First families, stepfamilies and stress: a comparative analysis

Alan Howard Zeppa
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First families, stepfamilies and stress: A comparative analysis

Zeppa, Alan Howard, Ph.D.

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First families, stepfamilies and stress:
A comparative analysis

by

Alan Howard Zeppa

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the past decade the two diverse topics of family stress and stepfamily development have received rapidly increasing amounts of theoretical attention in the family studies literature (McCubbin et al., 1980; Spanier & Furstenberg, 1987). Attempts to integrate the former with the latter, however, have been discouragingly few and far between (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1982). The main purpose of this project, therefore, is to compare and contrast the stress process of "first-marriage" families, with the stress process of remarried "second" families. Data from first families and stepfamilies will be analyzed in order to address a variety of research questions, among which the following are perhaps the most important:

Do stepfamilies experience more stressors and negative manifestations of stress than first families? Also, does the relationship between first family/stepfamily group membership and stressors and negative manifestations of stress change with the passage of time?

Questions such as these are increasingly significant ones in today's rapidly changing society. As recently as 1976 it was estimated that as few as 10% of all U.S. children under 18 lived in stepparent households (Nelson & Nelson, 1982); by 1980, that figure had conservatively risen to 16%
(Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985). Many have suggested that the stepfamily is likely to become the most prevalent family form of the future (Duberman, 1975; Visher & Visher, 1979); others have predicted that the stepfamily could be the predominant family form in the United States by as early as 1990 (Robinson, 1984).

In addition to their sheer numbers, stepfamilies have drawn increasing attention for a variety of other reasons. Overall, the redivorce rate is estimated to be between 6%-17% higher than for first marriages (Clingempeel, 1981; McGoldrick & Carter, 1980). Partly as a consequence of data like these, stepfamilies have been characterized as being especially vulnerable to disturbance and malfunctioning because of poorly defined stepparental roles (Fast & Cain, 1966). Others have argued that the higher divorce rates for second marriages were at least partly attributable to the "incomplete institutionalization" of remarriage in this country; solutions based upon first family norms were believed to be inappropriate in the resolution of problems specific to the stepfamily (Cherlin, 1978). Significantly, the presence of children from prior marriages has been demonstrated to increase the probability of divorce in remarriages (Clingempeel, 1981).

Despite a veritable explosion of visibility in the present decade after years of slow but steady growth fueled
by the accelerating divorce rates in the 1960s and 1970s, research interest in "blended families" continues to lag behind the demographic growth rates of this increasingly common family form (Lagoni & Cook, 1985). Little is known, for example, about the factors which contribute to stepfamily strengths and survival.

Quite obviously, not all stepfamilies are alike. Indeed, there are a tremendous number of possible permutations of the stepfamily model, extending from the most simple example of a biological/custodial parent and one childless stepparent to the most complex example of two biological/custodial parents (Clingempeel et al., 1984). All varieties appear to be subject to most of the stressors common to first families; there are, however, several stressors that may be unique to stepfamilies.

Visher and Visher (1985) posit several such differences, one of which is that stepfamily life cycles do not necessarily follow the biological pattern; a previously childless stepparent might enter into a household containing children of various ages, for example. Goetting (1982) asserts that an important task in the process of remarriage is the changing of one's individual identity into a conjoint one—emotionally, psychically, parentally, and economically. Whiteside (1982) and Papernow (1984) stress the importance of establishing "stepfamily boundaries" independent of any
previous biological family ones. The Vishers (1985) also imply a potential for disruption latent in the relationship with the ex-spouse and quasi-kin. McGoldrick and Carter (1980) infer that an adequate "emotional divorce" from the previous marriage is critical in the process of committing to the possibilities of the remarried household. Since there is initially no consensus on the roles and expectations of stepparents and stepchildren, Ransom et al. (1979), suggest that a major task of integration is to restructure and clarify these roles. For instance, Crosbie-Burnett (1984) demonstrated the importance of the stepparent-stepchild bond in determining successful outcomes for stepfamilies.

Scholarly interest in family responses to stress has grown unfailingly for nearly four decades, especially since the pivotal work of Reuben Hill (1949, 1965) in this area. The scope of these efforts has been sweeping, with the focus of efforts to date on identifying "which families, under what conditions, with what resources, and involving what coping behaviors are better able to endure the hardships of family life" (McCubbin et al., 1980, p. 125). Interpreted broadly, family stress theory has sought no less than to fathom which families will succeed or fail and why. Since this is at least a tacit goal of much or most that passes for family studies, it is not surprising that family stress theory is
today one of the preeminent "middle-range" theories in family studies (Holman & Burr, 1980).

In spite of the extensive nature of these efforts, very little has been done to specify ways in which the stress process in stepfamilies might differ from that of first families. One current thrust in the field has been to learn more about the contextual variables that affect the stress process (Walker, 1986; Boss, 1987; Norem & Blundell, 1988). Existing work has tended to focus on only one or two of the various levels of the social system, obscuring vital differences between individuals and families and ignoring levels of which the family is but a single part. Crucial to some of these conceptualizations is the notion that perception of any stressor event is mediated by the internal and external contexts, and that the resultant meaning given the stressor event by the family involved determines whether the family will cope or fall into crisis (Boss, 1987). Since the process of stepfamily development is largely one of merging multiple "family cultures and identities" (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982), it follows that the stress process in these families may be unusually complex.

Importantly, stress theory and research has predominantly focused on analyzing data without disaggregating by group differences (Malia et al., 1988). Unquestionably, studies which illuminate this neglected area can assist
clinicians, educators, and stepparents themselves to more clearly define the roles they must carry out in a clearly changing family context.

While a major intention of this paper is to compare and contrast the stress process as it occurs in first families with that which occurs in stepfamilies, an equally vital objective is to relate the findings of this study to broader research and/or theoretical concerns. Although the study of stepfamilies is not nearly as developed as that of first families, it has nevertheless generated several intriguing research findings that have, by implication, challenged much of what we think we know about families in general. Stepfamilies, especially, have encountered systematic and strongly negative cultural stereotypes in the scientific as well as the lay community (Coleman & Ganong, 1987). For example, despite studies indicating that the new generation of children being raised in second families have no more problems than first-marriage children (Ganong & Coleman, 1984), stepchildren are routinely perceived as being more deprived than intact nuclear family children (Bryan et al., 1985). Indeed, the most common response of family professionals to stepfamilies has been to concentrate on perceived problems of the reconstituted family (Coleman et al., 1985). This point will be discussed in greater detail in the review of stepfamily literature which follows.
Review of Literature

Stepfamily development

There is clearly a need for empirical studies devoted to exploring crucial questions relating to stepfamily development. Upwards of 40% of all first marriages are likely to end in divorce, and, of that number, three out of four are likely to remarry, usually within five years of the initial divorce (McGoldrick & Carter, 1980). Sixty percent of those who remarry have children from previous relationships, a figure which clearly illustrates the tremendous stepfamily "explosion" of the last few decades. For many years interest in "blended families" lagged far behind the growth rates of this increasingly common family form (Lagoni & Cook, 1985). More recently, interest in this particular family experience has grown almost geometrically: nearly three out of every four scholarly articles dealing with reconstituted families has been written in the decade of the eighties (Giles-Sims, 1987). Even though stepfamilies are quickly becoming the most common family form, sociocultural attitudes as evidenced in the popular literature indicate that traditional attitudes regarding stepfamilies are changing only slowly (Coleman et al., 1985). For instance, one widely accepted presumption of western society reflected in its popular literature about the subject is that stepfamily life is decidedly more "problematic" than first family life. Stepchildren are typically
viewed as being emotionally "poorer" than children of intact nuclear families, as well as being at greater risk of physical and psychological abuse.

While fairy tales such as Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel initially dramatized and perpetuated these stereotypes, a broad array of scholarly support for the problematic nature of stepfamilies has been forthcoming, particularly in recent years (Giles-Sims & Finkelhor, 1984). Several studies, for example, have indicated that divorce rates for second marriages are typically about 10% higher than for first marriages (Furstenberg, 1987). Nearly as many studies have purported to show a significantly greater incidence of psychological and physical abuse in stepfamilies as opposed to first families (Daly & Wilson 1980; Lightcap et al., 1982; Walters, 1982; Vander-May & Neff, 1984). A variety of scholarly papers have pointed to the typically more complex structure of stepfamilies as an indicator of elevated stress levels in remarital families (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982). Numerous explanations have been forwarded in an attempt to account for these apparent relationships. One of the earliest and most influential of these posited that stepfamilies were especially vulnerable to interpersonal disturbances and malfunctioning owing to the poorly articulated role definition of stepparents, which implied many contradictory functions (Fast & Cain, 1966). Extending these ideas
Cherlin (1978) argued that generally higher divorce rates for remarriages than for first marriages was due to the "incomplete institutionalization" of remarriage in this country. The problems faced by remarried families, Cherlin posited, were intrinsically different than those faced by first families, and solutions to those problems based upon first family norms were inherently inappropriate. Visher and Visher (1978) posited that intrafamilial sexual attraction could be a source of greater tension in stepfamilies than in nuclear families, owing primarily to a weakened incest taboo resulting from the non-biological relationships of the stepfamily members.

More formally, many researchers have sought to place empirical data into various theoretical frameworks. Representative of the sociobiological (or social evolutionary) perspective, Daly and Wilson (1980), and Lightcap et al. (1982), imply that stepparents would tend to be more neglectful and/or abusive because their perceived relatedness to their stepchildren would be relatively low when compared to that of biological parents; given a choice, parents would never abuse a biological child where a stepchild was also present. Noting empirical evidence linking stress and physical abuse of children (Strauss et al., 1980), stress theorists Martin and Walters (1982) reason that if excessive stress in families leads to abuse and there is more stress in
families where step relationships occur, then abuse is more likely to occur in these families.

Despite this tremendous spiraling of attention, however, many complain that little accurate data exist to help guide our understanding of remarriage and reconstituted families (Spanier & Furstenberg, 1987). Even more recently a few have seriously questioned the nature of the evidence that step-family life in general is less healthy than first family life. Importantly, no conclusive evidence exists indicating that children brought up in stepfamilies perform psychologically or behaviorally less competently than do offspring of intact biological unions (Robinson, 1984).

Earlier, a large survey by Burchinal (1964) indicated that neither personality characteristics nor social relationships of adolescents were related to marital status of the parents. Other researchers have similarly found no significant differences between high school students brought up in stepfather families and those raised in natural parent households (Wilson et al., 1975). A third large study by Bohannon and Erickson (1978) concluded that children living with stepfathers do just as well on all the behavioral characteristics studied as do children living with natural fathers. Other studies have gone so far as to conclude that children in stepfather families might be receiving more competent parenting than children in intact families (Sant-
rock et al., 1982). Indeed, Collins and Ingoldsby (1982) go so far as to suggest that stepfamilies might be healthier overall than first families—more motivated, more realistic, more mature.

Robinson (1984) states that such apparently contradictory findings might be due in large part to methodological shortcomings, and contends that outcomes are frequently contingent upon the methodology that researchers choose. Others concur. While Ganong and Coleman (1984) found little empirical support for the presumption of significant differences between stepchildren and children from intact nuclear families, they also reason that the dominant atheoretical "deficit-family model" and "deficit comparison" approaches to stepfamily research have contributed to the commonly perceived negative stereotypes of stepfamilies and stepfamily members (Coleman et al., 1985; Ganong & Coleman, 1986). "Researchers," they maintain, "have tended to ignore the complexity of stepfamilies to the point where crucial distinctions between different types of stepfamilies were not made and critical variables were not assessed" (Ganong & Coleman, 1986, p. 312).

Such sentiments are echoed by Spanier and Furstenberg (1987), who argue that journal articles relating to remarriage and the creation of stepfamilies have been extremely limited, tending to be conceptual and/or clinical in nature.
Such approaches generally rely upon the case-study approach, rarely depend upon empirical analysis, and seldom give evidence of how the authors have arrived at the conclusions they present. Where articles are empirically based, they commonly focus on very specialized research questions with limited generalizability. Investigators utilizing any one of the aforementioned approaches are most likely to have generated their samples non-randomly, usually on the basis of participation in therapy or some other clinical endeavor that implies chronic dysfunctionality of one sort or another.

While the available data strongly suggest that stepfamilies are at greater risk than first families, and that stepfamily life is more problematic than first family life, under scrutiny these data appear increasingly inadequate, based more on "Whoozle Effects" than upon rigorous examination of the facts. Gelles (1980) describes a Whoozle Effect as a phenomenon that occurs when a particular finding reported in one study is accepted by others without consideration of the possible limitations of the study. Over time the original findings become treated as facts that form the basis for more studies, more findings, more facts, etc.

In the case of stepfamilies, however, we are not dealing with original findings, but with a powerful stereotype whose roots extend deeply into our cultural past. Its primary assumption is that variations from the intact nuclear family
are dysfunctional and inadequate. Yet it is this deficit family model that forms the basis of most of the research central to the field. By beginning a priori with the unchallenged notion that stepfamily life is problematic, it is not surprising that most surveys have confirmed that basic fact (Ganong & Coleman, 1986).

What is needed, obviously, is ongoing study aimed at rectifying several of the methodological problems alluded to earlier in this paper. Laboring under the general hypothesis that stepfamilies are only different from and not necessarily worse than intact nuclear families, a primary goal of this project is thus to indirectly test the deficit family model itself. Because of the ubiquitous nature of stress as well as because it is generally accepted that stepfamily life is more stressful than first family life, the use of data pertaining to family stress was an obvious one for this purpose. If, indeed, reconstituted families are less healthy overall than nuclear families, it follows that both stressors and negative manifestations of stress should be significantly higher in stepfamilies than in first families, and that these differences should be demonstrably attributable to some degree to the fact of group membership alone. The following section provides an overview of theories pertaining to stress in families.
Family stress theory

ABCX Model of family stress  In its present form, family stress and coping theory is largely an outgrowth of Hill's seminal study (1949) on family adjustment to the crises of war-induced separation and reunion. Essentially a two-part theoretical model of families under stress, a descriptive section posited a "roller coaster" course of adjustment to stressor events which were disruptive of a family's preexisting sense of balance; once disrupted, that homeostatic state was thought to be followed by a disorganized interval superseded in turn by a period of trial-and-error crisis resolution (the "angle of recovery"), which subsequently lead to a new level of organization/homeostasis. An explanatory segment of the model sought to identify various factors that contributed to crisis identification and severity (Walker, 1986).

Hill's original model basically posited that a family's response to stressors was a function of the interaction between several variables, each comprised in turn of several component parts. Defining stressors as "life events or occurrences of sufficient magnitude as to bring about a change in the family system", stress as "a function of the response of the distressed family to the stressor and refers to the residue of tensions generated by the stressor which remain unmanaged", and crisis as "the amount of incapacita
tedness or disorganization in the family where resources are inadequate" (McCubbin et al., 1980, p. 127), the theoretical proposition most crucial to the model states that:

"A" (the stressor event and related hardships)
- INTERACTING WITH -
"B" (the family's crisis meeting resources)
- INTERACTING WITH -
"C" (the definition the family makes of the event)
- PRODUCES -
"X" (the crisis)

Although Hill's key concepts have seen remarkably little change in the nearly forty years since their initial presentation (Burr, 1973; McCubbin et al., 1980; Walker, 1986), and his contribution remains central to many past and present efforts in the area of family stress and coping, the basic ABCX model has been greatly expanded and refined by both Hill and by many others. Four major domains have been emphasized in research to date: [1] family response to non-normative events (disaster, illness, etc.); [2] family response to normative life-span transitions (parenthood, old age, etc.); [3] the nature and importance of family psychological resources and perceptions; and, [4] the nature and importance of social support and coping in stress management. Developing over the years into one of the preeminent areas in the family studies field (Holman & Burr, 1980), research into family stress and coping has attempted to discover and to explain those elements of family functioning that contribute
to a family's ability to withstand pressures that might easily bring another family to dysfunctionality and ruin.

**Stressor events**

To date, research regarding Hill's "A" factor (the stressor event) has generated fewer gratifying results than has study of his other variables, primarily owing to difficulties in adequately defining and (especially) operationalizing the concept (Burr, 1973). Investigators have been generally unable to refine the model sufficiently to distinguish between discrete stressor events and the "general level of hardship" that any family is experiencing at any one time independent of the stressor. Further, because most investigators have necessarily relied heavily on cross-sectional data the dimension of time is seldom utilized; distinctions between the stress arising from the stressor event and from the family's reaction to the stressor event have been extremely difficult to ascertain. This has predictably lead to problems in determining both directionality and causality (McCubbin et al., 1980).

Reconceptualizing the "A" factor as "family demands", McCubbin and Patterson (1983a) have dichotomized it into "stressor" and "hardship" components. The former they define as a life event that impacts the family unit which has the potential of producing change in the family social system, and posit that this change might be in any of a variety of areas of family life such as its boundaries, goals, roles,
interaction patterns, or values. Hardships are described as demands on the family unit that are specifically associated with the stressor event. Both impose demands on the family system which must be dealt with for the family to manage successfully (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b).

Several theorists have advanced schemes for classifying stressful life events and various normative and non-normative transitions. Hill’s 1958 formulation ordered them into four general categories according to their impact upon the family and the way in which they changed family structure. Accession involved the addition of a family member (through birth, etc.). Dismemberment involved change through permanent loss of a member. Circumstances such as alcoholism, e.g., involved loss of family morale and unity. Finally, desertion and divorce, e.g., involved changed structure and morale for most families. Needless to say, Hill’s schema in this regard was too vague to attract much empirical interest (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a).

More comprehensive was the scheme advanced by Lipman-Blumen (1975) for the assessment of family crises. Most of her criteria, posited as dichotomies, have proven useful not only in classifying stressors but also in determining the extensiveness of stress within the family system. They provide relatively elegant means of conceptualizing both the nature and amount of stress impinging upon the family along
each of the following continua: internality vs. externality of the stressor; pervasiveness vs. boundedness of the stressor (affect all or just some family members); precipitate vs. gradual onset (suddenness); intensity vs. mildness of the stressor; transitoriness (short-term) vs. chronicity (long-term) of the stressor; predictability (expectedness) vs. unpredictability (randomness) of the stressor; natural vs. artificial (human-made) cause of the stressor; and perceived solvability (controllability) vs. perceived insolvability (uncontrollability) of the stressor.

Since the initial impetus for conceptualization of family stress and coping theory was the study of families undergoing war-induced separations and reunions, one might expect the literature in the field to be heavily represented by research into relationships concerning family stress arising from non-normative events. This has indeed been the case (McCubbin et al., 1980). In addition to war related studies the focus has expanded greatly in recent years, especially in the '70s and '80s. Major new thrusts regarding non-normative events have dealt with conflicts resulting from increasing female labor force participation and the phenomena of dual career families. Another important development of recent years has been the application of the theory to the area of adaptation to chronic illness in the family.
Other efforts geared towards investigation of Hill’s "A" variable have focused on normative life cycle events and their relationship to family stress. In general, normative stressor events are seen to be transitory experiences which involve often complex changes in behaviors and written and unwritten family rules. In addition to their transitoriness they are deemed normative because they are also ubiquitous and expectable. Most recently there have been efforts made to cluster normative and non-normative events in an effort to more accurately represent a "piling-up" of stressors within families.

**Family resources**  Hill’s "B" variable, family resources, has received considerable attention over the years. It has been described as the family’s ability to prevent an event of change in the family system from creating a crisis in that family (Burr, 1973). More simply, resources form a large part of the family’s ability to resist crisis. Four major dimensions of family resources have been posited. The first of these, personal resources, is defined as "the broad range of reserves and aids characteristic of individual family members which are potentially available in times of need" (McCubbin et al., 1980, p. 131). Four components of this dimension have been specified in the literature to date: [1] economic well-being; [2] cognitive well-being; [3] physical well-being; and, [4] personality resources
(e.g., perceived self-esteem, perceived self-denigration, perceived mastery). It is believed that when individual family members have "sufficient appropriate resources", they would be less likely to perceive a stressful situation as a crisis.

Family system resources comprise the second dimension of Hill's "B" variable. Burr (1973) identified fifteen such resources, of which family integration (i.e., those bonds of coherence and unity within a family) and adaptability (i.e., a family's ability to meet obstacles and change a particular course of action to overcome them) have received the most attention, forming the major axes of Olson's Circumplex Model of family behavior (Olson et al., 1983). Another fundamental family resource, problem-solving effectiveness (i.e., the ability of the family to solve its problems to the mutual satisfaction of its members), likewise demonstrates potential of providing researchers with valuable clues as to which families deal best with stressors before they become crises (Klein and Hill, 1979).

Social support is the third major dimension central to Hill's original "B" concept. Three major lines of inquiry have prevailed (McCubbin et al., 1980). The first, attempting to define and categorize the dimension, have posited that social support is information exchanged at an interpersonal level that provides emotional support (leading to a belief
that one is cared for), esteem support (leading to a belief that one is valued), and network support (leading to a belief that one belongs). A second research thread has attempted to specify the types of social networks important to families in times of stress (i.e., neighborhoods, mutual self-help groups, kinship networks), as well as to explore questions of accessibility to these various types of social support for differing kinds of family groups. A third line of inquiry has explored the apparent mediating effects of social support upon families in distress, as well as the ways in which such support often speeds a family's recovery.

The fourth dimension of family systems resources, coping, is referred to as the active process of family adaptation, and had received scant attention prior to the 1980s. Now, in an expanded form (about which more in the section devoted to the double ABCX model), it arguably receives the most (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b). This change is seen to signal a shift away from an emphasis on the dysfunctionality of stress towards a view which posits stress as neutral, not necessarily negative, and possessed with positive aspects as well. In general coping is seen as a process of achieving balance in a family system which promotes unity and stability as well as individual growth and development.
Family definition  Hill proposed that the family's definition of the stressor event is an important predictor of crisis severity, suggesting that should a family perceive an event as one that it could handle, a crisis would probably be lessened or avoided. Should that same family perceive that event as one that it could not handle, then a crisis would be likely to occur and/or would be more severe (Walker, 1986). The "C" factor, then, is the family's subjective definition of the stressor, the accompanying hardships, and their perceived effect upon the family (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a).

Perhaps the least studied of any aspect of the original ABCX model, the concept of the family's definition of the severity of the change has been plagued with operationalization and measurement difficulties. While the subjective meaning is supposed to be reflective of the family's values and previous experience in dealing with crisis and change, several have questioned the implication of a "unified family mind" in highly charged stressor situations (Walker, 1986).

According to the ABCX model, stressor events and their related hardships produce tension which, if not managed and overcome, produce stress which influences both the family and the individuals that comprise it. Family stress is thus conceived of as a state arising from an actual or perceived imbalance between demand and capability in the family's
functioning, which is in turn characterized by non-specific demands for change (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a). The stress becomes distress when it is defined as unpleasant or undesirable by the family unit.

**Family crisis**  
Hill's "X" factor, crisis, is distinct from stress and has been posited as a continuous variable that denotes the amount of disruption or disorganization evident in the family after the stress has been labeled distress. The crisis state is characterized by an inability to restore stability, and is further marked by continuing pressure to make changes within the family's structure.

**The Double ABCX Model—a major refinement**  
The ABCX Model has certainly stood the test of time for any theory, having remained virtually unchanged for nearly forty years as well as being increasingly utilized to generate substantive research on a variety of different topics. However, extensive utilization of the model revealed at least four additional factors which appeared to influence the course of family adaptation to crisis situations but which were virtually undiscoverable under the limitations of the original paradigm: the pile-up of additional and perhaps unrelated stressors and strains; the family's efforts to find and use new resources from both inside and outside the family; changes in the family's definition of the stressor situation;
and coping strategies designed to bring about changes leading to positive adaptation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b). Many of these issues have been addressed by the recent introduction of the Double ABCX Model by McCubbin and Patterson (1983a; 1983b).

The Double ABCX Model places increased emphasis on the active processes of adaptation and coping over time, answering some critics who had found the original model to be too static (Lavee et al., 1985). In addition, it slightly redefines precrisis variables while adding new postcrisis variables in an effort to describe three important processes of family adaptation to stress and crisis: those additional stressors (both before and after the event) which result in a pile-up of demands; the range of outcomes (from bonadaptation to maladaptation) of the process; and the intervening factors (family resources, definitions, coping strategies) that influence that adaptation. In addition, the revised paradigm posits three stages in the process of the family adjustment and adaptation response (FAAR) to the crisis situation (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b).

In introducing a pile-up concept (the "aA" factor), the revisionists have acknowledged that families seldom deal with single stressors, but instead routinely experience several post-crisis demands. In addition to including normative and non-normative stressors (with their attendant hardships), the
theorists have also included three new possible sources contributing to the pile-up: prior family strains (e.g., those from inadequately resolved previous hardships); strain caused by previous efforts to cope with the current situation (e.g., those coping behaviors which do not meet with familial or social approval); and ambiguity, both internal and external to the family. Regarding the latter, Boss (1980) has implied that many normative transitions can sometimes cause stress over boundary ambiguity issues. Changes that occur as a result of crisis adaptation can contribute to the pile-up by creating confusion as to just who is and who isn’t a member of the post-crisis family.

McCubbin and Patterson’s "bB" factor is conceptualized by them to be family adaptive resources and are posited to include characteristics of individual family members, of the family unit as a whole, and of the community of which the family forms a part. They are of two general types. Existing resources are already part of the family’s existence and help minimize the impact of the stressor event. Expanded family resources are those new resources developed or enhanced as a result of the crisis situation.

The "cC" factor in the Double ABCX Model refers to the family’s general orientation to the overall circumstances (Lavee et al., 1985). It includes not only their perceptions regarding the stressor event, but also those regarding the
pile-up of stressors which may follow and their best estimations of both their coping capabilities and directions. It is intended to be a measure of a pervasive, enduring and dynamic feeling of confidence that a family’s environments are (or are not) predictable. Generally it has been found that families successful in redefining crisis situations have attempted to clarify issues and tasks, decrease emotional burdens associated with the crisis situation, and encourage each other to carry on with fundamental family tasks. A synonymous term for this factor is family coherence.

Coping assumes a much more intrinsic role in the Double ABCX Model. It refers here to the efforts directed at [1] eliminating or avoiding stressors and strains; [2] managing hardships; [3] maintaining the family’s integrity and morale; [4] acquiring and developing resources to meet demands; and [5] making structural changes to adjust to the new demands. In a sense it assumes a position as an interfacing concept between the four variables of the double model, since it has linkages to each of them. McCubbin and Patterson call their "XX" factor "family adaptation balancing" (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983b), and view it as the outcome of the family’s processes in response to the crisis and pile-up of demands. As the concept central to the Double ABCX Model, it is conceptualized in this instance as a continuous variable with a range from maladaptation (i.e., a continued imbalance between
demands and the family's ability to meet those demands) to bonadaption (i.e., a minimal or non-existent imbalance). While the former can be characterized by a deterioration of family integrity and individual well-being, the latter can be characterized by a strengthening of both of these. As proposed it has both micro and macro applications, since it is supposed to reflect a balanced "fit" (i.e., a successful adaptation) at several levels--member-to-family, family-to-community, etc.

The actual ways in which families adapt themselves to stress and crisis is part of a threefold process beginning with a family resistance stage--wherein the crisis is either denied or defined as temporary--before moving through a restructuring stage--wherein changes began to take place on an individual and piecemeal basis--to a stage of family consolidation--wherein the piecemeal changes of the previous stage become a stimulus for making additional changes in an effort to restore stability to the family system (McCubbin and Patterson, 1983b). Labeled by them as the Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR), it reveals the ways in which families appeared to change over time in response to a particular predicament.

**Contextual approaches to family stress** Even more recently articles have begun to appear which argue that any complete understanding of the process of families under
stress is unlikely to occur unless researchers make attempts to integrate micro and macro interdependent levels of the social system into their models (Walker, 1986). According to Walker, existing work has tended to focus on only one or two of the various levels of the social system, obscuring vital differences between individuals and families and ignoring levels of which the family is but a single part. Partial confirmation of this idea has been provided by Norem and Blundell (1988), who point out in their study of farm families and marital disruption that stressors from a variety of sources affect not only interpersonal relationships, but economic well-being and overall life style as well.

Walker (1986) posits multiple interdependent levels of the social system in her conceptualization of a contextual model: individual, dyadic, familial, social network, community, and cultural/historical. Boss (1987) suggests that the end result of the stress process is partly shaped by the broad contexts external to the family. Her contextual model of family stress supposes an external context which largely shapes the family's internal context. Crucial to her conceptualization is the notion that perception of any stressor event is mediated by the internal and external contexts, and that the resultant meaning given the stressor event by the family involved determines whether the family will cope or fall into crisis.
Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of a statement of the problem and literature review (Chapter 1), two articles written in manuscript form suitable for publication in professional journals addressing different aspects of the research (Chapters 2 and 3), and a concluding chapter presenting a summary of the findings and recommendations for future research (Chapter 4). The format for this dissertation has been approved by the Graduate Faculty at Iowa State University. Permission has been granted by the North Central Regional Project 164 technical committee regarding use of NC-164 data for the dissertation. Procedures for both waves of data collection (see below) were approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee at Iowa State University.

Sampling and data collection

This research examines data from the nine-state North Central Regional Project on Stress in Families in their Middle Years, with support provided by respective state Agricultural Experiment stations. States involved in the project include Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska. The data reported here are from the first two waves planned in the panel design of the project, and were gathered in the spring of 1983 and the spring of 1985.
The sample for the project consists of two major units, one urban and one rural. For the urban subsample, families were randomly drawn from each of 8 large-population Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA), one per state from 8 of the 9 participating states. The rural subsample consists of families with rural RFD postal addresses which were randomly drawn, state by state, from counties designated as rural on the basis of location and size of largest community within county.

The sample was identified through the use of a commercial mailing list obtained from a large direct marketing corporation. Their data banks contain information from over 70 million households in the United States, approximately 87 percent of the households in the United States according to 1980 Census figures. Lists provided each state were designed to target families with two parents and at least one adolescent living at home, with wives falling between 35 and 54 years of age.

In each state, surveys were sent to the urban and rural families obtained from the commercial mailing lists. Follow-up procedures included reminder postcards, second mail-outs of questionnaires, and in some states telephone contact. Data were received from 1945 families across the project area ultimately, resulting in an overall response rate of approximately 32%. Questions in the survey focused on stressors
such as major life events and daily irritations; resources of family integration and adaptability, social networks, and socioeconomic status; and outcomes of individual symptomatology, general health, and satisfaction with aspects of individual and personal life.

Description of the sample

The total regional data set includes information from over 1900 families. Of these, 1470 families returned questionnaires from both the husband and the wife. Since the husband’s assessment of his own symptom level was needed in this study for the family symptom measure, a decision was made to include only those cases in which both the husband and wife responded.

While the age of respondents ranged from 24 to 72, almost 80 percent fell within the targeted age parameter of 35 to 55. All but five percent have at least one child in the home. The sample is about evenly divided between urban and rural, which was defined as farms and towns smaller than 2500. The average education of both husbands and wives is about 13 years. Almost half of both men and women have education beyond high school. Mean family income is $32,600 and over 30 percent of the wives are employed full time, with an additional 20 percent employed part time outside the home. Family size averaged 4.8.
Present data set

One complication to the current study presented by the regional data set arose from its failure to elicit information pertaining to family type. Thus, further data reduction measures were necessary in order to determine the number of stepfamilies vis-a-vis first families in the overall sample. Acting on the certainty that at least some of the children within stepfamilies would have had to have been born before the couple’s remarriage date, stepfamilies were ultimately disaggregated from the total sample through the expedient of comparing the current couple’s wedding date with the birth dates of every child. While it is certainly possible that some of the families accordingly grouped in this fashion might not, in fact, be stepfamilies, it was assumed that the margin for error was relatively low. Unfortunately, no unequivocal criteria for separating first from second families ever presented themselves.

A first step in this process was to ensure that complete data existed regarding the target criteria (i.e., the couple’s marriage date and children’s birth dates), which had the effect of paring the overall sample to just under 925 of the 1470 families for which data for both husband and wife existed. Ninety-one of these families met the criteria for designation as stepfamilies. A random sample of a like number of the 832 remaining families was drawn in order to
begin the comparison of the two groups on the selected target variables.

Summary

The following two chapters will examine differences in the relationship between stressors and manifestations of stress for intact biological families and stepfamilies. Stressors will be measured by indices of life events and daily hassles. Multiple indicators of manifestations of stress are respondent's symptoms, family symptoms, and life satisfaction.

One major purpose of the research is to confirm or deny prior empirical research and/or conceptual/clinical studies which have overwhelmingly inferred a positive relationship between stress and the fact of stepfamily existence. The literature is unambiguous on this point: the stepfamily structure is clearly more complex than an intact nuclear one, and the greater the structural complexity of a family, the higher the level of family stress relative to first families (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982). The article presented in Chapter 2 will deal with the implications raised by this first research question.

A final research interest considers the longitudinal persistence of first family/stepfamily group differences pertaining to stressors and negative manifestations of
stress. Most of the conceptual articles dealing with stepfamily "integration" posit periods of varying duration wherein the developing stepfamily progressively resolves (or fails to resolve) the potentially dysfunctional ambiguities attendant upon its formation (Goetting, 1982; McGoldrick & Carter, 1980; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984; Ransom et al., 1979; Whiteside, 1982). Since the regional study upon which the following analyses were based focused upon families in their "launching years," we might with some justification surmise that the great majority of the stepfamilies in the sample will have successfully passed through this formative stage and achieved a level of stability commensurate with that of their first family counterparts. It follows that family group differences that persist between the two waves of data collection would represent tangible as opposed to transient first family/stepfamily differences viz-z-viz the target variables. Chapter 3 will consider the issues raised by this general research question.
CHAPTER 2. STRESSORS, MANIFESTATIONS OF STRESS, AND FIRST FAMILY/STEPFAMILY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

A multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) design is utilized to test the generally accepted propositions that stepfamilies experience more stressors and negative manifestations of stress than do first families. Results do not support either of these propositions, possibly indicating that lingering sociocultural bias against step-families continues to prejudice first family/stepfamily comparisons.

Introduction

For many years scholarly interest in "blended families" lagged far behind the growth rates of this increasingly common family form. Only in the decade of the eighties have we witnessed a veritable explosion of research interest after years of slow but steady growth initially fueled by the accelerating divorce rates in the 1960s and 1970s (Lagoni & Cook, 1985). By contrast, stress in families has received increasing amounts of theoretical attention in the family studies literature ever since Rueben Hill's seminal study (1949) on family adjustment to the crises of war-induced separation and reunion (McCubbin et al., 1980). In spite of the attention in both areas, however, very little has been done to specify ways in which the manifestation of stress in stepfamilies might differ from that of intact biological families (Ihinger-Tallman & Pasley, 1982). The major purpose of this paper, therefore, is to compare and contrast the
manifestations of stress in "first-marriage" families with "remarried" families. Specifically, data from a random sample of first families and stepfamilies are analyzed in order to address the following research questions:

Do stepfamilies experience greater levels of stressors than first families? Also, do stepfamilies experience more negative manifestations of stress than first families?

Previous Research

Stepfamily development

The incredible proliferation of stepfamilies makes questions such as those posed by the current study increasingly significant in today's rapidly changing society. As recently as 1976, for example, it was estimated that as few as 10% of all U.S. children under 18 lived in stepparent households (Nelson & Nelson, 1982); by 1980, that figure had conservatively risen to 16% (Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985). It has been suggested that, given current trends, the stepfamily is likely to become the most prevalent family form of the not-too-distant future (Duberman, 1975; Visher & Visher, 1979).

Another compelling rationale underlying the current study pertains to what Spanier and Furstenberg (1987) refer to as a lack of accurate data with which to facilitate our understanding of remarriage and stepfamily life. Several recent studies in both the popular and the scholarly litera-
ture have implied, for example, that traditional attitudes regarding stepfamilies are changing only very slowly, and that lingering bias in research calls into question the validity of data previously gathered on the topic (Coleman et al., 1985). It has even been suggested that the dominant modalities for studying stepfamily formation and development contribute significantly to the commonly perceived negative stereotypes of stepfamilies and stepfamily members (Ganong & Coleman, 1986; Coleman et al., 1985). Thus, studies questioning accepted assumptions regarding stepfamilies are especially timely.

Prior empirical findings and theoretical perspectives have tended to support the notion that life in remarried families is "more problematic" or "less healthy" than life in nuclear families. Early theoreticians posited that stepfamilies were especially vulnerable to interpersonal disturbances and malfunctioning due to the poorly articulated role definition of stepparents, which implied many contradictory functions (Fast & Cain 1966). Extending these ideas Cherlin (1978) argued that generally higher divorce rates for remarriages than for first marriages were due to the "incomplete institutionalization" of remarriage in this country. According to Cherlin, since the problems faced by remarried families were intrinsically different than those faced by first
families, any solutions to those problems based upon first family norms were inherently inappropriate.

More formally, many researchers have sought to integrate empirical findings into various theoretical frameworks. Citing studies which indicate a greater incidence of psychological and physical abuse in stepfamilies, sociobiologists Daly and Wilson (1980), and Lightcap et al. (1982), for example, imply that stepparents would tend to be more neglectful and/or abusive because their perceived relatedness to their stepchildren would be relatively low when compared to that of biological parents. Given a choice, the authors assert parents would never abuse a biological child where a stepchild was also present. Noting empirical evidence linking stress and physical abuse of children (Strauss et al., 1980), stress theorists Martin and Walters (1982) reason that if excessive stress in families leads to abuse and there is more stress in families where step relationships occur, then abuse is more likely to occur in these families.

Recently, a few investigators have seriously questioned the nature of the evidence that stepfamily life in general is less healthy than first family life. Stepchildren, for example, have been routinely viewed, by professionals and lay people alike, as being emotionally "poorer" than children of intact nuclear families, as well as being at greater risk of physical and psychological abuse. Importantly, no conclusive
evidence exists indicating that children brought up in step-families perform psychosocially or behaviorally less competently than do offspring of intact biological unions (Robinson, 1984). Given the extensive inferential support of the proposition that children are at significantly greater risk of physical and psychological abuse in stepfamilies, one might logically expect this to be the case.

Instead, an early survey by Burchinal (1964) indicated that neither personality characteristics nor social relationships of adolescents were related to marital status of the parents. Other researchers found no significant differences between high school students brought up in stepfather families and those raised in natural parent households (Wilson et al., 1975). A third large study by Bohannon and Erickson (1978) concluded that children living with stepfathers do just as well on all the behavioral characteristics studied as do children living with natural fathers. Another study indicated that children in stepfather families might be receiving more competent parenting than children in intact families (Santrock et al., 1982).

Robinson (1984) states that such apparently contradictory findings might be due in large part to methodological shortcomings, and contends that outcomes are frequently contingent upon the methodology that researchers choose. Others concur. While Ganong and Coleman (1984) found little
empirical support for the presumption of significant differences between stepchildren and children from intact nuclear families, they also reason that the dominant atheoretical "deficit comparison" approaches to stepfamily research have contributed to the commonly perceived negative stereotypes of stepfamilies and stepfamily members (Ganong & Coleman, 1986; Coleman et al., 1985). Underlying all of these approaches is an unchallenged premise that variations from the intact nuclear family are dysfunctional and inadequate. It is this deficit comparison model that has formed the basis of most of the research central to the field.

Quite likely this has been the case with stepfamilies and stress. While all varieties of stepfamilies are presumed to be subject to most or all of the stressors common to first families, investigators also posit the existence of a plethora of stressors that are apparently unique to stepfamilies.

Visher and Visher (1978), for example, state that intrafamilial sexual attraction is a source of greater tension in stepfamilies than in nuclear families, owing primarily to a weakened incest taboo resulting from the non-biological relationships of the stepfamily members. These same authors (1985) also suggest that other sources of stressors for stepfamilies might stem from the fact that stepfamily life cycles seldom follow the "biological pattern"; a previously
childless stepparent might enter into a household containing children of various ages, for example. Similarly, Goetting (1982) asserts that an important task in the process of remarriage is the changing of one's individual identity into a conjoint one—emotionally, psychically, parentally, and economically—and that this process is more complicated for remarried families than for first married ones. Whiteside (1982) and Papernow (1984) stress the importance of establishing "stepfamily boundaries" independent of any previous biological family ones. The Vishers (1985) also imply a potential for disruption latent in the relationship with the ex-spouse and quasi-kin. McGoldrick and Carter (1980) infer that an adequate "emotional divorce" from the previous marriage is critical in the process of committing to the possibilities of the remarried household. Since there is initially no consensus on the roles and expectations of stepparents and stepchildren, Ransom et al. (1979), suggest that a major source of stressors in stepfamilies arises out of the need to restructure and clarify these roles. The list goes on.

Given the chorus of investigators expounding upon the belief that stepfamily life is fraught with a greater variety of stressors than is first family life, it is perhaps unsurprising that the few papers that have examined the question of stress in stepfamilies in any depth have pointed to this untested body of work as an indicator of (1) greater struc-
tural complexity and (2) elevated levels of stress in second families (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982). Under scrutiny, however, such findings appear increasingly inadequate, based more on "whoozle effects" than upon rigorous examination of the facts. Gelles (1980) describes a whooozle effect as a phenomena that occurs when a particular finding reported in one study is accepted by others without consideration of the possible limitations of the study. Over time the original findings become treated as facts that form the basis for more studies, more findings, more facts, etc. What is needed, obviously, are studies aimed at challenging the notion that stepfamilies are prima facie more stress-ridden than intact biological families.

Family stress

In its present form, family stress and coping theory is largely an outgrowth of Hill's seminal study (1949) on family adjustment to the crises of war-induced separation and reunion. Essentially a two-part theoretical model of families under stress, a descriptive section posited a "roller coaster" course of adjustment to stressor events which were disruptive of a family's preexisting sense of balance; once disrupted, that homeostatic state was thought to be followed by a disorganized interval superseded in turn by a period of trial-and-error crisis resolution (the "angle of recovery"),
which subsequently lead to a new level of organization or homeostasis (Walker, 1986).

Hill's original model basically posited that a family's response to stressors was a function of the interaction between several variables, each comprised in turn of several component parts. Defining stressors as "life events or occurrences of sufficient magnitude as to bring about a change in the family system", stress was conceptualized as "a function of the response of the distressed family to the stressor and refers to the residue of tensions generated by the stressor which remain unmanaged" (McCubbin et al., 1980, p. 127).

Although Hill's key concepts have seen remarkably little change in the nearly forty years since their initial presentation (Burr, 1973; McCubbin et al., 1980; Walker, 1986), and his contribution remains central to many past and present efforts in the area of family stress and coping, the basic ABCX model has been greatly expanded and refined by both Hill and by many others. Recently, articles have begun to appear which argue that any complete understanding of the process of families under stress is unlikely to occur unless researchers make attempts to integrate micro and macro interdependent levels of the social system into their models (Walker, 1986). According to Walker, existing work has tended to focus on only one or two of the various levels of the social system,
obscuring vital differences between individuals and families and ignoring levels of which the family is but a single part. Partial confirmation of this idea has been provided by Norem and Blundell (1988), who point out in their study of farm families and marital disruption that stressors from a variety of sources affect not only interpersonal relationships, but economic wellbeing and overall lifestyle as well.

Walker (1986) posits multiple interdependent levels of the social system in her conceptualization of a contextual model: individual, dyadic, familial, social network, community, and cultural/historical. Boss (1987) suggests that the end result of the stress process is partly shaped by the broad contexts external to the family. Her contextual model of family stress supposes an external context which largely shapes the family's internal context. Crucial to her conceptualization is the notion that perception of any stressor event is mediated by the internal and external contexts, and that the resultant meaning given the stressor event by the family involved determines whether the family will cope or fall into crisis. Since the process of stepfamily development is largely one of merging multiple "family cultures and identities" (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982), it could logically follow that the stress process in these families is unusually complex. Importantly, research into family stress
has predominantly focused on analyzing data without disaggregating by group differences (Malia et al., 1988).

Methodology

Description of the sample

This research examines data from the nine-state North Central Regional Project on Stress in Families in their Middle Years, with support provided by respective state Agricultural Experiment stations. The sample is about evenly divided between urban and rural, and was designed to target families with two parents and at least one adolescent living at home, with wives between 35 and 54 years of age. The data reported here were gathered in the spring of 1983.

Data were received from 1945 families across the project area, resulting in an overall response rate of approximately 32%. Questions in the survey focused on stressors such as major life events and daily irritations; resources of family integration and adaptability, social networks, and socio-economic status; and outcomes of individual symptomatology, general health, and satisfaction with aspects of individual and personal life.

While the age of respondents ranged from 24 to 72, almost 80 percent fell within the targeted age parameter of 35 to 55. All but five percent reported at least one child in the home. The average education of both husbands and
wives is about 13 years. Almost half of both men and women have education beyond high school. Mean family income is $32,600, and over 30 percent of the wives are employed full time, with an additional 20 percent employed part time outside the home. Family size averaged 4.8. Only those cases in which both the husband and wife responded were included in the population from which the final sample was ultimately drawn.

One complication to the current study presented by the regional data set arose from its failure to elicit information pertaining to family type. Thus, further data reduction measures were necessary in order to determine the number of stepfamilies vis-a-vis first families in the overall sample. Acting on the certainty that at least some of the children within stepfamilies would have had to have been born before the couple's remarital date, stepfamilies were ultimately disaggregated from the total sample through the expedient of comparing the current couple's wedding date with the birth dates of every child. While it is certainly possible that some of the families accordingly grouped in this fashion might not, in fact, be stepfamilies, it was assumed that the margin for error was relatively low.

A first step in this process was to ensure that complete data existed regarding the target criteria (i.e., the couple's marriage date and childrens' birth dates), which had
the effect of paring the overall sample to just under 923 of
the 1470 families for which data for both husband and wife
existed. Ninety-one of these families met the criteria for
designation as stepfamilies. A random sample of an equal
number of the remaining 832 first families was drawn in order
to begin the comparison of the two groups on the selected
target variables. Final cleaning of the data further pared
the final sample to eighty-five first families and eighty-
seven stepfamilies.

Hypotheses and variables used in the study

This paper examines the differences in the incidence of
stressors and in the negative manifestations of stress in
intact biological families and stepfamilies. The major
purpose is to test hypotheses based on empirical and/or
clinical findings which overwhelmingly infer a positive
relationship between stepfamilies and (1) increased levels of
stressors, and (2) negative manifestations of stress. The
literature is clear on these points: the stepfamily struc-
ture is more complex than an intact nuclear family structure,
and the greater the structural complexity of a family, the
greater the level of stressors and negative manifestations of
stress relative to other families (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman,
1982). Thus, two general hypotheses related to the overall
research questions are:
Hypothesis 1.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report more stressors than spouses in first families.

Hypothesis 2.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report more negative manifestations of stress than spouses in first families.

Stressors

Two indicators of stressors (hypothesis 1) were utilized from the project questionnaire—family life events and daily stressors. Drawing partially upon McCubbin, Wilson, and Patterson's (1979) Family Inventory of Life Events (FILE), a family life events scale of 48 items was administered to both spouses in order to assess the total number of stressor events that had occurred in the year prior to the survey. Regarding the total number of stressors as reported by husbands and wives it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1a.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report a greater number of family life events than spouses in first families.

An 18 item inventory (Norem & Brown, 1983) of everyday situations (e.g., work, leisure) and relationships (e.g., children, neighbors) and their effects upon husband and wives was used as a second measure of stressors. Husbands and wives were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the effect each of the items had upon their life. Concerning the
effect of commonplace daily interactions upon a family it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1b.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report more negative impact from a variety of daily stressors than spouses in first families.

Manifestations of stress Multiple indicators were also utilized to assess the manifestations of stress (hypothesis 2)—the degree of disturbance caused by various family life events, individual symptomatology, and global and specific measures of individual satisfaction.

The first of these measures was derived from the family life events scale described above. In addition to being asked whether or not the particular event had occurred to the family in the last three years, husbands and wives were also asked to report how disturbing this event was to them on a five-point Likert scale. With respect to the level of disruption caused by various family life events it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2a.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report being more disturbed by family life events than spouses in first families.

In order to assess individual symptomatology, a theoretically valid five-item subset of an individual and family
health status inventory scale developed by Norem and Brown (1983) was used to measure depression related behaviors for the individual spouses. Ratings on a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "almost always" for items like "had trouble sleeping" and "found it difficult to relax" were included. It is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2b.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report more individual symptoms than spouses in first families.

Five single-item Likert scale indicators of various aspects of individual satisfaction were used as final measures of manifestations of stress. Olson et al. (1983), suggest that global measures of life satisfaction are appropriate measures of manifestations of stress because they indicate the degree of discrepancy between expectations and present conditions. More specific measures indicative of one's satisfaction with their current family life, their relationship with their spouse, their relationship with their children, and with their childrens' relationship with each other were also included in the current analysis in order to ascertain whether differences in patterns of satisfaction exist between stepfamilies and first families. Therefore, it is finally hypothesized that:
Hypothesis 2c.

Spouses in stepfamilies will report less individual satisfaction with their life as a whole, with their current family life, with their spousal relationship, with their relationship with their children, and with their children's relationship with each other than spouses in first families.

In addition to the independent variable determining family group membership and the multiple dependent measures for level of stressors and manifestations of stress, eight demographic covariates were utilized throughout the analysis: age of husband, age of wife, husband's education, wife's education, family size (as reported by husband), family size (as reported by wife), family income, husband's income, wife's income, years married, and community size.

Analysis strategies

Since a major goal of this study is to specify how much differences on multiple measures of family functioning between intact biological families and stepfamilies are attributable to group membership and how much might be due to other factors, Multiple Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was chosen as the primary means for specifying the significance of any variation between the groups on the multiple dependent measures.

In MANCOVA, the linear combination of dependent variables is statistically adjusted for differences in the covar-
iates. The adjusted linear combination of dependent variables represents the combination that would have been obtained if all participants had started out with the same scores on all of the covariates. In this way an accurate assessment can be made of whether differences in the dependent variables can be attributed to family group membership rather than to chance. Thus, MANCOVA affords a more precise look at the relationship between group membership and multiple dependent variables with the effect of the chosen covariates partialled out (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). A subset of commands from SPSS* MANOVA were utilized to complete the analysis (SPSS*, 1983).

Results

Frequencies were obtained and cross tabulations were run to examine the relationships between the demographic covariates and the independent variables for both first families and stepfamilies. Demographic (covariate) characteristics of stepfamilies and first families are summarized in Table 2.1. These results were analyzed in order to further refine the data and to check for normality, curvilinearity and the presence of outliers which might confound the findings (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983).

Pearson correlation matrices for all the covariates and dependent variables used in the current analysis were then
TABLE 2.1. Sample characteristics—covariate means/standard deviations for first families and stepfamilies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVARIATES</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Families (n=85)</td>
<td>Step Families (n=87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age - Wife</td>
<td>45.30</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age - Husband</td>
<td>47.40</td>
<td>46.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education - Wife</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education - Husband</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>12.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Married</td>
<td>23.73</td>
<td>14.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - Family</td>
<td>39737.02</td>
<td>33997.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - Wife</td>
<td>10309.82</td>
<td>8677.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income - Husband</td>
<td>28138.74</td>
<td>26394.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Size:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Reporting</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Reporting</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Size</td>
<td></td>
<td>First Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage residing in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2,500</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2,500-50,000</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50,000</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

generated for the first family (n=85) and stepfamily (n=87) subsamples. While these matrices were initially obtained in order to specify directionality associated with significant results of the MANCOVA analysis, unexpectedly large differences in several of the first family/stepfamily coefficients pointed out new possibilities for continuing inquiry. A final step in the analysis process utilized these correlations in order to estimate the significance of all apparent differences between these correlation coefficients. Partial
results from this part of the process will be discussed in the concluding section of this paper.

**Stressors variables**

The two hypotheses associated with the first research question posit that husbands and wives in stepfamilies will report a greater number of family life events and more negative impact from a variety of daily stressors than will spouses in first families. Results of the omnibus MANOVA summarized in Table 2.2 do not support these hypotheses.

Multivariate analysis of the relationship of family group membership to the set of dependent variables with the effect of the covariates partialled out result in extremely low F-values for the criterion statistic. These findings are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.2. Means and F values of family form, covariates and stressors variables—multivariate and univariate analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Means</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MULTIVARIATE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIVARIATE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stressors Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family events:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily stressors:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant at .01 level.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant at .05 level.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
paralleled and supported by the univariate analyses of the
effect of family form on each one of the dependent variables.
While the comparative means for each of these variables
suggest the possibility of significance, after controlling
for the effect of the demographic covariates it is clear that
no significant relationships exist between the independent
variable, family form, and any of the dependent variables.
Indeed, none of the relationships remotely come close to our
criterion for significance. Taken in turn, these results
demonstrate no significant relationships between the inde­
pendent variable of family form and (a) the number of stres­
sor events reported by husbands or wives and (b) the impact
of daily stressors on husbands and wives. Taken together,
the data strongly suggest that stepfamilies and first fam­
ilies do not significantly differ in the amount of stressors
as reported by either spouse, after controlling for a variety
of demographic covariates.

Instead, examination of the equivalent analysis of the
set of covariates and the set of dependent variables with
family form effects eliminated demonstrates a multivariate
relationship significant between the .05 and .01 levels.
Univariate findings summarizing results of independent multi­
ple regressions for the covariate group and the four depend­
ent variables taken separately (also Table 2.2) reveals that
the most significant single relationship is between the
covariate group and the individual dependent variable corresponding to the perceived negative impact of the husband’s daily stressors. Indeed, this latter is the only one of the univariate relationships significant at the .05 level or above, although two of the others lie just outside of our decision criterion.

Analysis of multiple regressions for each dependent variable in turn, with covariates acting as multiple continuous independent variables, clarifies the data further (see Table 2.3). A wife’s reported number of events for three years is significantly related to only two of the individual covariates, family size (as reported by the wife) and husband’s educational level. The wife’s daily stressors are likewise significantly related to only two of the covariates, family size (reported by wife) and husband’s income. None of the individual covariates are related to either of the other two dependent variables. For stressors, demographic factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressors variables</th>
<th>Covariates</th>
<th>t value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s reported events</td>
<td>Family Size (Wife reporting)</td>
<td>2.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husband’s education</td>
<td>-2.41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily stressors for wife</td>
<td>Family size (wife reporting)</td>
<td>2.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husband’s income</td>
<td>-2.03*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at .05 level.
acting together rather than individually clearly account for more of the reported variance in the dependent variables measuring stressors than does either first family or step-family group membership.

Stress manifestation variables

Considering the second research question, although the comparative means for several dependent variables suggest the possibility of significant group differences, results from the omnibus MANOVA for manifestations of stress (Table 2.4) do not support the hypotheses that first families and step-families differ significantly in (a) the level of disturbance caused by family life events, (b) the individual symptom levels of spouses, or (c) the global/specific satisfaction levels of spouses.

As with the previous set of hypotheses, multivariate analysis of the relationship between family form and the set of stress outcome variables with the effects of the covariates eliminated result in insignificant values of F. Similarly, univariate analysis reveals no significant relationships between family form and any of the dependent variables separately considered. Only one of these relationships, with wife's family satisfaction, came close to the .05 level of significance. As before, the data strongly imply that, after controlling for demographic factors, stepfamilies do not
Table 2.4. Means and F values of family form, covariates and outcome variables—multivariate and univariate analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>F Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Families</td>
<td>Step Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=85)</td>
<td>(n=87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MULTIVARIATE</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIVARIATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Variables</td>
<td></td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>25.84</td>
<td>27.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>18.06</td>
<td>20.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of depression:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>9.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with life as whole:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with family life:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with spousal relationship:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with own relationship to children:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with children's relationship with each other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No relationships significant at .05 level or greater.

Differ significantly from first families in negative manifestations of stress.

With the effects of biological or stepfamily group membership partialled out, neither the multivariate nor the
univariate findings demonstrate any significant relationship between the set of covariates and the dependent variables, considered as a group or individually (Table 2.4). Either no group differences in manifestations of stress exist between stepfamilies and first families, or whatever differences do exist can be attributed to variables not included in the analysis. Only five of the outcome variables demonstrated significant relationships to any of the covariates analyzed individually (see Table 2.5 below).

## TABLE 2.5. Significant individual covariate predictors of outcome variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome variables</th>
<th>Covariates</th>
<th>t value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife's satisfaction with family life</td>
<td>Wife's age</td>
<td>-2.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community size</td>
<td>-2.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's satisfaction with relationship with children</td>
<td>Community size</td>
<td>-2.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife's satisfaction with children's relationship</td>
<td>Community size</td>
<td>2.44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's satisfaction with wife</td>
<td>Husband's age</td>
<td>2.25*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at .05 level.
**Significant at .01 level.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study do not support the generally accepted notion that stepfamilies experience more stressors and negative manifestations of stress than do first families.
Clearly, they provide a sharp challenge to the deficit comparison model that has dominated thinking regarding stepfamilies for decades, and lend overt support to the proposition that it is the conditions rather than the nature of stepfamilies that distinguish them from first families.

These findings have several implications for researchers and theoreticians, raising serious questions regarding the broadly accepted theoretical givens concerning stepfamily formation and stepfamily life. It is no longer enough merely to point to different categories of stressors and thereby draw conclusions regarding structural complexity and resultant level of stress. Hopefully, this study and others like it will give renewed impetus to studies which subject such chains of assumption and, ultimately, conjecture, to a much needed dose of critical scrutiny.

Ideally the findings of this study will also prove useful to those providing direct services to stepfamilies. Taken as part of a body of recent work which indicates significantly fewer differences between first families and stepfamilies than had previously been thought to be the case (Robinson, 1984; Santrock et al., 1982; Ganong & Coleman, 1984), such studies indirectly contribute to updating the "common sense" regarding stepfamily development. More directly, one implication to be drawn from the current study is that perceived stepfamily deficits vis-a-vis first families
are more likely attributable to socioeconomic effects or to unconscious bias than they are to the fact of living in a stepfamily, per se.

All the foregoing is not to say, however, that first family/stepfamily differences do not in fact exist, only that they have in the past been overstated and are, perhaps, more subtle than had previously been believed. Indeed, preliminary analysis of Pearson correlations generated from each family type on each of the 29 variables used in the study gives at least inferential support to the idea that the stress process in stepfamilies and first families could differ in several distinct ways. When it was noted that some rather large discrepancies existed between first family/stepfamily correlations for some variable pairs, the raw correlations were converted to standardized Z scores (adjusting for sample size) and then individually contrasted in order to estimate the significance of differences between the correlations for the two family types. Forty-two of the 435 correlations contrasted in this manner were significantly different at or beyond the .05 level. Table 2.6 summarizes the results obtained from this part of the analysis.

A few of these significant differences are entirely self-evident ones, of course. It is simply common sense to expect a positive relationship between age and number of
TABLE 2.6. First family/stepfamily pooled Pearson correlation contrasts significant at or beyond .05 level (adjusted Z > 1.96)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1&lt;&gt;Variable 2</th>
<th>Pearson coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first n=85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (wife)&lt;&gt;Age (husband)</td>
<td>.84*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (w)&lt;Years married</td>
<td>.86*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (w)&lt;How disturbing family events (w)</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (w)&lt;how disturbing family events (h)</td>
<td>.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (w)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (w)</td>
<td>- .14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (w)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (h)</td>
<td>- .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (h)&lt;Years married</td>
<td>.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (h)&lt;How disturbing family events (w)</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (h)&lt;How disturbing family events (h)</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years married&lt;&gt;Family size (w)</td>
<td>.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years married&lt;&gt;Family size (h)</td>
<td>.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years married&lt;&gt;How disturbing family events (w)</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years married&lt;&gt;How disturbing family events (h)</td>
<td>.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (f)&lt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (w)&lt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (w)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (h)</td>
<td>.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (h)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (w)</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Family size (h)</td>
<td>.96*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Family events (h)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Satisfaction with life as whole (h)</td>
<td>.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (h)</td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Satisfaction with spousal relationship (h)</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (w)&lt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (h)&lt;Family events (h)</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community size&lt;&gt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (h)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (h)</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation significant at .05 level.
TABLE 2.6. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable 1&lt;&gt;Variable 2</th>
<th>Pearson coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (h)&lt;&gt;Satisfaction with spousal relationship (h)</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (h)&lt;&gt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size (h)&lt;&gt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (w)</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family events (w)&lt;How disturbing family events (w)</td>
<td>.76*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family events (w)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (w)</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family events (h)&lt;Satisfaction with life as whole (w)</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily hassles (h)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (w)</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (w)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (w)</td>
<td>-.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (w)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (h)</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (w)&lt;Satisfaction with spousal relationship (w)</td>
<td>-.42*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (w)&lt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (h)&lt;Satisfaction with life as whole (w)</td>
<td>-.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing family events (h)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (w)</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of depression (h)&lt;Satisfaction with family life (w)</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with life as whole (h)&lt;Satisfaction with own relationship to children (h)</td>
<td>.49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with spousal relationship (h)&lt;Satisfaction with children’s relationship with each other (h)</td>
<td>.34*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

years married, for example, and that the relationship between these two variables would be significantly more pronounced in unbroken families (.86 for wives; .78 for husbands) than in
remarried ones (.42 and .39, respectively). Other apparent
differences, while perhaps not as manifest as the aforemen-
tioned one, can similarly be intuitively grasped in light of
explanations currently prevalent in the family stress litera-
ture. While the correlation between husbands’ and wives’
responses regarding family size is a healthy .96 for first
families, for instance, it is a significantly lower (although
still quite robust) .79 for stepfamilies. Reflecting Boss
and Greenberg’s notions concerning the concept of boundary
ambiguity (1984), one quite plausible and readily accessible
explanation for this difference between family types could
involve heightened uncertainty regarding family membership in
stepfamilies.

Most of the apparent first family/stepfamily differences
gleaned from the contrast of correlations do not as easily
lend themselves to such obvious or intuitive interpretations,
however, either when weighed in light of the entire body of
findings from the current study or by recourse to explana-
tions drawn from a review of relevant literature. Perhaps
the most dramatic example involves the apparent first family/
stepfamily dissimilarities between stressor perception and
satisfaction. In first families these sets of variables in
the main demonstrate strongly negative correlations; i.e.,
the more disturbing first family spouses perceive their
stressor events to be, the less likely they are to report
high levels of satisfaction. Although one might intuitively expect this to be the case for all families, the findings reveal that in stepfamilies no relationship between stressor perception and satisfaction exists. In remarried families, apparently, satisfaction does not depend on how disturbing one perceives stressor events to have been.

The range of possible explanations for this apparent difference between first families and stepfamilies is beyond the limited scope of this paper, although two possibilities rather immediately do stand out. On the one hand, the difference could be linked to sociocultural expectations developed prior to the formation of the stepfamily itself. If spouses have been culturally conditioned to expect significantly more problems of greater intensity in stepfamilies, it follows that any ensuing incident, whatever its intensity, would be more likely to be perceived as normal for that family than would a similar first family disturbance of equal intensity. On the other hand, the very nature of stepfamilies affirms that one or both spouses have "been around the block," so to speak. Having once gone through the experience of marriage, it is conceivable that remarried partners might have developed more realistic attitudes towards the wedded state. Having experienced similar or worse in their previous marriages, there is some likelihood that remarried spouses
would be better able to view such events more dispassionately, as it were.

Both these possibilities imply, of course, that attitudes towards stressor events are quite different in first families and stepfamilies. Stressor events, whatever their intensity, should be less likely to affect satisfaction because their occurrence would be considered more normal in stepfamilies than in first families. Neither of these possibilities is completely satisfying, however, in that both also suggest that remarried spouses would tend to find stressor events less disturbing than would first family spouses, a logical extrapolation contradicted in large part by the comparison of the correlations for these variables. The data demonstrate that, for wives, the relationship between stressor events and level of disturbance is significantly stronger in stepfamilies than in first families; i.e., as the number of stressors increases, remarried wives are significantly more likely first family wives to report high levels of disturbance, although the relationship between the variables is robust in both cases (.76 and .88 for first families and stepfamilies respectively). Clearly, an elegant explanation of this apparent first family/stepfamily difference is more elusive than not. Other significant differences between first families and stepfamilies, notably involving age and family size, appear equally difficult to explain.
A critical point to be taken from introducing these apparent differences is that we still have much to learn from continuing research into questions raised by this and other studies. The current study was certainly never intended to be definitive, and is admittedly limited in several regards. We note but cannot explain, for example, the somewhat inflated figures for family income in both the first family and stepfamily samples utilized in the study, and similarly offer no cogent explanations for the counter-intuitive findings on family type and community size. Also, the data do not offer much insight into several critical questions currently being considered in the literature on remarried life. Identified through the use of a commercial mailing list, the sample may systematically exclude many low income families. Since it was primarily intended to study families in their middle years, it likewise says little about the initial stages of stepfamily formation. And, given the failure to elicit information relating to family type, the data do not address those questions pertaining to the relative diversity of the stepfamily structure when compared to the intact family form.

Even acknowledging these caveats, we still believe the current study has much to offer. It is far too easy simply to aver that stepfamilies fare better or worse when compared to first families, when what goes into making such statements involves value judgments at the deepest and most subconscious
levels. Stepfamilies are only different from first families, probably not in the ways in which we have been conditioned to believe, but different nevertheless. We have only begun to explore the nature of these differences, much less to understand them.
CHAPTER 3. FIRST FAMILIES, STEPFAMILIES AND STRESS: A TIME ONE/TIME TWO COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Utilizing longitudinal data from a nine-state family stress project, the present inquiry compares intact biological families and remarried families by contrasting Pearson correlation coefficients of stressors, negative manifestations of stress, and a variety of demographic variables in order to infer some ways in which the stress process might differ between the two family forms. In general, the findings indicate significantly fewer differences between first families and stepfamilies than had previously been thought to be the case, with no overall patterns manifest. While these results support a recent body of work critical of the "deficit comparison" approach that has formed the basis of most research central to the field, they also raise questions about attacks upon this approach predicated on a belief in the relative diversity and complexity of stepfamilies vis-a-vis intact biological families.

Introduction

As recently as 1976 it was estimated that as few as 10% of all U.S. children under 18 currently lived in stepparent households (Nelson & Nelson, 1982); by 1980, that estimate had risen to 16% (Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985). On the basis of this and similar data, many have suggested that the stepfamily is likely to become the most prevalent family form of the future (Duberman, 1975; Vinh & Vinh, 1979). Considering that over 40% of all children are likely to encounter parental divorce, it is probable that at least one in every three children alive today will live in a stepfamily at some point before they reach adulthood (Furstenberg, 1987).
In spite of an explosion of research interest in step-families since 1980 (Lagoni & Cook, 1985), many complain that these studies have raised far more questions than they have answered. In addition to leaving large areas of research virtually untouched, they have been characterized by disagreement and a general lack of replication (Sauer & Fine, 1988). As one example, while Anderson and White (1986) suggest that non-clinical, functional stepfamilies are characterized by less cohesion and more detachment, Smith (1987) indicates that remarried families do not report significantly lower levels of cohesion than intact first marriage families.

At the very least studies involving stepfamilies are generally acknowledged to be subject to most or all of the limitations pertaining to family research in general. Many reviews of the literature and/or conceptual discussions have, for example, stressed the need for more longitudinal designs in the study of alternative family forms and stepfamily development (Macklin, 1987; Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987).

Far more critically, the dominant modality for conducting research in this area has come under spirited attack in recent years. A growing body of work indicates that by accepting either implicitly or unconsciously the idea that variations from the intact biological family norm are intrinsically less functional family forms, this atheoretical "deficit comparison" approach generated much support for the
notion that life in remarried families is more problematic and less healthy than life in intact nuclear families. In addition to being increasingly tenuous, such findings have also tended to reinforce commonly perceived negative stereotypes of stepfamilies and stepfamily members (Coleman et al., 1985; Ganong & Coleman, 1986).

The lack of accurate data concerning stepfamilies is particularly acute in the area of family stress. For instance, a broad sampling of the literature devoted to stepfamily formation demonstrates widespread acceptance of the proposition that remarried, or "second" families, are subject to a greater number and variety of stressors than are first families. Partly as a consequence of this belief, it is also generally accepted that stepfamilies experience significantly more negative manifestations of stress than do nuclear families (Giles-Sims & Finkelhor, 1984). One recent study, however, found no support for either of these propositions, indicating, perhaps, that lingering sociocultural bias continues to prejudice the context of first family/stepfamily comparisons (Zeppa & Norem, 1988). Thus, studies which explore the relationship of first families, stepfamilies and stress are especially timely.

In light of the foregoing, the major purpose of the current study is to compare and contrast the relationship between stressors, manifestations of stress, and a variety of
demographic variables for a random sample of first families and stepfamilies at two different points in time. Data are analyzed in order to assess how the relationship between these three categories of variables changes in intact biological families and stepfamilies over time, as well as to infer some ways in which the stress process might differ between the two family forms.

Previous Research

Gelles (1980) defined a "whozzle effect" as a development that occurs when a finding generated by an empirical or theoretical analysis becomes generally accepted as factual without consideration of the possible limitations of the study. Over time the original conclusions become part of the "common sense" about the subject at hand and form the basis for more studies, more findings, more facts, etc.

It is quite likely that empirical and theoretical findings associated with stress in stepfamilies have been tainted, and to some extent continue to be tainted, by such whozzle effects. In addition to remarried families being subject to most or all of the stressors common to first families, a great many theoreticians and clinicians have posited, generally without empirical verification, the existence of a plethora of stressors that are apparently unique to stepfamilies.
One of the earliest and most influential of these studies posited that stepfamilies were especially vulnerable to interpersonal disturbances and malfunctioning because of a general lack of institutionalized norms for parental roles in remarried families (Fast & Cain, 1966). Extending these ideas Cherlin (1978) argued that generally higher divorce rates for remarriages were attributable in large part to the stress associated with these conflicting and ambiguous norms. According to Cherlin, solutions to stepfamily problems based upon first family norms were inherently inappropriate, since the problems faced by remarried families were intrinsically different than those faced by intact biological families. Since there is initially no consensus on the roles and expectations of stepparents and stepchildren, Ransom et al. (1979), suggest that a major source of stressors in stepfamilies arises out of the need to restructure and clarify these roles.

Rather more specifically, Visher and Visher (1978, 1985) suggest that a major source of stressors for stepfamilies stems from the fact that stepfamily life cycles seldom follow the "biological pattern." A previously childless stepparent might enter into a household containing children of various ages, for example. Intrafamilial sexual attraction could also be a source of greater tension in stepfamilies than in nuclear families because of a weakened incest taboo arising
from the non-biological relationships of the stepfamily members. The Vishers further imply a potential for stressful disruption latent in the relationship with the ex-spouse and quasi-kin. McGoldrick and Carter (1980) infer that the failure to acquire an adequate "emotional divorce" from the previous marriage is critical in the process of committing to the possibilities of the remarried household. Similarly, Goetting (1982) asserts that an important task in the process of remarriage is the changing of one's individual identity into a conjoint one--emotionally, psychically, parentally, and economically--and that this process is more complicated and stressful for remarried families than for first married ones. Whiteside (1982) and Papernow (1984) likewise stress the importance of establishing "stepfamily boundaries" independent of any previous biological family ones, with similar implicit complications. This list is far from exhaustive.

Given the context of this widespread acceptance of the belief that life is intrinsically more stressful for remarried families than for first married families, it is not remarkable that the few papers that have considered the questions of stress in stepfamilies in any depth have relied on this body of work as prima facie indicators of greater structural complexity and higher levels of stress in stepfamilies than in first families (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1982). Under closer examination, however, such findings
appear increasingly inadequate, based more upon whoozle effects than upon rigorous examination of the facts. Somewhat to our surprise, a previous analysis of some of the same data that forms the basis of the present study resulted in the finding that stepfamilies do not experience significantly more stressors or negative manifestations of stress than do first families (Zeppa & Norem, 1988).

While the data did not support either of these generally accepted propositions, it is not to say that differences in the experience and processing of stress do not exist between these different categories of families, only that they have, in the past, been overstated and are probably more subtle than had previously been thought to be the case. In fact, preliminary analysis of the sets of correlations generated by the previous study lent some support to the notion that the stress process in stepfamilies and first families could differ in several important ways. It was the desire to continue that analysis on a longitudinal basis that provided the impetus to the current study.

Methodology

Variables used in the study

**Stressors** Drawing partially upon McCubbin, Wilson, and Patterson’s (1979) Family Inventory of Life Events (FILE), a family life events scale of 48 items was adminis-
tered to both husbands and wives. It was given in order to assess the total number of stressor events that had occurred in the year prior to the time one survey, and the two years prior to the time two survey.

Manifestations of stress--the degree of disturbance caused by various family life events, individual symptomatology, and global/specific measures of individual satisfaction--were assessed by several measures. The first of these indicators was derived from the family life events scale described above. Not only were spouses asked whether or not the particular event had occurred to the family in the last (two) year(s), husbands and wives were also asked to report how disturbing this particular event was to them on a five-point Likert scale.

A theoretically valid five-item subset of an individual and family health status inventory scale measuring depression related behaviors (Norem & Brown 1983) was used in order to assess symptomatology for the individual spouses. Ratings on a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "almost always" for items like "had trouble sleeping" and "found it difficult to relax" were included.

Five single-item Likert scale indicators of various aspects of individual satisfaction were used as final measures of manifestations of stress. Global measures of life satisfaction are appropriate measures of manifestations of
stress because they indicate the degree of discrepancy between expectations and present conditions (Olson et al., 1983). More specific measures indicative of one's satisfaction with their current family life, their relationship with their spouse, their relationship with their children, and with their children's relationship with each other were also included in the current analysis in order to ascertain whether differences in patterns of satisfaction exist between stepfamilies and first families.

In addition to the independent variable determining family group membership, the dependent measure for level of stressors, and the multiple dependent measures for manifestations of stress, seven demographic covariates were utilized throughout the analysis: age of husband, age of wife, husband's education, wife's education, family size (as reported by husband and by wife), family income, husband's income, wife's income, and number of years married.

Data collection

This study analyzes data collected in the spring of 1983 and again in the spring of 1985 from the nine-state North Central Regional Project on Stress in Families in their Middle Years, support for which was provided by respective state Agricultural Experiment stations. Evenly divided between urban and rural, the sample targeted families with
two parents and at least one adolescent living at home, with wives between 35 and 54 years of age. Questions in the survey focused on stressors such as major life events: resources of family integration and adaptability, social networks, and socioeconomic status; and outcomes of individual symptomatology, general health, and satisfaction with aspects of individual and personal life.

Nineteen hundred and forty-five families across the project area provided data for an overall time one response rate of approximately 32%. Time two questionnaires were sent to all those who returned time one questionnaires. Fifty-nine percent of these follow-up questionnaires were subsequently returned, for an overall time two response rate of approximately 19% of the total time one sampling population.

Because information pertaining to family type was not elicited, further data reduction measures were necessary to determine the number of stepfamilies in the overall sample. Since some of the children within stepfamilies would have had to have been born before the remarried couple's wedding date, stepfamilies were identified through the expedient of comparing the current couple's wedding date with the birth dates of every child. Although some of the families grouped in this fashion might not, in fact, be stepfamilies, it was assumed that the margin for error was relatively low. Given the paucity of longitudinal data sets on large numbers of
stepfamilies, the advantages of the opportunity for this study seemed to outweigh the risk.

Ensuring that complete data existed regarding the target criteria (i.e., the couple’s marriage date and children’s birth dates) had the effect of paring the overall sample to just under 923 of the 1470 families for which data for both husband and wife existed. Ninety-one of these families met the criteria for designation as stepfamilies. A random sample of an equal number of the remaining families was drawn in order to begin the comparison of the two groups on the selected target variables. Final cleaning of the data further pared the final time one sample to eighty-five first families and eighty-seven stepfamilies. The time two sample consisted of forty-one first families and forty-two stepfamilies. Table 3.1 provides a look at the characteristics of both time one and time two responders.

<p>| TABLE 3.1. Sample characteristics--variable means for all families--time one and time two |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Time One                        | Time Two                        |
| First                          | Step                            | First                          | Step                            |
| (n=85)                         | (n=87)                          | (n=41)                         | (n=42)                          |
| Demographic variables:         |                                 |                                |
| Age:                           |                                 |                                |
| Wife (WAGE):                   | 45.30                           | 43.00                          | 48.25                           | 45.24                          |
| Husband (HAGE):                | 47.40                           | 46.40                          | 50.54                           | 48.40                          |
| Education:                     |                                 |                                |
| Wife (WEDUC):                  | 13.06                           | 12.75                          | 12.97                           | 13.24                          |
| Husband (HEDUC):               | 13.71                           | 12.82                          | 14.35                           | 13.49                          |
| Years married (YEARS):         | 23.73                           | 14.31                          | 26.56                           | 16.29                          |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time One First Step (n=85)</th>
<th>Time Two First Step (n=87)</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income (each increment equal to $5,000):</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (FINC):</td>
<td>8.79</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>8.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wife's (WINC):</td>
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<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's (HINC):</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>7.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household size (parents &amp; dependent children):</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting (WSIZE):</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting (HSIZE):</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stressor variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of family events(^a):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife reporting (WEVNT):</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>9.98</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>11.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband reporting (HEVNT):</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manifestation variables:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How disturbing perception of family events:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WPER):</td>
<td>25.84</td>
<td>22.63</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>25.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HPER):</td>
<td>18.06</td>
<td>17.59</td>
<td>20.91</td>
<td>20.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symptoms of depression:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WSYMP):</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>12.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HSYMP):</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>11.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction (1=very dissatisfied to 7=very satisfied):</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with life as a whole:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WLIFE):</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HLIFE):</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with family life:</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wife (WFAM):</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HFAM):</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with spousal relationship:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WSPOS):</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HSPOS):</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with own relationship to children:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WKID):</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HKID):</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with relationship between children:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife (WKIDS):</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband (HKIDS):</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Time 1 events are for one year preceding study. Time 2 events are for two years preceding study.

**Analysis strategies**

A major goal of this study is to compare intact biological families with stepfamilies on multiple measures of
family functioning at two different points in time in order to infer some ways in which the stress process might differ between the two family forms. A secondary goal is to describe how the relationship between stressors, manifestations of stress, and demographic variables changes in intact biological families and stepfamilies over time, both between and within family types. For convenience sake a decision was made to limit the analysis only to those variable pairs that might possibly indicate significant family group differences, rather than attempt an extensive examination of all the 650 time one/time two correlations for both family forms. By narrowing the focus in this way we hoped to minimize the confusion inherent in the consideration of such a massive amount of data, as well as to generate findings that could be useful to a broad range of researchers and practitioners. The complete set of Pearson correlations for all variables for both family types can be found in Appendix B.

The technique employed for the analysis involved the relatively simple expedient of comparing standardized correlations weighted for sample size. Four contrasts were considered. One set of two static first family/stepfamily comparisons (one each at time one and time two—summarized in Table 3.4) generated the major test statistics, while a set of two longitudinal comparisons involving intact families and remarried families (Tables 3.2 and 3.3, respectively) were
used to supplement the main analysis. Adjusted Z scores generated for each set of comparisons were utilized in order to determine whether the raw Pearson scores were significantly different from each other.

Obviously, the analytical technique of weighted, or "pooled" correlations is more sensitive to differences in large samples than in small ones. The decision criterion for significance in the larger time one sample, for instance, was .304 (in the standardized, not the raw correlational form), whereas in the much smaller time two sample it was .447. This led to a situation where some of the raw differences at time two were considerably greater than those at time one, although they were not great enough to meet the time two significance criterion in their standardized form. Because of this disparity, we opted to report not only the "unambiguously persistent" family group differences at both times, but also those with time two standardized (not raw) differentials between .304 and .447 as "ambiguously persistent" family group differences. Although we did not consider the latter group of findings truly indicative of significant family group differences, we strongly felt that they needed to be discussed. Both types of differences, as well as representative examples of the differences that "washed out" at either time one or time two, will be considered in our presentation of findings.
Before introducing the findings, however, it is important to take into consideration some ways in which the sample population changed between time one and time two of the study, and how these changes might have affected subsequent analyses.

**Time one/time two data set discrepancies**

While for the most part the sample aged rather predictably in the two year interval between data collections, in a few very important ways the time two respondents as a group appear to be quite different from their time one counterparts, so much so that it is tempting at first glance to consider the time two respondents a self-selecting subsample of the original group rather than a representative one. One rather unexpected anomaly as evidenced in Table 3.1 is worthy of special note, inasmuch as it possibly influenced all of the subsequent analyses.

Time one means indicated that first families were more affluent than stepfamilies to the tune of about $5,000-$7,500 annually (with one point on the income scale equivalent to $5,000). This is decidedly not the case at time two. Rather, total family income at time two is down on the order of $2,500 for first families—a not inconsiderable amount when the impact of inflation is considered—and up nearly $7,500 for stepfamilies. And, while for both types of fam-
ilies husbands' income rose about the same amount between the two survey periods, this is certainly not the case for their wives. Reported income for first family wives fell slightly between time one and time two, while their stepfamily counterparts enjoyed some improvement in reported income. Overall, the time two stepfamily sample is more affluent than the time two first family sample, on the order of about $5,000. This is clearly inconsistent with previous studies which have indicated an over-representation of stepparents among lower socioeconomic groups (Giles-Sims & Finkelhor, 1984).

While the possibility that the time two respondents are a self-selecting rather than a representative subsample of the original time one group cannot be ruled out entirely, the economic recession of the early 1980s that heavily impacted the nine participating states is a more likely explanatory factor. Given that remarried wives have once had to "fend for themselves," it is also likely that they are more liable to have been employed for a longer period of time than first family wives. With a more consistent pattern of participation in the labor force, it follows that they would not suffer as much as a group in any general economic slowdown. There is food for thought in the distinct possibility that it was financially advantageous to belong to a stepfamily during this particular period of time.
The potential significance of these changes in reported income is more completely comprehended by looking at Tables 3.2 and 3.3, which summarize the significant time one/time two contrasts for first families and stepfamilies, respectively. For first families, sixteen of the twenty-nine variable pair correlations that are significantly different at time two involve either individual or family income; for stepfamilies, eight of the seventeen significant contrasts involve these measures.

To all appearances a second major time one/time two sampling incongruity is indicated by the data for the two measures for household size. Both first families and stepfamilies shrunk on average from well over five to well under four household members between time one and time two of the project. However, project families were targeted precisely because they were in the middle of their "child-launching" years. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect that household size would have changed so much for both intact families and remarried families over such a brief span of time.

While the decrease in household size was anticipated, it is not certain how this change influenced subsequent analyses, only that it appeared to impact first families more so than stepfamilies. For first families, six of the remaining thirteen time one/time two differences involve one of the two measures of household size (Table 3.2); for stepfamilies,
none of the seventeen time one/time two differences involve these variables (Table 3.3).

TABLE 3.2. Significant time one/time two pooled Pearson correlation contrasts--first families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic variables</th>
<th>Time One (n=85)</th>
<th>Time Two (n=41)</th>
<th>Adj. Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAGE/HAGE</td>
<td>.84*</td>
<td>.66*</td>
<td>2.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAGE/YEARS</td>
<td>.86*</td>
<td>.65*</td>
<td>2.60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAGE/HSIZE</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
<td>2.43*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAGE/HSIZE</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
<td>2.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS/WSIZE</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>2.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS/HSIZE</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>-.41*</td>
<td>3.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIZE/HSIZE</td>
<td>.96*</td>
<td>.73*</td>
<td>5.03*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic/manifestations variables

| WEDUC/WLIFE                   | .03            | -.37*          | 2.09*  |
| FINC/HLIFE                    | .06            | -.39*          | 2.43*  |
| FINC/HFAM                     | -.02           | -.46*          | 2.51*  |
| FINC/WSPOS                    | -.08           | -.43*          | 2.00*  |
| FINC/HSPOS                    | -.07           | -.60*          | 3.25*  |
| FINC/WKID                     | -.21*          | .18            | -1.97* |
| FINC/HKID                     | .11            | -.28*          | 2.08*  |
| WINC/WSYMP                    | -.09           | .35*           | -2.34* |
| WINC/WLIFE                    | .09            | -.36*          | 2.36*  |
| WINC/WFAM                     | .10            | -.41*          | 2.75*  |
| WINC/WKIDS                    | .20*           | -.22           | 2.10*  |
| HINC/HSYMP                    | -.18           | .24            | -2.06* |
| HINC/HLIFE                    | .11            | -.34*          | 2.38*  |
| HINC/HFAM                     | .03            | -.40*          | 2.29*  |
| HINC/WSPOS                    | .06            | -.39*          | 2.46*  |
| HINC/HSPOS                    | .01            | -.53*          | 3.07*  |
| HINC/WKID                     | -.18*          | .22            | -2.11* |
| WSIZE/WLIFE                   | .01            | .47*           | -2.53* |

Stressors/manifestations variables

| WEVNT/WPER                    | .76*           | .92*           | -3.05* |
| WEVNT/HPER                    | .42*           | .73*           | -2.46* |

Manifestations variables

| WFAM/WSPOS                    | .98*           | .38*           | 2.21*  |
| HSPOS/WKID                    | .49*           | .21            | 2.19*  |

*Significant at or beyond .05 level.
TABLE 3.3. Significant time one/time two pooled Pearson correlation contrasts--stepfamilies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time One (n=85)</th>
<th>Time Two (n=41)</th>
<th>Adj. Z</th>
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<tr>
<td>Demographic variables</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>YEARS/WINC</td>
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<td>.25</td>
<td>-2.22*</td>
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<td>FINC/HINC</td>
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<td>.54*</td>
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<td>Demographic/stressors variables</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>-2.40*</td>
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<td>-2.51*</td>
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<td>Demographic/manifestations variables</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINC/HKIDS</td>
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<td>.28*</td>
<td>-2.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HINC/WPER</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>-2.21*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stressors/manifestations variables</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WEVNT/HPER</td>
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<td>.68*</td>
<td>-2.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifestations variables</td>
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<td>WPER/HPER</td>
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<td>-2.70*</td>
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<td>-2.93*</td>
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<td>HLIFE/HKID</td>
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<td>-2.37*</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFAM/WSPOS</td>
<td>.76*</td>
<td>.89*</td>
<td>-2.31*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at or beyond .05 level.

Results and Discussion

Of the total of 650 first family/stepfamily variable pairs contrasted, there are sixty-seven significant family group differences at either time one or time two (Table 3.4). In all sixty-one variable pairs are involved, with forty-one significant differences found at time one and twenty-six at time two. Somewhat surprisingly, only six of the forty-one time one family group differences are unambiguously persis-
tent (or "hard") at time two as well, with adjusted Z scores significant at or beyond the .05 level at both times; ten of the differences are ambiguously persistent (or "soft") at time two, with adjusted Z scores between .304 and .447 after exceeding the .05 decision criteria at time one.

**Unambiguously persistent differences**

Of the six unambiguously persistent family group differences, two involve demographic only variable pairs. In the first of these, the findings indicate that the relationship between a husband's age and number of years married is significantly more positive in first families than in stepfamilies (HAGE YEARS). The second significant demographic contrast involves the relationship between spousal income. Significantly more so for stepfamilies than for first families, a positive relationship exists between the individual income of each spouse (WINC/HINC).

Three more hard family group differences involve demographic with stressor or negative manifestation of stress variable pairs. In all three of these cases the demographic half of the variable pair is a measure of household size. The first of this trio of contrasts indicates that at both times stepfamily husbands are significantly more likely than first family husbands to report more family events as household size increases (FSIZE/HEVNT). The final two contrasts
TABLE 3.4. Significant first family/stepfamily pooled Pearson correlation contrasts with adjusted Z scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic variables</th>
<th>TIME ONE</th>
<th>TIME TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First (n=85)</td>
<td>Step (n=87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAGE/HAGE</td>
<td>.84* (.70*)</td>
<td>2.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAGE/YEARS</td>
<td>.86* (.42*)</td>
<td>5.44*</td>
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<td>HAGE/YEARS</td>
<td>.78* (.39*)</td>
<td>4.15*</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINC/WINC</td>
<td>.25* (.42*)</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINC/HINC</td>
<td>.81* (.82*)</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINC/HINC</td>
<td>-.08 (.34)</td>
<td>-2.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS/WSIZE</td>
<td>.34* (-.02)</td>
<td>2.41*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS/HSIZE</td>
<td>.31* (-.01)</td>
<td>2.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSIZE/HSIZE</td>
<td>.96* (.79*)</td>
<td>5.43*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic/stressor variables

| WSIZE/HEVNT           | -.05 (-.05) | -.27* (-2.08) | .09 (.26*) | -.08 (.08) |
| HSIZE/HEVNT           | -.09 (-.09) | -.24* (-2.12) | -.07 (.38*) | -2.07* |

Demographic/manifestation variables

| WAGE/WPER             | .24* (-.11) | 2.27* | .15 (-.22) | 1.63 |
| WAGE/HPER             | .29* (-.03) | 2.12* | .10 (-.31) | 1.84 |
| WAGE/HPOS             | -.03 (.12) | -0.96 | -.28* (.19) | -2.10* |
| WAGE/WKIDS            | -.14 (.24*) | -2.43* | -.03 (.05) | -0.36 |
| WAGE/HKIDS            | -.12 (.23*) | -2.28* | -.16 (.17) | -1.50 |
| HAGE/HKIDS            | -.00 (.27*) | -1.81 | -.35* (.39*) | -3.36* |
| HEDUC/WPER            | -.29* (.04) | -2.20* | .06 (.25) | -0.86 |
| HEDUC/HPER            | -.26* (.11) | -2.45* | .02 (.24) | -0.98 |
| HEDUC/WSYMP           | -.19* (-.02) | -1.07 | -.09 (.35) | -2.02* |
| YEARS/WPER            | .19* (-.16) | 2.27* | -.04 (.06) | -0.41 |
| YEARS/HPER            | .27* (-.12) | 2.55* | .15 (-.10) | 1.09 |
| YEARS/HKIDS           | -.04 (.17) | -1.33 | -.24 (.28*) | -2.32* |
| FINC/HPOS             | -.07 (-.13) | 0.48 | -.60* (-.20) | -2.15* |
| FINC/HKID             | .11 (.21) | 2.15* | -.28* (-.26) | -0.09 |
| WINC/WFAM             | .10 (.01) | 0.43 | -.41* (.02) | -2.00* |
| WINC/HKID             | .16 (.13) | 2.24* | -.18 (.16) | -1.54 |
| WINC/HKIDS            | .22* (-.06) | 2.18* | -.10 (.28*) | -1.68 |
| HINC/HPOS             | .01 (-.08) | 0.55 | -.53 (-.12) | -2.07* |
| HINC/WKIDS            | -.26* (.15) | -2.72* | -.03 (-.05) | 0.09 |
| WSIZE/WLIFE           | .01 (-.09) | 0.62 | .47* (-.10) | 2.66* |
| WSIZE/HLIFE           | .31* (.02) | 1.96* | .14 (-.34) | 2.17* |
| WSIZE/WFAM            | .04 (-.02) | 0.39 | .36* (-.09) | 2.02* |
| WSIZE/HFAM            | .23* (-.15) | 2.46* | .28* (-.31) | 2.70* |
| WSIZE/HPOS            | .24* (-.08) | 2.08* | .05 (-.37) | 1.90 |
| WSIZE/HKID            | .17 (-.19*) | 2.35* | .13 (-.14) | 1.16 |
| HSIZE/WLIFE           | .02 (-.14) | 1.05 | .35* (-.27) | 2.79* |

*Significant at or beyond .05 level.
of this set are associated with household size as reported by
wives, and indicate that at both time one and time two as
family size increases, husbands in stepfamilies are signif-
ically less likely to be as satisfied with their life as a
whole (WSIZE/HLIFE) and with their family life (WSIZE/HFAM)
as are first family husbands.
The last of the unambiguously persistent differences is linked with two of the measures of satisfaction. For step-families more so than for first families, the better the spousal relationship for the husband the greater his satisfaction with the children's relationship with each other (HSPOS/HKIDS).

As a group these differences come as close to actual or intrinsic first family/stepfamily group differences as we can observe with the current data set. The majority are fairly straightforward and do not require much cognitive stretching by way of interpretation.

It is simply common sense, for example, to expect that the older a man is the longer his marriage would have lasted, and that the relationship between these two variables would be significantly more pronounced in intact biological families than in remarried ones. More surprising is that this seemingly self-evident relationship does not persist at time two for women. Distinctly different at time one, there is no apparent difference between the family groups regarding the relationship between a woman's age and number of years married at time two (WAGE/YEARS).

The second hard family group difference involving coupled demographic variable pairs likewise lends itself to intuitive explanation. Remarried wives--by definition having once had to "fend for themselves"--are much more likely to
have once been employed than never divorced wives, especially those in the target age cohort. Having once been employed, they are always more likely to be employed, especially in the midst of an economic downturn.

The three hard differences matching demographic with stressor or negative manifestation of stress variables similarly make a certain amount of intuitive sense, although we begin to tread upon somewhat shakier ground here. Obviously, the larger the remarried family the likelier it is to contain two different sets of children. This could go a long way towards explaining the significantly more positive relationship between household size and stressor events (both reported by the husband) for stepfamilies than for first families; not only would stressor events arise out of the interactions between stepparent and stepchild, but also out of the interaction of one family of stepchildren with those of the other family. This being the case, however, we are rather perplexed that a similar relationship between household size as reported by the wife and husband’s events (WSIZE/HEVNT) washes out entirely between time one and time two.

We are additionally tempted to dismiss as intuitive the findings suggesting that husbands in stepfamilies are more likely to be dissatisfied with both their life as a whole and with their family life as family size increases, for many of the same reasons discussed above. A quick look at the group
of findings related to measures of household size, however, reveals that the relationship between these measures and stressor and manifestation variables is quite varied and complex. These relationships will be considered at greater length in the next section and in the section that deals with non-persisting family group differences.

The last of the unambiguous differences is easier to grasp. A husband’s satisfaction with his wife appears to be significantly related to his feelings about the children’s relationship with each other for both intact and remarried families (time two first families excepted). That it should be significantly more important in remarried families underscores, we believe, the centrality of the marital bond in these families, especially since it is far more likely that the children in any stepfamily will be hers and not his.

Ambiguously persistent differences

Of the ten ambiguously persistent or soft family group differences, only one involves matched demographic variable pairs. For first families probably more so than for stepfamilies, the longer the marriage the larger the household size as reported by the wife (YEARS/WSIZE).

Five of the remaining nine soft differences are associated with demographic and negative manifestation of stress variable pairs, with wife’s age being a common factor in
three of these ambiguously significant contrasts and household size associated with the other two. The former group of findings suggest that in first families more so than in stepfamilies, the older the wife the more disturbing are both her and her husband's perceptions of family events (WAGE/WPER & WAGE/HPER). Conversely, in stepfamilies seemingly more so than in first families, the older the wife the greater is her husband's satisfaction with the relationship between their children (WAGE/HKIDS). The first of the latter two contrasts indicates that as first family household size (reported by wife) increases, husbands in these families seem to report more spousal satisfaction than do remarried family husbands (WSIZE/HSPOS). Similarly, wives in first families appear to be more likely than stepfamily wives to report being satisfied with the relationship between the children as household size (reported by husband) increases (HSIZE/WKIDS).

The last four soft family group differences consist of negative manifestation of stress only variable pairs. Three of these are associated with wives' perceptions of how disturbing family events are. In first families probably more so than in stepfamilies, the more disturbing the perception of these events for the wives; (a) the lower the husbands' satisfaction with his family life (WPER/HFAM); (b) the lower the husbands' satisfaction with his own personal relationship to his children (WPER/HKID); and (c) the lower the wives'
satisfaction with her relationship to her husband (WPER/WSPOS). The final contrast of this group is related to a husband's symptoms of depression and his wife's level of family satisfaction: i.e., in first families probably more so than in stepfamilies, the more symptomatic the husband the less family satisfaction for wives as opposed to their stepfamily counterparts (HSYMP/WFAM).

While reiterating that we cannot consider these contrasts authentic family group differences without further study, as a group they are personally more intriguing than the unambiguous differences because they do not typically lend themselves to obvious or intuitive interpretations.

Upon consideration we should not expect to find, for instance, a more positive relationship for first families than stepfamilies between measures for household size and years married. Stepfamilies are more likely to be lower SES than first families, and it is axiomatic that lower SES groups are more prolific than middle and upper ones. It is just possible, since lower SES women also tend to bear their children earlier than other women, that as a group stepfamilies may have launched more of their children than have the first families in the sample. Coupling this insight with the fact of the decades long decrease in family size (impacting this particular cohort more so than any before it) gives us a roundabout, if not very elegant, explanation for this
superficially perplexing result. Parenthetically, a similar contrast associated with years married and husband's reported household size washes out entirely between time one and time two, although this might be due more to the fact that husbands did not furnish their date of marriage nearly as frequently as their wives, and their missing data for this question was typically replaced with their spouses' response (YEARS/HSIZE).

Ready-made interpretations of the ambiguous differences associated with the five demographic/manifestation and the four manifestation only contrasts are in like manner not easy to come by. For example, the findings indicate that in intact families apparently more so than in remarried ones, the older the wife the more distressful is her perception of stressor events. In turn, the results also demonstrate that the more distressful her perception of these events the greater the negative impact upon personal satisfaction. For these findings we have no easy explanations. Of course, the possibilities of insignificance and/or spuriousness certainly exist, but with equal justification the results could indicate some sort of "buffering" process at work in some stepfamilies which makes them as a group more resilient than intact biological families to some categories of stressors and to at least some of the negative manifestations of stress. Perhaps, as Collins and Ingoldsby (1982) have sug-
gested, stepfamilies might be healthier overall than first families—more motivated, more realistic, and more mature.

**Non-persistent differences**

Assuming that the foregoing represent authentic and potentially authentic family group differences, it follows that the contrasts which do not persist across the two survey dates are due not to intrinsic but to external influences. Given the changing time one/time two demographics discussed earlier, it is not unexpected that several of the relationships that washed out are linked to the three variables measuring individual and family income and the two measures of household size. In fact, the particular nature of the changes involving these variables offers us the unique opportunity of chronicling the differential effects of recession and launching upon the first families and stepfamilies represented in the sample.

At time one, for instance, the family groups do not differ in the relationships between a family and a wife’s income (FINC/WINC), while at time two the income of stepfamily wives is significantly more likely than the income of first family wives to be positively related to the total family income. A similar pattern is discernible for stepfamily/first family husbands (FINC/HINC), although the raw differential is not nearly so great. In a like manner,
there are no significant time one first family/stepfamily differences in the correlation between family income and a husband’s satisfaction with his spouse. At time two, however, it is apparent that first family husbands are significantly less likely to be satisfied with their spousal relationship as family income increases (FINC/HSPOS). A comparable relationship exists between a husband’s income and his spousal satisfaction (HINC/HSPOS). In a final contrast involving family income, as combined income increases, stepfamily husbands are apparently less likely to be satisfied with their own personal relationship to their children than are first family fathers (FINC/HKID); this difference evaporates at time two, however.

The income variable for wives, as might be expected, causes some of the most profound changes between time one and time two, especially in terms of a husband’s satisfaction with his own personal relationship to the children (WINC/HKID) and in his satisfaction with the relationship between the children (WINC/HKIDS). In both instances first family husbands are significantly more likely to be satisfied with those relationships at time one than are stepfamily husbands, but at time two these differentials narrowly miss significance in the opposite directions. Almost as dramatic is the relationship between a wife’s income and her satisfaction with her family life (WINC/WFAM). While there is no family
group difference at time one, first family wives are far less likely than stepfamily wives to be satisfied with their family lives as their income rises.

The decrease in household size between times one and two appears to have had a pervasive but rather mixed effect upon the satisfaction levels of husbands and wives. In addition to the three hard and three soft family group differences associated with these variables, twelve of the non-persisting differences involve household membership as well. Two of these were discussed earlier; the rest will be considered as a group below.

Of the non-persisting differences not already discussed elsewhere only one involves demographic only variable pairs. The findings indicate that at time one first family husbands and wives demonstrated significantly more agreement about current family membership than did remarried family spouses. At time two, however, these differences were negligible. It is just possible, of course, that fewer first family husbands supplied wedding dates than did stepfamily husbands (and thus more wife's data was used for this variable), but a likelier answer involves Boss and Greenberg's (1984) notions of boundary ambiguity. As the child-launching process continues, parents are more likely to disagree on current family membership. In this instance, first family confusion about who is in and who is outside of the family at time two approaches
that of the stepfamilies that remained in the sample at that time.

Fully nine of the non-persisting differences associated with size are linked to various of the measures of individual satisfaction—thirteen differences in all if including the two hard and two soft differences considered above. While some of these differences lose significance between time one and time two, others gain significance between these same time periods. As far as we can perceive, there is no general pattern in these shifts.

One striking consistency does stand out in these results, however. Whether they indicate significant and persisting family group differences or not, the correlation between size and satisfaction is always more positive for first families than for stepfamilies. In most cases the difference is not enough of a one to signify either hard or soft family group differences, but the regularity with which we observe this simple fact could be important in and of itself. Perhaps a more sophisticated analysis could explore in more detail the apparently complex relationship between household size and satisfaction in remarried families.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Perhaps the single most important contribution of this paper lies in its finding that there are very few first
family/stepfamily group differences that are unambiguously persistent between time one and time two of the survey. Clearly, most of the sixty-seven significant contrasts in the relationships between the variables at either time in the study do not represent authentic first family/stepfamily differences. If this were the case we would surely see far more of the differences persisting between time one and time two of the study. Taken as part of a body of recent work which indicates far more similarities than discrepancies between first married and remarried men and women (Zeppa & Norem, 1988; Smith, 1987; Leigh et al., 1985), this finding alone raises serious questions regarding some of the widely accepted theoretical givens concerning the magnitude of stressors and the nature of the stress process in step-families.

A second major contribution of this paper lies in those findings that deal with the differential effects of recession and launching upon intact and remarried families. Although it was never our intention to provide such a record, the peculiar nature of the changes in household size and income between the two survey periods study made the inclusion of these findings an inescapable imperative of the overall process. If indeed the current thrust in research into the remarital experience is accurate in suggesting that perceived stepfamily deficits vis-a-vis first families are more likely
attributable to bias, socioeconomic effects, and/or personal characteristics than they are to the simple fact of living in a stepfamily, then it is incumbent upon those working in this area to provide relevant insights from as many different starting points as possible. Historically, it has been too easy and to acceptable simply to presume that stepfamilies in general are worse off when compared to first families, when what goes into making such statements involves value judgments at the deepest and most subconscious levels.

While the results of this study strongly support recent critiques of the deficit comparison models that have dominated research in this area, a third important contribution of this paper is paradoxically critical of the empirical basis of some of these attacks. Many of these thrusts have been predicated on a belief in the relative diversity and complexity of stepfamilies vis-a-vis intact biological families, a belief which in turn rests upon a whole series of beliefs about stressors and negative manifestations of stress not themselves supported by the findings of this or other recent studies (Zeppa & Norem, 1988). Clearly, it is no longer sufficient merely to point to the fact of a stepfamily's existence and thereby draw conclusions regarding diversity, structural complexity, and the expected level of stressors and negative stress effects. Hopefully, this study and others like it will give renewed impetus to studies which
subject such chains of assumption and, ultimately, conjecture, to a much needed dose of critical scrutiny, thus indirectly contributing to updating the "common sense" about stepfamilies.

The findings presented here have broad implications for not only for researchers and theoreticians, but ideally will prove useful to clinicians providing direct services to stepfamilies as well. There appear to be many more similarities than differences between first marriages and remarriages, and the process of improving relationships probably occurs in much the same way for remarried and for first-married men and women. It is vital for those who work with stepfamilies to avoid the tendency to diagnose on the basis of "expected problems" and to assess cases on an individual basis (Leigh et al., 1985). Remarried families may in fact be different from intact biological families, although probably not in the ways in which we have been conditioned to believe. We have only begun to explore the nature of these differences, much less to understand them.

In retrospect, our rather limited aims for this paper were to synthesize a great mass of potentially valuable information in a way that might make its intricacies more accessible to a broad spectrum of readers. In this we hope we have achieved some small success, although the current study is admittedly limited in several respects. We note but
cannot explain, for example, the somewhat inflated figures for family income in both the first family and stepfamily samples utilized in the study. Also, the data do not offer much insight into several critical questions currently identified in the literature on remarried life. Because the sample was generated through the use of a commercial mailing list, the data may systematically exclude many low income families. Since the original intention was to study families in their middle years, the data likewise say little about the early years of stepfamily formation. Finally, given the failure to elicit information relating to family type, the data cannot directly address any questions pertaining to the relative diversity of the stepfamily structure when compared to the intact family form.

Be that as it may, we still feel that the current study has much to offer those currently working in this important area. And, while no attempt was made to develop hypotheses in order to specify causality or define specific models in any of the foregoing, it is our hope that others may wish to examine in more detail whatever nuances these data might suggest to them.
CHAPTER 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The analyses presented in the preceding chapters have attempted to scrutinize assumptions based upon empirical, conceptual, and/or clinical findings which have overwhelmingly inferred that remarried families with children experience significantly more stressors and negative manifestations of stress than do biologically intact first families. Popularly accepted but largely untested, these commonsensical assumptions continue to shape much of current wisdom regarding the increasingly common and highly diverse stepfamily form. The following pages are designed to briefly summarize and clarify major findings as well as to indicate some possible directions for future research.

Since a major goal of this analysis was to determine the degree to which first family/stepfamily differences were attributable to group membership and how much might be due to other factors, a multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) design was utilized in Chapter 2 in order to specify the significance of any variation between the two family forms on the multiple dependent measures of stressors and negative manifestations of stress.

Although the comparative family group means for the former set of variables hinted at the existence of more stressors in stepfamilies, further analysis of the data
strongly suggested that first families and stepfamilies did not significantly differ in the amount of stressors as reported by either spouse, after controlling for the effect of demographic factors. Instead, demographic factors acting in concert rather than individually accounted for far more of the reported variance for stressors than did family group membership.

None of the findings reported in Chapter 2 demonstrated any significant relationships between the demographic variables and any of the stress manifestation measures, either individually or as a group. Therefore, multivariate analysis of data for negative manifestations of stress did not support hypotheses that first families and stepfamilies differ significantly in the level of disturbance caused by family events, symptoms of depression, or global and specific levels of satisfaction.

By examining how the relationships between stressors, manifestations of stress, and demographic variables for intact and remarried families change over time, the main purpose of Chapter 3 was to infer ways in which the stress process itself might differ between the two family forms. Although there was some evidence to believe that the time two respondents constituted self-selecting rather than representative subsamples of the time one groups, the findings did indicate surprisingly few family group differences that
persisted between the two time periods encompassed by the data, and, for those few differences that did persist, no overall patterns were apparent. The major findings from these analyses clearly do not support the conventional wisdom that stepfamilies experience more stressors and negative manifestations of stress than intact biological families. Rather, by indicating far fewer family group differences vis-à-vis family stress than had previously been thought to be the case, both studies lend overt support to the idea that it is the conditions rather than any intrinsic quality of stepfamilies that most distinguish them from first families. In this sense, both analyses provide a sharp challenge to the deficit comparison model that has mechanically guided research in this area for decades. Taken as part of a growing body of work these two studies continue to cast doubt upon the widely accepted theoretical verities concerning stepfamily formation and stepfamily life. Paradoxically, neither of these studies bolster the thrust of the preeminent attacks upon the deficit comparison model. In the main, these assaults are predicated in large part on a belief in the relative diversity and complexity of stepfamilies vis-à-vis first families, a belief which in turn rests upon a series of beliefs implying that stepfamilies are subject to a greater number and variety of stressors than are intact families. Although the present studies made no effort to
specify the nature of the stressors that confronted participating families, remarried families clearly were not more prone to more stressors simply by virtue of their being stepfamilies. These findings do not in any way invalidate the major points of recent criticisms of the deficit comparison model, of course. However, they do imply that one important thrust in the overall critique of the deficit comparison model may in fact be predicated upon an unsupported comparison itself, namely that stepfamilies are prima facie more stressful than first families. If nothing else, this single implication stands as an indication of how pervasive the sociocultural bias against stepfamilies is, and how deeply ingrained it remains.

In a broader vein, one recommendation for future research springs quickly to mind. An oversight of the designers of the regional project upon which these analyses were based and which quite nearly proved the undoing of the present investigators stemmed from the designers' failure to include any questions pertaining to family form (e.g., intact, single-parent, remarried). Regardless of their preconceived utility, all projects intending to deal with large amounts of survey data should routinely include questions of this nature.

The analytical strategies used here demonstrate the usefulness of applying novel approaches to the data generated
by studies involving contrasts between different family structures, in particular the multivariate approach employed in Chapter 2. Empirical studies involving stepfamilies have been criticized for focusing on very specialized research questions with little or no generalizability to other areas of general interest. For this and other reasons, it is past time to implement more broadly based designs more fully capable of analyzing the broader questions pertaining to perceived family form differences. As the foregoing analyses have hopefully demonstrated, even those researchers most cognizant of the problems of sociocultural bias are not entirely immune from its effects.
LITERATURE CITED


Giles-Sims, J. (1987, November). Report presented to focus group on remarriage, annual meeting of National Council on Family Relations, Atlanta, GA.


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee, Drs. Craig Allen, Gordon Bivens, Donna Cowan, Rosalie Huisinga Norem, Marty Miller, and Ed Powers, for the support, guidance, jobs, friendship, and free meals (not too many of these!) they have offered throughout my many years of penance and poverty at ISU. Particularly I want to express my gratitude to Rosalie, who I feel like I’ve known forever, and who tricked me regularly into working much harder than I ever thought I’d have to, curse the luck.

More briefly but more lovingly, I want to thank my wife, Leslie, and my kids (Josh, Jenny, Jazzy, and, most recently, Francezca). Patience is never inexhaustible, and I’m glad I never exhausted yours.
APPENDIX A. VARIABLES AND VARIABLE ABBREVIATIONS UTILIZED

Demographic variables
- Wife's Age (WAGE)
- Husband's Age (HAGE)
- Wife's Education (WEDUC)
- Husband's Education (HEDUC)
- Years married (YEARS)
- Family Income (FINC)
- Wife's Income (WINC)
- Husband's Income (HINC)
- Household size (parents & dependent children)
  - Wife reporting (WSIZE)
  - Husband reporting (HSIZE)
- Community Size (CMTY)

Stressor variables
- Number of family events
  - Wife reporting (WEVNT)
  - Husband reporting (HEVNT)
- Daily stressors
  - Wife reporting (WHASS)
  - Husband reporting (HHASS)

Manifestation variables
- How disturbing perception of family events
  - Wife (WPER)
  - Husband (HPER)
- Symptoms of depression
  - Wife (WSYMP)
  - Husband (HSYMP)
- Satisfaction with life as a whole
  - Wife (WLIFE)
  - Husband (HLIFE)
- Satisfaction with family life
  - Wife (WFAM)
  - Husband (HFAM)
- Satisfaction with spousal relationship
  - Wife (WSPOS)
  - Husband (HSPOS)
- Satisfaction with own relationship to children
  - Wife (WKID)
  - Husband (HKID)
- Satisfaction with relationship between children
  - Wife (WKIDS)
  - Husband (HKIDS)

1 Utilized at time one only, not at time two.
2 Events at time one for one year preceding survey.
Events at time two for two years preceding survey.
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*Correlation significant at .05 level or greater.*
APPENDIX B. (continued)

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*Correlation significant at .05 level or greater.
APPENDIX B. (continued)

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HFAM (continued) / WKID/

| HKID            | .75*     | .81*     | .73*              | .80*     | HKID     | .39*       | .22*     | .38*     | .20 |
| WKIDS           | .14      | .18*     | .12               | .17      | WKIDS    | .72*       | .67*     | .50*     | .57* |
| HKIDS           | .58*     | .71*     | .37*              | .62*     | HKIDS    | .37*       | .23*     | .26*     | .06 |
| WSPOS/ HKID/    |          |          |                   |          |          |             |          |          |     |
| HKID/ HKID/     |          |          |                   |          |          |             |          |          |     |
| HKID            | .49*     | .31*     | .64*              | .30*     | WKIDS    | .25*       | .11      | .12*     | .31* |
| WKID            | .49*     | .42*     | .21               | .41*     | HKIDS    | .67*       | .80*     | .60*     | .76* |
| HKID            | .35*     | .14      | .10               | .12      | WKIDS/   | .30*       | .26*     | .24*     |     |
| WKIDS           | .30*     | .26*     | .24               | .31*     | HKIDS    | .42*       | .21*     | .29*     | .31* |
| HKID            | .24*     | .15      | .07               | .23      |          |             |          |          |     |
| HSPOS/ HKID/    |          |          |                   |          |          |             |          |          |     |
| HKID            | .38*     | .31*     | -.03              | .12      |          |             |          |          |     |
| WKID            | .65*     | .72*     | .45*              | .71*     |          |             |          |          |     |
| HKID            | .12      | .08      | -.11              | .14      |          |             |          |          |     |
| HKIDS           | .34*     | .66*     | .11               | .58*     |          |             |          |          |     |

*Correlation significant at .05 level or greater.
APPENDIX C. PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE (Time one sample)

We would like to have some background information about your family to help us in our study. Please fill in the following information about each member of your household, identifying each person by their relationship to you.

First, think about yourself.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Sex: M F</th>
<th>No. &amp; Yr. of Birth</th>
<th>Yrs. of School Completed</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>If Married, Mo. &amp; Yr. of Marriage</th>
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Next, think about each of your children, starting with the oldest child. We will be asking questions about each of your children later in this questionnaire. Please make sure your answers are from oldest to youngest in each instance.

<table>
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<th>Q2</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mo. Yr. Completed</th>
<th>Yes or No Leaving</th>
<th>Mo. Yr. You Provide</th>
<th>Living at (If No) Date</th>
<th>Reason for Left</th>
<th>Support</th>
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</table>

(Add on if necessary)

Finally, think about each other member of your household.

<table>
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<th>Q3</th>
<th>Relationship to You</th>
<th>Sex: M or F</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
<th>Yrs. of School Completed</th>
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<th>Support</th>
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Religious Preference:

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<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
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</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

Q5 Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification?

- Black
- White (Caucasian)
- Chicano (Mexican-American)
- Oriental
- Native American (American Indian)
- Other (please specify)

Q6 How many years have you lived in your present community? _________

Q7a. What is the size of the community in which you live? (circle one)

1. Less than 2,500 persons and outside an urbanized area
2. More than 2,500 persons but less than 50,000 persons
3. 50,000 or more persons

b. (If you live in a community of less than 2,500 persons) Is your home
on less than 1 acre of land or on a city or suburban lot?

1. Yes (skip to Q8)
2. No

c. (If no) Do you live on a farm?

1. Yes
2. No (skip to Q8)

d. (If you live on a farm of more than 1 acre) Did your farm produce
$1,000.00 or more in sales of crops, livestock, or other farm products
during the preceding year?

1. Yes
2. No

Please read each of the events listed below and mark whether it was ex­
perienced by any family member in the last three years. If yes, please
circle the number showing how disturbing it was and indicate whether it
occurred in the last twelve months.

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<tr>
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<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Marriage of a member</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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</table>

How Disturbing Was This Event?

- Slightly
- Moderately
- Quite
- Extremely

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Did It Occur In The Last 12 Months?</th>
<th>How Disturbing Was This Event?</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Death of a member</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Marriage of a member</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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APPENDIX C. (continued)

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<th>Has This Event Happened To Your Family In The Last Three Years?</th>
<th>How Disturbing was This Event?</th>
<th>Did It Occur In The Last 12 Months?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. Member moves out of home (for independence, for added schooling,</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>for job, for marriage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Member moves back (unemployed, divorced, or separated, etc.)</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Non-member (renters, boarders, etc.) moved into home</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Marital separation occurs</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<td>g. Periodic absence of family member due to work demands</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Family pet dies</td>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Pregnancy of unmarried member</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>j. Member demanding of new privileges, exemptions from family rules,</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>choice of friends, dates, etc.</td>
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<td>k. Adult child has trouble achieving independence</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>l. Household chores pile up</td>
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<td>m. Family took a stressful vacation</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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This Question Continues On The Next Page
APPENDIX C. (continued)

### B. Family, School and Work

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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Did It Occur In The Last 12 Months?</th>
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<td>n. Member drops out of school before completing training</td>
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<tr>
<td>o. Member returns to school after time away</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Major wage earner loses or quits job</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Major wage earner starts or returns to work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Member given promotion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. Member changes to new job or shifts career</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t. Major wage earner retires from work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u. Member accepts time consuming, unpaid assignment in voluntary association (scouting, church, or service agency)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Outside activities draw adult members away from family</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w. Member's hours/scheduling of work change</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

5

How Disturbing Was
This Event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has This Event Happened To Your Family In The Last Three Years?</th>
<th>NOT</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY</th>
<th>MODERATELY</th>
<th>QUITE</th>
<th>EXTREMELY</th>
<th>Did It Occur In The Last 12 Months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x. Member has major conflict with boss and/or others at work</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Family, Relatives and Close Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y. Relatives/in-laws become intrusive (offer unwelcome advice, gifts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z. Death of husband's or wife's parents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa. Death of brother or sister</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb. Death of close friend and confidant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc. Married children &quot;freeze out&quot; parents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dd. Member breaks up with close friend or confidant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ee. Relative dies (not parent or sibling)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Family and Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ff. Major wage earner experiences serious illness or accident</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gg. Member experiences serious emotional problems</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Question Continues On The Next Page
APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Old It Occur In The Last 12 Months?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hh. Child member experiences serious illness/accident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Aged parent(s) becomes seriously ill or disabled requiring direct care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jj. Member experiences menopause</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kk. Aged parent committed to institution or placed in nursing home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Family, Household Finance and the Law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ll. Husband's or wife's parents or siblings require financial assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm. Cut in total family income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nn. Expenses exceed total family income requiring going into debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oo. Family takes a major loss in stock market, bank failure, bad debts, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pp. Family receives windfall funds (inheritance, lottery win, or other unanticipated gain)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Disturbance</th>
<th>Did It Occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Member starts receiving public assistance in the form of food stamps, rent</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Member takes out or refinances a loan to cover increased expenses</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Family member involved with courts; robbed or assaulted, arrested for crime</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Family forced to dip heavily into family savings</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Member taking on additional jobs</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Member experiencing demotion, job bumping, or retooling</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Other Events Not Covered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Disturbance</th>
<th>Did It Occur?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please Go On To The Next Page
We would like you to think a bit more in detail about a few of the events which have happened during the last three years, as indicated by your answers to the previous questions. Please write in the 3 events from the previous list which you think have had the most impact on your family during the past three years.

Q9 • EVENT 1. ____________________________ Approximate mo. & yr. ______
Are there other changes which have taken place in your family because of this event? __yes __no If yes, what are they? ________________________________

Which family member do you think has been most affected by this event?
____self ____spouse ____son ____daughter ____other

Has this event happened to friends or other members of your community?
____yes __no If yes, to whom?_____________________________________________________________________

Has this change something you expected? __yes __no

What resources were important to you in coping with this event or change?
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Do you think these resources were adequate in this particular situation?
____yes __no If not, why? ___________________________________________________________________

Q10 • EVENT 2. ____________________________ Approximate mo. & yr. ______
Are there other changes which have taken place in your family because of this event? __yes __no If yes, what are they? ________________________________

Which family member do you think has been most affected by this event?
____self ____spouse ____son ____daughter ____other

Has this event happened to friends or other members of your community?
____yes __no If yes, to whom? ___________________________________________________________________

Has this change something you expected? __yes __no
APPENDIX C. (continued)

What resources were important to you in coping with this event or change?

__________________________________________________________

Do you think these resources were adequate in this particular situation?
__yes  __no  If not, why?

Q11 EVENT 3. __________________________  Approximate mo. & yr. _____

Are there other changes which have taken place in your family because of this event?  __yes  __no  If yes, what are they?

Which family member do you think has been most affected by this event?
__self __spouse __son __daughter __other

Has this event happened to friends or other members of your community?  __yes  __no  If yes, to whom?

Was this change something you expected?  __yes  __no

What resources were important to you in coping with this event or change?

__________________________________________________________

Do you think these resources were adequate in this particular situation?
__yes  __no  If not, why?

__________________________________________________________

Please Go On To The Next Page
APPENDIX C. (continued)

The following relationships and aspects of day to day routine are stressful for some persons. Please circle the number which best represents the impact each of these has on your life most of the time. A rating of 1 would mean a very negative effect on your life. A rating of 5 would mean a very good effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q12</th>
<th>VERY NEGATIVE</th>
<th>MODERATELY NEGATIVE</th>
<th>LITTLE EFFECT</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Spouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Ex-spouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. In-laws</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Brothers/Sisters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Neighbors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Leisure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Meals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Household Chores</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Finances</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Pets</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Errands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Time Use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s. Other (specify)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please read each statement and circle the response number which best describes your family for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q13</th>
<th>How would you describe your family now?</th>
<th>How would you like your family to be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td>Once in a while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>In our family, it is easy for everyone to express his/her opinion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>It is easier to discuss problems with people outside the family than with other family members</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Each family member has input in major family decisions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Our family gathers together in the same room</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Children have a say in their discipline</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Our family does things together</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Family members discuss problems and feel good about the solutions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>In our family, everyone goes his/her own way</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Question Continues On The Next Page
Please read each statement and circle the response number which best describes your family for each item.

**Q13**  
How would you describe your family **now**?  
How would you like your family **to be**?

| a. Family members are supportive of each other during difficult times | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. In our family, it is easy for everyone to express his/her opinion | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. It is easier to discuss problems with people outside the family than with other family members | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Each family member has input in major family decisions | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Our family gathers together in the same room | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| f. Children have a say in their discipline | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| g. Our family does things together | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| h. Family members discuss problems and feel good about the solutions | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| i. In our family, everyone goes his/her own way | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |

This Question Continues On The Next Page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How would you describe your family now?</th>
<th>How would you like your family to be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>We shift household responsibilities from person to person</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Family members know each other's close friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>It is hard to know what the rules are in our family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Family members consult other family members on their decisions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Family members say what they want</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.</td>
<td>We have difficulty thinking of things to do as a family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.</td>
<td>In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.</td>
<td>Family members feel very close to each other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>Discipline is fair in our family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.</td>
<td>Family members feel closer to people outside the family than to other family members</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How would you describe your family now?</th>
<th>How would you like your family to be?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td>Once in a while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Our family tries new ways of dealing with problems</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u.</td>
<td>Family members go along with what the family decides to do</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>In our family, everyone shares responsibilities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w.</td>
<td>Family members like to spend their free time with each other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x.</td>
<td>It is difficult to get a rule changed in our family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y.</td>
<td>Family members avoid each other at home</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z.</td>
<td>When problems arise, we compromise</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa.</td>
<td>We approve of each other's friends</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bb.</td>
<td>Family members are afraid to say what is on their minds</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cc.</td>
<td>Family members pair up rather than do things as a total family</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dd.</td>
<td>Family members share interests and hobbies with each other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following statements are about the changes in your family as your adolescent or young adult leaves home. If one or more of your children has left home, we would like to know your feelings about this change. If not, go on to the next page. If yes, fill in the name of your adolescent who has most recently left home in the blank provided. For each question, circle the answer that best shows how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q14 Birth date for this child:</th>
<th>Mo.</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q15a. I feel that it will be difficult for me now that _____ has left home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I feel that I prepared myself for _____ leaving home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I have difficulty accepting that _____ has grown up.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I continue to keep alive my hope that _____ will return home to live.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. I plan to use _____'s room for other purposes now that s/he has left home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q16a. Our family talks about _____ quite often.</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. I think about _____ a lot.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I find myself thinking about where _____ is and what s/he is doing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. _____ still comes home to sleep.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I am bothered because I miss my son/daughter.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Since _____ left, I am bothered by feelings of loneliness.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q17 Overall, how do you feel about your adolescent leaving home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
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<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

We're interested in the health of each member of your family. Please use the codes given below to indicate how often the following items apply to members of your family.

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Frequently
5. Almost Always

For example, if child 1 smokes "frequently" and child 4 smokes "sometimes" and no one else in the family smokes, then you would answer:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oldest</th>
<th>Youngest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF</td>
<td>CHILD 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILD 2</td>
<td>CHILD 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILD 4</td>
<td>CHILD 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILD 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

smoked cigarettes, cigars, or pipe......

1 4 1 1 3 1

Q18 How often have members of your family:

- a. had trouble sleeping......
- b. had accidents..............
- c. been irritable................
- d. been depressed................
- e. smoked cigarettes, cigars, or a pipe...
- f. used prescription drugs........
- g. had a weight problem...........
- h. used alcohol...................
- i. found it difficult to relax....
- j. had headaches................
- k. had muscle tension, nervous indigestion or anxiety..
- l. had colds or flu...............
The following items refer to preventive health practices. Again using the codes, please indicate how often you and your family follow these practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Almost Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q19 How often you and your family:

a. Are alert to warning signals of disease.

b. Practice good nutrition.

c. Have regular physical and dental checkups.

d. Exercise to maintain fitness.

e. Are immunized against disease.

f. Take enough time to relax.

g. Practice a relaxation technique (meditation, yoga, etc.).

h. Practice safety habits (buckle auto seat belts, wear bike helmets, etc.).

Please describe the general health of each person in your family, including yourself. Circle the number in the category which best describes the state of health of that family member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>SELF</th>
<th>CHILD 1</th>
<th>CHILD 2</th>
<th>CHILD 3</th>
<th>CHILD 4</th>
<th>CHILD 5</th>
<th>CHILD 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy (usually ill)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy (often ill)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy (sometimes ill)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy (seldom ill)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy (almost never ill)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

To get an accurate financial picture of the families in our study, we need to know something about your family's work and income.

First, we would like some more information about your work:

Q21 Are you working for pay, either full-time or part-time?
  _____ Yes, employed full-time (35+ hours/week) or with a job but not
  at work at present because of temporary illness, vacation, or
  strike.
  _____ Yes, employed part-time (less than 35 hours/week)
  _____ Unemployed, laid off, looking for work
  _____ Full-time homemaker
  _____ Retired
  _____ In school
  _____ Disabled
  _____ Other (Please specify_________________________)

Q22 Please give us some information about the type of work you do/did.
  (a) What is/was your main occupation or job title?_________________________
  (b) What kind of work do/did you do; that is, what are/were your main
     duties on the job?______________________________________________________
  (c) In what type of business or industry is/was this; that is, what
     product is/was made or what service is/was given?_______________________

Q23 Next, think about your personal income before taxes for 1992. Be sure to include all sources of income that you receive personally; such as earned income, investments, social security, your own business, job-related benefits, welfare benefits, rent and so on. If you farm or have your own business, we would like you to indicate your net farm or net business income before taxes.

  $_________________________(nearest $1,000)

Q24 Now, think about your total family income for 1992. This is total income before taxes for all members of your family, including yourself and your children. Be sure to include all sources of income; such as earned income, investments, social security, your own business, job-related benefits, welfare benefits, and so on. If your family farms or has its own business, indicate net farm or net business income before taxes.

  $_________________________(nearest $1,000)
APPENDIX C. (continued)

Q25 In general, which of the following best describes any changes in your total family income over the past 3 years?
   a. increased more than 25%
   b. increased 5 to 25%
   c. changed less than 5% (plus or minus)
   d. decreased 5 to 25%
   e. decreased more than 25%
   f. fluctuated up and down over the 3 years.

Q26 To what extent do you think your income today is enough for you to live on?
   a. can’t buy some necessities
   b. can meet necessities only
   c. can afford some of the things we want but not all we want
   d. can afford about everything we want
   e. can afford about everything we want and have some left over

Q27 Thinking about your family’s overall financial condition -- what you own, owe, earn, are able to buy, and so on -- which of the following best describes any change in your overall financial condition over the past 3 years?
   a. much worse
   b. worse
   c. same (skip to Q29)
   d. better
   e. much better

Q28 If your financial condition has changed during the past 3 years, please describe the change(s) below.

For each item listed below, think about the amount of money your family spends for family members now living in your household. Over the past 3 years, how has the amount you spend changed? In general, do you feel that the amount you spend today is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q29</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>Ho</th>
<th>More</th>
<th>More</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Food eaten at home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Food eaten away from home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Clothing purchases</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Clothing repairs and alterations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Circle the ones you have done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Repair shoes instead of buying new ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Use self-serve gas in car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Service/repair own car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Carpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Exchange help with others (babysitting, repairs, clothing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.</td>
<td>Buy on credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.</td>
<td>Spend savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.</td>
<td>Pay certain bills first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>Take advantage of sales/specals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.</td>
<td>Call long-distance at cheaper rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t.</td>
<td>Write letters instead of phoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u.</td>
<td>Make, not buy, gifts for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>Sell personal items (clothing, jewelry, furniture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w.</td>
<td>Do own yardwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q32 What other things have you done in the past 3 years to cope with economic changes?
APPENDIX C. (continued)

21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent in:</th>
<th>Decreased a lot</th>
<th>Decreased somewhat</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Increased somewhat</th>
<th>Increased a lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. Household work (cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Home maintenance and repair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Yardwork and gardening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Recreation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Personal improvement (courses, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Volunteer work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Sleep</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q34 What other changes in time use have you made in the past 3 years?

Families manage in different ways. Please indicate your family's situation as it is now and how you would like it to be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Family Now</th>
<th>Like Family To Be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost never</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. We make advance plans about how to use our time and money</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. We routinely check over last month's spending to see if we spent more than we planned</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. We use a written budget</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. We record date and amount paid on bills we have paid</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For understanding the results of our study, we need to know something about your community. When we use the term community we are referring to where you live and/or work. A list of events which may or may not be occurring in your community is given in the first column below. For each event listed, please answer the questions in the second and third columns by circling the appropriate number. Your answer should reflect your view of that event in your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q36</th>
<th>Has This Event Happened?</th>
<th>How Much Has This Event Affected Your Family?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A major change in your community's economic condition or picture</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A major change in employment conditions, such as a rise in unemployment, closing of businesses or industries, bumping, job relocation or assignment</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. An increase in labor negotiations, strikes, organizing efforts by farmers, etc.</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. An increase in the rate of bankruptcy of businesses, farms, etc.</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. An increase in the number of foreclosures of home mortgages</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. An increase in taxes</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. A change in the number of persons seeking welfare</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Large numbers of people moving into the community</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Large numbers of people moving out of the community</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Has This Event Happened?</th>
<th>How much has this event affected your family?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Increased difficulty selling or renting homes or apartments, by owners and landlords</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Increased difficulty buying or renting homes, by people looking for housing</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>An increase in toxic water or other environmental hazards</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>A disaster such as a tornado, flood, blizzard, or fire</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>An increase in vandalism, burglary, and other property crimes</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o.</td>
<td>An increase in crimes against persons</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.</td>
<td>A rise in the cost of community services (police &amp; fire protection, garbage collection, etc.)</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.</td>
<td>A rise in the cost of health care for the family</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>A change in people's feelings of safety in their homes or communities—Please specify</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.</td>
<td>A change in educational programs available—Please specify</td>
<td>Y N DK 1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"His Question Continues On The Next Page"
APPENDIX C. (continued)

24

Has This Event Happened? How much has this event affected your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. A change in recreational or spare time opportunities—Please specify

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. Other changes in your community—Please specify

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many communities provide different services to help families with their problems or stresses. Please indicate what services are provided, what services, in your own or other community, you have used in the past year, and how helpful these services were.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there services to help with this in your community?</th>
<th>Have you used this service in the past year (your community or elsewhere)?</th>
<th>If used, how helpful was the assistance? (If not used, leave blank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The physical environment; floods, tornadoes, air pollution, etc.

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK

b. Employment and work

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK

c. Crime and law enforcement

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK

d. Money or finances

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK

e. Care of preschool children; day care, nurseries, etc.

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK

f. Education of adolescents and adults

Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK Y N DK
APPENDIX C. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25</th>
<th>Have you used this service in the past year (your community or elsewhere)?</th>
<th>If used, how helpful was the assistance? (if not used, leave blank)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there services to help with this in your community?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Physical health (doctors, hospital, clinic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Marriage, family and personal relationships; mental health</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Family loss—death, divorce, separation, desertion</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, foster care</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Handicapped persons (physical and/or mental)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. The elderly (e.g. convalescent home, nursing home, meals, recreation)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Immediate care—telephone hot-line, crisis intervention, dial-a-service (counseling, suicide prevention, etc.)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q32a. Are there other problems or changes for which you have used community services or help? **Yes** **No**

b. If yes, what was the problem or stress?

c. If yes, complete last column ------------------------------- 1 2 3 4 5

This Question Continues On The Next Page
APPENDIX C. (continued)

q3a. Every county or parish in the state has a Cooperative Extension Service which provides information and programs, including 4-H, Home Economics or Family Living Programs, Expanded Nutrition Programs, Agriculture, Horticulture, Natural Resources and community development programs. Have you used any program or assistance from the Cooperative Extension Service to help deal with a problem, change or stress? yes no

b. If yes, what was the change, problem, or stress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If used, how helpful was the assistance?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. If yes, complete last column --------------- 1 2 3 4 5

In the last three years you may have experienced many stressful events and challenges. Your reactions to these challenges and problems may have varied in frequency. Please circle the most accurate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>More than once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Sharing our difficulties with relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Seeking information &amp; advice from persons in other families who have faced the same or similar problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Seeking advice from relative (grandparents, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Asking neighbors for assistance and favors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Seeking assistance from community agencies and programs designed to help families in our situation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C. (continued)

27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>More than once a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Accepting gifts and favors from neighbors (food, taking in mail, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Seeking information and advice from the family doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Facing problems &quot;head-on&quot; and trying to get solutions right away</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Watching television</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Attending church services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Sharing concerns with close friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Doing things with relatives (get togethers, dinners, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Seeking professional counseling and help for family difficulties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>Participating in church activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>Asking relatives how they feel about problems we face</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>Seeking advice from a minister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>Sharing problems with neighbors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Here are some words and phrases which we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. Please circle the number which best describes where you stand in describing your feelings.

Q21

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Boring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Enjoyable</td>
<td>Miserable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Worthwhile</td>
<td>Useless</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Unfriendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Empty</td>
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</table>

This Question Continues On The Next Page
APPENDIX C. (continued)

23

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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. Hopeful</td>
<td>Discouraging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Rewarding</td>
<td>Disappointing</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Brings out the best in me</td>
<td>Doesn't give me much chance</td>
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</table>

Please circle the number which best describes how satisfied you are with your life as a whole.

Q42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completely Dissatisfied</td>
<td>Completely Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please circle the number which best describes how satisfied you are with your family.

Q43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Your family life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Your relationship with your spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Your relationship with your children</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The relationship your children have with each other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please circle the number which best describes how happy you are with your marriage. The middle point represents "happy".

Q44

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Unhappy</td>
<td>Extremely Happy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>