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8/26/2003

Virginia A DeSeau, Contracting Officer
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6100 Executive Blvd., Suite 7A07
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Dear Virginia:

We appreciate the opportunity to clarify aspects of our proposal to RFP NICHD-2003-03: "Designing New Models for Explaining Family Change and Variation." Attached you will find your questions and our responses to them.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to any additional questions you or your colleagues may have.

Sincerely:

S. Philip Morgan

S. Philip Morgan, Proposed Principal Investigator

Susan Lasley

Susan Lasley, Assistant Director, Office of Research Support

"Designing New Models for Explaining Family Change and Variation"

Proposed Principal Investigator
S. Phillip Morgan, Ph.D.
Duke University

Response to Technical Questions and Clarifications
RFP NICHD-2003-03

August 27, 2003

Responses to Technical Questions and Clarifications for Proposal to RFP NICHD-2003-03: "Designing New Models for Explaining Family Change and Variation"

Principal Investigator: S. Philip Morgan
Duke University, with subcontracts to UCLA and the University of Maryland

Preface

We are pleased to respond to the technical questions and request for clarifications on our proposal. Responses to each technical question follow. As a preface to these responses, we affirm several basic principles that guided our responses and, more generally, guided the development of our proposal.

First, although our initial research team could be characterized as a group of mainstream social scientists representing a relatively limited number of disciplines, we think one of the hallmarks of our Core Group is its familiarity with, history of engagement in, and support of cross-disciplinary collaborations. Each member of our group has in the past organized multi-disciplinary research teams to work on grants and contracts. The published research of group members has often been the result of collaborations with scientists from disciplines other than their own. In preparing our proposal, a clear consensus emerged within our group that it will be essential to move beyond our initial team to include a wide and diverse set of scholars on this project.

Second, our initial team brings a wealth of both scientific and policy research experience to this project. The descriptions of the investigators on our team in Section A.6 (pp. 81-84) and the Biographical Information for the PI and Co-PI's in Section A.8 (starting on p. 98) offer clear evidence of this commitment to science and to conducting policy-relevant research. This background will help us to ensure that the model that evolves for a coordinated program of research and data collection will reflect the best science and will be useful to a variety of public policy audiences and decision-makers. We recognize that we can not make all of the connections between the scientific and policy communities on our own. We envision a collaboration with other researchers, the NICHD staff, and members of the policy community. Our team members' extensive experience in policy-related research will guide this collaboration.

Third, our proposal features the importance of exploring a variety of research and data-collection methods in developing a model of family change and variation called for by this RFP. We make this point in several places, including in Section A.2.b, Conceptual Introduction (pp. 9-14), in all of the modules in our proposal, and in all three of the Issue Areas for Pilot Studies that we discuss on pp. 64-72.

Fourth, it is important to keep in mind the orientation that characterizes our proposal. In particular, we view our proposal as a starting point, not an ending point, for a research program on family change and its consequences. This orientation led us to lay out an initial conceptual framework, discussed in our Conceptual Introduction (Section A.2.b) and a set of Principles that guided our approach to this project (pp. 14-15). In our view, a successful model for a research program on family change must begin with a well-grounded set of theoretical perspectives. It must attempt to address a limited set of central substantive issues. In contrast, we rejected proposing an encyclopedic list of theoretical models and substantive topics, which can inhibit a group's initial ability to make progress in discerning and critically evaluating important topics in an area. Coming to a soundly reasoned and substantiated model for a broad and vital research program requires this critical assessment and, in our view, depends much less on exactly *where* a group starts than on the group's ability to move forward in a creative, collaborative and inclusive direction.

Finally, our proposal balances the need for a principal investigator with a strong voice and a rich substantive and methodological background with the need for a broader research team that is fully committed to an equal intellectual partnership. Philip Morgan's exceptional organizational skills make him ideally suited to be the PI for this project. His research record on family and fertility change is well known. He has made significant contributions to the body of knowledge on family change in the United States and other developed as well as developing countries. We believe that the ambitious agenda outlined in the RFP requires a team of investigators who bring mainstream interests and expertise in family demography but who have also demonstrated the desire and ability to work collaboratively with members of other disciplines and to think "outside the box." The Core Group structure we proposed unites as co-investigators with Dr. Morgan, six researchers with a broad range of academic and policy interests in family change. The team will provide leadership in designing innovative research on family and fertility change.

Question 1. Individuals currently identified by the offeror as having a substantial role in the project include only sociologists and economists. This group lacks the diversity needed to shape a broad and integrated research agenda as anticipated by the NICHD. How does the offeror anticipate constituting the Core Working Group in order to adequately include individuals of other disciplines (including anthropology, biology and psychology, which were acknowledged in the proposal to be missing), racial and ethnic diversity, junior scholars, and experience with diverse methodological approaches, including qualitative and ethnographic methods?

The use of "Core Working Group" in Question 1 and our use of "Core Group" and "Working Groups" require clarification. We clarify our use of these terms and then address directly the substantive import of the question. In our proposal (and in responses here) we refer to a "Core Group" of seven researchers (the offeror) and to a set of "Working Groups." The Core Group of researchers consists of the PI and the six Co-PIs. Eight Working Groups are proposed; each member of the Core Group will be assigned to three Working Groups. This will allow each Working Group to contain three members from the Core Group of researchers (see

Table A.5-1, p. 72) and two to four additional members who will be added in the first months of the project period. The addition of approximately 24 persons (8 Working Groups x 3 additional persons per Working Group), plus input from those writing commissioned papers, ad hoc consultants, etc., will provide the diversity needed to shape the broad and integrated research agenda NICHD seeks. In addition, we propose an "Executive Committee" (see the response to Question 3 below) that consists of the Core Group of researchers, the NICHD Project Officer, and possibly others added after consultation with the Project Officer and staff at NICHD). The Executive Committee is synonymous with the RFA's "Core Working Group."

We concede that those currently identified as having a substantial role in the project (the Core Group) include only economists and sociologists. We agree that this group lacks the diversity to shape a broad and integrated research agenda for designing new models of family change and variation. The proposal identifies specific disciplines that the Core Group feels must be added to inform the process of model development – specifically, experts in the areas of anthropology, biology and psychology (as noted in Question 1 above). The addition of qualitative researchers with knowledge of ethnographic methods would also enhance our ability to shape a broad and integrated research agenda. The structure of our work outlines multiple mechanisms for including members of diverse disciplinary and methodological orientations as active participants in the process, including, but not limited to, as Working Group members, ad hoc consultants, and authors of commissioned papers (pp. 76ff). Among the strategies we adopt is to use such scholars on specific aspects of the work where they are most relevant. For example, we suggest that at least an anthropologist and evolutionary biologist be involved in Module 2, but that members of Working Groups for each module have input on which disciplines and scientists should be recruited for activities such as commissioned papers and pilot projects. The final recommendation on these matters will be made by the Project's Executive Committee, whose composition we discuss in greater detail below in answer to Question 3. We did not name specific personnel to fill these and other roles as our reading of the RFP was that the NICHD staff would need to be involved with such selections. Published amendments to the RFP explicitly stated that the offerors should not name an extensive list of collaborators, Working Group members, and consultants.

We are privileged to have at our institutions many scholars on whose expertise we plan to draw. Although we did not name them in our proposal, we consulted with them in developing our proposal. We regret that we did not adequately convey the interdisciplinary depth and breadth that went into the preparation of the proposal. For example, we consulted with social psychologist Melissa Milkie at the University of Maryland on ideas about cultural meanings and how situated life experiences in the family influence identity formation. She is a recently tenured Associate Professor and Faculty Associate of the Maryland Population Research Center who studies changing cultural meanings of parenthood and the influence of the media on teens' self images. Dr. Milkie typifies the young social scientist we seek to involve and whose attention to subjective phenomena would augment the research activity in virtually all of the modules. Discussions with Sandra Hofferth at Maryland focused on the current policy context surrounding family and fertility research, such as the increased attention to mechanisms that might promote marriage especially among low income populations. Similarly, Elinor Ochs, a linguistic anthropologist and Director of the Sloan-funded Center on Everyday Lives of Families at UCLA met with Judith Seltzer to inform the work of the proposal on anthropological perspectives on families' daily experiences. Colleagues at the UCLA School of Public Health and California Center for Population Research, such as Carol Aneshensel (collaborator with Len Pearlin at the University of Maryland) and Dawn Upchurch, provide perspectives on the stress process and on biological determinants of health behaviors. Hans Peter Kohler, an associate professor at Penn and a collaborator with Philip Morgan and Thomas DiPrete of Duke, although not named in the proposal, reviewed and provided suggestions on selected modules. As with Dr. Milkie, Dr. Kohler represents the *type* of individual who could be drawn upon to inform our work.

Of course no set of institutions has a monopoly on talent. To give the review panel more guidance on our thinking about the participation of researchers from outside our institutions, we would expect to include a developmental psychologist with the type of background of Lindsey Chase-Lansdale or Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, an anthropologist with the type of background of Elinor Ochs or Thomas Fricke who lead Sloan Centers on work and family, a biologist with the type of background of Jeanne Almann, and an ethnographer with the type of background of Kathryn Edin or Linda Burton. With respect to policy-related family research, especially experimental and program evaluation research, we would expect to include researchers with the type of background of Barbara Devaney of Mathematica Policy Research. Clearly, the design of models to advance family and fertility research will also need to involve experts in methodological aspects of data collection such as expertise in question wording that could be provided by someone like Stanley Presser of the Joint Program in Survey Methodology of Maryland and Michigan. While any of these people, of course, would be extremely valuable participants in the project, here we suggest these scholars only as examples to give the reviewers guidance on the variety of disciplines and quality of scholars we aim to assemble.

While we recognize the limited disciplinary background of the personnel currently named in the proposal, we feel a *core* group of sociologists and economists is appropriate for the type of empirical investigation of family and fertility processes that NICHD is likely to undertake. Although many fields contribute to understanding family change and variation, the study of the family has been central to sociology and the investigation of fertility and family decision-making has become a mainstream topic of economic demography. A very large percentage of the membership of the Population Association of America (PAA) is drawn from these two disciplines. We think that a major advantage of our proposal is that it begins with a team that is extremely broad-minded and that welcomes input from across disciplines. Our central mission is to collect ideas from a broad spectrum and help reshape them into an agenda for family and fertility research, to take new ideas now sometimes at the periphery of family and fertility research and bring them into the central core of the field. This will require excellent and respected scholars who can work in concert to make new ideas palatable, useful and insightful to their own and other disciplines.

We dedicate ourselves to establish racial and ethnic diversity in the groups who undertake the work of the RFP. Our proposal describes a number of mechanisms we will use to develop lists from which Working Group members, authors for commissioned papers, and researchers on pilot projects will be selected (p. 77). We will make a special effort to include names of scholars in traditionally underrepresented groups by consulting with our institutional colleagues who are themselves members of these groups. For example, at UCLA, David Harris (at Cornell) is a colleague on the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey and sociologists Vilma Ortiz and Edward Telles are California Center for Population Research Faculty Affiliates. We will also review lists of members of groups such as the Critical Demography Group at PAA, the past recipients of the American Sociological Association's (ASA) Minority Fellowships, sections of the ASA that focus on race and immigration and typically include many minority group members, and lists of scholars who were supported a by NIH Minority Supplements during their graduate or postdoctoral training.

We also welcome the participation of junior scholars who can both contribute to the project and benefit from the science learned. At the same time, we are cognizant of the potential costs to untenured faculty members and other junior researchers of devoting time to a project like this one at the expense of time devoted to publishing the results of their own research. We think that it is ideal to include junior scholars in Working Groups and activities organized by Working Groups, conferences, commissioned papers, and possibly pilot projects where their contributions to this project complement their own research agenda. At both the personal and intellectual levels our team recognizes the importance for the project and for junior scholars of taking account of the ideas of those who are just starting their careers. Each of us devotes considerable effort to mentoring current and former graduate students and junior colleagues. Several of us have played administrative roles in our universities to improve the training and research opportunities of those early in their careers (e.g., Department Chair, Director of Graduate Study, Population Center Director/Training Director). In addition, one of our team, Judith Seltzer, knows firsthand the great learning opportunity provided through participation in the design of a major demographic resource from her involvement with the National Survey of Families and Households when she was an assistant professor.

Junior scholars bring new insights to the study of family and fertility change. Many talented junior investigators have gained experience as postdoctoral fellows or young investigators on major NICHD data collections related to family and fertility processes. We would want to include those doing innovative work on the family, such as the group affiliated with the NICHD R21 Center at Bowling Green, or junior investigators and postdoctoral fellows who have gained experience through working on the Fragile Families Study at Columbia-Princeton, or who have been postdoctoral fellows and research associates on studies like the Three City Welfare Study based at Johns Hopkins or the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) at North Carolina. By incorporating their ideas, we expect to advance science at the same time we provide opportunities for new researchers to advance their careers. Many junior scholars are the potential users of any new studies this project might design. We want the project to gain from these new scholars' insights and to provide them with valuable research opportunities without asking for the kind of time and energy commitment that might threaten their ability to advance their individual careers. To insure adequate representation of more junior colleagues we will pay particular attention to recent PhDs., postdoctoral fellows, and NIH and NSF awards to new investigators in developing and updating our lists of likely project participants. We will also seek names from senior scholars in multiple disciplines of promising students who are working in relevant areas of family and fertility change.

While we will always be cognizant of the importance of racial and ethnic diversity and the inclusion of junior scholars our paramount concern in the selection of *all* project participants is the quality of the science. All project participants will be of the highest scientific merit.

Question 2. The RFP anticipates a planning process that will consider a broad range of data collection strategies. The proposal lacks sufficient information addressing the PI's experience designing and conducting exploratory or original research studies. Please discuss the PI's qualifications in this area.

First, we see this project as a collective effort among seven researchers, the PI and six Co-PIs. The project PI, Dr. Philip Morgan, has a special role in the management of the project. However, we view the intellectual contributions of the PI and the Co-PIs as equally important. This is not to say that the PI and each Co-PI will be involved in every stage of every project. Rather, the people on this are a talented team have complementary skills and can use some degree of specialization to accomplish the project goals effectively. Data collection is just one example. Our proposal suggests a broad range of data collection efforts: compiling data from known sources including codifying currently vague concepts, small-scale survey data collection, the collection of experimental data, and the use of administrative data. Although the PI, Dr. Morgan, does not have experience with each of these methods of designing and conducting research studies, he does have excellent experience with some. He is a well-informed consumer of other methods, and across the research team there is exceptional experience with the totality of all the methods. Because an operating principle of our project is that all of the investigators work as a team, we respond to this question by outlining the experience of each PI/Co-PI and then conclude with additional comments in response to the reviewers' concerns about this issue.

Dr. S. Philip Morgan was the PI on two original data collection projects, one in Nepal (with Bhanu Niraula) and one in India (with A. Dharmalingam). Both studies produced a number of visible publications (see Morgan's biographical sketch). Both studies were comparative village studies whose core was demographic measurement and measurement of women's status and autonomy. However, both studies mixed some qualitative and observational studies with the core survey research instrument. These studies were designed to complement material collected by Mason and Smith in five Asian countries (see http://www.pop.upenn.edu/swaf/index.html). Dr. Morgan has also produced a public use data set from archival materials, specifically the 1910 census manuscripts. While at the University of Pennsylvania, he worked with Sam Preston and others to produce the 1910 Census PUS. In addition, he added an oversample of African Americans that matches the larger 1910 PUS (archived at ICPSR, ICPSR 9453 Census of Population, 1910 [United States]: Oversample of Black-headed Households. Morgan, S. Philip, and Douglas Ewbank.). This larger sample of African Americans has allowed for more detailed and innovative analyses of historical racial differences. See, for example, Morgan and colleagues' work (cited in Morgan's biographical sketch) on turn of the century racial differences in family structure and living arrangements. Having called attention to this experience, we concede that other members of the core group have greater experience planning data collection and collecting data. Rather Morgan's reputation has emerged from innovative use of existing data and his selection as PI for this project relies on his demonstrated administrative and leadership skills.

Dr. Thomas DiPrete was a member of the team that produced the survey instrument and directed the data collection of the first wave of the High School and Beyond study. He also was on the team that produced the survey instrument and directed data collection of the bilingual educational experiences of the population of Hispanic students in the New York City school system. He was a member of the committee that advised Citicorp in the first production of the Citicorp research database, a longitudinal database with anonymized information about the careers of Citicorp employees.[1] He has overseen the production of research databases from administrative data sources both in scholarly research and in a large number of litigation-related research projects. As a research professor at the German Institute for Economic Sciences (DIW Berlin), he has played an advisory role in various aspects of the collection of the German Socio-Economic Panel. He has also advised the Panel Study of Income Dynamics on various aspects of data collection while on the Board of Governors for that study. In addition to these data collection activities, DiPrete has compiled contextual data at the societal and employer levels for use in multilevel investigations of the effects of historical change on employment and fertility.

Dr. Suzanne Bianchi and Dr. Judith Seltzer have direct experience collecting survey data on families (including time diary data) in the United States. Suzanne Bianchi, in collaboration with John Robinson, is an expert in the collection and analysis of time diary data. In 1998-99, with funding from NSF and supplementary funding from NIA for the sample over age 65, nationally representative time diary data were collected from a random sample of 1151 U.S. adults, the first collection since 1985 to include primary, secondary, and with whom data collection in a telephone time diary study. The design included question wording experimentation aimed at bridging estimates of paid and unpaid work from diaries and from standard survey questions. In 2000, with funding from the Sloan Foundation, time diaries were done with a sample of 1200 parents. The design also included an exploratory weekly diary study, with multiple family members, the first ever such weekly study in the United States. Before she joined the faculty at Maryland, as a Census Bureau employee, Dr. Bianchi was also involved in data collection and questionnaire design for school enrollment supplements to the October CPS, the SIPP **and edits and allocations for decennial Census collections.**

Dr. Judith Seltzer has extensive experience with collecting social science survey data, which has served as core data in our field. She participated on the National Survey of Families and Households project team from 1984 through the release of the wave 2 data. At the University of Wisconsin Seltzer also played a major role in the design and collection of two large state surveys of separated parents. The studies are unusual in their inclusion of both mothers and fathers for the same families and the availability of detailed information from court and other administrative databases to match to survey reports about family life after divorce. Her collaboration with Dr. Nora Cate Schaeffer on innovative methods for obtaining

[1] Over the past decade these data have been used for a large number of organizational and labor market research projects, which have received financial support from the Citicorp Behavioral Sciences Research Council and other funding sources.

high quality data on children's living arrangements, financial and in-kind transfers, and contact with nonresident parents, including , extended periods in each parent's home, and more conventional measures of visitation, have informed new, more reliable ways of collecting data on nonresident family members. Seltzer was a major contributor to the first waves of the survey designed for the Wisconsin Works Child Support Waiver Demonstration Evaluation headed by Dr. Maria Cancian and Dr. Daniel Meyer. In addition to her work on survey design, she was an active member of the team that designed the random-assignment demonstration and developed the evaluation design including both quantitative and qualitative components. Since its inception, Seltzer has been a member of the multidisciplinary design team for the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey headed by her colleague, Dr. Anne Pebley. The study design addresses the identification problem that plagues some of the best work to date on contextual effects by taking into account that neighborhood context depends, in part, on individual decisions about where to live. Finally, Seltzer has just started work with another interdisciplinary team to investigate the effects of the new family leave policy in California.

Perhaps more than anyone else on the team, **Dr. Duncan Thomas** brings to the project the most varied experience in the original design, implementation, and evaluation of major household surveys. These studies are multidisciplinary collaborations across institutions. The surveys use innovative designs and develop question sequences to address questions central to family change and variation. Other researchers have adopted elements of these designs in other major surveys on family topics. A unique feature of Thomas' expertise is his demonstrated ability to successfully field large, complex surveys with little lead time, as after the economic crisis in Indonesia in 1998 and the more recent Balinese bombing in 2002. These demonstrated skills are essential to the design and plans for implementing survey components of new studies of family and fertility change.

Thomas' experience in data collection includes co-directing with Dr. Elizabeth Frankenberg, the second and third waves of the Indonesia Family Life Survey (IFLS2, IFLS2+). The survey is large (covering 30,000 individuals in 7,500 households), extremely complex, and, arguably, one of the leading longitudinal socioeconomic surveys conducted outside the United States. After four rounds spanning nearly a decade–including a period of tremendous economic, social and political upheaval, response rates are still extremely high, with over 95% of households continuing to participate.

Several innovations in IFLS address important questions about fertility and family change. The study develops new measures of "power," a central concept in many theories of family variation. In collaboration with scholars from anthropology, demography, sociology and economics, Thomas conducted focus groups, in-depth interviews and field pretests which led to the design of new questionnaire modules for the IFLS. Components of those modules have been adopted by surveys in many countries—including the Health and Retirement Survey in the United States. The IFLS successfully interviewed each adult household member, a practice that is not widespread even though the need for couple and family-level data is well recognized in studies of fertility change. The study also includes detailed information about family members who do not live in the household.

Other innovations in the IFLS design include the wide array of domains of individual and family experience captured by the study and its new way to measure social context. The study collects extensive information about the economic prosperity, social capital and human capital of each household member and nonresident family member. It adopts a broad conceptualization of human capital and therefore includes, a physical health assessment conducted on each respondent with biomarkers (blood) being collected and analyzed as well as more conventional measures of human capital. Recognizing that social context and the environment are important factors in family life, IFLS collects an extraordinarily rich array of information about the community. Rather than rely on an arbitrary definition of "community," IFLS developed a statistical sampling approach to enable the meaning of community to vary across respondents and collected data accordingly.

The values of Thomas' contributions to the IFLS extends beyond the creation of a valuable data source for studying how families are affected by and respond to crises and changing economic circumstances. The innovations of the IFLS are being replicated (or planned) in several other countries, demonstrating that the innovations are exportable to other contexts. For instance, Thomas is Co-PI of the Mexican Family Life Survey which is unique in that it tracks individuals who move to the United States and also those that return to Mexico. And, as noted above, some questions developed for IFLS have been included in the U.S. Health and Retirement Study.

In addition to these studies, Thomas' new study addresses the problem of causation, a critical concern outlined in the RFP and addressed in our proposal. As PI of a large-scale random-assignment treatment-control iron intervention in Indonesia, Thomas is measuring the causal effect of an individual's health (or specifically iron status) on economic and social prosperity of the individual and on his/her family. The study follows respondents in over 4,000 households for three years and collects detailed information on economic status, social capital, time use, physical and psycho-social health, nutritional status (including iron content in blood) from each respondent every four months. Extensive community data are collected on a monthly basis, subjects complete physical assessments on an ergocycle, stool samples are collected and venous blood is analyzed. In addition, subjects are given a weekly iron supplement or a placebo for a year. Development of protocols for this study involved extensive interviews with local experts and policy makers as well as focus groups with potential subjects. The most complex survey-based project that Thomas has undertaken, the study is a collaboration with senior scholars spanning anthropology, biochemistry, demography, economics, epidemiology, gerontology, nutrition, pediatrics and sociology drawn from seven institutions.

Dr. V. Joseph Hotz's policy-oriented interests are highlighted in his involvement in the design of a number of original research projects involving data collection and designs of interventions. For example, Dr. Hotz was a member of the Design Team of the National JTPA Study conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In this effort, Dr. Hotz played a major role in designing questions for a survey of a sample of individuals who were eligible for services under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) but who had chosen not to participate. He played a key role in designing the strategies for sampling from this population in some 20 localities in the United States. The key issue in drawing these samples was balancing the need to achieve high take-rates of eligible, non-participants in screening interviews while minimizing the potential for bias in subsequent analyses by oversampling areas on the basis of unemployment rates when unemployment was an outcome to be analyzed in the study. More recently, Dr. Hotz has been involved in the design of the RAND Statewide CalWORKs Evaluation as a Co-PI. This study is evaluating the effects of welfare reform in the State of California and involves a complex mixture of methods of data collection and samples, including a small-scale survey of welfare participants, a set of qualitative analyses of the administration of the CalWORKs programs in more than 30 of California's 56 counties and the development of a large-scale administrative data system to monitor a variety of outcomes on all welfare participants in the State of California over the period 1995 through 2002. More generally, Hotz has been involved in a number of efforts, in California and other states, to assemble administrative data for use in policy-relevant research. Drawing on this experience, Dr. Hotz chaired a panel of experts assembled under the auspices of the Northwestern/University of Chicago Joint Center on Poverty Research and was the primary author on this panel's report titled, *Administrative Data for Policy-Relevant Research: Assessment of Current Utility and Recommendations for Development*.

Dr. Seth Sanders' data collection experience also demonstrates a concern with causal inference and the effects of policies that affect families. He has twice conducted studies in which experimental variation was induced in a field setting. First, his work with Lowell Taylor used standard data collection methods to collect all of the information that was asked on the State of Pennsylvania Welfare Program application form. By doing so, an algorithm could determine whether the respondent was eligible for the Food Stamp program. Since the data collection spanned a number of months, eligible non-participants were informed of their eligibility and then were followed up to see if this information changed their program use. Additional information was gathered on why the respondents made the decision to enroll or to remain off the program. Dr. Sanders was also involved with an experiment in which information on monitoring of workers within a firm was experimentally manipulated.

Finally, we recognize that there is a set of skills for managing large-scale scientific surveys, especially in the United States context, that is not the comparative advantage of our group, despite the broad data collection expertise represented on our team. We also acknowledge, as we did in our proposal and in our response to Question 1 above, that our Core Group does not include ethnographers with skills like those of Linda Burton and Kathryn Edin. We do plan to include researchers with these skills in our activities just as we propose to expand the types of phenomena, such as cultural meanings and situated life experiences, which we consider critical to investigate in data collection activities. The proposal outlines a number of mechanisms for including the contributions and advice from scholars of this (and other types), for instance through participation in Working Groups and in other consulting activities. However, we argue that some of these skills are most relevant once clarity in the research agenda is set.

We believe that the most innovative model for research and data collection for studying family change will emerge from an effort that minimizes the role of vested interests in past approaches or methods and is open to considering different approaches. This is why we proposed commissioning papers on collecting data from multiple family members and on strategies for gathering data on non-resident family members and the interactions among these members (pp. 62-63), for exploring new ways to exploit new technology for gathering time use data (p. 63), and for exploring the use of laboratory experimental methods, such as those used in psychology and, more recently, economics, in conjunction with household surveys (pp. 64-67). In the end, our Research Team believes that innovation, especially in designing a new model for research on family change, is most likely to come from smaller more flexible and more targeted efforts that question conventional assumptions about data collection and are guided by theoretical perspectives, from biology to psychology to anthropology and sociology to economics, and from experimentation with methods that have not often been used in most past and current data collection efforts.

Question 3. The proposal identified NICHD staff as "stakeholders" in the project, rather than as active participants. NICHD expects to play an active and substantive role in consultation on all aspects of this planning effort. How will the offeror revise its procedures to allow for the active and ongoing involvement of NICHD staff?

We regret that we described NICHD staff as "stakeholders" as it does not reflect our conception of their inclusion and involvement in this project. In fact, we recognize that NICHD, through its designated Project Officer, will have a contractually-obligated oversight role on this project. But, in addition, we see the NICHD staff as exceptionally knowledgeable colleagues, who bring important perspectives to the project's efforts to develop a long-range model for research on family change. Below, we describe some specific steps we would take to ensure the active and ongoing involvement of NICHD staff, especially the Project Officer. More generally, we expect the staff to be involved in every stage of the planning, collective meetings, review of reports written etc. In the end, this must be a collaborative and cooperative effort that involves NICHD staff, our research team, other scientists who contribute to Working Groups, commissioned papers, and so forth, and the broader research community with interests in the family and fertility, if it is to be successful.

One of the advantages of the research team we have assembled lies in the close physical proximity between NICHD's Project Officer and other staff members and our Maryland colleagues. For this reason we planned to have a disproportionate number of group meetings in the Washington, D.C. area. It remains our expectation and hope that the entire project would unfold with the cooperation and active involvement of NICHD's staff.

We laid out too few specifics for how this would be accomplished in our original proposal. How best to facilitate NICHD involvement will need to be discussed with NICHD staff, but some specifics of how NICHD's Project Officer and other staff will be involved are as follows:

- We will establish an Executive Committee that will be charged with overseeing all activities. The Executive Committee will consist of the PI and the six Co-PIs (what we refer to as the Core Group in our proposal) and the NICHD Project Officer. We will consider, in consultation with NICHD, the possibility of including one or two other researchers from fields not already represented on our team to share the responsibilities of integration and oversight. Likely candidates are scholars in psychology (e.g., Lindsey Chase-Lansdale or Jeanne Brooks-Gunn) or someone whose expertise in qualitative methods would extend the range of direct experience represented in the team's leadership, for instance a scholar who uses ethnographic methods (e.g., Kathryn Edin). Adding to the membership of the Executive Committee has budget implications and requires that a specific person(s) be identified, a task we do not want to undertake without direct consultation with NICHD.

- All major decisions will be reviewed by the Executive Committee. The Committee also will monitor the work undertaken in the various modules that are ultimately developed, the pilot projects that are conducted and the commissioned papers that are written. This oversight is essential for ensuring that the work done in these components of the project meets a high standard and that the work is completed in a timely fashion.

- As is clear from the RFP and we acknowledge in our proposal, the NICHD Project Officer will have a unique oversight role in that this person will have final approval authority on the scholars to be recruited for the various tasks the project undertakes. Thus, the Project Officer's participation on the Executive Committee is subject to the contractual guidelines that govern the formal aspects of our relationship to NICHD. But, it is our intention that the relationship within the Executive Committee, between the Project Officer and the other members, be a collaborative one on all substantive and organizational aspects of the project.

- Operationally, the Executive Committee will participate in the weekly meetings via video and telephone conference.

- We expect to draw on the expertise represented among the NICHD staff in constituting the Working Groups. We look forward to discussing with the Project Officer and the NICHD staff ways to integrate NICHD staff members into these and other aspects of the project work. We welcome the inclusion of NICHD staff members as full members of the Working Groups and look forward to discussing this possibility with the NICHD Project Officer.

- Finally, we plan to hold meetings in the Washington, D.C. area that will facilitate the inclusion of NICHD staff; for those meetings outside D.C., we will structure the logistics to maximize participation of NICHD staff by, for example, having them coincide with PAA meetings etc. Many of our meetings will be conducted by video-conference or electronically.

Question 4. The RFP specifies that the contractor will establish a Core Working Group "with the consultation and approval of the Project Officer." How will the offeror meet the requirement of the RFP to obtain the input and approval of the Project Officer in determining the membership of the Core Working Group?

Our proposal uses the designation "Core Group" to identify the PI and six Co-PIs. We distinguish between this group and the Executive Committee described above (response to Question 3) that includes all of the investigators, the NICHD Project Officer, and, perhaps another member or two to be appointed in consultation with the Project Officer. The Executive Committee is what the RFP refers to as the Core Working Group, something we should have clarified in the original proposal. Our response to this question is largely covered in our response to Question 3, above, that describes the composition and operating procedures of the Executive Committee (AKA Core Working Group). In addition to the important role the Project Officer will play in determining the final composition of the Executive Committee, the Project Officer also plays a central role in determining the composition of the Working Groups tied to the modules outlined in our proposal. The leaders of each Working Group, who are designated in our proposal as members of our team, will submit a proposed list of members to the Executive Committee and, after consultation with and recommendations by the Executive Committee (which includes the Project Office), the NICHD Project Officer will have final approval over the membership of these Working Groups.

More generally, we expect to work with the NICHD staff in a continual and interactive manner. We expect each of the investigators (the PI and Co-PIs) to develop lists of potential members of the Working Groups, to solicit suggestions from prominent scholars and for NICHD staff to similarly construct such suggestions. We would first construct the categories of the type of scholars we will try to recruit to the project and then ask everyone involved to develop lists of people for each category. We hope, through negotiation, that we can identify within each category a few scholars of the highest scientific achievement who are available to participate, assuming the budgetary implications of the arrangements have been resolved. By having the Project Officer as a regular member of the project’s Executive Committee, we think that conflicts over membership can be largely avoided and that the oversight and approval process for the Project Officer will be a smooth and consensual one.

Question 5. How will the offeror ensure that individual Working Groups include needed breadth with regard to discipline, substantive foci, methodological approach, racial and ethnic composition, gender, and rank?

We understand that it will be challenging to ensure that the Working Groups include the breadth with regard to discipline, substantive foci, methodological approach, racial and ethnic composition, gender and rank. With limited time and limited financial resources we, along with the NICHD staff, will need to make choices that will inevitably fall short of what would be possible to accomplish with more time and more resources. Working Groups will typically contain from 5-7 people (including a leader and participants from the Core Group). This means that full representation is virtually impossible within a single topical Working Group. For each topic we will need to determine the disciplines and methodological approaches that are most relevant and how best to obtain the broader view afforded from racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the group. By keeping these questions in mind for each of our eight topical Working Groups we hope to achieve reasonable balance across all Working Groups. We will collaborate with NICHD staff to help us decide which characteristics are most important for particular Working Groups. Any decision to expand the size of the Working Groups would necessarily have budget implications.

Several research mechanisms expand the opportunity for needed breadth. Authors of commissioned papers, PIs of pilot projects, ad hoc reviewers and discussants at the concluding conference provide opportunities to influence our work and final recommendations.

Question 6. The proposal contained little discussion of criteria that will be used to identify topics and expertise of scholars appropriate for the commissioned papers and to choose pilot projects, procedures to identify "ad hoc consultants" for Working Groups, and strategies to obtain subcontract compliance and timely production of commissioned products. Please elaborate on proposed procedures for these management tasks.

We believe the first central task of the Executive Committee is to identify good people with innovative views who work in the topic areas that are central to the topics of the RFP. Once these individuals are identified, it is essential to give them the freedom to express their views in written products and Working Group discussions. We recognize that giving such liberty to scholars may leave us in the position of receiving reports or pilot projects that at first may bear little resemblance to the typical way mainline population researchers approach the same problem. But we see this as having great value. The core mission of the seven co-investigators is to then translate innovative ideas and pilot study findings and consultants' insights into products that are useful in the study of family and fertility processes. All of us have been and continue to be members of multi-disciplinary research projects that require this type of translation and conceptual effort. In jointly working on the proposal in response to the RFP, each of us has made a commitment to this type of translation and integrative work.

As for management of these projects we will do all we can to make sure those projects are delivered in a timely fashion (although we anticipate that working with scholars on such projects will be like trying to herd cats). One method we have found effective in other applications is to put up an internal website for all project participants, posting reports as they become available. This has the advantage of exerting peer pressure, as the status of all projects is public to all group members.

All of the investigators on our team have substantial, successful experience managing disciplinary and interdisciplinary groups whose members sometimes disagree about basic principles, pay varying attention to deadlines, and sometimes provide conflicting advice about the "right" course of action. We include the current and a recent past president of the Population Association of America (Dr. Morgan and Dr. Bianchi) and a former editor of *Demography* (Morgan). Five of us are or have been Directors/Associate Directors of NIH-funded population centers (Bianchi, Hotz, Sanders, Seltzer, Thomas); two are chairs of diverse academic departments (Morgan, Hotz); two have played leadership roles in organizing multi-country international collaborations (DiPrete, Thomas); all have played major leadership and service roles in other professional organizations, including membership in elected offices and on elected and appointed committees. We will draw on the organizational skills we have developed in these roles to accomplish project tasks and to coordinate the activities of all project participants to complete work on time.

Finally, with respect to the financial management of the work by the Working Groups, commissioned paper writers and those conducting Pilot Projects, we plan to use a payment scheme in which: (a) a small fraction of the payment is made to contractors at the beginning of a task, (b) another partial payment at the halfway point that is based on an interim report that is delivered to and accepted by the Executive Committee and (c) most of the payment (50% or more) is made upon completion of the task and approval of final reports by the Executive Committee. Furthermore, we will plan to have the final payment decline with time for projects that are not completed by the agreed upon completion date.

Question 7. The scope of work defined by the offeror is extremely large and the Core Working Group appears to bear much of the responsibility for this work. Please explain how the project will be managed to assure that the work is completed within the time commitments available to Core Group members.

Our response to this question is covered in part in our response to Question 6. We would be monitored by the Executive Committee and would post our own reports to the internal website. Weekly conference calls would be devoted to assessing progress and setting priorities and allocating responsibility for the completion of tasks.

Further we agree with both observations: the proposed scope is large and the Core Group bears primary responsibility for the work. Both features are by design. This important activity should begin with a wide scope so that important decisions and a narrowing of focus do not occur prematurely. We have provided a structure that moves us from high levels of abstraction (Modules 1 – 3) to more “middle level” ones (Modules 4 – 8). We have also stated the principles that will guide our work. Thus, a broad scope should be seen as an advantage and not a threat to completing the project aims. The Core Group members all have strong reputations for innovative conceptual and empirical work – work that requires narrowing broad questions/issues to relevant questions that can be empirically examined.

Also, the work burden should fall most heavily on the Core Group. We are senior investigators and scholars and have experience making hard choices about where effort should be placed. As indicated by our thorough proposal we are highly committed to completing the task. We see this activity as intellectually exciting and one appropriate for our current career stages. We think we can make a difference. Finally, we have placed substantial budge resources at our disposal to do this work. Each member of the Core Group is budgeted for a significant period of time.

Question 8. It appears that Working Group members will be asked to commit only 8 days per year to the project. Please clarify how this work is to be accomplished within this period of time (in consideration of the following question, too).

This research will attain the highest scientific standards and have the greatest impact on policy and scholarly thinking if research affiliates are actively engaged in the studies as part of their on-going research program. Although this will clearly limit the breadth of what a particular person might contribute, our goal is to bring together the best and the brightest researchers in the field (broadly defined) in an effort to maximize the synergies among these people. It is our expectation that this will provide the foundation for researchers to broaden their own research programs and explore innovative approaches to answering key questions regarding family and fertility in America. In so doing, the goals spelled out in the RFP will be well served and the quality of the science in the field will be elevated for years to come. Our intent is to provide eight days of support to cover the marginal cost of coordinating activities and preparing for and participating in meetings.

Significant projects will also be accomplished by ad hoc consultants, those who write commissioned papers, and researchers who conduct pilot projects. All of these activities are budgeted separately from the 8 days budgeted to compensate Working Group members for their time.

Finally, a few key Working Group members may be assigned to multiple Working Groups (as are Core Group members). This could potentially double the time (to 16 days a year) our project could cover. Such "dual appointments" could highlight key intersecting issues, such as the one addressed in question 20.

Question 9. It appears that the amount of time and the rank of senior personnel who are currently proposed may jeopardize the potential for a cost-effective management structure for the project and adequate diversity in the supporting personnel. Please reconsider staffing and provide a plan that reduces the effort of some of the senior personnel currently proposed.

Our reading of this concern is that six Co-PIs may be unwieldy and unnecessarily expensive. We considered both having fewer Co-PI's and cutting back on the Co-PI's effort. This would necessitate solidifying more of a hierarchy in our management team and for the PI to take the central managerial role in all Modules. We rejected this approach for two reasons.

First, given the ambitious nature of our proposal, and the emphasis on innovation, it is difficult to separate management from scientific input. We expect that decision-making for the project will take a good deal of substantive knowledge. As accomplished as the PI is, we felt that this was too much to ask of any one investigator.

Second, we feel that "ownership" is important to get the level of involvement that the admittedly ambitious agenda requires. Our model of Modules with separate leaders for each Working Group will induce the most involvement from all members of the team. It also has the added advantage of assigning responsibility in the case that a particular Working Group falls behind our ambitious schedule and again the positive performance of one group will induce "peer pressure" on other groups.

Unfortunately, we see no way of doing this without substantial effort and cost. Unlike our consultants, nearly everything each Working Group leader (appointed from our Core Group of Co-PIs) does will be an activity that he or she would not have undertaken in the absence of the project. We view the work as involving a large degree of synthesis and management, as opposed to direct research on projects. We also anticipate substantial investment in the conceptual aspects of the project and in translating material that is discipline or problem-specific to make it more useful to mainline researchers. The coordination tasks and the conceptual work cannot be delegated to less experienced researchers without considerable costs to a junior scholar's career advancement (see response to Question 1) or to the science of the project that requires the vantage point of more experienced scholars. We also believe there would be a substantial loss to the project if tasks were compartmentalized more than they are. This would sacrifice a major strength of our team work approach, which builds on the routine and frequent interaction among the co-investigators about project work.

Another way to reduce the cost of the project is to consider modifying the scope of the work. We are reluctant to take this step at this stage. Our proposal is designed to include a collaboration with NICHD. At this stage in the process the NICHD Project Officer and staff have not had a chance to discuss these issues with us. We look forward to having an opportunity for this exchange.

Question 10. The proposal lacks a detailed plan for administrative and technical support (e.g., research assistants, computer consultants, clerical staff, etc.) for the project, indicating where support staff will be located, and how their work will be managed and coordinated. Please provide such a plan.

Our work is centered on Modules with each Module having a leader from the Core Group. Resources were located at the institution where the leading Co-PI is located. The Working Group activity requires administrative support – workshop planning, meeting coordination. That is why RAs are located at each institution; some administrative support is requested for each institution, as is some computing support.

As the PI, Dr. Morgan is budgeted for more time than other investigators. Approximatley 10% of his time will be devoted to organizational activities (interacting with the Project Officer and NICHD staff, and assuring that the terms of the contract are met in a timely manner). He will also be assisted by Gary Thompson, the proposed project manager
. Gary Thompson assisted Dr. Morgan in all aspects of the planning for the 2003 PAA meetings. Thompson is highly and generally competent. He is able to solve computing and web page issues, to effectively communicate with a large number of investigators, and is both sensible and attentive to detail. He would manage the proposed project website, arrange for teleconferencing, advise on other information technology issues, and organize the logistics for the twice yearly meetings. Thompson would be supported by a business manager (either in Sociology, the Center for Demographic Studies or The Center for Child and Family Policy).

Question 11. The RFP calls for input from a variety of sources in identifying and finalizing the key questions during the project itself. Because pre-identification of these areas could limit the scope of the planning process, further consideration must be given to the topics assigned to the workgroups and the number of workgroups in the early stages of the project. What is the offeror's plan for adapting their proposed plan in response to input from NICHD, appointment of the Core Working Group, and consultation with Working Group members and others?

High quality science calls for the combination of a disciplined and carefully articulated research plan at the outset and a commitment to remaining flexible during the research process in order to respond to new ideas, new methods and new evidence. We spelled out our research plan in the proposal to provide the basic foundation for our thinking. Armed with that foundation, we expect that each Working Group will re-examine old facts, assemble new facts and review the literature in an effort to provide new thinking about fertility and the family. The Working Group composition will be very broad-based and appointment to each group depends on the protocol outlined (see response to Question 3) and in the proposal (pp.76-77).

The theoretical and methodological challenges that we outlined in the eight proposed Modules are essential to making progress on new models of the family and fertility. We recognize that talented scholars may disagree about the importance of the challenges outlined in these Modules. Scholars may also judge that we have omitted important methodological issues and substantive topic areas. Coming to agreement on the appropriateness of these eight areas and negotiating substitutions, expansions or reductions in the scope must be accomplished early. It is the foundation of what we do. We plan to use the Executive Committee intensely in the earliest stages to set this agenda. In short, we proposed a strong framework as a starting point for identifying the terrain of the project. Collaboration is a guiding principle of our design. We hope – and expect – the project work to develop in multiple and sometimes unanticipated directions as the work progresses.

Question 12. The proposed procedures appear to provide little opportunity for on-going contact among the investigators in different Working Groups and for integration across the topical areas and the development of cross-cutting themes. This may limit the ability to take an interdisciplinary and fresh approach to the issues, informed by cross-fertilization. What mechanisms are proposed to assure adequate opportunity for integration of ideas and work products across work groups?

One way to view the organizational structure we propose is from the perspective of network studies. We propose a structure that facilitates interactions and discussion across groups to identify cross-cutting themes. The strong interlocking ties of the Executive Committee members connects the Working Groups. Each of the Co-PIs on the Executive Committee is assigned to three Working Groups (see Table A.5-1, p72). Further, the Executive Committee's weekly conference calls will be used to discuss problems and progress and to identify possibilities for collaboration across groups on topics that might fall at the intersection of the groups' work. Additional strong ties can be created by placement of regular Working Group members on multiple Working Groups when appropriate. In addition, there are the *strong ties* to authors of commissioned papers and to PIs of pilot projects. We anticipate that these papers and projects will frequently focus on cross-cutting issues as a way to maximize the intellectual product. Thus, information will flow from these authors/PIs to multiple Work Groups. There are also *weaker ties* provided by ad hoc consultants that may advise one or more Working Groups at a particular meeting. These ad hoc consultants may fill informational "structural holes" in the informational network and, thus, have a synergistic impact on the work of multiple groups. Weaker ties are also provided by the proposed conference in the third year that allows for comment on our conclusions and recommendations.

Further, the organization of our planned meetings allows for less structured interaction. All Working Groups meet over a two-day period allowing for informal contacts and for information to flow between all participants. As noted above, the internal website provides an additional opportunity for information to flow across Work Groups. The external website also allows for the influence of weaker ties through communication with a broader constituency that has access to working documents we post there.

In short, we propose a network structure of formal and informal contacts that facilitate interactions likely to have a positive impact on Working Group deliberations and such contacts that maximizes the likelihood of identifying cross-cutting themes.

Question 13. The proposal does not address how the work of each work group will be integrated to produce a final product. It is not clear that the final conference will accomplish this effectively. What procedures will be used to develop an integrated final product?

We regret that we were not clearer about our plans for this in the original proposal. Our goal is to produce a single integrated document that will reflect the major findings and recommendations. We do not view the conference as a substitute for such a document but instead as a way to obtain additional input into finalizing such a document (through the broad participation in questions and discussion at such a conference). Our application proposes a final report, not just a conference, and that report will include the detailed, coordinated recommendations and study plans that have risen from the Working Group process and will reflect the input of the broader scholarly community. (Note that our proposal also outlines multiple mechanisms for broad scholarly input much earlier and at all stages of the project work.)

More generally, one model for a final product is the output of National Research Council (NRC) panels and committees. Such committees always generate a detailed final report, with the possibility of an interim report, in which the issues in question are framed, the requisite background, relevant theories and body of findings are discussed and then a set of detailed recommendations is made. In addition, some of these NRC panels/committees issue a companion volume of commissioned papers and results from conferences that were held to provide more detailed information to a broad research audience. While the content of our Final Report (Interim Reports, if any) and compendium of commissioned papers and results from pilot projects will differ in content – i.e.., we will likely have more elaborate discussions of relevant theories and methodologies and more on findings from original research than are typically found in the output of NRC panels/committees – our team found the “NRC model” of a final synthesis report a good prototype to conceptualize what we see as a good way of organizing the findings and recommendations of a model for a new research program at NICHD on family change.

We want to make clear that the “NRC model” is just a model for the final product, a comprehensive report. We have specified a process for arriving at the final report that we believe is more thorough, innovative, and collaborative than the typical NRC process. Also, we do not view aspects of the NRC process as appropriate for this endeavor. In particular, the NRC model tends to be focused on consensus, particularly with respect to recommendations, often at the expense of innovation. Hence, creative content is often excised from final reports because it is deemed too controversial or because panels cannot agree on standards of evidence.

This is not desirable for the work of this RFP. Also, recommendations from NRC panels may be far too general to result in specific actions; here, our goal is to develop a comprehensive model that can be readily implemented.

Finally, confidence in our ability to produce an integrated final product should result from our demonstrated ability to articulate a structured work plan, develop an over-arching conceptual framework, and assemble a core group of first-rate scientists motivated to accomplish the task.

Question 14. The proposal provides little detail regarding plans for communication with various communities of scholars about the team's work, the desire for additional input and review of products from interested researchers, and the existence of the project's website for broad communication and feedback. What strategies will be used to effectively reach out to relevant scientific communities to assure broad input into and knowledge of the planning process?

The proposal provides little detail regarding how policy makers, foundations, and other stakeholders will be used or involved in this process. What procedures will be put in place to ensure that such stakeholders are informed about the process and have ample opportunity to provide input to it?

We are proposing six specific strategies for involving stakeholders about the team's work so that they can easily access our work products and efficiently and effectively provide feedback.

1] We plan to use BLACKBOARD software to provide communication among project participants and to allow posting of materials for access by project participants. BLACKBOARD allows for the creation of specific sites for each aspect of the overall project, for structured posting of documents in a variety of formats to these sites that can be accessed by all users, for the linking of relevant external (i.e., internet-based) information to the site, and for the creation of discussion groups organized around specific work products of the project (see www.blackboard.com for further details about the capabilities of BLACKBOARD). Duke's BLACKBOARD license can be used for this purpose at no cost to the project. Persons at other institutions can be listed as users and have full access to the materials and the ability to interact via e-mail with all participants or with selected groups (e.g., selected Working Groups, Core Group, Executive Committee).

2] We plan to create a website that allows selected working documents to be viewed by the public at large. This mechanism allows for the broadest possible audience and feedback. We plan to advertise this website to relevant groups so they may read the documents and react on their schedule.

3] At the outset of the project, we plan to communicate with relevant officers at the foundations that have research on the family as a major funding priority, such as the Ford Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Sloan Foundation. In addition, we will communicate with major research and policy groups that focus on the family, such as Child Trends, the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Family Health International, the Population Council, or Rand. Our initial communication is intended to provide them with a strong working knowledge of our overall goals and our specific work group themes so that they understand the scope of the overall project and how it relates to their specific research interests and program missions. The foundations and research groups will be invited to indicate their specific interest in each of the major parts of our project, and we will use this expression of interest as a basis for identifying the core audience for the work product of each of the Working Groups established by the project. The foundations will also be invited at the outset to share with us their opinions about the major research questions and policy issues that are related to our research program. Depending upon the nature of foundation and research organization interest, this process of early information sharing will take place either individually or through a meeting organized by the core group with stakeholders to be held at either Duke, Maryland, or UCLA.

4] Each of the Working Groups will itself identify the most important stakeholders for the specific project. Each Working Group will engage in outreach efforts to involve its stakeholders in the development of its major work products.

5] Each of the Working Groups will also contact persons whose past or current work is highly relevant and ask for their reaction to our working documents. Persons who respond with useful and innovative suggestions could then be invited as ad hoc reviews or serve as discussants of the final report (at the concluding conference). Policymakers, foundations and other stakeholders would be included in the same manner.

6] Sessions at the PAA meetings and at the APPAM meetings will be initiated by core group members around Working Group themes in order to provide further opportunity for structured and rigorous feedback on the major work products of the Working Groups.

Question 15. The proposal does not address the requirement for clearance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB, as opposed to Institutional Review Boards) for pilot studies that may potentially involve data collection from more than nine individuals. (See http://www1.od.nih.gov/oma/manualchapters/management/1825/*). What procedures will be put in place to deal with such a requirement?*

We will apply for OMB approval for any pilot projects involving data collection on 10 or more individuals. None of our team has recent experience applying for OMB clearance, but we are all at institutions with expertise in this area. We will consult closely with NICHD and OMB staff to complete the appropriate applications and comply with all OMB requirements. Our proposal takes into account the lead-time required to consult with and secure OMB approval. No pilot projects are planned before year 2 of the project.

Question 16. The core questions posed by the RFP involve explaining family and fertility change and variation. The treatment of the three theoretical Modules is vague and does not adequately discuss theory, substantive results, or the key issues relevant to the causes of family *change and variation. How will the offeror focus the effort to ensure adequate attention to the core questions articulated in the RFP?*

We designed the three “big picture” Modules – Household and Family Decision-Making, The Role of Biology in Families and Fertility, and Contexts Shaping Families and Family Change – to address theoretical and methodological questions that span all studies of family and fertility change. Our aim was to integrate a wide range of theoretical approaches, to identify common questions at the core of multiple perspectives, and to outline primary challenges that would help address these questions. By adopting this strategy, some of the ways that researchers conventionally frame theoretical debates about family change - for instance, (neo)modernization theory, social networks and diffusion, interactionist perspectives - do not emerge directly from our exposition of these three Modules. We appreciate this opportunity to clarify our thinking about these issues. First, we provide a short “road map” of where in the proposal text we addressed these issues and explain some of our views on these matters. We then conclude with some further responses to the question about how we plan to focus the efforts on these core questions in order to ensure they receive adequate attention.

In the Conceptual Introduction to our proposal, we sought to provide a “framing” of the key issues that arise when one thinks about responses to the questions of “what factors and processes produce family change in populations over time? and “what factors and processes influence variation in family change and behavior among racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and regional, and cultural groups and among men and women?” (pp. 6-9). To confront these questions, one must begin by addressing the questions of why families exist and consider what roles the family plays as an organizational entity in human populations and societies. We highlighted issues related to the role of biology in family formation and behaviors, the role of choice in such behaviors and the role of society and context. In our view, the concept of how family is defined and the roles of biology and constrained choice in how family is defined, are at the heart of any study of families, any studies of family formation, and any study of families’ behaviors and well-being. We believe that theories of family and fertility change must also take into account of how individuals obtain information, how the affective and cognitive factors affect information processing, and how social interactions create negotiated meanings that frame individuals’ choices and their perceptions of constraints. These topics are central to theories about how the social context and normative environment account for race-ethnic diversity in childbearing patterns, for example. Some individual and family behaviors are not recognizable by either researchers or the individual actors themselves as choices and our consideration of context in Module 3 addresses this concern.

While one might argue for the need of a more comprehensive conceptualization of why families exist and what roles they have played in the past and/or now play, one cannot forgo addressing the theoretical perspectives we outlined if one is to study how families. Changes in families may result from changing roles of biology, through evolutionary and adaptive processes, and many family outcomes can be viewed, in part, as the result of choices, albeit varying in the degree to which they are consciously or deliberately made. In addition, we believe that to conceptualize why individuals organize into families and sources of change in family organization over time and across groups requires careful attention to context in its various dimensions. Without an understanding of how context has changed over time and how it differs for race-ethnic and socioeconomic groups, researchers cannot develop a full explanation for observed changes in family structure and behaviors.

The Conceptual Introduction also highlighted the two additional key, methodological issues that one must consider when answers to the core questions posed are going to be subject to scientific inquiry of the highest caliber. In particular, we noted the important role and practical issue of how we gather data on families. Here we laid out some of the key challenges in gathering data to monitor and analyze how families, and their behaviors change over time. The issues foreshadow challenges that we subsequently consider in more detail in the initial set of Modules, commissioned papers and pilot projects we propose. We also identify critical concerns about methods for making inferences about the causes and consequences of family variation. As our discussion indicates, there are a variety of approaches, each of which has its advocates and critics. But, the key issue is that developing a coordinated model for a research program on family and fertility change must critically consider these methodological issues and take into account of their implications for developing theories that can be subjected to meaningful tests and for guiding what data needs to be gathered.

In summary, our Conceptual Introduction, in many ways, raises age-old questions to which each generation of scholars studying the family seems to inevitably return. For example, considering the role that nonresident kin play in families is important for evaluating classical questions about the effects of political and economic change on extended families (modernization, family organization theories) and for understanding fathers' relationships with children born outside of marriage or cohabiting unions. That generations of scholars return to these questions does not mean, in our view, that new progress on these issues is impossible. Rather, we strongly believe that these issues should be revisited and reconsidered if we are to move forward with developing new knowledge and understanding in more specific areas. We identify common theoretical problems central to multiple theoretical perspectives on family change and variation to provide new insights that will inform an integrated program of study for family and fertility research.

While our Conceptual Introduction was necessarily brief, our proposal focused its more detailed consideration of issues related to the study of family change and variation in the eight Modules. Furthermore, we used the topics for commissioned papers and pilot studies to illustrate our research team's initial thinking about how to develop elements of a new and innovative model for research on family change and variation. To avoid needless repetition, we will not summarize the topics in the Modules, and proposed commissioned papers and pilot projects here. But, in our view, these Modules provide our research team's succinct assessment of key issues in various substantive aspects of family formation and behavior and the changes and variations that have been documented and analyzed in the existing literature. We provide, at the end of each Module, our initial views on the key challenges that must be addressed to make real progress in understanding the factors and processes that govern family change and variation. Cross-cutting issues integrate the theoretical and topical Modules to inform our initial proposals for commissioned papers and pilot studies.

Question 17. The RFP also allows for the design process to "advance scientific understanding of complementary research questions to the extent possible". Discussion within the five "focused" models is strong, but it is not clear how all are "complementary" to the core questions. Please explain how the offeror will achieve conceptual and theoretical integration across all Modules while addressing the core questions of the RFP?

The design of our project balances the need to have depth within a substantive Module with the need to have breadth so that the work in one Module informs the others. This is a balancing act but we believe that advancement is unlikely unless we advance some specific areas first. This is why the proposal emphasizes our Modules. As we lay out in the proposal, the advantage of a large integrated team of Co-PI's of leaders is the ability to share research across team leaders which will get disseminated within project Modules to other scholars. Integration will be achieved in several ways. First, as we mentioned, one key feature of integration is to have as a focus pulling all information toward the core of population research. That is by having a team of Co-PI's at the center of the field, but (1) allowing input from many perspectives and (2) depending on the Co-PI's to "translate" ideas from an allied field (such as population genetics) will itself have an integrating influence. Second, as we are committed to specific recommendations, all Co-PI's will work collectively in the last stages of the project to produce a unified volume of work.

As with any innovative project, there may be strands of research that seem important but that can not be integrated with the present state of the science. These facts are still valuable and worth reporting. Although integration is a laudable goal, science cannot always be neatly integrated either.

Question 18. The proposal appears to emphasize microeconomic behavioral models in its approach. (Statements on pp. 8 and 14 explicitly acknowledge the centrality of a choice paradigm to the project.) Although NICHD wishes to include economic and "choice" paradigms in this planning effort, it prefers that no single paradigm be privileged at the outset. Please address in more detail how the project will include broader theorizing about family change and variation, including aspects such as theories of culture and deeper conceptualizations of context?

We recognize that the theoretical perspective of individual cost/benefit analysis is too restrictive to provide the leverage necessary for effectively advancing research on family and fertility change (p. 14). Microeconomic behavioral models are also too limited a framework for the development of the types of public resources this project aims to develop. Our intent is not to place one paradigm in a privileged position but rather to place the complexity of the family and fertility change into a framework that is amenable to scientific inquiry. Specifically, we take as given, that individuals make choices during their lives and that these choices are influenced by their own characteristics and the social context in which they live. Individuals' characteristics develop over the life course – in part because of choices that were made in the past – and so does the social context – again, in part, because of choices that were made in the past. The interesting scientific questions revolve around how decisions are made, what factors influence decisions and what the effects of different decisions are on individuals' own lives and the lives of others. We also recognize the critical importance of identifying the conditions under which individuals perceive their actions as choices and the aspects of social interaction that shape individuals' ideas about the opportunities and constraints they face. For instance, when do women think of having a child as a separate decision from whether or not they should marry? How do social networks transmit information about childbearing and family obligations? Some behaviors may be the result of interaction between biological and social factors. These are not choices in the usual sense, but identifying the conditions under which choice operates and those under which it does not is critical for conceptualizing family behavior. These questions span economics, sociology, biology, psychology and anthropology and are extremely interesting to address. They are the questions that will occupy the Working Groups.

The intersection of choice and social context, including culture at both the macro and micro, negotiated level is at the core of our project. Our proposal outlines many of the ways that culture and a deep conceptualization of context are an integral part of the framework we propose and how they play an important role in shaping decisions. By drawing on the highest quality scientists from a broad array of disciplines, our goal is to provide a springboard for innovative thinking about the family and family change.

Having said this we do not believe that all paradigms have been developed equally in terms of both theory and empirical regularities to date. Therefore, how to integrate each paradigm may vary. We believe the choice model as conceived by economists has been well developed over the last 30 years. As such, we focused here more on issues surrounding its empirical content. Our reading of the literature is there are many more variants of models in other paradigms, such as the evolution of culture, context and social norms and its role in family choice although perhaps the cross-sectional evidence is more plentiful. For this reason our hope is to put emphasis on refining theory so that sharper predictions can be made and the underlying circumstances that would distinguish variants on these models can be articulated.

Question 19. The RFP gives explicit attention to (ethnic or religious) subgroup variability in family forms, but the proposal contains little explicit theorizing about or attention to subgroup differences. How will the offeror address this gap? How will theories of subgroup variation and inequalities be brought in?

Ethnic and religious subgroup variation in family forms is an important component of each of our proposed Modules. Across all of these Modules, we view subgroup variation in the specific outcome (fertility, union formation, intergenerational transfers etc.) as an important datum to be explained. The theoretical building blocks for the explanation of these differences will be developed at the highest level of abstraction in our first three Modules. These Modules provide an appropriate structure to address change/differences – across time, place, and social location. At this level of theorizing, we develop ideas about decision-making, how biology constrains and motivates choice and how social context provides incentives and disincentives for particular choices or constrains them so severely as to make "choice" invisible to many persons. An essential component of this theoretical development concerns the question of whether differences in biological conditions, in social context, or in forms of decision making can provide an adequate explanation of subgroup differences, or whether additional approaches must be developed to provide the theoretical basis for explaining subgroup variability in family forms.

The focused substantive Modules (4 – 8) invite theory at a “middle level”. Here decisions, biology and social context are defined more concretely for particular outcomes and in particular contexts. For instance, Module 4 focuses on union formation and dissolution. At this middle level, we will develop models of behavior and ask what factors lead to differential outcomes across groups. For instance, why are marital disruption rates higher for African Americans than for whites in the contemporary United States? These theories will involve specific, concrete characterizations of the interactions of choice, biology and context. Ultimately, we view subgroup variability as both a critically important datum to be explained and as a critical test of the power of the theories that will be developed by this research project. Powerful theory must accommodate subgroup differences as variation that supports general theoretical principles. The reverse is also true, powerful theory must lead us to convincing understandings of concrete differences we observe.

Question 20. Given that fertility and union formation are considered in separate Modules, how will the offeror ensure adequate attention to the question of how family patterns and fertility patterns are interrelated?

Our proposal outlines a Working Group structure that treats childbearing and unions in separate Modules. We also treat child rearing and child wellbeing (Caring for the Next Generation) and intergenerational relationships in separate Modules. Yet the outline of our work and the initial questions we pose for the Working Group activites explicitly address the interdependence of fertility and other family processes. Module 4, Union Formation and Dissolution, considers the relationship between union status and fertility (p. 37ff) and asks how social context affects the relationship between being in a union and having a child (p. 41). We pose a related question in Module 5, Why Have Children (bottom of p. 46, 47). Module 6 considers how parents’ biological and social relationships with children affect children’s development (p. 51), and Module 7, Intergenerational Relationships, identifies a major challenge for new work on families as developing testable hypotheses about the multigenerational processes that affect individual and family behavior (p. 55-57).

We propose to coordinate Working Groups’ efforts to address the interdependence of family and fertility patterns in three ways. First, the composition of Working Groups will be overlapping. Second, Core Group members who head related Working Groups will also be members of Working Groups that address closely related topics. For instance, Dr. Morgan heads the Working Group on the fertility Module, and he is a member of the Working Groups on Union Formation and Dissolution and Caring for the Next Generation. Dr. Seltzer heads the Working Group on Unions and on Intergenerational Relationships. Dr. Sanders is a member of both the fertility and intergenerational Working Groups, in addition to heading the Working Group on the Role of Biology in Family and Fertility. Such allocation of responsibilities among Core Group members has a benefit beyond the overlapping membership on Working Groups because the Core Group Members will be in contact at least weekly to discuss the substantive and practical aspects of Working Group progress. The third mechanism for integrating project work on family and fertility patterns is through the involvement of the broader research community. Researchers who study the relationship between fertility and being in a union are strong candidates for inclusion in at least one of the fertility and union Working Groups, subject to the approval of the project's Executive Committee, which includes the NICHD Project Officer. Further a focus on fertility and family patterns can be strengthened by adding a single person to multiple work groups, i.e., a person who shares say an interest in fertility and union type could join both Working Group 4 and 5. Our structure is very flexible in responding to such important cross-cutting issues (See response to Question 3 above.)

Moreover, we acknowledge that the integration of family and fertility patterns is a central concern for theory and new research on family change. In particular, recent demographic research on the relationships between fertility and union formation highlight the importance of theoretical approaches that consider the interdependence of family processes. Recent improvements in both qualitative and quantitative data on both fertility and union formation (and dissolution), such as the Fragile Families surveys and qualitative interviews, the new wave of the Add Health survey, the European Family and Fertility Surveys of which the NSFG is a component, all provide descriptive information about the extent to which having children depends on being in a stable union.

We propose to build on these theoretical and methodological innovations. We view the correspondence between couple relationships and caring for children as a topic that spans the life course. Whether – and when – adults have children in marriage or a stable union is an important aspect of this concern, but these family experiences have long standing effects. As children grow up and parents age, questions of how parents' marital or union status affects investments in children and resource allocations to biological and stepkin must also be addressed. We think that by recognizing the overlapping concerns in each Module, we potentially maximize the chance of pushing the boundaries of knowledge about each topic at the same time we build on the substantial received wisdom in each area.

Finally, a strength of our team for examining the association between fertility and union formation/dissolution is that each of us has worked in this area and treats it as a special interest.

Question 21. How will the investigators incorporate theory and research on public policy and make their design relevant for policy decision-making?

Our application proposes a research design that encourages innovation. We plan to encourage all involved to bring new ideas to the table and to present the best evidence of their saliency for explaining family change and variation. We believe that good public policy should be based on the cumulative knowledge provided by research instead of on the latest innovative study. Because our goal for the project is to uncover the ideas that have the most promise for advancing knowledge and to propose methods for implementing them, we see our primary contribution to public policy as primarily resulting from implementation of the recommendations of this project. We hope and expect that our work will give the research community new leverage to investigate relationships that are important for policy making. We also expect that the community of scholars who work with us will assemble data sets, develop new statistical methods and designs for evaluating causation, and improve the validity and reliability of survey and other data. These efforts will form the kind of scientific consensus that may be useful to policy makers on today's relevant matters, just as past cohorts of scholars have done for policy issues salient at other times. There are many examples of how consensus findings from social science research have affected public policies, including those still relevant today, for example the early establishment of paternity or the use of Head Start programs. In short, an important part of this project is to propose appropriate infrastructure to support the science necessary for answering the key questions of the next several decades.

Therefore we will attempt to incorporate the major questions of the policy-making community. What are the developing and pressing needs of these stakeholders?. Just as with other stakeholders (see Question 14), we will develop email distribution lists of policy makers with interests in family policy and fertility policy. Our work is organized around the Working Groups for each Module and we suspect that our more specific Modules (Module 4-8) will be of the most interest to policy makers. The email list will keep all informed as to the workings of the groups and will point to a website where more details are available. We will encourage email discussion between the policy community and the scholars in the Working Group, moderated by the Working Group leader, to the degree that this discussion furthers the scientific agenda. Although web-based communication and email have been extremely successful for facilitating interaction between the research and policy communities, for instance the experience of Child Trends, we recognize that email and other forms of electronic communication are not as commonly used as other forms of communication by some members of the policy community. We will make a particular effort to seek advice from our colleagues at places like Child Trends, the Urban Institute, and the Population Reference Bureau about other mechanisms for sharing information and inviting input from the policy community about their interests and concerns.

One of the tasks of the Working Groups will be to bring the exchanges between researchers and policy makers to the table and to identify the questions that may be aided by better science. At times, we are likely to use our many vehicles of papers, projects, and ad hoc consultants to bring in specific policy makers whom the Working Groups think could make strong contributions, subject of course to Executive Committee approval. To facilitate communication between the research community and policy makers we will also pay particular attention to considering policy-oriented researchers as members of Working Groups to enhance the policy relevance of the research designs (see the response to Question 1 where we discuss examples of potential Working Group appointees, such as Barbara Devaney at Mathematica Policy Research).

We believe that our team has two principle advantages for developing research resources that will be useful to policy makers. First, the Co-PI's and their colleagues have an unusual degree of experience conducting research important to public policy and in interacting with the policy community more generally. Dr. Hotz and Dr. Sanders both started their academic careers in Schools of Public Policy rather than in disciplinary departments. Dr. Bianchi started her career and served many years at the U.S. Census Bureau, an agency that must be responsive to requests from congress and other government agencies. And much of the Co-PIs' work has been presented and has influenced policy at both the State and Federal level.

For example Dr. Seltzer's work on paternity establishment was presented to California and Wisconsin child support administrators; Dr. Sanders' work on gays in the military was presented to President William Clinton. In addition, our colleagues on whom we will rely have had direct experience in policy-making positions. Two examples are Dr. Kathleen McGarry (UCLA), who served for two years on the Council of Economic Advisors and Dr. Edward Montgomery (Maryland) who served as Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary for Policy, and Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Second, we believe that having a group located in the Washington, D.C. area is a great advantage. Many professional organizations dedicated to public policy research are located in the area and our plan is to reach out to these organizations, for example the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM). We will encourage all scholars involved in this project to present work at professional meetings where researchers with policy interests congregate. In addition, by virtue of our Maryland team members' location, we are likely to have greater access to the federal policy making community and to both encourage policy makers' involvement in Working Groups through face-to-face meetings and to lower the costs of such involvement by limiting travel for these individuals.