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Family Structure Variations in Patterns and Predictors of Child Victimization

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In a national probability sample of 1,000 children aged 10−17, youth from single parent and stepfamilies experienced higher rates of several different kinds of victimization compared with youth living with two biological parents. Youth in stepfamilies had the highest overall rates of victimization and the greatest risk from family perpetrators, including biological parents, siblings, and stepparents. Elevated risk in stepfamilies was fully explained by their higher levels of family problems. Victimization risk in single parent families was more affected by their lower socioeconomic status and residence in more violence neighborhoods and schools.

Keywords: child victimization, family structure, neighborhood violence, parental dysfunction, perpetrator characteristics

Social policy and research continue to be legitimately concerned about how different family structures affect children's development and well-being. High rates of divorce and increases in children born to unmarried mothers means that almost one third of all American children reside with only one parent (Fields, 2003). Moreover, given high rates of remarriage, it has been estimated that 23% of children currently under 18 will also spend some time in a stepfamily (Bumpass, Raley, & Sweet, 1995).

Residing in a single parent or stepfamily is a risk factor for psychopathology and adjustment problems in children and adolescents (Hetherington, Bridges, & Isabella, 1998). Children from divorced and remarried families are more likely than children from nuclear intact families to have academic problems, to have externalizing and internalizing disorders, and to have lower self esteem and social competency (Amato & Keith, 1991; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994; Hetherington et al., 1998).

While certainly there are multiple causes of greater risk among children in divorced families, one important source of risk may be their greater exposure to victimization. "Child victimization" encompasses a relatively broad category of events, including criminal offenses against minors (such as robbery and aggravated assault), violations of child welfare statutes (such as physical abuse and neglect), and other aggressive and sexual behaviors against children (such as bullying and sexual harassment).

Although past studies have typically failed to consider a full range of victimization experiences and have not directly compared victimization patterns across single parent and stepfamilies, there is some evidence that family structure represents an important risk factor for childhood victimization. Based on a large national survey of 12−17 year olds, Lauritsen (2003) found that youth in single parent families experienced more stranger and nonstranger victimizations than those in two-parent families, independent of race and socioeconomic status.

Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) found that youth in stepfamilies were at particular risk, relative to other family structures, for sexual assault and parental assault, with a variety of other predictors controlled. Similarly, Turner, Finkelhor, and Ormrod (2006) found that, relative to children living with two biological or adoptive parents, children living in single parent and stepfamilies had greater lifetime exposure to several forms of victimization, including sexual assault, child maltreatment, and witnessing family violence.

Given the large body of literature pointing to the significance of child victimization for the development of psychiatric disorders, physical health problems, and poor social and economic outcomes (Molnar, Buka, & Kessler, 2001; Terr, 1991), specifying the social contexts that contribute to child victimization remains an important objective. Recent research suggests that exposure to multiple forms of victimizations may have particularly powerful consequences (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007; Menard & Huizinga, 2001) and that lifetime victimization explains much of the difference in children's symptom levels across family structure (Turner et al., 2006). To the extent that children in single parent and stepfamilies are at increased risk for victimization, efforts to identify factors that explain or contribute to their elevated risk are clearly warranted.

The specific objectives of this research are to:

(1) Examine differences in recent victimization across fam-

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ily structure by comparing three groups of children who are currently living (a) with two biological or adoptive parents, (b) with a single parent, and (c) in a stepfamily household. Using a nationally representative sample of youth, we will address a wider range of victimization experiences than has been typical in past research.

(2) Consider potential explanations for elevated victimization in single parent families and stepfamilies. Toward this aim, we will (a) examine variations in perpetrator characteristics across different family structures, and (b) identify potential mediating or predisposing factors that might explain greater victimization among children in single parent and stepfamilies. Factors to be considered include family problems, parent–child conflict, parental monitoring, residential mobility, and local violence.

Family Structure and Victimization

Although past research suggests that youth in both single parent and stepfamilies may be at elevated risk for victimization, the extent of risk, the types of victimizations they experience, and the mechanisms that lead to victimization in these families may differ. Paralleling research on child well-being (Thompson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994), the most influential factors for single parent families may revolve around lack of economic resources and time constraints, while stepfamilies may have more problems in the quality of family relationships.

Applying these findings to victimization, we hypothesize that youth in single parent families will experience greater risks from economic-related factors, such as residence in violent neighborhoods and high residential mobility, and from factors related to time constraints, such as poor parental monitoring. In contrast, we anticipate that youth in stepfamilies will experience greater victimization from family generated risks, such as family problems and parent–child conflict. These mechanisms should also translate into differences in perpetrator characteristics, with children from single parent families being at greatest risk for extrafamilial victimization and those from stepfamilies showing the greatest risk for family perpetrated victimizations.

Risk in Stepfamilies

Elevated risk of child victimization in stepfamilies may be the direct consequence of the presence of a stepparent perpetrator in the household. There are several studies, for example, indicating that stepfathers are more often perpetrators of sexual abuse than are biological fathers (Finkelhor & Baron, 1986; Russell, 1984). There is also considerable evidence of elevated risk for child physical abuse in stepfamilies (e.g., Daly & Wilson, 1987; Turner et al., 2006), although many of these studies did not directly examine the relationship between abuser and victim (Giles-Sims, 1997). Giles-Sims (1997) outlined a number of factors that may contribute to the overrepresentation of stepparents among child abuse perpetrators, including lower SES, higher interpersonal conflict, less commitment to the caretaking role, and selection factors associated with social dysfunction. To the extent that parents with problems (such as history of unemployment or drug and alcohol problems) are more likely to be found in stepfamilies, we are also likely to also see more biological parents as perpetrators in these families.

Stepsiblings may also be significant perpetrators of victimization. Child abuse researchers often fail to consider violence between siblings, yet victimization by siblings is relatively widespread (Hardy, 2001; Wiehe, 1990) and has shown lasting consequences (Kessler & Magee, 1994). While we know of no research that has specifically compared sibling victimization across family structure, Dunn, Deater-Decker, Pickering, O'Connor, and Golding (1998) found that children's adjustment in complex stepfamilies (households that include stepsiblings) was significantly poorer than those living in simple stepfamilies. While a number of reasons for this association are certainly likely, one factor may include greater victimization among siblings in stepfamilies.

Victimization in stepfamilies may be linked with a number of problems more common in stepfamilies, including parent–child conflict and other forms of family dysfunction. Research shows that stepfamilies are particularly likely to be characterized by conflict in relationships between parents and children (Hetherington et al., 1998) and relationship "negativity" (Dunn et al., 1998). While some of this reflects heightened conflict between children and stepparents (Fine & Schwebel, 1992; Hetherington, 1989; Thompson et al., 1994), research has also shown poorer relationship quality between children and biological mothers when the father and child are not biologically related (Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, & Sturgess, 2000). Parent-child conflict is likely to contribute to or co-occur with family perpetrated child victimization and may even lead to greater victimization outside the household by reducing positive communication and involvement with children.

Child victimization often occurs against a backdrop of parental dysfunction and chronic family adversity, such as unemployment, parental alcohol or drug problems, parental imprisonment, marital discord, or episodes of homelessness. Such family problems, while often coexisting with victimization, are likely to increase the risk of subsequent victimization and, therefore, can themselves represent risk factors for victimization exposure. Indeed, a substantial increase in the risk for child maltreatment has been associated with parental alcohol abuse (Sebre et al., 2004), parental substance abuse (Forrester, 2000), and wage earner unemployment (Gillham et al., 1998). Children with incarcerated parents have also been overrepresented in child maltreatment cases (Phillips, Barth, Burns, & Wagner, 2004).

There is some evidence that family problems, such as those described above, are more often present in stepfamilies than in families with two biological parents (Amato & Keith, 1991; Dunn et al., 1998; Hetherington et al., 1998). Many scholars have pointed to difficulties that arise from the formation of stepfamilies. It has been suggested, for example, that stepfamilies represent "incomplete institutions" with unclear norms for parenting and conflict resolution and stress associated with greater isolation from relatives and their community (Booth & Edwards, 1992; Bray & Berger, 1993; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994). These stressful circumstances, in turn, can reduce the psychological and social functioning of parents (Hetherington & Jodi, 1994). Therefore, family problems or dysfunction may mediate the association between family structure and victimization.

Social selection may also operate in the association between family structure and victimization. Dunn et al. (2000) found that negative parent–child interactions within stepfamilies could be linked to parental problems and risks earlier in both parents' lives. Parents in stepfamilies are more likely to have left home early, experienced a teenage pregnancy, and have entered their first marriage at a young age (Dunn et al., 2000). Accelerated adult transitions, such as early marriage, have been associated with preexisting indications of substance abuse (Chassin, Presson, Sherman, & Edwards, 1992) and other risky and unconventional behavior (Martino, Collins, & Ellickson, 2004). Since marriage at young ages is strongly associated with divorce (Teti & Lamb, 1989) and young single parents are more likely to remarry (Le Bourdais & Desrosiers, 1995), partners in remarriages may more often have problematic life course histories. Indeed, studies have shown that parents in stepfamilies are also more likely to have a history of employment difficulties, multiple relationships, and family conflict, even prior to the formation of the stepfamily (Amato, 1993; Booth & Edwards, 1992; Dunn, 2002; O'Connor, Thorpe, Dunn, & Golding, 1999; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, adults with existing dysfunction may be more likely to both select into stepfamilies and possess characteristics that increase their children's risk of victimization.

Risk in Single Parent Families

Some of the conditions cited above that contribute to victimization in stepfamilies, such as lower SES and parental dysfunction, likely also operate in single parent families. Indeed, single parent families are most likely to live in poverty and experience the many stressors that arise from financial difficulties (Amato, 1999; Arendell, 1986; McLanahan, 1983). Economic deprivation, in turn, can contribute to inconsistent and "harsh" parenting (McLoyd, 1990). Low-income status and unemployment can also have direct effects on victimization by reducing basic resources necessary to support and care for children (Berger, 2004). However, while conditions in single parent families may have implications for family perpetrated victimization, their importance for extrafamilial victimization may be even greater. The acute economic difficulties, poor neighborhood environments in which single parent families often reside, and poor parental supervision, may make children in this family type especially vulnerable to victimization outside of the household.

Single parent families may have particular problems with the monitoring of children. In general, parental monitoring involves tracking the child's whereabouts (Bulcroft, Carmody, & Bulcroft, 1998), ensuring adequate supervision, and awareness their child's friends and activities (Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, & Steinberg, 1993; Fisher, Leve, O'Leary, & Leve, 2003). There is considerable evidence that inadequate parental monitoring is associated with numerous forms of antisocial and delinquent behavior (Chilcoal & Anthony, 1999; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1994). Although less research has focused on the impact of parental monitoring on victimization experiences, there is some evidence that children who are poorly supervised are more likely to be victims of crime (Esbensen, Huizinga, & Menard, 1999).

Research has shown that single parents make fewer demands on their children and monitor their activities less adequately than do married parents (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Cookston, 1999). Lone parents have considerably more demands on their time and energy and are often less able to monitor children and maintain involvement in school and extra school activities (Ram & Hou, 2003). To the extent that single parents provide less monitoring, this may represent one important mechanism by which children in these family forms are at increased risk for victimization.

Another possible source of risk in single parent families is residential mobility. Divorce is associated with multiple transitions for children that extend beyond changes in household structure and can contribute to poor outcomes (Kurdek, Fine, & Sinclair, 1995). An important index of multiple changes is residential mobility, since moving households is often accompanied by changing schools, leaving friendship networks, having new peer contacts, and exposure to different neighborhood conditions. Residential mobility is typically higher for single parent families than for two-parent families (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994) and is likely linked low or unstable economic resources. There is reason to suspect that residential mobility might also increase exposure to victimization (Sampson, 1985).

Single parent families may also expose children to more dangerous neighborhood conditions. Local violence, in schools and neighborhoods, is likely to directly increase victimization exposure among children. Children in high community violence contexts (typically inner cities) are both more likely to witness violence and to experience personal victimization outside of the household (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Because single parents more often live in poverty and more often forced to reside in dangerous neighborhoods (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; South & Crowder, 1998), neighborhood conditions may represent one mechanism by which children in these family structures are at increased risk for victimization.

Hypotheses

The review of the literature cited above leads us to several hypotheses concerning family structure variation in child victimization and the factors that explain these differences:

1. Youth living in both single parent families and stepfamilies will report higher rates of victimization over the past year, compared to youth living with two biological parents.

2. Stepfamilies will be associated with the most family perpetrated victimizations, given the interpersonal difficulties particularly characteristic of this family form. Single parent families will be associated with the most extrafamilial victimization, given economic and supervisory problems that may put their youth in more unsafe environments outside the household.

3. Stepfamilies will be most characterized by parent–child conflict and family problems and these factors will best explain higher victimization among stepfamilies. Single parent families will be most characterized by low parental monitoring, high residential mobility, and high local violence, and these factors will best explain elevated victimization among single parent families.

Method

Participants

This research is based on data from the Developmental Victimization Survey (DVS), designed to obtain prevalence estimates of a comprehensive range of childhood victimizations. The survey, using a random digit dial methodology, was conducted between December, 2002, and February, 2003, to assess the experiences of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 children, ages 10−17, living in the contiguous United States. Details concerning the sampling methodology and study procedures are reported elsewhere (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005).

One child, age 10 −17, was randomly selected from all eligible children living in a household by selecting the child with the most recent birthday. First, a short interview was conducted with the adult caregiver (usually a parent) who indicated being "most familiar with the child's daily routine and experiences," and then the target respondent was interviewed. Up to 13 callbacks were made to select and contact a respondent and up to 25 callbacks were made to complete the interview. Consent was obtained from both the parent and the child. Respondents were promised complete confidentiality and were paid $10 for their participation. The average length of the main interview was 45 minutes. Interviews were successfully completed with 79.5% of the eligible persons contacted.

The sample somewhat underrepresents the national proportion of Blacks and Hispanics, and as a result, using 2002 Census estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), we applied poststratification weights to adjust for race proportion differences between our sample and national statistics. We also applied weights to adjust for within household probability of selection given variation in the number of eligible children across households and the fact that the experiences of only one child per household were included in the study.

Measurement

Family structure. For the purpose of this research, family structure was defined by the current composition of the household. Specifically, three groups were constructed: (a) two biological parent families consisted of respondents living with two biological or adoptive parents, (b) single parent families comprised respondents living with one biological parent only (the majority of these were divorced parents while approximately 30% were never married); and (c) stepfamilies consisted of respondents living with one biological parent and a stepparent.

Because the social and interpersonal context within households containing unmarried partners may be substantively different from stepfamily households and because this group was too small to consider separately, respondents living with one parent and his or her "boyfriend or girlfriend" were dropped from the analyses. For the same reason, youth living with other relatives or foster parents were also excluded. In regression analyses, two biological parent families represent the comparison group.

Victimization. Measures of victimization exposure are based on items from the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), a recently constructed inventory of childhood victimization (Hamby, Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2004). The JVQ was designed to be a more comprehensive instrument than has typically been used in past research, providing a description of all the major forms of offenses against youth. Moreover, its use of simple language and behaviorally specific questions enables the JVQ to be used for self-report by children as young as age eight. The JVQ obtains reports on 34 forms of offenses against youth that cover five general areas of concern: Conventional Crime, Child Maltreatment, Peer and Sibling Victimization, Sexual Assault, and Witnessing and Indirect Victimization. Specific screener items reflecting the 34 types of events are presented in Appendix A. Follow-up questions for each screener item (not shown) gathered additional information needed to classify event types, including perpetrator characteristics, the use of a weapon, whether injury resulted, and whether the event occurred in conjunction with another screener event.

Dichotomous measures indicating whether respondents were exposed to any victimization within each of six categories (sexual victimization, child maltreatment, physical assault, peer/sibling victimization, property crime and witnessing/indirect victimization) were constructed. In addition, a summary measure of victimization was developed that assesses exposure to multiple forms of victimization across all 34 specific types. The Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ) has shown evidence of good test–retest reliability and construct validity across a wide spectrum of developmental stages (Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005).

Family problems. "Family problems" was assessed by a measure that includes five events and chronic stressors, each representing problems likely to be associated with parent's functioning. The respondent was asked to indicate whether each of the problems had occurred or was present at any point in his or her lifetime. Problems include parent imprisonment, parental unemployment, alcohol or substance abuse by family members, chronic parental arguing, and episode of homelessness. A summary count of exposure to family problems was constructed.

Parent-Child conflict. Parent-Child conflict was assessed with a single item that was obtained in the parent interview (and therefore from the parent's perspective). Parents responded to "How often do you have arguments or disagreements with your __ year old?" on a 5-point scale ranging from *never or almost never* to *very often*.

Parental monitoring. Parental monitoring was assessed with a summary score of three items where parents indicated the extent to which they agreed with the following statements: "I know who my __ year olds friends are."; "I know where he or she is when he or she is not home."; and "I know what my __ year old is doing when I'm not with him/her." Parents responded on 4 point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The reliability coefficient for the measure is .76.

Residential mobility. Residential mobility was based on the question: "How long has your __ year old been living in this particular residence?" To consider the relevance of residential mobility on victimization exposure with the last year, a dichotomous variable was constructed indicating whether the child had moved residences within the last 18 months (0 = *no*; 1 = *yes*).

Local violence. Local violence was constructed as a summary of two items that ask parents about violence in the respondent's school and neighborhood: "How much of a problem is violence in your __ year olds school?"; and "How much of a problem is violence in your __ year olds neighborhood?" Parents answer each item on a 4-point scale ranging from *big problem* to *not a problem at all*.

Sociodemographic factors. All demographic information was obtained in the initial parent interview, including the child's age (in years), number of siblings in the household, and race/ethnicity (coded into 4 groups: white nonHispanic, Black nonHispanic, Hispanic any race, and other nonHispanic race). Socioeconomic status (SES) was a composite based on the sum of the standardized household income and standardized parental education (parent with the highest education) scores, which was then restandardized. In cases where the data for one of the SES indices (most often income) was missing, the SES score is based on the standard score of the remaining index. In all regression analyses, gender is a dummy variable (*female* = 1) and white nonHispanic is the comparison group for race/ethnicity.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 reports demographic characteristics of the sample across the three types of families: children living with two biological parents, single parent families, and stepfamilies. Child's age, household income, and parent's education all significantly differ by family type. These differences indicate a need to consider these demographic factors in our final explanatory models that examine determinants of family structure variations in victimization. It is noteworthy that both components of our socioeconomic status (SES) measure—parent's education and household income—are significantly lower in single parent families than in both two parent families and stepfamilies. This finding supports the possibility that, as hypothesized, factors and conditions typically associated poverty may be most influential in the lives of children living with single parents.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics by Type of Family Structure (%)

	Two-Parent families	Single-Parent families	Stepfamilies
Child gender			
Male	50%	46%	51%
Female	50%	54%	49%
Child race*			
White	72%	40%	66%
Black	10%	33%	6%
Hispanic	13%	25%	25%
Other race	5%	2%	3%
Parental education*			
High school graduate and lower	22%	46%	35%
Some college/College graduate	54%	49%	51%
Post-Graduate	24%	5%	14%
HH income*			
<$20,000	6%	38%	6%
$20–$50,000	32%	41%	39%
Over $50,000	62%	21%	55%
Child age*			
10–13 years	47%	59%	47%
14–17 years	53%	41%	53%
n (unweighted)	641	196	125

*Values are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Variations in Victimization Across Family Types

First, we addressed the basic hypothesis that children living in single parent and stepfamilies will experience higher levels of recent victimization (past year) than children living with two biological parents. A series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to assess significant group differences between the three family structures on exposure to six specific categories of victimization (any sexual victimization, any physical assault, any property crime, any child maltreatment, any peer/siblings victimization, any witnessing or indirect victimization) and multiple victimization (exposure count across all 34 victimization types).

As shown in Table 2, significant group differences are evident for all victimization measures. Pairwise comparisons indicate that youth in stepfamilies were significantly more likely to experience any sexual victimization, any physical assault, any child maltreatment, and any peer/sibling victimization, than were children living in both single parent and biological two parent families. Single parent families and those with two biological parents did not differ significantly on exposure to these forms of victimization. However, youth in both single parent and stepfamilies were more likely to be exposed to property crimes and witnessing/indirect victimizations relative to those in traditional two parent families. It is important to note that this pattern was also evident when considering total exposure to all types of victimizations. Youth from both single parent and stepfamilies reported significantly greater exposure to multiple forms of victimization than did youth living with two biological parents.

Variations in Perpetrators Across Family Types

We also hypothesized that different conditions or characteristics within families and/or the external contexts surrounding families may create different risks of intrafamilial and extrafamilial victimization across the three family types. To address this question, we compared rates of victimization by any nonfamily perpetrator and rates of victimization by any family member across the three family forms. Data in the first row of Table 3 indicate that a significantly greater percentage of children in stepfamilies experienced at least one incident of victimization (any type of perpetrator), followed by children in single parent families, followed by those living with two biological parents ($p < .001$). All pairwise differences are significant. When comparing rates of nonfamily perpetrated victimizations (second row), youth in both single parent (74%) and stepfamilies (79%) had significantly higher rates than those residing with two biological parents (60%, $p < .001$). However, single parent and stepfamily rates did not significantly differ. When looking at rates of family perpetrated victimization (row 3), single parent and two biological parent families had almost identical rates (38.7% and 38.6%). In contrast, a substantially greater percentage of youth in stepfamilies (63%; $p < .001$) reported at least one incident of victimization by a family member.

In sum, our hypothesis that two parent families would have the lowest levels of extrafamilial victimization was confirmed. However, we did not find support for our expectation that youth in single parent families would be more likely to experience victimizations from extrafamilial perpetrators than youth in stepparent families. In contrast, our hypothesis that stepfamilies would have the highest rates of family perpetrated victimizations was clearly supported by the data.

Table 2
Mean Victimization Scores by Type of Family Structure

Victimization	Two-Parent families a.	Single-Parent families b.	Stepfamilies c.	p-value F statistic
Any sexual victimization	.12[c]	.14[c]	.21[ab]	$p < .05$ $F = 3.44$
Any child maltreatment	.13[c]	.19[c]	.37[ab]	$p < .001$ $F = 24.94$
Any physical assault	.50[c]	.55	.64[a]	$p < .05$ $F = 4.47$
Any peer/sibling victimization	.55[c]	.59[c]	.70[ab]	$p < .01$ $F = 5.21$
Any property crimes	.28[bc]	.37[a]	.43[a]	$p < .01$ $F = 7.41$
Any witnessing and indirect	.45[bc]	.57[a]	.62[a]	$p < .001$ $F = 9.33$
Total (multiple) victimization	2.43[bc]	3.16[a]	3.46[a]	$p < .001$ $F = 11.10$
n (unweighted)	641	196	125	

Note. Pairwise contrasts based on Least Significant Difference (L*SD*) tests.
[abc] Value is significantly different from value in column identified (a,b,c) at $p = .05$.

To further specify the source of greater family victimization in stepfamilies, we also calculated rates for specific family perpetrators. The bottom half of Table 3 reports the percentage of children in the sample reporting any victimization by a given type of family perpetrator. Striking differences across family structure were found in the percentage of youth reporting any victimization by a biological parent living in the household. Biological parents in traditional households showed similar rates of perpetration as single parents (7.0% vs. 8.5%, respectively). However, the percentage of youth victimized by biological parents in stepfamilies (18.1%) was significantly and substantially greater than in the other family types ($p < .001$).

In addition to the high rates of victimization by biological parents in stepfamilies, children in this family type also had additional (unique) exposure to victimization by stepparents. Specifically, almost 11% of youth reported at least one victimization incident by a stepparent. Moreover, an additional 6% of youth in stepfamilies reported at least one incident of victimization by a parent not living in the household—a rate similar to single parent families. The percent of youth reporting victimization by siblings was also significantly higher in stepfamilies (47.1%) than in either two parent (33.6%) or single parent families (34.2%, $p < .01$). This difference remained significant when controlling on number of siblings in the household (not

Table 3
Rates of Victimization (% of Children) by Child's Relationship to Perpetrator Across Types of Family Structure

Perpetrator	Two-Parent families a.	Single-Parent families b.	Stepfamilies c.	p-value Chi-square
Any victimization	71.4[bc]	77.9[ac]	86.2[ab]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 14.49$
Any nonfamily perpetrator	60.0[bc]	73.9[a]	79.0[a]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 25.84$
Any family perpetrator	38.6[c]	38.7[c]	63.0[ab]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 29.01$
Any biological parent in household	7.0[c]	8.5[c]	18.1[ab]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 17.24$
Stepparent in household	–	–	10.9	–
Any parent not in household	–	6.5	5.8	*ns*
Any sibling	33.6[c]	34.2[c]	47.1[ab]	$p < .01$ $chi^2 = 9.26$
n (unweighted)	641	196	125	

Note. Pairwise contrasts based on Least Significant Difference (L*SD*) tests.
[abc] Value is significantly different from value in column identified (a,b,c) at $p = .05$.

shown). Although we were unable to distinguish between biological siblings and step-siblings, this gives further evidence of greater within household risk of victimization among youth in stepfamilies.

In sum, the greater risk of family perpetrated victimization among youth in stepfamilies appears to arise from multiple sources. It is important to note that youth in stepfamilies were substantially more likely to be victimized by a biological parent than youth in other family forms. When we also consider the risk of victimization from stepparents and parents not in the home, it is clear that parents as a whole represented primary sources of victimization for youth in stepfamilies. Their greater likelihood of being victimized by siblings further added to the risk of victimization by intimate family members in this group.

Family Structure Variations in Victimization Predictors

We hypothesized that certain factors may represent mediators between family structure and victimization or possible predisposing contexts that contribute to both family structure and victimization exposure. As an initial step, we tested for differences in these factors across single-parent families, stepfamilies, and traditional two parent families. Specifically, a series of ANOVAS were performed to assess family structure differences on level of family problems, parent–child conflict, parental monitoring, and neighborhood violence. Results are shown in Table 4.

There are significant overall group differences on every factor except parent–child conflict. With respect to family problems, all three pairwise comparisons are significant, with stepfamilies having the highest level of family problems, followed by single parent families and, finally, traditional two-parent families. We note that, since it is possible that youth in stepfamilies are older on average than youth in other family forms and therefore may have had more time to accumulate lifetime adversities, we repeated these analyses controlling for age. The results (not shown) were almost identical to those presented in Table 4. Therefore, consistent with our hypotheses, family problems are highest in stepfamilies.

It is important to note that the significant family structure differences in parental monitoring run in the opposite direction than was hypothesized. Both single parents and parents in stepfamilies report greater monitoring of their children's activities than do parents in two-parent families. While it is not completely clear why these results emerged, it may reflect a tendency to increase monitoring in response to child victimization. Indeed, bivariate correlations (see Appendix B) show an unexpected positive relationship between level of parental monitoring and recent victimization. Thus, greater monitoring among single-parent and stepfamilies may be due to their higher levels of victimization and an association that flows causally from victimization to parental monitoring.

Contrary to our hypothesis, youth in stepfamilies are significantly more likely to have moved residences in the past 18 months than both single-parent ($p < .05$) and traditional two parent families ($p < .001$), supporting the notion that it is children in this family form (not single parent families) who are most likely to experience multiple transitions and household instability. In contrast, it is single parent households that are most likely to experience unsafe neighborhoods and schools. Consistent with our expectations, single parent families report substantially greater local violence, relative to both stepfamilies ($p < .001$) and traditional two parent families ($p < .001$).

Effects of Family Structure on Victimization: Explanatory Factors

Analyses presented thus far have supported our hypotheses that children in nontraditional family structures experience greater victimization and that there is some important variation across family structure in contextual factors that are likely to contribute to victimization exposure. The following analyses are intended to (a) assess the effects of nontraditional family structure on children's exposure to victimization, independent of other sociodemographic correlates, and (b) determine the extent to which the contextual factors (family problems, parental monitoring, residential mobility, and local violence) mediate or otherwise explain the association between family structure and victimization. Since parent–child conflict was unrelated to family structure and, therefore, no longer a candidate for a potential mediator, we excluded this variable from the multivariate analyses. Also, because our measure of multiple victimization represents the most inclusive indicator of

Table 4
Mean Scores on Contextual Factors by Type of Family Structure

Contextual factors	Two-Parent families a.	Single-Parent families b.	Stepfamilies c.	*P*-value (Pair-wise contrasts)
Family problems	$.47^{bc}$	$.90^{ac}$	1.28^{ab}	$p<.001$ $F = 44.82$
Parent-Child conflict	2.39	2.41	2.52	*ns*
Parental monitoring	4.12^{bc}	4.35^{a}	4.42^{a}	$p<.05$ $F = 3.86$
Local violence	3.22^{b}	3.77^{ac}	3.11^{b}	$p<.001$ $F = 16.28$
Residential mobility	$.070^{c}$	$.10^{c}$	$.17^{ab}$	$p<.01$ $F = 6.85$
n (unweighted)	641	196	125	

[abc] Value is significantly different from value in column identified (a,b,c) at $p = .05$.

victimization exposure and has been shown to have the greatest significance for child well-being (Finkelhor et al., 2007), analyses presented below focus exclusively on multiple victimization.

A comparison of the single parent and stepfamily coefficients across Models 1 and 2 of Table 5 shows the contribution of age, gender, race and socioeconomic status (SES) to each of these associations. Although both nontraditional family structures remained significant contributors to victimization, controlling for sociodemographic variables reduced the unstandardized coefficient (not shown) for single parent families by 25% while the coefficient for stepfamilies remained virtually unchanged. Thus, the significant negative association between victimization and SES and its positive association with age appear to explain one quarter of the higher victimization reported in single parent families (but not stepfamilies) relative to youth living with two biological parents.

In Models 3−6, the hypothesized mediators were entered separately to assess their individual contributions to each of the family structure-victimization associations. All of these contextual factors, except parental monitoring, were significantly associated with victimization, independent of demographic factors. However, they differed in their effects on the family structure coefficients. While family problems and local violence each reduced the single parent coefficient to nonsignificance, only family problems explained the stepfamily victimization association. In fact, none of the other mediators (when considered alone) reduced the stepfamily coefficient by more than 10%.

In Model 7, all contextual factors were considered simultaneously to assess their independent effects on victimization. In this model, demographic predictors of victimization (including family structure) were no longer significant. Only family problems and local violence remained significant independent predictors of victimization exposure. This final model explained 22% of the variance in exposure to multiple victimization over the past year.

In sum, we were able to fully explain the family structure victimization associations by accounting for the hypothesized mediators. Our expectation that family problems would best explain elevated victimization among youth in stepfamilies was supported. "Family problems" was both the strongest independent predictor of recent victimization and the only mediator that accounted for greater victimization in stepfamilies. While family problems also mediated the association among youth in single parent families, socioeconomic status and local violence also contributed to elevated victimization in single parent families.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine family structure variations in children's exposure to victimization and to uncover potential sources of increased risk for youth in nontraditional family forms. Earlier findings based on this same data set have demonstrated the negative effects of victimization on children's mental health. In particular, multiple victimization

Table 5
The Effect of Family Structure, Sociodemographic Factors, and Hypothesized Predictors on Multiple Victimization: Standardized Regression Coefficients

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Single parent[b]	.106**	.081*	.076*	.068	.078*	.039	.027
	(.033)	(.037)	(.037)	(.036)	(.036)	(.034)	(.034)
Stepfamily[b]	.129***	.126***	.125***	.136***	.117***	.015	.018
	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.031)	(.031)
Gender (female = 1)		−.038	−.035	−.035	−.039	−.048	−.044
		(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.029)	(.029)
Age		.143***	.126***	.120***	.146***	.087**	.057
		(.032)	(.033)	(.032)	(.032)	(.030)	(.030)
Black[a]		.04	.039	.023	.046	.024	.010
		(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.035)	(.032)	(.032)
Hispanic[a]		.013	.014	−.010	.016	−.030	−.048
		(.034)	(.034)	(.034)	(.034)	(.031)	(.031)
Other race[a]		−.020	−.018	−.009	−.017	−.024	−.013
		(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.032)	(.030)	(.029)
Socioeconomic status		−.073*	−.068†	−.047	−.066†	−.017	.012
		(.036)	(.036)	(.036)	(.035)	(.033)	(.033)
Number of siblings in HH		.021	.020	−.002	.019	.066*	.043
		(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.030)	(.031)
Parental monitoring			.046				.051
			(.033)				(.030)
Local violence				.160***			.128***
				(.034)			(.031)
Residential mobility					.080*		.055
					(032)		(.029)
Family problems						.421***	.410***
						(.031)	(.031)
R^2	.022	.052	.052	.074	.059	.205	.220

Note. Standardized *SE* are in parentheses; $N = 961$.
[a] Comparison group = white non Hispanic. [b] Comparison group = two biological/adoptive parents.
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

(i.e., experiencing several forms of victimization) within the past year was related to substantially elevated symptoms of depression, anxiety, and anger/aggression in this nationally representative sample of youth (Finkelhor et al., 2007). Given the significance of victimization for child well-being, identifying and explaining sources of variation in victimization experiences remains an important research objective.

Findings of the current research clearly confirmed our supposition that youth in single parent families and in stepfamilies experience greater victimization than do youth residing with both biological parents. Elevated victimization in these nontraditional families was evident both when considering the likelihood of any type of victimization in the past year and with respect to the level of victimization across multiple types. However, our results also indicated that risk of victimization is not equivalent in single parent and stepfamilies. As shown in Table 2, youth in stepfamilies reported the greatest exposure to several individual forms of victimization, including child maltreatment, sexual victimization, physical assault, and peer/sibling victimization.

The perpetrators of victimization also appear to differ by family type. Consistent with our hypotheses, youth in stepfamilies were at substantially greater risk for victimization at the hands of family members, compared to youth in either two parent or single parent families. For youth in stepfamilies, elevated risk of family victimization arose from multiple sources within the household: biological parents, siblings, and stepparents. However, contrary to our prediction that nonfamily perpetrated victimizations would be greatest in single parent families, the elevated rates of extrafamilial victimization did not significantly differ between single parent and stepfamilies.

Although our findings indicated that single parent families and stepfamilies share many of the same risk factors for victimization, there is some suggestion in these data that the mediating or predisposing processes vary somewhat for these two family forms. In support of our prediction, elevated victimization among children in single parent families appears to be more strongly related to their lower SES and residence in more violent neighborhoods and schools. This is consistent with the specific types of victimization experienced by these youth, such as property crimes and witnessing violence to others, and points to unsafe environmental contexts as the possible cause. This is also consistent with perpetrator data showing an elevated rate of victimization by nonfamily perpetrators among single parent families, but a rate of family victimization similar to that of two parent families.

For youth in stepfamilies, the higher rates of victimization appear most related to family problems. Youth in stepfamilies scored significantly higher on our family problems measure than did youth in other family structures and this is the only contextual factor that statistically accounts for their substantially higher levels of victimization. Given the relevance of family problems for stepfamilies, we believed it important to further specify the types of problems that are elevated in these families. This more detailed analysis of individual items in the family problems measure showed that, while none of the problems applied to the majority, stepfamilies had particularly high rates of parental imprisonment compared to other families, in addition to elevated rates of parental unemployment, family drug/alcohol problems, and chronic parental arguing (see Appendix C). These problems appear to represent markers of parental dysfunction, and this is consistent with our findings showing high rates of victimization by parents in stepfamilies. Greater child maltreatment among youth in stepfamilies also points to the significance of caregivers as perpetrators and the link between parental dysfunction and child victimization.

Issues and Questions for Future Research

The elevated levels of problems among parents in stepfamilies and their significance for child victimization suggest a need for further research into the processes that underlie these associations. Relatively high levels of parental dysfunction in stepfamilies may be based on a complex mix of stressful family conditions, the outcomes of stepfamily formation, and the selection into stepfamilies of parents with problems. For example, disagreements about family roles and expectations, lack of support from relatives, and unresolved conflicts in past relationships may create especially stressful family conditions. Children, themselves, can also contribute to these problems in stepfamilies, showing disapproval or hostility toward their parent's marriage or engaging in delinquent or antisocial behaviors that may elicit parental retaliation. In the context of such adversity, biological parents in stepfamilies may find themselves acting in particularly authoritarian or aggressive ways, since they are responsible for "keeping the peace" between their children and new family members. Thus, parent's attempts to cope with stressful family problems while managing resistant children may increase the risk of child victimization in stepfamilies.

Social selection may also be operating to bring more parents with problems into stepfamilies. Difficulties in parental functioning, as indexed by problems such as alcohol or drug use, psychiatric disorder, or parental imprisonment, can both select respondents into stepfamilies (by leading to initial parental divorce and subsequent remarriage) and contribute to child victimization. For example, single parents experiencing high levels of parenting stress may seek a partner to help control difficult children. Individuals who have difficulties holding down a job may remarry in an attempt to ease financial burdens. Parents with low social competence yet high dependency needs may pursue remarriage as a way to resolve personal problems. In any of these examples, the greater family problems in stepfamilies would reflect preexisting characteristics of parents that may also contribute to child victimization. Of course, such "preexisting" characteristics are likely to have been shaped by past social and structural conditions, including past exposure to poverty and their own history of child victimization. Indeed, women who experience violence as children or adolescence are more likely to partner with violent men (Desai, Arias, Thompson, & Basiles, 2002; Renner & Slack, 2006), experience marital problems and divorce (Widom, 1999), and rely on aggressive strategies in dealing with their own children (Coohey & Braun, 1997; Merrill, Hervig, & Milner, 1996).

Implications for Prevention

It is important to note that our analysis suggests that it is not family structure in itself that produces more victimization.

Because other variables were able to fully account for the family structure differences in victimization rates, it means that certain social contexts that occur with differential frequency across family structure increase the risk for child victimization. Thus, prevention strategies are likely to be most successful when they target risk factors for victimization (such as parental dysfunction, dangerous neighborhoods, or family adversity histories) regardless of family structure. However, that does not mean that we should ignore family type in planning prevention strategies. Because family structure is a highly visible marker and associated with elevated risk, intervention efforts to reduce child victimization would benefit from considering single parent families and, especially, stepfamilies as target groups.

While the individual, family, and situational contexts that increase risk for child victimization are likely to apply to children in all family types, the analysis presented here suggests the possibility of tailoring prevention strategies differently for stepparent and single parent families. If one goal of a differential strategy was to minimize the effect of dysfunctional parenting in stepfamilies, strategies involving counseling and parenting education around the time of stepfamily formation may be most effective. Civil authorities, religious institutions, and schools might help identify reconstituting families and work to provide counseling and education that might help to protect children. State child protection agencies may also wish to train specialists and develop specialized materials for advising and counseling stepfamilies.

Our analyses suggest a somewhat different emphasis for protecting children in single parent families. To the extent that children in these families are at special risk from extrafamilial perpetrators, dangerous neighborhoods and violent schools, then providing single parent families with housing and financial options that allow them to escape such environments may offer the greatest protection. While many current social policies around divorce attempt to do just this through such mechanisms as improving child support collections, the ultimate strategy is to make the schools and communities where such families reside safer.

Certainly intervention efforts to reduce parental dysfunction and to increase the safety of communities and schools would benefit children in all types of families. However, to the extent that different family structures tend to also differ in the most salient risk factors for victimization, a costs and benefit analysis may favor creating more targeted interventions for single parent and stepfamilies. Clearly, more research and consultation with prevention specialists is needed to better understand the strategic utility of the family structure differences uncovered in this study.

Study Limitations

As with most studies that seek information on child victimization, there is clear potential for selection bias whereby the most at-risk families may be the least likely to participate. Yet, despite this potential, the levels of child victimization reported in our survey are striking. Our findings indicate that almost 75% of the sample as a whole reported at least one victimization in the last year and the average number of victimizations was over 2.5. Clearly, children are willing to report a significant amount of victimization.

Another possible sampling limitation is our inability to obtain participants in households with no landline telephone. On the one hand, this may underrepresent low-income respondents who have no phone service at all and who, on average, may have higher victimization risk. On the other hand, respondents who have no landline because they rely exclusively on cell phone use tend to be young single adults (The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2006) who would have been less likely to be eligible for our study. Although we applied poststratification weights to adjust sample proportion by race, it is important to remember that nonEnglish speaking respondents are not represented in our sample. We also did not assess variations in victimization across other family forms, such as foster family arrangements, children who reside with relatives, or youth who live with an unmarried parent and a cohabiting partner. The great diversity and complexity of American families requires a more detailed examination of how family structures and contexts influence risks for child victimization.

A final limitation is the restricted set of characteristics of families and contexts that we were able to measure. For example, there may be family structure variations in the frequency of unwanted, unplanned, or closely spaced children that contribute to differences in child victimization. Thus, victimization differences across family structure may be a function of other unmeasured characteristics—personality, parental victimization history, early family contexts and choices—that are the true risk factors for victimization and the most appropriate targets for intervention. Caution should therefore be observed in interpreting the findings, and future studies should assess family structure and family problems with a more complete inventory of contributing factors.

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Appendix A

Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ)

Conventional Crime Screeners

1) In the last year, did anyone use force to take something away from you that you were carrying or wearing?

2) In the last year, did anyone steal something from you and never give it back? Things like a backpack, money, watch, clothing, bike, stereo, or anything else?

3) In the last year, did anyone break or ruin any of your things on purpose?

4) Sometimes people are attacked WITH sticks, rocks, guns, knives, or other things that would hurt. In the last year, did anyone hit or attack you on purpose WITH an object or weapon? Somewhere like: at home, at school, at a store, in a car, on the street, or anywhere else?

5) In the last year, did anyone hit or attack you WITHOUT using an object or weapon?

6) In the last year, did someone start to attack you, but for some reason, it didn't happen? For example, someone helped you or you got away?

7) When a person is kidnapped, it means they were made to go somewhere, like into a car, by someone who they thought might hurt them. In the past year, has anyone tried to kidnap you?

8) In the past year, have you been hit or attacked because of your skin color, religion, or where your family comes from? Because of a physical problem you have? Or because someone said you are gay?

Child Maltreatment Screeners

9) Not including spanking on your bottom, in the last year, did a grown-up in your life hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?

10) In the last year (since [month] when you were [age/grade]), did you get scared or feel really bad because grown-ups called you names, said mean things to you, or said they didn't want you?

11) When someone is neglected, it means that the grown-ups in their life didn't take care of them the way they should. They might not get them enough food, take them to the doctor when they are sick, or make sure they have a safe place to stay. In the last year, did you get neglected?

12) Sometimes a family fights over where a child should live. In the last year, did a parent take, keep, or hide you to stop you from being with another parent?

Peer and Sibling Victimization Screeners

13) Sometimes groups of kids or gangs attack people. In the last year (since [month] when you were [age/grade]), did a group of kids or a gang hit, jump, or attack you?

14) In the last year, did any kid, even a brother or sister, hit you? Somewhere like: at home, at school, out playing, in a store, or anywhere else?

15) In the last year, did any kids try to hurt your private parts on purpose by hitting or kicking you there?

Appendixes continue

16) In the last year, did any kids, even a brother or sister, pick on you by chasing or grabbing your hair or clothes or by making you do something you didn't want to do?

17) In the last year, did you get scared or feel really bad because kids were calling you names, saying mean things to you, or saying they didn't want you around?

18) In the last year, did a boyfriend or girlfriend or anyone you went on a date with slap or hit you? (Only asked of children age 12 and older).

Sexual Assault Screeners

19) In the last year, did a *grown-up you know* touch your private parts when you didn't want it or make you touch their private parts? Or did a *grown-up you know* force you to have sex?

20) In the last year, did a grown-up you did *not* know touch your private parts when you didn't want it, make you touch their private parts or force you to have sex?

21) Now think about kids your age, like from school, a boy friend or girl friend, or even a brother or sister. In the last year, did another child or teen make you do sexual things?

22) In the last year, did anyone TRY to force you to have sex, that is, sexual intercourse of any kind, even if it didn't happen?

23) In the last year, did anyone make you look at their private parts by using force or surprise, or by "flashing" you?

24) In the last year, did anyone hurt your feelings by saying or writing something sexual about you or your body?

25) In the last year, did you do sexual things with anyone 18 or older, even things you both wanted? (Only asked of children age 12 and older).

Witnessing and Indirect Victimizations Screeners

26) In the last year, did you SEE one of your parents get hit by another parent, or their boyfriend or girlfriend? How about slapped, punched, or beat up?

27) In the last year, did you SEE your parent hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt your brothers or sisters, not including a spanking on the bottom?

28) In the last year, in real life, did you *see* anyone get attacked on purpose WITH a stick, rock, gun, knife, or other thing that would hurt? Somewhere like: at home, at school, at a store, in a car, on the street, or anywhere else?

29) In the last year, in real life, did you *see* anyone get attacked or hit on purpose WITHOUT using a stick, rock, gun, knife, or something that would hurt?

30) In the last year, did anyone steal some thing from your house that belongs to your family or someone you live with? Things like a TV, stereo, car, or anything else?

31) When a person is murdered, it means someone killed them on purpose. In the past year, has anyone close to you, like in your family, a friend, or neighbor, been murdered?

32) In the past year, have you *seen* someone murdered in real life? This means not on TV, video games, or in the movies?

33) In the past year, have you been in a place in real life where you could see or hear people being shot, bombs going off, or street riots?

34) In the past year, have you been in the middle of a war where you could hear real fighting?

Appendix B

Correlations Among Family Structure Variables, Hypothesized Predictors, and Victimization

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Multiple victimization	1															
2. Gender (*female* = 1)	−.05	1														
3. Age	.14**	−.02	1													
4. Black	.04	−.03	−.04	1												
5. Hispanic	.04	.05	−.02	.20**	1											
6. Other race	−.03	−.06	−.04	.09**	.09**	1										
7. Socioeconomic status	−.11**	−.02	.05	.25**	.15**	−.01	1									
8. Number of siblings in HH	.02	.05	−.08*	.11**	.10**	.02	−.03	1								
9. Parent-Child conflict	.15**	.01	−.05	−.05	.08*	.01	.02	−.03	1							
10. Parental monitoring	.09**	−.04	.18**	.16**	.04	.06	.13**	.06*	.15**	1						
11. Local violence	.19**	−.03	.11*	.17**	.17**	−.07*	.26**	.15**	.12**	.18**	1					
12. Residential mobility	.07*	.02	−.03	.01	.01	−.04	.09**	.03	.06	.01	−.03	1				
13. Family problems	.43**	.01	.13**	.02	.14**	−.03	.19**	−.08*	.08**	.03	.09**	.10**	1			
14. Two parent family	−.15**	−.02	.08*	.16**	.15**	.07*	.34**	−.02	−.03	.09**	.10**	.10**	.27**	1		
15. Stepfamily	.11**	−.01	.01	.10**	.08*	.01	.01	.08*	.04	.06	−.07*	.11**	.24**	−.56**	1	
16. Single parent	.08*	.04	−.09*	.28**	.11**	−.07*	.39**	−.05	.00	.05	.18**	.03	.11**	−.70**	−.21**	1
Mean	2.7	.50	13.6	.16	.17	.04	−.06	1.6	2.4	4.2	3.3	.10	.69	.66	.14	.20
SD	2.8	.50	2.2	.37	.38	.19	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.5	1.3	.30	1.0	.48	.35	.40

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Appendix C

Rates of Specific Family Problems (% of Children) by Family Type

Family problems	Two-Parent families a.	Single-Parent families b.	Stepfamilies c.	*p*-value (chi-square)
Homelessness	1.6[b]	7.5[a]	3.6	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 18.4$
Parental unemployment	12.9[bc]	21.0[a]	29.9[a]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 26.1$
Parental imprisonment	4.9[bc]	13.6[ac]	27.5[ab]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 69.8$
Family drug/alcohol problem	11.4[bc]	21.6[a]	29.2[a]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 32.2$
Chronic parental arguing	16.5[bc]	26.9[ac]	39.1[ab]	$p < .001$ $chi^2 = 37.6$
n (unweighted)	641	196	125	

Note. Pairwise contrasts based on Least Significant Difference (L*SD*) tests.
[abc] Value is significantly different from value in column identified (a,b,c) at $p = .05$.

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