EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTAL AND STEPPARENTAL BEHAVIOUR TOWARD CHILDREN.

by

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Abstract

This study examined participants' expectations for parental and stepparental responsibilities with respect to child care. Seventy-nine female and seventy-five male participants completed the Parenting Expectations Questionnaire. Participants read a brief scenario about a first married family; a stepmother/biological father family; or a stepfather/biological mother family. They then assigned responsibility for 38 child care tasks on a 5-point scale from "man always" to "woman always". The general findings were: 1) participants assigned less responsibility to stepparents (stepmothers and stepfathers) for child care than they assigned to biological parents; 2) there was less consensus about appropriate "parental" behaviour for stepparents as compared to that for first married parents; and 3) participants with stepfamily experience assigned less responsibility to stepparents than did participants from first married families.

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Dissolution of marriages due to divorce (versus death of a spouse) began to increase rapidly in the late 1960's and continued to rise throughout the 1970's (Glick, 1980). This upward trend has resulted in a substantial number of marriages where at least one spouse has previously been married. This family type is called a "remarried couple" if neither husband nor wife brings to the new marriage a child under age 18 from a prior marriage. Utilizing data from the 1987 Current Population Survey, Glick (1989) estimates that there are about 6.7 million "remarried couples" in the United States.

When at least one of the spouses brings a child under 18 to the remarriage, a "stepfamily" results. The same survey data were used to estimate 4.3 million such families. Thus, in the United States, approximately 65% of remarriages involve stepchildren.

Canadian statistics are also available on remarriage, although they are reported in a different format than those in the United States. In 1985 there were 184,096 marriages in Canada. Of these marriages, 50,058 (27%) were remarriages meaning that at least one spouse had previously been married (Statistics Canada, 1988). There were roughly equal percentages of remarriages where: 1) both spouses had been divorced; 2) the husband had been divorced and the wife was previously single; and 3) the wife had been divorced and the husband was previously single. Canadian statistics are

not available on the percentage of remarriages which involve a child or children under 18 from a prior marriage.

Glick (1984) projects that almost half of all marriages will end in divorce by 1990, and that between 70% and 75% of divorcees will remarry. Remarriage is, and will probably continue to be, more likely for divorced men; the majority of divorced women also remarry following divorce, however. It must be noted here that remarriage and stepfamily statistics often do not include common law couples/families which are an increasing family form. With regard to stepfamilies, the unique issues these families encounter are likely applicable regardless of whether the new couple is legally married or not.

Academic interest in stepfamilies began with the "groundbreaking" article by Fast and Cain in 1966 (cited in Papernow, 1984). This article was followed by a gradual increase in publications throughout the 1960's and 1970's, and an "explosion" of stepfamily research in the 1980s (Papernow, 1984). The topic of stepfamilies is also receiving increased attention in the popular literature, particularly in women's magazines. Utilizing the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman (1985) searched for stepfamily articles which had been published in popular magazines. While in the 1940's and 1950's, there were only a total of 10 articles published, the numbers increased dramatically in the following two decades, resulting in a total of 99 articles between 1960

and 1979. Nolan et al. (1984) note, however, that marriage and family textbooks pay scant attention to the subject of remarriage and stepfamilies.

Despite the so called "explosion" of publications in the 1980's, stepfamily research is still in its infancy. Esses and Campbell (1984), in their overview of the literature, state that the "...research conducted to date is at a relatively primitive stage in its development and serious methodological flaws plague the available studies" (p.415). The same authors note that the majority of studies: 1) are clinical versus empirical; 2) are atheoretical; 3) are pathological in their focus; 4) utilize small numbers of participants and nonrandom samples (e.g., university students); 5) utilize instruments which are created by the authors and for which reliability and validity data are unavailable; 6) are static rather than longitudinal in format; 7) have a first married family bias, and 8) do not compare structurally different (e.g. stepmother versus stepfather; in-living versus out-living stepchildren, etc.) types of stepfamilies.

The Stepparent Role

The majority of early research on stepfamilies focused on the adjustment of stepchildren. Recently, there has been a trend toward studying the adults in stepfamilies, especially with regard to relationship satisfaction for remarried partners, and the quality of stepparent-stepchild relationships. While many authors make mention of the type

or essence (versus the quality) of steprelationships, little empirical research has examined this topic.

Walker and Messinger (1979) define roles as "...clusters of rights and obligations in reciprocal relations between pairs of individuals and the patterns of expected behavior associated with these rights and obligations"(p.186). A person enacts more than one role at any point in time (Allen & van de Vliert, 1984), including those in domains such as family of origin, family of procreation, and occupation. Thus, in examining the stepparent role, one is temporarily disregarding other important roles the person enacts in her/his life.

A role consists of not only the behaviour of the incumbent, but also of the expectations of such behaviour and the sanctions which result when a person is negligent in fulfilling their role (Nye, 1974). Role expectations are defined by Allen and van de Vliert (1984) as "...prescriptions about what a position incumbent ought to or not to do under given circumstances"(p.5). That is, what behaviours are generally expected and not expected of stepparents, relative to the spouse of the stepparent, and relative to same-sex biological parents in first married families?

It should not be assumed that expectations are directly translated into role behaviour. Mediating variables include: 1) whether or not the expectations are communicated clearly (assuming there are established societal

prescriptions for the particular role to be communicated), 2) individual differences such as whether or not the incumbent chooses to comply with the expectations (Allen & van de Vliert, 1984), and 3) the reactions of significant others to attempts at role enactment (Fast & Cain, 1966). It is important to note that role enactment occurs in the context of relationships. A stepparent does not, therefore, act in isolation. Her or his behaviour will be influenced by the attitudes, expectations, and behaviour of others (stepchildren, spouse, friends, etc.), as well as her/his own attitudes, expectations, and personal experiences and resources.

It is likely, however, that behaviour (or role enactment) is in part a function of expectations held by the role incumbent and significant others in her/his life. Such expectations are an important topic of research, and one which has not been empirically addressed in either the literature on first married families or that on stepfamilies.

Incomplete institutionalization. Several authors have suggested that norms regarding stepfamilies are lacking in our society (Cherlin, 1978; Duberman, 1973; Fast & Cain, 1966; Kompara, 1980; Larson & Allgood, 1987; Visher & Visher, 1979; and Walker & Messinger, 1979). Cherlin (1978) has labelled this lack of normative information the "incomplete institutionalization of remarriage". He argues that the established patterns of interactions in first

married families do not exist for remarried families. That is, persons in first married families have more normative information as to their respective roles, and how they should interact and resolve conflict.

In addition to insufficient information on appropriate stepparent (and stepchild) behaviour, it may also be that the information available is contradictory. Fast and Cain (1966) argue that: "The role definition of stepparent in this society is both poorly articulated and implies contradictory functions as 'parent', 'stepparent', and 'nonparent'"(p.486). They suggest that stepparents are expected on the one hand to behave like a biological parent while at the same time, they are expected to be somewhat less than a biological parent.

Without clear information about what it means to be a stepparent, members of such families are said to experience role and boundary ambiguity (Walker & Messinger, 1979). Boss and Greenberg (1984) conceptualize "...family boundary ambiguity as a state in which family members are uncertain in their perception about who is in or out of the family and who is performing what roles and tasks within the family" (emphasis added; p.536). Perception is an important component of the ambiguity. For example, it may be that a stepmother is performing childrearing tasks which mothers normally perform, but is still not perceived by other family members as belonging in, or fulfilling, the mother role.

As evidence for his thesis of incomplete institutionalization, Cherlin (1978) makes the following points. First, he notes that slightly higher divorce rates are consistently found for remarried versus first married couples. Second, stepfamilies are not generally recognized in law. This, however, is beginning to change in some jurisdictions (Kompara, 1980). For example, the British Columbia Family Relations Act recognizes some stepparents as "parents" and may require them to continue to provide financial support for stepchildren upon dissolution of the remarriage. Third, Cherlin asserts that the English language does not contain appropriate terms for steprelationships. For example, the original meaning of "step" related to the replacement of a dead parent, not the addition of another parent as is often the case today.

Finally, Cherlin (1978) suggests that the research findings of Ann Goetting provide support for his argument. While Goetting (1979) did not directly examine norms for the stepparent role, she explored a related topic, that of ex-spouse relations. Goetting asked 180 remarried men and women who had at least one child from a previous marriage to respond to several hypothetical scenarios. The scenarios involved a divorced couple (both of whom had remarried) in various situations, covering 9 domains of ex-spouse relations. Several scenarios were chosen to represent each domain. Respondents were asked whether or not the ex-spouse should or should not engage in a particular behaviour.

Participants were also given the option of a neutral response.

If significantly more than one-half of the sample gave the same response (yes, no, or neutral), Goetting concluded that there was consensus regarding the particular issue portrayed. Using this criterion, Goetting (1979) found consensus to exist for 69% of the scenarios. She concluded, therefore, that there was a moderate amount of normative consensus concerning ex-spouse relations.

Unfortunately, we have no comparison group to assess whether this amount of consensus is higher or lower than that found for first married family relations. The results are, therefore, open to different interpretations, as is the case here. While Goetting concludes that the results are supportive of moderate normative integration, Cherlin (1978) focused on the considerable amount of variability found by Goetting. In fact, Cherlin asserts that Goetting's findings provide support for his incomplete institutionalization hypothesis. Without a control group of first married couples responding to scenarios about first married family relations, definitive conclusions can not be drawn.

While they disagree with Cherlin's argument that incomplete institutionalization is the cause of higher divorce rates among remarried couples, Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) concede that "...reconstituted families are confronted with a great deal of normative confusion"(p.434). They note the considerable number of unique challenges

remarried families must face, and for which they are not given adequate guidance. The main issues include: children from prior marriages, ex-spouses, children who move between two households, unclear financial obligations, and complicated kinship networks.

Remarried adults are often faced with the challenge of incorporating children from previous marriages into the new family. This is not always the case, however, as many fathers fail to maintain contact with their children following divorce. In a 1981 nationwide U.S. survey of children of divorce, Furstenberg and Nord (1985) found that 49% of the children had had no direct contact with their noncustodial parent (usually the father) in the year previous to the interview.

Nevertheless, for those remarried parents who do maintain significant relationships with their children, the blending of the new marital unit with children from the prior marriage can be a formidable undertaking. Some of the issues which must be addressed in this realm are: the nature of the stepparent role (Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984), the suddenness of this same role (Visher & Visher, 1979), coparenting with one's ex-spouse (Visher & Visher, 1989), and the reluctance of some children to accept the remarriage of their parents (Visher & Visher, 1979).

Stepfamilies are also unique due to the existence of the children's other biological parent. Coparenting arrangements must be worked out between the two biological

parents of the child. While smooth relations are considered optimal for the children involved, a good coparenting relationship may create difficulties such as jealousy for the newly married couple (Visher & Visher, 1979). The existence of a biological parent outside the stepfamily may also create loyalty conflicts on the part of the children who now have two same-sex "parents".

A third challenge involves the accommodation of children who move between two different households (Larson & Allgood, 1987; Mills, 1984). This feature of stepfamily life requires more permeable boundaries around the family (household) unit as compared to first married families. In addition, children must adjust to both household systems with their distinct rules and patterns of interaction (Visher & Visher, 1979).

The financial arrangements are also be unique in stepfamilies (Goetting, 1982; Visher & Visher, 1979). Remarried couples must decide how their respective money is to be distributed. For example, to what extent is a stepparent financially responsible for her/his stepchildren? As well, the difficulties in paying and receiving (or not receiving) child support are inherent challenges for these families.

Finally, kinship relations are especially complicated in stepfamilies. Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) concluded from their empirical research on remarried couples that: "...the size and complexity of kinship networks among

remarried persons presented certain problems in managing the child's various responsibilities to several sets of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins"(p.435). Decisions must be made regarding which kinship ties from the previous marriage will be maintained, and regarding the nature of new relationships with steprelatives.

While most would agree that stepfamilies face unique challenges, at least one author questions Cherlin's assertion that stepfamily relations are less institutionalized than those of first married families. Halliday (1980) suggests that attitude (and sometimes behavioural) changes regarding the division of family labour and employment outside the home has resulted in a lack of consensus on appropriate family roles in general. Halliday (1980) states that:

> At present, first marriages are undergoing a drastic process of redefinition, particularly in the movement from asymmetrical to symmetrical power relationships between spouses and in shifts in the occupational and marital role definitions of spouses. Many first marriages become battle grounds between two conflicting conceptions on marriage(p.634).

Furstenberg and Spanier (1984), in their critique of Cherlin's thesis, point out that: "(a)lthough widely cited in the recent literature on remarriage, Cherlin's thesis has received little direct empirical scrutiny"(p.433). Given the possibility that norms for first marriages are just as

ambiguous as those for remarriages, the call for empirical tests of the incomplete institutionalization hypothesis is all the more important.

Expectations for the stepparent role. Despite the preceding criticisms, most authors believe that the norms for stepparent behaviour are unclear. Stepparents and their significant others, therefore, do not have clearly defined expectations of how stepparents should act toward their stepchildren. Walker and Messinger (1979), add, however, that "...insofar as roles are ascribed at all, they tend to be those appropriate to the nuclear family..."(p.187). These authors are suggesting that in place of clear expectations unique to the stepparent role, there are expectations which are more relevant to first married families, reflecting perhaps a first married bias in our society. Thus, as will be discussed in a later section on the role enactment of first married parents, women (stepmothers) may be expected to take on more of a childrearing role than men (stepfathers), while the latter may be expected to assume financial responsibility for stepchildren.

If this is true, expectations for the stepmother role are much higher than those for the stepfather role in terms of the emotional involvement and amount of time required. According to Visher and Visher (1979), the demanding responsibilities a stepmother is expected to undertake include: solving the problems created by the divorce,

creating a happy family unit, proving herself to be a good stepmother, and developing instant love between herself and the stepchildren.

Little empirical research has been conducted on expectations for the stepparent role. Two investigations will be discussed here. First, Ganong and Coleman (1989) interviewed 205 remarried adults, some of whom were stepparents and the remainder of whom were the spouses of stepparents. They found that: "(a)pproximately two-thirds of both biological parents and stepparents expected the stepparent to fill a parental role with the children"(p.30). Thus, two-thirds of the sample equated steppparenthood with parenthood. Unfortunately, the authors did not inquire about the specific behavioural components of this parental role, nor did they make the distinction between expectations for the stepmother and the stepfather roles.

In another study on this topic, Giles-Sims (1984) conducted interviews with adult members (one per household) in 99 stepfamilies. Respondents were asked the question: "Who is responsible for childrearing?" with respect to children of the remarriage, children from the husband's prior marriage, and children from the wife's prior marriage. Responsibility was to be assigned on a 5-point scale from "husband always" to "wife always". Giles-Sims obtained the following results. For children of the remarriage, 95% of the sample indicated that husbands and wives should be equally responsible for childrearing. When asked about

children from previous marriages, fewer respondents indicated equal responsibility (59% for the wife's children and 52% for the husband's children), and those who did not assign equal responsibility favoured the biological parent.

The expected discrepancy between expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers was not found in this study. That is, stepmothers were not expected, more than stepfathers, to take on childrearing responsibilities. Given that the majority of participants were women, however, the responses may have been biased in a particular direction. It is possible that the lack of a substantial discrepancy between expectations for stepfathers and stepmothers (59% versus 52% were expected to share equal responsibility) is a result of the high proportion of women in this sample. That is, had the researcher included more male respondents, more discrepant expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers may have resulted. It is also possible that as each respondent rated the three classes of children (a within-subject design), attempts to appear unbiased masked real differences in expectations. These possibilities must be empirically tested, however.

Given the small number of studies in this area and the limitations of those which exist, it is clear that little is known about the expectations for the stepparent role. Empirical investigation is necessary regarding the expectations stepparents have of themselves, and the expectations which significant others (particularly, other

members of the stepfamily) have of stepparents. In order to better understand the developmental process of stepfamilies, it is essential to explore expectations held prior to becoming part of a stepfamily as well as those which result from the actual experience of being a stepparent.

The impact of family background on expectations for stepparental behaviour has also not been examined in the literature on stepfamilies. One study found that stepmothers described in hypothetical scenarios were evaluated (using the semantic differential technique) differently by participants from step- and single-parent families (Fine, 1986). It is possible that the unique socialization process of children in stepfamilies may influence such respondents' expectations in terms of the amount of responsibility assigned to stepparents and in terms of the consistency of these expectations over time.

Role enactment of stepparents. While the role enactment of stepparents is not simply a function of one's own, and others', role expectations, role enactment studies do give us some indication as to what these expectations might be. Again, however, the stepfamily literature contains many assumptions which are not supported empirically. In particular, Furstenberg (1980) notes that the division of parenting labour in stepfamilies is a largely unexplored area of research. Nevertheless, a few recent, empirical studies will be discussed here.

Ambert (1986) examined, among other variables, the division of family work (housework and childcare) in stepmother and stepfather families. Through interviews with 109 male and female stepparents, Ambert (1986) concluded that:

> (I)t is generally the stepmothers, and not the stepfathers, who are primarily responsible for childcare and the functioning of the household. We found that, when stepchildren visited, it was usually the stepmothers, and not the children's fathers, who acquired extra work (housecleaning, shopping for food, cooking, bedmaking), and this work was perceived as a burden because the stepmothers would benefit little emotionally from the visits.(p.801)

Ambert (1986) is suggesting not only that stepmothers were more responsible for childrearing relative to stepfathers in similar circumstances, but also relative to the child's biological father. Unfortunately, the author does not indicate the manner in which she obtained this information, nor the size of reported discrepancies. That is, what questions did she ask in order to make such comparisons, and what were her criteria for deciding that a particular group of people had more responsibilities? Due to these limitations, these findings must be taken as tentative.

In a recent study, Guisinger et al. (1989) distributed questionnaires to 62 couples in stepmother/father families.

The sample consisted of couples in their first year and those in their third to fifth years of remarriage. As part of the questionnaire, subjects completed a modified version of the "Who Does What?" scale, originally developed by Cowan et al. (1978). This scale contains a total of 31 items relating to housework, childcare and decision making. Participants were asked to rate the current division of family labour (when the stepchild is in the couple's home), and what they believed to be the ideal division of labour.

Unfortunately, when reporting the results of their study, Guisinger et al. (1989) did not make clear distinctions between housework, decision making and child care. Important information for our purposes is, therefore, obscured. All that can be concluded is that stepmothers (relative to fathers) in this study were performing more of the household tasks which directly related to the children (e.g., preparing meals). More specific information on the division of child care labour was not reported.

Amato (1987) provides some information on stepfather role enactment from an Australian sample, although it is not known how applicable the results are to Canadian stepfather/mother families. Through interviews with 402 primary and secondary school children from first married, single mother, and stepfather/mother families, Amato examined stepfather involvement with, and decision making regarding, stepchildren.

Involvement was assessed through responses to 12 questions regarding such activities as talking to the child and helping the child with homework. Amato found that stepfathers were significantly less involved with younger (primary school) stepchildren than fathers from first married families. A significant difference among family types was not found, however, for adolescents. In terms of decision making, it was found that stepfathers had less input (relative to biological fathers) in decisions about adolescent stepchildren, while there was no significant difference for younger children.

Finally, two studies have assessed decision making (regarding stepchildren) by stepparents. In a previously mentioned study, Giles-Sims (1984) asked remarried adults about their relative participation in making decisions. Whereas with shared children, 70% of the participants indicated that husbands and wives contributed equally to decisions, this was less often the case with stepchildren. That is, only 20% and 29% of participants stated that decision making was shared equally with regard to the husbands' and wives' children (respectively) from previous marriages. For the remaining respondents, decision making was reported to be primarily the responsibility of the child's biological parent.

While Giles-Sims (1984) suggests that the expectations of shared child care for stepchildren (52-59%) are discrepant with actual role enactment (20-29%), her

operationalization of role enactment is limited to decision making only. It can not be concluded, therefore, that expectations and enactment are discrepant here. It may be that decision making is one aspect of the parental role that stepparents are given less responsibility for, relative to other child care functions.

In a second study on decision-making, Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett (1989) interviewed mothers, stepfathers and adolescents in 87 stepfamilies. They assessed decision making power for major and everyday decisions involving the adolescent. For major decisions, mothers had the most power, followed by stepfathers and then adolescents. For everyday decisions, participants indicated approximately equal power for all three members of the family.

The Parental Role

The roles of mothers and fathers in first married families are discussed here for comparison purposes. This is not to suggest, however, that expectations for, or role enactment of, the stepparent role should be the same as for first married parents. Rather, the purpose of the comparison is to explore the extent to which stepfamilies are a unique family form. It is important not to assume that to be different from first married families is to be dysfunctional. Instead, possible differences should be explored so that we may further our understanding of nontraditional families, with the assumption that these nontraditional families provide equal or better growth

promoting environments for the rearing of children (as compared to first married families) unless proven otherwise. Through increased understanding, the author is hopeful that the first married family bias noted earlier can be overcome. Expectations for first married parents. While there has been a considerable amount of empirical research on the role enactment of mothers and fathers, similar research on expectations is scarce. In making the point that expectations of childrearing by fathers have increased in recent years, Leslie et al. (1988) report the findings of a 1981 opinion poll conducted in the United States. In this poll, 60% of adult respondents (male and female) expressed an expectation of shared childrearing.

In another study, Hansen and Darling (1985) examined the attitudes of male and female adolescents toward the division of family labour. A total of 893 adolescents were asked to anticipate the division of family labour in their future families. As the items relating to childrearing are quite global (e.g., "care for infants", "care of older children") in this study, information on the specific (expected) division of childrearing labour is not available.

Nevertheless, the results indicated that 36.3% and 46.9% of respondents expected equality in the care of infants and older children, respectively. When participants did not assign responsibility equally to mothers and fathers, childrearing was generally expected to be the mothers' responsibility. Furthermore, when analyzing the

results separately for female and male respondents, the authors found that female participants expected equality on twice as many family labour tasks, including such responsibilities as housework, yardwork and childcare.

LaRossa (1988) argues that there is a new culture of fatherhood today. By "culture" LaRossa (1988) means the "...shared norms, values, and beliefs surrounding men's parenting..."(p.451). That is, people's attitudes seem to have changed regarding the appropriate father role; fathers are expected to increase their participation in the rearing of their children. LaRossa makes the important point, however, that fathers do not necessarily act in accordance with these new values. He calls this attitude-behaviour discrepancy the "asynchrony between the culture and conduct of fatherhood"(p.451).

Role enactment of first married parents. As noted by LaRossa, and by the current author in an earlier discussion about the various influences upon role enactment, behaviour in a role does not follow directly from cultural and personal expectations. It is important, therefore, to examine the empirical literature on mothers' and fathers' childrearing behaviour. Based on their extensive literature review, Thompson and Walker (1989) concluded that: 1) Mothers, in general, enact the childrearing role more often than fathers, in terms of the number of tasks performed and the total time spent on childrearing; 2) In terms of the division of childrearing labour by types of tasks, mothers

are more responsible for the physical maintenance of
children (activities such as changing diapers, feeding,
bathing, etc.) while fathers spend most of their time with
children in leisure activities; and 3) "Mothers, regardless
of whether they are employed, carry 90% of the burden of
responsibility for child care: they plan, organize,
delegate, supervise, and schedule" (p.856).

Researchers have also examined the influence of various
factors on the role enactment of mothers and fathers. In
terms of the impact of the wife's employment status, Leslie
et al. (1988) make the distinction between child care tasks
performed alone and those performed jointly. In an
empirical study, they found that when wives worked outside
the home, husbands were more likely to engage in more child
care activities with their wives. However, employed women
continued to perform more child care tasks alone, relative
to their husbands.

Another factor, the age of the child, appears to have
only a small impact on fathers' roles. Berk (1985) notes
that fathers tend to participate in child care more when the
children are younger (i.e. infants and toddlers). She
suggests, however, that this increased participation is not
usually significant in comparison with the mother's
responsibilities. Finally, Basow (1986) states that fathers
engage in more child care activities with first-born sons
versus daughters (first-born or otherwise) or later-born
sons.

The Present Study

This study was designed to assess expectations for the stepparent role. Six research questions were addressed.

1. First, what are the role expectations for stepparents relative to those for biological parents? That is, what responsibilities are stepparents expected to fulfill regarding their spouses' children? Is it assumed that they will take on a parental role as if they were the children's biological parents or are the expectations for the stepparent role unique?

2. Second, is there more or less consensus about appropriate stepparental, versus parental, behaviour? More specifically, is the variability among a group of participants who are queried about the stepparent role different than the variability for participants responding to the same questions about first married parents?

3. Third, do respondents who have had substantial experience with stepparents, due to divorce in their family of origin, have expectations different from those of participants from first married families?

4. Fourth, how much responsibility for childrearing do respondents assign to stepmothers relative to that assigned to stepfathers?

5. Fifth, how consistent, over time, are participants' expectations for adults in stepfamilies relative to those for adults in first married families?

6. Sixth, how consistent, over time, are the expectations for the stepparent role of participants who have had substantial experience with stepparents versus those without such experience?

The present study focused on stepfamilies but the term was expanded to include remarried couples where children (under 18) from a previous marriage live only part-time in the remarried couple's household. This expansion was necessary in order to include stepmother, as well as stepfather, families as children do not usually live full-time in the former type of household. Following divorce, only a small minority of fathers are granted full custody of the child/ren of their marriage; children who continue to see their fathers (and their new wives if they remarry), therefore, generally do so on a part-time basis (Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985).

For the purpose of providing definitions of "stepmother" and "stepfather", the terms "married" and "marriage" will include common-law arrangements. As well, remarriage due to death of a spouse will not be included. A stepmother is defined here as a woman married to a man who has previously been married, where the man has at least one child from the previous marriage. In some cases, the woman may have a child(ren) of her own and/or the remarried couple may have shared children.

A stepfather is a man married to a woman who was formerly married, where the woman has at least one child

from her previous marriage. Again, children other than those from the wife's prior marriage may also be part of the stepfamily. Lesbian stepmothers and gay stepfathers were not included in these definitions because they comprise a small proportion of the stepfamily population and fall outside the scope of this study. Investigation of the unique dynamics of these stepfamilies where the romantic partners are homosexual is sorely lacking, however.

This study was designed to improve over previous investigations in the following ways: first, an empirical approach was taken; second, the design and measures were selected on the basis of theory (Cherlin's theory of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage); third, a substantial number of participants (N=154) were recruited; fourth, expectations for different types of stepparents (stepfathers and stepmothers) were examined; fifth, an attempt was made to recognize stepfamilies as unique rather than deviant in comparison to first married families; and sixth, the expectations of participants from different family backgrounds were examined.

Some of the previously mentioned criticisms of existing research were not addressed, however. First, the sample consisted of university students; conclusions must be limited, therefore, to the subset of the Canadian population the sample represents. Nevertheless, given the current statistics on the increasing number of stepfamilies, there is a high likelihood that these students will in the future

either be stepparents, live with or marry stepparents, or interact with those (friends, relatives, coworkers) who are stepparents. It is for these reasons that the expectations of these respondents are important.

Second, the present study did not look at expectations from a longitudinal perspective, although change over a short period of time (approximately 17 days) was investigated. Third, while the authors attempted to locate a preexisting scale of childrearing tasks (with reliability and validity data) in the literature on the division of family labour, an adequate, comprehensive measure was not available.

As mentioned above, the current study included participants who had prior experience with stepparents, as well as those who did not, to examine any resulting differences in expectations. It is possible that the unique socialization experiences of stepchildren might influence their expectations of such a role incumbent in the future. Duration and frequency of contact criteria were necessary for inclusion in this group of participants so that there was sufficient time for a stepparent-stepchild relationship to develop. The criteria chosen by the author were designed to include experiences with stepmothers **and** stepfathers (remembering that contact with stepmothers is generally less frequent), while at the same time excluding relationships too short and/or infrequent to be of significance. In addition, the further requirement that at least some of the

contact had taken place in the stepparent's home ensured the opportunity for a variety of "parental" responsibilities to arise.

In order to assess expectations for the stepparent role, the author constructed hypothetical scenarios, one for each of three family types: a first married family; a stepmother/biological father family; and a stepfather/ biological mother family. The three scenarios were equivalent with respect to the employment statuses of the adults, and the age of the child depicted.

The choice of the particular employment situation (both adults were described as working full-time outside the home) was designed to render the present study applicable to a substantial proportion of both first married and step-families. According to a recent report on Canadian women (Statistics Canada, 1985), 52.3% of married women work outside the home, and 73.3% of these same women work full-time. Approximately 40% of married women, therefore, are employed full-time in the workforce.

The age chosen (9 years old) was old enough to be applicable to a large proportion of stepparents (stepparents generally do not have contact with infants and toddlers), and also young enough to require a significant amount of "parental" attention. Were an adolescent portrayed in the scenarios, respondents might wish to assign more responsibility to the adolescent her/himself rather than focusing on "parental" roles.

A decision was made (for practical reasons) not to specify the gender of the child. As previously mentioned, fathers may be more attentive to male children (especially first-born males), and thus there is reason to assume that the gender of the child might influence expectations.

Thus, it was necessary to make several decisions about the characteristics of the families portrayed in the scenarios. I have taken what are complex and variable situations (either first married families or stepfamilies) and simplified them for practical reasons. To recruit the number of participants required to respond to all possible permutations of family life would be impractical.

Hypotheses

Six hypotheses were proposed. The first hypothesis was that stepparents (both stepmothers and stepfathers) would be assigned less responsibility for childrearing relative to their same-sex counterparts in first married families. This hypothesis was based on several factors. First there are suggestions in the clinical literature on stepfamilies that stepparents are expected to be somewhat less than a parent (e.g., Fast & Cain, 1966).

Second, expectations for stepparents may be reduced by the existence of the child's other biological parent (i.e., the ex-spouse). While the questionnaire asked only about childrearing responsibilities for the remarried couple, the ex-spouse was mentioned as being part of the child's life, and this may have influenced expectations for the

stepparent. Third, the previously mentioned empirical findings of Ganong and Coleman (1989) and Giles-Sims (1984) regarding reduced expectations for stepparents (versus biological parents) are supportive of this hypothesis.

The second hypothesis was that participants responding to the step-scenarios would show more within-group variability (i.e., less consensus) than those responding to the first married scenario. This hypothesis was based on Cherlin's assertion that there is a lack of normative information regarding stepfamily roles. The current author proposed that this lack of normative information should result in more individual differences in expectations for stepparent roles. That is, there should be more variability around the group means for responses to the stepfamily scenarios, as compared to within-group variability for responses to the first married scenario.

The third hypothesis was that stepmothers would be assigned more responsibility for childrearing than stepfathers. The current author predicted higher expectations for stepmothers for several reasons. First, if there is a first married family bias as suggested by Walker and Messinger (1979), expectations for stepparents should follow a pattern similar to that found for first married parents in terms of differential expectations for women and men. As noted previously, Hansen and Darling (1985), in their study of adolescents' childrearing expectations for

biological mothers and fathers, found that participants had higher expectations of mothers.

Second, there are numerous suggestions in the clinical literature on stepfamilies (e.g., Visher & Visher, 1979) that stepmothers are expected to engage in more childrearing activities than stepfathers. Third, if role enactment can be taken as support for differential expectations, findings in this area of research are supportive of the hypothesis. Recall that Ambert (1986) found that stepmothers engaged in more childcare behaviour than stepfathers, and also more than the child's biological father. The previously noted limitations of Ambert's study (lack of specificity regarding the criteria for deciding that stepmothers had more responsibily) left some doubt as to the validity and strength of stepmother/stepfather differences, however.

The fourth hypothesis was that participants with stepfamily experience would assign less responsibility to stepparents (both stepmothers and stepfathers) than would participants without such experience. This hypothesis was based on Walker and Messinger's (1979) suggestion that there is a first married bias in our society. Recall that this bias should result in expectations for stepparents which, rather than being unique, are similar to those for first married parents.

The current author predicted, however, that this bias would be overcome in part by childhood experiences with stepparents. Further, the current author predicted that

this move away from expectations for stepparents which are similar to those for first married parents would be in the direction of less involvement. That is, participants with stepfamily experience, as compared to those without such experience, would expect stepparents to be somewhat less involved in child care.

The fifth hypothesis was that participants' expectations for childrearing in stepfamilies would be more variable over time than those for childrearing in first married families. This hypothesis was also based on Cherlin's incomplete institutionalization hypothesis, and the suggestion of Walker and Messinger (1979) that this lack of normative information leads to uncertainty regarding appropriate stepparental behaviour. The current author predicted that this uncertainty would be reflected in less stability in expectations for stepparental behaviour, relative to expectations for parental behaviour.

Finally, the sixth hypothesis was that participants with stepfamily experience would be more consistent over time when responding to the step-scenarios than those participants without such experience. This hypothesis was based on the current author's assumption that insufficient normative information regarding stepfamilies stems from the fact that remarriage (due to divorce) is a relatively recent phenomenon; that is, there has been insufficient time for the establishment of norms. For participants with stepfamily experience, this lack of normative information should be at

least partially overcome by their exposure to stepfamily life, leading to less ambiguity (and more stability over time) regarding stepparent roles.

Method

Study 1

Participants. Participants were 75 male and 79 female Psychology undergraduates who were recruited from introductory Psychology courses. Participants were identified from a volunteer subject pool and were contacted by phone to see if they were willing to participate in the study. Eligible students received course credit for their participation. Students who were parents themselves were excluded from participating as the focus of the current project was to assess parenting expectations held prior to becoming a parent.

Two groups of participants were recruited: 1) students from first married families (i.e., their parents did not separate or divorce before they turned 16) and 2) students whose parents did divorce before they turned 16 and who also had ongoing contact with a stepparent. The minimum criteria for inclusion in this latter group were: 1) a relationship with a stepparent for more than 2 years, and either 2) face-to-face contact with this same stepparent in the stepparent's home at least twice a month, on average, or 3) face-to-face contact with the stepparent in the stepparent's home at least two times per year where each visit was of at least 7 days in duration.

Procedure.   Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix A) consisting of three parts. In the demographic section, they answered questions regarding age, gender, country of origin, their relationship status, and family history. Of particular importance here, was whether or not the respondents had any experiences with stepparents, as well as the self-reported duration, frequency and quality of such experiences.

Following this section, respondents read a brief description of a family, which was either: 1) a first married family (FM condition), 2) a stepmother and biological father family (SM condition), or 3) a stepfather and biological mother family (SF condition). Participants who were raised in first married families were randomly assigned to one of the three scenarios. Respondents with stepfamily experience were assigned either to the first married scenario or to the relevant step-scenario (stepmother or stepfather) for which they met the frequency and duration of contact criteria. In other words, all participants in the SM condition had substantial experience with a stepmother, and all participants in the SF condition had substantial experience with a stepfather. Those in the FM condition could have experience with either type of stepparent.

In the FM scenario, the adults were described as having one child. In the SM scenario, the man's child was described as living in the couple's home every second

weekend, in addition to accompanying them on vacations. In the SF scenario, the woman's child was described as living full-time with the couple, with the exception of weekend visits (every second weekend) to the biological father's home. With respect to employment status, both spouses were described as working full-time outside the home. The age of the child (9 years old) was also noted in each scenario.

Participants were then asked to assign responsibility for a list of 38 child care tasks with the couple described in mind. The respondents were to indicate who they thought should be responsible for the various tasks listed. In the two stepfamily scenarios, participants were asked to limit their expectations for parental responsibilities to occasions when the child was in the couple's home. Responsibility was rated on a 5-point scale (as in Giles-Sims' 1984 study), where 1 = the man (John) always, 5 = the woman (Lori) always, and 3 = about equal responsibility. Participants were to assign responsibility for each individual item on the Parenting Scale.

The Parenting Scale was adapted from scales used in division of family labour studies (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Kamo, 1988; Leslie, Branson & Anderson, 1988; Rettig & Metzger, 1986; and Warner, 1986). A wide variety of responsibilities involved in parenting (those which were applicable to the age of the child chosen), covering such domains as physical maintenance of the child, financial support, nurturance, guidance, and the

maintenance of kinship relations were included. Housework responsibilities were included only if they were directly related to the child (e.g., cleaning the child's bedroom).

As the gender of the child was not specified in the scenarios, participants were asked about any assumption regarding the child's gender which they might have made. Finally, participants completed a measure of social desirability, The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses (BIDR; Paulhus, 1990), which has two subscales: Self-Deceptive Positivity (SDP; honest but positive bias) and Impression Management (IM; deliberate false reports). The scale consists of 40 items: 20 items on each subscale. For the purposes of this study, however, a shortened version (10 items) of the SDP subscale was utilized in addition to the full-scale version of the IM subscale.

The BIDR was chosen as the measure of social desirability because it separates the two components of socially desirable responding. A measure of impression management was necessary to control for the influence of participants wanting to appear egalitarian when asked about parenting/stepparenting. The measure of positive self-deception was included to examine the relationship between this bias and Parenting Scale means. The two subscales of the BIDR also have adequate test-retest reliability - .69 and .65 for the SDP and IM scales, respectively, over a 5-week interval (Paulhus, 1990).

For respondents who elected not to participate in part two of the study, a debriefing followed the administration of the first questionnaire. Participants were told the general purposes of the study and given the option of receiving a summary of the results.

Study 2

Participants. A proportion of the participants (N = 84) from study 1 volunteered to take part in a second phase of the project. Those eligible received an additional credit for their participation.

Procedure. The participants completed the Expectations for Parental and Stepparental Behaviour Questionnaire a second time, approximately 2 weeks later, in order to assess the stability of responses over time. At time 1, the participants were told only that they would be required to complete a second questionnaire. That the two questionnaires were actually identical was only revealed at the time of the second administration. This was necessary to ensure that respondents were not cued to memorize their first responses and therefore attempt to replicate them at time 2. A debriefing followed to explain the reason for not revealing, when the participants originally volunteered, that the second questionnaire would be the same as the first.

Results

Scoring

For the following analyses, responses to the Parenting Scale were scored as follows. Participants recorded a raw score (1 through 5) for each of the 38 parenting tasks. A mean was then derived for each individual by averaging these 38 raw scores. Thus, an average score on the Parenting Scale was computed for each participant.

The two subscales of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses were scored as indicated by Pauhlus (1984). Participants recorded a raw score (1 through 7) for each of the 30 items. Scores which indicated an extreme tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner (6 or 7 for the positively keyed items, and 1 or 2 for the negatively keyed items) were recoded as 1's. All other scores were recoded as 0's. For the 20 items on the IM subscale, a total score was then calculated for each participant; scores could thus range from 0 to 20. A total score was also calculated for the 10 items on the SDP subscale; scores on this subscale could range from 0 to 10.

Analyses

Description of Sample. Of the 154 participants (79 women and 75 men) in the present study, approximately equal numbers responded to the FM, SM, and SF scenarios: 51 (33.1%), 55 (35.7%), and 48 (31.2%), respectively. Due to the relative difficulty of recruiting participants with stepfamily experience, there were more participants from first married families (87 vs. 67). See Table 1 for the

basic design of the study and for a breakdown of the number of participants per cell.

Eighty-four (54.5%) of the original participants agreed to complete the second questionnaire. The average length of time between the first and second administration of the questionnaire was 16.85 days (sd=3.05). Three test-retest correlation coefficients were computed for responses to each of the 3 scenarios. Comparisons were made between the Parenting Scale means for each participant at Time 1 with those at Time 2. They were as follows: r=.777 (FM), r=.854 (SM) and r=.852 (SF) with an average test-retest correlation of r=.830. Note that these estimates of stability over time reflect consistency in average responses rather than responses to individual items.

The ages of participants ranged from 17 to 25 with a mean of 19.5 years old. The majority (80.5%) of the sample were between 18 and 20 years old, inclusive. More than half (57.1%) of the sample were single, 33.1% were in a romantic relationship; 7.1% were living common-law; and 2.6% were married. Approximately 77% of the respondents indicated that they were born in Canada; 2.6% in the United States; and 20.1% in a country outside North America.

For those participants whose parents had divorced, 88.1% indicated that their father had remarried or lived with another partner following the divorce. Within this group, the average amount of contact with their father's new partner was 3.25 on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 indicated

the most frequent contact. When rating the quality of relationships with stepmothers, the responses of these same participants ranged from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive) with a mean of 4.49.

Slightly fewer (50 out of 67; 74.6%) participants indicated that their mothers had remarried or lived with another partner following the divorce. The average amount of contact with stepfathers was 4.4 on the 5-point scale mentioned above. In terms of the quality of relationships with stepfathers, the average rating given was 4.94 with scores ranging from 1 to 7.

Forty-two of the 67 participants (62.7%) with stepfamily experience indicated that both their mother and father had remarried or lived common-law following the divorce. For these respondents, 2 dependent t-tests were performed between stepmother and stepfather ratings on the frequency and quality of stepparent contact. Participants indicated having significantly more frequent contact with stepfathers, $t(66)=5.29$, $p<.001$. While the respondents rated their relationships with stepfathers as somewhat more positive than relationships with stepmothers (M=4.79 vs. M=4.40), this difference was not significant, $t(66)=.89$.

For the first administration of the questionnaire, Parenting Scale means were: 3.13 (sd=.129), 2.61 (sd=.283), and 3.38 (sd=.262) for the FM, SM, and SF scenarios, respectively. Note that Parenting Scales means were not significantly related to Self-Deceptive Postivity scores on

the BIDR. After reversing scores on the Parenting Scale for the SF scenario (so that high scores for all participants indicated more responsibility for the woman), a correlation was performed between SDP and Parenting Scale scores. The correlation was not significant ($r=.03$, $p>.05$). At the time of second administration, the Parenting Scale means were virtually the same for the FM and SM conditions, 3.13 (sd=.146) and 2.63 (sd=.293), respectively, and somewhat higher for the SF scenario, 3.46 (sd=.271).

The average score on the SDP (short version) of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responses was 4.47 (sd=2.12), while the average for the IM subscale was 6.53 (sd=3.36). The test-retest reliability coefficients for the SDP and IM subscales were: $r=.725$ (n=83) and $r=.810$ (n=83), respectively. After correcting for decreased reliability due to fewer items on the SDP subscale via the Spearman-Brown correction (Ghiselli et al., 1981), the test-retest reliability of the SDP subscale increased to $r=.841$.

Tests were conducted to determine whether there were any significant between-group differences on variables other than those of interest in the current study. In order to examine between-group differences on age, assumption regarding the gender of the child, IM and SDP, a Scenario (3 levels: FM, SM, and SF) by Gender (2 levels: female and male) by Family Background (2 levels: stepfamily experience and no stepfamily experience) MANOVA was performed. The gender assumption variable was recoded so that it reflected

a scale from 1 = female to 3 = male, with the middle of the scale indicating that no assumptions were made.

In order to test for homogeneity of covariance matrices, Box's M test was performed. The results of this test revealed significant heterogeneity, $F(100,14390)=1.32$, $p<.05$. As a result, a correlation coefficient was computed between the cell size and covariance matrix determinants to determine whether the MANOVA might be liberal or conservative (Hakstian, 1989). The resulting correlation was not significant ($r=-.08$), indicating no particular bias.

There was a significant effect for Scenario ($F(1,142)=4.49$, $p<.01$), for Gender ($F(1,142)=7.30$, $p<.001$), and for Family Background ($F(1,142)=4.49$, $p<.01$). None of the interactions were significant. Due to significance at the MANOVA level, 4 Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVAs were performed, one for each of the dependent variables.

Table 2 shows the means for each of the dependent variables. Tables 3-6 show the ANOVA results for age, gender assumption, SDP and IM, respectively. As can be seen in Table 3, there was a significant main effect for Family Background, $F(1,142)=12.97$, $p<.001$. Participants from stepfamilies were significantly older than participants from first married families, with means of 20.2 and 19.1 years, respectively.

For the second dependent variable, assumption regarding the child's gender, there were two significant main effects

(see Table 4). There was a significant effect for Gender ($F(1,142)=13.32$, $p<.001$) with men, more often that women, assuming the child to be a boy. In addition, there was a significant effect for Scenario, $F(2,142)=21.17$, $p<.001$.

Tukey's multiple comparisons were performed, utilizing the Spjotrell and Stoline formula for unequal n's (cited in Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Results were referenced to the Studentized Augmented Range Distribution. The multiple comparisons revealed that all three comparisons were significant. Participants in the FM condition were significantly more likely, as compared to those in the SF condition, to assume the child was a boy, q $(3,142)=5.05$, $p<.01$. In addition, participants in the SM condition were significantly more likely to assume the child was a boy, as compared to those in the FM condition (q $(3,142)=3.86$, $p<.05$) and those in the SF condition (q $(3,142)=8.30$, $p<.01$).

Table 5 shows the results of the ANOVA for Self-Deceptive Positivity. There was a significant main effect for Gender, $F(1,142)=9.67$, $p<.01$. Men had significantly higher scores on the SDP scale than women, with means of 5.0 and 4.0, respectively. In terms of the fourth dependent variable, Impression Management, there were no significant differences (see Table 6).

In summary, there were significant between-group differences for three of the four variables included in these analyses. Participants from stepfamilies were older

than those from first married families. Men, as compared to women were more likely to assume the child was a boy, and had higher scores on the SDP scale. Finally, there were significant differences between the 3 conditions with respect to gender assumptions, with participants in the SM condition being most likely to assume male, followed by those in the FM condition, and finally by those in the SF condition. As a result of these significant between-group differences, two of the variables, age and gender assumption, will be included as covariates in subsequent analyses where appropriate. The variable, Self-Deceptive Positivity, is not considered by the author of the BIDR to be an appropriate covariate (Paulhus, 1990).

In order to test for differences in the frequency and quality of stepparent contact (as rated by participants with stepfamily experience) between respondents in the SM and SF conditions, two ANOVAs were performed. While many participants had experience with stepmothers and stepfathers, only their ratings on the stepparent that matched the scenario they received was included in these analyses. Participants from first married families were excluded from these analyses as they would not have responded to the questions of interest. In addition, as the FM scenario did not involve a stepparent, participants in this condition were excluded.

Two Scenario (SM and SF) by Gender (female and male) ANOVAs were performed. Table 7 shows the mean ratings of

frequency and quality of stepparent contact. In terms of the frequency of contact, there was a main effect for Scenario ($F(1,42)=6.42$, $p<.05$), with participants indicating more frequent contact with stepfathers (see Table 8 for a summary of this ANOVA). As can be seen in Table 9, there were no significant differences with respect to the quality of contact with stepparents.

In summary, participants (with stepfamily experience) in the SF condition, as compared to those in the SM condition, had more frequent contact with stepparents. With respect to the quality of stepparent contact, there were no significant differences between the SM and SF conditions.

Between-group differences regarding country of birth were examined through 3 Chi-Square tests of association (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Comparisons were made between: 1) participants in the FM, SM, and SF conditions; 2) women and men; and 3) participants with and without stepfamily experience. Responses to the question regarding country of birth were first recoded so that participants born in Canada or the United States were given a score of 1 (1 = born in North America), and participants born in any other country were given a score of 0 (0 = born in a country outside North America.

Table 10 shows the proportions of participants born in North America for the relevant comparisons. The Chi-Square test of association for the FM, SM, and SF conditions was not significant, $X(2)=.17$. Similarly, female and male

participants did not differ significantly in terms of their country of birth, X(1)=0. There was a significant difference, however, between participants from stepfamilies and those from first married families, X(1)=7.15, p<.01. Participants from stepfamilies were significantly more likely to have been born in North America.

In summary, there were no significant differences in the proportion of participants born in North America (versus countries outside North America) for 2 comparisons: 1) FM versus SM versus SF scenario, and 2) female versus male respondents. Participants with stepfamily experience were, however, more likely to have been born in North America, as compared to participants without such experience.

Hypothesis 1. In order to test the first hypothesis, that stepparents would be assigned less responsibility for childrearing, as compared to their same-sex counterparts in first married families, a Scenario (3 levels: FM, SM, and SF) by Gender (2 levels: female and male) by Family Background (2 levels: stepfamily experience, and no stepfamily experience) ANOVA, with age and gender assumption as covariates, was performed. The covariates were necessary due to the aforementioned significant between-group differences on these variables.

Due to unequal n's, a Bartlett-Box test was first performed to test for homogeneity of the 12 cell variances. The Bartlett-Box test was significant, F(11,13138)=3.78, p <.001. From this result, it could be concluded that the

group variances were heterogeneous. However, as the Bartlett-Box procedure is sensitive to nonnormality in the underlying distribution of the dependent variable (which is true of the Parenting Scale distribution), the Scheffe test of homogeneity which is robust to nonnormality (Glass & Hopkins, 1984), was performed.

The Scheffe test was performed as follows: The data in each of the 12 cells were divided into a number of subgroups. Variances for Parenting Scale means were calculated for each subgroup and these variances were then transformed into natural logarithms. An ANOVA was performed with the natural logarithms as the dependent variable. Group variances were sufficiently different that the hypothesis of homogeneity was again rejected with a main effect for scenario, $F(2,140)=11.75$, $p<.001$. As a result, a correlation was computed between the variances and the number of participants in each cell to determine whether the ANOVA might be liberal or conservative (Hakstian, 1989). The correlation was not significant ($r=-.027$), indicating no particular bias.

The first hypothesis (that stepparents would be assigned less responsibility for childrearing than their same-sex counterparts in first married families) was addressed by the Scenario main effect. Remembering that higher scores equal more responsibility for the woman, full support for the hypothesis would be provided through multiple comparisons if: 1) the average score in the FM

group was significantly higher than that in the SM group (i.e., stepmothers were given significantly less responsibility than biological mothers in the FM scenario) and 2) the average score in the FM group was significantly lower than that in the SF group (i.e., stepfathers were given significantly less responsibility than biological fathers in the FM scenario). Partial support would be provided if either 1 or 2 occurred.

The summary table for this first ANOVA is shown in Table 11. The main effect for Scenario was significant, $F(2,140)=6.23$, $p<.001$) with means of 3.13 (n=51), 2.61 (n=55), and 3.38 (n=48) for the FM, SM, and SF conditions, respectively. Dunnett's multiple comparison procedure was utilized to compare the 2 step-scenario means against the FM (control) mean, as planned. This procedure maintains an experiment-wise error rate of $p<.05$. The first hypothesis was fully supported; that is, the FM average was significantly higher $(t(3,140)=11.61$, $p<.01)$ than the SM average, and significantly lower $(t(3,140)=5.40$, $p<.01)$ than the SF average.

Thus, stepmothers and stepfathers were assigned less childrearing responsibility than their same-sex counterparts in the FM scenario. It should be noted that the discrepancy between childrearing expectations for stepparents versus biological parents was greater for stepmothers than for stepfathers.

In addition, the interaction between Scenario and Family Background was significant, $F(2,140)=3.69$, p<.05). The means and standard deviations for this interaction are shown in Table 12. Further simple main effects analyses (see Table 13) were conducted to test the Scenario effect at both levels of Family Background. Surprisingly, both analyses were highly significant: there was a significant Scenario effect for participants from stepfamilies $(F(2,140)=87.72$, p<.001) and for participants from first married families $(F(2,140)=64.23$, p<.001).

Tukey's multiple comparisons were performed to compare the 2 step-scenario means against the FM average at each level of Family Background, utilizing the Spjotrell and Stoline formula (cited in Glass & Hopkins, 1984) for unequal n's. Resulting q values were referenced to the Studentized Augmented Range Distribution. For participants with stepfamily experience, the FM average was significantly higher $(q (3,140)=10.75$, p<.01) than the SM average, and significantly lower $(q (3,140)=6.97$, p<.01) than the SF average. For participants from first married families, the same pattern was found: the FM average was significantly higher $(q (3,140)=11.66$, p<.01) than the SM average and significantly lower $(q (3,140)=3.84$, p<.05) than the SF average.

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between Scenario and Family Background. While the patterns of means are similar for participants from step- and first married

families, the discrepancy between the FM and SF means differ in their significance values. Lower expectations for stepfathers (as compared to biological fathers) are more obvious for those respondents with stepfamily experience, even though they still exist for respondents from first married families.

In summary, the first hypothesis was supported, revealing that stepmothers and stepfathers were assigned less childrearing responsibility than their same-sex counterparts in the FM scenario. These lowered expectations were more noted for stepmothers than for stepfathers. In addition, while the lower expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers existed for respondents from step- and first married families, the stepparent versus biological parent discrepancy was smaller for the latter group of respondents in the SF versus FM comparison.

Hypothesis 2. In order to test the second hypothesis, that the participants responding to the SM and SF scenarios would show more within-group variability than those responding to the FM scenario, two tests between independent variances (Glass & Hopkins, 1984) were performed, each at $p < .025$ to control for Type I error. The results of the aforementioned Bartlett-Box and Scheffe tests provided an indication that at least one of the variances was significantly different from another of the variances. The follow-up tests between variances allowed for more specific information relevant to the hypothesis.

As planned: 1) the variance for the FM group (.0166) was compared with that for the SM group (.0801), and then 2) the FM variance was compared with the SF variance (.0686). As it was hypothesized that the FM variance would be smaller than either of the other 2 variances, one-tailed tests were performed. It was found that the FM variance was significantly smaller than both the SM variance ($F(54,50)=4.81$, $p<.001$) and the SF variance ($F(47,50)=4.12$, $p<.001$).

In summary, the second hypothesis was supported; participants responding to the FM scenario were less variable as a group in their responses than those responding to either the SM or SF scenario.

Hypothesis 3. A Scenario (2 levels: SM and SF) by Gender (2 levels: female and male) by Family Background (2 levels: participants with stepfamily experience and those without such experience) ANOVA, with age and gender assumption as covariates, was performed to test the third and fourth hypotheses. For these hypothesis tests, responses to the FM scenario were not relevant and thus were not included in the analysis. Recall that the third and fourth hypotheses were that stepmothers would be assigned more responsibility for childrearing than stepfathers, and that participants with stepfamily experience would assign less responsibility to stepparents than would participants without such experience.

One minor recoding of the data was necessary in order to directly compare expectations for stepmothers with those for stepfathers. As the scale ranged from the man always(1) to the woman always(5), a high score in the SM condition would indicate more responsibility for the stepmother, while a high score in the SF condition would indicate less responsibility for the stepfather. A statistical comparison of these raw scores would be inappropriate. The scores of participants responding to the SF scenario were, therefore, reversed (e.g., 1 changed to 5 and 5 changed to 1, etc.). As a result, higher scores for both the SM and SF scenarios indicated more responsibility for the stepparent.

The Bartlett-Box test of homogeneity of variances was not significant (F(7,8568)=1.72), suggesting that the cell variances were significantly homogeneous. Due to the aforementioned skewness of the Parenting Scale distribution, the Scheffe test of homogeneity was also performed. The results of this test contradicted the Bartlett-Box finding of homogeneity with a significant main effect for Gender (F(1,21)=6.85, p<.016) and a significant interaction between Scenario and Family Background (F(1,21)=7.10, p<.014). Thus, significant differences in variances were found between male and female participants, and between participants from stepfamilies versus first married families after controlling for Scenario. A correlation was then performed between the variances and number of participants in each cell to determine whether the original ANOVA might

be liberal or conservative (Hakstian, 1989). The correlation coefficient was not significant (r=-.013) indicating no particular bias.

The summary table for this ANOVA is shown in Table 14. The third hypothesis (that stepmothers would be assigned more responsibility for childrearing than stepfathers) was not supported, F(1,93)=.322. The Parenting Scale means for the SM and SF scenarios were almost identical: 2.61 and 2.62, respectively. However, while the overall means were similar, an examination of the means for individual items revealed considerable differences between responses to the SM and SF scenarios.

Table 15 shows the SM and SF means and standard deviations for each item on the Parenting Scale. For some items (e.g., listening when the child wants to talk, and helping the child with homework), the expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers were similar. For others (e.g., doing the child's laundry and preparing the child's meals), expectations for stepmothers were substantially higher than those for stepfathers. There were also items (e.g., attending parent-teacher meetings and paying the child's allowance), for which expectations were substantially higher for stepfathers.

In Tables 16 and 17, the means for each item are again shown for the SM and SF scenarios. The items are now arranged from least to most responsibility for the stepparent. It can be seen that there was more similarity

between expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers when the expectations were low, rather than high. Both stepmothers and stepfathers were assigned low responsibility for the three items relating to the child's biological kin.

When examining items with the highest means, different patterns were evident for stepmothers and stepfathers. The items for which stepmothers were assigned the most responsibility were: supervision, choosing leisure activities and vacations, caring for the child when ill, cleaning the child's room, supervising personal hygiene, picking up after the child, preparing the child's meals, and washing and ironing the child's clothes. These items can be summarized as relating primarily to the physical care and daily work required to keep the child clothed and fed.

The items for which stepfathers were given the most responsibility were: supervision, helping the child with homework, paying for gifts for the child, playing with the child and taking her/him on outings, paying for and choosing vacations, providing transportation, paying the child's allowance, and attending the child's sports practises and events. These items can be summarized as taking care of financial needs, facilitating entertainment, and meeting the occasional needs of the child.

Table 18 shows the means for items on the Parenting Scale for the FM scenario. The means are rank ordered such that earlier items are more often expected to be performed by fathers, and later items are more often expected to be

performed by mothers. Note that the expected division of labour follows a pattern similar to that found for stepparents.

Hypothesis 4. The fourth hypothesis, that participants from stepfamilies would assign less responsibility to stepparents than participants from first married families, was addressed by the same ANOVA for the third hypothesis. There was a significant main effect for Family Background, $F(1,93)=6.56$, $p<.05$. As predicted, participants from stepfamilies assigned significantly less responsibility to stepparents (M=2.55) than did participants from first married families (M=2.67). In addition, there was an unexpected finding that female, as compared to male, participants assigned more responsibility to stepparents, with means of 2.66 and 2.57, respectively, $F(1,93)=5.207$, $p<.05$.

In summary, the overall amount of childrearing responsibility assigned to stepmothers was no higher than that assigned to stepfathers. When examining individual item means rather than overall means, however, it was clear that the specific expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers were different. Expectations for stepmothers were higher in the domains of physical maintenance of the child, and housework. Expectations for stepfathers were higher with respect to financial support, and entertainment. In addition, participants with stepfamily experience assigned significantly less responsibility to stepparents

than did participants from first married families. Finally, women respondents had significantly higher expectations of stepparents than men.

Hypothesis 5. In order to test the fifth hypothesis, that responses to the stepfamily scenarios would be more variable over time than responses to the FM scenario, three tests between independent (test-retest) correlation coefficients were conducted. First, Pearson test-retest correlation coefficients were computed for responses to the FM, SM, and SF scenarios. Sample size was necessarily reduced for each of the 3 groups as approximately half of the participants did not complete the questionnaire at time 2. The correlation coefficients were $r=.777$ ($n=26$), $r=.854$ ($n=32$), and $r=.852$ ($n=26$) for the FM, SM, and SF scenarios, respectively.

Correlation coefficients were transformed to Fisher z-scores. Then, the standard tests for significant differences between z-scores (Glass & Hopkins, 1984) were performed between the FM and SM; FM and SF; and SM and SF scenarios, revealing no significant differences. Variability over time was not significantly different for the FM versus SM comparison ($z=.83$), for the FM versus SF comparison ($z=.75$), or for the SM versus SF comparison ($z=.04$).

In summary, the fifth hypothesis was not supported. There was not more variability in expectations over time for the step-scenarios as compared to the FM scenario.

Hypothesis 6. In order to test the sixth hypothesis, that participants with stepfamily experience would be more consistent over time when responding to the SM and SF scenarios than those participants without such experience, another test between independent correlation coefficients was performed. Test-retest correlation coefficients were computed for responses to both the SM and SF scenarios at each level of Family Background. The four correlation coefficients were first transformed to Fisher z-scores, and then an average (between the SF and SM scenario scores) z-score was calculated for participants from stepfamilies and for participants from first married families. After transforming these z-scores back to correlation coefficients, the test-retest correlations were r=.835 (n=27) for participants with stepfamily experience, and r=.865 (n=31) for participants without such experience.

The test between correlation coefficients was conducted utilizing the two average z-scores computed earlier, revealing that the difference between the two z-scores was not significant (z=.392). In summary, support for the sixth hypothesis was not found. Participants from stepfamilies were not more consistent over time in their responses to the step-scenarios.

Discussion

A brief summary of the results will be provided. Participants had significantly lower expectations of

stepparents, as compared to same-sex biological parents, in terms of child care. The stepparent versus biological parent discrepancy, while still significant, was smaller for participants from first married families. In terms of Parenting Scale means, a significant difference between expectations for stepmothers and expectations for stepfathers was not found. An examination of individual items, however, revealed that the role expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers were very distinct from one another. In addition, the differential expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers paralleled the gender division found for the first married scenario. Stepmothers, in comparison to stepfathers, were more often expected to perform child care tasks in two general areas: 1) physical maintenance, and 2) child-related housework. Stepfathers, more than stepmothers, were expected to provide for the child's financial and entertainment needs.

Participants with stepfamily experience assigned significantly _less_ responsibility to stepparents than did participants without such experience. In addition, female, as compared to male, respondents, assigned significantly _more_ responsibility to stepparents.

While there was less consensus for appropriate stepparental, versus parental, behaviour, there was not more variability over time in expectations for stepparents. In addition, participants from stepfamilies, as compared to

those from first married families, were not more consistent over time in their expectations for the stepparent role.

Support was found for 3 out of 6 hypotheses in the current study. Participants clearly did expect biological parents in first married families to be more responsible for parenting than stepparents. It seems that people do consider the stepparent role, as compared to the role of a biological parent, to be unique, in terms of overall responsibility for child care. Stepparents (both stepmothers and stepfathers) were assigned the least responsibility for tasks relating to the child's biological kin. Participants did not expect stepparents, very often, to: 1) maintain relations between the child and her/his biological kin; 2) accompany the child on visits with these kin; or 3) buy/send cards and gifts for these kin.

As predicted, participants who had childhood experience with stepparents assigned significantly less responsibility to stepparents than did participants from first married families. The current author suggested that this group of participants, due to their exposure to stepfamily issues, would consider the stepparent role to be even more unique (from the parental role) than would participants from first married families.

There are two possible reasons for these lower expectations. First, there are numerous suggestions in the clinical literature on stepfamilies that stepparents often assume a parental role in the early stages of stepfamily

development, leading to conflict with the children of the remarriage. That is, there is often an adjustment period whereby stepparents move from enacting a parental role to finding their own unique role in the child's life. Having gone through this process (from the child's perspective), people with stepfamily experience might be more likely to have expectations which resemble stepparent role enactment at later stages in stepfamily development.

Second, the negative experiences with stepparents (which some participants reported) may have resulted in lower expectations. That is, those participants who rated the quality of stepparent contact as low may have assigned less responsibility to stepparents out of concern for the child depicted; they may have assumed that less involvement with stepparents would be a way of avoiding negative interactions.

As predicted, there was also less consensus regarding appropriate stepparental, versus parental, behaviour. Consensus was assessed by comparing variability around the mean (variances) for responses to the step-scenarios versus responses to the FM scenario. This result is supportive of Cherlin's incomplete institutionalization theory. That is, if there is a relative lack of normative information regarding remarriage and stepfamilies, expectations for stepparents should be more variable. Participants in the current study did show more individual differences when responding to the step-scenarios versus the first married

scenario. This support for Cherlin's theory must be taken as tentative, however. In order to provide strong support for the theory, a larger and more representative sample would be required.

While the hypothesis regarding higher expectations for stepmothers was not supported, the lack of support may reflect the methodological constraints of a study on expectations. While studies of role enactment can ask directly about the amount of time involved in child care, this is not possible with a study of role expectations. In order to assess differential responsibility for child care by stepmothers and stepfathers, one must, therefore, study the actual amount of time stepparents spend on child care.

Support was not found for the hypothesis that responses to the step-scenarios would be less stable over time. It was predicted that the ambiguity regarding the stepparent role (Walker and Messinger, 1979) would result in more variability in expectations between the first and second administrations of the questionnaire. In addition, childhood experience with stepparents did not result in more stable expectations for stepparental behaviour.

The lack of differences in the stability of responses is supportive of Halliday's (1980) suggestion that the parental role is just as ambiguous as the stepparent role. That is, recent changes in attitudes regarding the appropriate division of child care labour may lead to considerable uncertainty as to the appropriate behaviour of

mothers and fathers. Another possible reason for the lack of differences might be the short length of the test-retest interval. It may be that two weeks is not a long enough time period to examine the stability (or lack thereof) of expectations. The best tests of hypotheses regarding the stability of expectations would involve longitudinal research. Firm conclusions can, therefore, not be made regarding the stability of expectations for stepparent roles on the basis of the current study.

There are several implications of the current study. First, the differences found between expectations for biological parents and for stepparents remind us that stepfamilies are a unique family type. Given the increasing numbers of stepfamilies in Canada, it is important that more empirical research be conducted on the various issues relevant to stepfamilies. Secondly, the tentative finding that expectations for stepmothers imply more involvement with stepchildren has implications for the amount of stress associated with being a stepmother. Third, the finding that family background has an impact on role expectations suggests that as stepfamilies increase in number, stepparent roles may become more institutionalized in our society. That is, people may come to see the stepparent role as unique, rather than a replacement for a biological parent.

It is clear that additional research on the stepparent role is necessary. Studies of role expectations for stepmothers and stepfathers, which utilize larger and more

representative samples, would be particularly informative. In addition, studies of the role enactment of stepparents would allow researchers to examine issues such as the connection between expectations and behaviour, and the amount of time stepmothers and stepfathers spend on child care.

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Table 1

Design of Current Study.

Family Background

Gender of Participant	Stepfamily Experience		No Stepfamily Experience	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
FM	n=11	n=10	n=15	n=15
Scenario SM	n=14	n=11	n=15	n=15
SF	n=11	n=10	n=13	n=14

Table 2

Means for: Age, Gender Assumption, Self-Deceptive
Positivity, and Impression Management.

	Age	Gender Assumption	SDP	IM	n
FM Scenario	19.45	2.10	4.65	6.16	51
SM Scenario	19.55	2.53	4.64	6.82	55
SF Scenario	19.63	1.52	4.10	6.58	48
Women	19.35	1.85	3.97	6.81	79
Men	19.73	2.31	5.00	6.23	75
Stepfamily Experience	20.16	1.96	4.36	6.10	67
No Stepfamily Experience	19.06	2.16	4.56	6.85	87

Table 3

Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVA with
Age as dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	.498	2	.249	.068	.934
GENDER	6.943	1	6.943	1.892	.171
FAMILY BACKGROUND	47.593	1	47.593	12.969	.000 *
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	.725	2	.363	.099	.906
SCEN by FAMBK	2.112	2	1.056	.288	.750
GEND by FAMBK	1.022	1	1.022	.278	.599
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND by FAMBK	9.302	2	4.651	1.267	.285
Error	521.112	142	3.670		

*p<.001

Table 4

Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVA with Gender Assumption as dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	26.816	2	13.408	21.173	.000*
GENDER	8.432	1	8.432	13.316	.000*
FAMILY BACKGROUND	1.455	1	1.455	2.297	.132
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	.684	2	.342	.540	.584
SCEN by FAMBK	1.818	2	.909	1.436	.241
GEND by FAMBK	.104	1	.104	.163	.687
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND					
by FAMBK	1.547	2	.774	1.222	.298
Error	89.924	142	.633		

*p<.001

Table 5

Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVA with Self-Deceptive Positivity as dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	10.222	2	5.111	1.219	.299
GENDER	40.545	1	40.545	9.667	.002*
FAMILY BACKGROUND	.959	1	.959	.229	.633
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	18.264	2	9.132	2.177	.117
SCEN by FAMBK	1.323	2	.662	.158	.854
GEND by FAMBK	4.755	1	4.755	1.134	.289
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND					
by FAMBK	13.994	2	6.997	1.668	.192
Error	595.540	142	4.194		

*p<.01

Table 6

Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVA with Impression Management as dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	12.699	2	6.350	.547	.580
GENDER	14.303	1	14.303	1.232	.269
FAMILY BACKGROUND	23.739	1	23.739	2.045	.155
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	4.168	2	2.084	.179	.836
SCEN by FAMBK	6.434	2	3.217	.277	.758
GEND by FAMBK	.363	1	.363	.031	.860
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND by FAMBK	22.265	2	11.132	.959	.386
Error	1648.703	142	11.611		

Table 7

Means for: Frequency of stepparent contact and quality of stepparent contact.

	Frequency	Quality	n
Rating for Stepmothers	3.56	4.56	25
Rating for Stepfathers	4.24	4.62	21
Women Rating Stepmothers or Stepfathers	4.08	4.52	25
Men Rating Stepmothers or Stepfathers	3.62	4.67	21
Women Rating Stepmothers	3.64	4.71	14
Men Rating Stepmothers	3.45	4.36	11
Women Rating Stepfathers	4.64	4.27	11
Men Rating Stepfathers	3.80	5.00	10

Table 8

Scenario(2) by Gender(2) ANOVA with frequency of stepparent contact as a dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	5.516	1	5.516	6.420	.015*
GENDER	2.694	1	2.694	3.135	.084
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	1.189	1	1.189	1.384	.246
Error	36.087	42	.859		

* p <.05

Table 9

Scenario(2) by Gender(2) ANOVA with quality of stepparent contact as a dependent variable.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	.033	1	.033	.010	.919
GENDER	.239	1	.239	.075	.785
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GENDER	3.289	1	3.289	1.034	.315
Error	133.584	42	3.181		

Table 10

Proportion of participants born in North America.

	Proportion	n
FM Scenario	.80	51
SM Scenario	.78	55
SF Scenario	.81	48
Women	.80	79
Men	.80	75
Stepfamily Experience	.93	67
No Stepfamily Experience	.70	87

Table 11

Scenario(3) by Gender(2) by Family Background(2) ANOVA with age and assumption regarding the gender of the child as covariates

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates					
AGE	.000	1	.000	.003	.958
GENDER ASSUMPTION	3.256	1	3.256	61.219	.000**
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	12.459	2	6.229	117.134	.000**
GENDER	.059	1	.059	1.113	.293
FAMILY BACKGROUND	.026	1	.026	.494	.483
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	.273	2	.137	2.568	.080
SCEN by FAMBK	.392	2	.196	3.686	.028*
GEND by FAMBK	.132	1	.132	2.484	.117
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND by FAMBK	.081	2	.040	.761	.469
Error	7.446	140	.053		

*p<.05   **p<.001

Table 12

Means for SCENARIO by FAMILY BACKROUND interaction

	Stepfamily Experience		No Stepfamily Experience	
	M	N	M	N
FM Scenario	3.09	21	3.15	30
SM Scenario	2.55	25	2.66	30
SF Scenario	3.44	21	3.32	27

Table 13

Simple main effects analyses for SCENARIO by FAMILY
BACKGROUND interaction

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
SCENARIO (S's with step-family experience)	9.298	2	4.649	87.72	.001*
SCENARIO (S's without step-family experience)	6.808	2	3.404	64.23	.001*
Error	7.446	140	.053		

* p<.001

Table 14

SCENARIO(2) by GENDER(2) by FAMILY BACKGROUND(2) ANOVA with age and assumption regarding gender of child as covariates

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig of F
Covariates					
AGE	.096	1	.096	1.388	.242
GENDER ASSUMPTION	.015	1	.015	.213	.646
Main Effects					
SCENARIO	.022	1	.022	.322	.572
GENDER	.359	1	.359	5.207	.025*
FAMILY BACKGROUND	.453	1	.453	6.557	.012*
2-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND	.050	1	.050	.727	.396
SCEN by FAMBK	.000	1	.000	.006	.938
GEND by FAMBK	.068	1	.068	.986	.323
3-Way Interactions					
SCEN by GEND by FAMBK	.099	1	.099	1.439	.233
Error	6.421	93	.069		

* p<.05

Table 15

Means and standard deviations for items on the Parenting
Scale for stepfamily scenarios

1=never responsible   4=usually responsible
2=sometimes responsible 5=always responsible
3=equally responsible

Item	Stepmother Scenario		Stepfather Scenario	
	M	sd	M	sd
1.shop for child's needs	2.67	(.67)	2.29	(.54)
2.take to doctor/dentist	2.56	(.74)	2.54	(.54)
3.help with friend problems	2.64	(.62)	2.77	(.52)
4.supervise bedtime	2.64	(.65)	2.67	(.66)
5.meetings with teachers	1.89	(.88)	2.69	(.55)
6.wash clothing	3.24	(.54)	2.42	(.61)
7.supervise child	2.91	(.29)	2.92	(.28)
8.pay for clothing,etc.	1.80	(.76)	2.69	(.69)
9.relations with kin	1.73	(.78)	1.73	(.71)
10.transportation	2.80	(.40)	2.98	(.25)
11.take on outings	2.84	(.37)	2.96	(.20)
12.listening	2.87	(.39)	2.88	(.33)
13.pay for leisure activities	2.33	(.64)	2.83	(.52)
14.supervision of chores	2.80	(.65)	2.69	(.55)
15.paying for child's gifts	2.56	(.63)	2.94	(.25)
16.discipline of child	2.29	(.63)	2.52	(.77)
17.fold/iron child's clothes	3.24	(.47)	2.31	(.59)
18.pick up after child	2.98	(.45)	2.69	(.51)
19.help with homework	2.89	(.32)	2.92	(.28)
20.visits with kin	1.93	(.66)	1.98	(.73)
21.choose leisure activities	2.93	(.33)	2.79	(.41)
22.comfort child when upset	2.75	(.48)	2.60	(.49)
23.discuss sexual issues	2.36	(.83)	2.44	(.77)
24.pay for vacations	2.13	(.72)	2.96	(.41)
25.clean child's room	2.95	(.53)	2.42	(.61)
26.pay allowance	1.78	(.71)	2.98	(.64)
27.run errands for child	2.73	(.53)	2.67	(.48)
28.make doctor/dentist appts	2.82	(.58)	2.44	(.58)
29.play with child	2.89	(.32)	2.96	(.29)
30.attend sports activities	2.64	(.56)	3.04	(.50)
31.decide on discipline	2.31	(.64)	2.54	(.74)
32.buy/send gifts for kin	1.91	(.78)	1.77	(.72)
33.make family rules	2.60	(.66)	2.71	(.58)
34.assign chores to child	2.86	(.59)	2.67	(.48)
35.choose holiday location	2.93	(.33)	2.98	(.14)
36.prepare/serve meals	3.16	(.42)	2.46	(.54)
37.care for child when ill	2.93	(.50)	2.46	(.50)
38.supervise personal hygiene	2.96	(.61)	2.40	(.57)

Table 16

Rank order of means for items on the Parenting Scale for the stepmother scenario: From least to most responsibility

Item	Stepmother Scenario Mean
1.relations with kin	1.73
2.pay allowance	1.78
3.pay for clothing, etc.	1.80
4.meetings with teachers	1.89
5.buy/send gifts for kin	1.91
6.visits with kin	1.93
7.pay for vacations	2.13
8.discipline of child	2.29
9.decide on discipline	2.31
10.pay for leisure activities	2.33
11.discuss sexual issues	2.36
12.take to doctor/dentist	2.56
13.pay for child's gifts	2.56
14.make family rules	2.60
15.attend sports actitivites	2.64
16.supervise bedtime	2.64
17.help with friend problems	2.64
18.shop for child's needs	2.67
19.run errands for child	2.73
20.comfort child when upset	2.75
21.transportation	2.80
22.supervision of chores	2.80
23.make doctor/dentist appts	2.82
24.take on outings	2.84
25.assign chores to child	2.86
26.listening	2.87
27.help with homework	2.89
28.play with child	2.89
29.supervise child	2.91
30.choose leisure activities	2.93
31.choose holiday location	2.93
32.care for child when ill	2.93
33.clean child's room	2.95
34.supervise personal hygiene	2.96
35.pick up after child	2.98
36.prepare/serve meals	3.16
37.wash clothing	3.24
38.fold/iron child's clothes	3.24

Table 17

Rank order of means for items on the Parenting Scale for the
stepfather scenario: From least to most responsibility

Item	Stepmother Scenario Mean
1.relations with kin	1.73
2.buy/send gifts for kin	1.77
3.visits with kin	1.98
4.shop for child's needs	2.29
5.fold/iron child's clothing	2.31
6.supervise personal hygiene	2.40
7.clean child's room	2.42
8.wash clothing	2.42
9.make doctor/dentist appts	2.44
10.discuss sexual issues	2.44
11.prepare/serve meals	2.46
12.care for child when ill	2.46
13.discipline of child	2.52
14.take to doctor/dentist	2.54
15.decide on discipline	2.54
16.comfort child when upset	2.60
17.assign chores to child	2.67
18.run errands for child	2.67
19.supervise bedtime	2.67
20.meeting with teachers	2.69
21.pay for clothing, etc	2.69
22.supervision of chores	2.69
23.pick up after child	2.69
24.make family rules	2.71
25.help with friend problems	2.77
26.choose leisure activities	2.79
27.pay for leisure actitivies	2.83
28.listening	2.88
29.help with homework	2.92
30.supervise child	2.92
31.pay for child's gifts	2.94
32.take on outings	2.96
33.pay for vacations	2.96
34.play with child	2.96
35.pay allowance	2.98
36.choose holiday location	2.98
37.transportation	2.98
38.attend sports activities	3.04

Table 18

Rank order of means for items on the Parenting Scale for the first married scenario.

M

1.	pay allowance	2.61
2.	attend sports events	2.65
3.	pay for vacations	2.69
4.	decide on discipline	2.73
5.	discipline child	2.73
6.	make family rules	2.75
7.	pay for leisure	2.77
8.	take on outings	2.80
9.	pay for miscellaneous needs	2.80
10.	choose vacations	2.88
11.	pay for child's gifts	2.90
12.	help with homework	2.94
13.	choose leisure activities	2.98
14.	play with child	3.00
15.	transportation	3.02
16.	listening to child	3.06
17.	supervise child	3.08
18.	visits with kin	3.10
19.	sexual issues	3.12
20.	parent-teacher meetings	3.14
21.	supervise bedtime	3.16
22.	friendship problems	3.18
23.	relations with kin	3.18
24.	supervise chores	3.20
25.	accompany to doctor/dentist	3.20
26.	run errands for child	3.20
27.	pick up after child	3.22
28.	assign chores	3.31
29.	comfort child when upset	3.35
30.	make doctor/dentist appts.	3.43
31.	care for child when ill	3.43
32.	clean child's room	3.51
33.	buy/send gifts to kin	3.55
34.	prepare meals	3.57
35.	supervise personal hygiene	3.43
36.	shopping	3.61
37.	wash clothing	3.63
38.	fold/iron clothing	3.73

*Note that means below 3.00 indicate more responsibility for the father and means above 3.00 indicate more responsibility for the mother.

FIGURE 1

Comparison of SCENARIO
means at each level of
FAMILY BACKGROUND

*p < .05

**p < .01
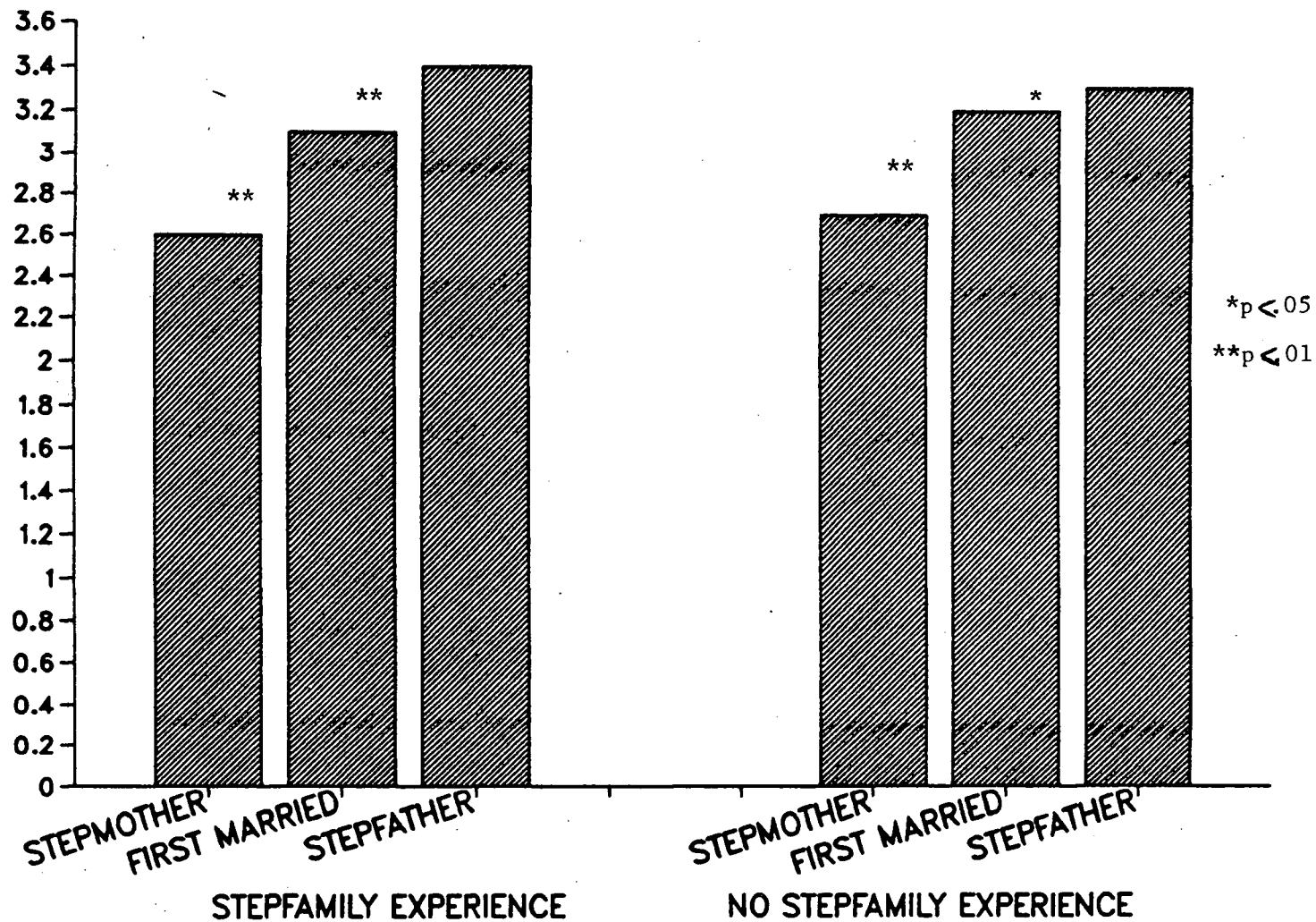
Appendix A

1. Date: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Gender: Female _____   Male _____

4. What is your country of origin? (i.e. where were you born?)

   _____

5. Family History:

   a. Did your parents ever divorce? Yes ____   No ____

      If no, please go to question #7

      If yes, please go to question #5 (b)

   b. If your parents <u>did</u> divorce, did your father remarry or live with another woman before you turned 18? Yes ____   No ____

      If <u>yes</u>, how often were you in contact with his new partner? (note: if there was more than one partner, please answer the following questions with regard to the longest relationship he had before you turned 18)

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

      How would you characterize the overall quality of your relationship with his new partner? (as you perceived the relationship before you turned 18)

Very Negative	1	Somewhat positive	5
Negative	2	Positive	6
Somewhat negative	3	Very positive	7
Neutral	4		

   c. If your parents <u>did</u> divorce, did your mother remarry or live with another man before you turned 18? Yes ____   No ____

      If <u>yes</u>, how often were you in contact with her new partner? (note: if there was more than one partner, please answer the following questions with regard to the longest relationship she had before you turned 18)

Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

How would you characterize the overall quality of your relationship with her new partner? (as you perceived the relationship before you turned 18)

Very negative	1	Somewhat positive	5
Negative	2	Positive	6
Somewhat negative	3	Very positive	7
Neutral	4		

6. Currently, what is the __total__ length of time (in years and months) you have had some degree of contact with either a stepfather or stepmother or both? (i.e. if your father remarried when you were 13 and you are now 18, your response would be 5 years):

stepmother:_____
stepfather:_____

7. Current family status:

a. What is your present marital status? (check more than one category if applicable)

single (unattached): ____
involved in a romantic relationship: ____
living with your intimate partner: ____
married: ____
divorced: ____

b. Do you have any children? Yes ____ No ____

c. If you are married or living with a romantic partner, does this partner have any children from a previous relationship? Yes ____ No ____

In responding to the remainder of the questionnaire, please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your unique perspective on parenting.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO

<u>John</u> and <u>Lori</u> are married to each other. This is the first marriage for both partners. They have one child, age 9. Currently, both John and Lori work full-time outside the home. Please respond to the following questionnaire with this couple in mind.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO

John and Lori are married to each other. This is Lori's first and John's second marriage. John has one child, age 9, from his previous marriage. The child spends 2 weekends per month in John and Lori's home, in addition to accompanying them on vacations. Currently, both John and Lori work full-time outside the home. Please respond to the following questionnaire with this couple in mind.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO

John and Lori are married to each other. This is John's first and Lori's second marriage. Lori has one child, age 9, from her previous marriage. The child lives primarily with John and Lori, but spends 2 weekends per month and some vacation time with the biological father. Currently, both John and Lori work full-time outside the home. Please respond to the following questionnaire with this couple in mind.

Using the following scale, indicate <u>who you think should be</u> <u>responsible for</u> the various tasks (when the child is in the couple's home. Place the appropriate number to the right of each item.

John Always 1	John Usually 2	About Equal 3	Lori Usually 4	Lori Always 5

1. shopping for the child's clothing and other miscellaneous needs _____

2. accompanying the child to doctor/dentist appointments _____

3. helping the child with friendship difficulties _____

4. supervising the child's bedtime _____

5. attending parent-teacher meetings _____

6. washing the child's clothing _____

7. supervising/keeping an eye on the child _____

8. paying for the child's clothing and other miscellaneous needs _____

9. maintaining relationships between the child and extended kin (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) _____

10. transporting the child to school, friends' houses, etc. _____

11. taking the child on outings _____

12. listening when the child wants to talk _____

13. paying for leisure activities which include the child _____

14. assuring that the child performs household chores satisfactorily _____

15. paying for gifts to be given to the child (birthdays, etc.) _____

16. disciplining the child _____

17. folding and ironing the child's clothing _____

18. picking up after the child _____

19. helping the child with homework _____

John Always 1	John Usually 2	About Equal 3	Lori Usually 4	Lori Always 5

20. accompanying the child on visits with extended kin (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) _____

21. determining which leisure activities will take place (for those which include the child) _____

22. comforting the child when upset _____

23. discussing sexual development and sexual relations with the child _____

24. paying for vacations which include the child _____

25. cleaning the child's room _____

26. paying the child's allowance _____

27. running errands for the child _____

28. making doctor/dentist appointments for the child _____

29. playing with the child _____

30. attending the child's sports practises and events _____

31. deciding on appropriate disciplinary measures for the child _____

32. buying/sending cards and gifts for extended kin (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc) which are from the child _____

33. making general family rules which involve the child (curfew, etc.) _____

34. assigning household chores to the child _____

35. choosing a holiday location for a holiday which will include the child _____

36. preparing and serving meals for the child _____

37. caring for the child when ill _____

38. supervising the child's personal hygiene _____

What gender did you imagine the child to be when responding to the previous questions?   _____

```
Not                                          Very
True                                         True
      ─────  ─────  ─────  ─────  ─────  ─────
       1      2      3      4      5      6      7
```

Using the above scale as a guide, please write a number
beside each statement to indicate how much you agree
with it.

1. I always throw my litter into waste baskets
    on the street.   ____

2. I have received too much change from a salesperson
    without telling her/him.   ____

3. When I hear people talking privately I avoid
    listening.   ____

4. I have taken things that didn't belong to me.   ____

5. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.   ____

6. I always keep my promises, no matter how inconven-
    ient it might be to do so.   ____

7. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even
    though I wasn't really sick.   ____

8. I like to gossip about other people's business.   ____

9. I have done things that I don't tell other people
    about.   ____

10. I say only good things about my friends behind
    their backs.   ____

11. I sometimes put things off until tomorrow that I
    should do today.   ____

12. I always declare everything at customs.   ____

13. I have some pretty awful habits.   ____

14. I always tell the truth.   ____

15. I am sometimes late for appointments.   ____

16. I always obey traffic laws even if I'm unlikely
    to get caught.   ____

17. When I was a child I obeyed my parents.   ____

```
Not                                          Very
True                                         True

      1       2       3       4       5       6       7
```

18. I sometimes pick my nose. ____

19. I am always polite to others including my friends and family. ____

20. I have never cheated on a test or assignment in any way. ____

21. I am always free of guilt. ____

22. I could easily quit any of my bad habits if I wanted to. ____

23. I always accept criticism if it is accurate. ____

24. I always return a favour without hesitation. ____

25. It's alright with me if some people happen to dislike me. ____

26. I'm not interested in knowing what other people really think of me. ____

27. My parents only punished me when I really deserved it. ____

28. My parents always loved me no matter what I did. ____

29. I have always been certain that I am no homosexual. ____

30. I have always been confident about my ability as a sexual partner. ____