

Family Structure and Educational Attainment: An Expansion on the Theoretical Framework of William H. Jeynes

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Abstract

Do children from differing familial backgrounds achieve varying levels of education? The purpose of this study is to expand upon William H. Jeynes' theories relating to family structure and educational attainment and analyze, more specifically the role remarriage or the death of a parent affects their ultimate level of education. Data from the General Social Survey is used and participants in this study are a representative sample of adults ages 18 and over living in the Continental United States. This study has an overall size of 13,223. Some support was found for both of Jeynes' theories. Academic achievement was found to be higher for remarried families due to death than for single-parent family types. However, academic achievement was found to be almost exactly the same for remarried families due to divorce and single-parent families due to divorce, showing some support for the non-parental adjustment school of thought.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, almost half of all marriages experience a divorce, and of those women who experience a divorce, 75% remarry (Bramlett and Mosher, 2002). This means the traditional concept of “family” has changed to include a variety of forms. This study focuses on five family types: Those with two natural parents, those remarried due to divorce, those remarried due to death, those that are single-parents due to divorce, and those that are single-parents due to death. As families have become more diverse, researchers have begun to study their effects.

It has been well established that growing up in a divorced family has negative consequences for children. Some of these consequences include fewer economic resources (Thomson et al. 1994), behavioral and emotional issues (Amato 1998), and, most important to this study, reduced educational attainment (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Case, Lin, and McLanahan 2001; Jeynes 1999, 2000, 2005). Given that many people do remarry it is important to understand whether this action mitigates some of these negative outcomes for children. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to understand whether a parental remarriage positively impacts children’s educational attainment relative to children growing up with single-parents or to those growing up in an intact family.

In order to expand on prior research, this study will test two of Jeynes’ (2000) hypotheses and see which holds true. Jeynes’ first hypothesis, the socioeconomic hypothesis, predicts that the academic achievement of children from reconstituted

families will be higher than that of children from single-parent homes. His second hypothesis, the non-parental adjustment school of thought, predicts that the academic achievement of children from reconstituted families will be equal to or lower than that of children from single-parent homes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Attainment

In this section I will discuss the literature as it pertains to the dependent variable, educational attainment. In 1967 Peter Blau and Otis Duncan conducted a pivotal study pertaining to the American occupational structure, in which the following statement was made, "Broken families spell lower occupational achievements for both the children and the husband" (p.410). Because this study was conducted in the 1960s, a time during which most families were intact, the widespread impact of divorce on children's educational attainment was not discussed. About five-sixths of the respondents that participated in Blau and Duncan's study (N = 44, 984) responded "yes" to the fact that they lived in intact families, at least through adolescence.

Times have changed tremendously since Blau and Duncan's study. Since 1972, each year around one million American children see their parents divorce. Given this reality, family structure has become a key variable in many sociological studies and an extremely influential factor on many aspects of social life, including children's educational attainment.

Educational attainment of children is critical because it tends to translate into occupational attainment. As the number of middle skilled, middle income occupations are on the decline, jobs have become more polarized. High skilled, high income jobs requiring a fair amount of education occupy one pole and low skilled, low income jobs requiring less education occupy the other pole (Skinner 2004). This change has made an education that much more important to achieving the “American dream” of being more resourceful than one’s parents. Fain (1999) concludes that, “sex and education are consistently the most important factors in explaining occupational outcomes” (p.102).

Theoretical Models on the Family Structure

I will now discuss the literature as it pertains to family type, which is the independent variable of this study. Jeynes (2000) proposed three schools of thought to explain the effects of family structure on the educational attainment of children. While one of these schools of thought does not pertain to the topic of this research paper (as it addresses the consequences of family structure on the psychological health of the children), the two remaining schools of thought do apply and will be discussed further.

The first school of thought or hypothesis is the socioeconomic school (Jeynes 2000). It is a common assumption among social scientists that non-intact families almost always have a lower socioeconomic status than intact families (Smock, Manning and Gupta 1999; Thomson et al. 1994). Socioeconomic status (SES) is defined as a concept referring primarily to people’s positions in stratification systems as indicated by their

occupational prestige and, secondarily, their educational attainment, wealth, and income (Johnson 2000). As there is less money available, one of the logical consequences for children growing up in non-intact families is lower educational attainment. Thus, when comparing intact families to single-parent families, under this perspective the single-parent family would be seen to fare worse. Yet, it must be acknowledged that some divorced individuals do become remarried, or form cohabiting relationships. Under these circumstances, it is logical to think that the amount of resources available for individual family members might be somewhat greater than those for single-parent families. Thus, under the condition of reconstituted relationships, we would expect that the academic achievement of children would fare quite well, better at least than for children growing up in single-parent families.

The second school of thought (or hypothesis) discussed is the non-parental adjustment school (Jeynes 2000). This is the idea that the presence of a caregiver that is not a child's natural parent may cause stress requiring change and adjustment in children's lives. Children in reconstituted families often struggle with new relationship issues; new stepsiblings, rivalries with their new stepparent(s), and a feeling of lost attention from their natural parent. Remarriage can also alter the allocation of time and other resources a parent gives to their children. If a child is in a single-parent home, with no siblings, they are receiving all of their parent's attention and time they have to give. If that parent remarries, all of a sudden that parent is giving time and attention to their new spouse and possibly new stepchildren (Ginther and Pollak 2004). It has been noted that

stepparents are also sometimes less willing to invest funds in stepchildren than natural-born children. This may be due to the fact that they are financially stretched in multiple directions and possibly have obligations to former families (Sandefur, McLanahan, and Wojtkiewicz 1992).

Blended families or stepfamilies are, historically speaking, a fairly recent institution. As such, research on the subject is comparatively new and still developing. In 1978, Cherlin called remarriage an “incomplete institution.” He said that roles in stepfamilies lack definition causing confusion and stress in children’s lives. Researchers who advocate this perspective focus on reconstituted and cohabiting families. Under this school of thought it is logical to predict that even with the introduction of an additional caregiver, the effects on the educational attainment of children in these family structures will be negligible, no different from children growing up with only one parent.

Empirical Support for how Family Type Affects Educational Attainment

Socioeconomic School of Thought

Many studies conducted on the topic of educational attainment and how it is affected by family structure have lent support to the socioeconomic perspective (Amato and Keith 1991; Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986; Wojtkiewicz 1993). These studies, as well as many others, have arrived at the conclusion that growing up in a non-intact family is associated with lower academic and occupational achievement. Children raised in

single-parent homes are most often the worst off economically. However, according to this perspective, it is more significant that they are negatively impacted academically due to consequences of socioeconomic adversity. Duncan et al. (1998) found that family income had the largest impact on level of schooling completed for children in low-income families.

Interestingly enough, some studies show that how the single parent family is formed makes a difference. Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) found that the attainments of children from a widowed single-mother family were almost the same as children from intact, two-biological-parent families, and were substantially higher than those of divorced single-mother families. This idea lends support to the socioeconomic school of thought due to the fact that children of widowed single-mother families are usually better off economically than children of divorced single-mother families. Widowed single mothers were more likely to own home, live in better quality homes, and move less frequently (Amato and Partridge 1987).

As divorce reached an all time high in the 1970s, the first reaction of researchers who began studying divorce, and subsequent remarriages, was that remarriage would improve the well-being of children due to the fact that their financial situation would be considerably improved in most cases. Many thought that the reason children from divorce had lower educational attainment was caused in large part by their family's economic situation (Garfinkel and McLanahan; Amato 1988; Amato and Booth 1997; Thomson, Hanson, and McLanahan 1994). It has been shown in previous research that income

accounts for a good deal of the differences in well-being for children of different family types. In particular, economic situation has been shown to be very influential on the educational attainment of children from single-parent homes (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Some social scientists believe that in public policy, if we improve the situation of children in poverty, their overall well-being will be improved, including their academic achievements (Bane and Jargowsky 1988). Presently, many researchers have acknowledged that while economics certainly does play a role in the academic attainment of children of divorce, there are also many other contributing factor that also need to be taken into account.

Non-Parental Adjustment School of Thought

The non-parental adjustment school of thought predicts the presence of an additional caregiver is not always as positive for children as previously thought. In 1994 Cherlin and Furstenberg, who had once subscribed to the socioeconomic school of thought, revisited some of the conclusions they had arrived at in their previous studies and stated that when they had studied the topic fifteen years ago they thought the well-being of children of divorce would improve by remarriage. They now believe that children in stepfamily households do no better academically on average than children in divorced single-parent homes. Other studies support their shift in position. Case, Lin, and McLanahan (2001) looked at whether the stepfamily experience was different for birth children (meaning both parents are their natural born parents) or nonbirth children

(meaning one parent is a natural parent and one is a stepparent). They found that nonbirth children have poorer outcomes than their siblings who are raised by both birth parents, which suggests that investments “are child specific.”

There are numerous, very recent studies supporting the non-parental adjustment school of thought. Current researchers seem to agree that stepfamilies impact the educational attainment of children negatively (Biblarz and Raftery 1999; Wojtkiewicz 1993) and that children in reconstituted homes perform no better, and sometimes worse academically than their counterparts who are raised in single-parent homes (Jeynes 1999; Wolfinger et al. 2003; Cherlin and Furstenberg 1994; Ham 2004). Taking it one step further, Hanson et al. (1998), suggested that couples that remarry appear to contribute to insufficiency in parental or community resources. In other words these relatively new institutions will negatively affect our children and in turn, our future communities.

Other Factors that Influence Educational Attainment

There are of course other factors that must be taken into account when studying educational attainment. One influential factor is gender. Historically, women have not achieved as high a level of education or income as men. Nguyen, Haile, and Taylor (2005) found that females in three ethnic categories (white, black and Hispanic), all had lower income mobility than their male counterparts. In addition, Isaac, Malaney, and Karras (1992), found that while women are more likely to pursue higher education than

their mothers were, they are still not as likely to complete as much schooling as men.

Yet another factor that shapes one's educational achievements is ethnicity. To this day, there remains an obvious ethnic divide in this country. Great differences exist in the average educational attainment of different ethnic groups. When comparing the three main ethnic groups, Hispanics remain far behind whites in educational attainment levels and occupational status, and blacks lie between the two other groups (Nguyen et al. 2005). Black and Hispanic children have a greater risk of dropping out of school than whites to begin with (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). Due to these studies, the topic of educational attainment could not be looked at without taking ethnicity into consideration.

Another variable that has been used to indicate academic achievement is father and mother's education. Blau and Duncan (1967) found that father's education and occupation have a significant influence on a man's chance of educational and occupational success. They also found that mother's education has an effect on the educational achievement of male children. The study does not look at the effects on female children. Halaby (2003) found that the education of the family of origin has a powerful effect on job values, which are usually associated with education values, expressed later in life. It has been consistently reported that parent education influences child achievement, some say indirectly through their education values and home behavior (Davis-Kean 2005). While early studies predominantly referred to father education, it has been found that a higher level of mother's education also influences a child (Biblarz and Raftery 1999). Couch and Lillard (1997) found that the earnings of the sons of

divorced couples is positively correlated with their mother and father's financial earnings than children raised in other family types, largely because they are less mobile than their peers and remain as their parents were, in the lower part of the income distribution.

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

The *General Social Survey* (GSS) will be used to test the relationship between family type and educational attainment. The participants in this study are a representative sample of adults ages 18 and over living in the Continental United States. To make sure there were an adequate number of people representing various family structure types the data sets for 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, and 1998 were combined. This study has an overall size of 13,223.

During the 1990s, the GSS relied on a multi-stage area probability sampling procedure, with two major stages and a third if it was necessary for certain areas. After sorting the 2,489 Primary Sampling Units (metropolitan areas and nonmetropolitan counties) by Census Region, state, percent minority and per capita income a systematic selection process was used with the selection probability for a PSU proportionate to the number of housing units it contained. Of the 100 selections made at this step, 19 areas were so large that they were automatically selected. The Secondary Sampling Unit was the segment, which consisted of one or more adjoining blocks. Prior to selection each segment was sorted by its location either within a central city or outside of it, state,

county, place, percent minority quartile, and census tract or blocking numbering area. Again, a systematic selection process was used with probability proportionate this time to number of housing units. A total of 384 selections were made at this step. A third selection step was used if necessary to select specific housing units within a block or Enumeration District.

Variables

The dependent variable, educational attainment, is operationalized as, 1 = less than a high school degree, 2 = a high school degree, and 3 = more than a high school degree. The independent variable in the study is family type (1 = children from an intact home with their natural mother and father, 2 = children from a reconstituted home due to a divorce, 3 = children from a reconstituted home due to a death, 4 = children from a single parent home due to a divorce, 5 = children from a single parent home due to a death). There are also five control variables for this study; sex of the respondent (1 = male, 2 = female), race/ethnicity of respondent (1 = white, 2 = other), mother's level of education (1 = high school or less, 2 = more than high school), father's level of education (1 = high school or less, 2 = more than high school), and father's occupational prestige (1 = scores 17-40, 2 = score 41-86).

ANALYSIS

The analysis of this study occurred in three stages. In stage one I examined the

breakdown of participants across individual variables (univariate analysis). In the second stage I examined the independent and dependent variables to establish whether or not there is a significant relationship between the two (bivariate analysis). Lastly, I conducted a multivariate analysis to analyze the relationship shown in the bivariate analysis and find out if the relationship remained the same after controlling for five other variables.

1) Univariate Analysis

Table 1 contains a break down of each individual variable by percentage. About three-fourths of those in the data set grew up in a two natural parent family. Of the remaining 22.5%, 4.7% lived in a remarried family due to divorce, 2.6% lived in a remarried family preceded by a parental death, 9.3% lived in a single-parent family due to a parental divorce, and 5.8% lived in a single-parent family created by the death of one parent. With respect to educational attainment, slightly more than half (53.5%) had obtained a high school degree and another 29.4% had gone beyond high school. Over 80% had parents who earned a high school degree or less, and about half had father's occupational prestige as 40 or less.

Table 1

Variable Name	%
Family Type (n=12,068)	
1 Two Natural Parent Family	77.5
2 Remarried due to Divorce	4.7
3 Remarried due to Death	2.6
4 One Parent due to Divorce	9.3
5 One Parent due to Death	5.8
Level of Education (n=13,178)	
1 Less than High School	17.2
2 High School Diploma	53.5
3 More than High School	29.4
Sex (n=13,223)	
1 Male	43.3
2 Female	56.7
Race (n=13,223)	
1 White	81.9
2 Other	18.1
Mother's Level of Education (n=11,752)	
1 High School Degree or Less	86.4
2 More than High School	13.6
Father's Level of Education (n=10,181)	
1 High School Degree or Less	81.5
2 More than High School	18.5
Father's Occupational Prestige (n=1138)	
1 17-40	50.9
2 41-86	49.1

2) Bivariate Analysis

The purpose of this study is to find out whether growing up in a remarried family results in greater educational attainment relative to single parent families. Intact families are also included for comparison purposes. I used Chi-square (χ^2) analysis of the data because both variables are categorical and measured at either the ordinal or nominal level of measurement. Cramer's V will be used to test the strength of the relationships.

The data in Table 2 indicates that family type does have an impact on educational attainment [$\chi^2(8, N = 12032 = 159.52, p < .05)$], although the relationship is weak. The greatest percentage of children attaining more than a high school degree were those from either intact families or remarriages formed due to the death of one parent. In the remaining three types of families just over three-fourths of the respondents earned a high school degree or less. Interestingly, enough, the findings for the two remarried groups are not the same. Remarriages preceded by divorce have consequences similar to single-parent families, while those preceded by the death of a parent have consequences similar to intact families. It is not clear at this point which of the Jeynes' models receives more support.

Table 2

Level of Education	Family Type				
	Two Natural Parents N=9327	Remarried Due to Divorce N=569	Remarried Due to Death N=315	One Parent Due to Divorce N=1118	One Parent Due to Death N=703
Less than High School	14.4%	18.8%	19.0%	19.1%	24.8%
High School	52.9%	60.6%	48.3%	60.4%	51.8%
More than High School	32.7%	20.6%	32.7%	20.6%	23.5%

$\chi^2(8, N = 12032) = 159.52, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .08, p < .05$

3) Multivariate Analysis

The purpose of this section is to see whether the relationship between family type and educational attainment remains once the control variables are taken into account.

Sex

First, I address whether the relationship remains statistically significant after taking respondent's sex into account. The data in tables 3a and 3b indicate similar results to the original relationship. For males ($\chi^2 (8, N = 5233) = 83.97, p < .05$) and for females ($\chi^2 (8, N = 6799) = 84.46, p < .05$) we see that family type continues to have weak but significant effect on educational attainment. While a slightly greater percentage of females earn a high school diploma or less across all categories of family type relative to males, the pattern is similar to males and to the original table. Thus, family type still has an effect on educational attainment regardless of sex

Table 3a

Family Type						
Sex	Level of Education	Two Natural Parents N = 4126	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 226	Remarried Due to Death N = 132	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 472	One Parent Due to Death N = 277
Male	Less than High School	14.4%	20.4%	18.2%	16.7%	27.8%
	High School	51.2%	58.4%	43.2%	61.4%	46.6%
	More than High School	34.4%	21.2%	38.6%	21.8%	25.6%

Table 3b

Family Type						
Sex	Level of Education	Two Natural Parents N = 5201	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 343	Remarried Due to Death N = 183	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 646	One Parent Due to Death N = 426
Female	Less than High School	14.4%	17.8%	19.7%	20.7%	22.8%
	High School	54.2%	62.1%	51.9%	59.6%	55.2%
	More Than High School	31.4%	20.1%	28.4%	19.7%	22.1%

Male: $\chi^2 (8, N = 5233) = 83.97, p < .05$; Cramer's V = .09, $p < .05$

Female: $\chi^2 (8, N = 6799) = 84.46, p < .05$; Cramer's V = .08, $p < .05$

Race/Ethnicity

Next I address whether the relationship between family type and level of education is changed by taking race/ethnicity into account. The data in tables 4a and 4b show these results.

The findings in table 4a show that for whites there is still a statistically significant relationship between family type and level of education attained ($\chi^2(8, N = 10,092) = 126.31, p < .05$). The data in Table 4b show that the same is true for individuals who are nonwhite ($\chi^2(8, N = 1,940) = 26.66, p < .05$). Both of these relationships, while statistically significant, are weak (Cramer's V for whites = .08, $p < .05$; Cramer's V for nonwhites = .08, $p < .05$). Taken together, the data in these two tables indicate that there is still a statistically significant relationship between family type and level of education no matter the racial/ethnic background. One small difference in Table 4b is that, a greater percentage of children growing up in intact families clearly attain a high school level of education or higher relative to all of the other family types.

Table 4a

Race	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 8034	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 486	Remarried Due to Death N = 258	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 783	One Parent Due to Death N = 531
White	Less than High School	13.2%	17.5%	16.3%	17.6%	23.9%
	High School	53.0%	61.5%	46.5%	60.3%	50.1%
	More than High School	33.8%	21.0%	37.2%	22.1%	26.0%

Table 4b

Race	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 1293	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 83	Remarried Due to Death N = 57	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 335	One Parent Due to Death N = 172
Other	Less than High School	22.0%	26.5%	31.6%	22.4%	27.3%
	High School	52.0%	55.4%	56.1%	60.6%	57.0%
	More Than High School	26.1%	18.1%	12.3%	17.0%	15.7%

White: $\chi^2 (8, N = 10092) = 126.31, p < .05$; Cramer's V = .08, $p < .05$

Other: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1940) = 26.66, p < .05$; Cramer's V = .08, $p < .05$

Mother's Education

Next I address the relationship between family type and mother's education. The data in Tables 5a and 5b depict these results. Table 5a data indicate that when mothers have a high school degree or less there is still a statistically significant and weak relationship between family type and children's educational attainment ($\chi^2(8, N = 9517) = 94.73, p < .05$), (Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$). We still see the same pattern of the relationship as the original bivariate relationship – the greatest percentage of higher education attainment for children growing up in intact families or remarried families formed because of the death of one parent. For instances where mothers had more than a high school degree the relationship between family type and level of education attained is still statistically significant ($\chi^2(8, N = 1518) = 74.27, p < .05$) but now is moderately strong (Cramer's $V = .16, p < .05$). In this case greater educational attainment is associated with growing up in an intact family or a family in which one of the parents had died. Unlike the previous two variables (sex and race/ethnicity) mother's education does appear to make a difference on the relationship between family type and children's educational attainment. Greater education for moms translates into greater education for children across all family types but especially for intact families and families in which one parent had died.

Table 5a

Mother's Education	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 7567	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 451	Remarried Due to Death N = 241	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 780	One Parent Due to Death N = 478
High School or Lower	Less than High School	14.8%	21.3%	19.5%	19.6%	23.6%
	High School	55.9%	60.1%	51.9%	61.8%	52.3%
	More than High School	29.3%	18.6%	28.6%	18.6%	24.1%

Table 5b

Mother's Education	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 1198	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 82	Remarried Due to Death N = 47	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 148	One Parent Due to Death N = 43
More than High School	Less than High School	2.0%	0.0%	2.1%	10.1%	2.3%
	High School	33.9%	62.2%	31.9%	47.3%	37.2%
	More than High School	64.1%	37.8%	66.0%	42.6%	60.5%

High School or Lower: $\chi^2 (8, N = 9517) = 94.73, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$

More than High School: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1518) = 74.27, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .16, p < .05$

Father's Education

Next I examine the relationship between father's education and family type. The data in Tables 6a and 6b show these results. The data in Table 6a indicates that when father's education is at the high school level or below a statistically significant, though weak, relationship between family type and children's educational attainment remains ($\chi^2(8, N = 7879) = 85.19, p < .05$), (Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$). Similar to the original bivariate relationship, the greatest percentage of children achieving higher levels of education are those from intact homes and remarried or single-parent homes created due to the death of a parent. The relationship between family type and level of education attained in cases where fathers had more than a high school education remained statistically significant ($\chi^2(8, N = 53.89, p < .05$) and became moderately strong (Cramer's $V = .12, p < .05$).

Father's education, similar to mother's education, does appear to influence children's educational attainment. Greater education for fathers translates into greater education for children from all family types but is most influential on those from intact homes and those families in which a parent has died.

Table 6a

Father's Education	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 7048	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 383	Remarried Due to Death N = 240	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 111	One Parent Due to Death N = 97
High School or Lower	Less than High School	15.5%	20.4%	21.7%	19.8%	39.2%
	High School	57.3%	61.4%	49.6%	69.4%	53.6%
	More than High School	27.2%	18.3%	28.8%	10.8%	7.2%

Table 6b

Father's Education	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 1651	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 98	Remarried Due to Death N = 41	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 15	One Parent Due to Death N = 17
More than High School	Less than High School	2.1%	3.1%	0.0%	13.3%	11.8%
	High School	33.8%	60.2%	26.8%	60.0%	23.5%
	More than High School	64.1%	36.7%	73.2%	26.7%	64.7%

High School or Lower: $\chi^2 (8, N = 7879) = 85.19, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$

More than High School: $\chi^2 (8, N = 1822) = 53.89, p < .05$; Cramer's $V = .12, p < .05$

Father's Occupational Prestige

Lastly I examine whether the relationship between family type and children's educational attainment remains statistically significant once father's occupational prestige is considered. The data in tables 7a and 7b depict the results. The statistics in Table 7a indicate that the relationship between family type and children's educational attainment remains statistically significant ($\chi^2(8, N = 569) = 51.45, p < .05$) and weak (Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$) when father's occupational prestige score is ranked in the 17-40 range. Table 4b depicts that in cases where father's occupational prestige score was higher, in the 41 to 86 range, the relationship between family type and children's level of education remained statistically significant ($\chi^2(8, N = 514) = 69.00, p < .05$) but is also considered weak (Cramer's $V = .08, p < .05$). Table 4b shows the same pattern and strength as Table 4a. This is very similar to the results found in the results for the variables sex and race/ethnicity. We still see the pattern found in the original bivariate relationship in which the greatest percentage of higher educational attainment of children occurred for children growing up in intact homes and those remarried families that had experienced the death of a parent. In this case, growing up in an intact home or a remarried home in which one parent had died is associated with higher educational attainment.

Table 7a

Father's Occupational Prestige	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 522	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 29	Remarried Due to Death N = 11	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 5	One Parent Due to Death N = 2
Scores 17-40	Less than High School	22.6%	27.8%	28.7%	21.6%	48.2%
	High School	55.4%	57.9%	49.4%	68.9%	43.4%
	More than High School	22.0%	14.3%	22.0%	9.5%	8.4%

Table 7b

Father's Occupational Prestige	Level of Education	Family Type				
		Two Natural Parents N = 456	Remarried Due to Divorce N = 29	Remarried Due to Death N = 15	One Parent Due to Divorce N = 3	One Parent Due to Death N = 11
Scores 41-86	Less than High School	6.1%	10.6%	6.3%	17.5%	14.3%
	High School	50.2%	63.3%	47.9%	66.7%	59.2%
	More than High School	43.8%	26.1%	45.8%	15.8%	26.5%

17-40: $\chi^2 (8, N = 569) = 51.45, p > .05$; Cramer's $V = .07, p < .05$

41-86: $\chi^2 (8, N = 514) = 84.46, p > .05$; Cramer's $V = .08, p < .05$

DISCUSSION

This paper has examined the relationship between family type and educational attainment using data from the General Social Survey. In order to expand on prior research, the findings of this study will be examined in order to find out if they fit into the theories put forth by Jeynes (2000).

The first theory I looked at is the socioeconomic school of thought, which predicts that the academic achievement of children from reconstituted families would be higher than that of children from single-parent homes. The second school of thought, the non-parental adjustment school of thought, predicts that the academic achievement of children from reconstituted families would be equal to or lower than that of children from single-parent homes. This study found that there is some support for both schools of thought. Academic achievement was found to be higher for remarried families due to death than for single-parent family types. However, academic achievement was found to be almost exactly the same for remarried families due to divorce and single-parent families due to divorce, showing some support for the non-parental adjustment school of thought.

A multivariate analysis was conducted to further study the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Five variables were controlled for in order to find out if they have any effect on the original bivariate relationship. For the variables sex and race/ethnicity, virtually no effect was seen, the original relationship between family type and children's level of educational attainment remained. When father's occupational prestige was taken into account the relationship remained statistically significant with

children from intact families and remarried families preceded by the death of a parent achieving higher levels of education. The results when mother's education and father's education were considered show a slight interaction. The relationship between family type and children's educational attainment was strengthened when either parent has had more than a high school education.

A couple of limitations of this study are that the data used is somewhat dated and higher number of participants in some categories would have been preferable. If I were to repeat the study I would use more current data and larger data sets. However, the results of this study are significant enough, I believe, to justify more research on the subject matter. This study's main contribution is that it shows that remarried family types cannot be combined into one group. It is clear that whether there was a divorce or a death matters greatly to the educational outcome of the children.

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