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Psychosocial factors related to father involvement with noncustodial children after remarriage

McArthur, Alison Gwen, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1994

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PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS RELATED TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT WITH NONCUSTODIAL CHILDREN AFTER REMARRIAGE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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1994

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1994
Dedicated to My Daughters
Marna McArthur Laudon
Ani McArthur Laudon
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The involvement of fathers in parenting has become an increasingly salient topic in the study of families (Lamb, 1982). Rising rates of maternal employment, dual-career families, and divorce have resulted in a need for greater involvement by the father as caregiver. Traditionally, the father role has been predominantly that of provider and as a liaison to the world outside the home (Lamb, 1981). The last two decades have seen an increase in active parenting by fathers, especially in play activities. Empirical work has marked this shift with a change of focus from father absence to factors related to paternal involvement (Bronstein & Cowen, 1988). Average levels of paternal involvement have risen, but not greatly, and it continues to be an important issue in men's lives (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1986). Societal expectations for the father role have been rising since the 1960's (Bronstein & Cowen, 1988; Lewis & Sussman, 1985), and Pleck (1983) found that more fathers were including paternal involvement in their definition of success as a male.
At the same time that men are becoming more involved in the father-child relationship, divorce and remarriage have complicated the father role. According to Martin and Bumpass (1989), it is estimated that two-thirds of all first marriages in the United States will end in divorce, the vast majority of men will remarry, and, many others who do not remarry after divorce will cohabit.

Individuals are divorcing at younger ages, and there has been a decrease in the time between first and second marriages. Therefore, divorce and remarriage involve an increasing number of children (Furstenberg, 1988; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). It has been predicted that nearly half of all children born in recent decades will spend a portion of their childhood in a single-parent household (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989). Glick (1989) estimated that in 1987, 14% of all children were living in stepfamilies, and this figure is expected to approximate forty percent in the next twenty five years.

The effect of these marital transitions on children depends on a variety of factors. The continuity of parenting and fathers' involvement have been found to be particularly important (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Kelly, 1988; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). In most divorce
cases, custody is awarded to the mother (90%). Even in the increasingly popular joint legal custody, the mother remains the "custodial" parent. The changes that this non-custodial status creates for men and their children are often dramatic. The context and ease of contact is lost, requiring greater effort to maintain involvement. Additionally, the contact is shrouded in the effects of separation, making the re-establishment of family roles difficult (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Umberson & Williams, 1993).

The father's absence in the home after divorce has a deleterious effect on the children involved (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Kurdek et al., 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Many of the negative effects stem from the economic hardship divorce creates for the custodial parent (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982, Lamb, 1986; Simons, Lorenz, Wu, & Conger, 1993). Many fathers also are not economically involved in the lives of their children after divorce. Teachman (1991) reports that one out of five fathers provide no financial assistance to their ex-spouse or children. Hoffman and Duncan (1988) note a 30 percent decline of income for women with children in the first year after divorce, and divorce precipitates many women falling below
the poverty line (Lerman, 1987). Teachman (1991) also reports that other than paying child support, approximately one out of three fathers has never provided any other assistance to their children.

Continued involvement of fathers with their children seems to be an important issue for men, both after divorce, and into remarriage. Considerable role strain has been noted as a source of psychological distress that inhibits contact following divorce (Umberson & Williams, 1993). Remarriage may create competing loyalties, and stress as psychological, as well as, financial resources are stretched. It is the purpose of this work to consider the factors that affect men's roles with their children after their remarriage into another family system.

Involvement of Non-custodial Fathers with Their Children

Extent of Involvement

In their national sample, Furstenberg and Nord (1985), indicated that nearly half of the children studied had no contact with their non-resident father during the past year. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) found that children in their sample longed for more contact with their fathers. These children found it difficult to reconcile the lack of
involvement with their father's professed feelings of love. Many children who had contact experienced an emotionally distant relationship, interacting more as pals than family members. For others contact dwindled over time, hampered by a variety of stressors.

Context of Father Involvement

The emotional and psychological stress that fathers experience after divorce is a factor related to involvement with their children. The consequences of divorce for men include a greater number of health problems and a higher rate of morbidity than for divorced females, increased economic stress, and difficulty in adjusting to changing social roles (Kitson & Morgan, 1990; McKenry & Fine, 1992; Riessman & Gerstel, 1985). Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1982) found that many fathers found it too emotionally painful to visit or found that their role was artificial. Ambrose, Harper, and Pemberton (1983) also found all but one of the no-contact fathers in their study developed some kind of mental health problem since the time of divorce. In a summary of stressors related to divorce and separation, Bloom, Asher, and White (1978) noted that automobile accidents, suicides, homicides, and deaths related to
medical illnesses were more common in fathers who had little or no contact with their children.

Men report great stress over loss of the aspects of living in the same household as their children (Jacobs, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). The move from custodial to visitation fathering is frustrating and emotionally painful for many men (Loewen, 1982). The ease of daily contact, and the family context for involvement by the father are lost. Hetherington, Cox, and Cox (1982) reported fathers in their study spoke of a continuing sense of loss related to seeing their children intermittently two years post-divorce. This effect was found even for men who had remarried.

Anger and guilt are often associated with decline of visitation. Guilt is re-experienced at each visitation for many fathers (Burgoyne & Clark, 1982). Anger as a result of being separated from family or related to continuing hostility toward ex-spouse interferes with re-establishing new relationships with children (Lund, 1982). Because of these emotional responses, for some men, the alternative may be to choose complete separation from their children or visitation frequency so low that the visits are social, rather than instrumental in their children's lives. This
response, obviously, removes men from the essential role they enjoyed in the nuclear family. Cessation or reduction in visitation, however, only compounds the problem resulting in long-term depression and anger (Ambrose, Harper, & Pemberton, 1983; Hetherington et al., 1982).

The lifestyle of recently separated fathers has been described by Hetherington et al. (1982) as "chaotic". Even after the initial adjustment phase, many men experience ongoing difficulties maintaining contact and involvement with their children. A return to single life may involve housing that does not accommodate children easily, and free-time activities more geared to adults.

Another factor that affects involvement is the change in their role in the relationship with their children. Role ambiguity for fathers is often very great, and there seems to be no consensus on societal norms for the father role post-divorce (Cherlin, 1978). The status of non-custodial parent brings changes in the enactment of the father role. It creates changes in the extent of influence on their children, interferes with the ease of contact, and reduces the instrumental aspects of the father-child relationship. The previous status of authority figure and head of the family is diluted.
Fathers often have conflicted relationships with their former spouses that interfere with their continued involvement with their non-custodial children. Conflict with the custodial parent has been shown to inhibit the amount of contact, and may generally interfere with visitation (Seltzer, Schaeffer, & Charny, 1989).

In remarriage, the fathering role may become more complicated, and the guidelines less clearly defined. Ahrons and Rodgers (1987) note the tendency of remarried families to model themselves after nuclear families. However, the father role in remarriage is complicated by age, gender and closeness factors that impact family relationships.

Fathers may experience negative reactions from children about new relationship commitments in a new marriage. Teenage children may have difficulty seeing their parent as a sexual being, and may feel jealous of the time commitment a new relationship demands (Crosbie-Burnett, 1993; Loewen, 1982). Conversely, they may interpret his keeping this life separate as being ashamed of them. Fathers seem to have a particularly difficult time maintaining contact with daughters. Hetherington found that remarriage of fathers often meant a decline in visitation with daughters,
especially if there was conflict between daughter and stepmother.

Loewen (1982) describes the role strain experienced after remarriage for many men as related to how it affects the relationship with the former spouse. The new relationship has the potential to either increase the tension or facilitate a truce (Maccoby, Buchanon, Mnookin & Dornbush, 1993). Furstenberg (1983) concludes that remarriage aggravates tension between ex-spouses, or, in other cases, helps them set aside their differences. If a stepmother does not facilitate visitation, or if there is frequent disagreement about the ex-spouse, fathers may find it difficult to establish complementary roles.

Assessment of the Literature on Non-Residential Fathers' Involvement

Researchers have only recently begun to systematically assess the predictors of father involvement. Most of the previous work in this area has been focused on the impact on children of a father's lack of involvement. The father was blamed without an attempt to understand the lack of involvement. The bulk of empirical work speaks to father involvement following divorce, not including remarriage. However, most fathers will remarry and become involved in
new family systems, and this is thought to create additional barriers to continued involvement of fathers. More exploration of the effects of remarriage on father involvement is needed to indicate if the barriers after their remarriage are different from the barriers to involvement after divorce (Demo & Acock, 1991; McKenry et al., 1992). The variables that have been found to be related to father involvement can be divided into four broad categories: 1) child characteristics, 2) father characteristics, and two areas involving relationship characteristics, 3) the relationship with both the former spouse, and 4) current spouse.

**Child Relationship Characteristics**

Child characteristics that have been found to influence involvement include gender, age, proximity, and presence of siblings. Studies of clinical samples have indicated the tendency of fathers to maintain contact with sons more so than daughters (Hess & Camera, 1979; Hetherington et al., 1982). More frequent and consistent visitation with sons was reported by Guidubaldi and Perry (1985) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980). Furstenberg (1988) also reported a greater likelihood of fathers to maintain frequent contact with their sons than with their daughters. This is thought
to be related to sons being more responsive to fathers
involvement, fathers concern that sons have same sex role
models (McKenry et al., 1992), and a tendency for sons to
stay overnight more often than daughters with their fathers
(Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Former spouses may facilitate
this involvement pattern because sons are a greater
disciplinary problem (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagen, &
Anderson, 1989; Steigman, 1966). These findings are
consistent with studies of intact families in which fathers
report greater involvement with sons than daughters (Hawkins
& Belsky, 1989).

However, studies using national samples have shown no
effect of sex of child on paternal involvement (Furstenberg
described the association between child's sex and paternal
involvement as "small and not always statistically
significant." In addition, her findings indicted that
fathers are less likely to maintain some type of involvement
with sons than with daughters. Further study of non-
clinical populations is needed to clarify the relationship
of gender and paternal involvement. The association between
sex of child and paternal involvement is complex and
warrants greater examination (Seltzer, 1991).
Seltzer and Bianchi (1988) found a positive correlation between non-custodial parent-child contact and the number of siblings present in the National Health Interview Survey. However, both McKenry et al. (1992) and Teachman (1991), using national samples, found that the number of children did not contribute to the variation in non-custodial physical involvement. Seltzer et al. (1989) postulated the relationship they found between number of children and father involvement after divorce may be a result of the higher support payments, and the greater number of occasions (school and celebrations) eliciting involvement. The general trend toward fewer children in American families may be a factor in continued involvement on the part of fathers post-divorce.

Age of the child is a characteristic that has been shown to be a factor in father involvement, yet findings are inconsistent. Those children who are younger are more likely to have frequent contact (Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988), yet, older children have been found to visit more often as they have greater freedom to make arrangements and initiate contact with non-custodial parents (Kelly, 1981). Teachman (1991) and McKenry et al. (1992) found no consistent effect of age on involvement of non-custodial fathers. Other
studies have found older children more often visited because the father is more comfortable with the relationship as the children approximate adult behavior and interests.

Physical proximity of the child to the non-custodial parent affects both physical and economic involvement (Dudley, 1991; Seltzer et al., 1989; Teachman, 1991). Visitation is more easily arranged, support payments more easily dispersed, and attendance at important events is more likely if the father lives nearby. However, the low rate of involvement on the part of non-custodial fathers, overall, indicates that proximity alone does not equal involvement (Furstenberg et al., 1983; Teachman, 1991).

**Father Characteristics**

Father characteristics identified in the literature include social class, psychological distress, age, and satisfaction with parenting. Healy, Malley, & Stewart (1990) did not find a correlation between fathers' occupational socioeconomic status and their indicators of father-child relationship. However, a positive relationship between social class measures and involvement have been reported by others (McKenry et al., 1992; Seltzer et al., 1989; Seltzer, 1991). Teachman (1991) indicated that household socioeconomic status factors are less important
than relationship factors, especially the parental dyad. He also reported that remarried fathers were more likely to make child support payments, and that fathers who provided one type of support tended to provide others.

Psychological distress may be a factor of influence in paternal involvement (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Dudley (1991) identified in a clinical study of fathers who have infrequent contact with their children, a sub-sample who reported personal problems as barriers to involvement. Although the nature of the personal problems varied considerably, the problems were separate from the subgroups of former spouse obstacles, i.e., age of children, distance, or remarriage factors. A common thread running throughout this sub-group were issues related to depression. Hughes (1989) proposed a connection between the poor mental health scores he found in men who did not live with their children and their perceptions of parenting in this status.

Involvement of the non-custodial father is often greatest initially after the separation and divorce (Beller & Graham, 1985; Seltzer et al., 1989). In general, because of a variety of factors, father involvement is negatively related to length of time since parental separation (Furstenberg & Nord, 1985; Healy et al., 1990;
Whether fathers limit contact with their children to avoid conflict (Wright & Price, 1986), redirect their attention to new families (Hetherington & Camera, 1984), it is clear that, for many men, this pattern is accentuated over time (Wallerstein & Hetherington, 1983).

Seltzer (1991) found in her study of 1,354 children who live with their mothers that fathers and children had less frequent visits the longer they lived apart, but that they were more likely to spend extended periods together. If this reflects a reorganization of the father-child relationship, it is important to understand what factors may be involved in some relationships declining, while others regain strength after redefinition.

Parental role strain has been studied as it applies to women during the transitions of divorce and remarriage, but there has been less attention paid to men's parental role (Umberson & Williams, 1993). Role strain may result from the lack of established norms for noncustodial fathering (Seltzer, 1991). Many men are not accustomed to sole responsibility for their children, even on a part-time basis (Fox, 1985), and may have difficulty in deciding whether their role is that of a disciplinarian, or of a friend.
(Weiss, 1985). Fathers must create a role with their children without the aid of societal norms for fathers post-divorce. This can be a complicated, and often, frustrating process as fathers sort their role in their children's school work, in teaching moral development, and in setting behavioral limits (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

The lack of societal institutionalization of appropriate roles is also a factor for remarried men (Cherlin, 1978). If discipline has not been an issue in the father-child relationship post-divorce, the remarriage often necessitates a revaluation of this part of the parent role. Changes in the parental role established during the post-divorce stage are common, and can exacerbate the strain of establishing yet new roles in remarriage. The presence of the new partner may change many aspects of the father's involvement, including the nature of the activities, the need for discipline, and the amount of time spent with the father's biological children.

**Relationship Characteristics**

Teachman (1991) found that relationship variables were more important in predicting parental involvement than individual factors such as SES, or child characteristics such as age. Relationship factors involving the former
spouse have been studied to a far greater extent than the remarriage relationships. Characteristics of the former spouse/father relationship that have been shown to influence this redefinition are custody, conflict between the father and child's mother, and mother's remarriage (Lowery & Settle, 1985; Seltzer et al, 19; Teachman, 1991).

Conflict between former spouses has been reported in the literature to affect the quantity and quality of parent child contact (Furstenberg, 1988; Grynch & Finch, 1990; Moreland & Schwebel, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). However, the nature of the relationship between conflict and involvement continues to be somewhat unclear. Dudley (1991) reported that conflict with former spouse was a major obstacle to having more frequent contact with their children in over a third of his sample. Higher levels of non-custodial father contact have been reported to be associated with more positive relationships with ex-spouses (Ahrons, 1983; Koch & Lowery, 1984). However, regularity of financial support by fathers has also been related to a congenial relationship with ex-spouses (Teachman, 1991). Hetherington et al. (1989) found a gradual loss of contact with the non-custodial parent and children when there were high rates of continued aggression between the former
spouses. Seltzer (1991) reported that, over time, parental conflict may diminish involvement of non-custodial fathers with their children. The question of quality and quantity is addressed again in the findings of McKenry et al. (1992) which suggest that the amount of conflict affected the amount of physical contact, but did not predict other levels of involvement. Conflict may inhibit the establishment of stable redefinition of boundaries between children and their fathers post-divorce. The influence of conflict may continue into the remarriage where the presence of step siblings can create more loss and greater role strain (Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987). Conflict can arise from non-residential children feeling pushed out by the step sibling, or increased conflict between the stepmother and the fathers' children (MacKinnon, 1989). The conflict may keep relationships in a state of flux, which may create sustained disruption.

Teachman (1991) reported no effect on father involvement of custodial mothers marital status. However, Healy et al. (1990) found that remarriage of the custodial mother resulted in less financial assistance from absent fathers. The effect of the custodial mother's remarriage may or may not have an affect on the boundaries between
children and their fathers. In comparison to mothers who had not remarried, remarried mother's children had less contact with their fathers (Dudley, 1991; Bianchi & Seltzer, 1988). Parental involvement may be affected by the custodial parent's remarriage.

Remarriage of the non-custodial parent is another factor that has been found to affect involvement in a varied pattern (Teachman, 1991). Some studies have indicated that the remarriage of the non-custodial parent affects the amount of child support paid and reduces the frequency of visitation (Furstenberg, 1983; Seltzer, 1991). It has been postulated that the establishment of a new family competes for time and financial resources (Seltzer, 1991; Ahrons & Rodgers, 1987). Hetherington et al. (1989) found a loss of contact, particularly under conditions of intense conflict, after remarriage.

Furstenberg et al. (1988) noted that withdrawal of parenting occurred upon remarriage by the non-custodial parent, but did not seem to be related to marital status of the custodial parent. Bianchi and Seltzer (1988) found a decline after either parent remarried and labeled this commitment to their current family unit as "serial parenthood."
However, it has also been acknowledged that remarried fathers are more likely to make child support payments (Hill, 1985; Beller & Graham, 1985; Teachman, 1991). The remarriage may make the amount of contact before the remarriage difficult to maintain. On the other hand, the re-entry into marriage may indicate a commitment to parenthood/family life (Teachman, 1991). Additionally, it may provide an environment and structure by which the father and child can maintain or reestablish contact with each other. Remarriage may enable the father to be financially involved in some cases (Visher & Visher, 1989). It appears that the findings are still contradictory.

Gold, Bubenzer, Richardson, & West (1991) studied the level of differentiation from ex-spouses, and its effect on marital intimacy in blended families. Differentiation was described as an ability to be emotionally separate from the former spouse and, yet, maintain a functional level of contact. They concluded that a healthy degree of differentiation from the former marriage, but a continuing financial commitment to the children involved, may be a greater reality than in the past. This is another area that has conflicting evidence. The presence of children (Gold et al., 1991) in the remarriage, has shown a positive
relationship to differentiation from the ex-spouse and, perhaps, greater involvement with children. A common myth of remarriage is that a mutual child will aid differentiation from the ex-spouse by cementing the remarriage bond. However, Coleman and Ganong (1990) identified no effect in their study.

A Theoretical Perspective on Noncustodial Father Involvement After Remarriage

The empirical literature on divorce and remarriage includes representation from developmental, sociological, family systems, and psychological theories. However, much of the empirical work on noncustodial fathers' involvement after divorce has been atheoretical. The events of divorce and remarriage have been studied in terms of loosely connected correlates of adjustment or well-being (Coleman & Ganong, 1990).

The structural changes involved in divorce and remarriage include not only a reorganization of the daily routines, and the development of new relationships, but also the establishment of new roles (Maccoby, 1992; Quick, 1989). Roles are a set of behaviors that have a function, usually agreed upon and accepted as a code of norms among a community of people (Biddle, 1979). Social roles link the
individual to their society (Newman & Newman, 1987). Newman & Newman (1987) note that roles are supported and defined by reciprocal roles, and have a set of associated expectations for involvement. The transitions from marriage to divorce and remarriage involve role redefinition. Role redefinition after divorce is described by Raschke (1988) as "an essential and logical, though painful, part of the aftermath of divorce".

The ease of transition into new roles includes the difficulty involved in the addition, termination or a significant change in the expectations of a role (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). Burr (1973) has identified four factors related to ease of transition. These include anticipatory socialization, role clarity, role conflict, and role strain (Burr, 1973). Anticipatory socialization is defined as identification with the person who is performing a particular role, and includes how we learn the behaviors appropriate for a role (Cottrell, 1942). Role clarity is the extent to which expectations for behavior in a role are clear rather than ambiguous (Burr, 1973). Role conflict is a result of incompatible expectations for a particular role, and affects the last factor, role strain (Burr, 1973). Role strain is defined as
"the stress generated within a person when he either cannot comply or has difficulty complying with the expectation of a role or set of roles" (Burr, 1973). The lack of institutionalization of roles or guidelines for remarried families is considered a contributor to the confusion about role enactment at this time (Cherlin, 1978; Fine, Ganong & Coleman, 1993). Role theory is useful in studying the factors that influence the ease of making the role transitions for fathers after divorce and remarriage. Burr, Leigh, Day, and Constantine (1979) include role clarity and role conflict in defining role strain. Role theory would, thus, suggest that the father's description of role strain might predict the noncustodial parental role (Goode, 1960). In the absence of a direct measure of role strain, as is the case in this study, factors that may affect role strain can be studied. Factors that increase role strain are hypothesized to be associated with low levels of father involvement after remarriage because the strain is inversely related to the ease of transition into new roles. Factors that decrease role strain or are associated with low levels of role strain are thought to be related to higher levels of father involvement after divorce and remarriage. Role theory, particularly the concept of role strain, can be used
as a guiding structure to understand the relationship between psychosocial factors and father involvement with children after divorce and remarriage.

The concept of role strain and transition has been addressed in studies comparing stepfamilies to nuclear families (Pink & Wampler, 1985; Walker & Messinger, 1979), in studies of children's psychological adjustment to divorce (Brand & Clingempeel, 1987), and in relation to parenting role identity (Pasley & Ihinger-Tallman, 1992). Role strain in post divorce relationships has been associated with greater complexity in relationships, less clarity in definition of roles, and few cultural guidelines for family roles in remarriage (Cherlin, 1978; Clingempeel, 1981; Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984; Booth & Edwards, 1992). Ahrons and Rodgers (1987) discuss the importance of establishing clear roles in the reorganization process of binuclear families. The sources of role strain in the transition from divorce to remarriage may encompass fathers' lack of clarity in their role with their children, the changing boundaries with their children, and/or conflict with their former or current spouse. The ease or strain of transition into new or reorganized roles has been used to explain the wide variation in involvement and styles of parenting post-
divorce (Seltzer, 1991). Role ambiguity and role strain have been reported in the father post-divorce involvement literature as a factor influencing involvement (Cowen, 1987; Dudley, 1991; LaRossa, 1988; McKenry, Price, Fine, & Serovich, 1992).

Role strain is not measured directly in this study. Role theory provides a conceptual framework on what factors might produce role strain for fathers during marital transitions. Role strain is an intervening variable, and the assumption is that higher levels of role strain inhibit father involvement. There are a number of sources of role strain identified in this study. These factors are divided into clusters as a way to organize the sources of role strain. The variables identified as indicators of role strain in this investigation will be grouped in clusters based on the work of Belsky (1984) in his ecological model of parenting. The domains he used included: (a) personal psychological resources of parents; (b) contextual sources of stress and support; and (c) characteristics of the child. This model, which arose out of the research on the etiology of child maltreatment, assumes that parental functioning is determined by a number of factors and that stress and/or support affect parenting by influencing these three areas.
The contextual sources considered in this investigation include both the former and current spousal relationships as there is the potential for role conflict or lack of clarity from one or both of these domains. The cluster grouping used in this investigation involves father characteristics, former spouse relationship characteristics, remarriage relationship characteristics, and child relationship characteristics.

**Father characteristics.** Individual psychological factors pertaining to the father include (a) fathers' age, (b) psychological distress, (c) socioeconomic status (SES), and (d) satisfaction with parenting. Dudley (1991) reported psychological distress as a major category of fathers' explanation of their lack of contact with children. Hetherington et al. (1982) found that men experienced the transition to new parental roles very stressful and withdrew contact because of this role strain.

Two other individual factors that may affect role strain are fathers' age and socioeconomic status (SES). Father's life span developmental tasks may facilitate or compete with meeting expectations of fathering. Older fathers, because of sex role conversion, may be more motivated to overcome role strain. SES is a measure of the economic factors that
may affect role strain. Lack of resources may make it difficult for fathers to meet their expectation for their role as parent and overcome barriers to remaining involved.

**Former spouse relationship factors.** There are several factors related to the previous marriage that may influence the re-establishment of the parent role for fathers, i.e.; (a) mothers' remarriage, (b) presence of other children in biological mothers' home, (c) the amount of conflict between mother and father, (d) the amount of contact with the former spouse, and (e) the father's perception of the current relationship with the former spouse. Contact with children usually implies some contact with the former spouse (Umberson & Williams, 1993). However, if the relationship with the child's mother is caustic, or very conflictual, the role of father post-divorce may be unclear, inconsistent, or difficult to sustain.

The former spouse's remarriage may make the biological fathers' role more unclear, and the presence of step-children may further complicate the re-establishment of functional roles. Umberson and Williams (1993) have noted the strain in the father role as a result of the loss of the children's mother as facilitator for father/child interactions. The presence of another father figure and
other children may require an additional role change for the father.

Remarital relationship factors. Fine, Ganong, and Coleman (1993) have found that remarriage creates changes in the roles of those in the newly created household. The ease of transition to new roles may affect fathers' continued involvement with their children from a previous marriage. Conflict or ambiguous expectation may result in role strain which would negatively affect the transition (Boss, 1992). Factors that influence the amount of role strain in this transition may include: (a) marital quality, (b) how men compare their current circumstances to their former marriage, (c) the level of conflict in the remarriage, and (d) their perceived feeling of fairness in the delegation of responsibilities in the new marriage. The relationship between non-custodial fathers' involvement with their biological children and their remarriage is an area that has received attention only recently in the empirical literature on men's issues. However, difficulty in the transition to a new marriage, or poor adjustment to remarriage, would create role strain, and may be related to lack of role clarity for men. Comparisons of the current relationship to the former marriage and feeling of fairness offer some indication of
role clarity, a component of role strain. If the comparison and feelings of fairness are negative, there is a greater likelihood of role strain, or difficulty in transition to new roles.

Child Relationship Characteristics. There are a number of child relationship characteristics that have been correlated with the transition to non-custodial fathering, and are implicated in the research as influencing the amount of role strain. These include: (a) child's age, (b) gender of the child, (c) proximity to the father, and (d) child well-being. Role strain may occur due to difficulty in meeting expectations of the fathering role with certain children or children at specific ages (Allison & Furstenberg, 1989). Fathers may have difficulty in knowing how to either entertain or discipline younger children in the context of non-custodial parenting and the developmental tasks of older children (socialization, launching) may conflict with the establishment of new parenting roles. Younger children may require care-giving by the father that he previously depended on the biological mother to facilitate, thereby creating role strain for the father. Greater independence of older children may make it difficult to maintain a traditional parent role with limited contact.
Other child relationship factors that may affect involvement are distance from the child (proximity) and gender of the child. It is more difficult to meet the requirements of a role when contact is impeded by distance. It has been indicated in previous work that fathers maintain more contact with either boys or with children when one is a boy (Hess & Camara, 1979). Boys may experience the contact more positively, and the need for continued involvement may be more clear for boys, thereby involving less role strain. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) noted that girls may experience greater loyalty conflicts than their brothers, and their resistance to involvement may add to father's role strain.

It is suggested in the literature that certain variable clusters will have greater predictability of father's involvement with their children after divorce and remarriage (Belsky, 1980; McKenry et al., 1992). Personal characteristics of the father, including attitudes toward parenting and psychological functioning, have been noted as important in facilitating the father's continued sense of importance in a child's life (Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988; Thomas & Forehand, 1991). These characteristics and resources are similar to the domain of personal
psychological resources that Belsky (1984) reported as most strongly associated with positive parental functioning.

The factors that are related to fathers' involvement with their children are the focus of this study. Role theory, and specifically the concept of role strain, offers a psychosocial framework from which to base an investigation of this relationship. The factors identified here have evolved from this theory and the empirical literature as being related to the concept of role strain for fathers as they adjust in their relationship with their children after their divorce and subsequent remarriage (Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate selected psychological and social factors related to fathers' post-divorce involvement with their biological children after they have remarried. The empirical work on father involvement and remarriage is scant, and predominantly atheoretical. Study in this area has also been hampered by few variables being considered at a time. In addition, the information about men's roles are often drawn from mother's responses about their children's father. The literature on divorce and remarriage suggests a number of individual and
relationship factors that would be described according to role theory as facilitating or impeding the adjustment because of the role strain they may produce (Levinger & Moles, 1979). The factors that serve as predictors of involvement include the age of the father and child, sex of child, proximity of father to child, presence of siblings, father distress, satisfaction with parenting, re-marital quality, conflict in both current and former spouse relationships, and amount of contact with former spouse, presence of siblings, and mothers remarriage. The factors have been grouped into four categories: child relationship characteristics, father characteristics, and two marital relationship characteristics—former spouse and current remarriage factors. Child relationship characteristics include gender, age, proximity to non-custodial father, presence of siblings and well-being. Father characteristics involve socioeconomic status (SES), psychological distress, satisfaction with parenting, and age. The group of marital relationship characteristics is comprised of two categories: a) former spouse variables including conflict between father and child's mother, her remarriage, current relationship with mother, amount of contact and presence of siblings; b) father's re-marital variables, which include marital
quality, comparisons of former and current relationship, perceived feelings of fairness, and disagreement in remarriage. Data will be drawn from only fathers' responses. Fathers' involvement will be determined by the following factors; physical involvement as determined by frequency of visitation, time spent in activities with the child, amount of time child spent at father's residence, and amount of contact either in written or phone correspondence.

The child relationship, father, former and current relationship characteristics will be studied as to their correlations to father involvement in an effort to assess how remarriage affects the relationship between fathers and their children. The use of a National data base, and of father responses addresses the weaknesses noted in the literature of overuse of clinical samples and mothers responses to study father involvement. Expanding the investigation of involvement beyond financial assistance and looking at relationship factors are two other elements of the proposed study which expands upon earlier research. Identification of factors related to fathers' involvement after remarriage should offer assistance to psychologists and other practitioners working in the areas of divorce and remarriage as they attempt to promote well-being in men by
facilitating the relationship between non-custodial father and their children.

**Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One:** A. Father characteristics including socioeconomic status, age, and satisfaction with parenting will be positively related to father involvement.

**Hypothesis One:** B. Father characteristic of psychological distress will be negatively related to father involvement.

**Hypothesis Two:** A. Former relationship characteristics of conflict, and mother's remarriage will be negatively related to father involvement.

**Hypothesis Two:** B. Other children in mother's household, current relationship with former spouse, and amount of contact with former spouse will be positively related to father involvement.

**Hypothesis Three:** A. Remarriage relationship characteristics of marital quality, comparisons of former relationship to current relationship, perceived fairness in current relationship will be positively correlated with father involvement.
Hypothesis Three: B. Level of disagreements will be negatively related to father involvement.

Hypothesis Four: A. Child relationship characteristics of proximity, presence of siblings, child well-being and gender will be positively related to father involvement.

Hypothesis Four: B. Age of child will be negatively related to father involvement.

Hypotheses Five: The father characteristic factors will be more predictive than former relationship characteristic factors, which will be more predictive than remarriage factors, which will be more predictive than child relationship factors of father involvement.

Definition of Terms

Father involvement: Defined by physical and psychological measures including amount of verbal communication, visits, amount of time involved in activities, and written communication.

Remarriage: Second or more marriage of either mother or father.

Role strain: Perceived stress a person experiences when one cannot or has difficulty in complying with the expectations of a role or set of roles.
**Child Relationship Characteristics:** Involves variables of gender, age, proximity to father in reported miles, and presence of siblings.

**Father Characteristics:** Includes socioeconomic status, age, psychological distress, and satisfaction with parenting performance.

**Former Spouse Relationship Characteristics:** Defined as amount of conflict between father and child's mother, mothers remarriage, quality of current relationship with former spouse, and presence of a sibling for focal child.

**Remarital Relationship Characteristics:** Defined as remarital quality, perceived fairness in relationship, comparisons to former relationship, and disagreements in the remarriage.
The current literature pertaining to father involvement with their children is reviewed in Chapter II. It is divided into three sections: (a) historical perspective of father involvement; (b) divorce and father involvement; and (c) remarriage and father involvement.

Father Involvement: A Historical Perspective

Evolution of the Father Role in North America

In Western society, fatherhood has undergone a pendulum swing from "predominant parent" to "peripheral parent" (Silverstein, 1993). The role of fathers prior to the late 19th century and industrialization, encompassed both legal and moral responsibility. The father was responsible for teaching both life skills and morals. He was economically responsible for children and, often, benefited from work done in the home or on the farm by older children. It was the father's role to impart discipline, and he usually became the custodial parent if a separation or divorce occurred.
This exclusive responsibility, and accompanying rights, created no check on the resulting power it put in men's possession. Women and children were treated well or poorly at the discretion, or ability, of the father as head of the family. Women had no legal rights and no recourse if the father of their children could not, or would not, behave in a manner befitting this responsibility. The stresses this caused families fueled the women's movement, and added to the force of the pendulum swing (Silverstein, 1993).

The shift from predominantly rural to urban living created by industrialization was a major factor in the swing of the pendulum. The Industrial Revolution resulted in a profound shift in the role of fathers (Guttman, 1993). Men fell under a hierarchy of power in the workplace similar to that which they had been privy to in their families. Workers, initially, had few rights, and their ability to maintain a place in their family was dependent on the benevolence, or lack of it, of their employers. The measure of success as a father changed from providing for the family and raising responsible children, to providing economic support to meet the family's physical needs. This role as breadwinner has consistently required men to spend time
apart from family. Activities required for success (long hours, willingness to travel, and or relocate) have become ingrained in the workplace, despite gains in employee rights won through the work of unions and the legal system.

The responsibilities of the home became the domain of women in the division of labor that followed the industrial revolution (Guttman, 1993). The pendulum swung past center. Mothers not only were recognized as important in their children's lives, but they were glorified as biologically predisposed to nurture and exclusively important for the healthy development of their children.

The abuses of children in the labor force in the early years of industrialization led to the consideration of children's rights. The belief that children were the property of their father came into question. Attention was building around the importance of the development of children, and the belief that they should be nurtured in their early years. This transformation resulted in a change in the legal system called the "tender years doctrine". This doctrine represented an interest in considering the needs of the child, and a growing awareness of child development.
This doctrine has altered the way courts consider disputes of child custody. It has reversed the trend in rulings that primarily awarded custody to men, to awarding custody to women in ninety percent of cases.

**Study of Fathers**

The study of psychology and psychosocial influences in interpersonal relationships has followed these cultural changes (Silverstein, 1993). The importance of the father as an influence in his child's development is emphasized in the writings of Freud (1965). Later, the shift to the importance of the mother as an influence is shown in the work of Bowlby (1969) on attachment.

The belief that women's exclusive domain in children's lives is natural, and the predominance of studies on parenthood involving only women's experiences resulted in a dearth of research on fatherhood. It was not until the 1980s that the father's role in the family was addressed. Despite an increase in attention, a review of the literature in eight clinical journals from 1984 to 1991 by Phares and Compas (1992) indicated that almost half of the studies still involved mothers, to the total exclusion of fathers.

Early studies in the 1970's showed that fathers contributed very little time to the parent role. The role
was largely conveyed through what the mother said about the father.

The increase in attention to the role of the father in family life has largely focused on the effect of his involvement or lack of it on his children. The implications of fatherhood for the adult male and his development has been studied to a far more limited degree (Lamb, 1986).

The growing interest in the effects of father involvement on children has indicated that the frequency and quality of the contact with the father is associated with child well-being (Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1985). In a study on parental control, Fine et al., (1993) obtained indication that the father had a role in maintaining control over deviant behavior. Conversely, Phares (1993) found that the role of the father was more playful than the mothers' role, and more gender stereotypical. Maccoby (1990) also found that men treat their children in a more gendered way. This finding has implications for development in sexual identity formation in children. The balance of father's more gendered treatment, with mother's less stereotypical interaction, may be important for completion of this developmental task. Newman and Newman (1987) describe the differences in parenting as a "concern for the process
versus the product of development". They describe the parental role of mothers as focusing on process factors such as comfort, trust and curiosity. Father parenting strategies tend to focus on problem solving, and physical strengthening. In addition to sex role development, the effect of father-child interaction is noted in the study of achievement, moral and intellectual development (Weisbroth, 1970; Radin, 1973; Tower, 1980). Although the effect of the father is generally stronger for boys, Hoffman (1977) found that moral judgment in girls was related primarily to identification with their fathers. These findings, along with the indication of the need for a connection with the father for secure attachment bonds found by Lamb (1986) are part of a growing awareness of the importance of the father in the development of children (Jacobs, 1982).

The role of the father has been studied in a much more limited way in discerning factors that facilitate father involvement with his children and the effect on him of that involvement. The development of the men's movement, in part, has been an acknowledgment of the difficulty men experience as a result of not having had enough contact with their fathers, and an awareness of their need for a connection with their children (Bly, 1990). Parenthood has
been increasingly recognized as an important developmental phase for adults (Jacobs, 1982). The demands of tasks in this phase of development facilitate growth through the confrontation of the problems endemic in parenting (Newman & Newman, 1987). It can also provide for the parent a context for evaluation of one's life and offer a sense of purpose (Guttman, 1993).

Divorce and Father Involvement

There is great societal pressure for men to be more involved in their children's lives, from being present at the birth to being available to their children for emotional, as well as, economic support. This is a component of the "new father" role that defines "cads" from "dads" (Silverstein, 1993). However, high rates of divorce in the past 20-30 years have resulted in a marked reduction in the amount of contact many fathers have with their children.

Impact on Children

In their review of father involvement, Amato and Keith (1991) found the majority of studies reported a positive association between the frequency and quality of contact with the noncustodial parent and children's well-being. Wallerstein, Corbin, and Lewis (1988) report a yearning in
children for greater contact with their fathers years after the divorce of their parents. There has been some evidence that continued father involvement is associated with behavioral disturbance rather than adjustment in children (Johnston et al., 1989; Zill et al., 1993). However, this appears to be more a function of conflict than of involvement (Forehand et al., 1988). The importance of continued involvement as evidenced by both children and men's desire to stay involved is consistently reported (Fine, Moreland, & Schwebel, 1983; Gately & Schwebel, 1991; Hetherington et al, 1989). Hetherington et al. (1989) reported in their review of research on marital transitions that the few findings on the role of the noncustodial parent provide an inconsistent effect on child development. They report that continued contact is beneficial for children if there is low interparental conflict. However, under the conditions of high conflict, children's adjustment is negatively affected by continued contact (Bray & Berger, 1993). Furstenberg and Cherlin (1991) reported that the frequency of visitation with a noncustodial father was less predictive of child well-being than was that of the climate in which the visits took place. This supports the psychological wholeness position which states that family
conflict is a more important variable in studying child adjustment after divorce and remarriage, that is the structure itself (Borrine et al., 1991; Enos & Handel, 1986; Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988).

It is important to note that conflict is not a unidimensional variable. The impact of conflict may depend not only on the intensity of conflict, but also on the context in which it occurs. Jaycox and Repetti (1993) found in their study of families that child adjustment was more strongly associated with family conflict level than with marital conflict. They used multiple informants to assess the social climate in the home of 72 4th and 5th graders. Their results were greater for girls than boys, and independent of anger in the parent-child relationship.

Quality of Fathers Post-Divorce Relationship with Children

The psychological and physical stresses men often encounter after a divorce include living a chaotic lifestyle, loss of daily contact with children, greater susceptibility to health problems, higher morbidity rates, and role strain. These have been noted more extensively in Chapter I. Kelly and Wallerstein (1977) speak of the divorce-imposed re-structuring of the fathers social role post-divorce. The success of this re-structuring may depend
on the fathers' psychological functioning, and in whether
the post-divorce involvement with children involves positive
characteristics as well as grief or loss. It is important
to note that the causality is not known between
psychological functioning and father involvement. Fathers
with poor psychological functioning may have greater
difficulty maintaining contact. Conversely, some factor of
children's involvement may negatively influence fathers'
psychological functioning.

The quality of the post-divorce relationship of fathers
and children is not easily predicted from the pre-divorce
relationship (Hetherington et al., 1989). Fathers who are
highly involved before divorce may find the restrictions in
time and location to be overwhelming (Jacobs, 1982). There
is some evidence that these fathers withdraw from
involvement post-divorce due to these feelings of loss
(Hetherington et al., 1989; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977; Kruk,
1991; Guttman, 1993;).

On the other hand, some fathers report that their
relationship with children improves post-divorce
(Hetherington et al., 1989). The limitations of visitation
have a positive effect of divorce for some fathers (Kelly &
Wallerstein, 1977). Positive effects may include the
ability to develop a relationship in a conflict free environment, and an opportunity to develop previously undiscovered caretaking skills (Friedman, 1980). Kruk (1991) reported a strong inverse relationship between fathers' pre- and post-divorce involvement with their children. Fathers who had difficulty with the demands of family life were more able to negotiate more limited child care responsibilities. Men who are not highly committed to the parenting role may find the expectations of visitation fathering more consistent with their interest level. Some fathers welcome an opportunity to parent in their own style without deferring to the biological mother's style.

Factors Related to Father Involvement

Mother's remarriage. Mother's remarriage has been found to reduce the amount of contact between noncustodial parents and children (Furstenberg & Spanier, 1984). Hetherington et al. (1989) found evidence of a renegotiation of the father role as a result of the addition of a stepparent in the child's life. They found role strain in this process, although the remarriage of the custodial parent was not related to a change in the level of involvement of the noncustodial parent.
The sex and number of children. The sex and number of siblings may have an effect on the level of father involvement. Father's tend to maintain involvement when they have more than one child and when at least one of the children is male (Zaslow, 1988). Explanations for this include father's perception of a need for a male-based identity model, a need for behavior control, and greater ease for the father of visitation with more than one child (Hetherington et al., 1989; Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Phares, 1993). Fathers may relate easier to males because of similar interests, and may be encouraged to maintain involvement by biological mothers to a greater extent than with girls. Children may entertain each other during visitations, easing the discomfort of this involvement. Single children, especially girls, are more likely to become enmeshed with custodial mothers, making continued contact difficult.

Amount of conflict with former spouse. Conflict with the former spouse has consistently been found to be associated with lower levels of father involvement (Amato & Keith, 1991; Bray, 1992; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Smetana et al., 1991). Dudley (1991) reported that conflict with the former spouse was a major reason given by fathers for not being
involved with their children post-divorce. High rates of chronic conflict were associated with gradual loss of contact in Hetherington et al.'s (1989) longitudinal study. Conflict is associated with diminished involvement and difficulty in the establishment of new roles post-divorce for fathers and their children (Forehand, McCombs, Long & Fauber, 1988; Jaycox & Repetti, 1993; Johnston et al., 1989; Seltzer, 1991). McKenry et al. (1992) using data from the National Survey of Families and Households found that the amount of conflict did not predict involvement per se, but it did affect the amount of physical contact. There are structural barriers that conflict creates for maintaining involvement. These include non-compliance with visitation schedule, constant changes in visitation procedure, and limitations in the fathers lifestyle that render the fathers new life less conducive to children (small apartment, work hours, lack of notification of school events). There is also an emotional component for most men. Levant (1992) addresses the emotional response in his study of men's roles and found biological correlates of withdrawal from conflict in the sympathetic nervous system. A cycle of pain-avoidance may offer some level of numbness to the
noncustodial father, and, yet, also add to his feeling of estrangement from his children (Guttman, 1993).

Current relationship with former spouse. The quality of the post-divorce parental relationship is associated with both continued father involvement and positive adjustment in children (Brody & Forehand, 1990; Hetherington et al., 1989). Although the quality of the post-divorce parental relationship has been more extensively studied as it relates to child adjustment, there is also indication that it facilitates father involvement. Bray (1992) joins a growing number of researchers who are finding family process variables more predictive of post-divorce adjustment than family structure. Enos and Handal (1986) labeled this concept "psychological-wholeness", as opposed to physical-wholeness (intact families), and found it to be more critical than parental marital status in family adjustment. This finding is replicated in studies of adolescent behavior post-divorce (Borrine, Handal, Brown, Searight, 1991; Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988). Conflict resolution strategies used by divorced parents and a balance between conflict/cooperation were found to be important in child adjustment and involvement (Hetherington et al., 1989). Healy, Malley and Stewart (1990) found an association between a positive
relationship with the ex-spouse and high levels of noncustodial father contact with children.

**Amount of contact with former spouse.** Parallel parenting, in which there is little interaction between parents, has been reported as more common than cooperative parenting in post-divorce families (Hetherington, 1993). Yet, in a study of the impact of divorce on the father-child relationship, Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) found that parents who had more frequent contact with one another indicated less negative impact of the divorce on children. This is consistent with research on attachment in adulthood which has focused on the continuity of attachment (Feeney & Noller, 1990). Hazan and Shaver (1987) have studied attachment and the part it plays in adult bonds. An ability to maintain contact with an ex-spouse may foster father involvement with children as a result of a healthy renegotiation of post-divorce attachment. The correlational nature of these studies makes it difficult to determine if this represents shared parenting, or better adjustment in fathers.

**Remarriage and Father Involvement**

The majority of studies on remarriage have focused on the custodial mother and stepfather relationship. The
predominant outcome studied has been child adjustment or well-being. Popular myth, with roots from the late 19th century when death was the more common precursor to remarriage, would suggest that a stepfather replaces a father. It is also a widely held belief that the new wife of a noncustodial father will be less than supportive of his continued involvement with children from a previous marriage. These beliefs may reflect a desire of people in remarriages to gain first marriage status by modeling the nuclear family form, and excluding nonresidential parents or family members (Bray & Berger, 1993). Cherlin (1978) described this as a result of incomplete institutionalization of remarriage, resulting in families operating out of a basis of myth and stereotypes. However, the literature offers a more complex picture of remarriage and father involvement.

Although the relationship of the noncustodial father is an understudied topic in psychology, some information can be gleaned from research done on remarriage and child adjustment to this family transition. A reduction in the amount of involvement by noncustodial fathers after remarriage has been reported by researchers. Bianchi and Seltzer (1988) noted a greater focus on the current family
in both parents after remarriage and labeled this as "serial parenthood". Hetherington et al. (1989) reported a loss of contact after remarriage, as did Furstenberg et al. (1988). Furstenberg et al. (1988) noted that this was related primarily to the remarriage of the noncustodial parent, not to the marital status of the custodial parent. In their research in the Developmental Issues in StepFamilies (DIS) Research Project, Bray and Berger (1993) studied the frequency of contact and quality of relationship over a period of 10 years after parental remarriage. They reported a gender disparity, with the father-daughter relationship quality remaining constant despite a reduction in contact, but the father-son relationship quality improving over time, with the contact remaining constant.

Mediating factors in the decline in father involvement after remarriage may include "pain-avoidance" of limited visitation, competing commitments, or renewed conflict with biological mother (Guttman, 1993). It may also be related to current remarital quality, or conflicts in the new marriage that arise from continued involvement with noncustodial children. Bray & Hetherington (1993) noted the important influence of the marital relationship on parent-
child relationships in all types of families in their review of the literature on families in transition.

Jacobs (1982) found that men who were highly involved with their children pre-divorce reported continued loneliness and loss as a result of their visitation schedule with children even after their remarriage. An inverse relationship of actual contact after remarriage was reported by Kruk (1991) in his study of pre- and post-divorce father-child relationships. Men who were relatively less involved during the marriage became more involved, whereas men who were highly involved tended to lose contact because of the pain associated with the reduced visitation.

**Disagreements in the Remarriage.**

Remarriage may have the effect of rekindling or aggravating conflict between the father and an ex-spouse, or it may be a catalyst for letting go of unresolved issues (Furstenberg, 1983). Interparental conflict in the remarriage is a factor influencing psychological wholeness, a variable studied by Borrine, Handal, Brown and Searight (1991) in a study of child adjustment. They also implicated family conflict in the effect of continued contact after remarriage. In a study on marital communication, Goldman and Baucom (1993) identified a difference in how negative
communication is used by couples. They studied maritally distressed, depressed, and nondistressed couples and assessed patterns of communication. Their findings suggest that more negative communication was related to greater marital adjustment for nondistressed couples, and indicated that a willingness to confront problems on the part of the husband rather than a withdrawal from conflict accounted for this effect. Negative communication in distressed and depressed couples was associated with a misunderstandings in messages or perceptions, as opposed to confrontation of problems, and was detrimental to marital adjustment and involvement.

Although the relationship of conflict, family structure and father involvement begs greater empirical investigation, studies suggest that family process variables and family psychological wholeness offer a more precise avenue to study the role of the father (Bray, 1992; Enos & Handel, 1986; Hetherington et al., 1989).

Marital Quality and Father Involvement.

The effect of marital quality on father involvement can only by suggested by related research as this is an area that has not received much attention.
Marital satisfaction in remarriage was subject to a meta-analysis by Vemer, Coleman, Ganong, and Cooper (1989). In comparing men and women in remarriage, they found a trend that resembles first marriages. Remarried men reported greater satisfaction in their marriages than did remarried women. These authors suggested that the complications of stepmotherhood may partially account for this finding.

These authors also compared remarriages involving residential versus non-residential children. They found no difference in remarital satisfaction between these two groups. However, they noted the small number of studies available (6), and consider the finding tentative.

An additional comparison involved simple versus complex remarriages (Vemer et al., 1989). Simple remarriages involve one partner being a stepparent. Complex remarriages have both partners becoming stepparents as a result of the union. This meta-analysis did not find an association between this status and marital quality. They suggested that this variable may be better studied as to the process factors, as structure does not offer any clear conclusions.

Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman (1992) in their review of the research on remarriage and stepparenting, report that a
cooperative, as opposed to competitive, relationship was related to satisfaction and adjustment in remarriage.

The lack of differences found in marital satisfaction in first marriages and remarriages contrasts with the finding that parent-child and stepparent-child relationships are more conflicted and detached in first-marriage families (Bray & Hetherington, 1993). In their review they reported greater negativity between family subsystems in remarriage, but similar levels of marital satisfaction.

Drawing from research on nuclear family interactions, Belsky (1993) found that fathers who felt support from their wives reported a greater sense of parental competence. Negativity or greater detachment among family subsystems may not impair marital satisfaction if the coparental support is high.

Another study may be noted in this discussion. Gottman (1993) proposes a cascade toward marital dissolution in his paper entitled "A Theory of Marital Dissolution and Stability". This work proposes a process and perception trajectory that predicts dissolution, and delineates certain negative interactions that were found to be involved in this trajectory or cascade. He describes the process of distancing and isolation that accompanies waning marital
satisfaction, and identified "flooding" as a mechanism by which these perceptions become global in the relationship. Flooding is defined by Gottman (1993) as intense emotional and physiological discomfort arising from an interaction, which leads to defensiveness and withdrawal. Defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling (withdrawal) were predictive of divorce.

The findings that specific types of negative interactions are most problematic, and that process variables may offer the most information about involvement in families is consistent with research previously cited. **Perceived Fairness in Remarriage.**

In the interest of considering the characteristics in remarriage that may be related to father involvement with children, the perception of fairness in the remarriage is explored. There is no research to date that investigate these variables together. However, it is hypothesized that the greater the perceived fairness in the remarital relationship, the lower the role strain, and, therefore, the greater the father involvement. Crosbie-Burnett and Gile-Sims (1991) found that couples in remarriages report they share power more equally than couples in first marriages. Power inequality and marital satisfaction are indirectly
related in research done by Whisman and Jacobson (1990) who studied both happily married and distressed couples. The highest levels of marital satisfaction were linked to egalitarian relationships in which decision making and responsibilities were delegated in a manner which was perceived as fair to both spouses. Although there is no research that addresses perceived fairness in remarriage to father involvement, family relationships are widely considered to be influential in parent-child relationships in all types of families (Bray & Hetherington, 1993). It is hypothesized that perception of unfairness in the remarriage would increase the role strain for the father, thereby impeding continued contact with children.

Comparison to former marriage.

The scale on comparisons to the former marriage in this study included a comparison of "being a parent", and of "care of your child". No research attends to these comparisons directly. However, there is some indication of comparisons of a more general nature. Positive comparisons to the former relationship may indicate less role strain, or a resolution to the role strain that positively affects father involvement.
Bray and Hetherington (1993) proposed that family subsystems in stepfamilies may be more independent than in first families. They found that stepfamilies were less cohesive, more distant in relationships, but, also, more flexible than first marriage families. Less cohesion was also reported by Hetherington et al. (1989) from responses from stepfamilies, along with poorly defined role expectations.

In a study of children's perceptions of stepfamilies, Fine, Kurdek, and Henningen (1992) found that stepparents were rated as having more role ambiguity than the ratings received by children of biological parents.

Bray (1992) described remarriages as more individuated, as defined by better adjustment, more effective communications and assertiveness.

The study of father involvement does not have a scope wide enough to have addressed these aspects of remarital family relations. However, if, as previously found, family dynamics are important to parent-child relationships, then the consideration of comparisons to the former marriage may be related to father involvement via the relationship to the father's level of role strain.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was a secondary analysis of data from a national project entitled "The National Survey of Families and Households" under the direction of Dr. Larry Bumpass and Dr. James Sweet (University of Wisconsin-Madison). The development of this national data base was funded by the Center for Population Research of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The secondary analysis reported here evaluated selected psychosocial factors related to non-custodial fathers' involvement in their children's lives after the fathers' remarriages.

Data Source

Data were collected for The National survey of Families and Households between March 1987 and May 1988. The main sample of 9,643 respondents is representative of the non-institutional United States population age 19 and older. Individuals under age 19 were eligible for selection as a main respondent if they were currently married (Sweet, Bumpass, & Call, 1988).
A number of the population groups were double-sampled. These include the minority groups of African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, single parents, persons with stepchildren, persons who were cohabiting, and persons who recently married. The total sample of 13,017 included 9,643 respondents in the initial sample and 3,374 respondents in the double sampled groups.

One adult was randomly selected from each household as the primary respondent. A shorter self-administered questionnaire was given to the spouse or cohabiting partner of the primary respondent. The interview portion of instrumentation collection averaged approximately one hour and forty minutes. Portions of the main interview were self-administered to allow for the gathering of sensitive information on subjects such as family violence and sexual functioning.

Sample Selection

The sample used to address the hypotheses of this study consisted of men currently in their second or more marriage (a remarriage) who have a child 0-18 years of age living elsewhere other than in their households. The majority of the children were living with their biological mother (81%) or grandparents (10%). The remaining children were divided
between foster placement, or institution/group home living (9%). Seventy five percent of the men were in their second marriage, 20% were in their third marriage, and 5% were in their fourth or more marriage.

Descriptive Statistics

The subsample from the National Survey of Families used in this inquiry consisted of 193 males, in their second or more marriage, who had a child 0-18 years of age, living elsewhere. Sixty percent of these men were the fathers of single children, 27% had two children, 10% had three children, with 4, 5, and 7 children accounting each for the remaining 3%. Eleven percent of this population identified themselves as Black, 81% as White, 6% Mexican, .5% Puerto Rican, .5% Cuban, and 1% as other Hispanic. Fifteen percent (15%) responded with "no religion" when asked about their religious preference. Twenty-four (24%) percent identified themselves as Roman Catholic, 1% were Jewish, 23% Baptist, 10% Protestant, 10% Methodist, and the remaining were Christian-based religious affiliations.

The mean age of these fathers was 38. The range was from 24 years to 58 years of age. The largest group was between 32 and 42 years of age. The target children of the men in this population were 48.2% male and 50.8% female.
The children ranged in age from 2-18 years, the majority in their teens. Thirty-three percent (32.6%) were 10 years or younger. Two-thirds were 10 to 18, with one-third grouped between 16 and 18 years. Approximately one-third of the males in this sample had stepchildren (i.e. spouses children).

Instrumentation

Dependent Variable

Father involvement was measured through the responses to eight questions. Respondents were asked how often they saw their child during the last 12 months, how often they had telephone or letter contact, and how often they spent in certain activities with their child. The activities included four areas: (a) leisure activities or visiting family friends, (b) religious activities, (c) talking, working on a project or playing together, and (d) school or other organized activities. Responses ranged from "not at all", "about once per year", "several times per year", "1-3 times per month", "1 time per week", "to several times per week".

Perceived influence on the child was measured by a single measure. The question used was: "How much influence do you have in making major decisions about such things as
education, religion, and health care?". Responses ranged from "none" to "a great deal". Respondents were asked how many weeks the child had visited or lived with them during the past 12 months.

The dependent measures were factor analyzed in order to ascertain whether they formed a unidimensional concept. A scale was created using the measures described above as they loaded on a single factor involving physical involvement. The analysis was performed with both oblique and orthogonal rotations. There was little variation between these analyses. Therefore, the orthogonal rotation was used and is reported here. The scale was combined and a Cronbach alpha reliability test indicated .80 for this scale.

**Independent Variables**

The independent variables were categorized into four conceptual clusters: (a) child relationship characteristics, (b) father characteristics, (c) relationship with former spouse characteristics, and (d) remarriage relationship characteristics. Various fixed choice questions were used to assess variables in each of these clusters. The psychometric properties of these questions have not been established.
Child relationship characteristics. These include age, gender, proximity as measured in miles away from father that child is currently living, presence of siblings, and child well-being. Raw data were used to assess age, gender, proximity and well-being. Presence of siblings was assessed by a "yes" or "no" response. Target child was randomly selected from the Household Roster list of children age 0-18.

Father characteristics. These include race, age, socioeconomic status, two measures of psychological well-being and a scale of parenting adjectives. Socioeconomic status was measured by the respondents occupational prestige based on the male-based SES index of Stevens & Cho (1985) for either his current job or last job if unemployed at time of interview. Psychological distress was measured by a rating scale ranging from "very happy" (1) to "very unhappy" (7). The second measure of psychological distress is level of depression. A shortened version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies - Depression scale (CES-D) was used (Radloff, 1977). The shortened version includes 12 rather than 20 items. Respondents were requested to indicate the number of days in the past week (ranging from 0-7 days) they had felt each of 12 symptoms of depression.
The 12 items were analyzed using the Cronbach coefficient alpha to test for reliability. The Cronbach coefficient was .92.

A set of parenting adjectives were used to assess satisfaction with parenting. The scale was comprised of six pairs of descriptors and respondents were asked to rate the things they do as a parent on a 7-point scale. The adjectives included interesting-boring, appreciated-unappreciated, overwhelming-manageable, complicated-simple, lonely-sociable, and poorly done-well done. The first two variables (interesting-boring, and appreciated-unappreciated) were re-scaled to provide consistent measures. The Cronbach coefficient was .97 for this scale. A total score will be used for data analysis.

Former spouse relationship characteristics. These included whether or not the mother had remarried, if the mother had other children in her current relationship, the quality of the current relationship with the former spouse (rated from "very unfriendly" to "very friendly" on a 5-point Likert scale), amount of contact with the former spouse (rated from 1-"not at all" to 6-"more than once per week"), and the level of conflict with the biological mother. Conflict was assessed with responses to the
question: "How much conflict do you and child's mother have over each of the following issues?", and the ratings were "none"(1), "some"(2), and "a great deal"(3). Issues included where child lives, how s/he is raised, how father spends money on child, how mother spends money on child, fathers visits, and fathers contribution to child's support. The Cronbach reliability test was .89.

Remarriage relationship characteristics. These consist of four scales of marital quality and the presence of stepchildren in the re-marital household. The four measures of marital quality include satisfaction with husband role, comparisons of current life to life a year before separation, a fairness scale relating to topics in current relationship, and a scale measuring level of conflict in remarriage.

Satisfaction with the husband role involves responses to descriptors. Respondents were asked "How would you describe the things you do as a husband?". Responses ranged from 1-6 on a set of descriptors that include interesting-boring, appreciated-unappreciated, overwhelming-manageable, complicated-simple, lonely-sociable, and poorly done-well done. The first two ratings were re-scaled to conform to a
consistent pattern of measurement. This scale had a reliability coefficient of .77. A total score will be used.

The comparison of current life to the year before separation consists of measures of responses to the question "In each of the following areas, how is your life now, compared to the year before you separated?". The responses ranged from much worse to much better, and involved nine factors: housing, social life, amount of leisure time, career opportunities, overall happiness, sex life, finances, being a parent, and care of children. In addition, a global marital satisfaction measure is included. The reliability coefficient for this scale was .67.

The fairness in the current marital relationship scale is comprised of responses to perceived fairness in the following areas: household chores, working for pay, spending money, and child care. The range was from "very unfair to me"(1) to "very unfair to her"(5).

Seven measures of disagreement between couples in remarriage were used to ascertain a scale of marital conflict. Respondents were asked, "How often, if at all, in the last year have you had open disagreements about each of the following?". The range is from "never"(1) to "almost every day"(6). The areas include household tasks, money,
spending time together, sex, having another child, in-laws, and the children. The reliability coefficient for these measures is .79.

Data Analysis

The relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables were explored in a series of correlational analyses. Four clusters of independent variables were entered into separate multiple regression analyses to determine the extent of the predictive power of each cluster, and individual prediction clusters were also identified. The clusters of independent variables were then entered into a hierarchical multiple regression to determine the extent of the predictive power with the other clusters included. An additional analysis will involve a forward stepwise regression procedure.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine selected social and psychological factors related to father involvement with their noncustodial children after the father's remarriage. As a result of factor analysis, father involvement was measured by the combined scores (summed) on four measures (a) telephone/letter contact, (b) how often father saw children, (c) number of weeks child visited, (d) father's perceived influence, and (e) a scale of involvement in four child-related activities. Based on Belsky's (1984) model of parental involvement, the independent variables were grouped into four clusters (a) father characteristics, (b) former spouse characteristics, (c) remarriage characteristics, and (d) child characteristics.

Subjects

The demographic information discussed in this section is presented in Table 1. The subsample from the National Survey of Families used in this inquiry consisted of 193 males, in their second or more marriage, who had a child less than 18 years of age, living with the custodial parent.
Sixty percent (n=116) of these men were the fathers of single children; twenty seven percent (n=52) had two children; ten percent (n=18) had three children; with four, five, and seven children accounting each for the remaining three percent (n=5).

The fathers tended to be approaching middle age. The mean age of the fathers in this study was 38, ranging in age from 24 years to 58 years of age. The largest group (n=96) was between 32 and 42 years of age.

The fathers in this sample were, for the most part, well educated. The level of education ranged from not having completed high school through graduate degrees. Thirty-two percent had some college experience with ten percent having some graduate education.

Eleven percent (n=22) of this sample identified themselves as Black, eighty one percent (n=156) as White, eight percent (n=15) as Hispanic.

Most of the fathers indicated a religious affiliation. Fifteen percent (n=29) responded with "no religion" when asked about their religious preference. Twenty-four (n=46) percent identified themselves as Roman Catholic, one percent (n=2) as Jewish, twenty three percent (n=44) as Baptist, ten percent (n=20) as Protestant, ten percent (n=20) as
Methodist, and the remaining 17 percent (n=32) were Christian-based religious affiliations.

The target children of the men in this population were approximately half male (48.2%) and half female (50.8%). These children tended to be of adolescent age. The children ranged in age from 2-18 years, the majority being in their teens. Thirty-three percent (n=64) were 10 years or younger. Two-thirds (n=127) were 10 to 18, with one-third (n=63) grouped between 16 and 18 years. Approximately one-third of the males in this sample had stepchildren (i.e. spouses children).

Findings Related to the Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this study were tested to determine the degree of relationship between each of the independent variable clusters and the dependent variable, father involvement. The results of the data analysis are presented according to the research hypothesis. The means, standard deviations, and range for each variable are presented in Table 2. For the purpose of this study, the probability level used for determining statistical significance was .05.

Bivariate correlational analyses were used as initial indicators of strength and direction of relationships and were followed by multiple regression performed with the
dependent variable, father involvement, regressed on each cluster of independent variables.

Hypothesis 1. Father characteristics of age, psychological well-being, and satisfaction with parenting will be related to father involvement.

1a. Father characteristic of age will be positively related to father involvement. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between father age and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not found to be significant, although it was in the direction predicted. To further test the hypothesis, this variable was entered in a multiple regression along with a psychological well-being scale, socioeconomic status and a satisfaction with parenting scale. Results indicated that age was not significantly related to father involvement. Thus the hypothesis was not accepted.

1b. Psychological distress of the father will be negatively related to father involvement. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between psychological distress as measured by the CES-
Depression scale and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from the analysis did not indicate a significant relationship between these variables, although it was in the direction predicted. To further test the hypothesis, psychological well-being was entered in a multiple regression equation along with father age, satisfaction with parenting, socioeconomic status with father involvement as the dependent variable. Results indicated that psychological distress was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

1c. **Satisfaction with parenting will be positively related to father involvement.** Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the father's satisfaction with parenting and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, although the direction was as predicted. A multiple regression analysis indicated that satisfaction of parenting was not significantly related to father involvement.

The multiple regression analysis using all the variables in the cluster of father characteristics indicated that the
cluster was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, Hypothesis 1. was not accepted.

Hypothesis 2. Former relationship characteristics of mother's remarriage, presence of other children in mother's household, and current relationship with mother, and amount of contact with mother will be related to father involvement.

2a. Mother's remarriage will be negatively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the biological mother's marital status and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, although the direction was as predicted. Mother's remarriage was entered into a multiple regression along with the other independent variables in this cluster (presence of other children in mother's home, level of conflict with former spouse, and amount of contact with child's mother). Mother's remarriage was not significantly related to father involvement in this analysis. Therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted.

2b. Presence of other children in mother's home will be positively related to father involvement. Pearson product-
moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the presence of other children in mother's home and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained in this analysis was not significant. However, the direction was as predicted. To further test this hypothesis, this variable, along with mother's remarriage, amount of contact with former spouse, and the level of conflict were entered in a multiple regression with father involvement. The results of this analysis also indicated that the presence of other children in the mother's home was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted.

2c. The level of conflict between the father and the biological mother will be negatively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship of the level of conflict between the father and the biological mother of the focal child. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, although the direction was as predicted. To further test the hypothesis, all independent variables in this cluster were included in a multiple
regression. Results indicated that level of conflict between father and biological mother, again, was not significantly related to father involvement. Thus, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

2d. The amount of contact father has with his children's mother will be positively related to father involvement. The Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the amount of contact the father has with his children's mother and his involvement with his children. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was significant ($r = .49, p < .0001$), and in the direction predicted. To further test the hypothesis, the amount of contact with former spouse was combined with other variables in this cluster. The results of this analysis indicated that amount of contact was significantly related to father involvement ($t = 4.79, p < .0001$), and accounted for 25% of the variance in the dependent variable, in a highly significant model ($F(5,77) = 6.01, p < .0001$). On the basis of these findings, the research hypothesis was accepted.

2e. The current relationship with the former spouse is positively related to father involvement. Pearson product-
moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the current relationship and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis approached significance, and the direction was as predicted ($r = .18$; $p < .09$). All of the independent variables in this cluster were entered into a multiple regression with the dependent variable, father involvement. Although the variable, current relationship with biological mother approached significance ($F(5,77) = 3.44$, $p = .06$), it was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

The cluster of variables that examined the father's relationship with the former spouse accounted for 28% of the variance in father involvement in a significant model ($F(5,77) = 6.01$, $p < .0001$). Therefore, the hypothesis that characteristics related to the relationship with the former spouse would be related to father involvement was accepted. The primary significant factor appeared to be amount of contact with former spouse.

Hypothesis 3. The remarriage characteristics of remarital quality, perceived fairness in current relationship,
and comparisons to former relationship will be related to father involvement.

3a. Re-marital quality will be positively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between re-marital quality and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, but it was in the direction predicted. To further test the hypothesis, remarital quality was entered, along with the other independent variables in the remarriage characteristics cluster, in a multiple regression with father involvement as the dependent variable. The results of this analysis indicated that remarital quality was not significantly related to father involvement. On the basis of these findings, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

3b. The perceived level of fairness in the current relationship will be positively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between perceived fairness and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, and was not in the
direction predicted. To test the hypothesis, all of the remarriage characteristic variables were entered, along with the dependent variable, into a multiple regression. The results of this analysis indicated that perceived fairness in the remarriage was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

3c. Father's comparisons between former and current relationships will be positively related to father involvement. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between father's comparisons and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, although it was in the direction predicted. This variable was entered in a multiple regression along with marital quality, perceived fairness in current relationship, and disagreements in the remarriage. Results indicated that a father's comparisons of his current relationship with his former relationship is not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted.

3d. Disagreements in the remarital relationship will be negatively related to father involvement. To test this
hypothesis, Pearson product-moment correlations were used to
determine the strength and direction of the relationship
between disagreements in the remarriage and father
involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from the
analysis approached significance ($r = .19, p < .07$). To
further test the hypothesis, disagreements in the remarital
relationship was entered, along with the other independent
variables in the remarriage characteristics cluster, in a
multiple regression with father involvement as the dependent
variable. The results of this analysis indicated that
disagreements in the remarriage approached significance but
was not significantly related to father involvement ($t = -
1.76, p < .08$). Therefore, the hypothesis was not accepted.

The cluster of variables related to remarriage
characteristics was not significantly related to father
involvement. Therefore, the hypothesis that remarital
characteristics would be related to father involvement was
not accepted.

Hypothesis 4. Child characteristics of age, proximity,
presence of siblings, gender, and child well being will be
related to father involvement.

4a. The age of the child will be negatively related to
father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations
analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between child's age and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant, but was in the predicted direction. To test the hypothesis, age of child was entered, along with the other child characteristics, into a multiple regression analysis, against the dependent variable, father involvement. The results of this analysis indicated that age of child was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

4b. **Child's proximity to father will be negatively related to father involvement.** Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between child's proximity and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained form this analysis was significant and the direction was as predicted ($r = -.22; p<.05$). To test the hypothesis, proximity was entered, along with the other child characteristics, into a multiple regression with father involvement. The results of this analysis indicated a significant relationship between proximity and father
involvement ($F(5,109)=2.03, p<.01$). Therefore, on the basis of these findings, the research hypothesis was accepted.

4c. The presence of siblings will be positively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the presence of siblings for the child and father involvement. Correlation coefficients obtained from this analysis were not significant although the direction was as predicted. To tests the hypothesis, presence of siblings was entered, along with the other variables in the child cluster, in a multiple regression with father involvement. Results of this analysis indicated that presence of siblings was not significantly related to father involvement. On the basis of these findings, the presence siblings research hypothesis was not accepted.

4d. The gender of the child will be negatively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the child's gender and father involvement. The correlation coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant although the direction was as predicted. The gender of the child
variable was entered into a multiple regression equation along with the other independent variables, and the dependent variable, father involvement. Results of this analysis indicated that the gender of the child was not significantly related to father involvement. On the basis of this analysis, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

4e. The child’s well-being will be negatively related to father involvement. Pearson product-moment correlations analysis was used as an initial indicator of the strength and direction of the relationship between the child's well-being and father involvement. The correlations coefficient obtained from this analysis was not significant although the direction of the relationship was as predicted. To test the hypothesis, child well-being was entered into a multiple regression along with the other child characteristics, and the dependent variable, father involvement. Results from this analysis indicate that child well being is not significantly related to father involvement. Thus, the research hypothesis was not accepted.

The cluster of child characteristics approached significance ($F(5,109) = 2.03, p < .08$), but was not significantly related to father involvement. Therefore, the
hypothesis that child characteristics would be related to father involvement was not accepted.

Hypothesis 5. Father characteristic factors will be more predictive than relationship characteristic factors, which, in turn, will be more predictive than child characteristics factors of father involvement. To test the hypothesis, the independent variables in each cluster were included in a hierarchical regression analysis. In order to compare the cluster, it was necessary to use a subsample of the original population studied to account for the missing data in all independent variables. The number of missing variables in the forward stepwise multiple regression necessitated a comparison of the remaining subjects (n = 55) to the subsample of one hundred ninety three (n = 193) used in the multiple regressions of the four clusters.

The fathers in the subsample used in the hierarchical and forward stepwise multiple regression models were similar to the fathers of the original subsample. They were slightly younger (n=55, 36 yrs vs. n=193, 38 yrs), and they had younger children (n=55, 48% between 2-10 yrs; n=193, 33% between 2-10 yrs).

In the first step of the regression, father involvement was regressed against the father characteristic cluster of
age, satisfaction with parenting, socioeconomic status and psychological well-being. The results of this analysis indicated that the cluster of father characteristics were not significantly related to father involvement.

In the second step of the hierarchical regression, the former spouse characteristics of mother's remarriage, presence of other children in mother's household, father's relationship with child's mother, and amount of the fathers' contact with biological mother were added to the father characteristics included in step one. Results indicated that the second step was significantly related to father involvement in the hierarchical regression model ($F(9,45) = 3.52, p < .01$). R-square $= .29$). A single variable, the amount of contact between the father and the biological mother, accounted for 25% of this variance. The model in step two of the hierarchical regression procedure accounted for a significantly ($F(5,66)=4.68, p<.01$) greater amount of variability than the model in step one. This step is both independently significant, and resulted in a significant increase in explanation of variability from step one in which father characteristics were examined.

In the third step of the hierarchical regression, the variables of re-marital quality, perceived fairness in
current relationship, disagreements in remarriage, and comparisons of current relationship to former relationship were entered along with the father characteristic cluster and former relationship cluster of variables. These variables explained an additional 4% of the variance in father involvement beyond the effects of former spouse characteristics in a significant model ($F(13, 60) = 2.36, p < .01$). This model was not independently significant, and the increase in $R^2$ was not significant ($F(4, 60) = 1.18, p < .05$).

Child characteristics of age, gender, proximity, presence of siblings, and global child well-being were entered in the fourth step of the hierarchical regression equation, along with the father, former spouse, and remarriage clusters of variables. The child characteristics cluster explained an additional 24% of the variance in father involvement. The total model with all four clusters includes was significant ($F(18, 36) = 2.67, p < .01$). The model was independently significant and the increase in $R^2$ with the addition of child characteristics was significant ($F(5, 36) = .52, p < .05$).

The findings of the hierarchical regression indicate that father characteristic variables were not more
predictive than the other clusters of variables as hypothesized. However, the former spouse cluster of variables was more predictive of father involvement than either remarriage characteristics or child characteristics as hypothesized. Child characteristic variables accounted for more variance in father involvement than did remarriage variables which were hypothesized to be more predictive than child characteristics. On the basis of the hierarchical regression findings, the research hypothesis was partially accepted.

Additional Analyses

Based on the partial support of the fifth hypothesis and because there was indication that certain variables from clusters contributed to the variance in father involvement, it was of interest to look at these variables without the constraints of the cluster groupings. A forward stepwise multiple regression was performed to allow for this. The forward stepwise regression involves an entry of all of the variables into a step regression and computer driven formation of a best model without the constraints of the cluster ordering. The criteria for inclusion in the final model was significance of the individual variables entered in the stepwise procedure.
The amount of contact with focal child's mother was the variable which entered in the first step of the hierarchical regression, accounting for 25% of the variance in father involvement ($F(1,53) = 17.99, p < .0001$).

Amount of contact with focal child's mother and mother's remarriage entered into the second step of the forward stepwise regression model. Mother's remarriage accounted for an additional 5% of the variance, resulting in this two variable model accounting for 30% of the variance in father involvement ($F(2,52) = 11.18, p < .0001$).

Amount of contact with focal child's mother, mother's remarriage, and presence of other children of mother's in household entered into the third step of the forward stepwise regression model. Presence of other children of mother's in household accounted for an additional 4% of variance, resulting in this three variable model accounting for 34% of the variance in father involvement ($F(3,51) = 8.74, p < .0001$).

Amount of contact with focal child's mother, mother's remarriage, presence of other children of mother's in household, and gender of child entered into the fourth step of the forward stepwise regression model. The child being male accounted for an additional 5% of variance, resulting
in this four variable model explaining 39% of the variance in father involvement ($F(4,50) = 8.03, p < .0001$).

This four step model was determined by inclusion of those variables that were individually significant in the model. In summary, the best fitting model included three variables from the former spouse cluster of variable, and one measure from the child characteristics cluster. The first three variables that entered were from the divorce cluster, i.e. (a) amount of contact with focal child's mother, (b) mother's remarriage, and (c) presence of other children of mother's in household. The child's gender was the fourth variable that entered under the criteria of being individually significant (see Table 12).

The additional analysis of the stepwise multiple regression indicated that former spouse characteristics had the greatest predictive ability in this examination of father involvement. The amount of contact the father had with the former spouse, the presence of siblings, and the mother not being remarried were most strongly related to father involvement. The child being male was significantly related to father involvement.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Introduction

Societal expectations for the father role have been rising for the past three decades (Bronstein & Cowen, 1988), and many men's definition of success includes functioning well in this role (Pleck, 1983). Divorce and remarriage have complicated this role for men, seriously reducing the involvement of men with their children following these transitions (Teachman, 1989). Various factors have been proposed to account for the reduction in involvement between fathers and their children after divorce, but findings thus far are inconclusive, especially regarding the remarital transition. This study was an attempt to understand the factors that effect fathers' involvement with their noncustodial children following remarriage.

This study examined selected psychological and social factors that influence father involvement with their noncustodial children after the fathers' divorce and subsequent remarriage. The independent variables were
grouped into four clusters: (a) father characteristics; (b) former spouse characteristics; (c) remarriage characteristics; and (d) characteristics of the relationship with the child. Although the conceptual framework for the study was role theory, the grouping of factors was based on Belsky's model of parenting in which personal, child, and contextual factors were examined (Belsky, 1984).

Role theory is used in this study to examine the effects of marital transitions on the level of involvement of fathers with their children. Role theory states that the transition into a new role involves the addition, termination or a significant change in the expectations of a role (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). If the transition to a role is successfully negotiated, a functional new role is established. A high level of stress surrounding the role renegotiation may lead to confusion about role enactment and may impair the success of the transition (Burr, 1973).

Role strain, (Goode, 1960) a major concept of role theory, was used as the conceptual framework to guide this research. Lack of clear expectations and guidelines are considered contributors to role strain (Burr, 1973). The transitions of divorce and remarriage create the need for
redefinition of the father role and result in greater complexity in roles, which may result in role strain (McKenry, Price, Fine, & Serovich, 1992).

A subsample from the National Survey of Families and Households was used to test the hypotheses of this study. This subsample consisted of 193 males, in their second or more marriage, who had a child less than 18 years of age, living with the custodial parent.

This study is part of the growing focus in empirical research on the marital transition of remarriage. Within this growing field, the majority of focus has been on the effects of remarriage on women and children. The effect on the biological, noncustodial father has received little attention. In addition to focusing on father involvement after remarriage, this study was unique as it used father responses to questions regarding their involvement with a target child. In previous research, father responses have not been used to a great extent because of the high rate of missing data commonly found, and because father's are not considered reliable respondents. Father responses have not been a part of data collection in many cases. Through the use of a national data base, this study also addresses a concern in the literature about the over-use of clinical
samples when researching divorce and remarriage. Solicitation of subjects through counseling centers, or from participation in support groups creates a self-selection process that may affect the outcome of the investigation. Although relationships found in these studies are helpful, national samples need to be used to access the significance of variables in a non-clinical population.

The use of psychological and relationship factors in determining involvement is another contribution of this study to the understanding of fathers and their relationship with their children. Involvement has been most frequently determined by financial support or economic factors only. Unlike most other studies in this research, father involvement was determined by more than one question, and was operationally defined with reference to shared activities and the father's perception of influence in their child's life. Father involvement was determined by the summation of eight measures. Although this sample of men were more involved with their children than is often reported, a lack of variation in some of the measures should be noted. Men were asked about their involvement in a number of activities with their children. A number of men had no involvement in religious and school activities with
their children. Sixty-nine percent of the fathers did not participate in religious activities with their children, and sixty-one percent did not participate in school or other organized activities. Of the other measures, fifty percent of the fathers reported that their children had not visited or stayed with the father in the previous year, and fifty percent felt they had no influence in important decisions regarding their children.

On the other hand, the responses to the measures concerning frequency of talking, or letter writing to the child, involvement in leisure activities, working on projects, and the father visiting the child showed adequate variation for use as an indication of involvement. Non-involvement ranged from fifteen to twenty-seven percent. Involvement ranged from once a year, to one to three times a month.

This chapter consists of a discussion of the findings of this study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and implications for intervention for men involved in the transitions of divorce and remarriage.
Discussion

Findings Related to the Hypotheses

Hypotheses were tested to determine the degree of relationship between the independent variables in the four clusters and the dependent variable, father involvement. Secondly, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the extent to which each cluster of independent variables added to the variance in father involvement. The hypothesized order of the clusters entered in the hierarchical multiple regression was only partially supported, and the variance in the clusters was predominantly accounted for by single variables. Therefore, an additional analysis of a forward stepwise regression was performed with all of the variables from the four clusters.

Hypothesis One

Father characteristics of socioeconomic status, age, and satisfaction with parenting will be positively related to father involvement. The father characteristic of psychological distress will be negatively related to father involvement.

This hypothesis was not supported by the data. The direction of the relationships was as predicted but the relationships between independent and dependent variables in
this sample were not significantly related. In his work on the determinants of parenting, Belsky (1984) reported that personal psychological resources of the parent are more effective in buffering the relationship between parent and child from stress than either contextual factors or characteristics of the child. He looked specifically at age of parent, level of depression, coping style and the experiences parents had while growing up. Two of these, father's age and psychological distress, were included in this study. In an examination of fathers who have infrequent contact with their children, Dudley (1991) reported that psychological distress was a frequent category identified as the reason fathers gave for not being involved with their children.

It is not clear why a relationship was not found between father characteristics and father involvement with their children after remarriage. One explanation may be the tendency for respondents, particularly men, to portray themselves in a positive manner, when questioned about psychological distress. As stated by Jourard, "Research in patterns of self-disclosure has shown that men typically reveal less personal information about themselves to others than women" (Jourard, 1974). There are societal
prescriptions against expression of feelings for men that create a risk to masculinity associated with self-disclosure (Derlaga & Chaikin, 1976; Jourard, & Lasakow, 1958; Watson & Clark, 1984). The reporting of psychological distress may have been influenced by these societal expectations.

An alternate explanation of the lack of relationship found between father characteristics and father involvement may come from a growing body of literature, primarily in the study of child adjustment to marital transitions. A number of studies have suggested that family process variables may be more predictive of adjustment to family transitions than family structure or individual characteristics (Bray, 1992; Emery, 1982; Enos & Handel, 1986; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982).

Belsky's (1984) ecological model of parenting domains was not helpful in predicting a relationship between father characteristics and father involvement. Two differences in his research compared to the present study may account for this lack of predictability. First, the parenting domains were based on empirical done in the field of child abuse. This is a relatively less positive outcome measure than father involvement. Secondly, the sample used in this investigation was from a non-clinical population. The
parenting domains were constructed from literature from clinical samples.

**Hypothesis Two**

*Former relationship characteristics of conflict and mother's remarriage will be negatively related to father involvement. Number of children, current relationship with former spouse, and amount of contact with former spouse will be positively related to father involvement.*

This hypothesis was partially supported by the data. The regression analysis indicated that amount of contact with former spouse was significantly and positively related to father involvement. The correlation coefficients indicated that the quality of the current relationship with the former spouse approached significance, indicating a positive association between the relationship with the former spouse and father's involvement with children after remarriage.

Although the relationship between amount of contact and father involvement may be a function of the fathers' actual involvement, it has implications for continued contact between biological parents post-divorce. Historically, remarriage was precipitated by the death of a spouse rather than the divorce of parents. Reorganization
of the family included accepting the stepparent as one's own parent (i.e., replacing a stepfather as one's father). A common myth of stepfamily life is that it is better for parents and children to "move on" after a divorce and that continued involvement with a noncustodial parent inhibits adjustment to the new family system. In the examination of this perception of stepfamily life, the exclusion of the noncustodial father has not been associated with parental or child adjustment in any but the most extreme cases of psychological distress or conflict (Dudley, 1991; Sauer & Fine, 1988). The finding that level of contact with former spouse is related to father involvement adds to the indication that a continued positive relationship with one's former spouse is conducive to father, as well as, child adjustment (Fine, Moreland, & Schwebel, 1983; Hetherington et al, 1989).

The current relationship with the former spouse approached significance. This suggests that investigation of the importance of maintaining and/or establishing a viable co-parenting relationship with the former spouse post divorce should be included as a variable in future studies. The quality of the coparental relationship is consistently related to continued father involvement in the literature,
particularly in overcoming the role strain imposed by ambiguous boundaries between the two family systems (Boss, 1992; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982; Kurdek, 1988; McKenry et al., 1992; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Buehler and Ryan (1994) suggest that due to the gatekeeper role of the biological mother, the quality of the coparental relationship is one of the major factors determining the continued involvement of the nonresidential parent.

The presence or level of conflict with the former spouse is a consistent finding in the empirical literature on father involvement after both divorce and remarriage. This variable was not related to father involvement in this investigation. The level of conflict has been established as a factor in father involvement and father role redefinition after marital transitions (Buehler & Ryan, 1994; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982; Kurdek, 1988; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Perhaps, as suggested in previous work, greater delineation of the aspects of conflict that influence men in their role as father is indicated for future research (Gottman, 1993; Jaycox & Repetti, 1993).

Just as Sher and Baucom (1993) found that negative communication is used differentially by distressed and
nondistressed couples, remarriage may have a mediating effect on the impact of conflict on continued involvement of fathers with their children. Buehler and Ryan (1994) suggest that how former spouses manage their disagreements had greater influence on father involvement than the actual level of disagreement in the relationship.

The hypotheses that mother's remarriage, level of conflict with former spouse, and presence of siblings in mother's home would be related to father involvement were not supported in the univariate analysis, the multiple regression on the cluster, or the hierarchical multiple regression. However, mother's remarriage and presence of siblings in mother's home were the second and third variables, respectively, entered into the stepwise multiple regression (forward selection). This final analysis when all the variables were included yielded a four variable model. The variables included three variables from the former spouse cluster: (1) the amount of contact with the former spouse, (2) mother's remarriage, (3) presence of siblings; and one variable from the child characteristics, (4) child's gender.
Hypothesis Three

Remarriage relationship characteristics of marital quality, comparison of former relationship to current marriage, and perceived fairness in current relationship will be positively correlated with father involvement. Level of disagreement in the remarriage will be negatively related to father involvement.

The analysis of the data did not provide support for this hypothesis. It is not known whether this finding is a result of characteristics of the present study, or indication that father involvement is relatively independent of these remarriage factors. It is a widely held belief that if the new spouse is threatened by the previous relationship, or competitive with time allotted to children from former marriages, continued involvement on the part of the father will be reduced (Bray, 1992; Maccoby, 1992). The correlation coefficient of the relationship between father involvement and disagreements in remarriage approached significance. Although this offers no additional information for this study, disagreements in the remarriage may warrant further investigation in future studies. The literature on the father role and remarriage is quite sparse, and the other variables in this cluster were
somewhat exploratory. Men are often dependent on wives to facilitate the relationship with their children, and so the remarital relationship may be important in determining noncustodial father-child contact (Simons et al., 1993). Continued attention to the factors involved in remarriage, and how they affect men's roles with their children is important to gain an understanding of the effect of this marital transition (Maccoby et al., 1993).

**Hypothesis Four**

*Child relationship characteristics of proximity, presence of siblings and gender will be positively related to father involvement. Age of child will be negatively related to father involvement.*

This hypothesis was partially supported as proximity was significantly related to father involvement after remarriage. This supports the finding by McKenry et al. (1992) of a relationship between geographic distance and fathers' physical involvement. The relationship of proximity to father's physical involvement is a somewhat self-evident finding. Less obvious is the relationship of geographical distance to the other aspects of father involvement as measured in this study. The relationship to telephone and letter contact may be partially explained by
the finding of Teachman (1991) that fathers who participate
with their noncustodial children in one type of support tend
to be involved with their children in a number of ways. The
relationship between proximity and involvement has
implications for men's decisions regarding the effect of
relocation and/or living a significant distance away from
their children after remarriage.

The lack of a relationship between child's age and
father involvement is inconsistent with previous research
(Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). The
lack of support in these data may be (1) idiosyncratic to
this sample, (2) may be reflective that this child
relationship characteristic is less important to continued
involvement after remarriage than previously indicated, or
(3) it may be due to the method of directing the respondents
answers to one focal child. The age and gender data in this
study was on one focal child in the family who was randomly
selected from all the father's children. Data on more than
one child may offer different information of the effects of
these variables on the pattern of contact.

Additional analyses involving a forward stepwise
regression procedure indicated that the child being a son,
and presence of siblings (not being an only child) were
related to higher levels of father involvement. These findings are consistent with the empirical literature on father involvement (Bray & Hetherington, 1993; Gately & Schwebel, 1991; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977; Kempton et al., 1991). Fathers have traditionally been more likely to maintain contact when there was more than one child and if that child was a male (Hetherington et al., 1989). Fathers may remain more involved with their sons because they have more shared interests, and identify with each other (Hess & Camera, 1979; Hetherington et al., 1989; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1977). It may be more difficult to arrange visits with daughters due to special requirements, such as separate quarters for sleeping. Fathers' continued involvement with boys may be partially explained in their relatively greater need for discipline, as compared to girls (Steigman, 1966). Similarly, the presence of siblings results in a greater need by the mother for assistance from the father (Brody & Forehand, 1990).

**Hypothesis Five**

The **father characteristic factors will be more predictive than former spouse relationship characteristic factors, which will be more predictive than remarital relationship characteristics, which will be more predictive**
than child relationship characteristics of father involvement.

This hypothesis was partially supported by the analysis. Characteristics of the father's relationship with his former spouse were most strongly related to father involvement in the hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The other analysis also indicated the greater strength of this cluster in predicting father involvement. With all the predictors included it was found, as hypothesized, that relationship characteristics, specifically those related to the former spouse, would be more predictive of father involvement than child relationship characteristics. This finding is consistent with the model proposed by Belsky (1984) in which contextual factors were stronger predictors than child characteristics. The greatest explanation arose from the cluster of former spouse characteristics, particularly the amount of contact with former spouse. This finding supports previous empirical investigation of this characteristic (Gottman, 1993; Hetherington et al., 1989; McKenry et al., 1992).

In contrast to Belsky's model, the father characteristic cluster of variables were not predictive of father involvement after remarriage. Although child
characteristics were least predictive in the ecological model of parenting domains, it was related to father involvement in the forward stepwise multiple regression analysis of this study. Gender entered into the fourth step of the forward stepwise multiple regression analysis. The disparity between Belsky's domains and the findings of this study may be due to the etiology of his theoretical formulation. He based his hypotheses on research from the child abuse literature, and parenting factors in nuclear family systems. Father involvement used in this investigation is a functional, rather than dysfunctional, outcome variable. This more positive focus, may in part, account for the disparity in hypothesized results. Additionally, the difference in the recruitment of respondents must be noted. The parenting domains were developed from clinical samples, and the present study is from a national, representative survey. These differences may have accounted for the lack of predictive power of cluster ordering according to this ecological model. It would appear that there is little indication that the clusters used in Belsky's parenting domains facilitated a greater understanding of the variables used in this study. Role theory suggests that the ease of transition to a role
is mediated by both psychological and social factors. The lack of findings regarding father characteristics may indicate that individual factors are mediated by other variables. Another reason that the model proposed by Belsky was not as useful in predicting relationships to father involvement as hypothesized may be that his work is based on clinical populations and the data used in this study was a national, non-clinical sample. The consideration of dysfunction may not illuminate the parenting domains of non-clinical populations.

The finding that involvement is greater with boys than with girls is consistent with previous research that indicates gender is related to father involvement (Bray & Hetherington, 1993; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Zaslow, 1988). The lack of predictive power of child's age found in this study may be further indication that these characteristics are differentially important depending on mediating factors. Bray and Berger (1993) found few gender differences in their study of parent-child interactions after divorce, and suggested that process variables, such as adjustment to marital transitions may be more important in influencing this relationship. However,
this may also be function of the method of collecting data from fathers regarding a focal child.

Although the remarital characteristics explored in this study were not related to father involvement, the empirical work in this arena is sparse. The lack of findings may also be helpful to future researchers. Theoretically, it is plausible that factors surrounding the remarriage might affect a father's level of role strain and, consequently, contact with his noncustodial biological children. Teachman (1991) found a significant relationship between remarriage and continued involvement with children, and suggested that the new family provided a context for this contact. He suggested that the presence of a stepmother provided childcare services, that living arrangements were often more conducive to family living, and that the presence of step-siblings created a child focus in the household. Buehler and Ryan (1994) found that the coparental relationship was more likely to deteriorate following the remarriage of the former husband. Disagreements in the remarriage have been reported by fathers as a reason for lack of contact with children after remarriage.

The importance of the former spouse characteristics may indicate that the strain in issues surrounding the divorce
and remarriage are factors that outweigh other individual factors thought to be more predictive of father involvement.

Recommendations

Several factors should be considered when drawing conclusions from this study. Although the sample size was small for a hierarchical statistical analysis, it was adequate for bi-directional analyses and for cluster analysis. A strength of the sample was that it was representative, and randomly selected. However, inclusion of larger samples is needed in future investigations of the father role after remarriage. Generalizations beyond this sample must be made with caution.

Although the sample composition was reflective of the diversity in the national population, the sample size did not allow for comparisons, or separate analysis of cultural groups. Therefore, generalization to other cultural groups cannot be made. Previous investigation of father's post-divorce role transition have indicated a difference in the process for African-Americans and Caucasians (e.g., Fine, McKenry, & Chung, 1992). Inclusion of populations from a variety of culture groups is recommended in future investigations.
This study was cross-sectional in design, and therefore, cause and effect relationships cannot be addressed by the findings. The cross-sectional design considers one point in time, and does not offer information on how the father role may have changed over time. Longitudinal designs, in which men are studied at various points in their lives, would offer comparison of the father role throughout the transitions of marital life (Buehler & Ryan, 1994). Further exploration of the quality of the parent-child relationship is recommended to illuminate the role of children in men's lives and vice versa.

A strength of this study was the use of multiple scales to measure many of the concepts. A criticism in the literature has been the overuse of single item measurements for complex issues such as father involvement, or psychological well-being. The use of dyadic, process measures that would involve responses from more than one family member should be used to assess systematic changes during marital transitions. Employment of multiple family perspectives is recommended in order to offer a perspective of the process of these marital transitions and to ameliorate the difficulties often associated with male self-report responses (Buehler & Ryan, 1994).
A weakness in the study with regard to instrumentation was that the scales, except for the measure of psychological distress, were constructed for the national data set, and psychometric properties were not established. The use of standardized measures with well established psychometric properties and the use of variables that more specifically assess role strain is indicated for future investigation of the father role during marital transitions.

Future investigation of men's role in the family may benefit from the combination of qualitative and quantitative research designs. The noncustodial father role is changing profoundly and quickly due to the current rate of marital transitions. Buehler and Ryan (1994) recommended the use of qualitative designs to examine why former spouse relationships are at greater risk of deterioration when the former husband (rather than the former wife) remarries, but the involvement of the nonresidential parent is more at risk when the former wife remarries. Qualitative designs may illuminate not only father's perceptions of their involvement, but also, process variables that take into account the dynamic interplay involved in these transitions (Worell, 1978). Qualitative designs are informative in the exploratory stage to discern new directions for research.
In addition to designs, there are research variables that need further attention. These factors include variables associated with the remarriage, a comparison of role expectation and role strain (for fathers), continued investigation of the dynamics of conflict in marital transitions, and gender issues in research. Remarriage is receiving greater attention, although the majority of this work is focused on women and children. The process variables of satisfaction of parenting and psychological distress may offer greater information in longitudinal studies as compared to the cross-sectional nature of the current analysis due to the collection of data at several different time periods. Building on Kruk's (1994) finding of an inverse relationship between pre- and post-divorce father involvement, further investigation of the father's perception of the role change during marital transitions is recommended. Group comparisons of fathers who experience less role strain under the constraints of noncustodial child care to those who find the reduced involvement of a visitation schedule to be a great strain in their expectations of their own parenting role are recommended for future study.
Bray and Hetherington (1993) also implicated process variables, such as the level of closeness between mother and child during the period of divorce, as important mediating factors in parent-child relationships during marital transitions. The interactions of the process variables with child characteristic variables warrants further investigation.

There has been conflicting information disseminated from clinicians and researchers regarding father involvement. Clinically, fathers have been shut out in an attempt to reduce the tension for children involved in marital transitions. Research to identify the components of contact with the former spouse that are problematic is needed to promote research driven clinical interventions for the growing number of people involved in marital transitions (Long, Slater, Forehand, & Fauber, 1988). There is need for greater cooperation between clinical and research approaches in order for both arenas to benefit from each others perspectives.

Finally, the impact of gender in the expectation of roles, in the experience of role strain, and as an important influence in this area of research needs greater attention in the literature (Campbell & Snow, 1992; Levant, 1992;
Maccoby, 1990; Sharpe & Hepner, 1991). Men's perspectives have not received as much attention in the research on remarriage as women's have. This has resulted in a dearth of understanding of the effect of being a man on the experience, or for the remediation of role strain.

The concept of roles is an important theoretical construct from the psychosocial approach of symbolic interaction theory that warrants further investigation as it offers a framework to understand relationship changes during marital transitions (King & King, 1990; Storms, 1979). Although the theory was not strongly supported in this study, it is important for future research because it attends to the expectations, clarity, and strain of role changes. There is little information about these aspects of the change in roles for men during marital transitions, and few guidelines for what expectations are reasonable, or how to effectively handle role strain. Gender-related traits and role strain have significant effects on the psychological well-being of men (Sharpe & Heppner, 1991; Spence, 1993). Continued use of role theory and a direct measure of role strain is needed to gain understanding of the changing role of men in families, guide research and
suggest appropriate interventions (Stillson, O'Neil, & Owen, 1991).

Implications for Intervention and Policy

The findings of this study yield several implications for intervention and policy. Many of these implications emerge from the findings that suggest that relationship variables, specifically with the former spouse, are more helpful in understanding father-child involvement than individual variables. It appears that the contact with the former spouse is an important factor in facilitating parenting for men even after their remarriage into another family system. The findings in this study attest to the importance of attention to the continuation of relationships post-divorce. The recent rate of divorce has created not so much the end of relationships, as an awkward extended family in which the expectations and roles are poorly established.

Additionally, the mother's remarriage creates significant barriers to father's continued contact with their children, suggesting that this marital transition increases the role strain for fathers. Hetherington et al. (1989) suggested that the introduction of a step-parent forces a renegotiation of the non-custodial parents' role,
and may strain their relationship. Fine, Kurdek, and Hennigen (1992) reported that subjects rated greater role ambiguity after parental remarriage. Although there is little research on the issue, it is commonly assumed that remarriage by either former spouse will create stress in the post-divorce coparental relationship. Buehler and Ryan (1994) found that the non-residential father involvement was more vulnerable to discontinuation if the former wife was remarried. Dudley (1991) found introduction of a new husband, who functions as an additional authority figure for the children, may further strain the role transition of the biological father. Greater use of multi-family therapy interventions is needed to help families negotiate the difficulties of marital transitions. The expectation of continued contact between spouses after both divorce and any subsequent remarriage should be normalized in divorce counseling and educational programs.

The concept of incomplete institutionalization of remarriages noted by Cherlin (1978) may leave the father with vague guidelines for his role with children after divorce and remarriage. This lack of norms for marital transitions is evident in policies regarding children. School forms, camp applications, instructions for emergency
care for children, and inclusion in school activities often do not include noncustodial fathers. Policies must change to reflect the complexity of families in society, and to normalize father involvement regardless of marital status.

Continued contact of fathers with their children is generally considered optimal for both father and child after marital dissolution (Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Lamb, 1986; Seagull & Seagull, 1977; Visher & Visher, 1989; Moreland & Schwebel, 1981). Most scholars agree on the importance for children of the continued commitment of fathers for involvement after marital dissolution. Dudley (1991) suggested that father involvement after divorce is positively indicated for both men and their children, except in the most extreme cases of mental illness or lack of psychological resources. Teachman (1991) reported a relationship between personal resources (ability to attract another mate or remarriage, SES, flexibility) and continued support of biological children after divorce. Feldman (1990) noted that most involved fathers reported feeling more effective as parents, more self-confident, and received enjoyment from the time they spent with their children.

Severing contact with children, as a solution to the problems of divorce, is not consistent with a human
tradition of taking responsibility for one's offspring (Sperling, 1993). It may represent the last option men feel they have when conflict or misfunctioning is high in a family. However, this study suggests that divorce does not eliminate the need for workable communication skills between parents, even after they leave their union. There are two areas of suggestion for interventions: (a) interventions during and after the divorce, and (b) gender issues important for interventions.

**Intervention During and After divorce.**

Intervention at the time of the divorce may be important, not only for the father-child relationship, but, also, for his remarriage. Hetherington, Stanley-Hagen, and Anderson (1989) argue that behavior problems of children in remarried families are not a result of maladaptation to the remarriage, but to stresses associated with the preceding divorce conditions. The findings of this study indicate that efforts to establish functional contact post-divorce is important.

It is a commonly held assumption that high levels of conflict are not only common, but inevitable in the divorce process. Additionally, there are few societal guidelines for post-divorce co-parental or former spouse relationships
(Cherlin, 1978). However, Fine, Moreland, and Schwebel (1983) found that negative consequences of the divorce for children were mediated by the quality of the relationship between spouses after divorce. Healy, Malley, and Stewart (1990) reported that a positive relationship with the ex-spouse was associated in their study with higher levels of noncustodial father contact with children. A positive relationship between biological parents has been indicated as an important factor in the successful adjustment of children to family transitions (Hetherington et al., 1989). Joint custody is recommended if the level of coparental conflict can be managed by the former spouses, as it facilitates father involvement and necessitates continued contact between parents. Divorce counseling to accept the loss of the marriage, and to gain post-divorce communication skills is recommended to reduce parental conflict during marital transitions.

Both educational and psychotherapeutic interventions that focus on post-divorce communication should be available to men to reduce the difficulty in maintaining contact with their children. Divorce counseling may offer men assistance in grieving the loss of the marriage, establishing a functional relationship with the former spouse, and
maintaining a level of contact with children. If a couple in marital counseling decide to end the marriage, the importance of working on a functional post-divorce relationship needs to be stressed. In an increasing number of petitions, divorce counseling is being required by the court before a divorce or dissolution request is formalized.

Mediation may be a viable avenue to teach divorcing couples how to negotiate issues surrounding mutual children. Skill-building in the area of problem solving and developing reasonable expectations for the post-divorce coparental relationships are valuable learning experiences in the course of mediation. Mediation offers the experience of moving past resolution of differences to negotiating differences in the post-divorce period and after any subsequent remarriages.

Educational programs to convey the information we have on men's roles post-divorce should be available to men. Greater understanding of the changes could offer an understanding of the benefit to men of mediating differences, and may serve to reduce some of the strain fathers experience (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989).

Dudley (1991) calls for increased emphasis in education about divorced fathers for not only psychologists
and policy makers, but the general public as well. Educational programs for the divorced father are increasingly available and are required in some districts for divorcing parents with children. Greater emphasis in the media is needed to normalize father involvement and offer suggestions for reduction of stressful aspects of contact with the former spouse (Sprenkle, 1988).

Psychotherapeutic interventions are becoming more accessible to divorcing parents. Buehler & Ryan (1994) suggest that clinicians identify shared beliefs between parents, and build on common goals to encourage cooperation. Divorce counseling and individual counseling are suggested for resolution of barriers to establishing functional contact throughout marital transitions.

The finding that the mother's remarriage is negatively related to father involvement suggests a particularly great strain on fathers when another man is in the picture. Bray (1992) noted that there are several key developmental issues for stepfamilies in the first years of a remarriage. Included in these was the concept of developing a workable relationship with the non-custodial parent. Hetherington, Stanley-Hagen, and Anderson (1989) draw an analogy between the withdrawal reaction of many men in conflictual marriages
(Christensen & Heavey, 1990) which has been associated with divorce (Gottman, 1993) and the withdrawal from children after divorce. They state the importance to intervene with fathers in order that father involvement is modeled for children, as they may find themselves in similar roles as adults. Interventions that enable stepfamilies to establish a format for functional interaction between family systems is needed, particularly until a societal norm develops. Family therapy involving both family systems is suggested as an important intervention to both establishing new roles, and modeling healthy marital transitions for children. It is important that practitioners and educators understand the unique characteristics of remarriage dynamics and keep abreast of the remarital developmental models as they develop (Bray, 1992) in order to more effectively help those involved in these family transitions.

**Gender Issues in Interventions**

The findings of this study may suggest the importance of gender issues in formulating strategies to reduce the role strain in stepfamily life. Previously, the bulk of research has focused on child adjustment, and data have been obtained primarily from women's responses. Further research using men's responses may show whether the strain men feel
surrounding the divorce outweighs other sources of role strain, such as from remarital factors, or if these findings are idiosyncratic to this sample. Men's withdrawal from difficult interactions appears to be a defensive coping strategy to manage a negative emotional and physical arousal response (Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976; Sher & Baucom, 1993). Kruk (1994) found an inverse relationship between pre- and post-divorce father-child relationships. The fathers who had close relationships with their children during the marriage reported that the reduced contact after the divorce was so painful and dissatisfying that they were less likely to maintain contact. The study of demand/withdraw interaction between men and women in relationships (Christensen & Heavey, 1990) offers a paradigm for conceptualizing the maintenance of men's contact with children. Interventions aimed at reducing defensiveness and promoting perspective taking are suggested to help men reduce the amount of stress they feel in conflictual interactions and, therefore, facilitate greater involvement with children (Locksley & Colten, 1979; Long & Andrews, 1990; Osherson & Krugman, 1990).

Measuring both the amount of role strain fathers experience and identifying their tendency to withdraw from
stressful situations may offer some insight as to how fathers respond to the strain of continued contact with their children post-divorce. Interventions aimed at both understanding role strain, and gaining skills in constructive problem resolution may facilitate continued involvement by reducing the amount of role strain fathers feel. Both the writings of Sher and Baucom (1993) and Gottman (1993) noted that it is not anger or negative communication per se that is problematic, rather, certain behaviors associated with communication are linked to withdrawal from communication. Sher and Baucom (1993) found that distressed couples showed a lack of willingness to confront problems, whereas Gottman (1993) found that husband's defensiveness was predictive of marital dissolution (Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, & Clements, 1993).

Perspective taking has received greater empirical attention as a positive individual characteristic in relational competence (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Franzoi, Davis, & Young, 1985; Long & Andrews, 1990). Perspective taking has been associated with effective social interaction and is a common component of interventions in psycho-educational programs for men (Dymond, 1949; Levant, 1990;
Pollack, 1990). It is hypothesized that perspective taking is positively related to relationship satisfaction in that it offers the person the ability to modify their behavior based on an understanding of the other persons experience (Feffer & Suchotliff, 1966). This ability enables greater tolerance for engaging in the conflict resolution process and may reduce the strain men experience during their involvement with their children.

The study of father's involvement in their children's lives after the marital transitions of divorce and remarriage continues to offer important information for researchers and clinicians. Use of longitudinal designs and inclusion of qualitative methods are important directions for future empirical exploration. Interventions designed to facilitate successful transition to the noncustodial parent role must address the importance of establishing a functional post-divorce relationship with the former spouse, and the aspects of this relationship that create the greatest difficulty for men. Gender-sensitivity in educational programs, divorce counseling, and mediation services is called for in order to more adequately facilitate father involvement with noncustodial children after remarriage.
APPENDIX
Table 1.

Demographic Profile of Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
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<td>51-58</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>Cuban</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Baptist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
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<td>Lutheran</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
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<td>Mormon</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Protestant</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other-Christain Based</td>
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Continued
Table 1 (continued)

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<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<table>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>27.2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of focal child</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>48.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of focal child</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's education</th>
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<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-high school graduate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
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<td>44.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>College experience</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>33.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post graduate experience</td>
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Table 2.

Descriptive Profile of Sample

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<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Observed Range</th>
<th>Possible Range</th>
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<td>38.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>24-58</td>
<td>19-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's psychological distress</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0-68</td>
<td>0-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with parenting</td>
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<td>1-28</td>
<td>1-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>193</td>
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<td>2613.8</td>
<td>1180-9999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's remarriage</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of other children (mo's hshld)</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amt of conflict with ex-spouse</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6-18</td>
<td>6-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current relationship with ex-sp</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of contact</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarital quality</td>
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<td>20.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1-28</td>
<td>1-28</td>
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</table>

Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fa's comparisons to former marriage</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>17-35</td>
<td>7-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived fairness in current rel.</td>
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<td>11.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4-16</td>
<td>4-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child age</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>2-18</td>
<td>0-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child gender</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to child</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>508.5</td>
<td>984.7</td>
<td>1-6000</td>
<td>1-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>1-12+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child well-being</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1-4</td>
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### Table 3.

**Pearson Correlations Among Dependent and Independent Variable Cluster: Father Characteristics**

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<th>Variable Cluster</th>
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<th>$p$</th>
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<td>Father's age</td>
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<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with parenting</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological distress</td>
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<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.16</td>
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</table>

$n = 151$
Table 4.

Pearson Correlations Between Dependent and Independent Variable Cluster:
Former Spouse Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father Involvement</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's remarriage</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of other children of mother's in household</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current relationship with former spouse</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of contact between father and former spouse</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of conflict between father and former spouse</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$n = 83$
Table 5.
**Pearson Correlations Between Dependent and Independent Variable Cluster:**
*Remarriage Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital quality in the remarriage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived feelings of fairness in the remarriage relationship</td>
<td>-.11   .31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons of current relationship to former marriage</td>
<td>.14    .18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagreements in the remarriage</td>
<td>.19    .07</td>
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</table>

n = 93
Table 6.

**Pearson Correlations Between Dependent and Independent Variables Cluster: Child Characteristics**

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</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>Father Involvement</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.41</td>
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<td>.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence of Siblings</td>
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<td>.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Child Well-Being</td>
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$n = 115$
### Table 7.

**Multiple Regression Analysis of Father Involvement and Father Characteristic Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with parenting</td>
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<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological distress</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's age</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F(4,146)=.63, p=.64.
Table 8.

**Multiple Regression Analysis of Father Involvement and Former Spouse Characteristic Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
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<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers remarriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence of siblings</td>
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<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current rel. with former spouse</td>
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<td>.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of contact with former spouse</td>
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<td>.0001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of conflict with former spouse</td>
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<td>-.22</td>
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F(5,77) = 6.01, p = .0001.
Table 9.

**Multiple Regression Analysis of Father Involvement and Remarriage Characteristic Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
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<th>P</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remarital quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived fairness in remarriage</td>
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<td>.43</td>
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<td>Comparison to former relationship</td>
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<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagreements in the remarriage</td>
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<td>.08</td>
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$F(4,88)=1.63, p=.17$. 
Table 10.

**Multiple Regression Analysis of Father Involvement and Child Characteristic Variables**

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child's gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's age</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to father</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child global well-being</td>
<td>-.0002</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F(5,109)=2.03, \ p=.08.$
Table 11.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis on Father Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cumulative R</th>
<th>R change</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with parenting</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological distress</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's age</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.141</td>
<td>.141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's remarriage</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of siblings</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current rel. with former spouse</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of contact with former spouse</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of conflict with former spouse</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.413**</td>
<td>.272**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Table 11 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cumulative R</th>
<th>R change</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarital quality</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived fairness in remarriage</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison to former relationship</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreements in the remarriage</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>.433</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's gender</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's age</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to father</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child global well-being</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>.572</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.139</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=55. For final equation: F(18,36)=2.67, p<.01. Beta weights were derived from final model.
*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001  ****p<.0001
Table 12.

Forward Stepwise Regression Analysis on Father Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step #</th>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>Cumulative R</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig. of Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Amount of contact with former spouse</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mother's remarriage</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Presence of siblings</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Child's Gender</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=55. For final equation: F(16,38)=2.48, p<.01. Beta weights were derived from final model.
### Table 13.

**Zero Order Correlations Among Independent Variables**

**Father Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Parenting satisfaction</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Father distress</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Age</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Socio economic status</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 151

*p < .05  **p < .01*
Table 14.

Zero Order Correlations Among Independent Variables
Former Spouse Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mother's remarriage</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Presence of siblings</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Current rel. with ex-spouse</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Amount of contact</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amount of Conflict</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.42***</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 83
*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
Table 15.
Zero Order Correlations Among Independent Variables
Remarriage Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Father Involvement</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Marital satisfaction</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived fairness</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comparisons with former relationship</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disagreements</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 93
*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
Table 16.

Zero Order Correlations Among Independent Variables
Child Relationship Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father Involvement</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Proximity to father</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Presence of siblings</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Child well-being</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 115

*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
REFERENCES


Riessman, C. K., & Gerstel, N. (1985). Marital dissolution and health: Do males or females have greater risk? *Social Science and Medicine, 20*, 627-635.


