

Theory of Parental Investment and Sexual Selection

Natural selection has created mechanisms to increase individual fitness (e.g., number of grandchildren).

- 1.) Females invest more in offspring than males (females bear costs of pregnancy and weaning)
- 2.) Because females have more of an investment, they will be more careful in **choosing** their mates.

Lecture 9 cont....

Parental Investment and Sexual Selection cont.

- Females choose mates that have high status and resources, and who indicate they will invest in their offspring.
- Females want parental support.



Sexual Selection cont.

- Males compete to be chosen by females by signaling that they can provision resources and defense.
- Some males can amass more wealth or territory than others. Extra resources and power can be attractive enough to attract more than one mate. As a result, the variance of successful mating and fitness is higher among males than females
- Result: There is more competition between males than between females.

Explaining Aggression

- Why are males more likely than females to be involved in violence?
- Hypothesis: Sexual selection has resulted in more competition between males, than competition between females.

Table 8.3. Two Hundred Twelve Closed Social Conflict Homicides in Detroit, 1972, in Which Victim and Offender Were Unrelated (Friends, Acquaintances or Strangers), Classified by Conflict Typology and by the Sexes of the Principals^a

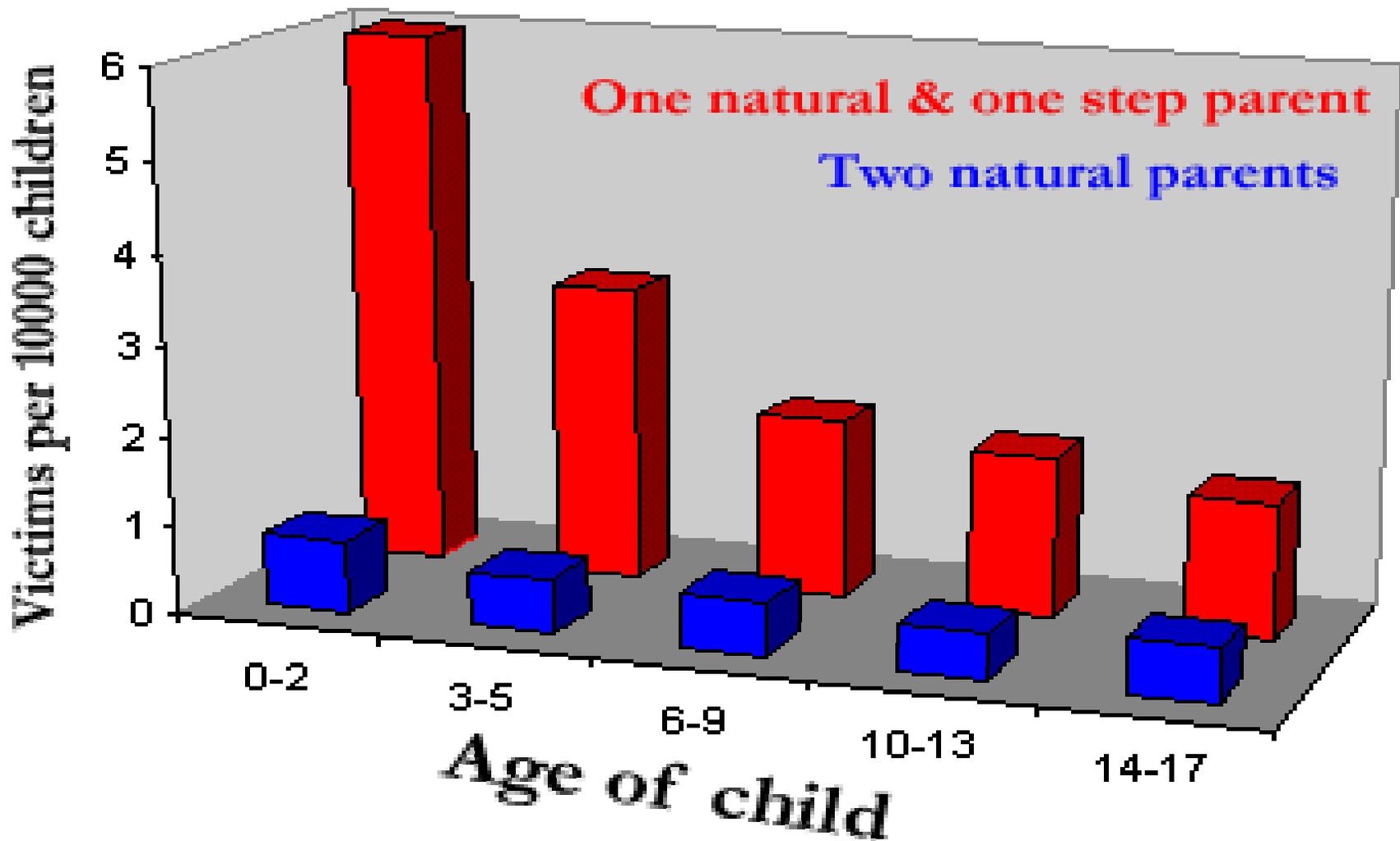
Conflict typology	Male killed male	Male killed female	Female killed male	Female killed female
Escalated showing-off contests	26	0	2	1
Retaliation for previous verbal or physical abuse	75	9	6	5
Jealousy conflicts	20	5	6	3
Business conflicts	10	1	2	0
Intervention in family dispute	5	0	0	0
Miscellaneous unique disputes	2	0	1	1
Insufficient information	<u>26</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total social conflicts among nonrelatives	164	19	18	11

^aFrom Wilson and Daly (1985), Table 3.

Aggression within Families: Parent-Offspring Conflict

- Evolutionary theory predicts that men should bias investment of time and other resources in favor of their own children.
- As a result, step children are at greater risk of child abuse and murder, than children living with both their natural parents

Child Abuse is More Common by Step Parents than Natural Parents



Child Murder is More Common by Step Parents than Natural Parents

