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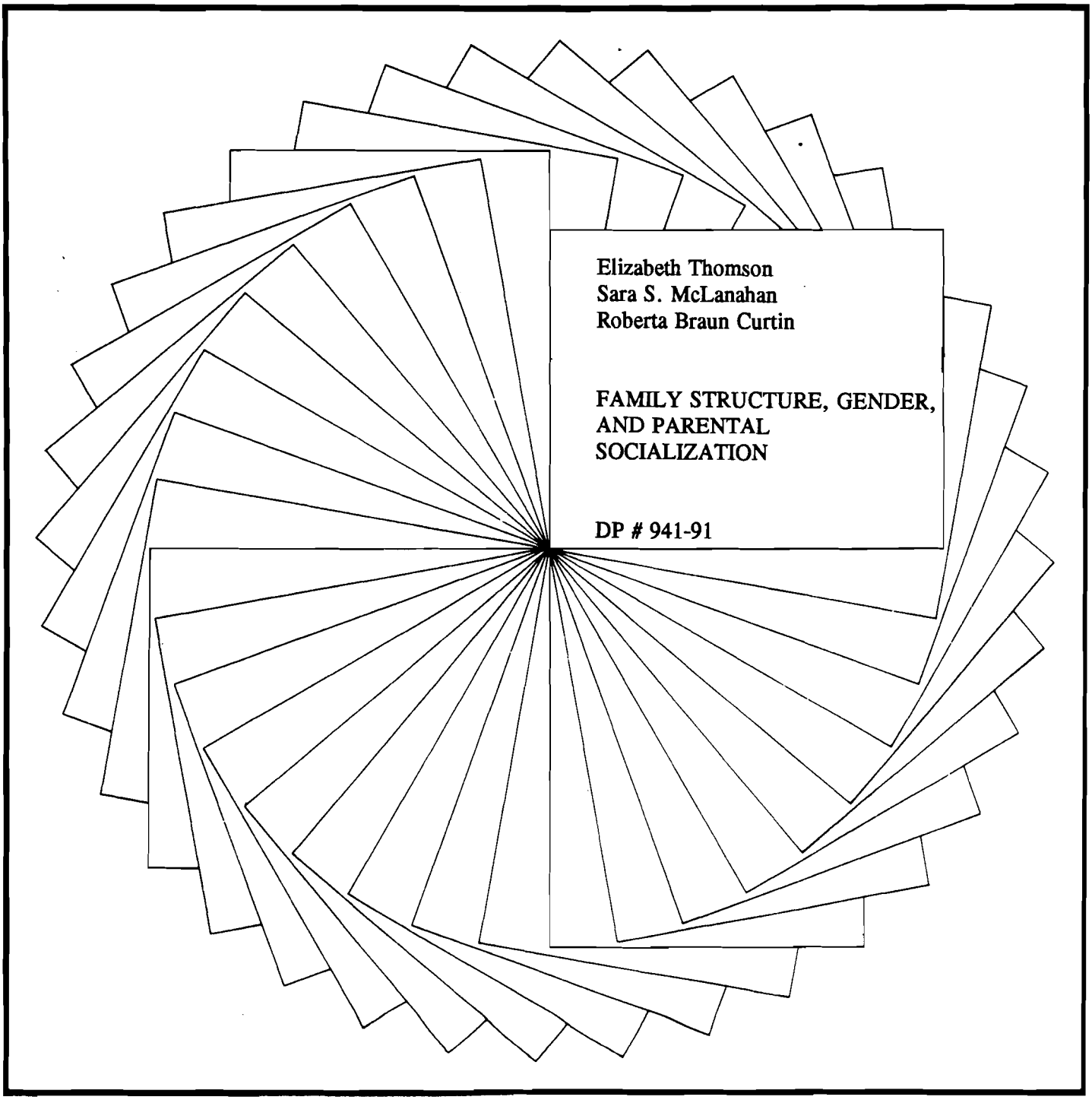

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FAMILY STRUCTURE, GENDER, AND PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION

DP # 941-91

Institute for Research on Poverty
Discussion Paper no. 941-91

Family Structure, Gender, and Parental Socialization

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April 1991

Some preliminary analyses were reported at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, California, August 9-13, 1989. This research was supported by grant HD26122 from the Center for Population Research (CPR), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHHD). The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) was funded by CPR-NICHHD grant HD21009. The NSFH was designed and carried out at the Center for Demography and Ecology (CDE), University of Wisconsin-Madison, under the direction of Larry Bumpass and James Sweet. The CDE receives core support for population research through grant HD05876 from the CPR-NICHHD. Fieldwork was conducted by the Institute for Survey Research, Temple University. We thank Li Min for her able research assistance.

ABSTRACT

Data from the National Survey of Families and Households demonstrate that parental behavior varies to a limited extent by family structure and to a large extent by gender. Mothers, whether married, single, or remarried, spend more time with children and are more responsive to child behavior than are fathers. Single parents spend more time with children than do married parents, while both are equally responsive to children. It is primarily stepparents, both stepmothers and stepfathers, who report a significantly lower frequency of activities with and a fewer number of positive responses to their children. We note, however, that single parents do not spend twice as much time with their children as do married parents; therefore, from a child's point of view, there are significant differences between parental time in one- and two-parent families.

We also observe important interactions between the effects of family structure and a parent's sex: male or female primary parents spend more time with children than do "secondary parents." Therefore, the most egalitarian childrearing arrangements, in terms of the discrepancy between the amount of time a husband and wife spend with their children, are likely to be found in father-stepmother families, the least egalitarian in mother-stepfather families. We do not, however, find any significant effects of family structure on negative responses to children or on parental control or demands.

FAMILY STRUCTURE, GENDER, AND PARENTAL SOCIALIZATION

Children from disrupted and never-married families appear to be disadvantaged in comparison with children raised by their original parents.[1] Differences are observed across a wide range of child outcomes, including educational attainment, future marital and family formation, and delinquency. (For recent reviews of this research, see McLanahan and Booth 1989; Emery 1988; Chase-Lansdale and Hetherington 1989; Demo and Acock 1988.)

Whereas differences in income were once thought to account for differences in child outcomes across family structures, recent research suggests that income accounts for at best only half of the difference between mother-only and original-two-parent families (McLanahan and Booth 1989). Furthermore, children in stepfamilies, which have higher incomes than mother-only families, also experience poorer outcomes than children raised by their original parents (Hetherington and Camara 1988; Peterson and Zill 1986). These findings have forced researchers over the past decade to look at other factors, such as neighborhood quality and attachment, social support from friends and extended kin, and parental socialization, that are associated with family structure and child well-being.

The analyses reported herein are part of a larger project to investigate socialization explanations for the effects of divorce and family structure on children.[2] This paper focuses on whether and how original-two-parent families, single-parent families, and stepparent families differ in parents' socialization practices. We use new data from the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) to go beyond, in several respects, previous studies of family structure and socialization. Most important, we investigate the interaction of gender and family structure effects, measuring the extent to which differences in single-parent and stepparent families are due to single parents being predominantly mothers and stepparents being predominantly fathers. The NSFH data

include as broad a coverage of parental behaviors as any other recent survey with a national sample, but for a wider age-range of children.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Studies of family structure and child socialization suggest that original-two-parent families are more likely than single-parent or stepparent families to meet the combined criteria for "good" childrearing or what Baumrind (1966) terms "authoritative" parenting: warmth and communication, high demands, and firm control (Maccoby and Martin 1983). Parent-child relationships appear to be less warm and communicative in stepparent families than in original or single-mother families (Amato 1987; Clingempeel et al. 1984; Furstenberg and Nord 1985; Peek et al. 1988; White et al. 1985).[3] Single and married mothers report the same educational aspirations for their children (McLanahan et al. 1990), but single mothers report more permissive standards for obedience and dating or sexual behavior (Furstenberg and Nord 1985; Morgan et al. 1979; Thornton and Camburn 1987). Single mothers seem to encourage greater autonomy and responsibility in children (Amato 1987; DeVall 1986; Furstenberg and Nord 1985; Weiss 1979), but perhaps without sufficient supervision and control (Amato 1987; Dornbusch et al. 1985; Furstenberg and Nord 1985; Hetherington et al. 1982; Hogan and Kitagawa 1985; Matsueda and Heimer 1987; McLanahan et al. 1990; Santrock et al. 1982). A few studies have shown that stepparents have less influence on their children's decisions than do original parents or biological relatives such as grandmothers (Kellam et al. 1977; Steinberg 1987).

Most of these findings are based on small, nonrepresentative samples; however, at least two other studies, based on national surveys, report reasonably similar findings. Using the 1976 National

Survey of Children, Furstenberg and Nord (1985) found that children raised by their original mother and father spent more time with their parents and were more likely to have rules for watching television and dating than were children in single-parent families who, on the other hand, had more responsibilities. Children in stepparent families fell somewhere in between on both dimensions, but were less likely than children in single-parent and original families to influence childrearing decisions. And recent analyses of the 1980 High School and Beyond Survey find that adolescents in mother-only families report less parental help with homework and curriculum planning than do adolescents in original-two-parent families (McLanahan et al. 1990). (See also Amato 1987; Peek et al. 1988.)

Almost all of this previous research, and all of the research with nationally representative samples, confounds potential effects of gendered parental behavior with family structure effects. Single-parent families are primarily single-mother families, while stepparent families are primarily mother-stepfather families. Studies of two-parent families find that mothers are more nurturant than fathers and are more likely to behave the same toward boys and girls (Clarke-Stewart 1978; Gilbert et al. 1982; Lamb et al. 1982; McGillicuddy-de Lisi 1988; Maccoby and Martin 1983; but see Russell and Russell 1987). Gecas (1974) reports that mothers are more likely to use verbal reasoning, fathers, physical punishment, in disciplining children. Risman (1987), however, argues that such differences depend on the microstructural organization of parental roles into primary and secondary parents. She found that primary or shared childrearing responsibilities mediated the effect of a parent's sex on parent-child affection and intimacy. Santrock and his colleagues (1982) reported that single fathers exercise more control over children than do single mothers, but found no differences overall in patterns of "authoritative" parental behavior.

The analyses reported below provide new information on family structure and parental socialization. They are based on the National Survey of Families and Households, which has sufficient cases to include for the first time a nationally representative sample of single fathers and

stepmothers. The survey covers parents with children aged 18 and under and includes data on three dimensions of parental behavior: activities with children, positive and negative responses, and parental demands and control.

SAMPLE AND MEASURES

The National Survey of Families and Households was conducted with a representative sample of adults living in the continental United States. The survey oversampled blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, single-parent families, families with stepchildren, cohabiting couples, and recently married couples (Sweet et al. 1988). The total number of primary respondents was 13,017.

Respondents whose own or whose spouse's/partner's children were under 19 and living in the household completed a self-enumerated questionnaire evaluating their general childrearing practices. In each family, one "focal child" was randomly selected, and parents reported the amount of supervision given to and the control exercised over that child. We excluded cohabitants from our analysis because there were too few of them to differentiate those who had only shared biological or adopted children from those who had "step" children. We also excluded parents whose children were all under the age of five, since those parents were asked fewer and substantially different questions about their behavior toward their "children." (Almost all of the parents excluded on the basis of their children's ages were in intact marriages.)

Parental Socialization

We investigated three sets of parental socialization behaviors: activities with children, positive and negative responses to children, and parental control/demands. The first two correspond

to Baumrind's "warmth and communication" dimension, while parental control/demands corresponds to "high demands" and "firm control."

Parental Activities. Three measures of parental activities were constructed:[4]

1. Total number of breakfasts and dinners parent shared last week with "at least one of the children."

2. How often parents spent "time with the children . . . at home working on a project or playing together? . . . helping with reading or homework? . . . having private talks? The original response scale (1 = "never," "rarely" . . . 6 = "almost every day") was converted into a weekly metric (e.g., "once a month" = .25), and the three responses were summed.[5]

3. How often parents spent "time with the children in leisure activities away from home (picnics, movies, sports, etc.)?" These responses were also converted into a weekly metric, to ease comparisons with home activities.

Parental Responsiveness. In the self-enumerated questionnaire, parents were presented with the following statement and request: "Listed below are several ways that parents behave with their children. Please indicate how often you do each . . . praise child, hug child, yell at child, spank or slap child." Response options were "never," "seldom," "sometimes," and "very often," coded from 1 to 4 respectively. We constructed separate measures first for positive and then for negative responses by averaging scores for praise and hug, yell and spank. (Averages [rather than sums] preserve the meaning of the original metric, since there are no absolute frequency counts into which these responses can be converted.)

Control/Demands. Questions about rules for children indicate both the amount of control exerted and the number of demands made by parents. We developed four measures of the control/demands dimension, some more directly related to control, others to demands:

1. Unsupervised time at home. Parents were asked if the focal child was "allowed to be at home alone . . . in the morning before school . . . in the afternoon after school . . . during the day when school was not in session . . . in the evening . . . overnight?" Except for the first two (before and after school), these items approximated a Guttman scale; we therefore assigned the highest possible value in the sequence below. For example, if a child was allowed to be at home alone in the evening, the parent received a score of 3, whether or not the child was allowed to be alone at home after school or all day.

0 = not allowed to be alone at home
1 = allowed alone at home before or after school
2 = allowed to be alone at home all day
3 = allowed to be alone at home in the evening
4 = allowed to be alone at home overnight

2. Curfew time. For focal children aged 12 to 18, parents were asked, "By what time is (name of child) supposed to be home on school nights? . . . Friday and Saturday nights?" Responses to these items were scored as hours past noon (e.g., 13 = 1 a.m.) and averaged.

3. Chores. Parents were asked if the focal child had "regular chores to do around the house" and, if so, whether the child was "required to complete chores before playing, watching television, or going out?" Responses were "no," "sometimes/it depends," and "yes." We analyzed a combined scale in which "no chores" was assigned a value of 0, and rules for completing chores were scored from 1 ("no") to 3 ("yes").

4. Television restrictions. Two questions were asked about restrictions on the focal child's television use: amount and type of programming. Responses were scored as follows and then averaged:

0 = Do not restrict
1 = Try to restrict, but not successful
2 = Restrict

Descriptive statistics for all measures of parental socialization are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Parental Socialization Behaviors

	Mothers			Fathers			Mothers and Fathers		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Valid Cases	Mean	Std. Dev.	Valid Cases	Mean	Std. Dev.	Valid Cases
Parental activities with children									
Meals with children per week	9.4	3.9	2110	8.0	3.7	1005	8.8	3.9	3115
Home activities with children per week	8.7	5.4	2202	5.6	4.4	1057	7.3	5.2	3259
Outings with children per week	3.6	1.4	2276	3.4	1.4	1086	3.5	1.4	3362
Parental responses toward children's behavior									
Positive responses[a] (hug, praise)	3.7	0.4	2261	3.4	0.6	1081	3.6	0.5	3342
Negative responses (yell, spank)	2.3	0.6	2265	2.2	0.6	1178	2.2	0.6	3343
Parental control/demands for focal child									
Allow focal child home alone[b]	1.8	1.6	2321	1.7	1.6	1115	1.8	1.6	3436
Curfew hours[c]	9.2	2.0	1115	9.2	2.0	517	9.2	2.0	1632
Rules for completing chores[d]	2.0	1.2	2375	1.9	1.2	1145	1.9	1.2	3520
T.V. restrictions[e]	2.1	0.8	2375	2.0	0.8	1141	2.1	0.8	3557

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-1988.

Notes: Sample includes respondents with own or spouse's child living in the household and excludes cohabiting parents. Means and standard deviations based on weighted data, valid cases on unweighted data.

[a] Frequency of positive and negative responses were valued as follows: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (sometimes), and 4 (very often), with average scores for two behaviors.

[b] Responses valued as follows: 0 (never allowed alone), 1 (allowed alone before or after school), 2 (allowed alone all day), 3 (allowed alone in evening), and 4 (allowed alone overnight).

[c] Responses scored as hours past noon (e.g., 1 a.m. = 13).

[d] Responses valued as follows: 0 (no chores), 1 (no rules for completing chores), 2 (rules, but not required to complete before play), and 3 (require completion before play).

[e] Responses valued as follows: 1 (do not restrict), 2 (try to restrict, but not successful), and 3 (restrict).

Family Structure

Parents were classified in terms of their own and their spouse's relationship to children under 19 living in their household (i.e., the group of children with whom parents reported spending time and participating in activities with, and from which the focal child was randomly selected). Families were classified as either

original (all children born to or adopted by both parents);

mother-stepfather;

father-stepmother;

single mother; or

single father.

Various forms of "blended" families (both spouses have stepchildren under 19 in the household and may or may not have shared children) were excluded from the analysis (N = 48). Thus, only those respondents whose children were either all original or all stepchildren provided information about the socialization of their children. The maximum possible analytic sample size was 3,557.

The NSFH does not allow us to determine the exact relationship between parents and their children aged 19 or older living outside the household, so some "original" families may include older stepchildren. We do control in our analyses for the existence of older children living elsewhere and for the presence of older children in the household. We also include a dummy variable to indicate whether the respondent or spouse has a child under 19 from a previous marriage living with the other parent. Additional sibship characteristics included in models of behavior reported toward the children as a group are the age of the youngest child (under 5, 5 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, or 15 to 18); the number of children under 19 in the household (one, two, or three or more); and the sex composition of that sibship (all boys, boys and girls, or all girls). For models of control/demands, the sex and

age of the focal child were substituted for the sibship's age and sex composition. Descriptive statistics for family structure and sibship characteristics are reported in Table 2.

We also controlled in our models for the presence in the household of adult relatives who might substitute for parental time and compensate for the decreased frequency of parental activities, or who might have positive effects on parental responsiveness and control by providing social and emotional support. And, of course, we controlled for known differences by race/ethnicity and education in parental socialization (e.g., Bartz and Levine 1978; Durrett et al. 1975; Gecas 1974; Hess 1970; Zill and Peterson 1982). Since we found no clear pattern of interactions between the effects of family structure and race/ethnicity on parental behavior, we estimated models for all race/ethnic groups combined.

ANALYSES AND RESULTS

All models were estimated with ordinary least squares regressions. Statistically significant interactions were found between the effects of a respondent's sex and family structure on parental activities and responses. We had, of course, expected such interactions on the basis of gender versus primary parent effects, and we therefore reported separate analyses of mothering and fathering behaviors. Reports of parental control and demands supposedly measure a single set of rules in two-parent families and should therefore be distributed similarly, whether the NSFH respondent is the mother or the father. We did find, however, that a parent's sex and a child's age or sex interacted in affecting parent demands and control. The interactions may result from either different perceptions of mothers and fathers or different experiences in enforcement. We therefore present separate models of parental demands and control from mothers' and from fathers' points of view.

Table 2

Family and Household Composition, Socioeconomic Characteristics, 1987-1988 National Survey of Families and Households

	Mothers (N = 2402)	Fathers (N = 1155)	Mothers and Fathers (N = 3557)
Family structure			
Intact marriage	66.1%	83.5%	73.6%
Remarried parent	9.2	2.0	6.1
Stepparent	1.7	10.6	5.6
Single parent	22.9	3.9	14.7
Household composition			
Number of children under 19 in household			
One	35.8	34.6	35.3
Two	38.5	42.8	40.4
Three or more	25.7	22.6	24.3
Number of children under 19 living with other parent			
None	91.5	89.5	90.6
One or more	8.5	10.5	9.4
Children 19 and older			
None	70.4	68.7	69.7
Elsewhere only	15.1	15.3	15.2
In household	14.5	16.1	15.2
Age of youngest child in household			
Under 5	15.9	15.1	15.5
5 to 8	29.0	30.7	29.7
9 to 11	16.7	16.7	16.7
12 to 14	15.8	14.2	15.1
15 to 18	22.6	23.3	23.0
Age of oldest child under 19 in household			
5 to 8	18.1	19.2	18.6
9 to 11	16.0	17.0	16.4
12 to 14	20.5	18.0	19.4
15 to 18	45.5	46.2	45.8
Age of focal child			
5 to 8	28.2	31.0	29.4
9 to 11	18.2	18.1	18.1
12 to 14	21.4	19.2	20.5
15 to 18	32.2	31.7	32.0

(table continues)

Table 2, continued

	Mothers (N = 2402)	Fathers (N = 1155)	Mothers and Fathers (N = 3557)
Adult relatives living in household			
No	95.2	94.4	94.8
Yes	4.8	5.6	5.2
Sibship sex composition			
All boys	31.7	29.9	30.9
Boys and girls	38.5	39.4	38.9
All girls	29.7	30.7	30.1
Valid cases	(2369)	(1139)	(3508)
Sex of focal child			
Male	51.5	49.4	50.6
Female	48.5	50.6	49.4
Valid cases	(2376)	(1141)	(3517)
Socioeconomic characteristics			
Race/ethnicity			
Black	14.3	10.0	12.4
White	74.5	80.3	77.0
Mexican American	5.9	6.0	5.9
Other	5.3	3.7	4.7
Valid cases	(2391)	(1154)	(3545)
Educational level			
Less than high school	17.1	14.8	16.1
High school graduate	44.7	35.6	40.8
Some postsecondary	22.8	22.7	22.8
College graduate	15.4	26.8	20.3
Valid cases	(2402)	(1149)	(3551)

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-1988.

Notes: Sample includes respondents with own or spouse's child aged 5 to 18 living in the household. Cohabiting parents were excluded. Frequency distributions based on weighted data, valid cases on unweighted data (number noted only for variables with some nonresponses).

Before turning to these results, we first note that the most striking difference in parental socialization was between the behavior of mothers and fathers, rather than between parents in different family types. (These analyses are not presented, but differences are evident in the tables of family structure effects for mothers' and fathers' behavior.) Not surprisingly, mothers reported a higher frequency of both activities with and positive and negative responses to children than fathers reported. Gender effects were quite a bit larger than those of family structure, reported below. We did not find major mean differences between mothers' and fathers' reports of parental demands/control, a finding consistent with the view that this dimension of parental socialization is not an individual but a family phenomenon.

We estimated both total and direct effects of family structure, realizing that some of our "control" variables might have been exogenous to or at least contemporaneous with family structure. In almost every case, differences across families did not change when controls were introduced for either child characteristics, adult relatives in the household, race/ethnicity, or education.[6] We therefore present estimates of parental socialization only from the full reduced-form equations.

Table 3 presents means for mothers' and fathers' meals, home activities, and outings with children by family structure, adjusted for the effects of all other variables in the model.
As shown in the top row, mothers on average have breakfast or dinner with children more than nine times each week, fathers about eight times. Stepmothers share meals with their children least often, mothers in original families most often, and single and remarried mothers in between. Among men, however, remarried fathers most often share meals with their children, stepfathers and single fathers least often, and original-family fathers in between.

For mothers, home activities are almost as frequent as meals (8-9 times a week), for fathers, quite a bit less (5-6). Mothers report only slightly more frequent outings with children than do fathers (every other day, on average). Stepparents participate in activities with their children least

Table 3

Weekly Parental Activities with Children, by Family Structure

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Meals	Home Activities	Outings	Meals	Home Activities	Outings
Grand mean	9.4	8.6	1.7	8.1	5.6	1.4
Family structure						
Original	9.7*	8.6*	1.8	8.2*	5.6*	1.4
Remarried parent	8.4	8.8	1.6	9.4	7.2	1.6
Stepparent	8.0	5.9	1.3	6.9	4.7	1.2
Single parent	8.8	8.9	1.6	7.5	7.5	1.8
Household composition						
Number of children under 19 in household						
One	8.8*	9.0	1.7	8.1*	6.3*	1.6
Two	9.7	8.7	1.7	7.7	5.4	1.4
Three or more	9.7	8.0	1.7	8.6	4.9	1.2
Number of children under 19 living with other parent						
None	9.4	8.7	1.7	8.0	5.6	1.4*
One or more	9.0	7.8	1.6	8.3	5.3	1.2
Children 19 and older						
None	9.2*	8.6	1.8*	8.0	5.5	1.4
Elsewhere only	9.3	8.8	1.4	8.4	5.6	1.5
In household	10.0	8.7	1.4	8.2	5.8	1.1
Age of youngest child in household						
Under 5	10.8*	10.6*	1.7*	8.7	7.5*	1.7*
5 to 8	9.9	10.3	1.9	8.4	6.7	1.6
9 to 11	9.7	9.7	1.9	8.3	6.3	1.5
12 to 14	8.9	7.9	1.8	7.8	4.9	1.4
15 to 18	7.6	4.8	1.3	7.2	2.7	0.8
Age of oldest child under 19 in household						
5 to 8	9.8*	9.7*	1.8	8.7	6.6*	1.3
9 to 11	9.7	8.8	1.9	8.2	5.6	1.5
12 to 14	9.2	8.0	1.7	8.2	5.5	1.3
15 to 18	9.1	8.4	1.6	7.7	5.2	1.4
Sibship sex composition						
All boys	9.5	8.6	1.8	8.4*	6.0*	1.5
Boys and girls	9.3	8.6	1.7	8.3	5.6	1.4
All girls	9.3	8.7	1.6	7.4	5.2	1.3
Adult relatives living in household						
No	9.4	8.7	1.7	8.1	5.6	1.4
Yes	9.2	8.2	1.7	8.3	5.6	1.5

(table continues)

Table 3, continued

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Meals	Home Activities	Outings	Meals	Home Activities	Outings
Socioeconomic characteristics						
Race/ethnicity						
Black	8.7*	8.7	1.7	7.3*	6.1	1.7*
White	9.4	8.7	1.7	8.0	5.5	1.4
Mexican American	10.0	8.5	1.8	9.8	5.7	1.6
Other	9.6	8.4	1.9	8.8	5.2	1.0
Educational level						
Less than high school	9.8	8.0*	1.8	7.5*	5.1*	1.2
High school graduate	9.3	8.5	1.8	7.9	5.2	1.4
Some postsecondary	9.3	8.5	1.6	8.2	5.8	1.4
College graduate	9.3	9.5	1.7	8.5	6.2	1.5
Valid cases	(2070)	(2160)	(2233)	(988)	(1039)	(1068)

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-1988.

Notes: Sample includes respondents with own or spouse's child aged 5 to 18 living in the household. Cohabiting parents were excluded. Means adjusted for effects of all variables in the model. Analyses based on weighted data, valid cases on unweighted data.

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

frequently. Original-family fathers engage in activities with their children less frequently than do remarried or single fathers, but more frequently than do stepfathers. We observe a similar pattern for family outings, but these differences are not statistically significant, perhaps due to larger error variance in the single indicator than in our multiple-indicator measures of meals and home activities.

Table 4 presents means for mothers' and fathers' positive and negative responses to children by family structure, again adjusted for the effects of other variables in the model. Parents reported a higher frequency of positive responses than negative responses (average responses may be interpreted as "often" versus "once in a while"). As mentioned above, mothers reported responding more frequently to their children than did fathers, presumably because they spent more time with them. For stepparents, the same low-frequency pattern observed for activities with children is observed for positive responses, but no differences by family structure in negative responses were found.

Table 5 reports parental controls and demands by family structure. The adjusted means show that, with one exception, parental control and demands do not vary by family structure. Only among fathers do there appear to be significant differences, with single fathers being more restrictive, fathers in original-two-parent families less restrictive, and fathers in stepparent families somewhere in between. Not only are the differences quite small, but they are in the opposite direction from differences hypothesized to explain the problems children have in single-father and/or stepparent families.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our analyses of variations in parental socialization reveal that gender influences parental behavior more than does family structure. Mothers, whether married, single, or remarried, spend more time with their children and are more responsive to child behavior than are fathers. This may

Table 4

Positive and Negative Parental Responses
to Children's Behavior, by Family Structure

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Hug/Praise	Spank/Yell	Hug/Praise	Spank/Yell
Grand mean	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.2
Family structure				
Original	3.7*	2.3	3.5*	2.2
Remarried parent	3.7	2.3	3.6	2.2
Stepparent	3.4	2.1	3.3	2.2
Single parent	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.3
Household composition				
Number of children under 19 in household				
One	3.7	2.2	3.6*	2.0*
Two	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.2
Three or more	3.7	2.3	3.3	2.3
Number of children under 19 living with other parent				
None	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
One or more	3.6	2.3	3.4	2.2
Children 19 and older				
None	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
Elsewhere only	3.7	2.2	3.5	2.1
In household	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.1
Age of youngest child in household				
Under 5	3.9*	2.6*	3.7*	2.3*
5 to 8	3.8	2.4	3.6	2.3
9 to 11	3.7	2.4	3.5	2.1
12 to 14	3.6	2.2	3.2	1.9
15 to 18	3.5	1.9	3.2	2.1
Age of oldest child under 19 in household				
5 to 8	3.7	2.4	3.5	2.2
9 to 11	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.2
12 to 14	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
15 to 18	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.1
Sibship sex composition				
All boys	3.7*	2.3	3.3*	2.2*
Boys and girls	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
All girls	3.8	2.3	3.5	2.1
Adult relatives living in household				
No	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
Yes	3.8	2.3	3.4	2.2
Socioeconomic characteristics				
Race/ethnicity				
Black	3.6*	2.4*	3.5	2.1*
White	3.7	2.3	3.5	2.2
Mexican American	3.6	2.0	3.4	2.0
Other	3.7	2.1	3.5	1.9

(table continues)

Table 4, continued

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Hug/Praise	Spank/Yell	Hug/Praise	Spank/Yell
Educational level				
Less than high school	3.6*	2.3*	3.3*	2.2*
High school graduate	3.7	2.3	3.4	2.2
Some postsecondary	3.7	2.2	3.5	2.2
College graduate	3.8	2.2	3.6	2.1
Valid cases	(2218)	(2222)	(1063)	(1061)

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-1988.

Notes: Sample includes respondents with own or spouse's child aged 5 to 18 living in the household. Cohabiting parents were excluded. Means adjusted for effects of all variables in the model. Analyses based on weighted data, valid cases on unweighted data. Frequency of positive and negative responses were valued as follows: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (sometimes), and 4 (very often), with average scores for two behaviors.

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Table 5

Parental Control and Demands for Focal Child, by Family Structure

	Mothers				Fathers			
	Allow Home Alone[a]	Set Curfew Hours[b]	Set Rules for Chores[c]	Restrict TV Viewing[d]	Allow Home Alone[a]	Set Curfew Hours[b]	Set Rules for Chores[c]	Restrict TV Viewing[d]
Grand mean	1.8	9.2	2.0	2.1	1.7	9.2	1.9	2.1
Family structure								
Original	1.8	9.3	2.0	2.1	1.7*	9.2	1.9	2.0
Remarried parent	1.8	9.1	2.1	2.1	1.9	8.9	1.9	2.1
Stepparent	1.8	10.1	2.3	2.0	1.8	9.6	1.9	2.1
Single parent	1.9	9.1	1.9	2.0	2.0	9.0	2.0	1.9
Household composition								
Number of children under 19 in household								
One	1.8	9.2	1.9*	2.0*	1.6	9.1	1.8	2.0*
Two	1.8	9.3	2.0	2.1	1.8	9.3	1.9	2.0
Three or more	1.8	9.1	2.1	2.2	1.8	9.2	1.9	2.1
Number of children under 19 living with other parent								
None	1.8	9.2	2.0	2.1	1.7	9.2	1.9	2.0
One or more	1.9	9.2	2.0	2.0	1.8	8.7	1.9	2.0
Children 19 and older								
None	1.8	9.2	2.0	2.1	1.7*	9.2	1.9	2.1
Elsewhere only	1.8	9.2	1.9	2.0	1.8	9.0	1.8	2.0
In household	1.9	9.3	2.0	2.0	1.9	9.3	1.8	2.0
Age of focal child								
5 to 8	0.2*	--	1.8*	2.5*	0.1*	--	1.8*	2.5*
9 to 11	0.9	--	2.2	2.4	0.8	--	2.1	2.4
12 to 14	2.1	8.1*	2.1	2.1	2.2	7.9*	2.0	2.0
15 to 18	3.4	9.9	1.9	1.6	3.4	9.9	1.7	1.5
Sex of focal child								
Male	1.9*	9.1*	2.0	2.1	1.9*	9.1	1.8*	2.0
Female	1.7	9.4	2.0	2.1	1.6	9.3	2.0	2.0
Adult relatives living in household								
No	1.8*	9.2	2.0	2.1*	1.7*	9.2*	1.9	2.0
Yes	1.5	9.5	1.9	1.9	1.9	8.3	1.6	2.0

(table continues)

Table 5, continued

	Mothers				Fathers			
	Allow Home Alone[a]	Set Curfew Hours[b]	Set Rules for Chores[c]	Restrict TV Viewing[d]	Allow Home Alone[a]	Set Curfew Hours[b]	Set Rules for Chores[c]	Restrict TV Viewing[d]
Socioeconomic characteristics								
Race/ethnicity								
Black	1.6*	9.1*	2.3*	2.2*	1.4*	8.8*	2.0*	2.2*
White	1.9	9.3	1.9	2.1	1.8	9.3	1.9	2.0
Mexican American	1.4	8.9	2.1	2.3	1.5	8.5	1.7	2.3
Other	1.6	8.4	2.1	2.2	1.9	8.1	1.6	2.0
Educational level								
Less than high school	1.6*	9.2	1.9	1.9*	1.5*	8.9	2.0*	2.0*
High school graduate	1.8	9.4	2.0	2.1	1.7	9.4	1.9	2.0
Some postsecondary	1.8	9.1	2.1	2.2	1.8	9.0	2.0	2.1
College graduate	1.9	9.0	2.0	2.2	1.8	9.2	1.6	2.1
Valid cases	(2281)	(1096)	(2335)	(2335)	(1096)	(504)	(1126)	(1122)

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, 1987-1988.

Notes: Sample includes respondents with own or spouse's child aged 5 to 18 living in the household. Cohabiting parents were excluded. Means adjusted for effects of all variables in the model. Analyses based on weighted data, valid cases on unweighted data.

[a] Responses valued as follows: 0 (never allowed home alone), 1 (allowed home alone before or after school), 2 (allowed home alone all day), 3 (allowed home alone in evening), and 4 (allowed home alone overnight).

[b] Responses scored as hours past noon (e.g., 1 a.m. = 13).

[c] Responses valued as follows: 0 (no chores), 1 (no rules for completing chores), 2 (rules, but not required to complete before play), and 3 (require completion before play).

[d] Responses valued as follows: 1 (do not restrict), 2 (try to restrict, but not successful), and 3 (restrict).

* Differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

not be at all surprising, but it provides an extremely important context for our understanding of the effects of family structure.

Still, family structure does have some important effects on parental socialization. We find that single parents spend more time with children than do married parents, while both are equally responsive to children. It is primarily stepparents, both stepmothers and stepfathers, who engage in activities with their children significantly less frequently and who respond positively to their children a fewer number of times. On the other hand, negative responses and parental control or demands do not vary significantly by family structure. In particular, we find no evidence of the "wicked" stepparent; perhaps stepparents are following experts' cautions about being too much of a disciplinarian.

Since control and demands might be viewed as a negative side of parenting, what we find then is that family structure is associated primarily with differences in positive parent-child interactions. Parental rules and punishments may be predominantly reactive to child development and/or initiation of behavioral problems, while activities and rewards are driven more by a parent's own interests and feelings. Thus, stepparents may spend a bit less time with and exhibit somewhat less responsiveness to their children because they are not as emotionally attached to them as original parents are attached to their children; on the other hand, stepparents and original parents may react in the same way to child-developing capabilities and/or potential behavioral problems.

We also observe important interactions between the effects of family structure and a parent's sex. For example, remarried fathers and single fathers spend more time with their children than do other fathers. This pattern is not found for mothers: single mothers are generally similar to mothers in intact marriages, and the stepmother difference is not so great as the stepfather difference. The result is that the most egalitarian parenting arrangements are likely to appear in remarried-father/ stepmother families, and the most traditional arrangements in either remarried-mother/stepfather

families or original families. In addition, the similarity between the behavior of single fathers and mothers toward their children is much greater than that between fathers and mothers in intact marriages. Our findings are therefore consistent with Risman's (1987) hypothesis that the microstructural conditions under which one raises children outweigh traditional gender roles in determining parental behavior; particularly among remarried residential fathers, we find a reversal of gendered parenting: fathers involve themselves with their children to a greater extent than mothers do.

Despite the fact that single parents spend as much or more time with their children than do married parents, on average they do not fully compensate for the absence of a second residential parent. Most of our analyses are based on measures with an interval-level metric; we can see from the adjusted means in Table 3 that single parents do not spend twice as much time with their children as do married parents. So, from a child's point of view, proportionately less parental time is devoted to parent-child activities in single parent families than in original or stepparent families. Because stepparents report a lower frequency of both activities with and positive responses toward children than do original parents, we can also infer that children in original-two-parent families will get a bit more time and attention than children in stepparent families. The differences might not be so great for father-stepmother families, owing to the high levels of involvement for this select group of fathers and the relatively small differences between stepmothers and original mothers.[7]

Our most surprising and perhaps most important finding is that parental demands and control do not differ across family structures. These findings differ from those reported by the National Survey of Children and the High School and Beyond Survey, both of which measured parental control and supervision from the child's point of view. Parents are certainly the best reporters of what they demand (want, expect) from children, while children might perceive more accurately the extent to which demands are enforced or control is exerted. A child's report of parental supervision and control may be a better indicator of enforcement, while a parent's report may be a better indicator of

goals and control attempts. On the other hand, these parental reports of supervision and control do vary with child characteristics, race, and education, as might be expected. It is not likely, therefore, that random measurement error accounts for the absence of the effects of family structure.

Overall, our results suggest no great gaps between the parental practices in single-parent and stepparent families as compared with those in original-two-parent families. This finding suggests that differences in postdivorce parenting behavior are not due to preexisting differences between those who do and do not divorce. Instead, the primary differences between single- and two-parent families seem to be a function of the two sets of hands and, figuratively speaking, the two hearts two-parent families have that enable them to spend more time with their children.

In closing, we note that parental control and demands are possibly implicated in child outcomes through an interaction with family structure. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) "socialization ecology" asserts that different parental behaviors may be required to achieve the same child outcomes in different circumstances. Baumrind (1972) suggests, for example, that members of minority groups may need to exercise more control over and make more demands on their children, as well as provide more warmth and affection, because of the hostile environment outside the family to which minority children seem frequently exposed (Boykin and Toms 1985; Hollidan 1985; Peters and Massey 1983; Sampson 1987). Children in single-parent and/or stepparent families may have more loosely organized kin and community networks than do children in original families, and therefore may require greater parental control (and warmth and affection) in order to mature as successfully. We will address these questions in future analyses.

Notes

1. We use the term "original" to refer to children born to or jointly adopted by the two parents with whom they live; later, the term "intact" is used to refer to the parents' marriage. Our usage presumes that a marriage can be "broken" and the parent-child relationship remain intact.

2. Socialization explanations are not, of course, a new idea. When "father absence" was first studied as a social problem, the disadvantages children had were attributed in large part to deficient parenting, stemming from either the absence of a male parent (as role model and disciplinarian) or the stress and disorganization of single motherhood. Such claims, however, were supported only by poorly designed, poorly implemented research (McLanahan 1985).

3. Immediately after a divorce, single mothers may be less nurturant and may communicate less well with their children, but these parenting problems do not last very long (Wallerstein and Kelly 1980).

4. Our decisions to sum or average indicators or to use single indicators were based on confirmatory factor analyses; conclusions about latent variables were the same, whether an ordinal or an interval measurement of indicators was assumed.

5. The full weekly metric is "never" (0), "once a month" (.25), "several times per month" (.75), "once a week" (1), "several times per week" (3), and "almost every day" (6). Models were also estimated for each indicator separately, using the original ordinal metric, with virtually identical results for effects of family structure. Schaeffer and Charng (1989) demonstrate that distributions for open-ended frequency responses are not significantly different from those for structured-response categories very similar to the categories used in the NSFH. This suggests that respondents attend to the content of these categories (in terms of days, weeks, months) rather than simply to their ordinal position.

6. For mothers, two differences were noted. The bivariate association between family structure and negative responses was statistically significant with the same pattern represented by adjusted means, with stepmothers reporting less frequent negative responses. Similarly, stepmothers reported significantly less restrictive television rules, but these differences disappeared when other variables were included in the model. Among fathers, only one difference was observed; the bivariate association between family structure and supervision ("allowed to be alone") was not statistically significant, apparently suppressed by other variables in the model.

7. Using matched reports from spouses, we were able to directly assess these effects for activities with children by summing scores for mothers and fathers in two-parent families and comparing them to scores for single parents. The results we infer in this discussion were generally supported. Owing to spouse nonresponse, that analysis was based on a substantially smaller sample than the analyses reported here; thus, estimates for the relatively unusual father-stepmother families may be less conclusive than are inferences from our matching of aggregate responses for remarried fathers and stepmothers.

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