

## The One-Size Fits All Family

Margaret F. Brinig and Steven L. Nock

*I am no better, and neither are you  
We are the same, whatever we do  
You love me, you hate me, you know me and then  
You can't figure out the bag I'm in.*

*I am everyday people.*

Everyday People  
Sly and the Family Stone, 1969

Family laws, and their implementing policies, usually assume that what helps the majority of people must be good for everyone. (In fact, we have previously shown how some of these assumptions are based upon less than perfect, or less than generalizable, research.)<sup>1</sup> For example, if studies show that marriage improves the welfare of the majority of couples<sup>2</sup> (and their children),<sup>3</sup> marriage is worth promoting as a major policy initiative.<sup>4</sup>

Another popular example of the “one size-fits all” assumption involves divorce. Many studies tell us divorce is bad for all except the small group of children from highly conflicted families,<sup>5</sup> as well that divorce is a leading cause of suicide<sup>6</sup> and depression<sup>7</sup> in divorced men.<sup>8</sup> Many legislatures<sup>9</sup> and other policymakers<sup>10</sup> have therefore made lowering the divorce rate a high priority.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret F. Brinig, Empirical Research in Family Law, 2002 U. Ill. L. Rev. 1083.

<sup>2</sup> Maggie Gallagher and Linda Waite; **The Case for marriage : why married people are happier, healthier, and better off financially.** New York: Broadway Books (2001); Steven L. Nock, Marriage in Men’s Lives. New York: Oxford Univ Press (1998).

<sup>3</sup> The (vast) research is summarized in Ten Principles.

<sup>4</sup> The current Bush Administration has had a major marriage initiative within Health and Human Services.

<sup>5</sup> See generally, A Generation at Risk, Paul Amato. Cambridge: Harvard Univ Press (2000); , Elizabeth Marquardt. Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce; Crown Books (2005); Sigle-Rushton, W. Wendy. "Parental Divorce and Subsequent Disadvantage" A Cross-Cohort Comparison." Demography 42.3 (2005): 427.

<sup>6</sup> Kposowa, Anthony J. "Marital Status and Suicide in the National Longitudinal Mortality Study." Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health 54.4 (2000): 254-61.

<sup>7</sup> Brinig and Nock, I Only Want Trust: Norms, Trust and Autonomy.” Journal of Socio-Economics 32 (No. 5): 471-87.

<sup>8</sup> Women do not seem to fare so badly, at least as far as psychologically. Bruce, Martha L. , and Kathleen M. Kim. "Differences in the Effects of Divorce on Major Depression in Men and Women." American Journal of Psychiatry 149 (1992): 917-17.

<sup>9</sup> For starters, see Americans For Divorce Reform, <http://www.divorcereform.org/>, which includes links to many legislative efforts as well as model legislation. See also Press, Associated. "Bill Would Make Divorces Tougher." Iowa City Press-Citizen March 14, 2003 2003, sec. A: 4.

<sup>10</sup> Marquardt, Elizabeth Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce. New York: Crown Pubs., 2005.

Finally, if adoption makes kids better off,<sup>11</sup> it seems logical to speed up the termination of parental rights. This reasoning spurred the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997<sup>12</sup> and the block grant initiatives for states that could significantly reduce the number of children in foster care and the length of their stays.<sup>13</sup> Similar reasoning about the desirability of adoption (over foster care) is also related to the federal legislation prohibiting racial matching in adoption.<sup>14</sup>

As a society and as a profession we devote a lot of attention to ensuring that laws do not discriminate—particularly, that they don’t advantage or disadvantage groups without good reason. We are, with cause, particularly worried about laws and policies that discriminate based upon, for example, race and gender. Casebooks and reporters are filled with decisions recording these questions. But how often do we look at how the laws we make, with the best of intentions, affect particular groups of kids in their wake?<sup>15</sup>

Some years ago, we examined policies for or against transracial adoption. In a paper published in the *Family Law Quarterly* in 2002,<sup>16</sup> we showed using the National Survey of Adolescent Health<sup>17</sup> that white children, as suspected, behaved when they were adopted just about as well as when living with their birth families but like foster children (not well) when living informally with relatives. For black children, however, kinship care worked about the same as adoption.<sup>18</sup> Since then, we have been curious about whether these seeming racial differences about the form of primary caregiving translated into other measures of legal status.

The Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is a nationally representative longitudinal study headquartered in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.<sup>19</sup> The PSID is based on a

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<sup>11</sup> Few people question whether adoption is better than foster care. The dividing lines run along whether it is preferable to long term kinship care, whether reunification with the birth family should take higher priority, or whether adoption by parents of a different race should only take place as a last resort. For a general discussion, see Brinig, Margaret F., and Steven L. Nock. "How Much Does Legal Status Matter? Adoptions by Kin Caregivers." *Family Law Quarterly* 36.3 (2002): 449-74.

<sup>12</sup> 42 U.S.C. §§ 1305 et seq.

<sup>13</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 673b. For an early report on how states were doing as of 1998, see Steve Christian, 19998 State Legislative Responses to the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, *State Legislative Report* March, 1999, vol. 24, #5. More recent data on both child welfare and adoption from foster care, including state “report cards” can be found on the Administration for Children and Families website, [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/index.htm#afcars](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#afcars).

<sup>14</sup> For a lengthy discussion of these policies, see Brinig, Margaret F. "Moving toward a First-Best World: Minnesota's Position on Multiethnic Adoptions." *William Mitchell Law Review* 28.2 (2001): 553-600.

<sup>15</sup> Brinig made a similar plea for responsible research in Brinig, Margaret F. "Promoting Children's Interests through a Responsible Research Agenda." *University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy* 14 (2003): 137-54, though that earlier publication was more focused on the writing of initial legislation than the evaluation of existing policies.

<sup>16</sup> Brinig and Nock, “Kin Caregivers”, supra note 11

<sup>17</sup> “The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) is a nationally representative study that explores the causes of health-related behaviors of adolescents in grades 7 through 12 and their outcomes in young adulthood. Add Health seeks to examine how social contexts (families, friends, peers, schools, neighborhoods, and communities) influence adolescents' health and risk behaviors.” This introduction comes from the program website, <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth>

<sup>18</sup> Brinig and Nock, “Kin Caregivers,” supra note 11, at 474 & Table 3.

<sup>19</sup> The internet “home page,” <http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>, indicates that

representative sample of American individuals (men, women, and children) and their families. It emphasizes the dynamic aspects of economic and demographic behavior, but its content is broad, including sociological and psychological measures. As a consequence of low attrition rates, the success in following young adults as they form their own families, and recontact efforts (for those declining an interview in prior years), the sample size grew from 4,800 families in 1968 to more than 7,000 families in 2001. The PSID has collected information about more than 65,000 individuals spanning as much as 36 years of their lives. The PSID data from 1969-2003 are publicly available on the project's website. Between 1968 and 1997, data on PSID individuals were collected each year. Beginning in 1997, data has been collected every other year.

The Child Development Supplement (CDS) is one research component of the PSID. While the PSID has always collected some information about children, in 1997 the PSID supplemented its main data collection with additional information on 0-12 year-old children and their parents. The objective was to provide researchers with a comprehensive, nationally representative, and longitudinal data base of children and their families from which to study the dynamic process of early human capital formation. The CDS-I successfully completed interviews with 2,394 families (88%), providing information on 3,563 children. In 2002-2003, the CDS re-contacted families in CDS-I who remained active in the PSID panel as of 2001. CDS-II successfully re-interviewed 2,021 families (91%) who provided data on 2,907 children and adolescents aged 5-18 years. These are the children whose outcomes we analyze here.

Because we saw that more than 95% of the children in the CDS lived mainly with their biological mothers, we excluded most other living arrangements (other than children living with two adoptive parents) (See Table 1).<sup>20</sup> First, the sample size in these groups was simply too small to draw valid conclusions. (The largest is for children living with only biological fathers, and it is only 83 children.) Second, these families were likely to differ on a large number of other dimensions that we could not account for but which involved separation from biological mothers. Children are highly likely to live with their mothers, and if they do not, it is typically because of her death or because of her abuse, neglect or abandonment of the child, all of which would undoubtedly have major influences on our dependent variables of interest. We report all the descriptive statistics for the variables we consider in Table 2.

We begin by looking at results from one question asked of children 12 and older on the CDS (that is, in 2002): how often would you say you were happy during the last month? The possible

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The PSID is a nationally representative longitudinal study of nearly 8,000 U.S. families. Following the same individuals since 1968, the PSID collects data on economics, health, and social behavior. The CDS focuses on the children and caregivers within PSID families, collecting information on education, health, cognitive and behavioral development, and time use.

<sup>20</sup> As detailed in the PSID's technical documentation, weights supplied on PSID data files are designed to compensate for both unequal selection probabilities and differential attrition and were used in our analysis.

answers range from “never” (scored 1) to “all the time” (scored 6).<sup>21</sup> The findings of interest for all children over 12 are reported in Figure 1.<sup>22</sup>

To determine the possible effect of the various factors in our analysis, we compared how children’s answers to this question differ when the factors are at the lower 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and the higher 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. The “hi” and “low” estimates in the graphs represent the differences that are found when these two levels are compared. For example, the factor of parental warmth ranges over a five point scale. The lower 25<sup>th</sup> percentile is XXX and the higher 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is XXX. The graphs show how happiness varies when these two values are considered. Therefore, the “effects” we show are conservative in that they represent only about half the range of possible variation on a factor like parental warmth. Had we considered the entire range (e.g., 1 and 5) the “effects” shown in the graphs would be larger.

What can we conclude from these results? Family income<sup>23</sup> doesn’t matter statistically for happiness.<sup>24</sup> Nor does it matter, overall, whether a child’s mother ever married, or whether you were adopted by a stepparent. What does matter significantly is whether your mother demonstrated warmth to you<sup>25</sup> (increasing your happiness by nearly a point on the scale

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<sup>21</sup> See <http://simba.isr.umich.edu/cb.aspx?vList=Q23L37A>.

<sup>22</sup> In the equation predicting happiness, additional variables include whether the child lives only with the biological mother, whether the child lives with an “other father figure,” whether the mother was married and widowed at least once, whether the mother married, divorced and remarried with the second marriage still intact, whether the mother married, divorced and remarried with the second marriage ending in divorce, the sex of the child, the child’s age at the time of the survey (2002), the age of the mother, and the race of the mother. All of these additional variables appear in each of the additional regressions reported as well and are therefore controlled in these equations. The happiness regression’s R<sup>2</sup> value was .077; that is, the equation predicted about 8% of the variance in results. In Figure 1, as with all Figures, statistically significant results are indicated by \*; for a probability that this result could have been obtained by change of less than .05, \*; for a probability that this result could have been obtained by chance of less than .01 by \*\*; and for a probability that this result could have been obtained by chance of less than .001 by \*\*\* (none in this Figure).

<sup>23</sup> For each observation in these models, a comparable measure of family income is calculated by dividing total family income by the Census needs standard for a comparably sized family in the same geographic area in the same year.

<sup>24</sup> This is not surprising if we consider reports that, worldwide, the happiest people come from countries like Venezuela, Mexico and Nigeria, not those from highly industrialized, wealthier nations.

<sup>25</sup> This is reflected in the CDS Primary Caregiver Child File as the mean of responses to Q21E13A through Q21E13G: About how often in the past month have you

- Told CHILD that you love (him/her)
- Spent time with CHILD doing one of (his/her) favorite activities
- Talked with CHILD about things (he/she) is especially interested in
- Told CHILD you appreciated something (he/she) did
- Talked with CHILD about (his/her) relationships, like (his/her) relationships with friends
- Talked with CHILD about current events, like things going on in the news

compared to the lower value) or your mother divorced (decreasing your happiness by about half a point on the scale if she divorced and did not remarry compared to if she did not). If you have a stepfather, you are slightly less happy (by about .23 on the scale) than if you do not.

In a slightly more sophisticated version of the same basic analysis, we can find for all children whether they had behavioral problems.<sup>26</sup> We report these results in Figure 2. When all

-- Talked with CHILD about (his/her) day

<sup>26</sup> *Behavior Problems Index.* The behavior problem scale (G23, G32) was developed by James Peterson and Nicholas Zill to measure the incidence and severity of child behavior problems in a survey setting. Peterson, J. L., & Zill, N. (1986). Marital disruption, parent-child relationships, and behavioral problems in children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48(2). Many of the items are from the Achenbach Behavior Problems Checklist. Achenbach, T., & Edelbrock, C. (1981). Behavioral problems and competencies reported by parents of normal and disturbed children aged four through sixteen. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 46(1). (No. 188). Exactly the same set of items used in the NLSY was used in the PSID Child Development Supplement in order to maximize comparability between the two data sets, though the PSID-CDS asked the questions were drawn from of children 3 and older while the NLSY began the questions at age 4. The scale is based on responses by the primary caregiver as to whether a set of 30 problem behaviors is often, sometimes, or never true of the child. Behaviors include having sudden changes in mood or feeling, is fearful or anxious, bullies or is cruel or mean, demands a lot of attention. Behaviors are also divided into two subscales, a measure of externalizing or aggressive behavior and a measure of internalizing, withdrawn or sad behavior..

[THIS SEEMS SOMEWHAT EXCESSIVE SINCE IT IS NICELY SUMMARIED IN NOTE 26]

**Table 3. Behavior Problems Index Factors and Reliabilities**

Question	External	Internal	Total
a (He/She)has sudden changes in mood or feeling.	X		X
b (He/She)feels or complains that no one loves him/her.		X	X
c (He/She)is rather high strung and nervous.	X		X
d (He/She)cheats or tells lies.	X		X
e (He/She)is too fearful or anxious.		X	X
f (He/She)argues too much	X		X
g (He/She)has difficulty concentrating, cannot pay attention for long.	X		X
h (He/She)is easily confused, seems to be in a fog.		X	X

i (He/She)bullies or is cruel or mean to others.	X		X
j (He/She)is disobedient.	X		X
k (He/She)does not seem to feel sorry after (he/she)misbehaves.	X		X
l (He/She)has trouble getting along with other children	X	X	X
m (He/She)is impulsive, or acts without thinking.	X		X
n (He/She)feels worthless or inferior.		X	X
o (He/She)is not liked by other children.		X	X
p (He/She)has difficulty getting (his/her) mind off certain thoughts.		X	X
q (He/She)is restless or overly active, cannot sit still	X		X
r (He/She)is stubborn, sullen, or irritable.	X		X
s (He/She)has a very strong temper and loses it easily.	X		X
t (He/She)is unhappy, sad or depressed.		X	X
u (He/She)is withdrawn, does not get involved with others.		X	X
v (He/She)breaks things on purpose or deliberately destroys (his/her)own or another's things.	X		X
w (He/She)clings to adults.	*	*	X
x (He/She)cries too much.	X		X
y (He/She)demands a lot of attention.	X		X
z (He/She)is too dependant on others.		X	X
aa (He/She)feels others are out to get (him/her).		X	
bb (He/She)hangs around with kids who get into trouble.	*	*	X

the children are added, warmth remains very significant both statistically and quantitatively (associated with a decrease in behavioral problems by from 14.622 to 8.93 on the scale). Having a stepfather is associated with an increase in behavior problems from about 16 to about 18.6 on the scale. A change from the analysis for happiness is that the mother's divorce is not significantly related to the incidence of behavioral problems, while whether or not the mother married is associated with a statistically significant increase in such problems, from about 16 to about 17.4.<sup>27</sup> And income still doesn't matter.

If these results were all we had, they would seem to justify a marriage-centered policy, worrying about divorce, and possibly placing some restrictions on remarriage (because of the negative results for stepparents).<sup>28</sup> Though the third concern may well be unconstitutional,<sup>29</sup>

cc (He/She)is secretive, keeps things to (himself/herself).		X	X
dd (He/She)worries too much.		X	X
Number of items	16	13	30
Cronbach's alpha	0.86	0.81	0.90
Unweighted N			2646

<sup>27</sup> An explanation of why the fact that the mother never married might matter when it did not in the happiness equation (and why divorce might not) lies in the age of the children who answered the question. Parental divorce seems to matter most to adolescents (the only ones surveyed in the happiness question), see, e.g., Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps?* (Harvard Press, 1994); Hetherington, et al., Paul Amato & Brian Keith, *Parental Divorce and the Well-being of Children: A Meta-Analysis*, 110 *Psychological Bulletin* 26 (1991); Andrew J. Cherlin et al., *Parental Divorce in Childhood and Demographic Outcomes in Young Adulthood*, 32 *Demography* 299 (1995); Kathleen Kiernan, *The Impact of Family Disruption in Childhood on Transitions Made in Young Adult Life*, 46 *Pop. Studies* 213 (1992); while the impact of the mother's never having married may be most severe for younger children. (The directions of the coefficients were consistent, but the statistical significance differed.)

<sup>28</sup> These suggestions are remarkably close to two contemporary systems. One is divorce from bed and board (or judicial separation), in which the parties live apart, the duty of support continues, and there is no freedom to remarry. See, e.g., Va. Code 20-95. See Margaret F. Brinig and June Carbone, *The Reliance Interest in Marriage and Divorce*. Support for marriage reached a high point during this period, see Margaret F. Brinig, *Rings and Promises*, 2 *JLEO* X (1990). Another is the canon law model followed by the Roman Catholic Church, which sacramentalizes marriage and does not recognize civil divorce, treating divorced spouses as still married.

<sup>29</sup> In *Zablocki v. Redhail*, 434 U.S. 374 (1978), the Supreme Court struck down on a Wisconsin restriction on marrying without meeting outstanding child support obligations, when the man involved owed significant child support to children of a first relationship.

both encouraging marriage (over childbirth outside it) and reducing divorce are centerpieces of social welfare policy at both the national and state level. To restate our original point, though, the wisdom of these policies depends upon their uniform (or at least benign) effects on major groups of people as well as the majority of children.

### *Racial Differences in Reactions to Status*

Let's look at exactly the same equation, but this time, separate our results into those for blacks (N=207) and those for whites (N=1212). The results are pictured in Figure 3. While maternal warmth works the same way for each racial group, associated with big decreases in total behavioral problems, whether or not the parents ever married does not apparently matter for blacks, but if they did not, is associated with an increase of about four points (and to a high degree of significance), for whites. Income for the first time is associated with significantly reducing total behavioral problems, but only for black children. Having a stepdad is not associated with a significant increase in problem behaviors for blacks, but is with increased behavioral problems for whites. There is some suggestive evidence that two variables work in opposite directions: divorce without remarriage seems associated with more behavioral problems for blacks and fewer for whites (though neither is significant). Very few black children were adopted by stepdads (about half a percent, so of no statistical significance), while for whites it increased behavioral problems by five points on the scale and was statistically significant.

To repeat: We might conclude that financial need matters much more for black kids' problems than for whites, and warmth shown by their mothers much less. But even more interesting for lawyers, the data suggests that lack of marriage matters much more for whites, and that never marrying or adoption by a stepdad in fact work in OPPOSITE ways. Further, we find opposite results for blacks and whites for children living with a father figure (what we would call cohabiting) (better for black kids, much worse for white), for children whose mothers divorce, remarry and remain married (better for black kids, worse for whites), and for those whose moms divorce a second time (worse for white kids, better for black). We reproduce these results in Table 4

Racial differences seemingly call for different policies if we look solely at the children involved as third parties to their caretakers' decisions. But are there gender differences in effects as well?

### *Gender Differences in Reactions to Status*

We begin with the familiar chart from the PSID measuring total behavioral problems, controlling for socioeconomic status and other factors, but this time separating boys and girls. Our results appear in Figure 4. We begin with income. Remember that overall, increases in

income were not associated with greater happiness nor a reduction in behavioral problems. But from Figure 4 we can see that what might have been an encouraging result is actually a complicated one that differs by sex: an increase in income is associated with a significant decrease in girls' behavioral problems, but will increase boys' at about the same rate (though not with statistical significance). In other words, the overall report shows a cancelling out effect.

Boys and girls react similarly and significantly to the warmth of their mothers. Both show more behavioral problems if their mothers have never married, but the difference is only statistically significant for girls. Neither boys nor girls exhibit a statistically significant difference in behavior problems if their mothers divorce and do not remarry (though the movement is in opposite directions for the two genders). While the presence of a stepfather is related to negative effects for both boys and girls, both in terms of statistical significance and in absolute terms, the relationship is more profound for girls (where it increases behavioral problems by more than three points, or nearly 25%) than for boys (where it increases behavioral problems by less than two points, or 10%). Another significant difference that is masked when we look at boys and girls together is the presence of another (unrelated) male in the household. For boys, it is associated with a significant increase in behavioral problems (at the less than .001 probability of error) and by nearly six points (or 30%). For girls, it is associated with a insignificant decrease. Finally, boys' behavioral problems are associated with a slight increase (without statistical significance) with an increase in income from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, while girls' are associated with a slight decrease (at the .051 probability of error). Once again, the troubling results do not stop here. The last chart shows that we get opposite results looking at mothers' cohabitation (associated with much worse problem behavior in boys do much worse, slightly less in girls). We also get opposite results for children of mothers divorcing, remarrying and remaining in second marriage (neither result significant, girls do better). And the inconsistencies remain for depression and anxiety for these relationship states and for divorcing a second time.

One slightly more controversial set of tests looks at results on boys' and girls' self-esteem.<sup>30</sup> Here, again, we have different results for increases in income (boys' self-esteem increases slightly with income, while girls' increases significantly) adoption by a stepfather (boy's self esteem declines, and this is statistically significant, girls' apparently increases, but not significantly) and most importantly, with divorce (and no remarriage). Here both measures are statistically significant and they move in opposite directions: boys' self-esteem increases with divorce (by .217, or slightly more than 7 percent), while girls' decreases (by .132, or nearly five

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<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell, Self-Esteem and Socioeconomic Status: A Meta-Analytic Review, 6 *Personality & Soc. Psych. Rev.* 59 (2002)(socioeconomic status has a small but significant relationship with self-esteem); Morris Rosenberg et al., Global Self-Esteem and Specific Self-Esteem: Different Concepts, Different Results, 60 *Am. Soc. Rev.* 151 (1995)( while global self-esteem is more strongly related to measures of psychological well-being, specific (academic) self-esteem is a much better predictor of school performance).

percent). Because the results “cancel,” divorce will seem to have no effect on self-esteem when boys and girls are pooled in one analysis.

### *Some Cautions and Conclusions*

Although we controlled for what we could,<sup>31</sup> none of these equations predicted all, or even nearly all, the differences in outcomes. In other words, most of the differences we see in behavioral problems or happiness or self-esteem in these children were associated with other things than those captured in our variables. We also are capturing a snapshot of related variables, not causation. We cannot say that failure to marry causes behavioral problems, for example, but just that they are associated. We know that income is related (both ways) to divorce, for example (financial problems cause divorce and divorce causes financial problems) and that there are significant relationships between other variables. Finally, some things are too small to measure. Only 30 children in our sample were adopted by their dads, and no adopted kids at all were in the black families. Although we have data for children classified as Asian and Hispanic, there are too few variations in family structure and status (the variables of interest here) to show much. That is why we have nothing to say about two very important demographic groups.

What do we make of common changes to legal status or living arrangement that affect black and white, male and female children in different ways? Our first suggestion is the not very controversial one that all of this should be looked at again, using a different data set.<sup>32</sup> If what we report here holds up, as we think it will, it will be important to look at causation, and that will require a longitudinal analysis.<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, some of the differences we report are relatively benign. For example, children are always better off if their parents marry, even if the differences are more pronounced for whites than blacks. Perhaps, as with kinship care as the equivalent for adoption, societal support for something other than marriage will give similar benefits to this population. Similarly, more income is never a bad thing in a statistical sense, even if it matters more for blacks and for girls. Divorce, with or without remarriage, suggests more nuanced response, however.

Where there are big and opposite associations, as with the effect of divorce on self-esteem (where boys did better and girls worse), we might suggest hesitation before advocating large scale changes with blanket, as opposed to individualized rules.

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<sup>31</sup> Control variables in each equation are described in footnote 29, supra.

<sup>32</sup> We plan such a replication ourselves, using the first nine waves of the NLSY97 (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997).

<sup>33</sup> We have attempted one using a subset of the CDS, but the usable variables are limited.

Finally, as teachers, students, or makers of family law, we need to pay attention to empirical studies, especially ones done by unbiased, careful researchers. That's the lesson for this conference. As you consider them, pay attention to the limitations of the studies.

Table I. Relationship of Primary Caregiver to Child

Relationship of PCG	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Biological mother	2,554	95.2	95.2
Stepmother	1	0.0	0.0
Adoptive mother	22	0.8	0.8
Biological father	83	3.1	3.1
Stepfather	1	0.1	0.1
Grandmother	3	0.1	0.1
Grandfather	1	0.0	0.0
Aunt	0	0.0	0.0
Sister	14	0.5	0.5

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
KID LIVES WITH 2 BIO PARENTS?	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.6832	0.46532
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND NO BIO DAD?	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1917	0.39367
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND ADOPTIVE DAD?	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0063	0.07922
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND STEP DAD	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0759	0.26489
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND OTHER DAD FIGURE	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0344	0.18226
KID LIVES WITH TWO ADOPTIVE PARENTS	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0086	0.09219
HEAD IS WHITE	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.6316	0.48246
HEAD IS BLACK	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1462	0.35335
HEAD IS HISPANIC-LATINO	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1321	0.33866
HEAD IS ASIAN PI	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0278	0.16437
HEAD IS OTHER RACE - AM INDIAN, ETC	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0423	0.20124
ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE OF KID AT SERVICES DRAWN FROM 2 VARIABLES 6-9 AND 10+ AGE	2,030	1.00	6.00	4.2156	1.37686
IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TO PRIMARY CARETAKER	2,672	1.00	3.00	2.6385	0.59797
AGE OF MOTHER OR MOTHER FIGURE	2,582	20.00	81.00	41.9310	7.44560
HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIV CENSUS NEEDS STANDARD	2,583	0.00	113.39	3.7756	4.78121
MOM MARRIED ONCE, STILL INTACT	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.5833	0.49311
MOM MARRIED AND WIDOWED AT LEAST ONCE	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0153	0.12274
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, REMARRIED STILL INTACT	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1251	0.33093
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, REMARRIED, NOW DIVORCED	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.0316	0.17483

MOM NEVER MARRIED	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1168	0.32119
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, NEVER REMARRIED	2,681	0.00	1.00	0.1176	0.32221
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SCALE 02	2,681	1.00	5.00	4.1270	0.59692
PARENTAL WARMTH SCALE 02	2,681	1.00	5.00	3.9271	0.64020
BPI - TOTAL SCORE 02	2,650	0	30	8.58	6.442
BPI - EXTERNALIZING SCORE 02	2,667	0	17	5.53	4.116
BPI - INTERNALIZING SCORE 02	2,659	0	14	3.23	3.193
PEARLIN SELF-EFFICACY SCALE 02	2,671	1.00	4.00	3.1054	0.58953
ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE 02	2,674	1.00	4.00	3.4036	0.44345
SEX OF CDS CHILD	2,000	1.00	2.00	1.5107	0.50001
CHILD AGE AT TIME OF PCG IW - YEARS 02	2,681	5.52	19.25	12.3159	3.73311
Valid N (listwise)	1,495				

Figure 1.

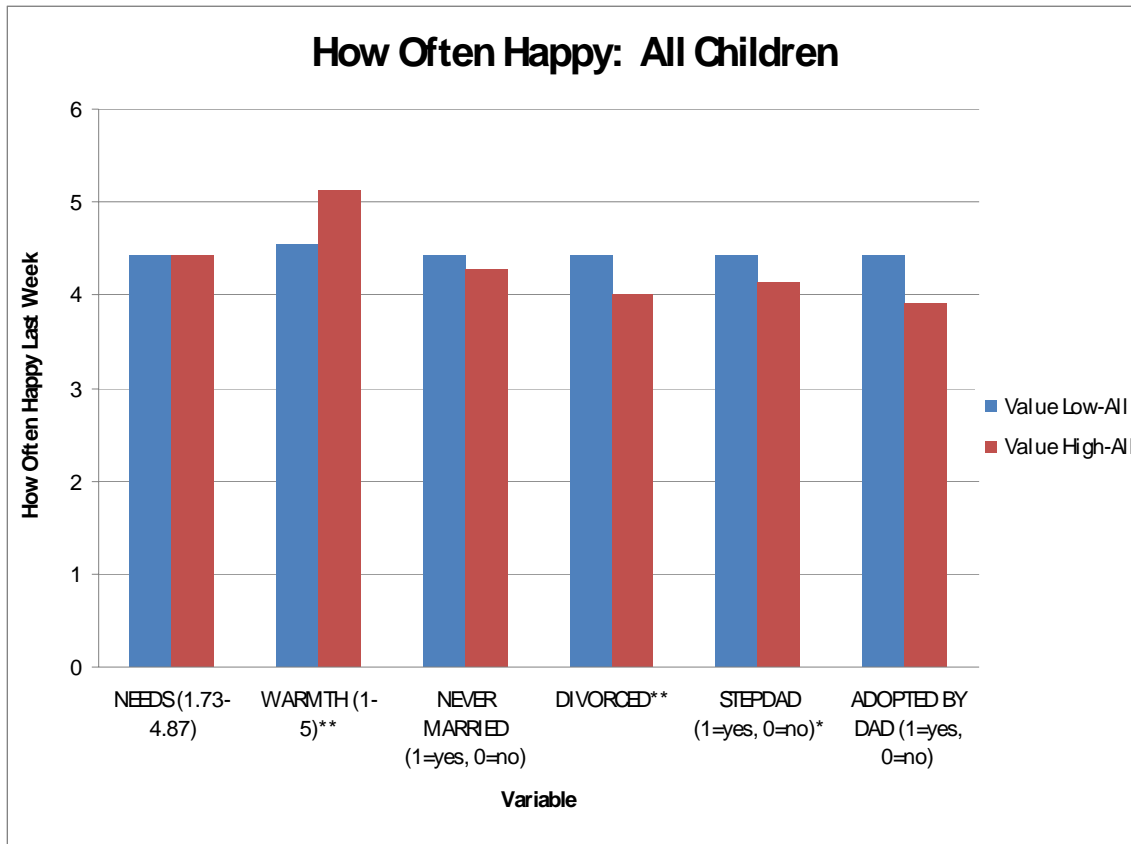


Figure 2.

### Total Behavioral Problems- All Kids

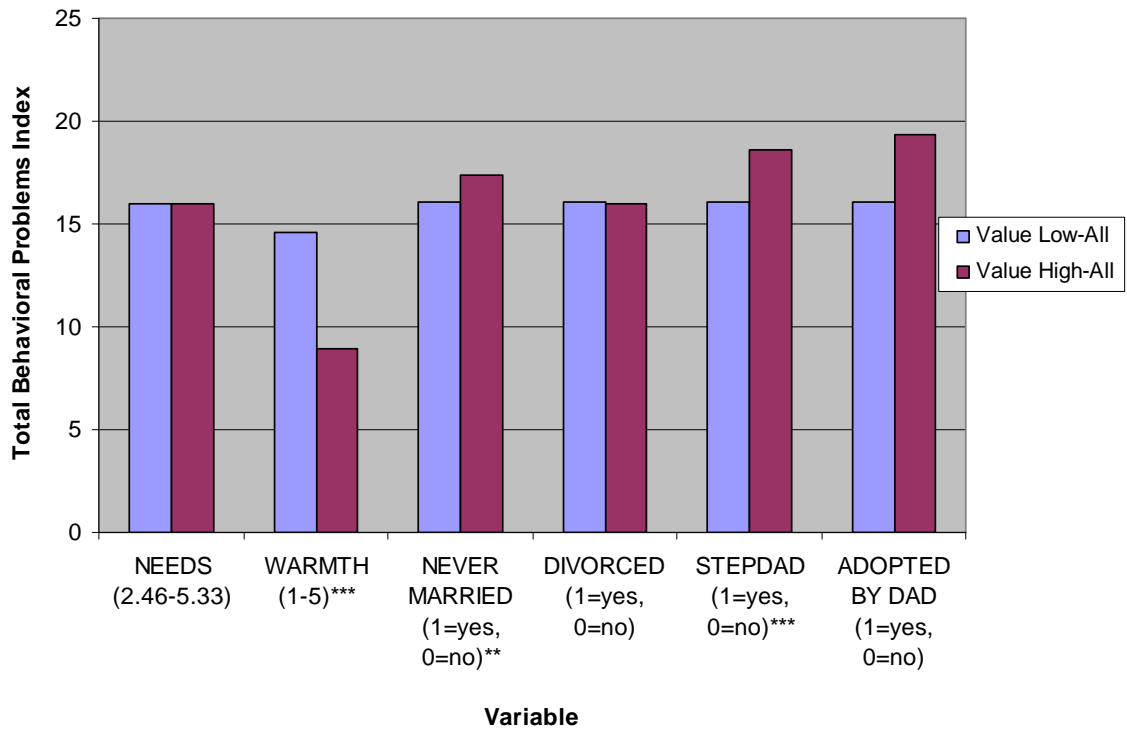


Table 4. Comparison of Associations with Behavioral Problems for White and Black Children

	Whites Only				Blacks Only			
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	16.128	1.865		0.000	24.671	3.805		0.000
HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIV CENSUS NEEDS STANDARD	-0.001	0.028	-0.001	0.979	-0.721	0.292	-0.157	0.014
KID LIVES IWTH BIO MOM AND NO BIO DAD?	4.109	1.105	0.229	0.000	-1.966	1.461	-0.130	0.179
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND ADOPTIVE DAD?	5.119	2.204	0.064	0.020	-8.723	21.491	-0.022	0.685
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND STEP DAD	3.250	0.823	0.132	0.000	2.664	1.567	0.107	0.090
KID LIVES WITH BIO MOM AND OTHER DAD FIGURE	4.281	1.392	0.117	0.002	-0.539	2.322	-0.015	0.817
KID LIVES WITH TWO ADOPTIVE PARENTS	11.299	9.129	0.034	0.216				
MOM MARRIED AND WIDOWED AT LEAST ONCE	-1.955	1.784	-0.033	0.273	5.962	2.458	0.157	0.016
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, REMARRIED STILL INTACT	0.400	0.582	0.023	0.492	-0.647	1.743	-0.023	0.711
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, REMARRIED, NOW DIVORCED	-0.500	1.287	-0.016	0.698	1.463	2.763	0.033	0.597
MOM NEVER MARRIED	4.140	1.468	0.103	0.005	1.112	1.629	0.072	0.495
MOM MARRIED, DIVORCED, NEVER REMARRIED	-1.702	1.093	-0.086	0.120	1.558	1.765	0.080	0.378
PARENTAL WARMTH SCALE 02	-1.725	0.302	-0.163	0.000	-1.517	0.582	-0.148	0.010
SEX OF CDS CHILD	-0.169	0.340	-0.014	0.620	-2.412	0.874	-0.159	0.006
CHILD AGE AT TIME OF PCG IW - YEARS 02	-0.183	0.064	-0.091	0.004	-0.269	0.158	-0.107	0.090
AGE OF MOTHER OR MOTHER FIGURE	0.022	0.028	0.026	0.422	-0.032	0.061	-0.034	0.603

Figure 3.

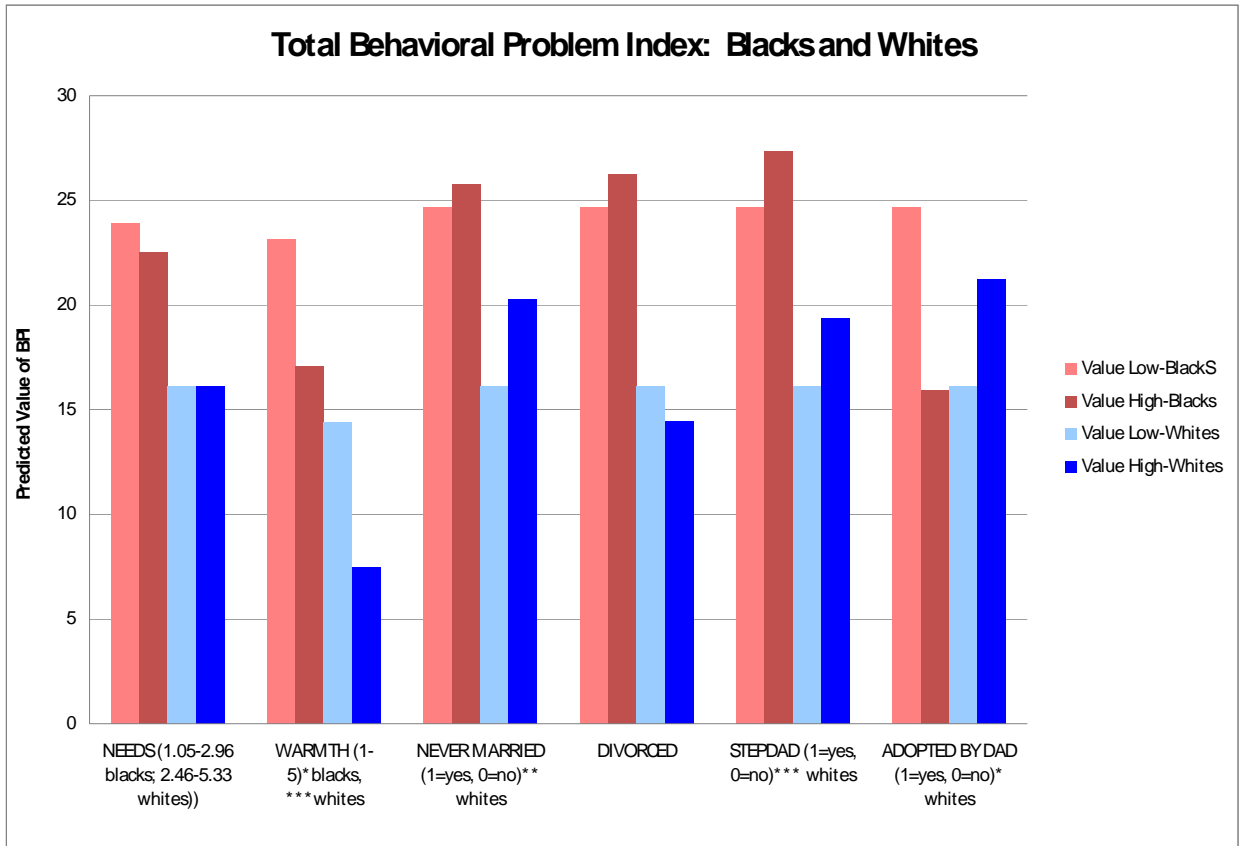


Figure 4.

