AN EXAMINATION OF HETEROGENEITY IN CHILD OUTCOMES
FOR THE INTACT FAMILY GROUP

by

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ABSTRACT

Diversity within the intact family group was explored using National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth survey data from a representative sample of Canadian parents raising children aged 4-11 (N= 14054). This study tests the null hypothesis that children from intact families display positive outcomes, regardless of within group differences in family life situations. Differences in parental reports of children's academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes based on within group divisions by blended family status, parental work demands, partner satisfaction and family functioning were examined and compared to differences found between parental reports for children from intact, single-parent and stepparent families. The intact family group exhibited the same range of experiences and outcomes as the total sample. Both between and within group divisions explained less than 1% of the variance in child outcomes once the effects of child's gender, family size, income, parental depression and parenting were controlled. These findings bring into question the use of the intact family group as a benchmark of child adjustment in research and in policy.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Children who live with both of their biological parents in the same household are commonly used as a baseline comparison group in studies that assess the impact of divorce, remarriage, out of wedlock birth, adoption and various other family phenomena on children (see, for example, Acock & Demo, 1994; Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey & Stewart, 2001). These two-parent biological family households are known as "intact" or "traditional" families. While historically speaking two-parent biological families are not at all traditional, they do represent the model of "normative" North American family life that researchers, policy makers and laymen have widely identified as a reference point since the 1950s.

Though a majority of Canadian and American children live in intact families (Statistics Canada, 1995; U.S. Bureau of Census, 1998), public concern and scientific curiosity regarding increases in the number of North American children who spend at least part of childhood in single-parent and stepparent families has resulted in a large body of comparison research. In particular, there has been a great deal of interest in knowing whether children living in non-intact families exhibit the same academic, psychosocial and behavioral outcomes as children living in intact families. The controversial assumption underlying much of this research is that two-parent biological families, whether it be by virtue of their configuration, their access to resources, or their internal family processes, are inherently better equipped than other families to promote child well-being.

Research over several decades indicates modest support for this assumption. On average,

children living in intact families are less at risk than children living in other family structures, especially those living in single-parent families, to experience poverty, maternal depression, and a variety of other negative home life conditions (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). They also tend to display slightly more favourable outcomes than do other children (Acock & Demo, 1994; Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith 1991). However, group averages do not reflect individual realities. By no means do all children living in intact families exhibit better outcomes than all other children, nor do they all experience better home lives; groups overlap considerably. In fact, a majority of children from all family types display positive outcomes (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991; Lansford et. al., 2001); where differences between groups do occur in children's academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes, they tend to be slight (Acock & Demo, 1994; Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991). Yet, researchers and policy makers continue to discuss children's health and well-being in the context of family structure – giving it a prominent place in research and, perhaps more importantly, in policy that some scholars believe to be unsubstantiated and misleading.

Even researchers who draw comparisons between family structure groups warn that weak between-group differences disguise considerable heterogeneity within family structure types (Amato, 2001). Yet, little research has been done to explore heterogeneity within the intact family group. This is an important avenue of investigation because it remains unclear whether children from intact families are uniformly buffered from experiencing negative outcomes even under conditions that are typically associated with other family types. If this were not the case, there would be little reason to continue using intact families as a meaningful benchmark in research or in policy. While many critics of family structure research argue that focusing on group averages unfairly stigmatizes children and parents living in non-traditional families,

danger also exists in perpetuating overly optimistic stereotypes about intact family life that may guide policy makers to overlook the needs of children and parents living in intact families whose difficult realities are not reflected by desirable group averages.

Research shows significant differences within family structure types for both single-parent and stepparent families (Amato & Keith, 1991; Biblarz & Gottainer, 2001; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1995). Given that intact families comprise the largest family structure type in the population, there is reason to believe that this group is at least as economically, socially and structurally diverse as non-intact groups and that the children from these intact families are just as varied in their outcomes. The intact family group may simply be a default classification. After all, at any given point in time, the intact family group not only includes children who will remain in intact families for the duration of childhood, but also those children whose parents' life trajectories will eventually lead them to be reclassified in at least one non-intact family structure group.

The purpose of this study is to explore diversity within the intact family group based on child outcomes, internal family processes, external factors and household configurations that are widely examined in family structure research. Using a nationally representative sample of Canadian families raising elementary school-aged children, I will test the null hypothesis that children raised in intact families consistently display positive academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes, regardless of within intact group differences in family configuration, external factors and internal family processes. I will examine these within-group differences in child outcomes and compare them to between group differences in academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes for children in intact, stepparent and single-parent families.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Child Outcomes

Researchers interested in investigating differences between intact and non-intact families invariably pose the question, "What are the implications of non-intact family life for children?"

Though researchers ask this question about children ranging in age from toddlers to young adults (see, for example, Acock & Demo, 1994; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Hill, Yeung & Duncan, 2001; Ermisch & Francesconi, 2001; Furstenberg & Kiernan, 2001; Schoppe, Frosch & Mangelsdorf, 2001), primary school children are the most widely studied group (Amato, 2001). In general, family structure effect sizes tend to be largest for this age group (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Given family's unique role in nurturing and socializing children, especially young children, it is not surprising that perceived changes to family life are met with concern for children's well being. After all, society has a vested interest in producing healthy, well-adjusted children who grow to be productive, law-abiding adults. But which child outcomes are researchers most interested in analyzing?

Amato (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 67 studies published in the 1990s that compared children living in intact families to children living in divorced parent families. He found that the outcomes assessed in these studies could be coded in five general categories: academic achievement, conduct, psychological and emotional adjustment, self-concept and social relations (Amato, 2001). Of these outcomes, conduct, psychological and emotional adjustment, and academic achievement had the largest effect-sizes for primary school children

(Amato, 2001). This same narrow band of academic, psychosocial and behavioural child outcomes is repeatedly investigated by researchers who assess the impact of divorce, remarriage, parental death and adoption on children (Amato & Keith, 1991; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Lansford, et al., 2001).

Findings reveal that differences between groups based on these outcomes tend to favor children living in intact families; however, effect sizes are small, particularly in methodologically advanced studies that control for economic factors and internal family processes (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991). Amato's (2001) meta-analysis revealed that 88% of effect-sizes showed differences between children by family type; however, only about half of these effect-sizes were statistically significant. The average effect size was .29, indicating that on average, children from intact families scored only about one-quarter of a standard deviation above children from non-intact families on various outcomes (Amato, 2001). These differences were the same for both boys and girls, though conduct effect sizes tended to be greater for boys than for girls (Amato 2001, Amato & Keith, 1991).

However, differences between intact and non-intact family types may be overstated (Furstenberg & Kiernan, 2001). Researchers believe that certain outcome variables, such as academic achievement are less affected by family structure than by economic factors (see, for example, Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997) or by children's continued involvement with non-custodial parents (Lund, 1987). As well, many of the effects that are commonly attributed to living in non-intact families may actually emerge due to conditions, such as conflict, that are present in the intact family prior to structural change (see, for example, Amato & Booth, 1997). On rare occasions, some researchers have even found that children living in single parent families display slightly more favourable results than do children living in intact families on

certain dimensions of adjustment, such as prosocial behaviour (White, et al., 2002). Hence, due to the complex and multidimensional relationship that exists between child outcomes and family structure, it is important to assess a wide range of outcomes that tap into the many facets of child well being.

What is Family Structure?

Family structure is a widely studied, yet conceptually and theoretically ambiguous construct (White, Marshall, & Wood, 2002). In its purest sense, family structure refers to the number of members within the family and to the fulfillment of key roles, such as mother-wife and father-husband, within that family (Parsons & Bales, 1955). However, family researchers operationalize family structure in a number of ways, from strict dichotomies (one parent or two parent families) to complex divisions based upon the life event histories of children, or more frequently, upon the marital histories of parents.

Three groups that consistently appear in family structure research are intact, stepparent and single parent families. However, researchers commonly divide stepparent and single parent families into smaller subgroups based on the sex of the biological parent, or on the life event histories that resulted in the formation of the non-intact family structure (i.e. widowhood, divorce or never married) (see for example, Acock & Demo, 1994; Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Lansford et al., 2001).

In contrast, the intact family group is typically conceptualized as being structurally homogeneous; yet, the configuration of intact families can vary on a number of structural dimensions. While the most obvious is by number of members, the complexity of modern

family life has led to at least one other possibility. Specifically, a two-parent biological family may also be a stepfamily!

Blended families that contain at least one child who is biologically related to both parental figures in the household present a conundrum for traditional family structure divisions. The family's classification would differ depending upon the target child studied. This is problematic from a structural perspective because the family would be predicted to act in two different ways on children, though it is structurally equivalent. So, do biological children display the benefits of residing with two biological parents, or do they display the disadvantages of living in a stepfamily situation? Even stepchildren who live in these family configurations are technically exposed to an intact family environment. Do they exhibit the benefits of living in an intact family situation or the disadvantages of living in a stepfamily?

Researchers argue that differences between children living in intact families and stepfamilies are at least partially due to higher levels of conflict and lower levels of functioning in these families (Demo & Acock, 1996). As children living in blended families are exposed to the same structural family environment, regardless of biological ties, it can be hypothesized that biological *children living in blended intact families have less positive academic, psychosocial and behavioral and outcomes than children living in non-blended intact families. However, these two-parent biological children living in blended families display the same outcomes as stepchildren living in the same family configuration.*

How are Family Structure and Child Outcomes Related?

Researchers use a variety of competing mini-theories and models to explain the relationship between family structure and child outcomes (White et al., 2002). Models that are

based solely on structural factors, such as the superiority of two-parent configurations, receive far less support than those based on mediated or spurious relationships (see, for example, Acock & Demo, 1994). Most of these models imply indirect effects based on "risk factors" that are associated with living in non-intact household configurations such as poverty, maternal depression, low parental investment, high family conflict, and low family functioning (see, for example, Biblarz & Gottainer, 2001; Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; Lansford et al.).

These "risk factors" can be grouped in two distinct categories: external factors and internal factors. External factors occur outside of the family environment but influence children's experiences within the family either directly or indirectly through parental stress; some commonly studied external factors are income and parental work demands. Internal factors occur within the context of the family environment; these include conflict, family functioning and maternal depression. The effects of external factors on child outcomes are at least partially mediated by internal family processes. Which is to say that parents who are experiencing stress due to time constraints and financial hardship are less able to provide their children with high quality home environments (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). My premise as illustrated in Figure 1 is that *family structure simply provides context for circumstances that could be experienced by children living in a variety of family types.*

Figure 1. Family Structure Orientation Model
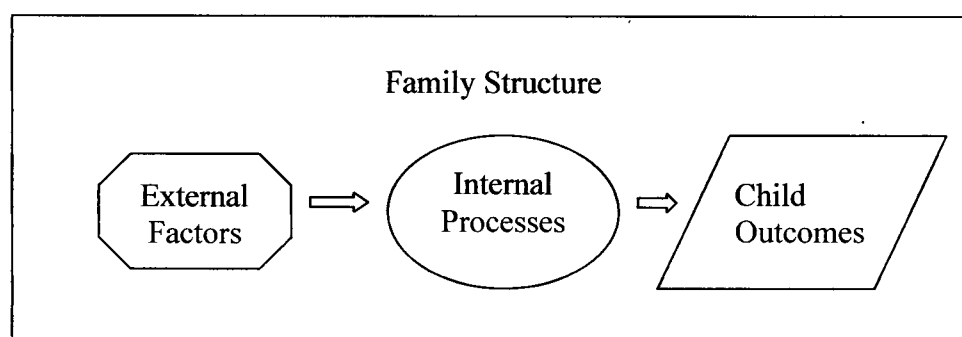
External Factors that Influence Investments in Children

One dominant perspective in family structure research is that non-intact families lack either the ability or the will to provide their children with the same levels of economic resources and parental involvement that intact families provide for their children (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). From this perspective, parents in a two-parent biological family are best equipped to deal with external stressors, and to complement each other's financial and time contributions to the family, thus optimizing children's outcomes (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). In contrast, single parents are depicted as being limited by external factors, such as lack of money and stressful time demands, that make it more difficult for them to provide their children with quality home environments and family lives (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001). Even children living in two parent stepfamilies are considered to be disadvantaged as a result of not having biological ties to both parents because parental investments in biological children are thought to be greater and because stepparent roles and obligations are more ambiguous.

However, not all intact families have equal ability to invest in children. Clearly, research has revealed that poverty is detrimental to children, regardless of family type (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). However, the effects of economic factors alone do not account for differences in child outcomes.

What about time demands? In a study of American families, Sandberg and Hofferth (2001) found that mothers in single parent households spent less time with their children than did parents living in two parent families. However, children from dual earner two-parent households spent less time with their parents than did children living in two-parent single-earner families (Sandberg & Hofferth, 2001). While quantity and quality are not necessarily equivalent, it is clear that there are differences between these two types of intact families in terms of the amount

of time invested in children. Hence, controlling for economic investment, it can be hypothesized that ***children living in dual earner families display less positive outcomes than children living in single earner or no earner families.***

Internal Family Processes that Affect Children's Outcomes

Children are not only affected by things that "happen to their families" like economics and parental work demands, but also by dynamics that occur within their families. Family structure research has revealed that internal processes have more influence on child outcomes than either structural or economic factors (see for example, Acock & Demo, 1994; Acock & Booth, 1997; Demo & Cox, ;White et al., 2002). Children who are exposed to maternal depression, marital conflict, family dysfunction and, especially, poor parenting are at risk of experiencing poor outcomes.

At a time in history when divorce is less about escaping horrible circumstances than about finding a new space for personal growth and development (Amato, 2001; Amato & Booth, 1997), partner satisfaction and family functioning are good indicators of whether or not an intact family is destined to undergo structural change. Do children from these intact families differ in their outcomes from children living in other intact families? Amato & Booth (1997) propose that the two worst situations for children are high conflict marriages that do not end in divorce and low conflict marriages that do. Hence it can be hypothesized that ***children living in intact families with low partner satisfaction experience less positive outcomes than children living in intact families with high partner satisfaction. Furthermore, children living in intact families with low family functioning experience less positive outcomes than children living in intact families with high family functioning.***

Control Variables

Many of the external and internal factors that I mentioned in the previous discussion need to be controlled for to test the alternative hypotheses that I propose. In particular, income, maternal depression, and parenting are all factors that influence children's outcomes. These variables are peripherally related to the topic of structure; if these variables account for more variance than structural factors, they should be addressed in their own right by economic policy, therapy and parenting skills training. Gender of target child and number of minor children in the household are also controlled in this study.

Summary of Purpose

In summary, this study tests the null hypothesis that children raised in intact families consistently display positive academic, behavioural and psychosocial outcomes, regardless of within intact group differences in family configuration, external factors and internal family processes. This is achieved by examining ranges of outcomes and experiences faced by children living in intact families and by examining differences that occur in children's outcomes between intact families who differ in blended family status, in parental work demands, in partner satisfaction and in family functioning. Within group differences in child outcomes are compared to differences in child outcomes found between children living in intact, single parent and stepparent families.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Sample and Procedure

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY; 1995) contains data on approximately 22,831 Canadian children aged 0-11 from nearly 13,500 households. Statistics Canada designed and collected this multistage cluster sample.

Components of the survey were from participants in Statistics Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS) and from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) that was conducted by Statistics Canada at the same time as the NLSCY. The Yukon and the Northwest Territories were excluded from the LFS sampling, so a sample of these regions was added by sampling occupied dwellings with at least one child aged 0 to 11 years.

Data was collected from households and, for school children, from teachers and principals. Household data collection involved completion of a general questionnaire, a parent questionnaire and a child questionnaire; the person most knowledgeable (PMK) about the child completed computer-assisted interviews and the general, parent and child questionnaires (response rate 81.4%).

For this study, only families with a target child between the ages of 4 and 11 years (mean age = 7.42 years, SD = 2.30) living in a two-parent biological family, a stepfamily or a single parent family were included in the analyses (N = 14054) because data on the dependent variables were limited to this age group. Only 1.3% of families raising children within this age range did not fit in one of these three family types; these families were excluded from the analyses.

Analyses were limited to PMK reports (for a complete list of survey items included in the present study, see Appendix A). PMKs were predominantly female - 91.6% of PMKs who reported about children in this age group were female, while 91.5% of PMK's who reported about children from intact families in this age group were female. PMKs predominantly ranged in age from 30-39 years. The largest age group of PMKs for the entire sample (33.1%) was aged 30-34, while the largest age group of PMKs for the intact family group (35.0%) was aged 35-39, indicating that PMKs from the non-intact family groups were slightly younger than PMKs for the intact family group.

PMK reports were almost equally divided between outcome reports for boys (n_{sample} = 7151, 50.9%; n_{intact} = 5542, 50.9%) and outcome reports for girls (n_{sample} = 6903, 49.1%; n_{intact} = 5343, 49.1%). For a complete summary of the descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study, see Appendix B for the entire sample and Appendix C for the intact family group.

Measures

Child Outcomes

Academics. Academic outcomes were measured by the PMK's response to the question, "Based on your knowledge of [target child's] school work, including report cards, how is your child doing in school overall?" Response choices range from 1 (very well) to 5 (very poorly) on a five-point Likert Scale.

Emotional disorder. Emotional well being was measured by an eight item Emotional Disorder-Anxiety scale (Statistics Canada, 1995). This instrument measures PMK's responses to items such as, "How often would you say that [target child's name] cries a lot?" on a three-point

Likert scale ranging from "never or not true" to "often or very true." Total scores range from 0 (high emotional well being) to 16 (low emotional well being). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .79.

Hyperactive inattention. Hyperactive inattention was measured by an eight item Hyperactive-Inattention scale (Statistics Canada, 1995). This instrument measures PMK's responses to items such as, "How often would you say that [target child's name] cannot settle into anything for more than a few moments?" on a three-point Likert scale ranging from "never or not true" to "often or very true." Total scores range from 0 (low hyperactivity) to 16 (high hyperactivity). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .84.

Conduct. Physical aggression was measured by a six item Conduct Disorder-Physical Aggression scale (Statistics Canada, 1995). This instrument measures PMK's responses to items such as, "How often would you say that [target child's name] is cruel, bullies, or is mean to others?" on a three-point Likert scale ranging from "never or not true" to "often or very true." Total scores range from 0 (low aggression) to 12 (high aggression). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .77.

Family Structure

Marital status. Family structure was measured by PMK's reports of the PMK's marital status, and of the PMK's reports of the relationship between the adult figures in the household to the target child. Families were grouped in three categories: intact (*n* = 10885, 77.5%), stepparent (*n* = 1030, 7.3%) and single parent (*n* = 2139, 15.2%).

Blended family. For intact and stepparent families, children were divided into "blended" or "not blended" families based on the PMK's "yes" or "no" response to the item, "Child is a

member of a blended family?" Only stepfamilies containing a biological child shared by both partners was classified as "blended" for the purpose of the analyses. This blended stepfamily group includes stepfamilies that PMKs reported to be "His and Theirs," "Hers and Theirs," and "His, Hers and Theirs" families.

Four categories emerged intact "not blended" (n = 10417, 88.3%), "intact blended" (n = 468, 4.0%), "step blended" (n = 404, 3.4%), and "step not blended" (n = 509, 4.3%).

External Factors

Time demands. Time demands were based on PMK's reports of parental work commitments. This variable was measured by whether the home was a dual-earner (n = 3505, 45.6%), single earner (n = 3451, 44.9%) or no earner household (n = 733, 9.5%).

Internal Processes

Partner satisfaction. Partner satisfaction for the intact family group was measured using PMK's response to the item, "All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your marriage or relationship with your partner?" Scores range on an 11-point Likert scale from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 11 (completely satisfied). Results were significantly skewed (see Table C2). This measure was recoded in four categories for group comparison purposes. Scores ranging from 0-8 on the original scale were recoded as 1 "low partner satisfaction" (n = 2222, 20.7%), scores of 9 were recoded as 2 "mid-low partner satisfaction" (n = 2089, 19.2%), scores of 10 were recoded as 3 "mid-high partner satisfaction" (n = 2289, 21.4%), and scores of 11 were recoded as 4 "high partner satisfaction" (n = 4112, 38.4%).

Family functioning. Family functioning was measured by PMK's responses to a 12 item Family Functioning Scale taken from the McMaster Healthy Functioning Family Scale (Epstein, 1993). This instrument measures responses to items such as, "Making decisions is a problem for our family," and, "We confide in each other," on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Scores range from 0 (high functioning) to 36 (low functioning). The Cronbach's alpha for this measure is .88. Results were significantly skewed (see Table C2). This measure was recoded in three categories for group comparison purposes. Scores ranging from 0 to 5 on the original scale were recoded as 3 "high functioning" ($n = 3662$, 34.2%), scores ranging from 6 to 11 were recoded as 2 "medium functioning" ($n = 2089$, 36.4%), and scores ranging from 12 to 36 were recoded as 1 "low functioning" ($n = 3146$, 28.9%).

Control Variables

Child's gender. Child's gender was based on PMK's reports of whether the target child was male or female.

Family size. Family size was based on PMK's reports of the number of minor children present in the household. The responses ranged from 1 to 4. All families with more than 4 minor children were grouped in the "4" category.

Economic resources. Economic resources were measured by income adequacy. Income adequacy is a five-category instrument that is measured by combining household income with household size. For example, the lowest category of income adequacy includes households of 1-4 members with an income of less than $10,000 and households of 5 or more persons with an income of less than $15,000.

Parental depression. Parental depression was measured by PMK's responses to a 12 item Depression Scale. This instrument measures responses to items such as, "How often have you had crying spells during the past week?" on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "rarely or none of the time (less than one day)" to "most or all of the time (5-7 Days)." Scores range from 0 (not depressed) to 36(very depressed). Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .82.

Parenting. Parenting was measured using four scales. The first three scales, adapted from Stayhorn and Weidman's (1988) Parent Practices Scale, measure positive interaction, consistent parenting and hostile ineffective parenting. The fourth scale measures Aversive Parental Management Techniques (Statistics Canada, 1995). The Positive Interaction Scale ranges from 0 (negative interaction) to 20 (positive interaction). A sample item from this scale is, "How often do you and your child laugh together?' Cronbach's alpha is .81. The Consistent parenting scale ranges from 0 (inconsistent) to 20 (consistent). A sample item from this scale is, "How often does your child get away with things that you feel should have been punished?" Cronbach's alpha is .66. The hostile ineffective parenting scale ranges from 0 (low hostility-ineffectiveness) to 25 (high hostility-ineffectiveness). A sample item is, "How often do you think that the kind of punishment you give your child depends on your mood?" Cronbach's alpha is .71. The aversive parent management techniques scale ranges from 0 (not aversive) to 19 (aversive). A sample item is, "When your child breaks the rules, how often do you calmly discuss the problem?" The Cronbach's alpha is .57.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Between Group Differences

One-way ANOVAs of each of the four child outcomes by family structure type were conducted. All four of these tests were statistically significant: academic [$F(2,9908) = 58.64$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .012$], emotional disorder [$F(2,13729) = 155.86$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .022$], hyperactivity-inattention [$F(2,13715) = 158.48$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .023$], and aggression [$F(2,13694) = 76.79$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2 = .011$]. The follow-up ANCOVAs, which controlled for the effects of child's gender, number of minor children in the household, income, parental depression and parenting, are displayed in Table 1.

A similar data analysis procedure was used by Lansford et al. (2001) to identify and assess between group differences for children from adoptive, intact, single-parent and stepparent households. ANOVA and ANCOVA were employed in the present study rather than MANOVA and MANCOVA because, as stated previously, the relationship between family structure and child outcomes is complex and multi-dimensional. The outcome variables used in the present study are not viewed as dimensions of the same factor.

There were statistically significant differences on all of the child outcome variables examined; however, the strength of these relationships decreased sharply once the control variables were entered. The hypothesis that children from intact families display more positive academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes than do children from stepparent and single parent families was supported.

Table 1

ANCOVAs for Child Outcomes by Family Structure Net of Control Variables

Child outcome	Intact	Step	Single-parent	ANCOVA		
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*df*	*F*	η^2
Academic	1.74 (0.87)$_a$	1.94 (0.93)$_b$	1.98 (0.97)$_b$	2, 9609	24.80***	.005
Emotional	2.33 (2.39)$_a$	3.17 (2.85)$_b$	3.28 (2.93)$_b$	2,13342	48.71***	.007
Hyperactive	4.33 (3.43)$_a$	5.69 (3.86)$_b$	5.60 (3.87)$_b$	2,13331	52.16***	.008
Aggression	1.34 (1.79)$_a$	1.66 (2.06)$_b$	1.89 (2.30)$_c$	2,13313	22.80***	.003

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Dunnet's C

significant difference comparison. ***$p < .001$.

Note. For step and single-parent families, gender of biological parent is not assessed.

Heterogeneity of Experiences Within the Intact Family Group

As displayed in Table 2, PMK reports on variables of child outcomes, household

configurations and external factors ranged just as much for the intact family group as they did for

the total sample of intact, single-parent and stepparent families. The intact family group also

displayed the same ranges as the total sample for 5 of 7 internal family process variables. The

ranges for the intact family group only differed from those of the total sample on two parenting

variables - positive interaction and hostile-ineffective parenting. Specifically, there is a one-

point difference in the response ranges for the intact family group and the total sample on each of

these variables. These slight differences are due to a single non-intact family case that scored

below the range reported by PMKs from the intact family group on positive interaction, and to

two non-intact family cases that scored above the range reported by PMKs for the intact family group on hostile-ineffective parenting.

These findings support the descriptive hypothesis that intact families are as economically, socially and structurally diverse as non-intact groups and that the children from these intact families are just as varied in their outcomes. In fact, PMK reports of child well being for children from the intact family group ranged from the extreme positive to the extreme negative on all four of the child outcome variables examined. (For a complete listing of the descriptive statistics for these variables including variances, see Appendix B for the entire sample and Appendix C for the intact family group).

Table 2

Ranges of Variables for the Total Sample and for the Intact Family Group

Variable	Total sample (*N*=14054) (Range)	Intact family group (*n*=10885) (Range)
Child outcomes		
Academic	1-5	1-5
Emotional disorder-anxiety	0-16	0-16
Hyperactive-inattention	0-16	0-16
Aggression	0-12	0-12

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

Variable	Total sample (N=14054) (Range)	Intact family group (n=10885) (Range)
Household configuration		
Blended family status	1-2	1-2
Number of minor children	1-4	1-4
External factors		
Parental time demands	1-3	1-3
Income	1-6	1-6
Income adequacy	1-5	1-5
Internal factors		
Partner satisfaction	1-11	1-11
Family functioning	0-35	0-35
Parental depression	0-35	0-35
Internal factors		
Parenting		
Positive interaction	1-20	2-20
Consistency	0-20	0-20
Hostile-ineffective	0-25	0-24
Punitive-aversive	4-19	4-19

Within Group Differences in Child Outcomes

Effects of Blended Family Status on Child Outcomes for Children from Intact and Step families

One-way ANOVAs of each of the four child outcomes by blended family status were conducted on the intact and stepfamily groups. All four of these tests were statistically significant: academic [$F(3,8305) = 15.86$, p<.001, $\eta^2 = .006$], emotional disorder-anxiety [$F(3,11516) = 44.90$, p<.001, $\eta^2 = .012$], hyperactivity-inattention [$F(3,11511) = 52.72$, p<.001, $\eta^2 = .014$], and aggression [$F(3,11494) = 9.86$, p<.001, $\eta^2 = .003$]. The follow-up ANCOVAs, which controlled for the effects of child's gender, number of minor children in the household, income, parental depression and parenting, are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

ANCOVAs for Child Outcomes by Blended Family Status Net of Control Variables for the Intact and the Stepfamily Groups

Outcome	Intact		Step		ANCOVA		
	Not blended	Blended	Not blended	Blended			
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	df	F	η^2
Academic	1.73 (0.87)$_a$	1.90 (0.92)$_b$	1.93 (0.92)$_b$	1.96 (0.93)$_b$	3, 8046	11.18***	.004
Emotional	2.33 (2.40)$_a$	2.15 (2.29)$_a$	3.56 (3.02)$_b$	3.09 (2.79)$_b$	3,11183	23.05***	.006
Hyperactive	4.31 (3.41)$_a$	4.77 (3.74)$_a$	6.14 (3.81)$_b$	5.54 (3.80)$_b$	3,11178	36.36***	.010
Aggression	1.34 (1.78)$_a$	1.47 (1.86)$_a$	1.81 (2.12)$_b$	1.55 (1.97)$_a$	3,11165	3.86**	.001

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Dunnet's C significant difference comparison. **p<.01 and ***p < .001.

There were statistically significant differences on all of the child outcome variables examined; however, the strength of these relationships decreased sharply once the control variables were entered.

The hypothesis that children from non-blended intact families display better outcomes than do children from blended intact families is slightly supported. Specifically, PMK reports of children's academic achievement were more positive for non-blended than blended intact families; however, PMK reports did not statistically differ between blended intact and non-blended intact families at the $p < .05$ level on the other three outcome variables.

The hypothesis that children from blended intact families display the same outcomes as children from biologically blended stepfamilies is weakly supported. Specifically, PMK reports of children's academic achievement did not statistically differ between the groups at the $p < .05$ level. However, I can not definitively state that absolutely no difference exists between the two groups (for a discussion of null hypotheses see Cohen, 1990). Contrary to the hypotheses, PMK reports of children's emotional anxiety, hyperactive inattention and aggression were more positive for children from blended intact families than for biologically blended stepfamilies.

Effects of Parental Time Demands on Child Outcomes for Children from Intact Families

One-way ANOVAs assessing the relationship between parental work demands and grades [$F(2,5354) = 1.05, p > .25, \eta^2 = .000$], parental work demands and emotional disorder-anxiety [$F(2,7600) = 0.19, p > .50, \eta^2 = .000$], and parental work demands and aggression [$F(2,7582) = 1.78, p > .10, \eta^2 = .000$] yielded non-significant results. Only the one-way ANOVA assessing the relationship between parental work demands and hyperactive-inattention was statistically significant [$F(2, 7592) = 6.36, p < .01, \eta^2 = .002$]. However, the follow-up

ANCOVA assessing the relationship between parental work demands and hyperactive inattention net of the effects of the control variables was not statistically significant [F (2,7417) = 1.07, $p >$ .25, η^2 = .000]. The hypothesis that children from intact dual earner families display less positive academic, psychosocial and behavioral outcomes than do children from intact single-earner and intact no- earner households was not supported.

Effects of Partner Satisfaction on Child Outcomes for Children from Intact Families

One-way ANOVAs of each of the four child outcomes by partner satisfaction were conducted on the intact family group. All four of these tests were statistically significant: academic [F(3,7476) = 17.41, p<.001, η^2 = .007], emotional disorder-anxiety [F(3,10515) = 84.54, p<.001, η^2 = .024], hyperactivity-inattention [F(3,10510) = 47.72, p<.001, η^2 = .014], and aggression [F(3,10492) = 65.42, p<.001, η^2 = .018]. The follow-up ANCOVAs, which controlled for the effects of child's gender, number of minor children in the household, income, parental depression and parenting, are displayed in Table 4.

There were statistically significant differences on all of the child outcome variables examined; however, the strength of these relationships decreased sharply once the control variables were entered. The hypothesis that children from intact families with high partner satisfaction display more positive academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes than do those from intact families with low partner satisfaction was supported.

Table 4

ANCOVAs for Child Outcomes by Partner Satisfaction Net of Control Variables for the Intact

Family Group

Outcome	High	Mid-High	Mid-Low	Low	ANCOVA		
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*df*	*F*	η^2
Academic	1.66 (0.84)$_a$	1.71 (0.88)$_a$	1.81 (0.90)$_b$	1.83 (0.91)$_b$	3, 7309	6.21***	.003
Emotional	1.94 (2.19)$_a$	2.24 (2.32)$_b$	2.59 (2.43)$_c$	2.88 (2.63)$_d$	3,10300	13.61***	.004
Hyperactive	3.89 (3.31)$_a$	4.30 (3.40)$_b$	4.57 (3.45)$_b$	4.94 (3.53)$_c$	3,10295	3.85**	.001
Aggression	1.08 (1.60)$_a$	1.30 (1.73)$_b$	1.55 (1.89)$_c$	1.68 (1.98)$_c$	3,10281	12.03***	.003

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Dunnet's C

significant difference comparison. **$p<.01$ and ***$p < .001$.

Effects of Family Functioning on Child Outcomes for Children from Intact Families

One-way ANOVAs of each of the four child outcomes by family functioning were

conducted on the intact family group. All four of these tests were statistically significant:

academic [$F(2,7477) = 49.10, p<.001, \eta^2 = .013$], emotional disorder-anxiety [$F(2,10517) =$

$59.07, p<.001, \eta^2 = .011$], hyperactivity-inattention [$F(2,10512) = 45.17, p<.001, \eta^2 = .009$], and

aggression [$F(2,10495) = 60.69, p<.001, \eta^2 = .011$]. The follow-up ANCOVAs, which

controlled for the effects of child's gender, number of minor children in the household, income,

parental depression and parenting, are displayed in Table 5.

There were statistically significant differences on 2 of the 4 child outcome variables

examined; however, the strength of these relationships decreased sharply once the control

variables were entered. The hypothesis that children from intact families with high family functioning display more positive academic, psychosocial and behavioural outcomes than do those from intact families with low family functioning was partially supported.

Table 5

ANCOVAs for Child Outcomes by Family Functioning Net of Control Variables for the Intact Family Group

Child outcome	High	Medium	Low	ANCOVA		
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*df*	*F*	η^2
Academic	1.60 (0.83)ₐ	1.79 (0.88)b	1.83 (0.89)b	2, 7309	15.69***	.004
Emotional	1.99 (2.18)ₐ	2.42 (2.43)ₐ	2.61 (2.53)ₐ	2,10301	1.83	.000
Hyperactive	3.89 (3.35)ₐ	4.48 (3.42)ₐ	4.66 (3.48)ₐ	2,10296	1.80	.000
Aggression	1.09 (1.60)ₐ	1.42 (1.81)b	1.54 (1.83)c	2,10283	4.04*	.001

Note. Means in the same row that do not share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Dunnet's C significant difference comparison. $*p < .05$ and $***p < .001$.

Testing the Null Hypothesis

Based on the within group differences outlined in the preceding sections, the null hypothesis that children raised in intact families consistently display positive academic, behavioural and psychosocial outcomes, regardless of within intact group differences in family configuration, external factors and internal family processes is rejected.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine heterogeneity in child outcomes within the intact family group and to compare these within group differences in child outcomes to between group differences found between children from intact, stepparent and single parent families. The intact family group was parsed into subgroups on the basis of blended family status, parental time demands, partner satisfaction and family functioning to test the null hypothesis that children from intact families consistently display positive academic, psychosocial and behavioral outcomes regardless of within group differences in family configurations, external factors and internal family processes.

Findings from the present study do not provide strong empirical support for the widespread use of the intact family group as a benchmark of child adjustment in research or in policy. While children living in intact families displayed slightly better academic, psychosocial and behavioral outcomes than children living in non-intact family situations, the meaningfulness of these group-average differences is qualified by a series of other findings.

First, family structure does not appear to be a particularly important predictor of child well being. The amount of variance in child adjustment explained by family structure across the four child outcome indicators was extremely small. In fact, family structure's explanatory power ranged from a low of 1.1% for aggression to a high of 2.3% for hyperactive-inattention in one-way analyses. Once child's gender, family size, household income, parental depression and parenting were controlled for, the magnitude of these effect sizes diminished sharply; family

structure accounted for less than 1% of the variance in child well being for each of the four

between group ANCOVAs. These findings are consistent with past research that indicates that

many of the economic and social factors that are spuriously related to family structure reduce or

eliminate the effects of family structure on child outcomes (see, for example, Amato, 2001;

Carlson & Corcoran, 2001; White et al., 2002). Controlling additional factors such as partner

satisfaction, family functioning and quantity and quality of parental involvement might even

further diminish this relationship.

Second, children from intact families experience the same range of economic and social

conditions experienced by children from all family situations and they exhibit the broadest

possible range of academic, psychosocial and behavioral outcomes. Hence, rather than being a

golden standard of advantage and well being, the intact family group is a category comprised of

children who experience a variety of family life circumstances and who ultimately display a

diverse range of outcomes from the most positive to the most negative.

Third, factors other than family structure account for similar levels of variance in child

outcomes. While the within group comparisons for the intact family group revealed a mixed tale

of consistency and diversity for intact families, the cumulative evidence suggests that intact

families do not uniformly display positive outcomes regardless of within group differences in

family situations. Statistically significant differences between child outcomes for intact family

sub-groups were similar in magnitude to between group differences by family structure. In fact,

partner satisfaction and family functioning accounted for slightly more variance in child

outcomes than did family structure on certain dimensions of well being before the effects of the

control variables were added to the analyses.

Fourth, comparisons by blended status revealed that for the most part, children living in blended intact families do not display similar outcomes to stepchildren living in the same family configuration. Children from blended intact families displayed more positive outcomes than stepchildren living in biologically blended families on all dimensions of child well being except academic achievement. Not only did the biologically blended stepfamily group fare worse than children living in both intact family groups, this group also displayed statistically significant higher levels of aggression than the non-blended stepfamily group. This suggests that exposure to an intact family environment may not be uniformly beneficial for all children. Factors other than family structure, such as internal processes, work to shape children's experiences, even among children who live in similar family configurations.

So, given that family structure does not appear to be a construct of any particular empirical or, as mentioned earlier, theoretical significance, why does the intact family group persist as a prominent benchmark in research and policy? The answer to this question is that the intact family group is a culturally meaningful classification. Even though the scholarly community recognizes that family structure accounts for very little variance in child outcomes (Amato, 2001) and that other factors are just as influential, if not more influential than family structure in shaping child outcomes (see for example White et al., 2002), family structure continues to be a prominent dimension by which children are divided and compared. This is troubling because it suggests that cultural biases regarding the beneficial effects of intact family life for children overshadow scientific findings in shaping how research and policy questions are framed and answered.

Family structure provides context for circumstances that could be experienced by children living in a variety of family types; however, cultural expectations of different contexts

shape interpretations of the same experiences. Hence, when children from single-parent, stepparent or other non-traditional family situations display poor outcomes, researchers and policy makers typically link the presence of these problems, either directly or indirectly, to family configuration. In contrast, when children from intact families experience difficulties, these problems are attributed to other factors that are unrelated to their families' configurations.

Neither researchers, nor policy makers nor laymen would ever suggest that difficulties experienced by children living in intact families result either directly or indirectly from living with two biological parents because this situation is deemed as the ideal family configuration for nurturing and socializing children in North American society. Hence, when researchers and policy makers emphasize family structure comparisons of children, they are at risk of unfairly minimizing or overlooking problems experienced by children living in intact family households because the underlying assumption of their approach dictates that intact families are optimally equipped to foster child well-being and that children from these families experience the best possible outcomes.

Limitations

It is important to note that the present study relies on the subjective reports of parents, predominantly mothers. I fully recognize that parental reports of child well being and family situations do not entirely reflect the circumstances of target children. In addition to a paucity of data from a child perspective, there are no data in the NLSCY data set that describe the quality of the relationship between the PMK's partner and the target child. Hence, due to the disproportionate number of female PMKs, there is very little information in this study that taps

into father-child relationship. As well, there is no information specifically related to the amount of time that children spent with parents; using parental work commitments as a proxy for parental involvement limits the scope of understanding about children's family experiences. Further, none of the four child outcome variables assessed were normally distributed (See Tables B1 and C1). The majority of PMK reports for children from both the intact group and the larger sample were extremely positive.

Future Research

The primary purpose of this study was to demonstrate heterogeneity within the intact family group, not to identify an exhaustive list of ways in which intact families differ internally; hence, this study only samples a small number of ways in which intact families differ in terms of configuration, external factors and internal family processes. Future studies could explore how other avenues of diversity within the intact family group, such as sibling relationship quality or commuter relationship status, affect children living in intact families. As well, future studies could examine whether the within group differences found in the present study are consistent for children across different age groups.

Ultimately, however, I hope that the most influential contribution of the present study is to help reshape how researchers and policy makers address the problem of child maladjustment. To this point, a disproportionate amount of attention has been focused at examining how family structure is tied to poor child outcomes. Future research and policy needs to push beyond this outdated and misleading model to reframe inquiries about poor child outcomes in a manner that is reflective of the experiences of all children, regardless of family type.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of critically examining and rethinking the prominent role that the intact family group has been assigned in research, and perhaps more importantly in policy. Contrary to popular stereotypes about the beneficial effects of intact family life, children living in intact families are not uniformly buffered from experiencing negative outcomes.

While children from these families are typically used as a baseline comparison group to assess how well children living in other family types fare in terms of academic, psychosocial and behavioural adjustment, it is important to note that between group differences in child outcomes are slight, that a majority of children from all family types display positive outcomes and that between group comparisons disguise considerable internal diversity within the intact family group. Within this group, there are families and children who are experiencing extremely difficult circumstances and who are ultimately displaying tremendously poor outcomes; many of these children and families are in critical need of research and policy attention.

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APPENDIX A

Measures Used in the NLSCY

Child Outcomes

Academic Achievement

Based on your knowledge of his/her schoolwork, including his/her report cards, how is

your child doing in school overall? Five response categories: 1 "very well," 2 "well," 3

"average," 4 "poorly," 5 "very poorly."

Emotional Disorder-Anxiety Score

Eight items each beginning with the phrase, "How often do you say that your child..."

Three response categories for each item: 1 "never or not true," 2 "sometimes or somewhat true,"

and 3 "often or very true."

1. Seems unhappy, sad or depressed?

2. Is not as happy as other children?

3. Is too fearful or anxious?

4. Is worried?

5. Cries a lot?

6. Appears miserable, unhappy, tearful, or distressed?

7. Is nervous, high strung or tense?

8. Has trouble enjoying him/her self?

Hyperactive-Inattention Score

Eight items each beginning with the phrase, "How often do you say that your child..." Three response categories for each item: 1 "never or not true," 2 "sometimes or somewhat true," and 3 "often or very true."

1. Can't sit still, is restless or hyperactive?

2. Is distractible, has trouble sticking to any activity?

3. Fidgets?

4. Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long?

5. Is impulsive, acts without thinking?

6. Has difficulty waiting turn in games or groups?

7. Cannot settle to anything for more than a few moments?

8. Is inattentive?

Conduct Disorder - Physical Aggression Score

Six items each beginning with the phrase, "How often do you say that your child..." Three response categories for each item: 1 "never or not true," 2 "sometimes true," and 3 "often true."

1. Gets into many fights?

2. When another child accidentally hurts him/her (such as by bumping into him/her), assumes that the other child meant to do it, and then reacts with anger and fighting?

3. Physically attacks people?

4. Threatens people?

5. Is cruel, bullies or is mean to others?

6. Kicks, hits, bites other children?

Family Structure

Family Structure

Marital Status. Does the PMK have a spouse living in the household? Two Response categories: 1 "yes" or 2 "no."

Child's parent status. Child lives with: 11 "both biological parents," 21 "biological mother and stepfather," 22 "biological father and step mother," 51 " biological mother and no father" 61 "biological father and no mother."

Blended Family Status

Blended family. Three Response categories: 1 "child is a member of a blended family," 2 "child is not a member of a blended family but is in a couple census family (step or intact)," or 3 "other (child is a member of a single parent family, is a foster child or does not live with a parent)."

Type of stepfamily. Report the biological relationship of the children living in the household. Three relevant response categories 13 "hers and theirs," 14 "his and theirs," 16 "his, hers and theirs."

External Factors

Parental Time Demands

Current working status of PMK. Relevant response categories 1 "currently working," and "not currently working."

Current working status for PMK's partner. Relevant response categories "currently working," and "not currently working."

Internal Factors

Partner Satisfaction

All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your marriage or relationships with your partner? Which number comes the closest to how you feel, where 1 is completely satisfied, 6 is neutral and 11 is completely satisfied?

Family Functioning Scale

Twelve items with 4 response categories each: 1 "strongly agree," 2 "agree," 3 "disagree," 4 "strongly disagree."

1. We express feelings to each other.

2. There are lots of bad feelings in our family.

3. We feel accepted for what we are.

4. Making decisions is a problem for our family.

5. We are able to make decisions about how to solve problems.

6. We don't get along well together.

7. We confide in each other.

8. We avoid discussing fears or concerns

9. Family members are accepted as who they are

10. We cannot talk to each other about sadness.

11. We can turn to each other for support

12. Our family misunderstands each other.

Control Variables

Child's Gender

Gender of child: f "female" or m "male" (recoded so m=1 and f=2)

Number of Minor Children

How many children aged 0-17 live in the household? Four response categories: 1 "one," 2 "two," 3 "three," 4 "four or more."

Income

Recoded household income. Six response categories: 1 "less than 10,000," 2 " 10,000 to 14,999," 3 "15,000 to 19,999," 4 "20,000 to 29,999," 5 "30,000 to 39,999," and 6 "40,000 or more."

Income adequacy. Five response categories: 1 "Lowest: household income is < 10,000 and household size is 1-4 persons; or household income is < 15,000 and household size is 5 or more persons," 2 " Lower middle: household income is 10,000-14,999 and household size is 1-2 persons; or household income is 10,000-19,999 and household size is 3-4 persons; or household income is 15,000-29,999 and household size is 5 or more persons," 3 "Middle: household income is 15,000-29,999 and household size is 1-2 persons; or household income is 20,000-39,999 and household size is 3-4 persons; or household income is 30,000-59,999 and household size is 5 or more persons," 4 "Upper middle: household income is 30,000-59,999 and household

size is 1-2 persons; or household income is 40,000-79,999 and household size is 3-4 persons; or

household income is 60,000-79,999 and household size is 5 or more persons," and 5 "Highest:

household income is 60,000 or more and household size is 1-2 persons; or household income is

80,000 or more and household size is 3 or more persons."

Depression Scale

Twelve items, each instructing the respondent to indicate, "How often you have felt or

behaved this way during the past week." Four response categories: 1 "rarely or none of the time

(less than 1 day)," 2 "some or a little of the time (1-2 days)," 3 "occasionally or a moderate

amount (3-4 days)," 4 "most or all of the time (5-7 days)."

1. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.

2. I felt that I could not shake the blues even with help from my family or friends.

3. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.

4. I felt depressed.

5. I felt that everything that I did was an effort.

6. I felt hopeful about the future. (reverse code)

7. My sleep was restless.

8. I was happy. (reverse code)

9. I felt lonely.

10. I enjoyed life. (reverse code)

11. I had crying spells.

12. I felt that people disliked me.

Parenting

Positive interaction. Five items, each beginning with the phrase, "How often do you…" The five response categories are: 1 "never," 2 "about once a week or less," 3 "a few times a week," 4 "one or two times a day," 5 "many times each day."

1. Praise your child by saying something like "Good for you!" or "What a nice thing you did!" or "That's good going!"?

2. Talk or play with your child, focusing attention on each other for five minutes or more, just for fun?

3. Laugh with your child?

4. Do something special with your child that he/she enjoys?

5. Play sports, hobbies or games with your child?

Consistency. Five items; the five response categories for each item are: 1 "never," 2 "less than half the time," 3 "about half the time," 4 "more than half the time," 5 "all the time."

1. When you give your child a command or order to do something, what proportion of the time do you make sure that he/she does it?

2. If you tell your child that he/she will get punished if he/she doesn't stop doing something, and he/she keeps doing it, how often will you punish him/her?

3. How often does he/she get away with things that should have been punished? (reverse).

4. How often is he/she able to get out of punishment when he/she really sets his/her mind to it? (reverse code).

5. How often when you discipline him/her, does he/she ignore the punishment? (reverse code).

Hostile ineffective. Seven items; the five response categories for each item are: 1 "never," 2 "less than half the time," 3 "about half the time," 4 "more than half the time," 5 "all the time."

1. How often do you get annoyed with your child for saying or doing something he/she is not supposed to?

2. Of all the times that you talk to your child about behavior, what proportion is praise? (reverse code)

3. Of all the times that you talk to your child about his/her behaviour, what proportion is disapproval?

4. How often do you get angry when you punish your child?

5. How often does the kind of punishment you give your child depends on your mood?

6. How often do you feel you are having problems managing your child in general?

7. How often do you have to discipline your child repeatedly for the same thing?

Punitive (aversive). Four items starting with the phrase, "When your child breaks the rules or does something that he/she is not supposed to, how often do you..." The five response categories for each item are: 1 "always," 2 "often," 3 "sometimes," 4 "rarely," 5 "never."

1. Raise your voice, scold or yell at him/her? (reverse code)

2. Calmly discuss the problem?

3. Use physical punishment? (reverse code)

4. Describe alternative ways of behaving that are acceptable?

APPENDIX B

Descriptive Statistics for the Entire Sample

Below are the descriptive statistics of the child outcome variables (See Table B1) and the control variables (See Tables B2 and B3) for the entire sample.

Table B1

Descriptive Statistics of the Child Outcomes for the Entire Sample

Statistics	Child outcomes			
	Academics	Emotional	Hyperactive	Aggression
N	9911	13732	13718	13697
Mean	1.79	2.53	4.61	1.44
SE mean	.01	.02	.03	.02
Median	2	2	4	1
Mode	1	0	1	0
SD	.90	2.55	3.57	1.90
Variance	.80	6.49	12.74	3.61
Skewness	.78	1.24	.74	1.79
SE skewness	.03	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.40	1.55	.05	3.55
SE kurtosis	.05	.04	.04	.04
Range	1 – 5	0 – 16	0 –16	0 –12

Table B2

Descriptive Statistics of the Control Variables (Number of Minor Children, Income, Income Adequacy, and PMK Depression) for the Entire Sample

Statistics	Control variables			
	Number of Minors	Income	Income Adequacy	Depression
N	14054	14054	14054	13710
Mean	2.44	5.04	3.33	4.77
SE mean	.01	.01	.01	.05
Median	2	6	3	3
Mode	2	6	3	0
SD	.86	1.35	1.00	5.40
Variance	.74	1.82	.99	29.16
Skewness	.27	-1.28	-.14	1.90
SE skewness	.02	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.58	.57	-.51	4.29
SE kurtosis	.04	.04	.04	.04
Range	1 – 4	1 - 6	1 - 5	0 – 35

Table B3

Descriptive Statistics of the Parenting Control Variables (Positive Interaction, Consistency, Hostile-Ineffective and Aversive) for the Entire Sample

Statistics	Parenting control variables			
	Positive	Consistent	Hostile	Aversive
N	13763	13677	13711	13719
Mean	12.82	14.87	8.90	8.99
SE mean	.03	.03	.03	.02
Median	13	15	9	9
Mode	13	16	8	9
SD	3.01	3.44	3.77	2.02
Variance	9.08	11.86	14.25	4.07
Skewness	-.07	-.67	.53	.07
SE skewness	.02	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.27	.26	.30	.06
SE kurtosis	.04	.04	.04	.04
Range	1 – 20	0 – 20	0 –25	4-19

APPENDIX C

Descriptive Statistics for the Intact Family Group

Below are the descriptive statistics of the child outcome variables (See Table C1), the internal process variables (See Table C2) and the control variables (see Tables C3 and C4) for the intact family group.

Table C1

Descriptive Statistics of the Child Outcomes for the Intact Family Group

Statistics	Child outcomes			
	Academics	Emotional	Hyperactive	Aggression
N	7569	10636	10629	10611
Mean	1.73	2.32	4.32	1.34
SE mean	.01	.02	.03	.02
Median	1	2	4	1
Mode	1	0	1	0
SD	.87	2.40	3.43	1.78
Variance	.76	5.74	11.73	3.18
Skewness	.85	1.25	.79	1.79
SE skewness	.03	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.30	1.49	.17	3.60
SE kurtosis	.06	.05	.05	.05
Range	1 – 5	0 – 16	0 –16	0 –12

Table C2

Descriptive Statistics of the Internal Process Variables for the Intact Family Group

Statistics	Internal process variables			
	Partner satisfaction		Family Functioning	
	Original NLSCY	Recode	Original NLSCY	Recode
N	10712	10712	10709	10709
Mean	9.47	2.77	7.93	2.05
SE mean	.02	.01	.05	.01
Median	10	3	8	2
Mode	11	4	12	2
SD	1.89	1.17	5.00	.80
Variance	3.56	1.36	25.03	.63
Skewness	-1.95	-.34	.245	-.09
SE skewness	.02	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	4.83	-1.376	.06	-1.42
SE kurtosis	.05	.05	.05	.05
Range	1 – 11	1 - 4	0-35	1 - 3

Table C3

Descriptive Statistics of the Control Variables (Number of Minor Children, Income, Income Adequacy, and PMK Depression) for the Intact Family Group

Statistics	Control variables			
	Number of Minors	Income	Income Adequacy	Depression
N	10885	10885	10885	10615
Mean	2.49	5.37	3.50	4.10
SE mean	.01	.01	.01	.05
Median	2	6	4	3
Mode	2	6	3	0
SD	.82	1.04	.92	4.72
Variance	.68	1.09	.85	22.32
Skewness	.31	-1.79	-.182	2.03
SE skewness	.02	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.52	2.82	-.321	5.24
SE kurtosis	.05	.05	.05	.05
Range	1 – 4	1 - 6	1 - 5	0 – 35

Table C4

Descriptive Statistics of the Parenting Control Variables (Positive Interaction, Consistency, Hostile-Ineffective and Aversive) for the Intact Family Group

Statistics	Parenting control variables			
	Positive	Consistent	Hostile	Aversive
N	10657	10590	10621	10625
Mean	12.89	15.00	8.75	8.98
SE mean	.03	.03	.04	.02
Median	13	15	8	9
Mode	13	16	8	9
SD	2.98	3.34	3.65	2.00
Variance	8.87	11.14	13.36	4.00
Skewness	-.05	-.67	.50	.05
SE skewness	.02	.02	.02	.02
Kurtosis	-.29	.31	.27	.02
SE kurtosis	.05	.05	.05	.05
Range	2 - 20	0 - 20	0 –24	4 - 19