: children between 6 and 17 years of age (M = 11.6, SD = 2.8) Gender: 65% female Gender: 35% male Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Statistically significant difference in mean level of the BAQ total score by group, with the RT group having higher scores than the non-RT group. Results revealed that children who were more resistant to treatment had statistically significantly higher. BAQ total scores than children not resistant to treatment.</p>	<p>1. Comparison group (non-RT group) 2. Standard measure used 3. Single source 4. No systematic control for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors</p>

	<p><i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention</i></p> <p>Second focus of the study was to examine the behaviors of the children once they began to receive services.</p>	<p>A subset referred to the agency for RT ($n = 19$). The remaining children referred to the agency for a variety of reasons including evaluations ($n = 4$), supervised therapeutic visitation ($n = 10$), and individual therapy ($n = 7$).</p> <p>Baker Alienation Questionnaire (BAQ), 28 items designed to capture a child's extreme rejection of one parent and extreme idealization of the other. Interrater reliability was a kappa of .93.</p> <p>Two clinicians also independently coded each child's behavior during the first and second sessions on a scale that measured resistance during the beginning of treatment.</p>		<p>5. Unable to test for direction of effects due to cross-sectional design</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample, low ability to generalize results</p> <p>7. Selection criteria somewhat clear</p> <p>8. Insufficient sample power (sample divided in half to make comparisons)</p>
7.				

	<p>Baker & Chambers (2011) <i>Prevalence/long-term effects</i> To identify rate of exposure to parental alienating behaviors for children from conflicted families and intact families and whether rates of exposure are associated with current reports of depression and self-esteem</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 106 students recruited from college Age: 18-56 years Gender: Females Ethnicity: US SES: graduate students Computer based survey. Survey developed based on rate of frequency on items derived from research with "adult children of parental alienation syndrome" (Baker, 2007).</p>	<p>Results revealed 80% of the sample endorsed at least 1 of the 20 parental alienation behaviors, indicating some exposure to parental alienation, with 20% of the sample reporting that 1 parent tried to turn them against the other parent. Participants whose parents divorced or separated before they were 18 years old were much more likely to report exposure to parental alienation strategies than participants whose parents remained married during their childhood. No relationship was found between recalled exposure to parental alienation and current depression or self-esteem.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used comparison group 2. Standard measure used to assess alienation/ standardized measures used to measure depression and self-esteem. 3. Single source informant 4. Some systematic search for variables that could have influenced outcomes 5. Unable to ensure temporal ordering of dependent and independent variables 6. Nonrandom sample, ability to generalize low 7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion criteria are vague 8. Sufficient sample power
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8.	<p>Baker & Darnall (2006) <i>Diagnosis/assessment of behavioral strategies that turn the child against the other parent</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 97 parents self-identified as targets of alienating behaviors by the other parent—80% response rate. Age: 22–63 years (M = 42.4, SD = 7.8) Gender: 60 males, 37 females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Categories of alienating strategies commonly identified were bad-mouthing, limiting visitation, limiting phone contact, limiting symbolic interaction, interfering with information, emotional manipulation, unhealthy alliance, and other. Mild, moderate, and severe levels were identified. Found no significant differences in strategies used based on gender of parent and/or child.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standard measure 3. All data derived from one source, the target parent 4. Controlled for some extraneous variables but not for alternative explanatory factors for child’s attitudes 5. Cross-sectional design cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom selection of sample; unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
9.	<p>Baker & Darnall (2007) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>			<p>1. Used no comparison or control group</p>

	<p>Test validity of Gardner’s eight symptoms as a measure to identify PAS</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 68 parents self-identified as targets of alienating behaviors by the other parent where the child was 18 years of age or younger Age: <i>M</i> = 44 years, <i>SD</i> = 7 Gender: 38 males, 30 females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Subjects were recruited through the second author’s posting of an invitation on his Web site. Only subjects reporting severe cases of PAS were eligible</p>	<p>Subjects reported child behaviors consistent with Gardner’s eight symptoms of a child with severe PAS (70%–90% noted six symptoms and 40%–50% noted two symptoms). Subjects reported their severely alienated children “always” or “mostly” exhibited these behaviors but also showed some positive inclination toward the targeted parent at times.</p>	<p>2. Used standard measures 3. Single source informant was target parent 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors of child’s attitudes (e.g., abusive parent) 5. Unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria mostly clear except for that of severe cases 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
10.	<p>Baker & Verrocchio (2013) <i>Long-term effects Prevalence</i></p>		<p>13 of the 20 items in the BSQ were endorsed by at least 10% of the sample; 75% of the sample endorsed at least one behavior.</p>	<p>1. Used a comparison group</p>

	<p>To examine surveys of undergraduate students regarding their childhood exposure to parental alienation, psychological maltreatment, and measures of current functioning.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 257 undergraduate psychology students who were invited to participate in survey as extra-credit activity for courses held in clinical psychology. Age: 21-61 years Gender: 85% women Ethnicity: Italian SES: Not stated Survey consisted of a series of demographic questions and standardized measures, including the Baker Strategy Questionnaire (BSQ), a standard measure to assess the perception of the frequency of 20 alienation tactics while the subject was growing up.</p>	<p>Rates of endorsement were statistically higher for those whose parents were separated than intact. Those who rated their parents' quality of relationship as "very bad" reported exposure to over three times as many PA behaviors. Higher exposure to parental alienation was associated with higher rates of parental psychological maltreatment, lower rates of parental caring, and poor functioning with respect to self-esteem, depression, adult attachment styles, alcohol abuse, self-direction and cooperation.</p>	<p>2. Standard measure used to assess alienation/ standardized measures used to measure depression and self-esteem. 3. Single source 4. A number of alternative explanatory variables were explored 5. Unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited (one semester, one location) 7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion criteria vague 8. Sample power sufficient</p>
11.	<p>Bala, Hunt, & McCarney (2010) <i>Prevalence</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 175 court cases in Canada where the term <i>alienation</i> was used.</p>	<p>Court made finding of alienation in 106 cases, with more frequent incidence in recent years (doubled in a decade).</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or/control group</p>

<p>To examine court-based rates of substantiated and unsubstantiated allegations of alienation, including gender differences and disposition of alienation cases in legal proceedings</p>	<p>Searches were made of all cases in two major commercial Canadian databases of judicial decisions (Westlaw and Quicklaw) that had records between 1989 and 2008 in order to identify those that were eligible. Age: Not stated Gender: 175 males, 175 females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated These court decisions were content-analyzed and coded, from which descriptive statistics were developed.</p>	<p>Mother was alienating parent for 68%, father was alienating parent for 31% (related to who had primary care of child). Court-ordered counseling in 27% cases; custody changed to the alienated parent in 49% of cases. Alienation was rejected by the court in 69 cases for the following reasons: “justified estrangement” (29); “focused on the parenting of the rejected parent” (24); “child’s independent decision not to see other parent” (14); “insufficient evidence to establish alienation” (26).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Used standard coding (extraction of data from decisions)3. Documents coded by single source but contents reflected multiple views4. Controls for multiple extraneous factors5. Unable to test for direction of effects6. Used total population of records but only Canadian officially recorded legal proceedings using PA terminology were data source7. Selection criteria clear8. Sufficient sample power
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<p>12.</p>	<p>Ben-Ami & Baker (2012) <i>Long-term effects</i> To examine long-term psychological correlates of experiencing parental alienation as a child.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 118 participants who responded survey Age: 18-66 years Gender: 2/3 females Ethnicity: Not specified but majority Caucasians SES: Not stated A flyer was posted on approximately 30 social networking Web sites and Listserv groups explicitly devoted to adult children of divorce and/or PA support groups and distributed to friends and colleagues who were encouraged to forward it to others. PA group and No PA group determined by response to two questions.</p>	<p>Revealed significant associations between perceived exposure to parental alienation as a child and lower self-sufficiency, higher rates of major depressive disorder, lower self-esteem and insecure attachment styles as adults.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of comparison group (PA or not PA based on two questions) 2. Standardized measures used to measure, except for PA 3. Single source 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors 5. Retrospective self-reports 6. Nonrandom selection of sample; ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion criteria vague 8. Sufficient sample power
<p>13.</p>	<p>Berk (2013) <i>(Dissertation)</i> <i>Diagnosis/assessment/etiology</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 8 postdivorced fathers from support groups Age: Not stated Gender: Male</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No comparison/control group 2. No standardized measures not used

	<p>To expand the conceptualization of the impact of the experience of alienation on the parent-child relationship from the fathers' perspective. To identify the origins and mechanisms that supported the experience of alienation and that discouraged the father-child bond.</p>	<p>Ethnicity: US (Philadelphia) SES: Not stated The researcher distributed flyers to father advocate groups to recruit interested fathers Qualitative method to identify and capture the dynamic nature of social interaction</p>	<p>Open coding produced 14 conceptual categories that explained fathers' perspectives of being alienated from their children, and their belief that court interventions interacted with their experience of alienation. The central issue expressed by the participants was their sense of loss, and the factors that they attributed to this loss.</p>	<p>3. Target parent was single source informant 4. Limitations emanating from theoretical framework 5. Interpretive results 6. Nonrandom sample, inability to generalize results 7. Selection and exclusion criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
14.	<p>Bow, Gould, & Flens (2009) <i>Professional views of PAS and its relevance to assessment, and admissibility as evidence in child custody litigation</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 448 mental health and legal professionals. US National Internet search was conducted to locate e-mail addresses of professionals involved in custody cases. Age: M = 53 years, SD = 8.04 Gender: 43% males, 57% females Ethnicity: 93% Caucasian, 2% African American, 2% Hispanic, 4% other</p>	<p>As a group, subjects considered themselves moderately to extremely knowledgeable about alienation. Overall, respondents perceived a lack of research to support the concept, although acknowledged the existence of alienation dynamics within the child custody field.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group but examined intergroup differences between professionals 2. Used standard measures 3. All data from one source 4. Some control for extraneous variables in post-hoc analysis</p>

		<p>SES: Not stated Completed a cross-sectional Internet survey (from a total of 1,172 invited to participate).</p>	<p>Almost all viewed it as a multidimensional construct. The majority did not endorse PAS as a syndrome or meeting either the <i>Frye</i> or <i>Daubert</i> standards. Different professions varied in the importance placed on assessment of multiple factors hypothesized to contribute to alienation.</p>	<p>5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine causal direction 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited (likely to change over time) 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
15.	<p>Braver, Coatsworth, & Peralta (n.d.) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> Relative extent of mothers' and fathers' alienating behaviors in intact and divorced families. <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i> on emotional well-being and adjustment of young adults.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 86 students and their families, including 142 mothers, 100 fathers. Subjects were recruited from six psychology classes and then invited their parents to participate. Age: Not stated Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Found co-occurrence of mothers' and fathers' alienating behaviors but with each parent reporting the other parent alienated significantly more often. Their offspring, however, did not report a significant difference between mothers' and fathers' alienating behavior.</p>	<p>1. Used a comparison group 2. Used standard measures 3. Multiple sources of informants 4. Some controls for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors 5. Retrospective design unable to test for direction of effects</p>

		<p>Written survey design. Retrospective reports of independent variable. Students from nondivorced families were used as a comparison group.</p>	<p>Alienating behavior was almost 3 times higher in divorced families than in intact families according to their offspring's report. Only two low significant correlations with adult student's current adjustment and well-being, both with the father's reports of mother's alienation.</p>	<p>6. Not a random sample, unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power for some of the findings</p>
16.	<p>Burril-O'Donnell (2001) (dissertation) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 30 custody evaluation cases, including 50 children Recruitment by author completing a search of court cases involving PAS Age: 2-17 years (M = 9.6, SD = 3) Gender: 33 females, 26 males Ethnicity: 49 Caucasian, 6 African American, 4 Asian SES: Not stated Content analysis.</p>	<p>Based on Gardner's definition of PAS, author found corroborating evidence of PAS in court cases. Children's and parents' behaviors were related to the severity of PAS.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used no standard measures 3. Data derived primarily from one parent and court files 4. Controlled for few extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional design unable to test direction of effect</p>

				<p>6. Nonrandom sample preselected for PAS, unable to generalize results</p> <p>7. Selection criteria clear</p> <p>8. Insufficient sample power</p>
17.	<p>Carey (2003) (dissertation) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects of PAS</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 10 young adults Participants recruited from website in the volunteer section and one was recruited from Parental Alienation Research Foundation. Further screening for at least 3/8 of Gardner's symptoms confirmed in 8/10 of the sample. Age: 19-31 (M = 27) Gender: 6 females, 4 males Ethnicity: 9 Caucasian; 1 Asian American SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Subjects believed alienation dynamics affected their development, especially the development of romantic relationships. 7/10 recovered relationship with target parent as an older youth or young adult, mostly as a result of maturation. Although none of the sample experienced a reversal of custody as children, those who were severely alienated as children lived away from the alienating parent as teens.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group</p> <p>2. Standardized measures not used</p> <p>3. Subjects were single source informant</p> <p>4. No systematic controls for alternative explanatory factors of subjects' views, beliefs, and feelings</p> <p>5. Retrospective design is unable to test for direction of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; unable to generalize results</p>

		Qualitative interviews were transcribed and interpreted by author and research assistant. Some descriptive quantitative data.		<p>7. Selection criteria somewhat unclear</p> <p>8. Insufficient sample power</p>
18.	<p>Cox (2010) (dissertation) <i>Professional views</i> of PAS and its relevance to assessment, and admissibility as evidence in child custody litigation, all as a function of professional orientation and years of experience</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 119 professionals Recruited based on professional residence in the United States and membership in AFCC. Total <i>n</i> = 350 Age: Not stated Gender: 40% male, 60% female Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated 9 judges; 28 attorneys, 64 psychologists, 1 psychiatrist, 6 social workers, 7 mental health counselors, 4 marriage and family therapists Survey design with closed-ended questions.</p>	<p>95% were “somewhat” and “very much” familiar with the concept of PA. 72% were of view that determination of whether PA has occurred is of utmost importance. Most stated the current knowledge on PA does not meet the <i>Frye</i> standards. 63 of 119 believed that in cases of severe PA, custody reversal is somewhat warranted. 16 viewed reversal as not warranted even in cases of severe PA. No relationships between type and experience of professional and his or her views.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group</p> <p>2. Used standard measure</p> <p>3. Multiple professionals were informants</p> <p>4. Some control for extraneous and other explanatory variables</p> <p>5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine direction of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited</p> <p>7. Selection criteria clear</p> <p>8. Sufficient sample power</p>
19.				

	<p>Darnall & Steinberg (2008) <i>Etiology</i> Exploration of factors that allow for successful spontaneous reunification</p>	<p>$n = 27$ children who were alienated and/or estranged who made “spontaneous requests for reunification with their previously rejected parent.” Requests for success stories via the Internet from both of the authors’ professional Web sites, parents bringing to the authors’ attention successful reunification, and from follow-up inquiries to family members in cases previously served. Age: 4-17 years Gender: 13 boys, 12 girls Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Archival records, interviews with children or adults who met the criteria of having been alienated from the rejected parent, and rejected parents.</p>	<p>Of the 27 spontaneous reunifications reviewed, 9 were considered successful because the child felt a bond and was accepted by both parents. The 18 remaining were not considered as successful because contact between the child and both parents was not bilateral, and in some cases the renewed contact with the rejected parent was severely limited or had completely stopped.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Standard(ized) measures not used 3. Multiple informants but coded by single source 4. No systematic controls for alternative extraneous or alternative explanatory factors for subjects’ views, beliefs, and feelings 5. Retrospective design is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Not a random sample; ability to generalize results low 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power
<p>20.</p>	<p>Dunne & Hedrick (1994)</p>	<p>$n = 16$ cases, including 26 children</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group

	<p><i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> To apply Gardner's criteria for PAS in child and corresponding alienating behaviors by aligned parent</p>	<p>Referred to one or both of the authors for forensic evaluation or treatment. Cases were selected on the basis of at least one child in the family having intensely rejected one of the parents for trivial or unsubstantiated accusations. Age: 2-16 years Gender: 14 girls, 12 boys Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Case study analysis.</p>	<p>All of the alienating parents experienced intense dysphoric feelings, which they blamed on their former spouses. Function of the pathology of the alienating parent and that parent's relationship with the children. Concluded that Gardner's PAS eight symptoms were a valid portrayal of the problem.</p>	<p>2. Standard(ized) measures were not used 3. Data gathered from multiple informants but single source clinical opinion reported 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors of subjects' views, beliefs, and feelings 5. Cross-sectional design is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results low 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
21.	<p>Gardner (2001) <i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention</i></p>	<p>$n = 99$ PAS children from 52 families</p>		<p>1. Used no comparison or control group</p>

	<p>Outcomes of change of custody for severe cases of PAS</p>	<p>Recruitment based on whether author had been personally directly involved in the case; custodial transfer or restriction of time with the alienating parent was warranted because of the tenacity of the alienating behaviors and/or the severity of the PAS; follow-up information was available Age: Not stated Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Case study analysis.</p>	<p>The court chose either to restrict the children’s access to the alienator or to change custody in 22 of the children with significant reduction or even elimination of PAS in all 22 of these cases. The court chose not to transfer custody or reduce access to the alienator in 77 cases. In these cases there was an increase in PAS in 70 (90.9%).</p>	<p>2. Standard(ized) measures were not used 3. Single source informant was target parent 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors of child’s attitudes (e.g., abusive parent) or for why court chose custody reversal 5. Case study analysis is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
<p>22.</p>	<p>Godbout & Parent (2012) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 6 adults who had been alienated from a parent as a child Age: 24–42 years Gender: 2 men and 4 women</p>		<p>1. No use of comparison and control group 2. No use of standardized measures</p>

	<p>To understand experiences of adults who have experienced parental alienation as children.</p>	<p>Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Voluntary and snowball sampling Semistructured interviews conducted and analyzed using thematic content analysis methods</p>	<p>Participants noted the role of the alienating parent and parenting practices that contributed to alienation. Such parenting practices were distinct behaviors (e.g., denigrating and excluding the other parent, and protecting the child from the “dangerous” parent, among others). Some participants were subjected to parentification by the alienating parent, by being treated as a confidant or being relied upon for emotional support in times of distress.</p>	<p>3. All data derived from one source 4. No systematic control for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors for subjects views, beliefs and feelings 5. Qualitative/retrospective design is unable to ensure temporal ordering of dependent and independent variables nor test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample: no ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria somewhat clear 8. Sample power insufficient</p>
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<p>23.</p>	<p>Gordon, Stoffey, & Bottinelli (2008) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> Examine the relationship between parenting behaviors of alienating and rejected parents and selected personality variables</p>	<p>$n = 158$ from court-ordered custody evaluations from seven forensic psychology practices. Subjects were identified as alienating parent, target parent, and control parent; 76 were PAS cases and 82 were custody cases without PAS (controls). Age: Not stated Gender: Father-mother pairs Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Two different MMPI-2 indexes were used to measure primitive defenses: $L + K - F$ and $(L + Pa + Sc) - (Hy + Pt)$.</p>	<p>Alienating parents (mothers and fathers) had clinical-range scores, while the control parents (mothers and fathers who were in custody litigation, but without PAS) had normal range scores in both measures of favoring primitive defenses, $L + K - F$, and the Goldberg Index $(L + Pa + Sc) - (Hy + Pt)$.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used a comparison group 2. Used standardized measures 3. Multiple sources of informants 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors 5. Unable to ensure temporal ordering of dependent and independent variable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power
<p>24.</p>	<p>Hands & Warshak (2011) <i>Long-term effects</i> <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p>$n = 50$ undergraduate psychology students who volunteered to participate</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used comparison group

	<p>To investigate the incidence of parental alienating behaviors, the incidence of alienated parent-child relationships, and the link between the two as self-reported in a population of college students from intact and divorced families</p>	<p>(32 with parents in the same home, 17 raised in divorced families) Age: 18-50 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Questionnaire with close-ended items designed to assess participant perception of their parents alienating behaviors and relative quality of their relationship with parents The 12-item Parental Alienation Behavior Scale (PABS)</p>	<p>Subjects who grew up in a divorced family were more likely to report higher levels of parent alienating behaviors than subjects who grew up in intact families. Despite alienating behaviors being more common in divorced homes, such behaviors by parents were also seen in intact families, suggesting the phenomenon can occur in either type of household. Alienating behavior occurred fairly equally among mothers and fathers.</p>	<p>2. Used standard measures (PABS) 3. Single source 4. No systematic control for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors for subject views, beliefs and feelings 5. Unable to test for directions or effects 6. Nonrandom sample, ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria is clear but exclusion criteria is vague 8. Sample power sufficient</p>
25.	<p>Johnston (1993) <i>Prevalence of visitation resistance and strong alliances</i> <i>Direction of effects</i></p>	<p>Study 1: $n = 80$ families, 100 children Study 2: $n = 60$ families, 75 children</p>		<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used standard measures</p>

	<p>To identify factors contributing to child’s reluctance or refusal to visit one parent and strong alliances with the other</p>	<p>All referred from local family courts after failing to settle custody and child-related disputes in litigation, mediation, or evaluation. Study 1 Age: 1-12 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: 64% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 8% African American, 8% Asian, 8% other SES: average low-middle incomes Study 2 Age: 3-12 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: 80% Caucasian, 8% Hispanic, 3% African American, 3% Asian, 5% other SES: average low-middle incomes Exploratory descriptive study of clinical observations supported by correlational data analysis.</p>	<p>In Study 1 and 2 respectively, visitation resistance manifest in 63% and 71%; strong alliances with one parent against the other in 7% and 27% of children. 6 explanatory themes: (1) Normal separation anxiety in very young child; (2) Child’s social cognitive capacity to consider parents’ opposing perspectives; (3) Intensity and longevity of parental disputes; (4) Child exposure to traumatic abuse and violence; (5) Child’s enmeshment with emotionally disturbed parent; (6) Counterrejection by other parent.</p>	<p>3. Data derived from multiple family members but rated by one source 4. No systematic controls extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional design cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
<p>26.</p>	<p>Johnston (2003)</p>			

	<p><i>Prevalence:</i> the frequency and extent of parent-child alliances of one parent against the other in community and court samples <i>Etiology:</i> tested a model of multiple factors hypothesized to contribute to children's negative attitudes and behavior toward a parent.</p>	<p>$n = 215$ children, 91 from the community and 124 in custody litigation Recruited to research study in exchange for counseling/mediation on sliding-scale fee. Age: 5-14 years at follow-up Gender: 108 girls, 107 boys Ethnicity: 81% Caucasian SES: diverse incomes Reanalysis of archives of clinical research data collected 2-3 years after divorce (1981-1991). Measures developed from ratings by clinician who saw family and factor-analyzed to produce scales. Parent report using some standardized measures. Cross-sectional design with follow-up. Multivariate data analysis including path models.</p>	<p>15% of community and 21% of court sample aligned with one parent against the other. Mother-child alignments were twice as frequent in custody litigating group compared to those in the community comparison group. Rejection of father was linked to his own socioemotional problems and multidetermined by: (1) Aligned mothers' use of child for their own emotional support and sabotage of the rejected parents' relationship with child; (2) Lack of warm involved parenting by rejected father; and (3) Vulnerabilities of children themselves, specifically those who were older, emotionally more disturbed, or socially less competent or had problematic self-esteem; (4) Chronic custody litigation in family court.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used comparison or control groups and made intragroup comparisons 2. Used standard measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members but rated by one source 4. Controlled for multiple explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional design cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power
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			Rejection of mother was linked to her own socioemotional problems and to 2, 3, and 4 above.	
27.	<p>Johnston & Goldman (2010); Johnston, Roseby, & Kuehne (2009) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i> of young adults who were children of high-conflict custody-disputing families, with special focus on those who had been alienated or estranged from one parent as children. Examine current relationships with both parents and occupational, emotional, and relational functioning of young adult.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 37 young adults from 22 families. This longitudinal study gathered data 15-20 years later from a representative one third of 90 custody-disputing families, initially referred by family courts between 1989-1993. Age: 20-30 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Majority was Caucasian (83%) SES: varied income All had been provided with 20-30 hours of family-focused counseling at the time of the custody dispute when they were ages 4-14 years.</p>	<p>Ratings by one fifth of subjects who recalled predominantly negative feelings toward one parent (mostly fathers) as children were generally consistent with counselors' ratings at the time of the custody dispute. The proportion of youths with predominantly negative feelings in this sample tripled during their mid-teens. As young adults, however, most had reverted to having relatively positive feelings towards both parents. Virtually all of the children and youths who had actively resisted or refused visitation subsequently, on their own accord, initiated reconciliation with the rejected parent some time during their late teens and early twenties.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control groups but made intragroup comparisons 2. Used standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members but ratings only by subjects 4. Controlled for few extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Longitudinal study ensured independent variable preceded dependent variable in time in order to determine direction of effects

		<p>Both parents and the grown children of the disputes, when able to be located, were interviewed by the same counselor (the first author) who had seen them originally (yielding a 70% response rate) and completed questionnaires and standardized measures of emotional adjustment and attachment security in intimate relationships.</p>	<p>A residual 19% during their young adult years expressed strong negative feelings toward one parent (all fathers) and continued to refuse all contact. These subjects were judged as estranged from an abusive parent rather than alienated. The occupational, emotional, and relational functioning of this subgroup ranged broadly, and it was no different from those who had relatively positive feelings toward both parents as young adults.</p>	<p>6. Random sample but small N; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
28.	<p>Johnston, Walters, & Olesen (2005a) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> Are alienated children emotionally disturbed and at risk for psychological problems or relationship difficulties later in life?</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 74 children Referred by family courts for counseling or evaluation. Included only cases with completed family reports and child psychological test data on at least one of the two criterion measures.</p>		<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups but made intragroup comparisons between alienated and nonalienated groups 2. Used standard(ized) measures</p>

		<p>Archival clinical and research records of families disputing custody. Age: 5-12 years Gender: 36 boys, 38 girls Ethnicity: 82% Caucasian SES: diverse incomes Cross-sectional design with interviews and rating scales completed by clinician and standardized psychological measures completed by parents (Child Behavior Checklist) and child (Rorschach).</p>	<p>Child alienation was defined as persistent, strong negative attitudes and rejecting behaviors toward one parent and absence of affection, lack of pleasure and enjoyment in contact with that parent, with a corresponding emotional enmeshment or boundary diffusion with the other parent, demonstrated by separation anxieties and parent-child role reversal. According to their aligned parent (whether mother or father), alienated children had more behavioral problems of clinically serious proportions (including depression, withdrawal, somatic complaints, and aggression) than children who were able to maintain relationships with both parents.</p>	<p>3. Data derived from multiple sources 4. Controlled for multiple extraneous and explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional study cannot determine directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
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			<p>Pattern of Rorschach personality variables suggested alienated children and nonalienated children used different coping styles in response to ongoing parental disputes, both potentially problematic.</p>	
29.	<p>Johnston, Walters, & Olesen (2005b) <i>Etiology</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 125 children from custody-litigating families referred by courts for counseling or custody evaluations. Drawn from archival database of documentary records describing parent-child relationships in separating divorced families. Age: 13 and under Gender: 65 girls, 60 boys Ethnicity: Caucasian (85%) and the remainder (15%) included African American, Hispanic, and Asian-Pacific Islander</p>	<p>Extreme rejection of parent: 11% fathers and 7.2% mothers Co-occurrence of mother's and father's alienating behaviors was common. The multifactor model was best predictor. Child's rejection of father was predicted by six independent variables: alienating by mother, separation anxieties with mother, mother's warm/involved parenting, lack of father's warm/involved parenting, older age of child, and father's abuse of child.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups but systematically examined variations within the group 2. Used standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members but ratings mostly made by one source 4. Controlled for multiple explanatory variables</p>

	<p>Tested four alternative theories to explain why children reject a parent: (1) <i>PAS Perspective</i>: Primarily a brainwashing parent who indoctrinates the child in a campaign of denigration of a good, loving parent; (2) <i>Abuse Perspective</i>: Child abuse and family violence perpetrated by the rejected parent; (3) <i>Family Structure Perspective</i>: Role reversal, parent-child boundary diffusion and enmeshment; or (4) <i>Multifactor Perspective</i>: Combination of all of above</p>	<p>SES: upper-income parents Data were rated on multiple items by two clinicians (one original counselor), factor-analyzed to produce scales measuring each concept, and subjected to multivariate analysis.</p>	<p>Rejection of mother was predicted by three independent variables: alienating by father, separation anxieties with father, and child abuse by mother. Role reversal and alienating behaviors by parents were highly correlated. Male domestic violence perpetrators attempted to alienate their child from the victim mother rather than vice versa.</p>	<p>5. Cross-sectional study cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
30.	<p>Johnston, Walters, & Olesen (2005c) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p>$n = 98$ parents from 49 families undergoing custody evaluations (from a total sample of 87 families, since only those with children under 13 years were selected)</p>	<p>Alienating co-parenting behavior by fathers was directly correlated with their narcissism, self-preoccupation, cognitive slippage, and rigid authoritarian style.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups but made systematic intragroup comparisons 2. Used standard(ized) measures</p>

	Examine the relationship between parenting behaviors of alienating and rejected parents and selected personality variables from the Rorschach	<p>Drawn from an archival database of custody evaluation records describing parent-child relationships in separating and divorced families.</p> <p>Age: 13 and under</p> <p>Gender: Not stated</p> <p>Ethnicity: Majority was Caucasian (90%)</p> <p>SES: Relatively high socioeconomic status for fathers and moderate status for mothers.</p> <p>Extensive interviews with each family member and full battery of psychological tests were administered to all parents, and with children when indicated.</p>	<p>Alienating co-parenting behavior by mothers was inversely correlated with their need for interpersonal closeness, and was directly correlated with cognitive slippage and a passive stance in fantasy.</p> <p>To the extent rejected parents (mothers and fathers) were prone to be abusive and/or lack warm involvement with their children, they were likely to be depressed and anxious and have coping deficits and difficulty modulating emotions.</p>	<p>3. Data derived from multiple family members</p> <p>4. Controlled for some alternative explanatory variables</p> <p>5. Cross-sectional study design cannot test for directionality of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results</p> <p>7. Selection criteria clear</p> <p>8. Sufficient sample power</p>
31.	Kruk (2010) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i>	<p><i>n</i> = 14 Canadian women who have lost custody of their children within a legal divorce process</p> <p>Gender: females</p> <p>Age: Not stated</p>		<p>1. No control group</p> <p>2. No standardized measures</p>

	<p>On mothers without custody by giving them a voice in regard to telling their story, and eliciting their views of their children’s needs in the divorce transition and the responsibilities of mothers and social institutions in regard to those needs.</p>	<p>Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Qualitative study using narrative analysis and grounded theory</p>	<p>All 14 mothers lost custody as the result of a legal process in which their children were awarded to the father in a divorce hearing, with the legal outcome being sole paternal custody or primary residence with the father. Seven main themes emerged: broken mother-child attachments, unresolved grief, and sense of loss; legal abuse within the adversarial system, and legal judgment based on nonconformity to a motherhood ideal; physical violence and emotional abuse in the family system; access denial and parental alienation; social stigma; lack of support services; and financial losses</p>	<p>3. Data derived from only one informant 4. No control for alternative explanatory factors 5. Cannot tests directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, no ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria somewhat clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
32.	<p>Kumar (2003) (dissertation) <i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention</i> of a supervised (facilitated) visitation program:</p>		<p>60% of children reconciled with a parent after using the Smart Parenting program.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups but made intragroup comparisons</p>

	<p>To examine what factors interfere with resolution of visitation refusal within that setting</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 105 families who attended the Smart Parenting Office were invited to participate if their case was closed with the Smart Parenting program and the reason for attendance was due to the child's refusal to have contact with a parent. Cases were excluded if allegations of abuse, currently in treatment, being monitored or in evaluation. Age: <i>M</i> = 7 years, <i>SD</i> = 3.8 Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Parents mostly well educated Mother custody 77%, father custody 23%. All family members completed questionnaires. Passive-observational design using archival data.</p>	<p>Older children (>13) were less likely to reconcile than younger children. Length of time since visits and level of parental conflict had little impact on reconciliation. The more willing parents were to communicate and ameliorate their relationship with the other parent, the more likely the child reconciled with the other parent.</p>	<p>2. Used standard measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members and clinicians 4. Controlled for few extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional study cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample of less severe cases; unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
33.	Lampel (1996a)			

	<p><i>Prevalence of alienation in custody-litigating cases</i></p>	<p>Study I, $n = 24$ sets of parents and children. Inclusion criteria were that the child's entire family had been referred for a child custody evaluation by the family court during 1989 and 1990. Age: 7-14 years (M = 10 years, SD = 26.5 months) Gender: 10 boys, 14 girls Ethnicity: 23 Caucasian, 1 Latino SES: Not stated Cross-sectional descriptive study. Administered the Revised Slosson Intelligence Test and the Family Relations Test (FRT) to each child as part of the standard evaluation procedure for the court-ordered psychological evaluation.</p>	<p>Study 1: Alignments were defined as having more positive than negative responses toward one parent on the FRT. 46% were nonaligned, with positive scores for both parents; 42% were aligned and had positive scores for mother and negative scores for father. None had positive scores for father and negative scores for mother. All children were of average intelligence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members 4. No controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional design cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power
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<p>34.</p>	<p>Lampel (1996b) <i>Diagnosis assessment</i> Compared personality traits and psychological functioning of aligned and nonaligned parents and children in custody-litigating families</p>	<p>Study 2: $n = 20$ sets of parents and their children Age: 7-14 years (M = 10 years, SD = 25 months) Gender: 12 boys, 8 girls Ethnicity: 14 Caucasian, 8 other SES: Not stated Half the children were aligned and similar in age and gender with nonaligned children. Each child completed the Revised Slosson Intelligence Test, the Family Relations Test, and Roberts Apperception Test for Children and each parent the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2, Mother-Child Relationship Evaluation, and Parent Stress Index as part of the standard evaluation procedure for the court-ordered psychological evaluation.</p>	<p>Both parents of aligned children were more rigid, naively defended, and less emotive than were parents of nonaligned children. Aligned children preferred the more emotive, problem-solving, and outgoing of the two parents. Aligned children were less adept at conceptualizing complex problems than were nonaligned children, but they were more self-confident. No differences in intelligence between groups.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used comparison or control groups 2. Used standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members 4. No systematic controls for extraneous or other explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional study cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power
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<p>35.</p>	<p>Laughrea (2002) <i>Measurement</i> To develop a self-report measure of family alienation from young adult's viewpoint</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 493 undergraduate students, 417 were from intact families (IF) and 76 were from divorced/separated families (DF). Recruited throughout all of the faculties at the University of Moncton. Age: 17-22 years (M = 19 years, SD = 1.8) Gender: 363 women, 117 men Ethnicity: Not stated SES: diverse incomes of parents</p>	<p>The "Alienated Family Relationship Scale" (AFRS) comprised three sections: (1) Interparental Conflict, (2) Alienating Attitude of the father toward the mother and of the mother toward the father, and (3) Alienated Attitude of the young adult toward both parents. Results suggested good reliability, and convergent and construct validity. The AFRS also discriminated between IF and DF groups.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used comparison or control group 2. Used standardized measures 3. Young adult was single source informant 4. Some systematic controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors for subjects' attitudes (e.g., abusive parent) 5. Retrospective design is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria clear; classes invited to participate 8. Sufficient sample power
<p>36.</p>	<p>Lavadera, Ferracuti, & Togliatti (2012) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 24 cases</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of comparison group

	<p>To (a) analyze the parents' characteristics in families for whom PAS has been diagnosed according to Gardner's criteria, (b) examine the children's characteristics and their psychological adjustment, together with the possible psychopathological characteristics found in PAS cases, and (c) consider experts' proposals in PAS cases with regard to custody and intervention</p>	<p>12 court appointed expert evaluations of families for whom PAS had been diagnosed and 12 evaluations that did not receive PAS diagnosis Gender: Not explicitly stated Age: Children average age: 11.21 years/ Mothers: 39.02 years/Fathers: 45.12 years Ethnicity: Resided in Rome and all Caucasian SES: 33% had completed primary school, 36% had completed secondary school, and 31% had obtained an academic degrees Qualitative study using archived material</p>	<p>The alienating parents were equally divided between fathers and mothers. Most ($n = 11$) of the alienating parents had custody at the moment of the forensic psychological evaluation and had lived with the child since the divorce. In 35% of the cases, the father had custody prior to the expert consultation. In 50% of the cases, the mother had custody prior to the consultation. In 15% of the cases, custody was given to a third party, such as the grandparents or Social Services. In the PAS group, the mothers began a new relationship following the divorce more frequently than the fathers. The presence of a new relationship for one or both parents had no connection to whether a parent was an alienating or alienated parent</p>	<p>2. Standardized psychological testing was undertaken 3. Data derived from multiple family members but ratings mostly made by one source. 4. Systematically explored multiple variables that have been hypothesized to influence PAB and PA 5. Unable to test for direction of effects 6. Random sample, but low ability to generalize results due to small sample size 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
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			Among the fathers in the PAS group, there was a higher frequency of difficulty in expressing affection. This increased frequency was not related to being the alienating ($n = 5$) or alienated ($n = 3$) parent.	
37.	<p>López, Iglesia, & García (2014) <i>Diagnosis and assessment</i> To explore strategies used by alienating parents for inducing the rejection of their children toward the other parent in circumstances of conflictual couple separation</p>	<p>$n = 72$ couples in the process of separation or divorce, with at least one of their children experiencing parental alienation Age: Not stated Gender: 51 Women and 21 men Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Mixed research design</p>	<p>Mothers and fathers used different alienating strategies. Mothers tended to seek help from third parties, fathers tended to focus their alienation activities on diminishing the mother's authority over her children. Having custody or not tends to impact the number and type of alienation strategies used.</p>	<p>1. No comparison or control group but intragroup comparison of gender 2. Standard measures 3. Multiple sources 4. Systematically examined the effects of two variables—i.e., gender of parent and custody/noncustody parent. 5. Unable to ensure direction of effect 6. Nonrandom sample, no ability to generalize results</p>

				<p>7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion criteria vague</p> <p>8. Sample power sufficient</p>
38.	<p>Moné (2007) (dissertation) <i>Diagnostic/assessment</i> To understand and interpret internal dynamics and family relationships of divorced parents who engage in ongoing interparental conflict and parental alienation</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 3 families Sent over 400 letters and flyers and attended workshops to recruit parents into the study. Qualitative interviews. Age: 37-44 years Gender: 1 father, 2 mothers Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Parental alienation involves a family relational dynamic. Three meta-themes identified: (1) parents and children are engaged in dichotomous construction of meaning and views of one another; (2) the need for control seems to be the underlying motivation for family members' response to the conflict and alienation; (3) multiple family members contribute to the alienation.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups</p> <p>2. Used no standard(ized) measures</p> <p>3. Data derived from only 3 families and interpreted by one source</p> <p>4. No systematic control for extraneous or alternative explanatory variables</p> <p>5. Cross-sectional design cannot test for direction of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results</p> <p>7. Selection criteria unclear</p> <p>8. Insufficient sample power</p>

<p>39.</p>	<p>Moné & Biringen (2006) <i>Prevalence of alienation in intact and divorced families.</i> <i>Measurement:</i> To develop an instrument to measure relationship distancing (alienating) parental behavior. <i>Prognosis and long-term effects:</i> To examine the connection between “feeling parent-child alienation” during the growing-up years and subjects’ report of adulthood relationships with both parents</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 227 undergraduates, 25% from separated or divorced families. Recruited from several applied human science courses at a large public university in the western U.S. Questionnaires were distributed to 382 students; 60% returned completed forms one week later. Age: Not stated Gender: predominantly females Ethnicity: predominantly Caucasian SES: Not stated Cross-sectional written survey included the Relationship Distancing Questionnaire (RDQ) and numerous other relationship questionnaires.</p>	<p>Psychometric properties of the Relationship Distancing Questionnaire (RDQ): Alpha = 7.6 and 0.79 for the factors that make up the mother and father section respectively. Test-retest was 0.94 and 0.88. Convergent validity showed RDQ connected to assessment of feelings of parent-child alienation. More negative adulthood relationships with both parents reported by subjects who felt parent-child alienation during childhood, especially with the alienating parent (a backfiring effect). Parental conflict was a better predictor than parents’ marital status of whether alienation occurred.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control groups but used multiple intragroup comparisons 2. Used standard measures 3. Data derived from single source 4. Some systematic control for extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional design cannot establish direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power
<p>40.</p>	<p>Mone, MacPhee, Anderson, & Banning (2011) <i>Diagnosis and assessment</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 3 families/one parent and one or two children from each family</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No comparison or control group

	<p>Narrative interviews with members of three families were used to explore meaning of divorce and interparental conflict and alienation.</p>	<p>Participants were recruited from high-conflict parenting workshop and mailing sent to parents who completed workshop within past 2 years Age: Parents (37-44 years) Children (10-14 years) Gender: 1 father and two mothers/ one son and three daughters Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated In-depth narrative interviews</p>	<p>Parents in study exhibited dichotomous views about their ex-spouse by describing their former mate in primarily negative ways Dichotomous thinking also is reflected in the children's differentiated views of their parents' badmouthing. Some children justified their mother's negative comments about their fathers but judged their fathers more harshly for making similar remarks about mothers. Children involved themselves in parental conflict as a way of minimizing anger and hostility, or because they believed the parents to be incapable of resolving disputes.</p>	<p>2. Standardized measures not used 3. Single source information (only the mother's views but not the father) 4. No systematic control for extraneous variables that may have influenced the magnitude of effect 5. Unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria and exclusion criteria are both clear 8. Sample power insufficient</p>
<p>41.</p>	<p>Morrison (2006) (dissertation)</p>			<p>1. Used no comparison or control group</p>

	<p><i>Measurement-diagnosis assessment-professional views</i></p> <p>To examine interrater reliability of Gardner’s eight symptoms of PAS and professionals’ recognition of the range of child and parent behaviors associated with PAS</p>	<p>Part I: $n = 20$ mental health professionals who returned test-retest written surveys from a total of 300 solicitations for participation from American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, and organizations affiliated with PAS.</p> <p>Subjects were given five case vignettes and asked to identify the presence of Gardner’s eight PAS symptoms.</p> <p>Age: 25–65 years Gender: 30% female, 65% male Ethnicity: 90% Caucasian SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Part I: In 4 of 5 vignettes professionals able to identify PAS in child. Alphas ranged from 0.78–0.95; minimum ICC = 0.77, replicating Rueda’s (2003) interrater reliability study.</p> <p>Part 2. The behavioral survey also provides support for identifying PAS child behaviors but found that relationship-destructive (alienating) behaviors by parents were observed more frequently with a high level of false allegations of abuse in custody-litigated cases.</p> <p>Findings provide support for Gardner’s eight PAS behaviors but revealed unresolved debates about whether PAS is a syndrome.</p>	<p>2. Used standard measure</p> <p>3. Multiple professionals were informants</p> <p>4. Lacks systematic control for extraneous variables</p> <p>5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine directionality of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited</p> <p>7. Selection criteria unclear</p> <p>8. Insufficient sample power</p>
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		<p>Part 2: $n = 36$ guardian <i>ad litem</i> who returned surveys from a total of 259 solicitations from family courts and Internet. Subjects estimated frequency of eight PAS child behaviors and alienating parent behaviors in their caseloads of custody disputing families.</p> <p>Age: Not stated Gender: 31% male, 69% female Ethnicity: 77% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, 11% African American SES: Not stated</p>		
42.	<p>Racusin, Copans, & Mills(1994) <i>Prevalence of refusal to visit in divorced families Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p>$n = 100$ children and adolescents</p>	<p>12% prevalence of visitation refusal.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups but made intragroup comparisons 2. Used no standard measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members but rated by one source</p>

	<p>To examine the characteristics of children, the psychopathology of parents, and custodial arrangements of families where a child refused to visit</p>	<p>Examined 100 consecutive clinical records in a psychiatric outpatient clinic of child and adolescent cases involving parental divorce seen by one of the authors. Compared the 12 children who refused postdivorce visits with noncustodial parents with 88 nonrefusers. Age: 2-17 years (M = 10, SD = 4.2) Gender: 70 boys, 30 girls Ethnicity: All Caucasian SES: Not stated Archival data analysis, clinical ratings.</p>	<p>Children who refused postdivorce visits with their noncustodial parents were significantly more likely to be female, the oldest child at home, and in special education, and to have at least one parent with evidence of psychopathology. Substance abuse and violence toward spouse were more frequent in the noncustodial parent; suicidal behavior, psychosis, and violence towards spouse were more frequent in custodial parents in refusers than nonrefusers.</p>	<p>4. Controlled for some explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional study design cannot test for directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power for refuser group</p>
43.	<p>Rand, Rand, & Kopetski (2005) <i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention</i> To evaluate the efficacy of structural and therapeutic interventions for interrupting PAS in more severe cases</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 45 PAS children from 25 families whom one author had evaluated over a period of 20 years, starting in 1976.</p>		<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used no standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived from multiple family members but rated by one source</p>

		<p>Archival data analysis on litigated custody cases referred by family court with longitudinal follow-up on 45 of a total of 84 PAS cases seen 20 years previously. Age: 3-16 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>Mother was alienating parent (AP) in 18 cases and father was AP in 7 cases. At follow-up, 20 children from 12 families had the PAS process "interrupted"; 11 in 5 families had "mixed outcomes"; and 14 from 8 families had alienation "completed." The court's decisions with respect to custody and visitation were viewed as essential for interrupting or preventing alienation. If therapy was the primary intervention, it was ineffective for interrupting alienation and sometimes made things worse.</p>	<p>4. Controlled for some explanatory variables 5. Longitudinal design ensured independent variable preceded dependent variable in time to establish directionality of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
44.	<p>Reay (2007) (dissertation) <i>Prognosis and long-term effects</i> To explore the long-term (adult) consequences of parent alienation as a child</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 150 adults from separated and divorced families of origin.</p>	<p>Findings demonstrated that adult children of divorce who perceived experiencing greater levels of PAS also perceived experiencing greater levels of psychological distress.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standard(ized) measures 3. Subjects were single source informant</p>

		<p>The majority recruited through advertisements in newspapers. Other by snowball sampling of local professionals for participants who may have experienced PAS in childhood and/or adolescence.</p> <p>Age: 18-35 years (M = 27.01, SD = 5.8)</p> <p>Gender: Not stated</p> <p>Ethnicity: 85% Caucasian, 2% Asian-Canadian, 5% Métis, 4% First Nations/Inuit, 1% Black-Canadian, 3% biracial</p> <p>SES: Not stated</p> <p>Causal-comparative research design: Subjects completed several measures of mother and father alienating behaviors they remembered experiencing as a child and a symptom checklist of their current level of emotional distress.</p>		<p>4. No controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors for subjects' views, beliefs, and feelings</p> <p>5. Retrospective design is unable to test for direction of effects</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results low</p> <p>7. Selection criteria clear</p> <p>8. Sufficient sample power</p>
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<p>45.</p>	<p>Reay (2015) <i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention</i> Family Reflections Reunification Program (FRRP) is a 4-day intensive treatment to reconcile children between 8 and 18 years of age with their rejected parent to foster a healthy relationship between the child and his or her rejected parent.</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 12 Families participated in a pilot study in 2012. The sample included rejected parents comprised of 6 mothers and 6 fathers. 22 children attended the retreat, 14 boys and 8 girls and one dropped out. Families were followed at 3-month, 6-month, 9-month, and 12-month intervals. Based on a small sample and descriptive statistics.</p>	<p>The pilot reported a 95% success rate (one participant left the program) in reestablishing a relationship between the children and their once-rejected parents between the second and third day of the retreat as evidenced by the children's statements, parents' statements, and observations of the multidisciplinary team at the retreat.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. No use of standard(ized) measures 3. Results based on children's statements, parents' statements and observations 4. No controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors for subjects' views, beliefs, and feelings 5. Small sample is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results low 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power
<p>46.</p>	<p>Rowen & Emery (2014) <i>Diagnosis/assessment and long-term effects</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 648 undergraduates Age: 17-21 years Gender: 67.8% females</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of comparison 2. Use of standard measure (PDS)

	<p>To explore the frequency and impact of denigration on parent-child relationships.</p>	<p>Ethnicity: 58% identified as Caucasian, 18% identified as East Asian/Southeast Asian/Pacific Islander, 9% identified as Mixed Race/Ethnicity, 8% identified as Middle Eastern, 5% identified as Black/African American, and 2% identified as Hispanic/Latino. SES: 65% came from families from middle to upper-middle socioeconomic status Parental Denigration Scale (PDS) used; a new scale with many items based on compilation of strategies employed by alienating parents.</p>	<p>Parental denigration was reported by adult children across married, divorced and never married families, with greater frequency in divorced and never married families. Denigration behaviors occur across marital status and are important to assess in work with families, especially in the case of divorce Children who reported higher levels of parental denigration also reported feeling less close to both parents. When parents denigrated the other parent, parental alienation and rejection did not result. Instead, children felt closer to the parent being denigrated.</p>	<p>3. Single source informants 4. Examined the effects of several variables (i.e., gender of parent and marital status, parent-child relationship variables) 5. Retrospective design is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Random sample, ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
<p>47.</p>	<p>Rueda (2003, 2004) (dissertation and publication) <i>Measurement-professional views</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 14 PhD-level professional practitioners familiar with child custody evaluations.</p>		<p>1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standard measure</p>

	<p>To examine the degree of acceptance and validity of the concept and the syndrome of PAS among professionals</p>	<p>Selected from professionals in the field in United States, Canada, and Europe. Out of 58 approached, only 14 surveys were usable. Age: Not stated Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated An interrater reliability study: The respondents analyzed five cases using Gardner’s differential diagnosis chart (eight criteria) built into a questionnaire for the potential alienating parent and child.</p>	<p>A significant level of concordance was found among raters in 4/5 cases; in 1/5 cases there was a lower consensus on the presence of PAS or meeting Gardner’s criteria due to the complexity of the case presentation. Overall, agreement about the symptoms of PAS prevailed over the agreement regarding the concept of syndrome.</p>	<p>3. Different professionals were single source informants 4. Lacks systematic control for extraneous variables 5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine causal direction 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited 7. Selection criteria unclear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
48.	<p>Sarrazin (2009) (dissertation) <i>Etiology</i> To examine factors that might predict which children become alienated in custody-litigating families</p>	<p><i>n</i> = 93 case files from an agency undertaking a psycholegal analysis because of parental disputes concerning child custody.</p>	<p>Two variables predicting a child’s risk of being a victim of parental alienation were (1) the child’s lack of communication with his or her surroundings, and (2) the absence of exteriorized disorders in the child.</p>	<p>1. Used a comparison group 2. Used standard measures 3. Multiple family informants but ratings made by clinician</p>

		<p>Among these files, 36 had previously been identified with a high likelihood of being in a PA dynamic. Both groups were matched regarding socioeconomic variables and the child's age. Age: 2-15 years (M = 8 years, SD = 3) Gender: 44 girls, 49 boys Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Archival data analysis.</p>		<p>4. Controlled for some extraneous variables 5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine causal direction 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
49.	<p>Siegel & Langford (1998) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> To compare pertinent personality variables of mothers who engaged in parental alienating behaviors with those mothers who did not in custody-litigating families</p>		<p>Mothers exhibiting PA behaviors had significantly higher scores on the K scale and significantly lower scores on the F scale than both the standard MMPI-2 normative sample and the sample of divorcing mothers who did not engage in PA. This was interpreted to mean PA mothers were more likely to deny and project.</p>	<p>1. Used a comparison group 2. Used standardized measures 3. Multiple sources of informants 4. Lacking controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors</p>

		<p><i>n</i> = 34 females who completed the MMPI-2 in the course of child custody evaluations. All but 4 were from the authors' practice. These test results were separated from the rest of the records of the evaluations, which were reviewed and subjects classified into a PA group (<i>n</i> = 16) and a non-PA group (<i>n</i> = 18).</p> <p>Age: 2-15 years (M = 8, SD, 3) Gender: all females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated MMPI-2 validity scales of the two groups were compared.</p>	<p>No significant difference in L scale scores between the alienating and nonalienating groups, although both were higher than the published normative sample.</p>	<p>5. Cross-sectional design is unable to test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
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50.	<p>Spruijt, Eikelenboom, Harmeling, Stokkers, & Kormos (2005) <i>Professional views as to the extent of PAS and the validity of Gardner's eight symptoms in detecting it</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 138 professionals and 69 divorced nonresident parents. Respondents replied to an invitation sent to 150 members of the Dutch Association of Family Lawyers and divorce mediators, and divorced nonresident parents. Age: 27–45 years Gender: all females Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Structured questionnaires. The questions were derived from Gardner's eight symptoms.</p>	<p>PAS occurred in a mild form in 33% of cases and in a moderate form in 9% of cases. There were very few serious cases of PAS. 58% of professionals thought PAS either does not occur or rarely occurs in the Netherlands, and 42% thought it does occur, and at mild (33%) or moderate (9%) levels. Gardner's classification of eight symptoms of parental alienation was not evident in the findings. However, distinguished four factors or symptoms, two concerning alienation by the resident parent and two concerning alienation by the child.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standard measure 3. Multiple professionals were informants 4. Lacks control for extraneous variables 5. Cross-sectional survey cannot determine causal direction 6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited 7. Selection criteria mostly clear 8. Sufficient sample power
51.	<p>Stoner-Moskowitz (1998) (dissertation) <i>Etiology</i></p>	<p><i>n</i> = 141 children (5 from intact families, 30 from divorced, 23 from high-conflict parents, and 30 alienated)</p>	<p>Children from intact families had significantly higher self-concept than those from the other family structures. However, no significant differences in children's self-concept were found between divorced, high-conflict, and PAS groups.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Used a comparison group 2. Used standardized measures 3. Multiple sources of informants

	<p>To compare the self-concept of children in different family structures with the hypothesis that alienated children would have the lowest level</p>	<p>Children in the first two groups were recruited through several public schools and the last two groups from family courts, where family court services determined eligibility into the study. Age: 7 to 13 years Gender: 73 males, 68 females Ethnicity: Equal distribution of Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, Asian SES: Not stated Administration of standard tests of child's self-concept.</p>		<p>4. Used controls for extraneous or alternative explanatory factors 5. Cross-sectional design is unable to ensure temporal ordering of dependent variable and independent variable or test for direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample; limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria somewhat unclear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
52.	<p>Sullivan, Ward, & Deutsch (2010)</p>		<p>The adult ratings of the camp experience in general were positive (all 4-5 on a 5-point scale). Children provided advice to parents and other peers in their situation.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used only standard satisfaction survey</p>

	<p><i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention:</i> of a multiday intensive educational and therapeutic group camp intervention for both parents and their alienated children</p>	<p>$n = 21$ parents from 10 families involved in program conducted twice (5 families per group). Families were recruited by word of mouth through authors' professional networks and selected for pragmatic reasons (e.g., timing, cost, and availability). Age: 7-14 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated All participants were approached to complete satisfaction survey at the completion of the camp, 1 month and 6 months later, and group leaders made ratings.</p>	<p>A range of preliminary outcomes have been observed to date with respect to resolution of the parent-child relationship difficulties and normalization of visiting arrangements.</p>	<p>3. Data derived from multiple family members and clinicians 4. Controlled for no extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Posttreatment measures only cannot establish direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria somewhat unclear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
53.	<p>Toren et al. (2013) <i>Evaluation of intervention/treatment</i></p>	<p>$n = 22$ children and 38 parents</p>	<p>The anxiety and depression levels of children with parental alienation decreased significantly following the short-term (4 months) treatment period.</p>	<p>1. Used comparison group 2. Use of standardized measures but not for PA inclusion</p>

	<p>To evaluate outcomes of a 16-session therapeutic intervention for children of parental alienation and their parents.</p>	<p>Children were considered to have PA if they had refused to visit the alienated parent for a minimum of 4 months. Referred to clinic by the court or social welfare authorities Age: 5- to 16-year-olds Gender: 9 boys and 13 girls Parents: 19 mothers and 19 fathers Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Quasi-experimental design with comparison group of treated using standard community treatment</p>	<p>There was a significant difference in parental cooperation following the intervention at one-year follow-up A better cooperation between parents was detected in the families of the treatment than of the control groups.</p>	<p>3. Multiple sources 4. No systematic control for extraneous and alternative explanatory factors 5. Quasi design with control only measured at Time 3 thus limitation of direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, ability to generalize results is low 7. Selection criteria clear but exclusion is vague 8. Sample power is low for two groups compared</p>
54.	<p>Vassiliou (2005) (dissertation) <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> Part 1: To describe the experience and understanding of PAS from the "lost" parents' perspective.</p>	<p>Part 1. $n = 9$ parents meeting Gardner's eight symptoms.</p>	<p>Part 1. Findings focused on the difficulties of parents decoupling after separation and its influence on the presence of PAS.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups 2. Used no standard(ized) measures</p>

	<p>Part 2. To compare the characteristics of litigated custody cases of false allegations of abuse (FA) with those of PAS.</p>	<p>Participants recruited via flyers, Internet postings, and e-mails. Of the 200 packages sent out, 12 met the criteria (Gardner's eight symptoms), but three were dropped because difficult to contact. Age: Not stated Gender: 5 fathers, 1 mother Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Part 2. <i>n</i> = 39 court cases 20 FA; 19 PAS Searches on court-based databases for judgments made about FA and PAS Age: Not stated Gender: 22 females, 7 males Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Mixed-method design of qualitative interviews and court-based analysis (Part 2).</p>	<p>Part 2. Mothers more likely to make FA and to be alienating parents; PAS children were more likely to be older than those with FA. No difference between the 2 groups in length of litigation or number of siblings. FA seems to be a precursor for the presence of PAS. Subjects believed courts do not use their powers to sanction and so PAS seems to continue unabated.</p>	<p>3. Data derived primarily from one parent and court files; single source rating 4. Controlled for few extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional studies cannot ensure independent variable precedes dependent variable 6. Nonrandom samples, limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
<p>55.</p>	<p>Vassiliou & Cartwright (2001)</p>			<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups</p>

	<p><i>Diagnosis/assessment</i> To describe the experience and understanding of PAS from the “lost” parents’ perspective</p>	<p>$n = 6$ target parents’ perception of parental alienation syndrome (PAS). Participants recruited via flyers, Internet postings, and e-mails. Age: 36 to 54 years Gender: 1 mother, 8 fathers Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated Semistructured, open-ended interview questionnaires.</p>	<p>PAS children were “enlisted” by the alienating parent as secondary alienators to them (i.e., to the primary alienator) to contribute to the alienation. Lost parents reported feeling powerless as a result of the alienating situation.</p>	<p>2. Used no standard(ized) measures 3. Data derived only from rejected parent 4. Controlled for no extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cross-sectional study cannot ensure independent variable preceded dependent variable in time for causal inference 6. Nonrandom sample of cases, unable to generalize results 7. Selection criteria unclear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
56.	<p>Viljoen & van Rensburg, (2014) <i>Professional views</i></p>	<p>$n = 8$ psychologists registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa</p>	<p>The experiences of psychologists working with PAS are negative and tainted with frustration and stress.</p>	<p>1. No no comparison or control group 2. No standard(ized) measures used</p>

	To explore the experiences of psychologists working with PAS in private practice	Age: Not stated Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: South African SES: Not stated Snowball sampling Qualitative research design Semistructured interviews Phenomenological interviews	Results suggest that when working with parental alienation and PAS some psychologists may abandon their work with these cases due to the frustration and stress.	<p>3. Limited to few psychologists</p> <p>4. Data drawn from experiences and memories of respondents</p> <p>5. Qualitative design</p> <p>6. Nonrandom sample; ability to generalize results limited</p> <p>7. Selection criteria somewhat unclear</p> <p>8. Insufficient power</p>
57.	Warshak (2010) <i>Evaluation of treatment/intervention:</i> of an experiential educational intervention for children and their rejected parents in families suffering from severe parental alienation	$n = 23$ children in 12 families	The brief, intensive workshop is based on social psychological principles (e.g., common errors in perception, suggestibility, response to authority, negative stereotype formation) and teaches critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and parenting skills.	<p>1. Used no comparison or control groups</p> <p>2. Used no standard(ized) measures</p> <p>3. Data derived primarily from rejected parent and author-clinician</p> <p>4. No systematic control for extraneous or alternative explanatory variables</p>

		<p>All cases referred by court orders mandating child's participation with the "hated" parent. Cases were selected based on author's involvement with them during the intervention; 10 of the 12 rejected parents provided updates and documents such as report cards, award certificates, and photographs in a follow-up period ranging from months to several years.</p> <p>Age: age range <3 years to >17 years Gender: Not stated Ethnicity: Not stated SES: Not stated</p>	<p>By the conclusion of the workshop, 22 of the 23 children, all of whom were severely alienated at the outset and had prior failed experiences with counseling, had restored a positive relationship with the rejected parent, as evidenced by the children's own statements and by the observations of the rejected parent, workshop leaders, and aftercare specialist (primarily the author). Among the 22 children, four regressed after the court renewed their contact with the favored parent.</p>	<p>5. Pre-experimental design cannot establish direction of effects 6. Nonrandom small sample of cases, limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear 8. Insufficient sample power</p>
58.	<p>Whitcombe (2014) <i>(Dissertation)</i> <i>Diagnosis/assessment</i></p>	<p>N = 54 who identified themselves as alienated parents Gender: 47 father and 7 mothers Age: 32-66 years Ethnicity: living across England, Wales and Scotland SES: Not stated</p>	<p>A pervasive sense of powerlessness emerged in the findings.</p>	<p>1. Used no comparison or control group 2. Used standardized measures 3. Data derived from rejected parent only</p>

	<p>To explore the subjective and intersubjective experiences of the alienated parents in the United Kingdom and to enable an understanding of how parents who had been subjected to unjustified rejection or denigration by their child managed and made sense of their lives.</p>	<p>Recruited through social media channels and parent support organizations “Q methodology” to study parents’ subjectivity regarding alienation</p>	<p>Six narratives of shared experiences emerged (sadness and loss; deep sense of frustrations; sense of psychological damage, distress and pessimism; emotional pain, loss and rejection; conflicting suggestion of optimism, yet a sense of powerlessness, rejection and pain in the presence of their child coldness and barriers; functioning well in other aspects of their lives).</p>	<p>4. No systematic control for extraneous or alternative explanatory variables 5. Cannot ensure direction of effects 6. Nonrandom sample, limited ability to generalize results 7. Selection criteria clear, exclusion unclear 8. Sufficient sample power</p>
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Rating of studies is based on a systematic and transparent process for grading the strengths and limitations of included studies. Two of the coauthors independently rated the quality of studies according to a predetermined rating scale based on eight criteria for the quality of studies. The rating scale was adapted from the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) for the purpose of assessing the strengths and limitations of studies to make sound and empirically based inferences regarding alienation.

Summary of Composite Findings

Prevalence

In the absence of randomly drawn samples, and lacking common definitions of alienation, to date there are no defensible estimates of the prevalence or incidence of the problem. Among the studies aimed at estimating the extent of alienation, widely varying rates among separated parents were reported (Baker & Chambers, 2011; Baker & Verrocchio, 2013; Bala, Hunt, & McCarney, 2010; Johnston, 1993, 2003; Lampel, 1996a, Moné & Biringen, 2006; Racusin, Copans, & Mills, 1994; Spruijt, Eikelenboom, Harmeling, Stokkers, & Kormos, 2005).

There is general agreement parental alienation occurs regardless of gender of parent (Hands & Warshak, 2011; López, Iglesia & Garcia, 2014; Lavadera, Ferracuti, & Togliatti, 2012) or child (i.e., sons and daughters can become alienated from either their fathers or mothers), and that

the phenomenon can occur within intact, separated, and divorced or custody-litigating families. However, parental alienation occurs more frequently in disrupted families and litigating cases (Bala et al., 2010; Braver, Coatsworth, & Peralta, n.d.; Hands & Warshak, 2011; Johnston, 2003; Moné & Biringen, 2006), suggesting parental conflict is a formative factor. In litigated custody cases, fathers are more likely to be the rejected parent, but this may be in part because mothers are more often the primary custodian or have the major share of residential care of the children (Bala et al., 2010; López, Iglesia & Garcia, 2014; Johnston, 2003; Lavadera et al., 2012; Rand, Rand, & Kopetski, 2005). Furthermore, the problem of parental alienation is being raised increasingly more often in custody litigation cases during the past decade (possibly because of growing professional and public awareness and widespread use of this terminology to describe the problem) (Bala et al., 2010). (p. 382) (p. 383) (p. 384) (p. 385) (p. 386) (p. 387) (p. 388) (p. 389) (p. 390) (p. 391) (p. 392) (p. 393) (p. 394) (p. 395) (p. 396) (p. 397) (p. 398) (p. 399) (p. 400) (p. 401) (p. 402) (p. 403) (p. 404) (p. 405) (p. 406) (p. 407) (p. 408) (p. 409) (p. 410) (p. 411) (p. 412) (p. 413) (p. 414) (p. 415) (p. 416)

(p. 417) **Diagnosis and Assessment**

The most frequently stated purpose of the research has been to assess for or identify the presence of parental alienation and parental alienating behaviors (PABs). In general, these efforts have been promising, showing it should be possible to develop valid and reliable measures of these phenomena. However, to date, there has been little systematic development of these instruments with reports of adequate psychometric properties. More specifically, studies have examined Gardner's 8-symptom checklist of an alienated child and all but one (Spruijt, Eikelenboom, Harmeling, Stokkers, & Kormos, 2005) supported preliminary face and content validity (Baker & Darnall, 2007, Burril-O'Donnell, 2001; Dunne & Hedrick, 1994; Morrison, 2006; Rueda, 2003, 2004; Spruijt et al., 2005; Vassiliou, 2005; Vassiliou & Cartwright, 2001). However, these studies seldom assessed for more complex methods of validity testing, including concurrent, convergent, predictive, and discriminant. In terms of consistency of the criteria, only two of these studies (Morrison, 2006; Rueda, 2003, 2004) assessed interrater reliability between professional custody evaluators using the Gardner measure.

Rowen and Emery (2014) developed the Parental Denigration Scale (PDS) based on a compilation of strategies employed by alienating parents. Baker developed the Baker Strategy Questionnaire (BSQ) to assess the perception of frequency of alienation tactics while participants were growing up (Baker & Ben-Ami, 2011; Baker & Verrocchio, 2013). Preliminary data suggest good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .96) based on a sample recruited from flyers and various support groups related to divorce (Baker & Ben-Ami, 2011). Baker also developed the Baker Alienation Questionnaire (BAQ), designed to assess a child's extreme rejection of one parent and extreme idealization of the other. Preliminary data suggest good interrater reliability (Kappa = .93) based on a subset of children referred to an agency for reunification therapy and children referred for a variety of reasons, including supervised therapeutic visitation and individual therapy (Baker, Burkhard, & Albertson-Kelly, 2012). Altenhofen, Birign, and Mergler (2008) developed a 5-point Likert scale to measure parent-child alienation ranking from high to low levels of parent-child alienation.

Two alternative checklists to measure the child's rejection of a parent have been developed by others (Johnston & Goldman, 2010; Johnston, Roseby, & Kuehne, 2009; Johnston, Walters, & Olesen, 2005a; Laughrea, 2002; Sarrazin, 2009) with good scale consistency, interrater reliability, and preliminary evidence of concurrent and predictive validity.

There are a growing number of measures to assess for various parental alienating behaviors, and there has been progress in systematically controlling for extraneous variables that might influence the degree or seriousness of alienation. Further attention is needed to differentiate alienation from other conditions that might share similar features, for example, from realistic estrangement due to parental neglect, abuse or exposure to intimate partner violence; from psychological enmeshment and boundary diffusion due to family structural aberrations; or from psychotic states like *folie à deux*.

Although the majority of the researchers purport to exclude from their studies cases where abuse of the child had occurred, few have reported working definitions of child abuse and systematic methods for identifying and excluding these (p. 418) from their samples. Despite considerable controversy over the extent to which child abuse and intimate partner violence cases are wrongfully judged in family courts to be alienation cases or vice versa, whether estrangement as a consequence of abuse co-occurs with alienation, and the likelihood that allegations of abuse are false when they are associated with or precede alienation, few empirical studies have tried to sort these issues out, and to date no clear concurrence of findings has emerged (Johnston et al., 2005a; Morrison, 2006; Vassiliou, 2005).

On the other hand, the identification of PABs has produced a set of remarkably concordant findings, derived from researchers with diverse perspectives and variability in the quality of the studies (Baker, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; Baker & Ben-Ami, 2011; Baker, Burkhard, & Albertson-Kelly, 2012; Baker & Verrocchio, 2013; Baker & Darnall, 2006; Braver et al., n.d.; Hands & Warshak, 2011; Johnston, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005a, 2005b; Laughrea, 2002; López, Iglesia, & Garcia, 2014; Moné & Biringen, 2006; Moné, MacPhee, Anderson, & Banning, 2011; Rowen & Emery, 2014; Whitecombe, 2014).

Mothers, fathers, children, young adults, and counselors have been able to describe the explicit behaviors that may be perpetrated by one parent and have the capacity to distance, damage, or destroy a child's relationship with the other parent. The psychometric properties of a set of PABs are being verified in some of these studies (interrater reliabilities, alpha scale consistencies, concurrent and predictive validities; Baker & Ben-Ami, 2011; Baker & Verrocchio, 2013; Baker et al., 2012; Johnston, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Laughrea, 2002, Moné & Biringen, 2006; Rowen & Emery, 2014). Notwithstanding, much further scale development is needed to demonstrate adequate psychometric properties of PAB measures. A further problem is there is no commonly accepted measure of PABs; researchers have developed parallel and separate instruments to measure the phenomena.

A promising, fruitful domain of research was pursued by five studies that tested hypotheses about the psychological profiles of both preferred and nonpreferred parents and alienated children using psychological testing results (e.g., MMPI-2 or the Rorschach) and custody evaluation records (Gordon, Stoffey, & Bottinelli, 2008; Johnston & Goldman, 2010; Johnston et

al., 2005b, 2009; Lampel, 1996b; Siegel & Langford, 1998). These research designs were usually stronger because they employed a comparison group of nonalienation cases in custody evaluations, used standardized measures and procedures for collecting data, and had access to data collected from multiple family members and collaterals. In three of four studies, the findings supported the hypothesis that alienating parents tended to use more narcissistic and primitive defenses and had poor reality testing (Gordon et al., 2008; Johnston et al., 2005b; Siegel & Langford, 1998). The findings with respect to the rejected parent were mixed: Some studies did (Gordon et al., 2008) differentiate them from the alienating parent, but others did not (Lampel, 1996b); some found them similar to parents in nonalienation cases (Gordon et al., 2008); others found them to have different problems, such as having coping deficits and difficulty modulating emotions (Johnston et al., 2005b).

Interestingly, although alienated children are often thought to be emotionally disturbed compared to their nonalienated counterparts in custody-disputing families, empirical support for this hypothesis is also mixed, with findings of clinical levels of emotional problems according to some ratings (Baker & Ben-Ani, 2011; (p. 419) Lampel, 1996b) and null findings on others (Baker & Chambers, 2011; Johnston & Goldman, 2010; Johnston et al., 2009; Lampel, 1996b; Stoner-Moskowitz, 1998). The problem is that these studies are too few, lacked sample power, or examined only a limited number of the many relevant personality variables to draw definitive conclusions.

Etiology

To the extent that some researchers have adopted Gardner's conceptualization of parental alienation as a syndrome primarily instigated in a child by an alienating parent, they have tended to assume that a search for alternative explanations of the child's negative attitudes and behavior is not important. Other researchers, however, have challenged this assumption. At least eight studies (Darnall & Steinberg, 2008; Johnston, 1993, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005a; Moné, 2007; Racusin, Copans, & Mills, 1994; Sarrazin, 2009; Stoner-Moskowitz, 1998) have explored child and family dynamics associated with parental alienation, and several have tested causal models or used multivariate analysis to examine multiple predictive, buffering, or moderating factors hypothesized to produce family dynamics conducive to a child's alienation from one parent. The findings generally support these more complex models of effects. It is apparent that both parents in conflicted families may engage in reciprocal PABs (possibly in response to one another) (Braver et al., n.d.; Johnston, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005a; Laughrea, 2002), and that their children are differentially affected, depending upon their age, birth order, social-cognitive capacity, and socioemotional problems (Johnston, 2003; Racusin et al., 1994; Sarrazin, 2009). Three studies, all by the same research group (Johnston, 1993, 2003; Johnston et al., 2005a), implicate both parents as contributing to the problem. The preferred parent is more likely to engage in PABs along with providing conditional warm involvement with the child, while the nonpreferred parent often lacks warm involvement and is more prone to actual abuse of the child.

Data used to test these multivariate models have all been derived from cross-sectional studies that did not assess the directionality of effects. It is therefore difficult to assess the temporal order between a child's rejection of a parent and associational factors, such as a parent's alienating behaviors, poor parenting capacities, or critical incidents of child abuse. Although all

of these factors have been found to be associated with the child's rejection of a parent, only longitudinal studies can ensure the independent variables precede the dependent variables in time to assert causal direction. It could be argued rejected parents have been rendered powerless to parent by the alliance against them. Alternatively, it could be argued that concerned parents, in *response* to their child's angry troubled relationship with their ex-partner, empathically support their child's negative views and become alienators. In the absence of longitudinal data to help sort out whether the "chicken or the egg" came first and whether this temporal order was constant, good theoretical models predicting the child's rejection of a parent—those that are built upon fundamental knowledge about child development, parent-child attachment, the impact of intrusive parenting processes, and family structural aberrations—need to be tested using large, representative samples drawn from relevant populations.

(p. 420) Prognosis and Long-Term Effects

A growing number of studies have examined long-term outcomes and residual effects of parental alienation and PAB (Baker, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2010; Baker & Ben-Ami, 2011; Baker & Chambers, 2011; Baker & Verrocchio, 2013; Ben-Ami & Baker, 2012; Braver et al., n.d.; Carey, 2003; Darnall & Steinberg, 2008; Godbout & Parent, 2012; Hands & Warshak, 2011; Johnston et al., 2005c; Kruk, 2010; Laughrea, 2002; Moné & Biringen, 2006; Reay, 2007; Rowen & Emery, 2014). The findings are inconclusive as to the degree and type of negative consequences. Spontaneous reunifications (ones initiated by the teenagers or young adults) were reported with varying frequency, for different reasons and with a range of outcomes both positive and negative⁸ (Carey, 2003; Darnall & Steinberg, 2008; Johnston et al., 2005c). Two studies (Moné & Biringen, 2006; Rowan & Emery, 2014) found compromised relationships with both parents and a "boomerang effect" of later rejection of the alienating parent. Three studies (Baker, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; Carey, 2003; Reay, 2007) documented profoundly negative effects on the adult's mental health and capacity to form trusting intimate relationships; however, these studies had no control group and used small samples (ranging from 10 to 38), and all three employed retrospective designs wherein subjects were recruited because they self-identified as victims of parental alienation as a child. It is possible the subjects were overattributing all of their negative feelings and experiences to parental alienation.

On the other hand, there are a growing number of studies of college students (from intact and separated families whose data show significant relationships between reports of exposure to parental alienation as a child and adult problems in psychological functioning as measured on standard(ized) tests of self esteem, depression, general well-being, alcohol use, or relationships with parents and peers (Baker & Verrocchio 2013; Hands & Warshak, 2011; Laughrea, 2002; Moné & Biringen, 2006; Rowen & Emery, 2014). Because this subset of studies all employed retrospective designs, which cannot determine directionality of effects and ruled out few if any alternative explanatory factors (e.g., parental divorce, conflict, parental psychopathology), there is no way of definitively attributing these negative outcomes to parental alienation.

The only longitudinal study (Johnston & Goldman, 2010; Johnston et al., 2005c) that potentially could examine directionality of effects produced null findings; that is, although alienated offspring as young adults scored high using standardized measures of emotional distress and attachment insecurity in intimate relations, they were not more disturbed than their

nonalienated counterparts in custody-disputed cases. Unfortunately, this was a small sample ($n = 22$ families) with no control group, so the findings are deemed unreliable.

Evaluation of Treatment and Interventions

Eight studies evaluated the outcome effectiveness of diverse interventions for parental alienation, all claiming varying levels of success (Baker, Burkhard, & Albertson-Kelly, 2012; Gardner, 2001; Kumar, 2003; Rand, Rand, & Kopetski, 2005; Reay, 2015; Sullivan, Ward, & Deutsch, 2010; Toren et al., 2013; Warshak, 2010). Two evaluated custody change from the preferred to the rejected parent by court order for severely alienated cases as the intervention of choice, comparing (p. 421) outcomes of cases where the court had followed the recommendations of the evaluator with those cases where the recommendation of custody reversal was not followed by the court (Gardner, 2001; Rand et al., 2005). A third study evaluated a therapeutic supervised visitation program for visitation-resistant children (Kumar, 2003). A fourth study followed up a court-mandated 4-day educational program for alienated children and the rejected parent (Warshak, 2010). A fifth study included a posttreatment client survey following a 1-week psychotherapeutic group camp for all members of multiple PA families (Sullivan et al., 2010). A sixth study reported on a 4-day intensive treatment program (Reay, 2015). Toren et al. (2013) evaluated a 16-session therapeutic program for children and their parents. Baker et al. (2012) compared children involved in reunification therapy with other children involved in agency services.

Outcomes in response to treatment in these studies—defined differently and sometimes from a limited perspective of one family member—ranged from complete restoration of a parent-child relationship, to a partial softening of the negativity and resistance toward the rejected parent, to a reversal of parent preference, to no change or even a consolidation of the youngster's negativity. The 'success' of the interventions was associated with many factors, including early intervention; the capacity of parents to communicate about their offspring; younger age of child; absence of reactive or retaliative abuse, neglect, or abandonment by either parent; court orders that protect the child's right of access to the nonpreferred parent; and the opportunity for the alienated child to live away from his or her alienating parent(s) (Gardner, 2001; Johnston et al., 2005c; Kumar, 2003; Racusin, Copans, & Mills, 1994; Warshak, 2010). While these findings might suggest that in severe cases court-ordered reversal of custody can be an effective response, often requiring a suspension of contact with the alienating parent, there are a number of reasons for viewing this research as preliminary and requiring confirmation with further studies. Almost all of these studies employed the weakest research design (i.e., a post-treatment evaluation of different interventions designed by the researcher-clinician). Only one study used a comparison group (Toren et al., 2013), and none used standardized measures of outcomes. In six of the seven studies the sample size of independent subjects was small, and the cases were mostly derived from the researcher-clinician's own caseload. Further, there were no systematic controls for many other variables that might have affected outcome (e.g., child's contact with each parent, custody arrangement, maturation, etc.).

Professional Views

Finally, a set of seven studies surveyed mental health and/or legal professionals to ascertain their opinion about a range of issues, including their knowledge of parental alienation, its

prevalence in their caseloads, the importance of assessing for it in custody evaluations, and their opinions as to its admissibility in court during expert testimony (Baker, 2007; Bow, Gould, & Flens, 2009; Cox, 2010, Morrison, 2006; Rueda, 2003, 2004; Spruijt et al., 2005; Viljoen & van Rensburg, 2014). The findings were remarkably concordant across studies and in general agreement with the overall conclusions reached in our literature review as to the status of the empirical research on the subject of alienation.

(p. 422) As a group, professionals in the family justice field considered themselves moderately to extremely knowledgeable about alienation and endorsed the importance of assessing for it in custody and visitation cases. Estimated prevalence ranged broadly depending upon the composition of their practice caseloads. Overall, respondents recognized the lack of sound research to support the concept, although they acknowledged the existence of alienation dynamics within the child custody field generally and in their caseloads specifically. Almost all viewed parental alienation as a multidimensional construct.

In some studies there was no consensus, and in other studies the majority did not endorse parental alienation as a *syndrome* meeting either the *Frye* or *Daubert* standards for admission as a “diagnosis” by an expert witness in an American court. Where the question was asked, there were divided views about having parental alienation included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition (*DSM-5*), and ultimately the concept was not included. However, it would appear most professionals believe expert testimony about children’s resistance to contact with a parent can assist family courts in making decisions.

Summary and Implications

At this stage of the empirical research, it is apparent that PABs are characteristics often associated with high-conflict separations and postdivorce parental disputes. Parental alienation is not a diagnostic syndrome at this time but rather a cluster of commonly recognized symptoms; there is little empirically validated evidence about cause, prognosis, or treatment. The present research findings suggest there are many factors contributing to the problem, including higher levels of interparental conflict, age of children, personality predispositions of family members, parenting and parent-child relationship patterns, sibling attitudes, living arrangements, and ongoing custody litigation. For this reason, alienation should be viewed as a family relational problem, not an individual pathology of one parent or child. This does not mean both parents are always equally responsible: There are cases where one parent may have primary responsibility for “alienating” a child from the other parent. The complexity of these situations places the onus on custody evaluators to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the multiple factors impeding or facilitating parent-child contact problems, before prematurely determining responsibility rests specifically with one parent’s individual pathology or misconduct.

Parental alienation allegations may be exacerbated in the adversarial legal system. A finding of parental alienation by a court may appear to offer simple, clear-cut answers as to which parent is “right” and which parent is “wrong” in cases where the reality may be more complex. Parental blaming, mistrust, and polarization may be increased, and capacity for (co) parenting can be undermined in this context, so that a diagnosis of parental alienation can have the potential of doing more harm than good. Rather than make a simple diagnosis of parental alienation—with its potential for simplification of issues or misuse in custody litigation—clinicians should

consider using detailed behavioral descriptions of the parents' and child's behavior in the context of the family, together with a thorough assessment of all factors that appear to be contributing to the child's negative beliefs and behaviors vis-à-vis the other parent. When a child is reluctant or refuses contact with one parent, PAB is one important factor among many to consider; while (p. 423) it is important to identify and address PAB, it should not be the sole focal point of attention and censure. Moreover, interventions need to address the child's overall adjustment and best interests considering the dynamics of the particular child and the family situation. To move away from the counterproductive blame and polarization, the focus of any educational, clinical, or legal intervention, or combination of these, needs to be the best interests of the child, irrespective of the nature and severity of the contact problem, be it alienation, justified rejection, or a case with elements of both. For example, it may not be in the best interest of an alienated child to have contact with the rejected parent, while it may be in the child's best interest to have contact with a parent he or she is resisting or rejecting for justified reasons.

The following are considerations and cautions when applying the empirical evidence on alienation to cases involved in child custody disputes:

- *State of the evidence:* The extant body of empirical research on parental alienation comprising 58 studies was reviewed and assessed by conventional standards of quality to draw empirically supported general conclusions. As a group, the empirical studies were found to be methodologically weak, with limited ability to generalize the results of any one study. The clinician should be wary of the numerous knowledge claims in this field and realize the strongly supported empirical findings are relatively few. However, these conclusions are likely to change as new and better-quality research becomes available.
- *Prevalence:* To date, there are no defensible estimates of the prevalence of parental alienation. The problem can occur regardless of age and gender of parent and child in all family structures. However, adolescents are likely to be more entrenched in their stance, and fathers are more likely than mothers for a variety of reasons to suffer the rejection of their children in custody-litigating families.
- *Diagnosis/assessment:* There is remarkable agreement about the behavioral strategies parents can use to potentially manipulate their children's feelings, attitudes, and beliefs in ways that may interfere with their relationship with the other parent. The cluster of symptoms or behaviors indicating the presence of alienation in the child can also be reliably identified.
- *Measurement:* There have been growing efforts to develop assessment tools for parental alienation, but further research is needed to produce tools with adequate psychometric properties.
- *Differentiation:* There is a virtual absence of empirical studies on the differential diagnosis of alienation in children from other conditions that share similar features with parental alienation, especially realistic estrangement or justified rejection in response to parental abuse/neglect, significantly compromised parenting or the child being a witness to intimate partner violence.

- *Description:* Whereas a consistent psychological profile of a parent who engages in PAB is beginning to emerge, there are mixed or inconsistent findings about the psychological functioning of alienated children and the nonpreferred or rejected parent.
- *Etiology:* Multiple factors (including PAB) are associated with children's alienated stance. Clearly, PAB by a parent may be a contributing factor; (p. 424) however, it is not uncommon for both parents in high-conflict cases to engage in PAB. In addition, both parents may have problematic parenting practices that contribute to the problem—with intrusive or protective parenting practices by the preferred parent and lack of warm involvement or punitive (re)actions by the nonpreferred parent. Children are differentially affected, depending upon their age, birth order, social-cognitive capacity, and socioemotional functioning.
- *Prognosis:* Although a range of profoundly negative long-term consequences of parental alienation have been asserted, empirical findings about the nature and extent of those effects have been mixed and unreliable. The problem with all but one of the studies of long-term effects is they have used retrospective reports that are unable to ensure the independent variables precede the dependent variables in time. None of the studies have systematically controlled for extraneous variables or ruled out alternative explanatory factors for any observed long-term effects.
- *Treatment/intervention:* The development and evaluation of interventions (both legal and psychological) are in their formative stages; outcomes are inconclusive or unreliable at this time due mainly to very weak evaluation methodology.
- *Professional views:* Surveys of mental health and legal professionals indicate as a group they consider themselves knowledgeable about parental alienation and its clinical manifestations, consider it important to assess in custody matters, and are aware of its limited empirical research basis. The majority of professionals do not consider parental alienation as meeting the *Frye* or *Daubert* standards for admission of expert testimony as a "syndrome."
- *Implications for custody evaluations:* Parental alienation is not a diagnostic syndrome at this time, but rather a cluster of commonly recognized symptoms; there is insufficient empirically validated evidence about etiology, prognosis, and treatment. For this reason and because of the complexity of these situations, the onus is on custody evaluators to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the various factors impeding or facilitating parent-child contact problems.
- *Implications for intervention:* Court orders for a transfer of parenting time arrangements (custody and visitation,⁹ and mandates for psychological treatment should (1) be based upon the needs of the individual child within his or her particular family situation; (2) address the factors that appear to be maintaining the child's reluctance or refusal to contact; (3) be premised on ensuring that any therapeutic interventions specifically address issues of alienation and rejection of a parent; and (4) ensure a timely follow-up to review progress and determine the direction and need for further intervention.

The nature of the therapy will vary depending on the assessment of the multiple factors and the nature and severity of the parent-child contact problem (Fidler, Bala, & Saini, 2013). A range of different educational, therapeutic, and structural interventions are proposed and piloted, such

as early preventive education or counseling, parent-child reunification, multiday interventions, and family therapy (see Baker & Sauber, 2013 and Fidler et al., 2013 for summaries).

(p. 425) To date, there is insufficient research evidence as to what works best for which cases, though it is apparent that mental health and judicial interventions need to address issues of alienation. In the absence of these data, individually crafted interventions (including but not limited to court orders for the child's monitored or facilitated contact with the rejected parent, transfer of custody from an obdurate alienating parent, referrals for multifaceted psychoeducational family therapy involving family in various combinations) need to be based on a thorough assessment of the multiple factors maintaining the problem. Timely follow-ups on progress by a neutral, informed authoritative agent should guide the continuation and direction of the treatment. It is also appropriate for the court to order cessation of such interventions and reunification efforts that are consistently assessed to be futile, distressing, and harmful to the well-being of the child.

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Notes:

1. Electronic databases included PsychInfo, Medline, Sociological Abstracts, Social Science Abstracts, ERIC, and Social Work Abstracts. Additionally, we searched the Cochrane Collaboration and the Campbell Collaboration and Scholars Portal. Authors of studies included in the original chapter were contacted and requested to provide any additional citations of empirical evidence published since the last edition.
2. Atkins et al. (1994). GRADE is one of several guidelines for systematically retrieving, screening, appraising, and reporting the results of various methodologies. For example, the Campbell Collaboration and the Cochrane Collaboration, internationally recognized organizations, have developed methods for systematically reviewing evidence found in the existing literature to answer particular questions related to social welfare, health, education and criminology, and so on.
3. Rather than suggesting social science evidence should be binding or necessarily persuasive to any particular case or social policy, we argue the focus needs to be on the transparency of research designs and its limitations in making inferences to better explore the relative merits of the evidence and the connections to contextual factors within similar cases and policies. In this quest, social science should be a guidepost for decision making, not the crutch for supporting a decision.
4. If parental alienation is conceived to refer to a child who has been influenced to reject one parent, in extreme cases “brainwashed” or indoctrinated by an embittered/malicious other parent, hypotheses about the causes and correlates of parental alienation are unable to be falsified if only self-identified victims of parental alienation are recruited to the study. In these studies, hypotheses about causes, correlates, predictors, and outcomes of parental alienation cannot be tested because there are no comparisons with nonvictims.
5. A failure to find significant differences in children alienated from their mothers compared to those alienated from their fathers cannot be interpreted as evidence of no difference. Alternative explanations might include other factors, like age, gender of child, or custody arrangement, which may have influenced these differences.
6. A broadened concept of alienation might involve defining children who express private preferences for one parent as alienated together with those who resist/refuse contact with the other parent. A mutated concept of alienation might occur when studies of (p. 426) alienating behaviors by a mother are lumped together with those of maternal gatekeeping and intrusive parenting tactics.
7. Bias and error in findings will occur if studies include subjects of different age groups and sibling groups (young adults versus adolescents versus younger children) but do not examine the contribution of age or sibling position to explaining alienation.
8. Note the definition of spontaneous reunification is not always clear across studies. Some of these youth or young adults who attempted reunifications had earlier unsuccessful clinical interventions or unenforced access orders.

9. In some cases the judicial response to severe alienation is to remove children from the care of the “alienating” parent and place the child in the custody of the rejected parent, accompanied by a temporary or permanent suspension of contact with the alienating parent, or supervised contact (Bala et al., 2010; Bala & Hunt, 2015). This legal remedy may be accompanied by a judicial suggestion or order allowing intervention with the rejected parent and child (e.g., Warshak, 2010), and in some cases subsequently including the alienating parent. Some studies conclude a court-ordered reversal of custody can be an effective last-resort remedy in severe cases. There are reasons, including weak research designs, for viewing this research as preliminary and requiring confirmation with further research. Further, even with intervention to support a transition of custody, there is a lack of evidence that this approach can be effective in establishing a good relationship with *both* parents. Equally, there is a lack of empirical support for choosing not to intervene, that is, leaving children with the favored parent in cases of severe parental alienation. Clearly, more and better empirical research is warranted to unravel these complex family situations. Until research is done, family justice professionals and the courts face great challenges in determining how to respond to cases where a child is rejecting a parent: Often there is not a clear “harm minimization” approach.

