

**THE DETERMINANTS OF ADOLESCENTS' WILLINGNESS
TO ACCEPT A STEPFATHER'S AUTHORITY**

BY

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**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

It is hypothesized that an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority is related to factors such as the level of the stepfather's acknowledgement/rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional role of biological father, the degree of clarity of the stepfather's role in the stepfamily, the stepfather and the biological mother's parenting styles, and challenges to the parental role of the stepfather. Family triads, consisting of a biological mother, stepfather, and a child aged 12 through 18 were selected from two populations: those stepfamilies whose adolescent is willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority (group A) as determined by the Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale, and those stepfamilies whose adolescent is less than willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority (group NA). There were 10 cases in each group. Methods used included questionnaires and personal interviews. Findings revealed that the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority increases with higher stepfather role clarity, the biological mother's use of an authoritative parenting style, and, lower levels of stepfather role challenges. The level of the stepfather's acknowledgement/rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional role of biological father was not related to the adolescent's acceptance of the stepfather's authority. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the stepfather's use of an adjunctive parenting style was not found to be related to the adolescent's acceptance of the stepfather's authority.

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Chapter I INQUIRY INTO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many families experience difficulty in obtaining their adolescents' compliance with parental authority. In stepfamilies this routine difficulty is compounded by the fact that a new adult figure, the stepparent, may also seek such compliance.

Difficulty in negotiating the boundaries of authority is perhaps the most pivotal problem confronted by stepfamilies (Visser and Visser, 1979; Kompara, 1980; Lutz, 1983; Knaub, 1984; Crosbie-Burnett, 1988; Panneton, 1992).¹ The central questions are: 1) who is responsible for the establishment and enforcement of family rules, and further, 2) which family's rules are applicable. During the early stages of familial reorganization and formation, adolescents, biological parents, and stepparents struggle with uncertainty about the legitimate role of the stepparent, making his/her² position and authority open to question.

While there is a growing body of research on adolescents' willingness to accept a stepfather's authority, most of this work has been dominated either by clinical studies or survey research. Clinical studies emphasize the inherently problematic nature of stepfamily relationships by focusing on the pathological elements of stepfamily parenting practices in stepfamilies that have sought clinical advice (Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Kelley, 1992). Survey research has based conclusions on the responses of a single family member while using a deficit-comparison model

¹ Authority refers to that form of power which directs or articulates the actions of others through commands which are effective because those who are commanded regard those commands as legitimate (Mitchell, 1968). Legitimacy is the belief concerning the rightfulness of the institutional system through which the authority is exercised (Mitchell, 1968).

² This study is only concerned with stepfathers, as explained on page 4.

which assumes that step-relationships function at a deficit compared with relationships in natal families (Ganong and Coleman, 1986, 1994; Orleans et al., 1989; Robinson, 1984; Esses and Campbell, 1984). These studies have been based upon the use of natal families as comparison groups and the application of norms used to define natal family relationships. More recently, scholars have begun to pay attention to the strengths of stepfamily parenting (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Orleans et al., 1989; Kelley, 1992). While this shift in focus adds an important new dimension to our approach to stepfamily parenting, it remains an underdeveloped area of research.

Researchers have come to recognize several key sources of strain on adolescents' willingness to accept a stepfather's authority. Differences in stepfamilies have been noted in: 1) the level of the stepfather's rejection rather than acceptance of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional role of father (Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Kirk, 1984; Bray et al., 1987). This refers to the degree to which stepfathers acknowledge or reject a distinction between their need to achieve parental status and the largely ascribed status of a biological father; 2) the degree of clarity in the stepfather role (Cherlin, 1978; Messinger, 1976; Bohannon, 1970; Visser and Visser, 1988, 1990; Hobart, 1988; Schwebel et al., 1991; Booth and Edwards, 1992; Brown et al, 1990); 3) the degree of discontinuity in parenting styles between natal family and stepfamily (Baumrind, 1971; Buri et al, 1988; Fine and Kurdek, 1992). This refers to those significant changes to the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the child as he/she has moved from a natal family to a single parent family to a stepfamily; and 4) challenges to the parental role of the stepfather (Becker et al., 1977; White and Booth, 1985; Ihinger-Tallman,

1988; Crosbie-Burnett, 1988; Clingempeel et al., 1984). This refers to the degree of consensus negotiated between the stepfather, biological mother and adolescent regarding the parental role of the stepfather. However, the nature, extent and prevalence of inconsistencies in stepfamily members' attitudes toward these sources of strain can only be understood through a comparison of their responses. Furthermore, a comprehensive framework of adolescents' willingness to accept stepfathers' authority must incorporate a comparison of stepfamilies who are not drawn from a clinical population.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of several sources of strain on adolescents' willingness to accept their stepfathers' authority. The sources of strain include: 1) the level of the stepfather's acknowledgement/rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional role of biological father; 2) the degree of clarity of the stepfather's role in the stepfamily; 3) the degree of discontinuity in parenting styles; and 4) challenges to the parental role of the stepfather. This study assumes that an adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority is not unidimensional nor can it be predicted by merely knowing the opinions of an individual family member. Rather, we can only begin to understand it by way of systematic comparison of responses regarding each source of strain by each of the stepfamily's key actors: the adolescent, the biological mother and the stepfather. Furthermore, it is assumed that parents may develop particular strengths in parenting practices which facilitate a more positive relationship not only with their adolescent but with other family members both within

and external to the stepfamily. These strengths can be best delineated by the removal of bias in stepfamily selection for study. Hence, stepfamilies in this study are drawn from a nonclinical population.

While all stepparents confront similar situations as they adapt to their position within a stepfamily, stepmothers are faced with additional expectations unique to the stepmother role (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). For example, the mother is generally accorded the role of nurturer within the family; fathers may expect their new partner to immediately assume responsibility for this role upon entry into the stepfamily (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). However, this study concerns itself with stepfathers because not only do stepfathers make-up the statistical majority of all stepparents as a result of the outcome of most child custody arrangements (Cherlin, 1991). They are also usually expected by their partners to assume at least partial responsibility for disciplining their stepchildren.

The decision to focus this thesis on adolescents is based on the assumption that adolescents experience more difficulty than do younger children with accepting a stepfather's authority (Lutz, 1983; Heatherington et al., 1989; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989). Young children who have greater physical and emotional dependence on adults may quickly accept a stepfather's discipline. On the other hand, teenagers who are preoccupied with changing sexuality, schoolwork, friends and sports are typically straining to break free of adult control. They often choose to adhere to parental discipline out of fear, or love and respect, both of which the stepfather initially has little claim.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Clinical Assessments of Stepfamily Parenting

Most of the research conducted on stepfamilies has been developed by a community of applied clinicians which include psychiatrists, social workers and clinical psychologists. Clinicians have had the tendency to base their views on volunteers or individuals, couples and families encountering intrapersonal and interpersonal difficulties and have selectively focused on the pathological elements of stepfamily parenting practices (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Little emphasis has been placed on the strengths of stepfamily parenting. Furthermore, according to Chilman (1983):

The specialists in this field have not drawn on similar clinical literature that presents observations of parents and their children in unhappy first marriages. Nor have these specialists explored in depth the clinical literature concerning never married parenthood or single parenthood after divorce, separation or death. All in all, life may be better in the long run for some children who live in reconstituted families than for those who live in other, more customary family forms (159).

1. Stepfamily Integration

a. Clinical Impressions of Stepfamily Integration

The clinical literature suggests that parenting problems stem from the inability of adults involved in stepfamily relationships to be both flexible and creative in adapting to the added complexity created by stepchildren with more than two parenting figures in their lives. Unlike unions that become natal families over time as children are born, stepfamilies are in large measure “instant” families. In order for adults and children to have their needs met in a newly

formed stepfamily they have to integrate these relationships into a workable whole (Visher and Visher, 1988, 1991).

The clinical argument for the need to integrate rests on the following assumptions:

- 1) There is an implication that the stepfamily, not unlike the natal family, is goal-oriented toward intimacy and inclusion. This argument assumes that the family is designed to fulfil the same needs in all people. Furthermore, the stepfamily structure is considered pathological (Minuchin, 1974) due to its inability to provide instant integration because of the ambiguities and uncertainties in each member's mutual relationships. Family structure refers to a clear organization of roles whereby rights, duties and responsibilities are reciprocated between pairs of individuals (Walker and Messinger, 1979).
- 2) The remarried couple is expected to direct their newly formed family toward integration by outlining a new structure within the stepfamily.
- 3) There is a sense of urgency to create structure since it is assumed that stepfamily relationships will suffer without a high level of integration. This argument implies that an increase in the number of adult figures involved with the life of a child hinders integration.

b. Positive Strategies in Stepfamily Integration

The clinical literature also suggests methods by which stepfamilies can integrate:

- 1) The drive to immediately create a new family structure conflicts with the necessity to develop a relationship between all of the actors. Unlike the largely ascriptive status definitions between adults and children in natal families, step relationships are cultivated through

interaction. In this process, mutual respect for the status assigned to stepfamily roles is achieved. Studies have shown that such respect often takes three to four years to develop (Stern, 1978). Examples have also been cited where the stepfather-stepchild relationship may become less positive over time as a result of early deliberate attempts to establish definitive father-child relationships within the new family unit (Bray et al., 1987).

2) There is a body of evidence to suggest that the remarried couple is not completely responsible for the type nor level of integration which does develop in the stepfamily. In Whitesett and Land's study (1992), for example, stepparents reported that they were not sure what would be involved in being a stepparent and that they were not sure of either their spouse's or their stepchildren's expectations for them in the stepparenting role. This problem may be particularly acute for stepfathers because the paternal role, in general, is less well defined than the maternal role causing stepfathers to look to their wives and children for parenting cues (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Heatherington and Clingempeel (1992) found that after initial attempts to form a positive relationship with the stepchild and to enhance integration of the new family unit, the offer of attention was often not accepted and as a result many stepfathers became disengaged from their stepchildren. Rather than adults creating change in the children's behaviour, it was the children who shaped the stepfathers' behaviour (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

3) Clinicians' observations of stepfamilies where children have more than two parental figures in their lives have a built-in bias as a result of the self-selectivity in their sample. Clinicians have argued that many of their clients are parents who carry resentful feelings from their past

marriage as well as the divorce process and allow these feelings to influence the communication between all the actors involved with the stepfamily (Ahrons and Wallisch, 1987). These parents and often their new spouses tend to compete with the nonresidential biological parent by either parallel parenting (ex-partners mutually excluding each other from their parenting practices with their child) rather than co-parenting, or by an outright attempt to prevent contact with the child. Clinicians using this type of research population are not in a position, however, to observe the potentially positive impacts of several responsible adults on the lives of children. Step-relationships may add new dimensions to a child's world by broadening his/her cultural expectations. There is not only increased exposure to a variety of behaviour patterns, values and lifestyles, but additionally, there is the potential for new activities, additional social supports and further sources of identification (Skolnick, 1992; Knox and Schact, 1991). Wallerstein and Kelly's study (1980) shows that the nonresidential biological parent does not necessarily lose his or her place to the stepparent, even if the stepparent becomes an important figure in the child's life. Another study found that grandparents through remarriage frequently extended their time and energies to their step-grandchildren (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1985). These relationships add to, rather than diminish, the children's kinship network.

2. Communication

a. Clinical Findings of Communication Skills Within Stepfamilies

By virtue of the increased number of people and relationships within stepfamilies there is a demand for clear communication between members in order for adults to parent effectively.

This added complexity of familial relationships places a greater reliance on family members' creativity in problem-solving and communication skills (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

Stepfamily members are often considered by clinicians to argue more amongst themselves than members of natal families. In addition to the strains that confront every family that has children, stepfamilies must deal with unique strains associated with their family form. Issues found to create most disagreement revolve around marital dissatisfaction on the part of the remarried couple (White and Booth, 1985) and disciplinary issues related to the children's behaviour (Messinger, 1976).

Clinicians have found that remarried couples often possess ineffective conflict resolution and problem-solving skills and are more coercive toward each other than couples in first marriages (Bray et al., 1987). This is believed to be due to the fact that partners are often chosen because they can meet pragmatic needs, (i.e. parenting and financial), and not primarily to meet intellectual or intimate needs. Factors, such as low self-esteem and fear of conflict (Ganong and Coleman, 1994) have been identified and attributed to their poor communication skills.

Communication between stepparent and stepchild is often strained as a result of contradictory messages concerning stepparents' rights and obligations to the stepchildren. Traditionally, fathers are the family advisors and disciplinarians. In stepfamilies, stepfathers frequently begin with unrealistic notions of being a "miracle worker"; someone who can blend two families together seamlessly so that they act and react as an integrated family team (Papernow, 1987). Consequently stepparents may try too hard and employ an authoritarian parenting style which involves the use of punitive measures in an attempt to gain compliance.

When this approach fails, stepfathers are more likely to retreat and engage in a more permissive parenting style. At this point, adolescents in particular may become "aware of their increased power and act more provocatively toward their stepparents" (Hobart, 1988:182), thus adding to and perpetuating the conflict.

The relationship between the residential biological parent and child is also thought to deteriorate as a result of the formation of a stepfamily. Children may not only have felt a sense of betrayal with the dissolution of their natal family but may feel a double betrayal with the remarriage of either parent. Unhappy children often seek to manipulate their parents and stepparents as a way of expressing their hurt, anger, fear and dependency needs (Visher and Visher, 1979). Often this manipulation is in service of an attempt to dissolve the remarriage and re-unite the biological parents. The guilt, anxiety and insecurity of residential biological parents make them vulnerable to these manipulations. Second, the newlyweds may be so focused on their relationship that they overlook the needs and feelings of their children (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). Clinical observers speculate that newly remarried mothers tend to become more authoritarian in their disciplinary practices with their child (Bray et al., 1987). In an attempt to re-establish order and control within the family and compensate for the stepfather's permissive parenting style, mothers tend to use stern, dogmatic control without explaining the reasons for their discipline.

While these must be recognized as real problems, it must be noted that not all stepfamilies will face all of them, nor will they necessarily be overwhelmed by them.

b. Positive Strategies in Stepfamily Communication

Evidence from other studies contradicts these clinical findings. Furstenburg and Spanier (1979) found that remarried women were more receptive to controversy within the stepfamily and were less submissive to their new partner than women in their first marriage, while remarried men were more accommodating to their new partner's wishes. In Keshet's (1988) research, communication in second marriages was found to be more open with the partners having greater skills in talking about their relationship and issues which involved the stepfamily. Furthermore, the marital conflict which did occur was expected and was more easily accommodated. Another study found that functional stepfamilies were more able to reach agreement over family disputes than functional first marriage families (Anderson and White, 1986). This shows a tolerance for accommodating the wishes of others and flexibility in conflict resolution contributed to a greater ability to compromise individual desires. In Brown et al's. (1990) research, remarried couples in therapy and remarried couples not in therapy obtained higher scores on communication and problem-solving skills scores than the sample of couples in their first marriage.

Since clinicians tend to view remarriage as a defensive response to divorce and single parenthood rather than a positive end in itself, it is no surprise that the focus of their work is on the pathological elements of these relationships. It seems equally plausible, however, that many stepfamilies have fulfilling relationships. Individuals entering a stepfamily relationship are on average 10 to 12 years older than those marrying for the first time (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Their previous experiences provides them with insight into the nature of relationships

not available to many first married couples. Such insight leads to the growth of a more realistic attitude toward marriage and family (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1979), greater maturity (many of those who remarry were teenagers when they first married) (Ganong and Coleman, 1994) and ability to compromise (Anderson and White, 1986). Although divorce rates among remarriage couples slightly exceeds those of first married couples (Ganong and Coleman, 1994), it has been speculated that the majority of divorces in remarriage families involve complex stepfamilies where both partners have children residing with them (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Furthermore, in many instances, Ganong and Coleman (1994) indicate one or more of these partners may have been previously divorced on more than one occasion. This suggests that some individuals are more prone to end a marriage through divorce than others, and it is this factor that contributes to the higher divorce rate.

While considerable emphasis has been placed on the tenuous relationship between stepfather and child, the role of the residential biological parent in directing this relationship has been minimized. The extent to which stepfathers are able to effectively communicate with their stepchildren is also closely linked with their ability to communicate with their partner. This spill-over effect in communication processes was found to have a positive impact on stepfamily functioning (Kelley, 1992). Research indicates that residential mothers who took the lead in providing discipline by using an authoritative parenting style, wherein explanations were given for the new family's rules, were able to foster a higher level of success in stepfamily cohesion (Fine and Kurdek, 1992). In Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett's study (1989), the majority of residential mothers had more power in decision making on both major and everyday decisions

than did stepfathers and adolescents. In only 12% of the families studied, did stepfamilies report that adolescents had equal or greater power than parents.

Evidence suggests that those stepfamilies where the adolescent had equal or greater power than the parents, were simply continuing a pattern of interaction which existed prior to the formation of the stepfamily (Fine and Kurdek, 1992; Ganong and Coleman, 1994). When natal families dissolved some mothers coped by granting more power and authority to their children. This approach sometimes had negative consequences, such as increased numbers of challenges and breakdowns in communication (Messinger, 1976). Upon the creation of the stepfamily, some of these mothers now expected their new partners to assert some parenting control.

Continuity in parenting style, such that the biological parent remains the source of the authority, means that the child faces less adjustment with the introduction of a new adult in his/her life. Anderson and White's study (1986) supported these findings by suggesting that mother-child alliances were stronger in stepfather households as a consequence of the biological mother determining the interaction patterns between the child and parental figures. The biological mother in functional stepfamilies maintained the pre-existing relationship with her child and negotiated her new partner's parental rights to the extent that he would support and maintain the disciplinary measures as already established. According to Kelley (1992), children and parents in stepfamilies have ties that precede the new marriage that need to remain strong. Biological parents of successful stepfamily relationships maintained these ties with their children and made it the basis upon which the new partner would establish a relationship with the children.

3. Role Clarity

a. Clinical Findings of the Stepfather Role

The clinical literature identifies some of the circumstances which can create difficulties for the stepfather role. The number of actors within stepfamilies contributes to problems in parenting as a result of the complexity added by differing expectations over the performance of the stepparent role. These differences reflect competing agendas in remarried families (Visser and Visser, 1991). Ganong and Coleman (1994) state:

In first marriage families the couple brings expectations to marriage that are based partly on observations and experiences in their families of origin and partly on cultural expectations regarding marriage. Later, as they become parents, they again draw on personal experiences they had while growing up and cultural expectations to guide their behaviours in the roles of parents. In remarried families, adults bring expectations based not only on family experiences observed while growing up but also on adult experiences in prior marital/parental/family situations. Children also bring expectations, as do former spouses ...(133).

In his article, "Remarriage as an Incomplete Institution", Cherlin (1978) argues that remarried families after divorce have more difficulties than natal families because they lack institutionalized guidelines and support to help them solve their family problems. He further concludes that the absence of guidelines and norms for role performance contributes to greater stress and inappropriate solutions to problems with stepfamily members.

A lack of clarity in the stepfathers' role produces confrontations between stepfamily members. Often these confrontations take the form of coalitions between the children, biological parent and stepfather within the stepfamily household. (Visser and Visser, 1978a).

These interactional patterns often involve children attempting to gain their mother's support to resist the stepfather's requests. These requests develop around issues of discipline and nurturance whereby the stepfather's authority is not recognized and nurturant behaviour not reciprocated by the child.

Papernow's (1993) developmental model situates the source of stepfather's conflicting expectations in role performance within the biological mother's hopes of finding a better partner and also a better parent than the previous spouse. During the "fantasy stage", the stepfather attempts to meet these expectations and hopes to be appreciated for the efforts. If the mother remarried because she required assistance in parenting her children, the stepfather would immediately attempt to parent his stepchildren. Clinicians have pointed out that the stepfather's response to parenting, given the lack of consensus in role performance, arouses resistance in stepchildren and partner (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). While he may attempt to develop a strong bond with the child, adolescents may not be receptive to a nurturing stepparent. Such resistance stems from the fear of being disloyal to their biological father if they warm up to the stepparent. Furthermore, stepfathers may often lack experience in bonding with children. Stepfathers may attempt to engage in age-inappropriate activities or expect more emotional responsiveness than is developmentally normal (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

Stepfathers may also be unaware of the need to bond with the child before undertaking the role of disciplinarian (Furstenberg et. al., 1987). When the child's animosity rather than receptivity to these gestures becomes apparent, the stepfather may begin to withdraw from interacting with the child and the quality of their communication deteriorates. Adolescents, in

particular, have been shown to resent an adult figure who has yet to develop a relationship with them tell them what to do (Kirk, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Visser and Visser, 1991). At this point, mother and stepfather may begin to view their mutual relationship with the children differently. Stepfathers tend to view their partner as being too lenient with the children; the mother, in turn, believes her new partner is too harsh and does not understand the children well.

The relationship of the former spouse with the stepfamily may also serve to complicate the role performance of the stepfather. Clinicians suggest stepfather role clarity is impaired regardless of the quality of the former spouse's relationship with the newly formed family. Ex-partners who retain mutual respect for each other as people and parents and are able to maintain flexible parenting arrangements often continue to share together many of the rituals of the married family (Ahrons and Wallisch, 1987). Stepfathers sharing in such a relationship may feel threatened by the closeness of his new partner with her ex-spouse. The openness and flexibility of boundaries maintained by the divorced couple is often perceived as an invasion of privacy. Furthermore, any attempt by the stepfather to change the routines and family rituals (e.g., extended family gatherings) may be challenged by the children (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Children may attempt to disrupt the remarriage in order to re-unite their parents. This may be particularly appealing given the nature of their cooperative relationship. Jealousy related conflicts are likely to occur between the mother and stepfather and cause loyalty conflicts for the children.

Ex-partners may also carry the bitter, resentful feelings about the past marriage and the divorce process into their new marriage (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Custodial mothers may as a result attempt to punish the father by limiting his access to the children, and the father may retaliate by withholding child support. Furthermore, children are, on occasion, used to maintain the antagonism between their parents. The noncustodial parent may make damaging statements to the children about the stepparent in an attempt to upset the ex-spouse. Likewise, the custodial parent may use the children to convey damning information to the noncustodial parent. It is difficult for stepfathers to enter such a volatile situation because of loyalty conflicts on the part of children and the poor communication between ex-partners (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Accommodating the child's movements between the two households may become particularly taxing, especially for the stepfather since he has entered a situation which was already in progress upon his arrival. Stepfathers may feel that their lives are being controlled by people they do not like or know. While these antagonisms continue it becomes increasingly difficult for the stepparent and child to develop any kind of positive relationship. The stepfather may also come to resent the amount of time and emotional energy his new partner spends arguing with her ex-partner (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

b. Success in Achieving Role Clarity

The role of the residential biological mother as the primary authority figure in the adolescent's life is pivotal to the success of the stepfather achieving role clarity (Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Kelley, 1992). If the mother is responsive to her children by incorporating their past relationships into the creation of the new family form she may facilitate the successful

negotiation of the stepfather's status. The nature of the type and level of bonding between adolescent and stepfather and the extent to which the stepfather is an authority in the lives of his stepchildren is determined by the communication between the biological parent, her new partner and her children. The stepfather's cooperation in serving the interests of the child, (i.e., the decision to empathize with the child's feelings) has been shown to be an important factor in stepfamily success (Kelley, 1992; Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987; Visher and Visher, 1991). Stepfathers who cooperate rather than compete with their partners in the exercise of parental authority have been found to more quickly establish a positive relationship with their stepchildren (Kelley, 1992). Brown et. al. (1990) found differences between stepfamilies in the extent to which stepfathers received unequal levels of support in their parental role from their partner. The principal distinction between these stepfamilies was the presence or absence of child-focused problems. Children in stepfamilies receiving therapy for child-focused problems were far more likely to perceive their mother as less supportive of her new partner's relationship with them than children in stepfamilies not receiving therapy (support was measured by the frequency of conflict between the remarriage partners). Stepfamilies in therapy for child-focused problems had more instances of open conflict between the mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the child than those stepfamilies not in therapy. There was little difference between these stepfamilies in the amount of interaction between the stepfather and child. What did differ, however, was the extent to which the stepfather attempted prematurely to both demand affection and respect from the child and assume a parenting role.

For the stepfather, the development of a successful relationship with the adolescent is best secured by taking on a role which supports the parental initiatives of his partner. His relationship with her children does not begin as parent but as an adult source of friendship (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Stepparents in Kelley's study (1992) suggested that the development of mutual respect between stepfather and children was far more important than affection or the implementation of an authoritative relationship. The stepfather's authority should extend only to the point of supporting those practices already in place (Fine and Kurdek, 1992). These practices should not be authoritarian or permissive but rather provide for an adjunctive extension of the biological mother's parental role (Fine and Kurdek, 1992). Such a relationship minimizes the extent to which the child's and stepfather's expectations conflict, and further, removes the potential for conflict in his new partner's roles. Rather than forcing his partner to choose between supporting his need to become a parental authority or protecting her children from the influence of a new adult figure in their lives, the stepfather is in a position to enhance the interaction between others both within and outside the stepfamily, and, in so doing, constructs his own positive relationship with his stepchildren and his partner.

Although little research has been conducted on former spouse relationships in remarried families (Ambert, 1986; Ahrons and Wallisch, 1987), the fact that the new partners have been seeing each other on average for one year and that the majority of remarried couples reside together before marriage (Ganong and Coleman, 1994), probably means that stepfathers have a strong level of awareness regarding their new partner and her children's involvement with the non-residential biological parent prior to their decision to join the family. Contrary to clinical

studies which suggest stepfathers have the desire to change this relationship by taking control through the process of closing the boundaries between the two families, evidence indicates that stepfathers in higher functioning stepfamilies expend great amounts of energy in facilitating the movement of children and adults between families (Kelley, 1992). Kelley states, "these families do have permeable boundaries, with more people moving in and out of the family and the sharing of parents and grandparents" (584). In this case, stepfather role clarity revolved around the wish to distinguish the stepfather relationship with the child and husband-wife relationship with his new partner from that of the biological father's relationship to his child and the relationship between ex-partners. Stepfathers in Kelley's study (1992) "stressed the importance of celebrating holidays together while acknowledging the need to make adjustments to accommodate other schedules. Similarly, plans for vacations and special trips may need to be modified to accommodate the plans of other parents" (584). Even in relationships between ex-partners where communication was strained because of child related issues, the stepfather distinguished his role from the role of parent by not entering the dispute. By empathizing with the child, the stepfather may serve as a neutral go-between for the child and his/her biological parents (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

The decision to distinguish the stepfather role from the role of biological father minimizes the amount of disruption due to conflicting behavioural expectations from the members of the stepfamily. Furthermore, this decision alleviates the demands on any individual adult to make decisions related to child rearing. When responsible adults from current and past relationships are able to communicate effectively for the good of the child they can share to some degree the

financial, legal, emotional, and child-rearing rights and responsibilities for the children. This role clarification enables the child to identify with several caring adults.

B. Survey Research on Stepfamily Parenting

During the past decade, social scientists using survey research methods have begun to explore stepfamily dynamics in greater depth. Survey research has had the tendency to adopt the clinical focus of analysing inherent parenting problems within stepfamilies by studying variables most often selected for pragmatic rather than theoretical purposes. (Ganong and Coleman, 1986, 1994; Orleans et. al., 1989; Robinson, 1984). For example, the use of samples from the general population, rather than a stepparent population which is difficult to locate, often determines the choice of variables to be measured and compared between family types (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Additionally, many of the results of survey research have been based on the responses of a single family member. Finally, survey research has used a deficit-comparison model wherein stepfamily parenting practices are compared with natal families on several variables. The variables selected are believed to indicate healthy functioning in natal families, and differences are viewed as problematic and suggestive of poor functioning (Kelley, 1992). Results have been contradictory (Robinson, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1986).

1. The Use and Misuse of Natal Family Scales in the Measurement of Stepfamily Relationships

Survey research on stepfamilies has utilized scales designed to measure relationships in natal families (Esses and Campbell, 1984), including: the Olson's circumplex model (Pink and Wampler, 1985; Smith, 1992), McCubbin's double ABCX model of family stress (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a), Family Environment Scale (Brown et.al., 1990), and Beaver and Hampson's Family Systems Model (Kelley, 1992). While researchers have tended to assume that normative standards prevail across family forms, recent findings suggest measures of positive functioning in natal families are not necessarily generalizable to remarried families. For example, clinicians have identified cohesion as an important variable in successful parenting in remarried families. According to Visher and Visher (1988) the view that stepfamilies are less cohesive and need more permeable boundaries has prevailed. Cohesion has until recent times, however, only been addressed in nonempirical reports (Esses and Campbell, 1984). Smith (1991) applied Olson et. al.'s (1986) circumplex model to measure both cohesion and adaptability in a random sample of 68 remarried families. The circumplex model was designed to measure the extent to which parents and children in natal families are functioning in a healthy manner. Positive functioning is measured on two dimensions: 1) family cohesion (connectedness, ranging on a continuum from disengagement to enmeshment) and 2) adaptability (flexibility, ranging from rigid to chaotic). This model hypothesizes that a curvilinear relationship exists between adequate family functioning and the dimension of cohesion. Scores falling at either extreme are associated with family dysfunction.

Smith (1991) hypothesized that the stepparent cohesion scores would fall at the extreme of disengagement because, unlike the biological parent, initially there is no existing emotional bond with children. However, cohesion scores showed no significant differences between stepparent and biological parent.

Smith's (1991) study also hypothesized that cohesion levels in remarried families would be lower than those in natal families. The hypothesis was supported with respect to remarried families with adolescent children at the time of remarriage but not for other remarried families. In an earlier study, however, Olson et. al. (1986) found significantly lower levels of cohesion in natal families with adolescents than those without adolescents. It is entirely possible that it is the presence of adolescents within the family that makes the difference in family cohesion scores, not the fact that the family is remarried.

A third hypothesis in Smith's (1991) study indicated that the more complex the stepfamily structure the lower the cohesion level. That is, the need for increased flexibility due to the involvement of many people permeating the boundaries between family households would decrease the connectedness between remarried family members. This hypothesis was not supported. Smith suggested that successful remarried families handle stressors without their cohesion being seriously affected. Smith found that "successful" remarried families were better able to handle the potential stress of a more complex family structure regardless of how long they had been in a remarried family.

The Beaver and Hampson's (1990) family systems model has also identified dimensions of healthy family functioning. This model, like the circumplex model, was designed to measure

healthy relationships in natal families. However, it assesses family functioning on a linear continuum using more variables than the circumplex model. Family health is measured along the following dimensions: structure (how the family organizes itself), mythology (beliefs about the family, negotiation (problem solving), autonomy (allowing for individual differences to be expressed), and affect (range of feeling and conflict).

In Kelley's study (1992), Beaver and Hampson's model was used in an attempt to achieve two goals: to measure its appropriateness for assessing stepfamily functioning, and to assess its ability to differentiate between stepfamilies receiving and not receiving therapy. Fourteen stepfamilies were recruited through media advertisements who defined themselves as well-functioning. Six other stepfamilies who were receiving family counselling were recruited from family agencies. Only husbands and wives were asked to respond to questions on the self-report. The following subscales were included; conflict, cohesion, expressiveness and leadership. Additionally, trained observers videotaped a series of open-ended interviews which included all household members of the stepfamily.

Kelley found significant differences in overall health between the two groups of stepfamilies. The validity of these results, however, is questionable because of the problems associated with the use of statistical analysis on a small sample. Kelley found that all stepfamilies in her study were more cohesive in general than were natal families. Stepfamilies' mean scores for cohesion were higher than natal families' mean scores. While this finding runs contrary to clinical impressions, a content analysis of the video tapes showed that all these stepfamilies did have permeable boundaries, with more people moving in and out of the family and the sharing of

parents and grandparents. Cohesion was maintained by the partners' flexibility in adapting to schedules that enabled stepfamily members to meet on planned occasions. The most surprising finding was that all families in the sample were relatively healthy as measured by each of the subscales. All scores were in the mid to upper range on the health competence scale. The component of this research which contributed the most to our understanding of the strengths in stepfamily relationships was the use of a qualitative component to help form an interpretive framework for the quantitative findings. The qualitative analysis was based on 20 stepfamilies, all of whom were functioning relatively well, rather than focusing on two groups of stepfamilies with different levels of functioning.

2. Findings Based on Single Family Member Responses

Survey research findings have frequently relied on self-report survey responses of one family member because of the relative ease of collecting a large amount of such data. Ganong and Coleman (1984) conducted a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on stepfamily relationships and found: (a) the tendency to collect self-report data from a single respondent, usually the child (30 studies); (b) a reliance on surveys, with data only gathered once from each respondent (34 studies); (c) use of one method of gathering data (34 studies); and (d) the use of nonprobability sampling techniques (30 studies). The authors suggests that the dearth of multivariable-multimethod studies, and of studies obtaining responses from multiple family members is a major weakness of this research (Esses and Campbell, 1984; Robinson, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1984).

Inconsistencies in the reported findings have been attributed to these methodological shortcomings. These methods of assessment have unique flaws (Robinson, 1984). Two of the most cited empirical studies were conducted by Bowerman and Irish (1962) and Duberman (1973). Bowerman and Irish analyzed questionnaires completed by over 2000 stepchildren in junior and senior high schools. On almost every scale, the results were contradictory to the findings of Duberman. Bowerman and Irish characterized step-relationships as stressful, lacking affection and being less cohesive than relationships in natal families. Duberman studied a random sample of 88 remarried couples. Responses were obtained from the biological parent and stepparent. In contrast to Bowerman and Irish's findings, 64% reported excellent relationships. In comparing the outcome of different routes to remarriage Duberman found successful relationships were more likely to occur when previous marriages ended in the death of a spouse rather than divorce. Bowerman and Irish found the opposite; children were better adjusted toward stepparents when previous marriages ended in divorce.

Recent studies which have utilized self-report responses of one family member have also revealed inconclusive results in their findings, and researchers have stressed the need for multiple respondents to validate conclusions (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Ganong and Coleman, 1986; Kelley, 1992). Some studies have found that stepfamilies have more problems unique to their family structure than natal families (Wallerstein, 1985; White and Booth, 1985; Lutz, 1983; Schwebel, 1991; Elliott, 1991), yet other studies suggest little difference in marital satisfaction or family adjustment (Claxton et. al., 1992; Fine and Kurdek, 1992; Smith, 1991) and increased satisfaction in stepfamily couples (Kurdek, 1989).

The main design weakness in these studies stems from the practice of eliciting information from only one family member, usually a parent or child, but not both. Results tend to be biased due to conclusions which are based upon the stepfamily member whose responses are being studied. Because of differences in position within the stepfamily, motivation toward forming new relationships, and beliefs regarding the nature of the relationships, it is likely that perceptions of children and parents are different. Responses to such issues can be best understood within the context of the world view of all actors in this triadic (biological parent, stepparent, child) relationship.

Other problems unique to written assessments include: (a) a degree of uncertainty as to whether or not respondents actually behave in accordance with what they reported; (b) the problem that respondents must be old enough to read and write in order to participate in self-assessment studies; (c) age differences imply different levels of comprehension, and the instrument used must reflect this (Robinson, 1984). Clearly, in order to overcome these difficulties and provide a level of methodological uniformity, studies of stepfamily relationships must incorporate a multimethod and multivariable approach, operationalized in a fashion that can be easily comprehended by all respondents.

C. Rationale for the Hypotheses of the Study

1. Rejection of Difference Between the Stepfather Role and the Biological Father Role

The relationship of an adolescent with his/her stepfamily is different from the relationship with his/her birth family. The creation of a stepfamily results in the need to create an identity which makes sense of the fact that the adolescent's genealogical location has been disrupted by the remarriage of at least one of his/her biological parents. Thus, the adolescent must make sense of the reality that he/she has been removed from the continuity of the genetic and cultural stream of his/her birth family and placed into another family where at least one member has a different genetic and cultural constitution. The biological parents must display some understanding of this fact and be willing to take it into account as a basis for constructing the socio-cultural order of the newly constituted family.

Rejection rather than acknowledgement³ of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional role of father has been identified as one factor associated with discipline problems between adolescents and stepfathers (Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Kirk, 1984; Bray et al., 1987; Crosbie-Burnett, 1988; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Heatherington et al., 1982). These differences reflect the distinction between the largely ascriptive social relationship between a biological father and his child and the achieved social

³ Kirk (1984) distinguished acknowledgement of difference from rejection of difference in the adoptive parent role from the biological parent role in recognition of the fact that the child has additional, special needs, problems, questions and is willing to be supportive. Stepparents who acknowledge this difference not only inform the child of the nature of their relationship but often ritualize, (i.e., celebrate) the formation of their new family. Stepparents who reject this difference tend to deny any difference exists between their relationship with the child and the biological parents' relationship with the child.

relationship between a stepfather and his child. Subjective differences refer to the routine presence of love in the relationship between a biological father and his child in contrast to the stepfather's need to intentionally develop this affection with the child. Objective differences refer to the biological father's largely unchallenged legitimacy as disciplinarian toward his child in contrast to the stepfather's need to achieve and cultivate such legitimacy, which may always remain tenuous.

Stepfathers who adopt a rejection of difference approach to stepfamily life attempt to re-create the image of the nuclear family by rejecting the idea that stepfamily kinship is different to natal kinship (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Stepfathers may fail to make allowance for (or understand) the fact that there is a real problem for the child who may feel that compliance with their wishes is an act of betrayal toward his/her biological father, or that the child is angry and confused and happy to punish the stepfather who may be perceived as a cause of the dissolution of his/her family of origin. Through the use of this strategy, the stepfather attempts to suppress the need to create an alternate identity as stepfather in relation to the child and immediately assumes the role of parent to his wife's adolescent children. Men sometimes take this responsibility seriously and attempt to move quickly into the role of head of household and to assume the authority traditionally accorded this role (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Heatherington et al., 1982).

The adoption of this strategy places the stepfather in a precarious situation because it creates a framework which generates tensions and leads to both distorted or inadequate interpretations of his relationship with the adolescent. Consequently, the stepfather may fail (especially with

the adolescent child) to build a basis for working out some agreement between himself and his stepchildren which will help them to learn how to deal constructively with the anger, fear, frustration and other volatile emotions which stem from the dissolution of the children's first family. Messinger (1976) found that it requires approximately three years for stepfathers to develop affectionate relationships with stepchildren. It is during this time that many stepfathers assume the parenting responsibilities of disciplinarian and decision-maker (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). Anxieties occur as a result of their fear of being compared unfavourably with the children's biological father. Consequently, stepfathers may feel insecure and adopt a stern and rigid disciplinary stance toward their stepchildren (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980).

Confrontations may also arise as a result of the adolescent's questioning of the legitimacy of the stepfather as an authority figure (Crosbie-Burnett, 1988). Research shows that such demands may lead to challenges which result in power struggles between the adolescent and stepfather. The most destructive consequences of these challenges are decreased interaction between the stepfather and the adolescent (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989), the early removal of the adolescent from the home (White and Booth, 1985), and slightly higher rates of divorce than first marriage families (White and Booth, 1985; Becker et al., 1977).

2. Fruitful Leads in the Literature

a. Acknowledgement of Difference Between the Stepfather Role and the Biological Father Role

The literature review has, to this point, primarily indicated the weaknesses of many clinical studies and survey studies in research on stepfamily relationships. Furthermore, patterns of stepfamily behaviour detrimental to the formation of a healthy relationship between adolescent and stepfather have been thus far emphasized. But there are also some positive contributions that flow from this research.

Several promising leads will now be explored which will assist in the formulation of hypotheses. When stepfathers acknowledge that both subjective and objective differences do exist between their role and the conventional role of father, the special issues involved with stepfamily relationships are more easily included in the daily conversations of all stepfamily members. That is, the parameters of the stepfather's relationship to the children with regard to the right to give and receive affection, to give guidance and support, and to discipline, is determined in a process of negotiation among the family members rather than being assumed, imposed, or taken for granted. These stepfathers are more frequently called upon by their stepchildren to help establish their identity in the complicated dual family situation (Kirk, 1984). These stepfathers also discuss with adolescents, in a positive manner, what step-relationships mean to them. As stepfathers, they are sensitive to their children's need to reflect on their relationship with their biological father; they acknowledge the importance of celebrating holidays together, while acknowledging the need to accommodate other schedules; and they

are cognizant of the need to create occasions within the culture of the stepfamily to remind each family member of the reality of their status as a stepfamily (Kirk, 1984; Kelley, 1992).

Stepfathers who have adopted this approach report fewer discipline problems with their adolescent stepchildren (Kelley, 1992). According to Visher and Visher (1988), these stepfathers are more inclined to agree that it is important to reach a consensus with the biological mother with respect to the nature and extent of their authority over the adolescent before dealing with matters of discipline. Furthermore, these stepfathers are more prepared to explain the logic of joint decisions to their adolescent and allow for the possibility of challenge. According to Kelley (1992), a prominent factor found in healthy stepfamily functioning is the level of energy that stepfathers expended in negotiating their status as an authority figure to their teenage stepchildren. Kirk (1984) suggests that parents who adopt this strategy are better able to take the role of their stepchildren and empathize with the child as he/she manages the strains and challenges associated with this special family status. In Kelley's study (1992), stepfathers from nonclinical families monitored their stepchildren's behaviour during the first two years of marriage without actively making demands on them. Only after respect had developed in their relationship did stepfathers begin to take a more active role in the sharing of discipline. In order to further explore and probe the validity of this claim in the literature, this study therefore hypothesizes that:

(1) In stepfamilies where the stepfather acknowledges that subjective and objective differences do exist between his role and the conventional father role, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

b. Ambiguity of Stepfather Role

The role⁴ of stepfather is ambiguous because few cultural norms exist for sharing the duties of parenthood with the biological parent. What, precisely, is the role of the stepparent? What if the stepfather and his new spouse differ on definitions of appropriate behaviour for the adolescent? A questioning of the legitimacy of the stepfather's authority can arise when the adolescent, biological mother, and stepfather have differing expectations about the role of the stepparent (Visher and Visher, 1978a, 1978b; Bohannon and Erickson, 1978; Bray et al., 1987; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989; Brown et al., 1990; Lauer and Lauer, 1991).

During the formation of a remarried family, adolescents and stepfathers experience role ambiguity in their expectations of, and feelings toward, one another (Whitesett and Land, 1992). The mother may also experience uncertainty with regard to her new spouse's relationship to her children (Bird and Melville, 1994). Issues arise about which areas, and to what extent, she will allow her new partner to exercise authority over her children. Many mothers in Crosbie-Burnett's study (1989b) concluded that they, not the stepfather, should have major responsibility. The stepfather's expectations, alternatively, may have been established by traditional social custom and often reinforced by childhood experience and/or previous marital experience (Walker and Messinger, 1979), and will include role behaviour traditionally ascribed to the parent role.

Clarity of the stepfather role must be achieved through negotiation among members of the new family (Bird and Melville, 1994). This effort requires time and a tolerant willingness to

⁴ Roles are clusters of rights and obligations in reciprocal relations between pairs of individuals and the patterns of expected behaviour associated with these rights and obligations (Walker and Messinger, 1979).

discuss concerns about the initiation of an affectionate relationship with the stepchild, the initiation of disciplinary practices, and an ability to compromise individual expectations. The stepfather who acknowledges the adolescent's reluctance and his wife's ambivalence about his parental role, and is then able to step back and finally proceed with caution to establish some kind of consensus, has a better chance of providing the level of love, support and guidance needed by the children (Bird and Melville, 1994). This study therefore hypothesizes that:

(2) In stepfamilies where the stepfather has established or received greater role clarity, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

c. Changing Parental Styles

By the time a remarried family is created, the adolescent child may have been confronted with a minimum of three different parenting styles: (1) the parenting styles of his/her natal parents; (2) the parenting style of a single parent; and (3) the parenting styles of his/her parent and stepparent. Different parenting styles represent significant changes to the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of the child. Rapid changes and transitions in parenting style have been shown to be related to discipline problems in stepfamilies with adolescent children (Bray et al., 1987; Fine and Kurdek, 1992). Following the disruption of the natal family, all members experience a degree of difficulty adapting to the separation. Custodial parent and adolescent may become more tightly bound together and interdependent, particularly when the absentee parent has little contact with the family (Walker and Messinger, 1979). For the adolescent, this change represents a modification to the authority he/she has always known. Under these

circumstances, adolescents are frequently given more independence as a result of assuming additional family responsibilities (Schwebel et al., 1991). Consequently, the entrance of a stepfather into a family after remarriage poses a potential threat to the adolescent's independence when the stepfather undertakes the role of parent and establishes new disciplinary practices. The stepfather may assume the role of disciplinarian as a consequence of his own cultural expectations of the role of father or as a result of the other parent's desire to establish an increased level of order and structure into the family unit (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Bray et al., 1987; Papernow, 1987; Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a).

How does a stepfather negotiate with a child who no longer takes his/her conformity for granted? In such situations, stepfathers may employ one of several styles to achieve parental authority. Parental styles employed in first marriage families include authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting (Buri et al., 1988). Permissive parents tend to be warm toward their children, are nondemanding, noncontrolling, and are less likely than other parents to punish their children. Authoritarian parents expect unquestioning obedience as they attempt to control their children's behaviour, often through the use of punitive disciplinary measures. Authoritative parents are characterized as firm, clear and relatively demanding in their dealings with their children, but this authority tends to be moderated by a rational, flexible, and communicative mode of parenting.

The most successful parenting strategy used by stepfathers to legitimize their authority is adjunctive parenting (Fine and Kurdek, 1992). Here, stepfathers develop a warm, involved and communicative relationship with their adolescent stepchildren (Heatherington et al., 1982; Bray

et al., 1987; Kelley, 1992; Fine and Kurdek, 1992). Bray et al. (1987) describe such stepfathers as being neither detached nor immediately overinvolved. Adjunctive parenting describes stepfathers' behaviours that support the parent who has assumed primary responsibility for childrearing. Bray et al. (1987), and Heatherington et al. (1985) found that stepfathers who enforced but did not set rules to be followed, while the biological mother assumed an authoritative and active role of disciplinarian, had more positive relationships with stepchildren. This study therefore hypothesizes that:

- (3) In stepfamilies where the stepfather employs an adjunctive parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority; and
- (4) In stepfamilies where the biological mother employs an authoritative parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

d. Challenges to the Parental Role of the Stepfather

Normative ambiguity in stepfamily relationships gives rise to the potential for confusion with respect to appropriate parenting practices. Family members, both within and external to the stepfamily, may object to the disciplinary practices of the stepfather, and alternatively, he may object to the disciplinary practices of his partner. Challenges to the parental expectations of the stepfather tend to undermine the authority of his relationship with the adolescent family member (Visser and Visser, 1977, 1989; Heatherington et al., 1982; Crosbie- Burnett, 1988; Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987). The most severe internal challenge occurs when the biological mother objects to her new partner's style of discipline used on her child (Robinson

and Barret, 1986; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a). The stepfather's use of authoritarian parenting accompanied with punitive forms of punishment are often reflected in parents' concerns. For example, mothers in Crosbie-Burnett's study (1987) shared the sentiment that there is no worse feeling than to "watch him exert discipline..., crack down..., (and) exert power..." (1071).

The internal challenge to the stepfather's authority becomes even more complex when the stepfather also has children from a previous marriage living in the household. The possibility of disagreement about childrearing practices can increase substantially as the family unit becomes more complex (Heatherington et al., 1982; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a). If one parent is entirely in charge of setting and enforcing the rules for their biological children, the possibility exists that different rules for different sets of children may develop (Davidson and Moore, 1992).

The stepfather's authority over the adolescent is undermined when he questions the parenting practices of his spouse, particularly if his actions undermine the adolescent's independence. Frequently, divorced mothers and their adolescent children become involved in a coercive relationship (Heatherington et al., 1982; Heatherington et al., 1985). Divorced mothers and their adolescents in Heatherington et al's study (1982) were often engaged in power struggles. These struggles predominantly revolved around a conflict between the mothers' desire to protect their adolescents from the disruptive effects of divorce and the need to discipline their adolescents. Stepfathers in the same study often expressed dissatisfaction with the mother's protective control over the child and their wish to help the mother "get a handle on that kid".

The adult's history in parenting also tends to confound what is to be considered appropriate discipline. Ihinger-Tallman. (1988) found that parents with more previous experience in child

rearing may criticize the practices that the other partner uses with his/her own children. This finding is consistent with those of Crosbie-Burnett (1989a) who found that husbands with no prior fathering experience were less assertive about parental leadership for themselves or their new wives. She concluded that "the experience of prior fathering may be a resource that stepfathers bring to remarriages, thus increasing their parental power as perceived by mothers" (1073).

The stepfather's authority over the adolescent family member can be challenged by the objections of other birth relatives toward his parenting practices. Because children are able to expand the remarriage family's boundaries to include past and present extended family members, they may end up serving as messengers back and forth between custodial and non-custodial parents (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987). Since adolescents may not be well-acquainted with the stepfather at the time of remarriage, the biological father and his parents (grandparents) may give unwelcome input concerning the stepfather's disciplinary measures (Davidson and Moore, 1992). Such input can serve to legitimize the adolescent's feelings of loyalty toward members of the birth family and subject the authority of the stepfather to disrepute. Despite this tendency, research indicates that custodial mothers do make an effort to maintain the bonds between children and their paternal grandparents (Cherlin and Furstenburg, 1986). Ihinger-Tallman (1988) found that the recognition of such bonds may serve to mediate the negative influence which accompanies the flow of information into, and out of, families related through a child. This study therefore hypothesizes that:

(5) In stepfamilies where the stepfather experiences the fewest number of challenges from family members about his parental role, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

This review of the literature has assisted in the formulation of the research problem for this study which is an investigation into the effect of a series of sources of strain in stepfamilies which may affect the willingness of an adolescent to accept the authority of a stepfather.

Chapter II RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 SUBJECTS

Family triads, consisting of a birth mother, stepfather, and a child aged 12 through 18 years were selected from two populations: those stepfamilies whose adolescent is willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority (A group) as determined by the Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale (to be discussed later in this chapter), and those stepfamilies whose adolescent is less than willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority (NA group). There were 10 A-group and 10 NA-group families included in this study.

Families were drawn from Winnipeg and Saint Pierre, Manitoba. Nineteen of the 20 families were drawn from the use of a snow-ball sampling technique involving family referrals. One family responded to a referral from a Family Services Information Centre. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and took place in each family's home. Each family was visited at least twice.

All the mothers and stepfathers in the study were married or living together for at least six months. Adolescents lived at least half-time in the stepfamily for at least six months of each year. In addition, all adolescents had made contact with their biological father during the past year.

2.2 DATA GATHERING

A. Data Collection

The snowball sample began with 3 referrals from family acquaintances. Two of the 3 referrals consented to participate in the study. Members of these families provided the names and phone numbers of friends, relatives and work companions whose family characteristics matched those sought in this study. These people were then contacted; only one family consented to participate. This pattern of low acceptance continued up to the point where 50 phone calls produced a sample of 5 families. Acceptance rates increased substantially when members of those families who referred the names of others contacted these individuals and garnered their consent to participate. Confirmation of these families' willingness to participate was established with a telephone call.

After written consent from each adult and assent from the adolescent was obtained (see Appendix B for consent and assent forms), each of the 20 families was interviewed on at least 2 occasions; two families were interviewed on 3 occasions due to difficulty establishing a time where all 3 family members were home together. Each participant provided written approval or disapproval of their conversations being tape-recorded. All participants approved of having their conversations recorded. Participants were told that the research involved the study of stepfather relationships within stepfamilies. They were also told that they could ask for question clarification and stop completing the questionnaire at any time.

During the first visit, questionnaires were filled out by each participant; each provided their responses in separate rooms. This was then followed by a brief interview designed to clarify my

motives in conducting this research. The interview was concluded by establishing an appointment for the second interview. During the second visit, I began by interviewing the adolescent separately. I then met with the adults who responded to my questions in the presence of their partner only. Each parent concluded their conversation before the other began to participate. Following the interview with each adult, all three were invited to attend a round table conference where I could further probe the patterns that were established from the details of their individual responses. The interview was concluded with a debriefing as to the exact nature of the study. When requested, and when all parties consented, findings based upon the measurements of each individual family's responses were described and possible explanations of these findings were then discussed.

B. Development of Questionnaire

This research seeks to gather information from three respondents in order to improve on the weakness of past research, and consequently there were three versions of the questionnaire. I first provide a general review of the stepfather version, and then proceed to a more detailed discussion of the various subscales and their different versions.

1) Background Characteristics

These characteristics can be found on page 143. The intent of gathering information on background characteristics was to create a context for interpreting the results of this study.

2) Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale

The items included in this subscale can be found in the Appendices, page 145. The extent to which an adolescent is willing to accept a stepfather's authority has most recently been measured in terms of the relative power of stepfamily members with respect to both major and everyday decision-making (Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a). Aspects of each stepfamily's biographical background were contrasted and biological mother, stepfather and adolescent were asked to assess their power to make decisions within their family. Giles-Sims and Crosbie-Burnett's findings emphasized both the need to survey different family members in their perception of power, and the need to measure the amount of agreement in specific areas of authoritative relationships within the stepfamily. Ganong and Coleman (1994) concurred with these conclusions and pointed out the need for an instrument that demonstrates the developmental aspects of adolescent-adult respect within stepfamily relationships.

In drafting the basic format of the stepfather authority acceptance questions, it was decided that the measurement of the amount of shared respect between adolescent and stepfather would provide one indication of the extent to which the adolescent would be inclined to abide by the wishes of his or her stepfather. In addition to the stepfather and adolescent opinions of their current relationship, it was also important to have some indication of how this relationship developed from the time the stepfather first joined the family. The questionnaire therefore included items measuring the disciplinary development of the stepfather's authoritative relationship with his adolescent stepchild. The intent was to see if there was any increase in the compliance of the adolescent to the wishes of the stepfather over the course of the relationship.

3) Acknowledgement/Rejection of Difference Between the Stepfather Role and the Biological Father Role

The questionnaire items for this scale can be found on page 147. This scale allows us to address hypothesis #1 which states, "In stepfamilies where the stepfather acknowledges that subjective and objective differences do exist between his role and the conventional father role, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority." The questionnaire items that were created to measure the level of acknowledgement/rejection of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role were based on Kirk's 1984 study of adoptive relationships. The applicability of three of the original variables in assessing these differences in step-relationships was questionable and thus the decision was made to delete the inclusion of coping activity, sameness/difference and gratification. Two of the original variables in Kirk's theory of adoptive relationships, empathy and communication, were measured in this study because of their usefulness in assessing the nature of the communication between a stepfather and adolescent. Additionally, the extent to which the stepfather validates the adolescent's relationship with his or her biological father is applicable to the assessment authoritative relationships within the stepfamily. A third variable, ascription/achievement of the stepfather role, was created for inclusion in measuring the acknowledgement or rejection of difference in the stepfather role and the conventional father role.

Unlike the open-ended descriptive format of Kirk's study, a Likert scale was used to measure individual scores. By basing the statements in the questionnaire directly on the criteria specified

in Kirk's study, the responses were brought as close as possible to Kirk's theory of recreated family relationships. The main question then becomes whether the respondent has adequately understood the item, not whether the researcher has adequately interpreted the response.

4) Role Clarity Scale

The questionnaire items for this scale can be found on pg. 149. These questions allow us to address hypothesis #2 which states, "In stepfamilies where the stepfather has established or received greater role clarity, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority." Questions used to measure stepfather role clarity were based on the original scale created by Brown, Green, and Druckman, 1990. The subscales represented were stepfather initiation, support, reciprocity and satisfaction. The satisfaction subscale in this original study provided little relationship to role clarity and thus the decision was made to not use it in this study. The consensus and stepchild initiation subscales were added to this study because of their applicability to the measurement of stepfather role clarity. Level of consensus between the biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent addresses the nature of the stepfather role within the context of his relationship to his partner and adolescent stepchild. The level of the stepfather and biological mother's encouragement to the adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection as perceived by the adolescent also addresses this context of the stepfather's role.

While the original scale measured one dimension of activity through out each of the subscales by analysing the frequency of prescribed events, this study broadened the number of dimensions and thus provided a more comprehensive analysis of the stepfather role.

Dimensions of activity included frequency, degree of acceptance and level of support. The increased number of dimensions more adequately addressed the multi-faceted nature of measuring the clarity of the stepfather role.

5) Parenting Styles Scale

The questionnaire items for these scales can be found on pages 152 and 163. Responses to these items allows us to explore hypotheses #3 and #4 which state, "In stepfamilies where the stepfather employs an adjunctive parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority" and "In stepfamilies where the biological mother employs an authoritative parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority." Questions used to measure stepfather and biological mother parenting style were based on the scale developed by Fine and Kurdek (1992). Items for authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and adjunctive parenting styles were modified for this study. The modification to each parenting style scale entailed addressing each of the items toward the biological mother, stepfather and adolescent rather than solely toward the adolescent.

6) Stepfather Role Challenge Scale

The questionnaire items for this scale can be found on page 154. Responses to these items allows us to explore hypothesis #5 which states, "In stepfamilies where the stepfather experiences the fewest number of challenges from family members about his parental expectations, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority." Questions created for the stepfather role challenge scale were based on the theoretical premise that many stepfamilies experience increased levels of conflict relative to first marriage families

due to the expanded number of actors who have emotional ties to each of the stepfamily members, particularly the adolescent. Questions specified the situational contexts and the actors involved in the situation in order to ascertain the frequency of conflict.

2.3 DATA ORGANIZATION

I will now discuss each of the scales and subscales included in the questionnaire in greater detail. In addition to the eleven background questions, six scales were used in this study, each with its own subscales. Information on the dependent variable will be provided first, followed by the independent variables and intervening variables.

A. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is the degree to which the adolescent is willing to accept the authority of the stepfather. The adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority was measured with the following scale:

Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale This set of questions was specifically constructed for the present study. It has two versions, one for the stepfather and one for the adolescent. A family composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and adolescent. This scale was not administered to the biological mother because she would not usually be aware of the detail required in the questions which pertain to the relationship between her partner and her child. Furthermore, her perspective is that of an interested bystander since she's

not directly involved in the dyadic relationship between stepparent and child. This scale contains 2 subscales and 9 items.

Subscales

- 1) The Mutual Respect subscale (items #4-#9, pg.#145) measures the amount of shared respect between the adolescent and stepfather.
- 2) The Disciplinary Development subscale (items #10-#12, pg.#146) measures the reasonableness of the stepfather's disciplinary requirements of the adolescent during the time he has been in the stepfamily as perceived by the stepfather and the adolescent. Responses to items are on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Almost Never to 5=Almost Always.

In addition to the use of these scales, three summary questions (items #1-#3, pg.#145) were asked of the adolescent, stepfather and biological mother. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the adolescent, stepfather and biological mother.

Summary Questions

These questions measure perceptions of:

- 1) the overall relationship between the adolescent and the stepfather,
- 2) the overall emotional distance between the adolescent and the stepfather,
- and 3) the overall ease with which the adolescent talks with his/her stepfather.

Responses to these items are on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from

- (1) 1=Very Good to 7=Very Bad
- (2) 1=Very Close to 7=Very Distant
- (3) 1=Very Easy to 7=Very Strained.

The cumulative score of the responses within each stepfamily to these summary questions was used to screen stepfamilies for inclusion in this study. The aim was to include an equitable number of families whose scores reflected either a close or distant relationship between the adolescent and his or her stepfather. This instrument was administered to 20 families; all families were included in this study.

B. Independent Variables

Hypothesis #1: The Relationship Between AD/RD and Acceptance of Authority.

The independent variable in the first hypothesis is: the level of acknowledgement/rejection of differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. The level of acknowledgement/rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role was measured with the following scale:

Acknowledgement of Difference/Rejection of Difference (AD/RD) (Kirk, 1984). This scale was modified from its original design. Modification was necessary because most of the original questions were created to analyze adoptive rather than stepfamily relationships.⁵ The original design was developed with 5 subscales, and a 40 item instrument. The subscales represented were Coping Activity, Sameness/Difference, Empathy, Communication, and Gratification. All items were to be responded to with descriptive answers from either parent in an adoptive family or the biological parent in a stepfamily.

⁵ While Kirk's initial study in 1963 employed the acknowledgement/rejection of difference strategy only in the analysis of adoptive families, his follow-up study in 1984 used this strategy to examine both adoptive and stepfamilies.

The modified scale has two forms, one for the stepfather and one for the biological mother. A family composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and biological mother. The adolescent did not respond to this scale because he/she may not be aware of the necessary information required. It contains 3 subscales and 14 items.

Subscales

- 1) The Ascription/Achievement subscale (items #1-#4, pg.#147) was specifically constructed for the present study. The Ascription/Achievement subscale measures the degree to which the stepfather believes that an affectionate and authoritative relationship with his stepchild must be achieved.
- 2) The Communication subscale (items #5-#9, pg.#147) (Kirk, 1984) measures the extent to which the stepfather discusses with his partner and adolescent, his relationship with the adolescent stepchild.
- 3) The Empathy subscale (items #11-#14, pg.#148) (Kirk, 1984) measures the extent to which the stepfather validates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father.

Responses to the items on the original Communication and Empathy subscale were modified to a 5-point Likert scale. Responses to items on the Ascription/Achievement subscale are measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Each of the 3 Likert scales range from 1=Strongly Agree to 5=Strongly Disagree.

While the original scales have never been subjected to empirical validation, face validity of each scale's relationship with the AD/RD strategies was demonstrated in Kirk's 1963 study on

adoptive families. Kirk found that a high degree of acknowledgement of difference is associated with a high degree of empathy with the child, and with a readiness to think about the child's (other) biological parent(s) (1984:95).

Hypothesis #2: The Relationship Between Role Clarity and Acceptance of Authority.

The independent variable for the second hypothesis is: stepfather role clarity. Stepfather role clarity was measured with the following scale:

Stepparent Role Scale (SRS) (Brown, Green, and Druckman, 1990).

This scale was modified from its original design. The original design was developed with 4 subscales, and 28 items. The subscales represented were Stepfather Initiation, Support, Reciprocity and Satisfaction. The Stepfather Initiation subscale measures the amount of authority-related and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather. The Support subscale measures the amount of support by the birth parent for the stepfather's nurturant and befriending behaviour. The Reciprocity subscale measures the amount of reciprocity by the adolescent toward the stepfather's initiatives. The Satisfaction subscale measures the amount of family satisfaction with the stepfather's role. All items were to be responded to on a 5-point Likert scale with 1=Almost Never to 5=Almost Always. Each subscale had three forms, one each for the biological mother, the stepfather, and the stepchild.

The original Stepparent Role Scale (Brown, Green, and Druckman, 1990) only measured one dimension of activity through out each of the subscales by analysing the frequency of prescribed events. The modification of this scale broadens the number of dimensions and

provide a more comprehensive analysis of the stepfather role. The Satisfaction subscale was not included in this study because its relationship with the dependent variable is peripheral and thus would contribute little to proving the hypothesis.

The modified scale has three forms, one each for the biological mother, the stepfather, and the adolescent stepchild. It contains 5 subscales and 30 items.

Subscales

1. The Stepfather Initiation subscale (items #1-#6, pg.#149) measures the amount of authority-related and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather. This subscale was given to each of the three respondents. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores of the three respondents.
2. The Consensus subscale (items #8-#12, pg.#149) was specifically constructed for the present study. The Consensus subscale measures the level of consensus between the biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. This subscale was given to the stepfather and the biological mother. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and biological mother. The adolescent was precluded from responding to this subscale because he/she may not have been aware of the level of consensus, as it relates to the relationship between his/her mother and stepfather.
3. The Reciprocity subscale (items #13-#18, pg.#150) measures how accepting the adolescent's response is to the initiatives of the stepfather as perceived by

the stepfather and the adolescent. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and adolescent. The biological mother was precluded from responding to this subscale because she may not be aware of this information.

4. The Support subscale (items #19-#25, pg.#151) measures how supportive the biological mother is with regard to the stepfather's nurturant and befriending behaviour toward his stepchild as perceived by the stepfather and the biological mother. This subscale was given to the stepfather and biological mother. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and biological mother. The adolescent was precluded from responding to this scale because he/she may not have been fully aware of this information.

5. The Stepchild Initiation subscale (items #14-#18, pg.#161) was specifically constructed for the present study. This subscale measures whether the adolescent perceives the stepfather and biological mother to be encouraging when the adolescent initiated requests for help and displays of affection. Only the adolescent responded to this subscale. The potential desire to appear as encouraging parents makes the stepfather and biological mother's responses of limited value for our purposes.

Responses to items on each subscale were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses to items on the Stepfather Initiation subscale ranged from

1=Almost Never to 5=Almost Always. Responses to items on the Consensus subscale ranged from 1=Almost Never to 5=Almost Always. Responses to items on the Reciprocity subscale ranged from 1=Rejecting to 5= Accepting. Responses to items on the Support subscale ranged from 1=Challenging to 7=Supportive. Responses to items on the Stepchild Initiation subscale ranged from 1=Discouraging to 5=Encouraging.

Alpha reliability scores on the Stepparent Role Scale (Brown et al., 1990) have ranged from .70 to .90 on the various subscales.

Hypotheses #3 and #4: The Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Acceptance of Authority.

The independent variable in the third hypothesis is: stepfather's parenting style. The independent variable in the fourth hypothesis is: the biological mother's parenting style. Stepfather and biological mother parenting style was measured with the following scale:

Parenting Styles. Authoritative (items #1, #5, #9, #13, #17, pg.152) authoritarian (items #2, #6, #10, #14, #18, pg.152) and permissive (#3, #7, #11, #15, #19, pg.152) parenting styles were measured by items adapted from Buri et al. (1988) by Fine and Kurdek (1992). Adjunctive parenting (#4, #8, #12, #16, #20, pg.152) will be measured by items adapted from Fine and Kurdek (1992). Items for authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and adjunctive parenting styles were modified for this study. The modification to each parenting style instrument entailed addressing each of the items toward the biological mother, stepfather and adolescent rather than solely toward the adolescent. Three forms of this scale, each of which included items

regarding all parenting styles, were created: one each for the biological mother, stepfather and adolescent. Questions were designed to measure the biological mother's perception of her parenting style with the adolescent; the stepfather's perception of his parenting style with the adolescent; the adolescent's perception of his/her mother's parenting style with him/her; and the adolescent's perception of his/her stepfather's parenting style with him/her. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores in each of the dyadic relationships. The scale contains 20 items. Responses were scored on a Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree.

Alpha reliability for the authoritative , authoritarian, permissive, and adjunctive scales were reported as .70, .42, .67, and .68 respectively, for mothers, and .78, .77, .69, and .55 for stepfathers (Fine and Kurdek, 1992).

Hypothesis #5: The Relationship Between Stepfather Role Challenge and Acceptance of Authority.

The independent variable in the fifth hypothesis is: the number of challenges from family members about the parental expectations of the stepfather. It was measured with the following scale:

Stepfather Role Challenge Scale. This scale was specifically constructed for the present study. It has two forms, one for the biological mother and one for the stepfather. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the biological mother and the stepfather. It contains 4

subscales and 18 items. The adolescent has been precluded from responding to this scale because he/she may have limited information with regards to this issue.

Subscales

- 1) The Paternal Solidarity subscale (items #7-#10, pg.#155) measured the degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty toward his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority.
- 2) The Loyalty Division subscale (items #11-#13, pg.#156) measured the frequency at which the adolescent was likely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father.
- 3) The Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale (items #14-#20, pg.156) measured the frequency with which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent.
- 4) The External Disciplinary Challenge subscale (items #21-#24, pg.157) measured the frequency with which members of the stepfamily's extended family objected to the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent.

Responses to items on each scale were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1=Almost Never to 5=Almost Always.

In addition to the use of these scales, six summary questions were asked of the stepfather and biological mother. A composite score was derived by averaging the scores for the stepfather and biological mother.

Summary Questions

1) Three questions (items #1, #3, #5, pg154) measured the frequency of visitations between the adolescent and his/her biological father, maternal grandparent(s) and paternal grandparent(s). Responses to these items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1=At least once per week, 2=Two or three times per month, 3=Once per month, 4=Two or three times per year, 5=Once per year, to 6=Never and 7=N/A.

2) Three questions (items #2, #4, #6, pg.154) measured the disruptive effects of adolescent visits with his/her biological father, maternal grandparent(s) and paternal grandparent(s) on the adolescent's behaviour. Responses to these items on a 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1=Extremely Disruptive, 2=Very Disruptive, 3=Slightly Disruptive, to 4=Not Disruptive and 5=N/A.

In addition to the quantitative data obtained from each of the scales in this study, information was also gathered through the use of qualitative research techniques. Personal interviews were used in an attempt to clarify the phenomenological reality of the relationship between the adolescent, stepfather and the biological mother within each stepfamily. Particular attention was directed toward inconsistencies between family member's responses to questions in each scale.

C. Background Variables

Several intervening background variables could potentially modify or interfere with the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and result in spurious findings.

While this research cannot provide a definitive analysis of the effect of these variables, they will be actively considered in the analysis. Throughout the literature review, a series of potential intervening variables were identified and can be grouped in the following way:

1. Number, gender and ages of children in household

The greater the number of children and the variability in the gender and age profile of the family may add to the difficulty of applying parenting skills which are age specific. Young adolescents may be more emotionally and physically dependent than older adolescents on the immediate presence of adult figures in their lives.

The relationship between gender and the nature of the adolescent's relationship with the stepfather, as reported in the literature, has been found to be inconclusive. While some authors have found that females have a particularly close bond with their mothers thus creating the potential for conflict with the presence of a stepfather (Amato and Kieth, 1991; Aquilino, 1991; Bray, 1987), others have found that gender differences are negligible (Clingempeel and Segal, 1986; Heatherington and Clingempeel, 1992).

2. Frequency of contact

Frequency of contact between adolescent and his/her biological father has been shown to have an impact on the strength of their relationship with the stepfather (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). Adolescents who have regular contact with their biological father are less likely to

accept the authority of a stepfather than those who spend less time with or never see their biological father.

3. Number of stepfather's biological children living in stepfamily household

Some stepfamilies have children from both partners residing in the same home. This more complex stepfamily structure has been found to adversely affect stepfather-stepchild relationships (Coleman and Ganong, 1990). Children from different family backgrounds now residing in the same home must come to adapt to a common set of rules. The adaptation to this process has often been found to result in different rules for different children.

4. Number of children partners have had together

When the remarried couple have a child together, it is thought to bring all stepfamily members closer together as a family unit (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

5. Marital status of the biological mother and stepfather

Marital status may potentially have an effect on the level of commitment the stepfather has to his relationship with the adolescent.

6. Previous parenting experience of stepfather

A stepfather's previous parenting experience could potentially add to his ability to parent an adolescent stepchild (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). While a step-relationship has many unique

qualities compared to biological relationships, the increased ability to negotiate adolescent-adult conflicts may have developed due to this experience.

7. Length of time together as a family

Length of time spent together as a family has been repeatedly noted in the literature as having a profound effect on the relationship between stepfather and children (Ganong and Coleman, 1994; Ihinger-Tallman, 1988; Fine and Kurdek, 1992). Problems thought to occur in the early development of the stepfamily tend to be resolved as the family lives together for a longer period of time.

8. Nature of biological mother's relationship with her ex-partner

The nature of the relationship between the biological mother and her ex-partner has been shown to interfere with the relationship between adolescent and stepfather (Crosbie-Burnett, 1990; Ganong and Coleman, 1994). A positive relationship between ex-partners has been shown to diminish the stepfather's authority over the adolescent while a negative relationship increases the stepfather's authority by increasing the family's economic and emotional dependence on the stepfather.

9. Nature of stepfather's relationship with biological mother's ex-partner

The stepfather's relationship with the mother's ex-partner has been found to have an effect on his relationship with the adolescent (Ganong and Coleman, 1994). A negative relationship can

potentially divide the loyalty of the adolescent between his/her biological father and stepfather whereas a positive relationship increases the number of emotional supports in the adolescent's life and thus reduces the conflict between family loyalties.

10. Social Class

Family income has been shown to be correlated with family values, particularly with regard to punishment or consequences of adolescent behaviour. Lower class families have been shown to rely more on punitive measures whereas middle income families rely more on negotiation between parents and child or on the removal of adolescent privileges (Nett, 1988).

2.4 PRODUCTION OF DATA

A. Measurement Information

It has already been indicated that the primary data produced by this study is the set of mean scores calculated for each family on each aspect of both dependent and independent variables. These data were elicited in response to carefully structured questions. The question and answer technique has not been the only method employed thus far in the short history of stepfamily research. Alternate methods have been used, such as qualitative participant observation (Esses and Campbell, 1984) combined with content analysis for the purpose of assessing the nature of stepfamily relationships. Participant observation was not employed in this study. In addition to the obtrusive nature of an outsider's observation in the functioning of individual families and the self-selectivity problems of those families which would allow such an intrusion, cost and time

commitments of such an approach are beyond the resources available for this research. The physical presence of this researcher at the time of question completion allowed for the possibility to clarify ambiguity for respondents. Furthermore, clarification of the exact meaning of these questions to individual stepfamily members was obtained through the addition of unstructured interviews. Thus, the richness of the data was enhanced as a result of probing individual's responses which differed significantly from those other family members.

The calculation of arithmetic means in individual and stepfamily scores is methodologically problematic because responses to both dependent and independent variables consist of data at the ordinal level of measurement, for which the logical measure of central tendency is the median, not the mean (Babbie, 1992). Use of the arithmetic mean is usually reserved for continuous data at the interval or ratio level of measurement, where the distance between values is exact, equal, and actually known, whereas the distance in scores between an adolescent who is completely willing as opposed to completely unwilling to accept a stepfather's authority cannot be so precisely known. Nevertheless, while not completely justified in statistical terms, the use of means in ordinal data is a common and useful practice (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1987). Furthermore, the fact that many other researchers (Esses and Campbell, 1984) have already done so in stepfamily studies adds weight to the justification of having done so here.

B. Measurement Application

In administering the research stimulus, in this case asking questions, two options were available:

- 1) to use a quantitatively-oriented schedule, perhaps a self-administered, closed-ended, questionnaire and mail it to a large number of stepfamilies. This procedure was too unwieldy for my study because 60 individuals in 20 stepfamilies were interviewed in person on at least two occasions.
- 2) to employ a more qualitatively-oriented questionnaire. This was my choice because the first option would require a large sample from a population that is difficult to locate.

C. Measurement Rationale

The kind of issues to be probed were best approached through the use of a structured question-answer survey. This procedure was used to eliminate manipulation and reliance on the measurement of behavioural indicators. It elicits information which speaks directly to the hypothesized authoritative relationships within the stepfamily.

This procedure does, however, have liabilities. The primary liability is that it is obtrusive and therefore prone to producing reactive effects. There is no easy solution to this problem. How do we question someone's opinions without arousing a response set in them? The only consolation is that this obtrusiveness has been consistently present in all formats of stepfamily question-answer research, and may in fact be lessened by the possibility for individuals to explain their meanings.

A second limitation of the question-answer method of measurement is its dependence upon language. The meaning of the questions is particularly vulnerable to misinterpretation. The questionnaire developed for this study assumed the possibility of questioning a 12 year old child with approximately a grade 7 education. The second interview enabled the respondent to clarify responses that differed from other stepfamily members.

A third limitation of the question and answer method is that it is limited to self-reports. As such it is subject to problems such as memory-decay, bias, motivation and ability of the respondents. It does not measure social action directly, or indicate the context of the individual's social life. A questionnaire only enables the respondent to give a brief, fixed report on the patterns of their judgement. This study was able to overcome some of these problems. Problems relating to the memory, bias and motivation of respondents was at least partially balanced by the responses of other family members to the same questions.

Finally, this study triangulated the methodologies of in-person interviews utilizing both closed-ended and subsequently open-formatted questions. What was lost on the potential weakness of the small sample size and hence the degree to which findings could be generalized was strengthened by the potentially greater validity of the results.

D. Measurement Instrument

As stated above, this study has developed a rigorous researcher-administered, in-home questionnaire to measure the dependent variable, an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority, and 5 independent variables:

- 1) the level of acknowledgement/rejection of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role.
- 2) stepfather role clarity.
- 3) stepfather parenting style.
- 4) biological mother's parenting style
- 5) the number of challenges from family members about the parental expectations of the stepfather.

The responses of multiple stepfamily members were used to assess composite scores for families on each of the variables. This may be one of the most significant contributions of this study because no adequate instruments have been developed up to the present, and the lack of such has hampered the validity of research in authoritative relationships with the stepfamily.

This chapter has presented the research methods and procedures employed for this study of the effect of a series of sources of strain on an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority. It has described how the variables were identified, how respondents were selected and how stepfamily scores were measured. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data in the following chapter produced will provide some answers to the questions posed by this study.

Chapter III RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 DATA ANALYSIS

Because of the small number of families used in the sample, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Sum totals were used to tally each individual family member's scores and mean scores were used to create a composite family score. See Appendix C for individual family member's scores.

In the qualitative component of this study, it was important to place emphasis on obtaining family stories concerning their experience on the topic of study. It was important to discover if there were common themes which distinguish individual family members in the acceptance and non-acceptance groups. The scales used to measure the dependent and independent variables were supplemented by in-person interviews with the stepfather, biological mother and adolescent. These interviews probed the respondent's own perception of the effect of each of the independent variables on the adolescent's relationship with his or her stepfather. The terminology used in these interviews, it must be noted, did not directly address the adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority. As was the case in the wording in the scale items, the phrase "acceptance of authority" was carefully avoided because of the potential to introduce bias. Interviews were prefaced by an introduction which stated that, "the purpose of this inquiry is to find out what you as a family do to make your relationship as a stepfamily work". It is conceivable that an effect of any wording may further bias the perception of willingness to accept authority, the specificity of the questions was relative to particular questions already answered in the quantitative component of the study.

Results will be presented in the following pages. Each hypothesis' quantitative findings, qualitative findings and conclusions will be presented in this order.

3.2 HYPOTHESES

There are five hypotheses. Data analysis will be organized around them.

A. Hypothesis #1

In stepfamilies where the stepfather acknowledges that subjective and objective differences do exist between his role and the conventional father role, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

1. Quantitative Findings on Willingness to Accept Authority

The dependent variable, the adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority is operationalized as the sum of composite scores on: the Mutual Respect summary questions, the Mutual Respect subscale and the Disciplinary Development subscale. Family #1, for example, scored 34.1 on the adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority based on a mean score of 11.6 on the Mutual Respect summary questions, 13.0 on the Mutual Respect subscale and 9.5 on the Disciplinary Development subscale (see Tables C1, C2 and C3 in Appendix C).

The individual's score on the Mutual Respect summary questions is the sum of their responses to three items. These items measure perceptions of:

- 1) the overall relationship between the adolescent and the stepfather;
- 2) the overall emotional distance between the adolescent and the stepfather; and
- 3) the overall ease with which the adolescent talks with his/her stepfather.

Responses to the three items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) 1=Very Good to 7=Very Bad (2) 1=Very Close to 7=Very Distant (3) 1=Very Easy to 7=Very Strained. In family #1, the adolescent's score of 15 is the sum of scoring 3 on item #1, 6 on item #2, and 6 on item #3. The stepfather's score of 11 is the sum of scoring 3 on item #1, 4 on item #2, and 4 on item #3. The biological mother score of 9 is the sum of scoring 3 on item #1, 4 on item #2, and 2 on item #3. See Appendix C for individual respondent scores and Appendix D for subscale scores.

Composite scores on the adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority ranged from a possible low of 12 (completely willing to accept the stepfather's authority) to a possible high of 66 (completely unwilling to accept the stepfather's authority). The actual range in this study was 16.6 - 39.5. The 10 in the top half of this range were designated as families in which the adolescent was willing to accept the stepfather's authority (A group), while the 10 families in the bottom half of this range were designated as families in which the adolescent was less than willing to accept the stepfather's authority (NA group) (see Table #1).

The relatively small range of scores between all families indicates that while differences do exist in the extent to which adolescents are willing to accept their stepfathers' authority, these differences are not substantial.

Table #1 Adolescent's Willingness To Accept Authority

Range 12 (Unwilling) - 66 (Willing)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #4	16.6
Family #7	19.0
Family #18	19.0
Family #15	20.0
Family #6	20.5
Family #16	20.8
Family #3	20.8
Family #17	22.8
Family #2	22.8
Family #14	22.8
Family #5	26.0
Family #11	26.1
Family #13	29.5
Family #10	32.8
Family #1	34.1
Family #9	34.6
Family #8 ..	35.8
Family #20	36.6
Family #19	37.6
Family #12	39.5

2. Qualitative Findings on Willingness to Accept Authority

The Mutual Respect summary questions were the only opportunity for each of the family members to provide their perceptions of the overall relationship between the stepfather and the adolescent. While scores in general were not high, there was a trend for adolescents in the NA group to portray their relationship with their stepfather as being more negative than either of the adults. Conversely, in the A group, it was the adults rather than the adolescent who

perceived more instances where the relationship may have been strained or capable of being improved upon (see Table C1). Individual respondent score patterns on the Mutual Respect subscale indicate few divergencies in scores. The pattern on NA group individual scores on the Disciplinary Development subscale showed greater divergence than A group scores. This suggests that stepfathers and adolescents in the NA group have a greater tendency to disagree with each other over issues related to discipline than stepfathers and adolescents in the A group.

In the interview, adolescents in the NA group were far more inclined to provide recent instances of situations where they had either disagreed or argued with their stepfather than adolescents in the A group. Adults in the NA group, on the other hand, were more likely to give examples of instances where the adolescent was now better able than in the past to get along with the stepfather. Few instances were provided where the stepfather made changes in his activities to improve his relationship with the adolescent. Adolescents and adults in the A group most often stated that a positive relationship always existed between the adolescent and stepfather and that time had only brought them closer together.

Responses to the Mutual Respect subscale heightened the awareness of many stepfathers in the NA group to the present rather than past relationship with their adolescent stepchild. These stepfathers gave examples of recent occurrences which indicated that the adolescent questioned or ignored their instructions. As one stepfather pointed out, "How can you respect any one who completely ignores their curfew, particularly after I went to great lengths to explain that the door would be locked if he did it again."

Adolescents in the NA group, while frequently citing examples of contempt toward their stepfather, particularly with reference to the notion that their stepfather had in mind "what was best for them", were more likely to show greater levels of mutual respect than their stepfather. Often it was suggested that, "If it's (their relationship) not great now, you should have seen it before."

Adolescents and stepfathers in the A group showed relatively less contempt with regard to their relationship. These stepfathers, unlike those in the NA group, more frequently praised the guidance provided by their partner in facilitating their rapport with the adolescent. One stepfather stated, "His mother has known him a lot longer than I have and has done a good job of raising him under more trying circumstances than our present situation. Who am I to tell them things should be changed?" These adolescents were also more likely to reciprocate this respect. Not only were there fewer serious arguments with the stepfather than those in the NA group but the disagreements were more likely to be directed toward or involve the mother's demands. As stated by a 16 year old girl, "There's little reason to be upset with him. I know where these ideas about studying come from."

There were high concordance rates between adolescents' and stepfathers' scores in both NA and A groups with respect to the Disciplinary Development subscale. That is, both groups of respondents in the NA group reported a relatively high number of complaints about discipline from the time the stepfather first joined the family to the present, whereas both groups of respondents in the A group showed a low number of complaints concerning discipline. One significant difference between the responses of both adolescents and stepfathers in the two

groups was their answer to the question, "As of now, how often do you feel you have the right to tell your stepchild what to do?" The majority of adolescents and stepfathers in the A group answered between "sometimes" and "frequently". In contrast, adolescents' answers in the NA group tended to pool around "sometimes", while stepfathers answers were between "frequently" and "almost always". It appears that stepfathers in this group in contrast to those in the A group are more inclined to perceive their position within the stepfamily as an authority figure deserving respect.

3. Quantitative Findings on Acknowledgement/Rejection of Difference in Roles

The first independent variable, the level of acknowledgement/rejection of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role was calculated as the sum of the total scores on: the Ascription/Achievement subscale, the Communication subscale and the Empathy subscale. See Appendix D for subscales. Composite scores for the level of acknowledgement/rejection of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role ranged from a possible score of 14 (acknowledgement of subjective and objective differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role) to a possible score of 70 (rejection of differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role). The small actual range between scores (27.0 - 43.5) indicates little difference between families in their interpretation of acknowledgement or rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. (see Table #1) Furthermore, all scores are relatively low, suggesting that each family acknowledges to

some extent that a difference does exist between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. Finally, the NA and A group scores are dispersed throughout this range and show no relationship to acknowledgement or rejection of differences between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. Even divergencies in scores at the individual level had no bearing on whether the family was in the A or NA group. See Appendix C. Group scores that would support the hypothesis should cluster together with A group families at the lower end and NA group families at the higher end of the scale. Since this is not the pattern, the hypothesis is not supported. See Table #2 for individual family scores on level of acknowledgement/rejection of difference.

Table #2 Acknowledgement/Rejection of Difference

Range 14 (Acknowledgement) - 70 (Rejection)

(Composite of biological mother and stepfather individual scores)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #2	27.0
Family #9	27.0
Family #17	27.0
Family #14	27.5
Family #3	28.0
Family #12	28.0
Family #10	29.0
Family #13	30.5
Family #20	30.5
Family #15	31.0
Family #4	31.5
Family #19	31.5
Family #8	34.0
Family #6	37.0
Family #16	37.0
Family #11	41.0
Family #5	42.0
Family #1	43.5
Family #7	43.5
Family #18	43.5

4. Qualitative Findings on Acknowledgement/Rejection of Difference in Roles

This analysis was intended to discover if differences existed between stepfathers in the ways in which they perceived the identity of their stepfamily. That is, to what extent do stepfathers attempt to create a supportive milieu for their stepfamily; a milieu where the child feels

comfortable in dealing with the differences created by the changes in parenting? There was a high level of concordance between A and NA group families on a number of important issues which are related to the process by which family members identify with each other. All the mothers and stepfathers suggested the development of an affectionate relationship is not something that can be rushed nor can it be expected to automatically occur. These adults also concurred that a level of mutual respect had to be gained in the context of the family before the stepfather could expect to play an authoritative role. Last, all stepfathers acknowledged the need to follow their partner's lead with regard to understanding their expectations of their adolescent's behaviour.

Family differences regarding the stepfather's authority did exist, however, in the amount of formal discussion between partners and adolescent concerning the parameters around which the stepfather was expected to discipline the adolescent. These discussions were not specifically related to any incident, but rather, involved a general clarification of individual expectations. The differences in the amount of discussion between families, however, were not related to the extent to which adolescents were willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Most mothers felt their knowledge of their partner's attributes precluded the need to discuss with them their expectations of his authoritative role. They indicated their partners had established a good relationship with their adolescent before they actually lived together as a family and that time spent conducting daily routines had only brought them closer together.

Mothers in families #2, #3, #9, #10, #14 and #17 frequently made discipline a topic of discussion with their partners and adolescents. Furthermore, in each case, these discussions

extended from the time preceding the formation of their stepfamilies into the first year of their family relationships. These mothers felt that it was important to clarify any misunderstandings regarding the way in which they extended their authority over their adolescent. Adolescents in these families also indicated they had clear expectations with regard to their stepfathers' authoritative role. They frequently cited specific conversations, particularly during the time their stepfather first joined their family, where their mother and stepfather clarified the stepfather's relationship to the family. Each adolescent was informed that their stepfather was never expected to take the place of their father nor would he make demands on their behaviour without discussing it first with their mother. Adolescents in families #9 and #10 stated their mother and stepfather indicated from the beginning of their relationship that their mother would remain as the sole source of authority over them. The stepfather in both families, even after several years, has little authoritative involvement with their adolescent. Adolescents in families #2, 3, #14 and #17 stated they, along with their mother and stepfather established a family rule whereby their mother would remain responsible for establishing guidelines concerning curfew and homework. They indicated their stepfather has continued to enforce these rules, particularly in their mother's absence.

Families #2, #3, #9, #10, #14 and #17 were also more inclined to discuss, as a group, the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father. Mothers and stepfathers in these families indicated these discussions were rarely problematic and felt it was their responsibility to facilitate, as much as possible, their adolescent's time with their fathers. The mother and stepfather in family #12 also placed considerable emphasis on discussing this topic. However,

many of the discussions with their adolescent were confrontational whenever it had anything to do with her biological father. Both mother and stepfather felt their adolescent's visits were often disruptive to their family. They indicated that visits frequently resulted in the adolescent returning home only to question her mother's authority.

In all other families, discussions involving the adolescents' visits with their biological fathers were conducted between the biological mother and adolescent. These stepfathers indicated that visitation arrangements were established before they entered the family and felt their input would make their adolescent feel uncomfortable. The lack of input, however, contributed to the creation of problems. While stepfathers supported these arrangements, stepfathers in families #8, #11 and #13 stated there have been occasions when the timing of the visits conflicted with other family plans and they have intervened in the discussions. The stepfather in family #8 indicated that while he disliked spoiling his adolescent's plans to visit her dad, he was concerned with supporting the interests of the whole family. He stated, "If we have something planned as a family, then I would expect her to participate; unfortunately, it's me, rather than all of us who becomes the bearer of bad news." The stepfathers' attempts to avoid uncomfortable situations inadvertently caused division rather than bringing the family together.

5. Hypothesis #1 Conclusions

Hypothesis #1 compares stepfathers who accept that there is a difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role, and those who do not in order to determine if there is a difference in terms of their adolescent's willingness to accept their stepfather's

authority. It was anticipated that these two groups of adolescents would have different scores related to their stance toward their stepfather's authority. In other words, it was anticipated that the families' attitude toward the differences which are part and parcel of stepfamily relationships would have a bearing on the adolescent's acceptance of the stepfather's authority. The data in Table #3 show the number of stepfamilies which fall into each category and lead to the conclusion that there is no difference between stepfamilies where the stepfather accepts that he should play a different role than the conventional father and those stepfamilies where such a distinction is rejected. In both situations there was no discernible difference in the adolescent's willingness to accept his authority. Accordingly, hypothesis #1 is rejected.

Subsequent interviews revealed that many mothers and stepfathers in these stepfamilies, unlike adoptive families in Kirk's study (1984), felt little need to validate or communicate the nature of their stepfamily relationship in relation to the adolescent's biological family. This leaves the question of the adolescents' identity without any sense of closure. While continued presence of the biological mother and intermittent presence of the biological father in the life of the adolescent maintains the adolescents' ties with the past, it does not secure their bond with their new family. Stepfathers who attempt to save their adolescent the discomfort of discussing their identity create a barrier between themselves and their adolescent. This barrier ultimately questions the legitimacy of the family membership because the degree of connectedness between stepfather and adolescent is subject to doubt.

<u>Table 3</u> The Relationship Between	Position on Authority
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Differences and Acceptance of Authority			
		Accepting Authority	Rejecting Authority
Position on the Differences	Rejection	4	4
	Acceptance	6	6

B. Hypothesis #2

In stepfamilies where there is greater role clarity about the role of the stepfather, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

1. Quantitative Findings on Role Clarity

The second independent variable, stepfather role clarity, is operationalized as the sum of the total scores on: the Stepfather Initiation subscale; the Consensus subscale; the Reciprocity subscale; the Support subscale and the Stepchild Initiation subscale. (see Appendix D) Possible scores for stepfather role clarity ranged from 30 (a low degree of stepfather role clarity) to 150 (a high degree of role clarity). Actual scores ranged between 83.1 and 135.3 indicating a substantial difference between families in their perception of stepfather role clarity (see Table #4). Scores begin at the mid-range of the scale and end in the upper-range, suggesting some families perceive a moderate degree of stepfather role clarity while others perceive a high degree of stepfather role clarity. The NA group scores cluster at the lower end of this range while A group scores cluster at the upper end.

In the Stepfather Initiation subscale most NA group scores cluster at the lower end of the range while A group scores cluster at the higher end. This indicates most stepfathers in NA group families initiated less authoritative and nurturing and befriending behaviour to their adolescent than stepfathers in A group families.

In the Consensus subscale all families, except for #12, report a high level of consensus between the biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. While NA group scores tended to cluster at the lower end of this range, the range was so small that group scores add little information in explaining the relationship between the level of consensus between partners and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority.

In the Reciprocity subscale, the pattern of family scores suggest that in some families the adolescent moderately accepted the stepfather's initiatives, while in others the adolescent almost totally accepted the stepfather's initiatives. NA group scores clustered at the lower end of this range and A group scores clustered at the higher end. This indicates most adolescents in NA group families were less accepting of their stepfathers' initiatives than adolescents in A group families.

In the Support subscale, family score patterns suggest biological mothers in some families offer substantial support for their partners' befriending behaviour toward their adolescent, while in other families, biological mothers offer almost total support. NA group scores clustered at the lower end of this range and A group scores clustered at the higher end. This indicates

biological mothers in NA group families offer less support for their partners' befriending behaviour toward their adolescent than biological mothers in A group families.

The pattern of scores on the Stepchild Initiation subscale suggests that in some families the stepfather and biological mother moderately encourage the adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection, while in other families, stepfathers and biological mothers almost totally encourage their adolescent's requests. Further, it suggests that in family #10 the stepfather almost totally discourages the adolescent's requests for help and displays of affection. NA group scores cluster at the lower end of this range and A group scores cluster at the higher end. This indicates that the stepfather and biological mother in NA group families offer less encouragement to their adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection than stepfathers and biological mothers in A group families (see Appendix D for subscale scores). Nine of the ten lowest scores in stepfather role clarity belonged to families where the adolescent was less than willing to accept the stepfather's authority. Hypothesis #2 is therefore supported by the quantitative data.

Table #4 Stepfather Role Clarity

Range 30 (low clarity) - 150 (high clarity)
 (Composite of biological mother, stepfather and adolescent scores)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #12	83.1
Family #10	86.8
Family #19	102.0
Family #20	104.8
Family #9	105.1
Family #11	105.8
Family #1	110.8
Family #5	113.0
Family #6	116.5
Family #8	117.6
Family #3	118.3
Family #15	118.3
Family #17	118.5
Family #4	122.3
Family #16	124.5
Family #13	126.1
Family #7	126.3
Family #18	126.3
Family #14	128.3
Family #2	135.3

2. Qualitative Findings on Role Clarity

The congruency in individual respondent scores on the components of the Role Clarity scale is strongly related to whether the family is in the A or NA group. Individual family members' scores in the A group are more similar on every subscale other than the Consensus subscale than individual scores in the NA group. These findings suggest that family members in the A

group have a greater level of understanding and support for the initiatives of the stepfathers than family members in the NA group.

The qualitative analysis that follows focuses on these differences between stepfamilies and the degree to which members legitimize the stepfather's role. That is, to what extent do stepfathers negotiate their authoritative involvement with their adolescent? While adolescence is a time of growing independence regardless of family structure, and although adult involvement may be met with resistance at the best of times, there is still a need for the adolescent to know that familial authority figures have a nurturing interest in their intervention activities. Most adolescents in NA group families felt that time constraints affected their stepfather's conversations with them. They tended to view most conversations with their stepfathers as pragmatic, involving chores, homework and curfews rather than issues of concern to themselves. School and community related activities, such as sports or plays were of interest to approximately 80% of all the adolescents in this study, but adolescents in the NA group who were interested in these events expressed the feeling that their stepfathers would attend only after their mother had requested him to or made an issue of the event. Communication between the adolescent and stepfather was affected by this lack of interest. An eighteen year old stated, "The only time he's really interested in talking to me is when he needs help outside. Other than that, he rarely gives me the time of day." When asked how he responded to his stepfather's requests he stated, "I'm less than thrilled to help him. When he tries to be nice, I often believe it's my mom talking, not him. So, even then, it's hard to be nice all the time." While adolescents in the NA group felt they often obliged their stepfather when their help was needed, several

expressed resentment because of the pragmatic motives behind most of their stepfather's conversations.

For many of the adolescents in the NA group, this resentment affected the extent to which they were willing to initiate conversations with their stepfather. When asked how often they approached their stepfather for help, several indicated they would never ask. Others indicated that at the request of their mother, they had sought their stepfather's help. One adolescent pointed out that complying with his mother's request, led his stepfather to make occasional comments which reflected his feelings of being "second best". Another adolescent stated his stepfather once told him "that if I'm no more than a last resort then don't bother at all". While it is likely that all stepfathers in this group do not make such derogatory comments on a consistent basis, it is conceivable that even occasional comments of this kind would have a lasting effect on adolescents and undermine their willingness to accede to their stepfather's requests.

Stepfathers in the NA group, on the other hand, perceived themselves as intensely involved with their adolescent's interests. While a lack of time was a concern for some, many cited examples of occasions where they and their wives attended events involving the adolescent. Other than two families in the NA group where the adolescent and stepfather shared a particular interest (one in snowmobiling and one in attending university courses at the same time), however, no stepfather provided instances where he and the adolescent did something together.

Mothers in the NA group viewed the activities which occurred regularly at home as the key source of enjoyment for their adolescent and partner. Time spent together performing household, yard and mechanical tasks was seen as an opportunity not only to accomplish a goal which was pragmatic in nature, but to better understand each other by working together. Although several of them acknowledged their adolescent occasionally resented their partner's requests for help, most attributed this resentment to emotions typically expressed by teenagers in general, rather than a failure to negotiate their partner's role.

In the NA group, the biological mother in family #12 was the only one who did not support her partner's relationship with her adolescent. Coalitions in this family exist at multiple levels. It was agreed that the adolescent not only sought an alliance with her mother when disagreements between her and her stepfather escalated into arguments, but also attempted to gain the support of younger siblings in order to convince her mother that the stepfather's expectations were unreasonable. Both adults felt that significant adjustments in the family's pattern of interaction were required.

Unlike NA group families, issues involving the adolescent in A group families were frequently discussed between the adolescent, mother and stepfather. These stepfathers expressed that they and their adolescents could talk most often with relative ease regardless of how serious the issue. One stepfather said he arrived at this point by supporting his adolescent step-son in good times and bad.

"It's fine to direct your kids what to do and how to do it, but when they're hurting, whether it be from school, friends or family, they need a shoulder. His mom is a strong lady but one person has only so much energy. I've made my shoulders available to all of them and I think they know it, at least so my wife

tells me. This rapport carries over to times when there is no crisis; this is the stuff of everyday life. We're just there for each other."

In the A group, stepfathers' support for their adolescent extended beyond conversation and included requests to attend their adolescent's events. Adolescents recalled school and community activities where they were either participants or spectators where one (or both) adult(s) would attend. Several of these adolescents pointed out that conversation with their stepfather frequently revolved around these events. One adolescent's example was the amount of time it took his stepfather to help him make a wooden chest for a shops project in school. While the adolescent was quick to point out that his uncle knew more about woodwork than his stepfather, he was also very clear about the amount of effort his stepfather had invested reading library books on woodwork.

Adolescents in the A group reciprocated this support by validating their stepfather's initiatives.

"He thinks he was a comedian in a former life. We laugh at him, not because his jokes are funny, they're not, but because he can act so stupid. He has a way of doing that just to bring us all together."

When asked to explain this, he commented,

"We could be just eating supper and out of the blue, he'll come out with, 'this reminds me of a time when', and we'll just crack up and say, Oh God not again. Next thing you know an hour has gone by, my friends have been here for twenty minutes, and we'll be talking about school, friends, girls or sometimes even my dad and his family. He's alright."

These stepfathers, with the support of their partner, negotiated their relationship with their adolescent. Their discussions and involvement in family activities not only validated their

position in the family but also legitimized their role as an adult authority.

3. Hypothesis #2 Conclusions

Hypothesis #2 compares stepfamilies where the stepfather has greater role clarity with stepfamilies where the stepfather has a lower role clarity to determine if there are any differences in their adolescents' willingness to accept their stepfathers' authority. According to the hypothesis, it was anticipated that in stepfamilies where the stepfather has greater role clarity, adolescents would be more willing to accept their stepfather's authority.

The data in Table #5 support the hypothesis. Interviews corroborated this finding. Stepfathers in A group families negotiated their role by discussing their relationship with the adolescent. These discussions legitimized their bond with the new family. Adolescents in the A group were not only more accepting of their stepfather's initiatives but perceived their stepfathers as more accepting of their initiatives. Stepfathers in NA group families were less inclined to include discussion as a means of clarifying this relationship. They did, however, more frequently use conversation to provide direction or request their adolescent's help in performing specific tasks. This increased the likelihood of adolescents questioning their stepfather's initiatives, and ultimately, their legitimacy as a family member.

Table 5 The Relationship Between Role Clarity and Acceptance of Authority		Position on Authority	
		Accepting Authority	Rejecting Authority
Role clarity	High role clarity	10	4
	Low role clarity	0	6

C. Hypothesis #3

In stepfamilies where the stepfather employs an adjunctive parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

1. Quantitative Findings on Stepfather Parenting Style

The third independent variable is stepfather parenting style. Questions were designed to measure the stepfather's perception of his parenting style with the adolescent and the adolescent's perception of his/her stepfather's parenting style with him/her. Composite scores on each parenting style scale ranged from 5 (strongly disagreed with each statement) to 35 (strongly agreed with each statement). Parenting style was determined by the highest mean score on statements in which the stepfather and adolescent most strongly agreed. For example, family #1 had a mean score of 18 on permissive parenting, 24 on authoritarian parenting, 25 on adjunctive parenting and 28 on authoritative parenting (see Appendix D). In this same family the stepfather and adolescent most strongly agreed that the stepfather used an authoritative

parenting style, and hence this family's stepfather parenting style was designated as authoritative. Family scores indicate one stepfather used a permissive parenting style, six used an adjunctive parenting style, nine used an authoritative parenting style and four stepfathers used an authoritarian parenting style. These scores suggest considerable variation between each family's perception of the stepfather parenting style. Whereas the hypothesis indicates A group scores would cluster at the adjunctive parenting style and NA group scores would include all of the other parenting styles, this did not occur. Not only did scores show a difference in stepfamilies where stepfathers used an adjunctive parenting style (contrary to the hypothesis), but stepfamilies where the stepfather used an authoritative parenting style had a greater number of adolescents who were willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Hypothesis #3 is therefore not supported by the quantitative data (see Table #6 for individual family scores).

Table #6 Stepfather Parenting Style

Range 5 - 35 (Permissive, Adjunctive, Authoritative, Authoritarian)
(Composite of stepfather and adolescent scores)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #11	Permissive
Family #12	Authoritarian
Family #13	Authoritarian
Family #19	Authoritarian
Family #20	Authoritarian
Family #1	Authoritative
Family #2	Authoritative
Family #4	Authoritative
Family #7	Authoritative
Family #8	Authoritative
Family #14	Authoritative
Family #15	Authoritative
Family #17	Authoritative
Family #18	Authoritative
Family #3	Adjunctive
Family #5	Adjunctive
Family #6	Adjunctive
Family #9	Adjunctive
Family #10	Adjunctive
Family #16	Adjunctive

2. Qualitative findings on stepfather parenting style.

Two significant patterns emerge from the quantitative data on the individual responses to stepfather parenting style. First, in six families (#3, #5, #6, #9, #10, #16) the stepfather used an adjunctive parenting style, and in each case, with the exception of family #5, their scores are very high. This suggests adolescents in these families strongly acknowledge the level of support their stepfathers provide for their mothers' authoritative judgements. This is particularly

significant for families #9 and #10, both of which are in the NA group, yet the stepfathers and adolescents strongly agree on the stepfather's use of a parenting style which was hypothesised to increase the adolescent's acceptance of the stepfather's authority. Second, families in the A group generally have a larger difference in parenting style scores than families in the NA group. NA group families #9 and #10 are the exception to this finding. Differences between the parenting styles with the highest and lowest scores in these two families is great. These findings suggest stepfathers and adolescents in A group families and in families #9 and #10 share a clear understanding of the parameters of the stepfather's authoritative role (see Appendix D for stepfather parenting styles).

Three of the six stepfathers who used an adjunctive parenting style were members of families in the NA group. In two of these three families, the adolescents' individual scores on the adjunctive measurement were extremely high. Qualitative inquiries into this finding revealed the following result. It was the mother, in both cases, who felt the need to explain the nature of parental practices in their families. The mother in family #10 began her account by stating, "I think you have been asking the wrong questions." Needless to say, this statement gave this author a moment of pause. When asked to clarify her meaning, she went on to explain,

"I am my son's mother and parental figure. My partner is both my lover and confidant. We've been together for almost six years and from day one, this is how we have decided to arrange the family. My partner and son get along fine, but my son has a father who loves him a lot. He does not need another father. The relationship between my son and partner is friendly, however, my partner does not parent my son. He'll help him with homework and his paper route, if my son asks, but he does not get involved with rules for behaviour, that is my task. Much of what you have been asking is based on the assumption that more or less of a bond exists between my partner and son. Like I said, they get along

pretty well, but their paths do not cross very often. Their feelings toward each other are really a non-entity when you talk of parenting."

Her son concurred with his mother's explanation. He indicated, "I don't know him very well. I never think of us as being related in any way. He can be nice, but my mom can tell you more about him than I can."

This style of non-parenting was further elaborated by the mother in family #9.

"My partner has always been very quiet in our ten years of marriage. His involvement with my son, just like with the other kids, has always been removed. Don't get me wrong, he loves my family, it's just that I've always called the shots. I guess I learned that, in my first marriage. He's never questioned my judgement, he just goes along with the flow."

Her partner elaborated on her thoughts.

"I never had a family before and I think she better than I knows what's best for the kids. Her son likes to see his dad and I don't blame him, I liked to be with my dad when I was growing up. I help to provide a good home and I think that's the best anyone can ask for."

The adolescent in this family was somewhat more resentful about not sharing a life with his stepfather. "I wish he would do something once in a while. It's always him and my mom for as long as I can remember. He and I seldom argue, but then, we seldom do anything. I guess it's just in his nature." These accounts question the validity of measuring the adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority for these two families. The development of an authoritative relationship between these stepfathers and their adolescents was neither fostered by the adults' actions nor anticipated when the stepfamilies were formed. Furthermore, these findings suggest that an alternate parenting style, non-parenting, does not merely happen by chance, but rather, occurs through the volition of the parental figures. Lastly, given the

longevity of these families' relationships, the effectiveness of this parenting style cannot be discounted as a phase through which individual stepfamilies will pass before they put in place some alternate arrangement.

In four stepfamilies the stepfather used an authoritarian parenting style, and in one stepfamily a permissive style was used; in each of these families the adolescent was less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority. The adolescents' and stepfathers' scores on these scales were consistent, indicating that both respondents in these families were in agreement that the particular parenting style was, in fact, being used. Each of the stepfathers who used an authoritarian parenting style provided justifications for their actions which stemmed from their perception of how their own fathers related to them as teenagers. One stepfather suggested, "My dad didn't let me get away with much and I don't think it did me any harm." His partner was eager to point out, "You are talking of when you were young. Think of all the arguments you and your dad got into when you were old enough to speak your mind." Further conversation with both partners revealed the mother to be less than accepting of her partner's parenting style. She again made reference to how old he was when he spoke out against his father's directives and how these episodes frequently resulted in an argument. She ended the conversation by saying, "Remember that, the next time our son questions your orders".

The stepfather in family #11 used a permissive parenting style with the adolescent. He had a warm relationship with his adolescent which was neither demanding nor controlling. He felt that his 17 year old stepdaughter was a relatively mature young woman who was capable of making informed choices on her own. He also indicated that most arguments in the home were

between her and her mother. When asked what types of issues they argued about, his answer reflected the belief that his stepdaughter was often not capable of making sound choices. "Coming home late on school nights seems to be at the top of the list. Her mother has told her over and over that she can't function properly with too little sleep. Partying is more important than school work." His stepdaughter felt she and her stepfather got along pretty well. "We talk about when he was young. He loves to talk about his rebellious youth in the 60's. Those sounded like great times." When asked what kinds of rules he imposes, she responded with a laugh and asked, "what rules"?

"My mom and I argue mostly. Usually it has something to do with my friends and school. But lately, she has stopped giving me such a hard time. Maybe he has convinced her that I'm growing up and that I should start making decisions on my own."

Her mother corroborated this sentiment with an indication that she was prepared to give up on any further arguments with her daughter. She stated, "I guess she's got to grow-up sometime, hopefully sooner than later".

Nine stepfathers used an authoritative parenting style with their adolescent; two of these stepfathers were in families where the adolescent was less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Both of these stepfathers indicated the importance of explaining to their adolescents why particular rules exist, and how it's in their best interest to follow these guidelines. Upon questioning these adolescents, it became apparent that they understood the nature of these rules; both indicated they had heard these rules from their mothers. However, there appeared to be resentment that it was their stepfathers making these statements.

One of these adolescents indicated, "I don't want to hear him tell me what to do. It's like he's trying to take over from my mom. And what really bothers me is that she knows it too."

The other adolescent shared similar beliefs, but specified that the reason for his feelings was associated with the length of time they have known each other. "He tries too hard at being a father. It's not that he's mean. I just don't understand why he would try to enforce rules on a family he hasn't known for very long." Each of these stepfamilies had been together for six months.

Seven of the nine stepfathers who used an authoritative parenting style had adolescents who were willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Stepfathers and adolescents in these families shared an understanding of the necessity to provide a reason why family rules are made. Few stepfathers felt their requests differed from those made by their partners. Generally, their partners concurred with these beliefs; no one could recall an instance where the adolescent had complained that the stepfather's demand was unreasonable in relation to those made by their mothers. Similarly, adolescents in these families indicated that conflicts with their stepfathers' requests were rare. When they did occur, the cause was most often a matter of misunderstanding, rather than any attempt to ignore the legitimacy of the stepfathers' authority.

3. Hypothesis #3 Conclusions

Hypothesis #3 states that only an adjunctive stepfather parenting style will increase the likelihood that an adolescent will accept a stepfather's authority. More specifically, it tests the

prediction that authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles will have a negative impact in gaining an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority.

The quantitative data in Table #7 represent a major anomaly in the research findings. Contrary to the hypothesis, stepfamilies where the stepfather used an authoritative parenting style had a greater number of adolescents who were willing to accept their stepfather's authority. As anticipated, stepfathers who used a permissive or authoritarian parenting style had adolescents who were less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Other than adjunctive parenting, authoritative parenting would be the preferred type of proactive parenting styles.

In probing why only three of the six stepfamilies where the stepfather used an adjunctive parenting style were in the A group, subsequent interviews revealed that in two of the other three stepfamilies in the NA group (families #9 & 10) the stepfather's parenting input in the stepfather-stepchild relationship was insignificant. The measurement of mutual respect and disciplinary development showed that adolescents in these stepfamilies were less than willing to accept their stepfathers' authority, but these variables appear to inaccurately portray the nature of the stepfather-adolescent relationship in these families. As described by the mother and stepfather in each of these stepfamilies, these stepfathers do not actively parent, and their involvement with their adolescent had always remained peripheral. These adolescents' relationships with the stepfather were described as neither rejecting nor accepting but rather as neutral.

A possible explanation for the unexpected finding that so many stepfathers who used an authoritative parenting style had adolescents that were willing to accept their authority is simply that the data are cross-sectional, not longitudinal. Sixty individuals who are members of 20 stepfamilies and have been together for varying lengths of time were measured at roughly the same point in time, instead of measuring each stepfamily at an early stage of their relationship and then again at a later stage of their relationship. Had the latter been done, my guess is that the results would have been different. As it is, the finding may be due to some cohort effect in the sampling, or perhaps it is the case that a child has less to complain about when rules are clearly stated, explained in open communication, and can be challenged. Whatever the reasons for the surprising findings, hypothesis #3 is obviously not supported by the data.

Table 7 The Relationship Between Stepfather's Parenting Style and Acceptance of Authority		Position on Authority	
		Accepting Authority	Rejecting Authority
parenting style	permissive	0	1
	adjunctive	3	3
	authoritative	7	2
	authoritarian	0	4

D. Hypothesis #4

In stepfamilies where the biological mother employs an authoritative parenting style, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

1. Quantitative Findings on Biological Mother's Parenting Style

The fourth independent variable is biological mother parenting style. Questions were designed to measure the biological mother's perception of her parenting style with the adolescent and the adolescent's perception of his/her mother's parenting style with him/her. Composite scores on each parenting style ranged from 5 (strongly disagreed with each statement) to 35 (strongly agreed with each statement). Parenting style was determined by the highest mean score on statements in which the biological mother and adolescent most strongly agreed (see Appendix D for scores on the biological mothers' parenting styles). Three biological mothers used an adjunctive parenting style and 17 biological mothers used an authoritative parenting style. These scores indicate little variation between biological mothers' parenting styles. These data supports the hypothesis.(see Table #8).

Table #8 Biological Mother's Parenting Style

Range 5 - 35 (Permissive, Adjunctive, Authoritative, Authoritarian)
 (Composite of biological mother and adolescent scores)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #12	.....	Adjunctive
Family #19	.....	Adjunctive
Family #20	.....	Adjunctive
Family #1	.....	Authoritative
Family #2	.....	Authoritative
Family #3	.....	Authoritative
Family #4	.....	Authoritative
Family #5	.....	Authoritative
Family #6	.....	Authoritative
Family #7	.....	Authoritative
Family #8	.....	Authoritative
Family #9	.....	Authoritative
Family #10	.....	Authoritative
Family #11	.....	Authoritative
Family #13	.....	Authoritative
Family #14	.....	Authoritative
Family #15	.....	Authoritative
Family #16	.....	Authoritative
Family #17	.....	Authoritative
Family #18	.....	Authoritative

2. Qualitative findings on biological mother's parenting style

The quantitative analysis of differential perceptions in parenting style revealed that the mothers in NA group families #9 and #10 had the highest scores on the authoritative scale. This finding is consistent with other findings on these families in that these mothers have clearly defined their parental roles to their adolescents and partners. These mothers are the sole

sources of parental authority to their adolescents. Second, other than these two families, mothers in the A group had higher scores on the authoritative scale than mothers in the NA group families. Adolescents in the A group families, in contrast to NA group families, have a better understanding of the rules because they have been clearly stated and explained in open communication. Third, the highest scores for mothers in NA group families #12, #19 and #20 are on the adjunctive parenting scale. Furthermore, the difference in each of these family's scores on the four parenting styles is minimal. This suggests a lack of consistency in the parental expectations of these mothers, that these expectations are vaguely defined, and as a consequence it is difficult for these adolescents to know what is expected of them.

In the interviews with these families it was important to probe the extent to which biological mothers had maintained consistency in their parenting styles with their adolescents since the formation of their stepfamily. The accounts given by the adolescents in families #12, #19 and #20 to describe the effect of their mothers' use of an adjunctive parenting style differed significantly from their mothers' accounts. Adolescents in these families were consistent in their belief that their mothers had transferred their responsibilities as parents to their partners. Each adolescent described his/her mother's authority over him/her as being somewhat submissive in relation to their stepfather's authority. One adolescent used the phrase, "sold out" to describe a change in his mother's parenting style.

"She has never been strict or anything, but in the last year or so, she has really sold out to my stepfather. I think he just manipulates her into believing that we have to be told what to do all the time. It's no good trying to talk to her; she'll just tell him and then go along with whatever he says."

Another adolescent also expressed the belief that conversation with his mother was affected by his mother's willingness to go along with his stepfather's demands, rather than maintain the type of relationship they had in the past.

"We always had our disagreements but at least I could tell her how I felt and she would listen. Now talking to her is like talking to him. He always ends up finding out. And even though the complaint was given to her, the answer comes from him. I remember once, not too long ago, telling her about this. We sat and talked and I really thought it would make a difference. Not so. She must have tried to explain what I said, to him. He informed me that if I had a problem about him, I should be man enough to tell him. Now I say nothing to nobody."

Mothers in these families were more inclined to view the role of their parenting style as complementary rather than subordinate to their partners' parental style. One mother suggested that it's difficult for any one individual to raise a family.

"You never know if you are doing the right thing or not. I work a lot of weekends and I never know from one week to the next my shifts for the following week. What we've tried to do, is discuss issues of the day after either of us come home from work. That way, we can maintain some consistency with what is happening with the kids."

Further discussions with this mother revealed that supporting her partner's idea of how to parent her adolescent was less stressful than negotiating disagreements between her adolescent and partner.

"It used to be a battle zone whenever I came home; my son would be after me before I even got my coat off and my partner would be alone in the bedroom tuning out the world. I forever felt like I was being torn apart. Our therapist told us we need to talk more with each other, than at each other. And I think we've succeeded. Now, before I entertain my son's complaints, my partner and I will sit and have coffee together. Whatever measures Bob has begun regarding discipline, I try to remain consistent."

Seven of the seventeen stepfamilies where the biological mother used an authoritative parenting style were in the NA group. Adolescents in four of these NA group families expressed concern for the change in the ways their mothers discharged their authority. One adolescent felt that whenever he and his mother disagreed on a decision she would ask his stepfather to enter their conversations in order to support her justifications. He stated, "It's not that I'm complaining about my rules, it's just that it's as if she can't make a decision on her own. She had to before." Adolescents in the other three families shared a similar concern, however here the emphasis was not on the mother's ability to make a personal decision, but rather how her discipline had become increasingly more stringent since she remarried. One adolescent indicated, "I don't think she's unfair or anything, but she has changed. I know for sure, in the last couple of years, I've been grounded more often and usually for longer lengths of time than before."

There was also evidence to suggest that mothers in these seven NA group families did not incorporate the stepfather's input into many family decisions. Adolescents in these families indicated that their mothers would discuss family rules with them on the occasions when their stepfathers were not present. One adolescent explained that he and his mother had always talked alone about family rules. "Rules are something my mom and I often talk about. For as long as I can remember, we just sit in the kitchen, usually after school, and we'd discuss school work and sometimes she'd tell me about her job." When asked if his stepfather joined their discussions, he stated, "He would most often be doing something else if he was home or else he would be in work." He further indicated that his stepfather was never asked to leave them

alone, it was just his habit to depart from the situation if the adolescent and mother were sitting down discussing family issues. "He likes to putter in his workshop. He's either fixing something or making something new. But I know that when mom and I are finished, he and her have coffee together. I guess he must hear us walking around or something." Other adolescents in this group named similar behaviour where their stepfathers would remove themselves when they and their mothers talked of family issues. One adolescent described how his stepfather would go for coffee to the donut shop around the corner every Saturday morning. Another described how the stepfather referred to his bedroom as the "inner sanctum", and stated that his stepfather used this room as a personal retreat. These adolescents were very clear about the fact that they and their mothers would regularly talk during the time their stepfathers were not present.

Mothers of these NA group adolescents concurred with many of these statements. Several felt it necessary to maintain a personal dialogue with their adolescent as they had always done in the past. These mothers explained the importance of minimizing any disruptive effects as a result of the formation of their new family. The stepfather's exclusion from these conversations, however, established the potential for conflict. If the stepfather did not regularly share in routine discussions, his input was received after decisions were already made. This situation created a problematic context whereby the stepfather's attitudes might conflict with these decisions. These exclusionary practices might cause him to question his legitimacy as a family member particularly if he felt compelled to comply with these decisions. As one stepfather stated, " Sometimes, I don't know if I actually belong here". Furthermore, if the stepfather

addressed the need to change these decisions, his views might be disruptive to the established order within the family. Such disruptions might cause the adolescent to question his or her stepfather's legitimacy as an authority.

The mothers in families #9 and #10 felt that they, not their partners, were the key sources of authority in their adolescents' lives. They, not unlike the mothers in the A group, expressed a strong need to maintain the same authoritative relationship with their adolescent as they had done in the past. All A group mothers indicated that family rules were discussed with the whole family. Group A mothers with older adolescents indicated that their adolescents were all becoming increasingly autonomous, particularly with issues related to bed time, post-secondary education and part-time work. However, these mothers and those of younger adolescents expected their adolescents to abide by family rules. These mothers also shared the belief that rules do not necessarily have to remain rigid, but are subject to negotiation under the right circumstances. As one mother put it,

"I'm not without feelings nor am I that old. I remember what it's like growing-up as a teenager. When she asks me if she can stay out later than her weekend curfew, I try not to immediately dismiss her request. It's hard mind you. I'll ask her to explain why she wants to stay out later, what time she plans on being home, where she's going to be, I'll demand a phone number, and most important does she have a ride home. To qualify all this, I think it's important also, to say, no matter how good of a kid I've got, and she really is a great kid, this won't happen every weekend."

Adolescents in these families showed considerable respect for their mothers and generally echoed the sentiments expressed by their mothers.

3. Hypothesis #4 Conclusions

Hypothesis #4 was intended to serve as an elaboration of hypothesis #3. The stepfather's use of an authoritative parenting style was not expected to produce an increased number of adolescents who are willing to accept their stepfather's authority, but even if it did, this hypothesis suggests that only a certain type of parenting style used by the biological mother will function to increase the chances that an adolescent will accept a stepfather's authority. More specifically, it tests the prediction that adjunctive, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles will have a negative impact in gaining an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority.

The quantitative data in Table #10 show that biological mothers use an authoritative parenting style more frequently than other parenting styles. The fact that seven (families #1, #5, #8, #9, #10, #11, #13) of 17 stepfamilies where the biological mother used an authoritative parenting style had adolescents who were less than willing to accept their stepfathers' authority puts the efficacy of maternal authoritative parenting as a way to enhance acceptance of stepfather authority into question. A possible reason for this finding in at least four of the families may lie in the combined effect of the mother's parenting style with the stepfather's parenting style. Stepfathers in families #1 and #8 used an authoritative parenting style yet had been a part of the family for only six months. In family #11, the stepfather used a permissive parenting style, and in family #13 the stepfather used an authoritarian parenting style. Mothers in these families maintained individual responsibility for discussing family issues with their adolescent. However, these practices increase the possibility of conflict with their partner. In

adjusting to this problem, these mothers modified their authoritative relationship with their adolescent by becoming more stringent in their demands. These mothers' scores on the authoritarian scale are only slightly lower than their scores on the authoritative scale (see Table #32 in Appendix D). In families #9 and #10 the biological mother is the sole source of authority over the adolescent, but the stepfathers in both families accepted and supported this arrangement. In family #5, the stepfather used an adjunctive parenting style and therefore its properties in the NA group cannot be explained with these variables (see Table #9). Overall the preponderance of evidence supports hypothesis #4.

Table #9 Stepfather and Biological Mother Parenting Styles

	Stepfather Parenting Style	Mother Parenting Style
	(NA Families in Boldface)	
Family #11.....	Permissive	Authoritative
Family #12.....	Authoritarian	Adjunctive
Family #13.....	Authoritarian	Authoritative
Family #19.....	Authoritarian	Adjunctive
Family #20.....	Authoritarian	Adjunctive
Family #1.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #2.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #4.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #7.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #8.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #14...	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #15.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #17.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #18.....	Authoritative	Authoritative
Family #3.....	Adjunctive	Authoritative
Family #5.....	Adjunctive	Authoritative
Family #6.....	Adjunctive	Authoritative
Family #9.....	Non-Parenting	Authoritative
Family #10.....	Non-Parenting	Authoritative
Family #16.....	Adjunctive	Authoritative

Table 10 The Relationship Between Biological Mother's Parenting Style and Acceptance of Authority		Position on Authority	
		Accepting Authority	Rejecting Authority
parenting style	permissive	0	0
	adjunctive	0	3
	authoritative	10	7
	authoritarian	0	0

E. Hypothesis #5

In stepfamilies where the stepfather experiences the fewest number of objections from family members about his parental expectations, the adolescent will be more willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

1. Quantitative Findings on Stepfather Role Challenge

The fifth independent variable, stepfather role challenge, is comprised of the sum of composite scores on the Paternal Solidarity subscale, the Loyalty Division subscale, the Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale and the External Disciplinary Challenge subscale. The number of challenges from family members about the parental expectations of the stepfather ranged from 19 (a low number of challenges) to 95 (a high number of challenges). Actual family scores ranged between 21.0 and 46.0, indicating only moderate challenge to the stepfather's parental expectations.

It is important to note, however, that the NA group scores cluster at the upper-end of this range while A group scores cluster at the lower end. This finding is consistent in the Loyalty Division subscale and the Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale. Scores from the Loyalty Division subscale suggest adolescents in NA group families are moderately more likely to question their stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with their biological father than adolescents in A group families.

Scores from the Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale also suggest a moderate difference between families regarding partner's perceptions of the number of objections to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. Scores begin at the lower-range of the scale and end in the mid-range suggesting that in some stepfamilies partners have few objections to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent while in other families partners have a moderate number of objections. Finally, NA group scores cluster at the upper-end of this range while A group scores cluster at the lower end.

Findings on the Paternal Solidarity subscale and the External Disciplinary Challenge subscale were not consistent with those on the Stepfather Role Challenge scale. On the Paternal Solidarity subscale, scores indicate that all families have a low degree of conflict between their adolescent's feeling of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority. Furthermore, there is no relationship between NA and A group scores and family scores on this subscale. On the External Disciplinary Challenge subscale, all families experienced few objections from extended family members regarding the stepfather's disciplinary expectations with the adolescent. Eight of the ten highest scores in stepfather role

challenge belonged to families where the adolescent was less than willing to accept the stepfather's authority. Hypothesis #5 is therefore supported (see Table #11 for individual family scores on stepfather challenges).

Table #11 Stepfather Role Challenge

Range 19 (low number of challenges) - 95 (high number of challenges)
(Composite of biological mother and stepfather scores)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #16	21.0
Family #2	21.5
Family #17	21.5
Family #4	23.0
Family #13	23.0
Family #9	23.0
Family #14	25.0
Family #6	25.5
Family #7	27.0
Family #15	27.0
Family #18	27.0
Family #5	27.0
Family #8	28.0
Family #10	29.0
Family #1	30.0
Family #3	31.5
Family #19	35.5
Family #11	37.0
Family #20	37.5
Family #12	46.0

2. Qualitative Findings on Stepfather Role Challenge

The greatest divergence in individual scores appeared on the Loyalty Division subscale and the Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale. On the Loyalty Division subscale, this divergence was particularly distinct in families #10 and #12. Interview data indicate that in both of these NA group families, the mothers felt there was a strong likelihood that their adolescents would question their stepfathers' authority following visits or contacts with their biological fathers. Their partners, however, felt that it was very unlikely their adolescents would question their authority following these contacts or visits.

In family #10, the mother had assumed the sole responsibility for discussing with her adolescent all visitations with his biological father. Furthermore, she alone, negotiated these visits with her ex-partner. Since her ex-partner lived out of the province, the adolescent's visits with his father were often for several weeks. This mother indicated that the change in authoritative structure between households frequently resulted in her adolescent returning to her home only to resent the presence of her new partner. However, she, not her partner, was the one to discuss issues involving a return to the authoritative structure of their home. As such, this placed her in the position to witness her adolescent's emotions. Her partner did not discuss these issues with the adolescent, and therefore, from his perspective, his adolescent did not more frequently question his authority after he returned from visiting his father than before the visit.

The stepfather in family #12 indicated that while he understood why his wife felt their adolescent had loyalty conflicts between him and her biological father, the major source of

conflict with his adolescent when she returned from visiting her biological father stemmed from disagreements concerning the visits. He suggested her stay with her father was frequently longer than initially planned and often neither she nor her father informed anyone of the change in plans. These delays affected activities in the stepfamily, and ultimately created tension among its members. In an attempt to curtail these tensions, he indicated that, on occasion, he had stopped the visits. More often than not, however, these actions were challenged by his adolescent. The mother played a passive role in these confrontations. She suggested that while she understood both sides of the issue, she could not sit back and allow her daughter to continue feeling so upset. In most family disagreements, she sided with her daughter. She and her partner agreed that this type of scenario was frequently the cause of their family arguments.

The Internal Disciplinary Challenge subscale had the greatest divergence in individual scores. Stepfathers and their partners in families #8, #9, #12, #19, #20, #3 and #6 had the greatest difference in scores. Five of these families (#8, #9, #12, #19 and #20) are in the NA group. Family #12 is the only family where both partners frequently objected to each others disciplinary practices with the adolescent. In five of these seven families, it was the mothers who frequently objected to their partners' disciplinary practices. Only in families #8 and #6 did the stepfathers more frequently object about the way their partners' disciplined their adolescent. This would suggest that mothers have more concerns regarding their partners' parental role with their adolescents than do their partners. This finding is particularly relevant given its prevalence in families where the adolescent is less than willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

The interviews were used to analyze the types of challenges between partners concerning the stepfather's parental expectations and the circumstances under which these challenges took place. Problems expressed by mothers in the NA group clustered around stepfather power, particularly discipline and authority. These mothers made statements about their partner's relationship with their adolescent such as the following:

"I sometimes resent it when he tries to discipline my son, but I try to remember this is a learning process for all of us. I know patience is important, we've talked about it many times, but it can be really hard."

"There have been occasions where I don't feel he has the right to interfere with the things I have told my son."

"Watching them when they argue can drive me crazy. Thank goodness the two of them have been able to resolve their differences in the last while. It was often very uncomfortable at one point."

When asked what advice they would give to a friend involved in a stepfamily relationship, they responded, "Talk, talk and more talk. Discuss what you would like to expect from your spouse with regard to discipline and support."

Most stepfathers in the NA group were not opposed to their partner's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. Furthermore, all concurred with the importance of discussing their parental expectations, although several indicated a need to broaden the context for family discussion. Several stepfathers were concerned that their partner had not adjusted their discussion of these practices to include their participation in decisions involving the adolescent's activities. These stepfathers indicated that while it is important for their partner to maintain an authoritative relationship with their child, it is also important to ensure that everyone is made to feel included

in the new family relationship. Stepfathers in this group indicated that on occasion, their input was requested after their partner and adolescent had made a decision concerning an event or activity involving the adolescent. This placed the stepfather in an awkward position. He could either agree with the decision or challenge it, but either way, he did not contribute to it. Furthermore, if he challenged a decision, he not only disappointed his adolescent and distanced their relationship, he created a gulf between his partner and himself.

Parental expectations were seldom challenged by either partner in A group families. Most partners in these families never formally discussed how the stepfather would involve himself in an authoritative role with the adolescent. Mothers in this group did, however, actively promote family discussions. They indicated the importance of not only incorporating the presence of another individual in the family household but actively ensuring their partner be made to feel a part of the family. Coalitions between mother and adolescent were avoided by creating a context in which decisions which affected the family unit were determined by both partners and the adolescent.

3. Hypothesis #5 Conclusions

Testing this hypothesis involves comparing stepfamilies where the stepfather has a high number of role challenges with stepfamilies where the stepfather has a low number of role challenges to determine if there are any differences in their adolescents' willingness to accept their stepfathers' authority. This provides a measure of the effects of objections regarding the

stepfather's parental expectations on the adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

The quantitative data in Table #12 show that stepfamilies where the stepfather has a low number of challenges to his role, has a greater number of adolescents who are willing to accept his authority than those stepfamilies where the stepfather has a high number of challenges. This finding, which was confirmed by the interview data, suggests that stepfather role challenges increases the likelihood of the adolescent rejecting his stepfather's authority. Hence hypothesis #5 is supported.

Interviews revealed that the greatest number of challenges, particularly in NA group families, are between the biological mother and stepfather. Mothers in NA group families, unlike A group families, give more priority to maintaining the exclusivity of their relationship with their adolescent, than incorporating this relationship with their new partner. The parental expectations of these stepfathers are subject to doubt and this consequently increases the potential conflict in decisions involving the adolescent.

Table 12 The Relationship Between Stepfather's Challenges and Acceptance of Authority		Position on Authority	
		Accepting Authority	Rejecting Authority
Stepfather's Challenges	Low	9	3
	High	1	7

3.3 Demographics Of The Sample

Certainly factors other than the independent variables helped shape the orientation of the adolescent to a stepfather's authority. While definitive analysis of the effect of other variables is not possible, the following demographic information provides some context for interpreting the results of this study (see Appendix A).

A. Gender

Stepchild gender had no influence on their willingness to accept their stepfather's authority. There were an equal number of 5 males and 5 females in the group of 10 stepfamilies whose adolescents were more willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Similarly, there were an equal number of 5 males and 5 females in the group of 10 stepfamilies whose adolescent was less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority.

B. Age

As is apparent from Table #13 below, the age of the adolescent had no discernible bearing on the likelihood that they would be more or less willing to accept their stepfathers' authority.

Table #13 Adolescent Age by Family Type

AGE/ TYPE OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
12 YEARS OLD	1	0	1
13 YEARS OLD	2	2	4
14 YEARS OLD	0	1	1
15 YEARS OLD	1	2	3
16 YEARS OLD	1	3	4
17 YEARS OLD	3	1	4
18 YEARS OLD	2	1	3
	10	10	20

C. Income

There is no discernible pattern between stepfamily income and adolescent's willingness to accept their stepfather's authority (see Table #14).

Table #14 Frequency of Family Income by Family Type

INCOME/ TYPES OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
\$ 20,000-40,000	2	1	3
\$ 40,000-60,000	3	6	9
\$ 60,000-80,000	4	1	5
\$ 80,000-100,000	0	0	0
\$ 100,000-150,000	1	2	3
	10	10	20

D. Length of Time Together as a Family

There was no discernible relationship between length of time together as a family and the adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority, as Table #15 demonstrates.

Table #15 Length of Time Together as a Family by Family Type

TIME TOGETHER AS A FAMILY/ TYPES OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
0.5-1 YEAR	2	3	5
1-2 YEARS	2	3	5
2.5-3.5 YEARS	3	1	4
4-6 YEARS	2	2	4
8 YEARS	0	1	1
10 YEARS	1	0	1
	10	10	20

E. Marital Status

There was no apparent relationship between marital status and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority (see Table #16).

Table #16 Marital Status by Family Type

MARITAL STATUS/FAMILY TYPE	NA	A	N
COMMON-LAW	7	5	12
MARRIED	3	5	8
	10	10	20

F. Relationship of Wife to Her Ex-Partner

The better the wife's relationship with her ex-partner the more likely the adolescent is willing to accept the stepfather's authority (see Table #17 below). While this relationship is far from perfect, the wife's ability to get along with her ex-partner has a positive influence on the authoritative relationship between her new partner and her adolescent. This finding tends to contradict the literature in that a poor relationship between ex-partners presumably increases the emotional and economic dependence of the stepfamily on the stepfather thus increasing the likelihood that the adolescent would be more willing to accept his authority (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

Table #17 Relationship of Wife to Her Ex-Partner by Family Type

RELATIONSHIP OF WIFE TO EX-PARTNER/ TYPES OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
VERY- GOOD	1	3	4
AMICABLE	2	4	6
NOT GOOD	5	3	8
NON-EXISTENT	2	0	2
	10	10	20

G. Relationship of Stepfather to His Partner's Ex-Partner

The better the stepfather's relationship with his partner's ex-partner the more likely the adolescent is willing to accept the stepfather's authority. Again, while this relationship is not perfect, it does suggest that the stepfather's positive relationship with his partner's ex-partner

has a positive influence on his relationship with the adolescent. This tends to support the literature in that a positive relationship between stepfather and biological father reduces potential loyalty conflicts between the adolescent and these male parental figures (Ganong and Coleman, 1994).

**Table #18 Relationship of the Stepfather to
His Partner's Ex-Partner by Family Type**

RELATIONSHIP OF STEPFATHER TO HIS PARTNER'S EX-PARTNER/ TYPES OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
VERY- GOOD	1	3	4
AMICABLE	1	2	3
NOT GOOD	1	2	3
NON-EXISTENT	7	3	10
	10	10	20

H. Stepfamilies Who Have Had a Child Together

Three of the 20 stepfamilies had at least one child together; two of these stepfamilies' scores are in the NA group and one is in the A group, suggesting that this factor made no discernible difference in the adolescent stepchild's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority. The small sample size of course, makes it impossible to determine with certainty whether a relationship exists between these variables.

I. Adolescent's Contact With Biological Father

The data in Table #19 suggest that the adolescent's increased frequency of contact with his/her biological father increases the likelihood that he/she would be willing to accept the stepfather's authority. This finding is contrary to the literature (Ganong and Coleman, 1994) and could be a spurious result.

Table #19 Contacts by the Type of Contact and the Type of Family

FREQUENCY OF CONTACTS /TYPES OF FAMILY	NA	A	N
VISIT ONCE A WEEK	2	5	7
VISIT EVERY SECOND WEEK-END	0	0	0
VISIT ONCE A MONTH	1	5	6
VISIT ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS	2	0	2
PHONE CALLS AND/OR LETTERS 3-5 TIMES A YEAR	5	0	5
	10	10	20

J. Stepfather's Children Not Living At Home

Nine of the 20 stepfathers had biological children from a previous relationship not living in their household; all of these children were under the age of 18 years. Seven out of these nine stepfathers were in the NA group. There is no perceptible relationship between stepfathers' frequency of contact with their non-resident children and their ability to gain their adolescents' willingness to accept their authority.

K. Stepfather's Children Living in the Remarriage Household

Four of the 20 stepfathers had biological children from a previous relationship living full time in the remarriage household. Three of these stepfamilies were in the NA group. While these numbers indicate that a more complex stepfamily relationship detracts from an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority, three of four stepfamilies are too small a sample to generalize beyond these particular stepfamilies.

This chapter has presented the findings of the effect of a series of sources of strain on an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority. It described how the data were processed, it profiled the characteristics of the stepfamilies in the sample, and tested the relationships between the different sources of strain and an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority.

CHAPTER IV SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The review of the literature was suggestive of many factors that may have an impact on whether the adolescent child will accept the stepfather as an authority. This study has allowed us to eliminate some of them, and has enriched and refined our understanding of how other factors operate. This research has also demonstrated the promise of a particular methodological approach which can capture the points of view and the interactional dynamics of the three parties most involved: the stepfather, biological mother and adolescent child.

A. Substantive Results

Studies have established the centrality of the stepfather-stepchild relationship for the successful negotiation of the stepfather's role in the stepfamily. The quality of that relationship has been found to be a better predictor of healthy stepfamily functioning than the quality of the marital relationship (Clingempeel et. al., 1984). When adolescents reported that their stepfathers offered less encouragement, they were predominantly those adolescents who were less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority (NA group families). These same adolescents indicated that under these circumstances they were less than willing to reciprocate the few initiatives of their stepfathers which were, for the most part, of an instrumental nature.

When stepfathers helped to cultivate supportive, nurturing, befriending behaviour most adolescents responded positively (A families), but when they did not the adolescents responded

less positively (NA families). This finding differs with Brown et. al's finding (1990). In Brown et. al's study all stepfathers perceived their behaviour as supportive, yet the reaction of the adolescents was divided positively and negatively. I would suggest that the present findings are more reliable because the sample was drawn from a non-clinical population whereas Brown et. al. utilized a sample where 50% of the families were receiving therapy for a child focused problem.

Significant differences did exist between the NA and A groups in the amount and nature of discussion between adolescents and stepfathers. Group A stepfathers negotiated their role as family members prior to establishing an authoritative relationship with their adolescent. NA group stepfathers were less inclined to use discussion as a means of clarifying the nature of the relationship. They did, however, more frequently use conversation to provide direction or request their adolescent's help in performing household tasks. This suggests that instrumental role behaviour is less important in increasing the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority than the more affective discussions between stepfather, mother and adolescent to negotiate the legitimacy of the stepfather as a family member. Previous research has also found little difference between functional and dysfunctional stepfamilies in the stepparent's involvement with the child (Anderson, 1982). These studies, reported however, that functional stepfamilies were distinguished from dysfunctional ones by a higher level of communication between the stepchild and stepfather.

The biological mother's use of an authoritative parenting style was positively related to the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority. This supports previous findings

(Heatherington and Clingempeel, 1992; Fine and Kurdek, 1992) where the biological mother's use of an authoritative parenting style had a positive impact on adolescent adjustment in stepfamilies. These mothers have continued to maintain the active role of primary disciplinarian in their adolescent's life.

The fact that seven of 17 stepfamilies where the biological mother used an authoritative parenting style had adolescents who were less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority was unanticipated and counterintuitive. Evidence from this research suggests a potential interactive effect between the mother's parenting style and the stepfather's parenting style. Interview data indicated that in at least four families, mothers modified their relationship with their adolescent by becoming more stringent in their demands in order to synchronize it with the parental relationship between their partner and adolescent. The stepfather's parenting style appears to have precipitated the change and posed a potential threat to the adolescent's independence. Ultimately, this resulted in the increased likelihood of the adolescent questioning the stepfather's authority. These findings are not unlike the results of clinical research which has found that the behaviour of newly remarried mothers tend to become more demanding in their disciplinary practices with their child (Bray et al., 1987). The present study has clarified this relationship by showing that it was not the physical presence of a stepfather which produced a change in the mother's parenting practices, but rather, the influence of his parenting style on the dynamics of the relationship between mother and adolescent.

This study corroborated the findings of previous research (Robinson and Barret, 1986; Crosbie-Burnett, 1989a) that stepfathers who experience higher levels of conflict over parental

expectations with their partner have more disciplinary problems with their children than stepfathers with low levels of conflict. Stepfathers in NA group families received a moderately higher number of challenges to their parental expectations than stepfathers in A group families. These challenges came almost exclusively from their partners.

Mothers in NA group families, unlike A group families, gave more priority to maintaining the primacy of their relationship with their adolescent and often declined to incorporate their new partner into the disciplinary/governance dimension of their relationship with their child. Heatherington et.al (1982) similarly found that some mothers in stepfamilies experience a conflict between their desire to protect their adolescent from the disruptive effects of divorce and the need to maintain a consistent level of discipline with their adolescent. The results of this study corroborate the Heatherington et. al findings and deepen our understanding of the underlying sources of strain in stepfamilies. However, unlike stepfathers in Heatherington et. al's study (1982), stepfathers in the present study were not critical of their partner's parenting practices, but instead were critical of the extent to which they were allowed to participate in family decisions involving the adolescent. The parental expectations of these stepfathers were subject to ambiguity and consequently increased the number of conflicts with their partners.

Kirk's research (1984) on adoptive, and to a limited extent stepfamily, relationships stresses the positive value in acknowledging the differences between fictive and natal kinship. This study did not support these findings. The question to be answered is why did so many families in the present study not feel it necessary to communicate with the adolescent concerning the differences in the nature of their stepfamily relationship as compared to a natal family

relationship? This issue becomes particularly pertinent given the fact that, not unlike adoptive relationships, the formation of stepfamily relationships involves the need to create a new family identity wherein each individual can develop a sense of belonging (Kirk, 1984). One possible explanation is that in adoptive families parents must recognize the fact that their child has been totally removed from his or her genealogical location and no longer has regular contact with his or her birth parents, while stepfathers enter a family in which the child's genealogical location has only been disrupted by the removal of the birth father from the family home. Such a family has its own socio-cultural order and this order is maintained through the continued presence of the biological mother and intermittent presence of the biological father in the life of the adolescent. There is also continuity in biography with the mother who has gone through the disruptions with her child. Stepfathers in this situation may attempt to save their adolescents the discomfort of discussing their new family identity given these on-going relationships. In other words, it may simply be that the continuing presence of one biological parent and the more regular involvement of the non-residential biological parent makes this role distinction less important in the lives of stepchildren than it is for adoptive children.

The findings with respect to the hypothesis which predicted a relationship between stepfather parenting style and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority, were not readily interpretable. Four styles of parenting were posited: authoritative, adjunctive, permissive and authoritarian. As it turns out, there was an additional option: non-parenting. In two families (#9 & #10) it became clear that some stepfathers do not actively parent, in that their involvement with their adolescent had always remained peripheral. A non-parenting style

would more accurately describe such a relationship. As anticipated, stepfathers who used a permissive or authoritarian parenting style had adolescents who were less than willing to accept their stepfather's authority, and stepfamilies where the stepfather used an authoritative parenting style had a greater number of adolescents who were willing to accept their stepfather's authority. Authoritative parents are proactive in their interaction with adolescents, and their success in establishing a positive rapport is achieved by engaging in a clear, yet relatively demanding, communication pattern which does not threaten their adolescent's independence. Adjunctive parents react to events as they unfold offering support without imposing expectations. Perhaps the most fruitful approach is a blending of these two styles, in which step-fathers support their partner's wishes but also attempt to explain to the adolescent the reason for existing rules.

The focus of the relationships in this study is on the social construction of meaning within the organization of the stepfamily, and as such, comports well with ethnomethodology, symbolic interaction, and with functional definitions of the family. The parent-child role is socially negotiated. Blumer suggested that role making is an interpretative paradigm. Actors continually take into account the perspective of the other while constructing their social reality. Similarly, Garfinkel stressed that all social order is negotiated and is accepted until further notice. The activity of creating a taken-for-granted reality is especially called for in emergent settings like creating a working blended-family structure. Stepfamily members must be responsible for communicating their taken-for-granted reality with personal accountability as identified in Garfinkel's social psychology. The rules stepfamily members use to construct their social

reality, the way they apply these rules, and the methods they use to create a sense of order in their lives enhances and broadens traditional conceptions of authoritative relationships within the stepfamily. This study has shown the significance of the reciprocity of perspectives in developing these relationships. Many stepfathers assumed they shared the same understanding of role taking as other family members until they were given evidence to the contrary. The findings of this study revealed how stepfamilies actively and continuously organized their relationships based on these emergent understandings. For example, many of the stepfathers in the NA group families initially assumed that part of their parental responsibility included discussing with their partner and adolescent those issues which were pertinent to the family unit. It became evident early in their relationships that during those times when their partner and adolescent discussed disciplinary/governance issues, they were not necessarily expected to participate. Although the structure of these relationships produced conflicts in parental expectations, several stepfathers adjusted their actions in order to accommodate their partner and adolescent's privacy.

B. Methodological Results

This study was based on multiple respondents' perceptions of the impact of sources of strain on adolescent's willingness to accept their stepfather's authority. Previous survey research (Esses and Campbell, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1994) results on stepfamily relationships have been inconclusive due to the fact that conclusions have been based upon responses of a single stepfamily member. Previous studies (Bowerman and Irish, 1962; Duberman, 1973) have

also suggested that adolescent stepchildren tend to view their stepfamily relationship more negatively than either the stepparent or residential biological parent. The findings in this study, however, suggest that the greatest differences in responses were not between adolescents and adults, but rather between individuals in families where the adolescent was willing to accept the stepfather's authority and individuals in families where the adolescent was less than willing to accept this authority. The differences, however, were not great.

When questioned, adolescents who perceived their relationship with their stepfather as being somewhat negative were far more likely to have different responses than either adult, as opposed to adolescents who perceived a positive relationship with their stepfathers. These differences were primarily attributed to a lack of clarity in their understanding of their relationship with their stepfathers. In A group families, it was the adults who perceived more potential sources of strain than the adolescents.

The extent to which each adolescent accepted their stepfather's authority also had an impact on the level of agreement between their mother and stepfather's responses. Responses between the biological mothers and their partners in the NA group families showed greater divergence than those between partners in the A group families.

Combined, these findings emphasize the need to survey more than one family member and also suggest that the influence of different authoritative structures on the degree of agreement itself needs to be investigated. This supports the study of Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley (1987) where happily remarried couples agreed significantly more in their perceptions of frequency of agreement or disagreement than unhappily remarried couples.

4.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The major contributions of this study can be summarized as follows. First, this study has contributed to our theoretical knowledge within the substantive area of the sociology of the family. The study has brought to the sociology of the family a conceptual definition of authoritative relationships that describes these types of relationships in both natal and alternate family forms. Unlike the largely ascriptive status relationships between adults and children in natal families, step relationships are cultivated through interaction. As a result, mutual respect for the status assigned to stepfamily roles must be achieved. For the stepparent, the development of an authoritative relationship with the adolescent is best secured by taking on a role which supports the parental initiatives of his partner. This relationship minimizes the extent to which the child's and stepfather's expectations conflict, and also removes the potential for conflict in his new partner's roles.

There are several factors that shape child-parent relationships: authority, discipline and nurturance. Our findings allow us to begin to probe the interconnections among these. Familial relationships are based on a social order which is constructed through the negotiation of individual family members.

A second contribution is methodological. The development of an in-person administered questionnaire accompanied by follow-up interviews with multiple stepfamily members drawn from a nonclinical population will enable research in stepfamily relationships to progress in ways that it could not while limited to both clinical samples or individual survey respondents. Other efforts to measure authoritative relationships within stepfamilies have been characterized

by clinical bias and lack of systematic means by which to compare children's and adult's responses. The research design adapted for this study includes the multiple respondents within each family, thus facilitating the comparison of complex patterns within stepfamily life. Because the relationships are complex, the quantitative data are not necessarily definitive; they do, however, allow for a careful and focused discussion with respondents in follow-up interviews.

Third, this study has significance for the growing body of research on authoritative relationships within stepfamilies. The relationships between the variables of this study will allow researchers to use a more informed approach when working with clinical populations. Clinical studies have suggested that the stepfamily structure be considered pathological (Minuchin, 1974) because of its inability to provide instant integration to members because of the ambiguities and uncertainties in each member's mutual relationships. Given this view, families are thought to need a clear organization of roles, whereby rights, duties and responsibilities are enacted by family members. However, the purported need to immediately force a sense of family contradicts the even greater need to allow a relationship to develop between all the actors. Most adults in this study stressed the importance of slowly constructing the stepfather's relationship with the child by the mother's use of an authoritative parenting style with the child as a basis for the new family order. Moreover, this order did not remain fixed and permanent, but rather adapted to the developing relationships between family members.

Clinical studies have also indicated that the stepfamily, not unlike the natal family, is goal-oriented toward intimacy and inclusion. It is assumed that the family is designed to fulfil the same needs in all people. Families in the present study, however, did not all share the same

need for intimacy and inclusion. Stepfathers in families #9 and #10, for example, clearly had no expectations of playing parental roles. Their status was negotiated from the beginning of their relationship with their partners, and based on the longevity of their relationships, this proved to be a successful arrangement.

Clinicians have suggested partners in stepfamilies argue more amongst themselves than partners in first marriage families because of issues related to disciplinary problems with stepchildren. Each of the scales used in this study addressed the partners' level of agreement on issues related to their adolescent's behaviour. Contrary to the clinical studies, results indicated that partners in all families shared a moderate to high level of agreement on these issues. Most families devoted considerable effort in discussing concerns about their adolescent's behaviour in order to ensure both partners shared the same expectations.

Clinicians have also reported that communication between stepparent and stepchild is often strained as a result of contradictory messages concerning stepparent's rights and obligations with respect to the stepchildren. But most mothers in this study played an active role in clarifying the relationship between their partner and adolescent. They took the lead in providing discipline by using an authoritative parenting strategy. They set the initial parameters for the new family's rules and were able to foster a relatively high level of success in building workable patterns which engendered family cohesion.

Finally, clinical studies have suggested that stepfathers lack role clarity because of the complexity created by differing expectations for the performance of the stepfather role. This view is based on Cherlin's (1978) conclusion that the absence of guidelines and norms for role

performance contribute to greater stress and inappropriate solutions to problems with stepfamily members. All the stepfathers in this study, however, had moderate to high levels of role clarity. Their partners played an active role in negotiating their status through discussions with their adolescents. Most stepfathers cooperated with their partner's initiatives and were able to establish a positive relationship with their adolescents. Mothers in each of the families offered substantial support to their partner's relationship with their adolescents.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Many questions have been raised during the course of this research that have not been fully answered, or even addressed. Some have been central to this study's primary focus. The recommendations for further research are as follows.

Methodologically, much could be done to further validate the scales developed for this study, and possibly improve them through revision. The best measures of validity and reliability could be obtained if scores derived from the questionnaires in this sample were compared with scores from additional and larger samples. It would clearly be desirable if large numbers of subjects could be randomly selected from the step population and subjected to both the questionnaire and the interview.

Another way to improve the validity of the results would be a research design that controlled the demographic variables identified in this study: adolescent gender, adolescent age, family income, length of time together as a family, marital status, relationship of wife to her ex-partner, relationship of stepfather to his partner's ex-partner, stepfamilies who have had a child

together, adolescent's contact with the biological father, stepfather's children not living at home, stepfather's children living in the remarriage household. Also more general factors such as racial/ethnic composition of the family might be included.

Future investigations of the effects of demographic characteristics on an adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority might include the comparison of stepfamilies with similar demographics. Longitudinal studies of the effects of these sources of strain on the adolescent's willingness to accept a stepfather's authority would also generate findings more convincing than those of cross-sectional studies such as the present study.

It would be worthwhile to recast the way we think about stepparents. Perhaps we should think about them as members of a family who play a supportive role and not necessarily a parenting role. Nannies, for example, uphold family values, expectations, etc., in the name of the parents but do not establish these core elements of family order. This would allow us to move away from the designation of non-parent or even authoritative parent. For example, a Big Brother may give reasoned advice to an adolescent which may help shape his/her behaviour without confounding the matter by attempting to act the role of parent.

The parenting style of the mother and stepfather as well as the interactive effect between them seems to be of central importance to our understanding of how stepparent authority patterns can be best facilitated. The complexity of such patterns suggests that a more detailed qualitative ethnography of negotiations between the triadic members (mother, stepfather, adolescent) over time would be necessary to adequately probe and tease out the interactive

effects. It is unlikely that the methodology employed here would be adequate although it could be improved through a series of revised questionnaires and more focused interviews.

Finally, further research into stepfather role clarity would benefit from the inclusion of the Stepchild Initiation Subscale (SIS) on the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. SIS provides adolescents an opportunity to express the extent to which they feel that their initiatives have been encouraged by mothers and stepfathers. Given the fact that responses to this subscale strongly supported other components of the scale, it seems advisable to include SIS in any further study in this area.

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Appendix A

STEPFATHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Characteristics (Stepfather's Form)

1. How many of your partner's children live full-time (a minimum of 6 months a year) in this household? _____

2. What are their genders and age? _____

3. With regard to your eldest adolescent stepchild who is under nineteen years of age, how often during the past year did he/she have face to face contact with his/her biological father?

4. Do you have children who live full time in this household?

Yes. No. If so, how many? _____

What are their genders and age? _____

5. Have you and your partner had at least one child together?

Yes. No.

6. What is the marital status between you and your partner? _____

7. How many children do you and your partner have who do not live in this household full-time? Yours _____

Your partner's _____

8. How long have you lived as a member of this family? _____

9. How would you characterize your partner's current relationship with her ex- partner? Very Good. Amicable. Not Good. Non-existent.

10. How would you characterize your current relationship with her ex-partner? Very Good. Amicable. Not Good. Non-existent.

11. Approximately, what is the combined annual gross income of you and your partner?

- A. Under \$20,000.
- B. Between \$20,000. and \$40,000.
- C. Between \$40,000. and \$60,000.
- D. Between \$60,000. and \$80,000.
- E. Between \$80,000. and \$100,000.
- F. Between \$100,000 and \$150,000.
- G. Over \$150,000.

Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale

(Stepfather's Form)

1. Overall, how would you assess your relationship with your stepchild?

Very Good				Average			Very Bad
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Overall, are you emotionally close or emotionally distant from your stepchild?

Very Close				Neither Close nor Distant			Very Distant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

3. Overall, how do you find talking to your stepchild?

Very Easy				Neither Easy or Strained			Very Strained
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
4. When you discipline stepchild, how often does he/she remind you that you are his/her stepfather?	5	4	3	2	1
5. When you tell your stepchild to do something, how often does he/she feel you have no respect for him/her?	5	4	3	2	1
6. When you ask your stepchild to do something, how often do you think he/she has no respect for you?	5	4	3	2	1
7. When you ask your stepchild to do something, how often do you have what is best for him/her in mind?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
8. How often do you think your stepchild's actions and words show disrespect for your authority?	5	4	3	2	1
9. How often do you spend time wishing that you and your stepchild could develop more respect for each other?	5	4	3	2	1
10. As of now, how often do you feel you have the right to tell your stepchild what to do?	5	4	3	2	1
11. When you tried to discipline your stepchild at the time you first joined this family, how often did your stepchild complain or try to appeal the decision?	5	4	3	2	1
12. When you first joined this family, how often were your requests of your stepchild unreasonable?	5	4	3	2	1

Acknowledgement of Difference/Rejection of Difference Scale

(Stepfather's Form)

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Disagree nor Agree		Strongly Agree
1. When I began a relationship with my stepchild, affection between us developed slowly.	5	4	3	2	1
2. When I began a relationship with my stepchild, it was important to allow my authority over my stepchild to develop over time.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I began a relationship with my stepchild by developing affection before initiating discipline.	5	4	3	2	1
4. It is important that I explain my feelings about our stepfamily relationship to my stepchild.	5	4	3	2	1
5. My wife and I discuss how much affection I should give my stepchild.	5	4	3	2	1
6. My wife and I agree that we need to discuss the type of disciplinary measures I should apply to my stepchild because of the uniqueness of the stepparent role.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My stepchild and I do discuss how his/her relationship with his/her biological father fits in with our relationship in the stepfamily.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I acknowledge that my stepchild needs to discuss how much affection I should give him/her.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Disagree nor Agree		Strongly Agree
9. I acknowledge that my stepchild has a need to discuss my right to impose discipline on him/her.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I try to make my stepchild feel free to discuss the importance of his biological father in his life.	5	4	3	2	1
11. It is important to accommodate my stepchild's schedules with his/her biological father and his family.	5	4	3	2	1
12. It is important to understand my stepchild's feelings about his/her relationship with his/her biological father.	5	4	3	2	1
13. It is important for me to explain to my stepchild how stepfamily relationships differ from biological family relationships.	5	4	3	2	1
14. It is important to support my stepchild's attempts to maintain ties with his/her biological father.	5	4	3	2	1

Stepparent Role Clarity Scale

(Stepfather's Form)

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
1. How often do you rather than your partner tell your stepchild what to do in important family matters?	5	4	3	2	1
2. How often do you alone decide the consequences for your stepchild's misbehaviour?	5	4	3	2	1
3. How often do you encourage your stepchild to talk to you about his interests and concerns?	5	4	3	2	1
4. How often do you offer to help your stepchild with something without being asked?	5	4	3	2	1
5. How often do you suggest a pleasurable activity for you and your stepchild to do together alone?	5	4	3	2	1
6. How often do you offer to attend an event in which your stepchild is participating, such as a school play or a game?	5	4	3	2	1
7. How often do you show affection to your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
8. How often do you and your partner disagree about your disciplinary practices over your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
9. How often do you think you and your partner discuss how you should discipline your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
10. How often have you thought to your self, that you wished you and your partner would reach some sort of agreement regarding the way you discipline your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
11. How often do you suggest in front of your stepchild, that your partner's ideas of appropriate discipline are different to yours?	5	4	3	2	1
12. How often does your partner suggest in front of your stepchild, that your ideas of appropriate discipline are different to hers?	5	4	3	2	1
	Accepting		Neither Accepting nor Rejecting		Rejecting
13. My stepchild's responses to me when I show affection to him/her are...	5	4	3	2	1
14. My stepchild's responses to me when I encourage him/her to talk to me are...	5	4	3	2	1
15. My stepchild's responses to me when I offer to help him/her are...	5	4	3	2	1
16. My stepchild's responses to me when I explain why he should not resist doing what I request are...	5	4	3	2	1
17. My stepchild's responses to my suggestions for he/she and I to do something together are...	5	4	3	2	1

	Accepting		Neither Accepting nor Rejecting	Rejecting	
18. My stepchild's responses to my decisions as to whether or not attend an event in which he/she is participating are...	5	4	3	2	1
	Supportive		Accepting	Challenging	
19. My partner's responses to me about the affection that I show to my stepchild are...	5	4	3	2	1
20. My partner's responses to my encouragement of my stepchild to talk to are...	5	4	3	2	1
21. My partner's responses to me about my offers to help my stepchild are...	5	4	3	2	1
22. My partner's responses to my initiation of enjoyable activities for my stepchild and I to do together are...	5	4	3	2	1
23. My partner's responses to my decisions as to whether or not I attend an event in which my stepchild is participating are...	5	4	3	2	1
24. My partner's responses to me when her child complains about my discipline are...	5	4	3	2	1
25. When my partner disagrees with me about telling my stepchild what to do, her responses to me are...	5	4	3	2	1

Parenting Styles

(Stepfather's Form)

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
1. I usually give my stepchild a reason why family rules are made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My stepchild feels free to talk to me when he/she thinks I have been unfair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I listen to what my stepchild thinks in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Although I expect my stepchild to follow directions, I will talk to him/her about what I expect.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am willing to change what I expect of my stepchild.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If I don't agree with my stepchild I usually force him/her to do what I think is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When I ask my stepchild to do something, I expect him/her to do it right away without asking any questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I use force to get my stepchild to do what I want him/her to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I deal with my stepchild strictly when he/she doesn't do what he/she is supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I insist that my stepchild does what I want because I'm the one in charge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree	
11. I believe my stepchild should have his/her way most of the time in the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. I let my stepchild do what he/she wants to do even if it goes against what I want.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. I let my stepchild do just about any thing he/she wants.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. I hardly ever tell my stepchild how he/she should act.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. Anything my stepchild does is okay with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. I hold my stepchild to rules set by his/her mother.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. My partner makes the rules and I carry them out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. My partner has more say about what my stepchild can and cannot do than myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. I make sure my stepchild does what my partner wants him/her to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. I leave most of the rules of what my stepchild does up to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Stepfather Role Challenge Scale**(Stepfather's Form)****1. How often does your stepchild visit with his/her biological father?**

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

2. On average, are these visits with his/her biological father disruptive for him/her?**(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)**

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

3. How often does your stepchild visit with his/her paternal grandparent(s)?

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

4. On average, are these visits with his/her paternal grandparent(s) disruptive for him/her?**(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)**

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

5. How often does your stepchild visit with his/her maternal grandparent(s)?

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

6. On average, are these visits with his/her maternal grandparent(s) disruptive for him/her?
(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
7. In so far as discipline is concerned, how often does your stepchild indicate you are trying to take the place of his/her dad?	5	4	3	2	1
8. How often do you make decisions regarding your stepchild's behaviour that he/she believes should be decided by his/her father?	5	4	3	2	1
9. When you ask your stepchild to do something he/she doesn't agree with, how often does he/she tell his/her father?	5	4	3	2	1
10. When you discipline your stepchild, how often does he/she compare your decisions with the way his/her father disciplines him/her?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
11. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child's behaviour become more combative (combative means a demeanour toward physical aggression) toward you in comparison to his/her behaviour before the visit?	5	4	3	2	1
12. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child question family rules he/she would not normally question?	5	4	3	2	1
13. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child argue with you?	5	4	3	2	1
14. How often does your partner object to you being too authoritative with your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
15. How often do you think your partner wishes you would change the way you discipline your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
16. How often does your partner think your intentions while disciplining your stepchild are guided by your belief that your stepchild has too much independence?	5	4	3	2	1
17. How often does your partner and your stepchild get into a power struggle over your partner's authority with her child?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
18. How often do you think your partner feels a conflict between the need to protect her child and the need to be an authority figure to her child?	5	4	3	2	1
19. How often have you told your partner that she is too lenient with her child?	5	4	3	2	1
20. How often do you think your partner's disciplinary practices with her child attempt to counter-act the influences of your disciplinary practices?	5	4	3	2	1
21. How often have your stepchild's paternal grandparents objected to your partner about your use of discipline with your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
22. How often have your stepchild's maternal grandparents objected to your partner about your use of discipline with your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
23. How often has your child's biological father objected to your use of discipline with your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1
24. How often have your stepchild's maternal grandparents objected to you about your use of discipline with your stepchild?	5	4	3	2	1

Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale

(Adolescent's Form)

1. Overall, how would you assess your relationship with your stepfather?

Very Good				Average			Very Bad
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Overall, are you emotionally close or emotionally distant from your stepfather?

Very Close			Neither Close nor Distant			Very Distant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Overall, how do you find talking to your stepfather?

Very Easy			Neither Easy or Strained			Very Strained
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
4. When your stepfather disciplines you, how often do you remind him he is your stepfather?	5	4	3	2	1
5. When your stepfather tells you to do something, how often do you feel he has no respect for you?	5	4	3	2	1
6. When your stepfather asks you to do something, how often do you think he feels you have no respect for you?	5	4	3	2	1
7. When your stepfather asks you to do something, how often do you think he has what is best for you in mind?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
8. How often do you think your actions and words show disrespect for your stepfather's authority?	5	4	3	2	1
9. How often do you spend time wishing that you and your stepfather could develop more respect for each other?	5	4	3	2	1
10. As of now, how often do you feel your stepfather has a right to tell you what to do?	5	4	3	2	1
11. When your stepfather tried to discipline you at the time he first joined this family, how often did you complain or try to appeal the decision?	5	4	3	2	1
12. When your stepfather first joined this family, how often did you think his requests of were unreasonable?	5	4	3	2	1

Stepparent Role Clarity Scale

(Adolescent's Form)

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
1. How often does your stepfather tell you what to do in important family matters?	5	4	3	2	1
2. How often does your stepfather alone decide the consequences for your misbehaviour?	5	4	3	2	1
3. How often does your stepfather encourage you to talk to him about your interests and concerns?	5	4	3	2	1
4. How often does your stepfather offer to help you with something without being asked?	5	4	3	2	1
5. How often does your stepfather suggest a pleasurable activity for you and him to do together alone?	5	4	3	2	1
6. How often does your stepfather offer to attend an event in which you are participating, such as a school play or a game?	5	4	3	2	1
7. How often does your stepfather show affection to you?	5	4	3	2	1

	Accepting		Neither Accepting nor Rejecting	Rejecting	
8. My responses to my stepfather when he shows affection to me are...	5	4	3	2	1
9. My responses to my stepfather when he encourages me to talk to him are...	5	4	3	2	1
10. My responses to my stepfather when he offers to help me are...	5	4	3	2	1
11. My responses to my stepfather when he explains why I should not resist doing what he requests are...	5	4	3	2	1
12. My responses to my stepfather's suggestions for he and I to do something together are...	5	4	3	2	1
13. My responses to stepfather's decisions as to whether or not to attend an event in which I am participating are...	5	4	3	2	1
	Encouraging			Discouraging	
14. When I ask to talk to my stepfather, he is...	5	4	3	2	1
15. When I wish to discuss with my stepfather my expectations of his role in the family, he is...	5	4	3	2	1
16. When I show affection to my stepfather, he is...	5	4	3	2	1
17. When I offer to help my stepfather, he is...	5	4	3	2	1

	Encouraging			Discouraging	
	5	4	3	2	1
18. When I request my stepfather's help in explaining family issues, he is...					

Parenting Styles

(Adolescent's Form - Stepfather Parenting)

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
1. My stepfather usually gives me a reason why family rules are made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I feel free to talk to my stepfather when I think he has been unfair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My stepfather listens to what I think in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Although my stepfather expects me to follow directions, he will talk to me about what he expects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My stepfather is willing to change what he expects of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If my stepfather doesn't agree with me, he usually forces me to do what he thinks is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When my stepfather asks me to do something, he expects me to do it right away without asking any questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My stepfather uses force to get me to do what he wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My stepfather deals with me strictly when I don't do what I'm supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
10. My stepfather insists that I do what he wants because he's the one in charge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My stepfather believes that I should have my way most of the time in the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My stepfather let's me do what I want to do even if it goes against what he wants.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My stepfather let's me do just about any thing I want.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My stepfather hardly ever tells me how I should act.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Anything I does is okay with my stepfather.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. My stepfather holds me to rules set by my mother.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. My mother makes the rules and my stepfather carries them out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My mother has more say about what I can and cannot do than my stepfather.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My stepfather makes sure I do what my mother wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. My stepfather leaves most of the rules of what I do up to my mother.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Parenting Styles

(Adolescent's Form - Biological Mother Parenting)

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
1. My mother usually gives me a reason why family rules are made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I feel free to talk to my mother when I think she has been unfair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My mother listens to what I think in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Although my mother expects me to follow directions, she will talk to me about what she expects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My mother is willing to change what she expects of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If my mother doesn't agree with me, she usually forces me to do what she thinks is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When my mother asks me to do something, she expects me to do it right away without asking any questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My mother uses force to get me to do what she wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My mother deals with me strictly when I don't do what I'm supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. My mother insists that I do what she wants because she's the one in charge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
11. My mother believes that I should have my way most of the time in the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My mother let's me do what I want to do even if it goes against what she wants.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. My mother let's me do just about any thing I want.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. My mother hardly ever tells me how I should act.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Anything I does is okay with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. My mother holds me to rules set by my stepfather.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. My stepfather makes the rules and my mother carries them out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My stepfather has more say about what I can and cannot do than my mother.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My mother makes sure I do what my stepfather wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. My mother leaves most of the rules of what I do up to my stepfather.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Stepparent Authority Acceptance Scale

(Biological Mother's Form)

1. Overall, how would you assess your child's with your partner?

Very Good				Average			Very Bad
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Overall, is your child emotionally close or emotionally distant from your partner?

Very Close			Neither Close nor Distant			Very Distant
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Overall, how do you find your child's conversations with your partner?

Very Easy			Neither Easy or Strained			Very Strained
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Acknowledgement of Difference/Rejection of Difference Scale

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Disagree nor Agree		Strongly Agree
1. When my partner began a relationship with my child, affection between them developed slowly.	5	4	3	2	1
2. When my partner began a relationship with my child, it was important to allow his authority over my child to develop over time.	5	4	3	2	1
3. My partner began a relationship with my child by developing affection before initiating discipline.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Disagree nor Agree		Strongly Agree
4. It is important that my partner explain his feelings about our stepfamily relationship to my child.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I discuss with my partner how much affection he should give to my child.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I agree with my partner that we need to discuss the type of disciplinary measures he should apply to my child because of the uniqueness of the stepparent role.	5	4	3	2	1
7. My child and partner do discuss how my child's relationship with his/her biological father fits in with our relationship in the stepfamily.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My partner acknowledges that my child needs to discuss how much affection he should give him/her.	5	4	3	2	1
9. My partner acknowledges that my child has a need to discuss his right to impose discipline on him/her.	5	4	3	2	1
10. My partner tries to make my child feel free to discuss the importance of his/her biological father in his/her life.	5	4	3	2	1
11. It is important to accommodate my child's schedules with his/her biological father and his family.	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Disagree nor Agree		Strongly Agree
12. It is important to understand my child's feelings about his/her relationship with his/her biological father.	5	4	3	2	1
13. It is important for my partner to explain to my child how stepfamily relationships differ from biological family relationships.	5	4	3	2	1
14. It is important to support my child's attempts to maintain ties with his/her biological father.	5	4	3	2	1

Stepparent Role Clarity Scale

(Biological Mother's Form)

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
1. How often does your partner rather than you tell your child what to do in important family matters?	5	4	3	2	1
2. How often does your partner alone decide the consequences for your child's misbehaviour?	5	4	3	2	1
3. How often does your partner encourage your child to talk to him about his/her interests and concerns?	5	4	3	2	1
4. How often does your partner offer to help your child with something without being asked?	5	4	3	2	1
5. How often does your partner suggest a pleasurable activity for him and your child to do together alone?	5	4	3	2	1
6. How often does your partner offer to attend an event in which your child is participating, such as a school play or a game?	5	4	3	2	1
7. How often does your partner show affection to your child?	5	4	3	2	1
8. How often do you and your partner disagree about your partner's disciplinary practices over your child?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
9. How often do you think you and your partner discuss how your partner should discipline your child?	5	4	3	2	1
10. How often have you thought to your self, that you wished you and your partner would reach some sort of agreement regarding the way your partner disciplines your child?	5	4	3	2	1
11. How often do you suggest in front of your child, that your partner's ideas of appropriate discipline are different to yours?	5	4	3	2	1
12. How often does your partner suggest in front of your child, that your ideas of appropriate discipline are different to his?	5	4	3	2	1
	Supportive		Accepting		Challenging
13. My responses to my partner about the affection that he shows to my child are...	5	4	3	2	1
14. My responses to my partner's encouragement of my child to talk to are...	5	4	3	2	1
15. My responses to my partner about his offers to help my child are...	5	4	3	2	1
16. My responses to my partner's initiation of enjoyable activities for my child and him to do together are...	5	4	3	2	1

	Supportive		Accepting		Challenging
17. My responses to my partner's decisions as to whether or not he attend an event in which my child is participating are...	5	4	3	2	1
18. My responses to my partner when my child complains about his discipline are...	5	4	3	2	1
19. When I disagree with my partner about telling my child what to do, her responses to him are...	5	4	3	2	1

Parenting Styles

(Biological Mother's Form)

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree
1. I usually give my child a reason why family rules are made.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. My child feels free to talk to me when he/she thinks I have been unfair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I listen to what my child thinks in making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Although I expect my child to follow directions, I will talk to him/her about what I expect.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I am willing to change what I expect of my child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. If I don't agree with my child I usually force him/her to do what I think is right.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. When I ask my child to do something, I expect him/her to do it right away without asking any questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I use force to get my child to do what I want him/her to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I deal with my child strictly when he/she doesn't do what he/she is supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I insist that my child does what I want because I'm the one in charge.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neither Disagree nor Agree			Strongly Agree	
11. I believe my child should have his/her way most of the time in the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. I let my child do what he/she wants to do even if it goes against what I want.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. I let my child do just about anything he/she wants.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. I hardly ever tell my child how he/she should act.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. Anything my child does is okay with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. I hold my child to rules set by his/her stepfather.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. My partner makes the rules and I carry them out.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. My partner has more say about what my child can and cannot do than myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. I make sure my child does what my partner wants him/her to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. I leave most of the rules of what my child does up to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Stepfather Role Challenge Scale**(Biological Mother's Form)****1. How often does your child visit with his/her biological father?**

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

2. On average, are these visits with his/her biological father disruptive for him/her?**(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)**

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

3. How often does your child visit with his/her paternal grandparent(s)?

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

4. On average, are these visits with his/her paternal grandparent(s) disruptive for him/her?**(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)**

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

5. How often does your child visit with his/her maternal grandparent(s)?

- 1) At least once per week.
- 2) Two or three times per month.
- 3) Once per month.
- 4) Two or three times per year.
- 5) Once per year.
- 6) Never.
- 7) N/A

6. On average, are these visits with his/her maternal grandparent(s) disruptive for him/her?

(Disruptive means being more confrontational or aggressive than he/she would be on average)

- 1) Extremely disruptive.
- 2) Very disruptive.
- 3) Slightly disruptive
- 4) Not disruptive.
- 5) N/A

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some times	Rarely	Almost Never
7. In so far as discipline is concerned, how often does your child indicate your partner is trying to take the place of his/her dad?	5	4	3	2	1
8. How often do your partner make decisions regarding your child's behaviour that he/she believes should be decided by his/her father?	5	4	3	2	1
9. When your partner asks your child to do something he/she doesn't agree with, how often does he/she tell his/her father?	5	4	3	2	1
10. When your partner disciplines your child, how often does he/she compare his decisions with the way his/her father disciplines him/her?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some -times	Rarely	Almost Never
11. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child's behaviour become more combative (combative means a demeanour toward physical aggression) toward your partner in comparison to his/her behaviour before the visit?	5	4	3	2	1
12. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child question family rules he/she would not normally question?	5	4	3	2	1
13. Following a visit with his/her biological father, how often does your child argue with your partner?	5	4	3	2	1
14. How often do you object to your partner being too authoritative with your child?	5	4	3	2	1
15. How often does your partner think that you wishes he would change the way he disciplines your child?	5	4	3	2	1
16. How often do you think your partner's intentions while disciplining your child are guided by his belief that your child has too much independence?	5	4	3	2	1
17. How often do you and your child get into a power struggle over your authority with your child?	5	4	3	2	1

	Almost Always	Frequently	Some- times	Rarely	Almost Never
18. How often does your partner think you feels a conflict between the need to protect your child and the need to be an authority figure to your child?	5	4	3	2	1
19. How often has your partner told you that your are too lenient with your child?	5	4	3	2	1
20. How often do you think your disciplinary practices with your child attempt to counter-act the influences of your partner's disciplinary practices?	5	4	3	2	1
21. How often have your child's paternal grandparents objected to you about your partner's use of discipline with your child?	5	4	3	2	1
22. How often have your child's maternal grandparents objected to you about your partner's use of discipline with your child?	5	4	3	2	1
23. How often has your child's biological father objected to your partner's use of discipline with your child?	5	4	3	2	1
24. How often have your child's maternal grandparents objected to you partner about his use of discipline with your child?	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix B**Department of Sociology****University of Manitoba****Winnipeg, Manitoba****R3T 2N2****The Determinants of****Adolescent's Willingness to Accept a Stepfather's Authority****Consent Form**

This research is being conducted by Raymond Foui, in partial fulfilment of a Ph.D. degree in sociology at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of this research is to assess factors which affect adolescents' willingness to accept their stepfather's authority.

It is the aim of this research to provide an accurate description of the types of stepfamily parental roles, rights and responsibilities which contribute to the formation of healthy stepfamily relationships. The results of this study will provide a clear understanding of how parental roles within the stepfamily impact on an adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

I understand that my ward, my partner and myself will be interviewed on at least two separate occasions by the researcher for approximately one hour at each time. These interviews will consist only of questions about each of our perceptions of stepfamily relationships.

I agree that in the interviews, (please check one)

☐ () our answers will be tape recorded then transferred to written copy, or

☐ () our answers will "only" be written down, with no tape recording involved.

I understand that any information obtained will be held in strict confidence and our identities will not be disclosed in the publishing of the research.

I understand that our participation and our ward's participation is completely voluntary and that each of us are able to withdraw at any time in the research. Additionally, either my partner or I may withdraw consent for our ward's participation at any time in the research. Each of us have the right to decline any and all questions put to us. My partner and I may choose without penalty to withdraw any or all information that we and our ward have provided to the researcher.

I am aware that this research has been approved by the Department of Sociology Ethics Review Committee and if we have any complaints about the procedures we can call the head of the department at 474-9260. I understand that if we have any questions about the research we may leave a message for the researcher, Raymond Foui, or Rod Kueneman, advisor, at the department of sociology, University of Manitoba, at 474-9260

I understand that any revelation of child abuse will be reported to the study's advisor and to legal authorities.

I understand that I will receive feedback upon the conclusion of the study as to the findings of the research. My partner and I will be informed as to what findings have been concluded from our family's input. Second, based upon the consent of my partner and I, our adolescent will be informed of the findings concluded from our family's input. Third, my partner and I will have the opportunity following the conclusion of the study to meet with other parents involved in this study and discuss how stepfamily dynamics affect authoritative relationships with adolescents. I have read and understood what the research is about as well what my ward, my partner and my participation involves and my signature on this page indicates that I am willing to give consent for my ward and myself to participate.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF MOTHER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF STEPFATHER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

Department of Sociology

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3T 2N2

**The Determinants of
Adolescent's Willingness to Accept a Stepfather's Authority**

Assent Form

This research is being conducted by Raymond Foui, in partial fulfilment of a Ph.D. degree in sociology at the University of Manitoba. The purpose of this research is to assess factors which affect adolescents' willingness to accept their stepfather's authority.

It is the aim of this research to provide an accurate description of the types of stepfamily parental roles, rights and responsibilities which contribute to the formation of healthy stepfamily relationships. The results of this study will provide a clear understanding of how parental roles within the stepfamily impact on an adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

I understand that I will be interviewed on at least two separate occasions by the researcher for approximately one hour at each time. These interviews will consist only of questions about my perceptions of stepfamily relationships.

I agree that in the interviews, (please check one)

() my answers will be tape recorded then transferred to written copy, or

() my answers will "only" be written down, with no tape recording involved.

I understand that any information obtained will be held in strict confidence and my identity will not be disclosed in the publishing of the research.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I am able to withdraw at any time in the research. I also reserve the right to decline any and all questions put to me. I may also choose without penalty to withdraw any or all information that I have provided to the researcher.

I am aware that this research has been approved by the Department of Sociology Ethics Review Committee and if I have any complaints about the procedures I can call the head of the department at 474-9260. I understand that if I have any questions about the research I may leave a message for the researcher, Raymond Foui, or Rod Kueneman, advisor, at the department of sociology, University of Manitoba, at 474-9260

I understand that any revelation of child abuse will be reported to the study's advisor and to legal authorities.

I understand that based upon the consent of my mother and stepfather, I will be informed of the findings concluded from our family's input into this study.

I have read and understood what the research is about as well what my participation involves and my signature on this page indicates that I am willing to participate.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF ADOLESCENT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

Appendix C

INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENT SCORES

Table #C1 Mutual Respect Summary Questions (Authority Acceptance Scale)

Range: 3 (very close) - 21 (very distant)

Family	Stepfather	Adolescent	Mother
#1 (NA)	11	15	9
#5 (NA)	10	11	9
#8 (NA)	9	5	8
#9 (NA)	8	8	13
#10 (NA)	9	17	8
#11 (NA)	3	9	5
#12 (NA)	9	8	7
#13 (NA)	7	7	13
#19 (NA)	11	10	9
#20 (NA)	8	10	11
#2 (A)	7	7	5
#3 (A)	3	6	7
#4 (A)	3	3	6
#6 (A)	8	4	6
#7 (A)	9	9	11
#14 (A)	7	7	5
#15 (A)	3	3	6
#16 (A)	6	7	6
#17 (A)	7	6	6
#18 (A)	3	6	3

The Mutual Respect summary questions were the only opportunity for each of the family members to provide their perceptions of the overall relationship between the stepfather and the adolescent. While scores in general between family members were not large, there was a trend for adolescents in the NA group to portray their relationship with their stepfather as being more

negative than either of the adults. See scores on family #1 and #10. Conversely, in the A group, it was either of the adults rather than the adolescent who perceived more instances where the relationship may have been strained or improved upon.

Table #C2 Mutual Respect Subscale (Authority Acceptance Scale)

Range: 6 (much mutual respect) - 30 (no mutual respect)

Family	Stepfather	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	14	12
#5 (NA)	10	9
#8 (NA)	17	19
#9 (NA)	14	17
#10 (NA)	15	14
#11 (NA)	15	11
#12 (NA)	19	20
#13 (NA)	11	14
#19 (NA)	18	16
#20 (NA)	17	15
#2 (A)	9	10
#3 (A)	8	8
#4 (A)	10	6
#6 (A)	8	8
#7 (A)	3	7
#14 (A)	10	9
#15 (A)	9	10
#16 (A)	9	7
#17 (A)	8	11
#18 (A)	9	8

Individual respondent score patterns on the Mutual Respect subscale indicate few divergencies in scores. In fact, the greatest differences are between the stepfather and adolescent in A group families #4 and #7. In family #4, the adolescent perceives greater mutual

respect than the stepfather. In family #7, however, the stepfather perceives greater mutual respect than the adolescent.

Table #C3 Disciplinary Development Subscale (Authority Acceptance Scale)

Range: 3 (very few disciplinary complaints) - 15 (many disciplinary complaints)

Family	Stepfather	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	8	11
#5 (NA)	8	5
#8 (NA)	10	11
#9 (NA)	7	12
#10 (NA)	8	6
#11 (NA)	8	7
#12 (NA)	10	14
#13 (NA)	5	11
#19 (NA)	10	10
#20 (NA)	12	10
#2 (A)	6	8
#3 (A)	5	10
#4 (A)	3	5
#6 (A)	5	8
#7 (A)	6	7
#14 (A)	7	7
#15 (A)	6	7
#16 (A)	6	7
#17 (A)	8	6
#18 (A)	7	6

NA group individual scores on the Disciplinary Development subscale showed greater divergence than A group scores. In NA group families #9 and #13, and A group family #3, the adolescent perceived their stepfather had more disciplinary complaints about their behaviour than was perceived by the stepfather.

Table #C4 Ascription/Achievement Subscale (AD/RD Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #1)

Range: 4 (completely achieved relationship) - 20 (completely ascribed relationship)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	9	11
#5 (NA)	11	13
#8 (NA)	9	10
#9 (NA)	4	9
#10 (NA)	9	7
#11 (NA)	16	5
#12 (NA)	10	9
#13 (NA)	4	4
#19 (NA)	9	10
#20 (NA)	11	6
#2 (A)	8	8
#3 (A)	4	6
#4 (A)	5	12
#6 (A)	10	8
#7 (A)	11	6
#14 (A)	10	7
#15 (A)	8	8
#16 (A)	10	8
#17 (A)	9	7
#18 (A)	10	7

Major divergencies in the stepfather and mothers' scores occurred in families #11, #20, #4 and #7. The stepfathers in families #11, #20 and #7 were more likely to perceive their relationship with their adolescent as ascribed, whereas their partners perceived this relationship as almost completely achieved. In family #4, the opposite pattern exists. Divergencies in scores had no bearing on whether the family was in the A or NA group.

Table #C5 Communication Subscale (AD/RD Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #1)

Range: 5 - 25

(extensive communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent)
 - (little communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	19	14
#5 (NA)	18	18
#8 (NA)	14	13
#9 (NA)	12	15
#10 (NA)	14	12
#11 (NA)	9	21
#12 (NA)	13	10
#13 (NA)	13	14
#19 (NA)	13	9
#20 (NA)	14	13
#2 (A)	13	9
#3 (A)	15	12
#4 (A)	13	14
#6 (A)	18	16
#7 (A)	17	20
#14 (A)	12	10
#15 (A)	13	14
#16 (A)	18	16
#17 (A)	12	10
#18 (A)	17	20

The only significant divergence in individual scores is in family #11. The biological mother perceives little communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent while the stepfather perceives that he extensively communicates this relationship.

Table #C6 Empathy Subscale (AD/RD Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #1)

Range: 5 - 25

(stepfather completely validates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father)

- (stepfather completely invalidates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	19	15
#5 (NA)	12	12
#8 (NA)	7	15
#9 (NA)	5	9
#10 (NA)	8	8
#11 (NA)	23	8
#12 (NA)	9	7
#13 (NA)	13	13
#19 (NA)	8	8
#20 (NA)	10	9
#2 (A)	9	7
#3 (A)	11	8
#4 (A)	12	7
#6 (A)	9	13
#7 (A)	20	13
#14 (A)	9	7
#15 (A)	11	8
#16 (A)	9	13
#17 (A)	7	9
#18 (A)	18	15

Significant divergencies in individual scores occurred in families #8, #11, #4 and #7. In each of these families, other than family #8, the stepfather somewhat invalidated his adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father. The biological mothers in these families, on the other hand, perceived their partners as being more inclined to validate this relationship. In family #8, the opposite pattern occurred. Divergencies in scores had no bearing on whether the family was in the A or NA group.

Table #C7 Stepfather Initiation Subscale (Stepfather Role Clarity Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Range: 7 - 35

(little authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather)
 - (a considerable amount of authoritative and nurturing and befriending initiated by the stepfather)

Family	Stepfather	Mother	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	23	23	15
#5 (NA)	23	26	23
#8 (NA)	26	26	28
#9 (NA)	29	21	15
#10 (NA)	18	23	17
#11 (NA)	23	27	17
#12 (NA)	16	16	15
#13 (NA)	27	18	23
#19 (NA)	18	22	17
#20 (NA)	24	22	15
#2 (A)	24	27	25
#3 (A)	24	28	20
#4 (A)	22	23	25
#6 (A)	24	25	26
#7 (A)	29	30	23
#14 (A)	26	23	23
#15 (A)	27	24	25
#16 (A)	24	25	26
#17 (A)	23	26	23
#18 (A)	30	29	23

The adolescents in families #1, #9, #11, #19, #3, #7 and #18 all perceived considerably less authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by their stepfather than either their stepfathers or mothers. The greatest divergencies in scores are between NA group adolescents in families #1, #9, #11 and #19 and their stepfathers.

Table #C8 Consensus Subscale (Stepfather Role Clarity Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Range: 5 - 25

(a low level of consensus between biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent)

- (a high level of consensus between the biological mother and the stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	19	23
#5 (NA)	16	22
#8 (NA)	19	20
#9 (NA)	21	21
#10 (NA)	17	22
#11 (NA)	16	21
#12 (NA)	12	10
#13 (NA)	23	21
#19 (NA)	19	18
#20 (NA)	21	18
#2 (A)	25	22
#3 (A)	18	18
#4 (A)	21	18
#6 (A)	21	21
#7 (A)	21	22
#14 (A)	22	25
#15 (A)	18	21
#16 (A)	21	21
#17 (A)	23	20
#18 (A)	21	22

The only significant difference in scores is in family #5. The biological mother perceives a high level of consensus between her and her partner regarding his disciplinary practices with the adolescent while her partner perceives a moderate level of consensus.

Table #C9 Reciprocity Subscale (Stepfather Role Clarity Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Range: 6 - 30

(the adolescent's total rejection of the stepfather's initiatives)
 - (the adolescent's total acceptance of the stepfather's initiatives)

Family	Stepfather	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	19	24
#5 (NA)	24	22
#8 (NA)	24	29
#9 (NA)	24	17
#10 (NA)	18	10
#11 (NA)	21	18
#12 (NA)	18	21
#13 (NA)	29	28
#19 (NA)	21	18
#20 (NA)	20	19
#2 (A)	29	29
#3 (A)	30	25
#4 (A)	24	29
#6 (A)	22	23
#7 (A)	30	24
#14 (A)	30	25
#15 (A)	21	24
#16 (A)	24	29
#17 (A)	22	23
#18 (A)	29	25

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #1, #8, #9, #10, #3 and #16. In families #1, #8, and #16 the adolescents almost totally accepted their stepfathers' initiatives and their stepfathers perceived that their adolescents moderately accepted their initiatives. In family #10, the stepfather perceived the adolescent moderately accepted his initiatives while the adolescent almost totally rejected his stepfather's initiatives. In families #9 and #3, the stepfathers

perceived their adolescents to have a high level of acceptance of their initiatives while the adolescents level of acceptance was lower. NA group families #1, #8, #9 and #10 had more divergencies in scores than the A group families #3 and #16, and furthermore, these divergencies were greater in size.

Table #C10 Support Subscale (Stepfather Role Clarity Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Range: 7 - 35

(the biological mother's total lack of support of
her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent)
- (the biological mother's total support of
her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	27	29
#5 (NA)	23	31
#8 (NA)	24	26
#9 (NA)	30	26
#10 (NA)	27	29
#11 (NA)	29	28
#12 (NA)	25	19
#13 (NA)	31	33
#19 (NA)	29	25
#20 (NA)	31	26
#2 (A)	34	33
#3 (A)	35	25
#4 (A)	28	30
#6 (A)	25	31
#7 (A)	24	35
#14 (A)	33	34
#15 (A)	23	31
#16 (A)	25	31
#17 (A)	26	33
#18 (A)	27	32

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #5, #12, #20, #3, #6, #7, #15, #16, #17 and #18. While all individual scores indicate the biological mother's moderate to almost total support of her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent, differences exist between families as to which partner perceives the greatest level of this support. Of the seven A group families #3, #6, #7, #15, #16, #17 and #18, only in one family, #3, does the mother offer less support of her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent than the amount of support perceived by her partner. Of the three NA group families #5, #12 and #20, the mothers in two families, #12 and #20, offer less support than the amount of support perceived by their partners.

Table #C11 Stepchild Initiation Subscale (Stepfather Role Clarity Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Range: 5 - 25

(total discouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's requests for help and displays of affection)

- (total encouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection)

Family	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	20
#5 (NA)	20
#8 (NA)	20
#9 (NA)	14
#10 (NA)	6
#11 (NA)	17
#12 (NA)	15
#13 (NA)	21
#19 (NA)	17
#20 (NA)	17
#2 (A)	24
#3 (A)	19
#4 (A)	24
#6 (A)	20
#7 (A)	21
#14 (A)	20
#15 (A)	24
#16 (A)	24
#17 (A)	21
#18 (A)	21

Adolescents were the only family member to respond to items on this scale. Adolescent scores in the NA group families are considerably lower than the adolescent scores in the A group families.

Table #C12 Stepfather Parenting Style (Stepfather Parenting Style Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #3)

Range: 5 (strongly disagree with each statement) - 35 (strongly agree with each statement)

Family	Parenting Style	Stepfather	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	Authoritative	29	27
#5 (NA)	Adjunctive	24	28
#8 (NA)	Authoritative	23	29
#9 (NA)	Adjunctive	26	32
#10 (NA)	Adjunctive	26	35
#11 (NA)	Permissive	27	29
#12 (NA)	Authoritarian	28	30
#13 (NA)	Authoritarian	26	26
#19 (NA)	Authoritarian	23	31
#20 (NA)	Authoritarian	25	31
#2 (A)	Authoritative	31	29
#3 (A)	Adjunctive	30	30
#4 (A)	Authoritative	28	30
#6 (A)	Adjunctive	29	31
#7 (A)	Authoritative	31	25
#14 (A)	Authoritative	32	26
#15 (A)	Authoritative	31	31
#16 (A)	Adjunctive	29	29
#17 (A)	Authoritative	30	30
#18 (A)	Authoritative	29	27

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #8, #9, #10, #19, #20, #7 and #14.

While all individual scores indicate the stepfather and adolescent moderately to strongly agree with the statements on the particular parenting style, differences in the number and size of divergent scores exist between the NA and A group families. Of the five NA group families #8, #9, #10, #19 and #20, families #8, #9 and #20 have the smallest divergency of six. The two A group families #7 and #14, have divergencies of six.

Table #C13**Biological Mother's Parenting Style (Biological Mother Parenting Style Scale)**

(Refer to hypothesis #4)

Range: 5 (strongly disagree with each statement) - 35 (strongly agree with each statement)

Family	Parenting Style	Mother	Adolescent
#1 (NA)	Authoritative	24	28
#5 (NA)	Authoritative	30	22
#8 (NA)	Authoritative	30	20
#9 (NA)	Authoritative	26	32
#10 (NA)	Authoritative	33	27
#11 (NA)	Authoritative	24	30
#12 (NA)	Adjunctive	27	25
#13 (NA)	Authoritative	28	24
#19 (NA)	Adjunctive	23	27
#20 (NA)	Adjunctive	26	30
#2 (A)	Authoritative	32	26
#3 (A)	Authoritative	30	30
#4 (A)	Authoritative	30	26
#6 (A)	Authoritative	31	25
#7 (A)	Authoritative	33	27
#14 (A)	Authoritative	30	29
#15 (A)	Authoritative	29	28
#16 (A)	Authoritative	29	23
#17 (A)	Authoritative	31	29
#18 (A)	Authoritative	30	28

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #5, #8, #9, #10, #11, #6 and #7. All individual scores indicate the mother and adolescent moderately to strongly agree with the statements on the particular parenting style. Differences on the number of divergent scores exist between NA and A group families. Families #5, #8, #9, #10 and #11 are in the NA group. Families #6 and #7 are in the A group.

Table #C14 Paternal Solidarity Subscale (Stepfather Role Challenge Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Range: 4 - 20

(a low degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority)

- (a high degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	4	4
#5 (NA)	4	4
#8 (NA)	4	4
#9 (NA)	4	4
#10 (NA)	5	4
#11 (NA)	6	5
#12 (NA)	4	4
#13 (NA)	4	4
#19 (NA)	5	4
#20 (NA)	4	4
#2 (A)	4	4
#3 (A)	5	5
#4 (A)	4	4
#6 (A)	4	4
#7 (A)	4	9
#14 (A)	4	4
#15 (A)	4	4
#16 (A)	4	4
#17 (A)	4	4
#18 (A)	5	8

Family #7 shows a divergence in scores. The mother perceives a slightly higher degree of conflict between her adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his biological father's authority and his stepfather's authority than her partner.

Table #C15 Loyalty Division Subscale (Stepfather Role Challenge Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Range: 3 - 15

(adolescent was very unlikely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father)

- (adolescent was very likely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	3	3
#5 (NA)	3	3
#8 (NA)	3	3
#9 (NA)	3	6
#10 (NA)	4	9
#11 (NA)	7	4
#12 (NA)	3	12
#13 (NA)	3	3
#19 (NA)	5	8
#20 (NA)	4	6
#2 (A)	3	3
#3 (A)	3	7
#4 (A)	3	3
#6 (A)	3	3
#7 (A)	3	4
#14 (A)	3	3
#15 (A)	3	3
#16 (A)	3	3
#17 (A)	3	3
#18 (A)	3	4

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #10 and #12. In both of these NA group families, the mothers felt there was a strong likelihood their adolescents would question their stepfathers' authority following visits or contacts with their biological fathers. Their partners,

however, felt that it was very unlikely their adolescents would question their authority following these contacts or visits.

Table #C16

Internal Disciplinary Challenge Subscale (Stepfather Role Challenge Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Range: 8 - 40

(a low frequency at which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each others disciplinary practices with the adolescent)

- (a high frequency at which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each others disciplinary practices)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	19	19
#5 (NA)	18	14
#8 (NA)	21	13
#9 (NA)	7	14
#10 (NA)	15	12
#11 (NA)	19	19
#12 (NA)	24	32
#13 (NA)	13	11
#19 (NA)	15	23
#20 (NA)	17	27
#2 (A)	10	11
#3 (A)	14	23
#4 (A)	10	13
#6 (A)	19	9
#7 (A)	13	11
#14 (A)	12	16
#15 (A)	14	18
#16 (A)	10	10
#17 (A)	12	9
#18 (A)	14	10

The greatest divergence in scores appears in families #8, #9, #12, #19, #20, #3 and #6. Five of these families are in the NA group. Family #12 is the only family where both partners perceived a high frequency at which they objected to each others disciplinary practices with the adolescent. In five out of these seven families, it was the mothers who perceived a higher frequency of objections with their partners. Only in families #8 and #6 did the stepfathers perceive a higher frequency of objections. This would suggest that mothers have more objections about their partners' parental expectations concerning their adolescents than do their partners. This finding is particularly relevant in families where the adolescent is less than willing to accept his/her stepfather's authority.

Table #C17 External Disciplinary Challenge (Stepfather Role Challenge Scale)

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Range: 4 - 20

(a low frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family objected to the stepfather's disciplinary practices)

- (a high frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family objected to the stepfather's disciplinary practices)

Family	Stepfather	Mother
#1 (NA)	4	4
#5 (NA)	4	4
#8 (NA)	4	4
#9 (NA)	4	4
#10 (NA)	4	5
#11 (NA)	11	4
#12 (NA)	6	7
#13 (NA)	4	4
#19 (NA)	7	5
#20 (NA)	7	6
#2 (A)	4	4
#3 (A)	4	6
#4 (A)	4	5
#6 (A)	4	4
#7 (A)	6	4
#14 (A)	4	4
#15 (A)	4	4
#16 (A)	4	4
#17 (A)	4	4
#18 (A)	6	4

Family #11 showed the only divergence in scores. The mother perceived a low frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family objected to her partner's disciplinary practices. Her partner, however, perceived a moderately high number of challenges from the extended family.

Appendix D

SUBSCALE SCORES

Mutual Respect Summary Questions

Composite scores of summary questions on the Mutual Respect subscales range from 3 (very close) to 21 (very distant). Scores ranged from 4 to 11.6 suggesting little overall difference in emotional closeness. Eleven families scored between 4 and 6.3: and nine families scored between 7.3 and 11.6. All nine of the latter families are in the NA group. These scores are consistent with the responses measuring the adolescent's willingness to accept his/her stepfather's authority. Furthermore, NA group family scores clustered at the higher end of the range indicating that adolescents and stepfathers in these families are not as close as those in A group families. See Table #20 for individual family scores on Mutual Respect subscale summary questions.

Table #20 Mutual Respect Summary Questions

Range: 3 (very close) - 21 (very distant)
 (respondents - mother, stepfather, adolescent)
 (NA Families in Boldface)

Family #4	4.0
Family #7	4.0
Family #18	4.0
Family #15	4.0
Family #3	5.3
Family #11	5.6
Family #6	6.0
Family #2	6.3
Family #14	6.3
Family #16	6.3
Family #17	6.3
Family #8	7.3
Family #12	8.0
Family #13	9.0
Family #9	9.6
Family #20	9.6
Family #5	10.0
Family #19	10.0
Family #10	11.3
Family #1	11.6

Mutual Respect Subscale

Composite scores on the Mutual Respect subscale range from 6 (much mutual respect) to 30 (no mutual respect). Eleven families scored between 8 and 9.5, and nine families scored between 12.5 and 19.5. All nine of the latter families are in the NA group. NA and A group scores are consistent with responses on the Mutual Respect Summary questions; the range of families' scores is small and NA group family scores clustered at the upper end of the scale

while A group scores clustered at the lower end. See Table #21 for individual family scores on Mutual Respect.

Table #21 Mutual Respect Subscale

Range: 6 (much mutual respect) - 30 (no mutual respect)
(respondents - steppather, adolescent)
(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #3	8.0
Family #4	8.0
Family #6	8.0
Family #16	8.0
Family #18	8.0
Family #7	8.5
Family #2	9.5
Family #5	9.5
Family #14	9.5
Family #15	9.5
Family #17	9.5
Family #13	12.5
Family #1	13.0
Family #11	13.0
Family #10	14.5
Family #9	15.5
Family #20	16.0
Family #19	17.6
Family #8	18.0
Family #12	19.5

Disciplinary Development Subscale

Composite scores on the Disciplinary Development subscale range from 3 (very few disciplinary complaints) to 15 (many disciplinary complaints). Thirteen families scored between

4 and 7.5, and seven families scored between 8.0 and 15. All seven of the latter families are in the NA group. NA and A group scores are consistent with responses on the Mutual Respect Summary questions and Mutual Respect subscale to the extent that most NA group family scores clustered at the upper end of the range. However, unlike those scores, these scores have a larger range. This indicates a substantial difference in the number of disciplinary complaints between A and NA group families; most NA group families experienced more disciplinary complaints than A group families. See Table #22 for individual family scores on Disciplinary Development.

Table #22 Disciplinary Development Subscale

Range: 3 (very few disciplinary complaints) - 15 (many disciplinary complaints)
(respondents - stepfather, adolescent)
(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #4	4.0
Family #5	6.5
Family #6	6.5
Family #7	6.5
Family #15	6.5
Family #16	6.5
Family #18	6.5
Family #2	7.0
Family #10	7.0
Family #14	7.0
Family #17	7.0
Family #3	7.5
Family #11	7.5
Family #13	8.0
Family #1	9.5
Family #9	9.5
Family #19	10.0
Family #8	10.5
Family #20	11.0
Family #12	12.0

Ascription/Achievement Subscale
(Refer to hypothesis #1)

Composite scores on the Ascription/Achievement subscale range from 4 (a completely achieved relationship) to 20 (a completely ascribed relationship). Scores are consistent with findings in the level of Acceptance/Rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. The distribution of scores by family type (NA and A group) shows no relationship with each family's ascription/achievement score. The relatively low scores and

small range (4.0 - 12.0) suggest few differences between families regarding their perceptions of the extent to which the stepfather/adolescent relationship is achieved or ascribed. Further, it indicates all families tend to believe in the need for the stepfather to achieve his relationship with his adolescent. See Table #23 for individual family scores on ascribed/ achieved relationships.

Table #23 Ascription/Achievement Subscale

Range: 4 (completely achieved relationship) - 20 (completely ascribed relationship)
(respondents - mother, stepfather)
(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #13	4.0
Family #3	5.0
Family #9	6.5
Family #2	8.0
Family #10	8.0
Family #15	8.0
Family #17	8.0
Family #4	8.5
Family #7	8.5
Family #14	8.5
Family #18	8.5
Family #20	8.5
Family #6	9.0
Family #16	9.0
Family #8	9.5
Family #12	9.5
Family #19	9.5
Family #1	10.0
Family #11	10.5
Family #5	12.0

Communication Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #1)

Composite scores on the Communication subscale range from 5 (extensive communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with his stepchild) to 25 (little communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with his stepchild). Findings from this subscale are consistent with scores in the level of Acknowledgement/Rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. The relatively small range in scores (11.0 - 18.5) indicates few differences between families in the extent to which the stepfather communicates his relationship with his adolescent. NA and A group scores did not cluster together suggesting that there is no relationship between the amount of communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority. These scores also suggest both NA and A group families have only had limited discussions concerning the stepfather's relationship with their adolescent. See Table #24 for individual family scores on communication.

Table #24 Communication Subscale

Range: 5 - 25

(extensive communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent)

- (little communication by the stepfather regarding his relationship with the adolescent)

(respondents - mother, stepfather)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #2	11.0
Family #14	11.0
Family #17	11.0
Family #19	11.0
Family #12	11.5
Family #10	13.0
Family #3	13.5
Family #4	13.5
Family #8	13.5
Family #9	13.5
Family #13	13.5
Family #15	13.5
Family #20	13.5
Family #11	15.0
Family #1	16.5
Family #6	17.0
Family #16	17.0
Family #5	18.0
Family #7	18.5
Family #18	18.5

Empathy Subscale

...Empathy subscale range from 5 (the stepfather completely validates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father) to 25 (the stepfather completely invalidates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father). Family scores are consistent with finding in the level of Acknowledgement/Rejection of difference between the stepfather role and the conventional father role. Unlike the small range of scores in the ascription/achievement

subscale and the communication subscale, the range in the empathy subscale is more extensive (7.0 - 17.0), suggesting considerable difference between families in the extent to which stepfathers validate their adolescent's relationship with their biological father. NA and A group scores did not cluster together suggesting that there is no relationship between the extent to which the stepfather validates his adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority. See Table #25 for individual family scores on empathy.

Table #25 Empathy Subscale

Range: 5 - 25

(stepfather completely validates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father)
 - (stepfather completely invalidates the adolescent's relationship with his/her biological father)
 (respondents - mother, stepfather)
 (NA Families in Boldface)

Family #9	7.0
Family #2	8.0
Family #10	8.0
Family #12	8.0
Family #14	8.0
Family #17	8.0
Family #19	8.0
Family #3	9.5
Family #4	9.5
Family #15	9.5
Family #20	9.5
Family #6	11.0
Family #8	11.0
Family #16	11.0
Family #5	12.0
Family #13	13.0
Family #11	15.5
Family #7	16.5
Family #18	16.5
Family #1	17.0

Stepfather Initiation Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Composite scores for the Stepfather Initiation subscale range from 35 (a considerable amount of authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather) to 7 (little authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather). Scores are

consistent with findings in the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. Family scores ranged from 15.6 to 27.3, suggesting some stepfathers initiated a moderate amount of authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour while others initiated much more. The clustering of NA and A group scores are almost identical with the pattern on the stepfather role clarity scale. Most NA group scores cluster at the lower end of the range while A group scores cluster at the higher end. This indicates most stepfathers in NA group families initiated less authoritative and nurturing and befriending behaviour to their adolescents than stepfathers in A group families. See Table #26 for individual family scores on stepfather initiation.

Table #26 Stepfather Initiation Subscale

Range: 7 - 35

(little authoritative and nurturant and befriending behaviour initiated by the stepfather)

- (a considerable amount of authoritative and nurturing and befriending initiated by the stepfather)

(respondents - mother, stepfather, adolescent)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #12	15.6
Family #19	19.0
Family #10	19.3
Family #1	20.3
Family #20	20.3
Family #9	21.6
Family #11	22.3
Family #13	22.6
Family #4	23.3
Family #3	24.0
Family #5	24.0
Family #14	24.0
Family #17	24.0
Family #6	25.0
Family #16	25.0
Family #2	25.3
Family #15	25.3
Family #8	26.6
Family #7	27.3
Family #18	27.3

Consensus Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Composite scores for the Consensus subscale range from 25 (a high level of consensus between the biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent) to 5 (a low level of consensus between the biological mother and the

stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent). Scores are only moderately consistent with the findings on the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. Family scores ranged from 11.0 to 23.3, however, 19 of these scores ranged from 18.0 to 23.3. This small range of relatively high family scores indicates all families, other than family #12, have a high level of consensus between the biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. While NA group scores tended to cluster at the lower end of this range, the range was so small, group scores add little information in explaining the relationship between the level of consensus between partners and the adolescent's willingness to accept the stepfather's authority. See Table #27 for individual family scores on consensus.

Table #27 Consensus Subscale

Range: 5 - 25

(a low level of consensus between biological mother and stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent)

- (a high level of consensus between the biological mother and the stepfather regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent)
 (respondents - mother, stepfather)
 (NA Families in Boldface)

Family #12	11.0
Family #3	18.0
Family #11	18.5
Family #19	18.5
Family #5	19.0
Family #4	19.5
Family #8	19.5
Family #10	19.5
Family #15	19.5
Family #20	19.5
Family #1	21.0
Family #6	21.0
Family #9	21.0
Family #16	21.0
Family #7	21.5
Family #17	21.5
Family #18	21.5
Family #13	22.0
Family #2	23.3
Family #14	23.3

Reciprocity Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Composite scores for the Reciprocity subscale range from 30 (the adolescent's total acceptance of the stepfather's initiatives) to 6 (the adolescent's total rejection of the stepfather's

initiatives). Scores are consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. Family scores ranged from 14.0 to 29.0, suggesting in some families the adolescent moderately accepted the stepfather's initiatives, while in others, the adolescent almost totally accepted the stepfather's initiatives. Similar to findings on the consensus subscale, family #12 scored the lowest at 14, while the remaining 19 family scores ranged from 19.5 to 29.0. In family #12, the adolescent almost totally rejected the stepfather's initiatives. NA group scores clustered at the lower end of this range and A group scores clustered at the higher end. This indicates most adolescents in NA group families were less accepting of their stepfathers' initiatives than adolescents in A group families. See Table #28 for individual family scores on reciprocity.

Table #28 Reciprocity Subscale

Range: 6 - 30
 (the adolescent's total rejection of the stepfather's initiatives)
 - (the adolescent's total acceptance of the stepfather's initiatives)
 (respondents - stepfather, adolescent)
 (NA Families in Boldface)

Family #10	14.0
Family #11	19.5
Family #12	19.5
Family #19	19.5
Family #20	19.5
Family #9	20.5
Family #1	21.5
Family #6	22.5
Family #15	22.5
Family #17	22.5
Family #5	23.0
Family #4	26.5
Family #8	26.5
Family #16	26.5
Family #7	27.0
Family #18	27.0
Family #3	27.5
Family #14	27.5
Family #13	28.5
Family #2	29.0

Support Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Composite scores for the Support subscale range from 35 (the biological mother's total support of her partner's befriending behaviour toward her adolescent) to 7 (the biological mother's total lack of support of her partner's befriending behaviour toward her adolescent).

Scores are consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. Family scores ranged from 22.0 to 33.5, suggesting biological mothers in some families offer substantial support for their partners' befriending behaviour toward their adolescent, while in other families, biological mothers offer almost total support. NA group scores clustered at the lower end of this range and A group scores clustered at the higher end. This indicates biological mothers in NA group families offer less support for their partners' befriending behaviour toward their adolescent than biological mothers in A group families. See Table #29 for individual family scores on the Support subscale.

Table #29 Support Subscale

Range: 7 - 35
 (the biological mother's total lack of support of
 her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent)
 - (the biological mother's total support of
 her partner's befriending behaviour towards her adolescent)
 (respondents - mother, stepfather)
 (NA Families in Boldface)

Family #12	22.0
Family #8	25.0
Family #5	27.0
Family #15	27.0
Family #1	28.0
Family #6	28.0
Family #9	28.0
Family #10	28.0
Family #16	28.0
Family #19	28.0
Family #11	28.5
Family #20	28.5
Family #4	29.0
Family #7	29.5
Family #17	29.5
Family #18	29.5
Family #3	30.0
Family #13	32.0
Family #2	33.5
Family #14	33.5

Stepchild Initiation Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #2)

Scores for the Stepchild Initiation subscale ranged from 25 (total encouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's initiation of requests for help

and displays of affection) to 5 (total discouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's requests for help and displays of affection). Scores are consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Clarity scale. Family scores ranged from 6.0 to 24.0, however, similar to findings on the reciprocity and consensus subscales, one family scored substantially lower than the others. Family #10 scored 6.0, and the other families' scores ranged from 14.0 to 24.0. This suggests in some families the stepfather and biological mother moderately encourage the adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection, while in other families, stepfathers and biological mothers almost totally encourage their adolescent's requests. Further, it suggests in family #10, the stepfather and biological mother almost totally discourage the adolescent's requests for help and displays of affection. NA group scores cluster at the lower end of this range and A group scores cluster at the higher end. This indicates the stepfather and biological mother in NA group families offer less encouragement to their adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection than stepfathers and biological mothers in A group families. See Table #30 for individual family scores on the Stepchild Initiation subscale.

Table #30 Stepchild Initiation Subscale

Range: 5 - 25

(total discouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's requests for help and displays of affection)

- (total encouragement by the stepfather and biological mother's response to the adolescent's initiation of requests for help and displays of affection)

(respondents - adolescent)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #10	6.0
Family #9	14.0
Family #12	15.0
Family #11	17.0
Family #19	17.0
Family #20	17.0
Family #3	19.0
Family #1	20.0
Family #5	20.0
Family #6	20.0
Family #8	20.0
Family #14	20.0
Family #7	21.0
Family #13	21.0
Family #17	21.0
Family #18	21.0
Family #2	24.0
Family #4	24.0
Family #15	24.0
Family #16	24.0

Scores on Stepfathers Parenting Styles

(Refer to hypothesis #3)

Table #31 shows each family's composite scores on all the stepfathers' parenting styles. The family's composite score is based on the responses of the stepfather and adolescent. Two

significant patterns emerge from these data. First, in six families (#3, #5, #6, #9, #10, #16) the stepfather used an adjunctive parenting style, and in each case, with the exception of family #5, their scores are very high. This suggests adolescents in these families strongly acknowledge the level of support their stepfathers have for their mothers' authoritative judgements. This is particularly significant for families #9 and #10, both families are in the NA group yet the stepfathers and adolescents strongly agree on the stepfather's use of a parenting style which was expected to increase the adolescent's acceptance of the stepfather's authority. Second, families in the A group generally have a larger difference between the parenting styles with the highest and lowest scores than families in the NA group. NA group families #9 and #10 are the exception to this finding. Differences between the parenting styles with the highest and lowest scores in these two families is great. These findings suggest stepfathers and adolescents in A group families and in families #9 and #10 share a clear understanding of the parameters of the stepfather's authoritative role.

Table #31 Scores on Stepfathers' Parenting Styles

Range 5 - 35

Family #11	Permissive 28,	Authoritative 23,	Adjunctive 25,	Authoritarian 20
Family #12	Authoritarian 29,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 18,	Authoritative 25
Family #13	Authoritarian 26,	Permissive 22,	Adjunctive 24,	Authoritative 23
Family #19	Authoritarian 27,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 23,	Authoritative 25
Family #20	Authoritarian 28,	Permissive 23,	Adjunctive 23,	Authoritative 26
Family #1	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 18,	Adjunctive 25,	Authoritarian 24
Family #2	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 28,	Authoritarian 20
Family #4	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 24,	Adjunctive 26,	Authoritarian 18
Family #7	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 25,	Adjunctive 26,	Authoritarian 20
Family #8	Authoritative 26,	Permissive 21,	Adjunctive 23,	Authoritarian 24
Family #14	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 22,	Adjunctive 27,	Authoritarian 20
Family #15	Authoritative 31,	Permissive 23,	Adjunctive 28,	Authoritarian 18
Family #17	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 22,	Adjunctive 27,	Authoritarian 18
Family #18	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 25,	Authoritarian 21
Family #3	Adjunctive 30,	Permissive 25,	Authoritative 29,	Authoritarian 20
Family #5	Adjunctive 26,	Permissive 22,	Authoritative 23,	Authoritarian 24
Family #6	Adjunctive 30,	Permissive 22,	Authoritative 29,	Authoritarian 20
Family #9	Adjunctive 29,	Permissive 23,	Authoritative 24,	Authoritarian 22
Family #10	Adjunctive 31,	Permissive 24,	Authoritative 23,	Authoritarian 16
Family #16	Adjunctive 29,	Permissive 22,	Authoritative 25,	Authoritarian 18

Scores on Biological Mothers' Parenting Styles

(Refer to hypothesis #4)

Table #32 shows each family's composite scores on all the biological mothers' parenting styles. The family's composite score is based on the responses of the biological mother and adolescent. Mothers in NA group families #9 and #10 had higher scores on the authoritative scale than the majority of all the families. This finding is consistent with other findings on these families to the extent that these mothers have clearly defined their parental roles to their

adolescents and partners. These mothers are the sole sources of parental authority to their adolescents. Second, other than families #9 and #10, mothers in the A group had higher scores on the authoritative scale than mothers in the NA group families. Adolescents in the A group families as opposed to NA group families have a better understanding of rules because they have been clearly stated and explained in open communication. Third, the highest scores for mothers in NA group families #12, #19 and #20 are on the adjunctive parenting scale. Furthermore, the difference in each of these family's scores on the four parenting styles is minimal. This suggests a lack of consistency in the parental expectations of these mothers. The parameters of these expectations are vaguely defined, and as a consequence, makes it difficult for these adolescents to anticipate the structure of their rights and responsibilities.

Table #32 Scores on Biological Mothers' Parenting Styles

Range 5 - 35

Family #12	Adjunctive 26,	Permissive 24,	Authoritative 24,	Authoritarian 25
Family #19	Adjunctive 25,	Permissive 23,	Authoritative 22,	Authoritarian 24
Family #20	Adjunctive 28,	Permissive 24,	Authoritative 26,	Authoritarian 25
Family #1	Authoritative 26,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 24,	Authoritarian 23
Family #2	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 19,	Adjunctive 20,	Authoritarian 22
Family #3	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 21,	Adjunctive 18,	Authoritarian 23
Family #4	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 21,	Adjunctive 19,	Authoritarian 24
Family #5	Authoritative 26,	Permissive 24,	Adjunctive 24,	Authoritarian 23
Family #6	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 19,	Adjunctive 20,	Authoritarian 23
Family #7	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 18,	Adjunctive 17,	Authoritarian 24
Family #8	Authoritative 25,	Permissive 23,	Adjunctive 24,	Authoritarian 24
Family #9	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 17,	Adjunctive 16,	Authoritarian 27
Family #10	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 17,	Adjunctive 15,	Authoritarian 26
Family #11	Authoritative 27,	Permissive 21,	Adjunctive 23,	Authoritarian 25
Family #13	Authoritative 26,	Permissive 23,	Adjunctive 23,	Authoritarian 25
Family #14	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 19,	Authoritarian 24
Family #15	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 18,	Adjunctive 20,	Authoritarian 25
Family #16	Authoritative 28,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 21,	Authoritarian 24
Family #17	Authoritative 30,	Permissive 19,	Adjunctive 18,	Authoritarian 25
Family #18	Authoritative 29,	Permissive 20,	Adjunctive 21,	Authoritarian 24

Paternal Solidarity Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Composite scores for the Paternal Solidarity subscale range from 20 (a high degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty toward his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority) to 4 (a low degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority). Family scores ranged from 4.0 to 6.5 suggesting a low degree of conflict between

the adolescent's feeling of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority in all families. Furthermore, there is no relationship between NA and A group scores and family scores on this subscale. These scores are not consistent with scores on the Stepfather Role Challenge scale. See Table #33 for individual family scores.

Table #33 Paternal Solidarity Subscale

Range: 4 - 20

(a low degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority)

- (a high degree of conflict between the adolescent's feelings of loyalty towards his/her biological father's authority and his/her stepfather's authority)

(respondents - mother, stepfather)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #1	4.0
Family #2	4.0
Family #4	4.0
Family #5	4.0
Family #6	4.0
Family #8	4.0
Family #9	4.0
Family #12	4.0
Family #13	4.0
Family #14	4.0
Family #15	4.0
Family #16	4.0
Family #17	4.0
Family #20	4.0
Family #10	4.5
Family #19	4.5
Family #3	5.0
Family #11	5.5
Family #7	6.5
Family #18	6.5

Loyalty Division Subscale

(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Composite scores for the Loyalty Division subscale range from 3 (the adolescent was very unlikely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father) to 15 (the adolescent was very likely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father). Family scores ranged between 3.0 to 7.5, however, the majority (11 families) scored 3.0. This suggests that in most families the adolescent was very unlikely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father. In the other families the adolescent was somewhat likely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father. These scores are consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Challenge scale to the extent that families #3, #11, #12, #19 and #20 scores are in the upper-end of the range in both scales. While most NA group family scores tend to cluster at the upper-end of this range, there are more outliers in the Loyalty Division subscale than in the Role Challenge scale. Adolescents in NA group families are moderately more likely to question their stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with their biological father than adolescents in A group families. See Table #34 for individual family scores.

Table #34 Loyalty Division Subscale

Range: 3 - 15
(adolescent was very unlikely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father)
- (adolescent was very likely to question his/her stepfather's authority following visits or contacts with his/her biological father)
(respondents - mother, stepfather)
(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #1	3.0
Family #2	3.0
Family #4	3.0
Family #5	3.0
Family #6	3.0
Family #8	3.0
Family #13	3.0
Family #14	3.0
Family #15	3.0
Family #16	3.0
Family #17	3.0
Family #7	3.5
Family #18	3.5
Family #9	4.5
Family #3	5.0
Family #20	5.0
Family #11	5.5
Family #19	6.0
Family #10	6.5
Family #12	7.5

Internal Disciplinary Challenge Subscale
(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Composite scores for the Internal Disciplinary Challenge range from 8 (a low frequency at which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each other's disciplinary practices with

the adolescent) to 40 (a high score due to the fact that the biological mother and stepfather objected to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent). Family scores ranged from 10.0 to 28.0 indicating a moderate difference between families regarding partner's perceptions of the number of objections to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. Furthermore, scores begin at the lower-range of the scale and end in the mid-range suggesting in some stepfamilies partners have few objection to each other's disciplinary practices with the adolescent while in other families partners have a moderate number of objections. And last, NA group scores cluster at the upper-end of this range while A group scores cluster at the lower end. These scores are consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Challenge scale. See Table #35 for individual family scores.

Table #35 Internal Disciplinary Challenge Subscale

Range: 8 - 40
(a low frequency at which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each others disciplinary practices with the adolescent)
- (a high frequency at which the biological mother and stepfather objected to each others disciplinary practices)
(respondents - mother, stepfather)
(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #16	10.0
Family #2	10.5
Family #9	10.5
Family #17	10.5
Family #4	11.5
Family #7	12.0
Family #13	12.0
Family #18	12.0
Family #10	13.5
Family #6	14.0
Family #14	14.0
Family #5	16.0
Family #15	16.0
Family #8	17.0
Family #3	18.5
Family #11	18.5
Family #1	19.0
Family #19	19.0
Family #20	22.0
Family #12	28.0

External Disciplinary Challenge
(Refer to hypothesis #5)

Composite scores for the External Disciplinary Challenge range from 4 (a low frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family object to the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent) to 20 (a high frequency at which members of the stepfamily's

extended family object to the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent). Family scores ranged from 4.0 to 7.5 suggesting all families experienced few objections from extended family members regarding the stepfather's disciplinary practices with the adolescent. These scores are not consistent with findings on the Stepfather Role Challenge scale. See Table #36 for individual family scores.

Table #36 External Disciplinary Challenge Subscale

Range: 4 - 20

(a low frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family
objected to the stepfather's disciplinary practices)- (a high frequency at which members of the stepfamily's extended family
objected to the stepfather's disciplinary practices)

(respondents - mother, stepfather)

(NA Families in Boldface)

Family #1	4.0
Family #2	4.0
Family #5	4.0
Family #6	4.0
Family #8	4.0
Family #9	4.0
Family #13	4.0
Family #14	4.0
Family #15	4.0
Family #16	4.0
Family #17	4.0
Family #4	4.5
Family #10	4.5
Family #3	5.0
Family #7	5.0
Family #18	5.0
Family #19	6.0
Family #12	6.5
Family #20	6.5
Family #11	7.5
