
4 Families of formation

Social and family data 1980

Method

In this section we present our data on the second generation as adults. We decided that a household unit would mean any second-generation adult in any of the following circumstances, but only families in categories (a) and (c) could be used when considering the children of the third generation:

- (a) a married or cohabiting couple with children
- (b) a couple without children
- (c) a single parent
- (d) a single person.

We also decided that, except for certain key variables, in the new families men and women would be looked at collectively as Red Spots or spouses.

In addition, we had to decide whether to classify the families according to archival evidence of deprivation in the family of origin or current evidence of deprivation in the family of formation. There were good reasons for doing both. The former tells us about the social and family circumstances in 1980 of groups of Red Spots according to whether they were categorized as deprived or not deprived in 1952. The latter tells us about the social family circumstances of groups of families who were categorized in 1980 as deprived or not deprived.

Our tables provide distributions of social and family factors reported in 1980 in the various groups defined according to 1952. It will be evident that there is a degree of repetition inherent in this exercise – but it is analogous to the classification of disorders in psychiatry whereby cardinal criteria are used to define a disorder and co-morbidity is thereafter established by empirical research. In addition, a distribution of such factors is provided in groups defined

according to formation.

In the second and out of the family of formation origin, then generation as the household deprivation in close links in the distribution formation should found considered grouping.

Tables 4.1 and women in families own parents memories of deprivation in 1979

Only half of children had thirds of those case of men, however, the survivors live nearer their and contact with reduced mobility

The women Spots and spouses too ill to care for the care given arguments between groups. A similar data have not the evidence of fathers in the non-deprived, classificatory system

Table 4.2 gives adults living in multiply deprived with their siblings

according to the severity of deprivation in their families of formation.

In the second generation there are inevitably shifts both in and out of deprivation (see Part IV). If deprivation in the family of formation were unrelated to that in the family of origin, then the social and family data in the second generation as adults would be randomly distributed when the households are defined according to the degree of deprivation in the family of origin. If there are relatively close links in deprivation between the two generations, then the distributions of social and family data in the family of formation should reflect the original grouping. In fact, we found considerable excesses according to the original grouping.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 record the recollections of the men and women in families of formation (1979-80) regarding their own parents and homes. The differences between the memories of families in the different categories of deprivation in 1979-80 can be seen.

Only half of those women who were multiply deprived as children had both parents still alive in 1980 as against two-thirds of those who were not deprived (Table 4.1). In the case of men, these differences are not so substantial. However, the surviving parents of the multiply deprived tended to live nearer their families than did those of the non-deprived, and contact was more regular. This is likely to reflect the reduced mobility of multiply deprived families.

The women in the multiply deprived group (both Red Spots and spouses) reported an excess of parents too busy or too ill to care for them during childhood and, when they did, the care given tended to be poor. They also reported more arguments between their parents than did those from other groups. A similar picture was obtained from the men, and the data have not been presented. Of considerable importance is the evidence of lower occupational status of the respondents' fathers in the multiply deprived group, as compared to the non-deprived, coded according to the Registrar General's classificatory system.

Table 4.2 gives current data. A higher proportion of the adults living in deprivation as compared to those living in multiply deprived circumstances claimed good relationships with their siblings. However, while the differences between

*Table 4.1 Family of formation – 1979–80
Recollections from Red Spots regarding parents*

	Non-Deprived Group 1952		Deprived Group 1952		Multiply Deprived Group 1952	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Women's Report						
1. Both parents alive 1979–80	37	66	96	61	30	47
2. Parents together	33	59	71	49	23	40
3. Parents live locally	24	43	98	67	46	79
4. Mother too busy or ill to care for daughter during childhood	14	25	54	35	29	46
5. Poor care by mother	4	7	11	7	12	19
6. Poor care by father	5	9	18	13	11	20
7. Parental arguments	11	20	40	28	24	39
B. Men's Report						
1. Both parents alive 1979–80	31	55	74	52	28	46
2. Parents together	25	47	58	42	23	40
C. Men and Women: Memory of Fathers' Occupational Class During 1958–62						
I + II		16		3		1
III		58		50		43
IV + V		25		43		49
Unclassified		1		3		7
Total 'n'	53–56		132–157		50–62	

*Table 4.2 Families of formation 1979–80
Women – current social and family data*

Present Circumstances	Non-Deprived Group (1952)		Deprived Group (1952)		Multiply Deprived Group (1952)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Frequent contact with siblings (at least fort- nightly)	19/51	37	82/141	58**	33/60	55**
2. Good relations with siblings	46/51	90	117/141	83	44/60	73*
3. Less than 3 years full- time employment since leaving school (cumulative)	2/57	4	27/157	17	18/64	28*
4. Supplementary benefit	4/57	7	25/157	16*	21/64	33**
5. Without training and un- willing to undertake training	18/33	55	82/122	67	41/65	63*
6. Society unfair to you	5/57	9	32/157	20*	17/64	27*
7. Authorities do enough for the poor	30/70	43	61/157	39	16/64	25

*p < .05

**p < .01

the gro
reporte

Secor
were as
ing in
deprive

take fur
We al
cumulat
and fou
backgro

multiply
time en
deprive
more of
that soci

When th
vation,
benefit
early life

Informat

and conc

Table 4.

health p

Little di

classified

some su

were clas

1980, in

between

cent.

Howev

to illness

illnesses

cerned al

spouses v

comparec

suspect t

was a ge

interview

Again,

the groups are significant, only a minority of all families reported poor relationships between siblings.

Second-generation women without vocational training were asked whether they intended to undertake any training in the future; a greater proportion of those from a deprived childhood background were not willing to undertake further training (Table 4.2).

We also asked who had been employed full-time for a cumulative total of less than three years since leaving school and found that only 4 per cent of those from non-deprived background had been so employed against 28 per cent of the multiply deprived — also more of the latter had been in part-time employment. Further, more families from multiply deprived backgrounds were on supplementary benefit and more of the women from multiply deprived families thought that society was unfair and did not do enough for the poor. When the families are reorganized according to current deprivation, the distribution showing receipt of supplementary benefit broadly resembles that already listed in relation to early life deprivation. This was a common finding.

Information about health and other worries and concerns of second-generation women

Table 4.3 records some of the physical and psychological health problems of the second-generation females as adults. Little differences were apparent when the families were classified according to early life family deprivation, but some substantial differences emerged when the families were classified according to family deprivation in 1980. In 1980, in terms of chronic physical problems, the difference between non-deprived and multiply deprived was 52 per cent.

However, these wide differences were true only in relation to illness that mothers reported about themselves rather than illnesses they reported in their spouses. One exception concerned alcohol problems that women reported in their male spouses where the rate is zero in the non-deprived group as compared to one in five in the multiply deprived group. We suspect that this underestimates the real situation as there was a general reluctance to talk about drink during the interviews.

Again, as occurred in the Red Spots as children, the

54 *Continuities of Deprivation?*

children from multiply deprived families of formation were twice as prone to accidents requiring treatment than the children of the non-deprived. Such an excess of accidents probably reflects more dangerous environmental circumstances as well as poorer care. It is interesting to note that, when the families are reorganized according to deprivation in 1952 in the family of origin, the pattern of percentages of accidents in the third-generation under fives is similar – that is, 26, 35 and 58 per cent respectively.

Table 4.3 Families of formation: physical and psychological health of women

	Non-Deprived Group (1979-80)		Deprived Group (1979-80)		Multiply Deprived Group (1979-80)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Chronic or Recurring Health Problems in Last 5 Years						
1. Amount	0/70	0	58/182	32	29/60	48
2. Type of problems						
Physical	0/70	0	45/182	25	31/60	52
Psychiatric	0/70	0	10/182	5	20/60	33
B. No Hospital Treatment in Previous Year	52/70	74	117/182	64	35/60	58
C. Reported Illness: Male Spouse						
1. Male partners drink problems	0/43	0	9/82	11	6/27	22
2. Nature of illness						
Physical	6/67	9	28/160	18	12/50	24
Psychiatric	1/67	1	4/160	3	1/50	2
Both	0/67	0	3/160	2	2/50	4
D. Third-Generation Children Treated for Accidents in First Five Years	7/28	25	25/67	37	12/23	52

Social and family factors in 1979-80

In 1980 the wife or cohabitee (girlfriend) in multiply deprived families was about two years younger than in the non-deprived. The men were about five years older than their partners but less than two years older in the non-deprived group.

In more each other proportion deprived gra were living similar gra irritable wit disharmony

These gra families in 1 are reorgan origin in 1 deprived, d steep. For i each other : cent respect are 17, 25 ar

In 1980 t partly a refl partly due t their circum:

Table 4.4 the previous in the non-d greater in re vation in 19 in the numb school – usi deprived had compared to the multiply were 12, 31 a

It was clea multiply depi those of the be more freq the non-depri as with wome deprivation th poor and w significant on definitions of

In more than half of the families the partners had known each other for more than two years before marriage but the proportion was higher in the non-deprived than in the deprived group; more spouses in the multiply deprived group were living apart than in the non-deprived. There was a similar gradient in the rate with which couples became irritable with each other, reflecting the higher rates of marital disharmony in the multiply deprived group.

These gradients of percentages or rates of characteristics in families in 1980 are again remarkably similar when the families are reorganized according to deprivation in the family of origin in 1952, but the discrepancy between the non-deprived, deprived and multiply deprived groups is not so steep. For instance, the percentages of partners who knew each other for more than two years are 81, 59 and 58 per cent respectively, and irritability of couples with each other are 17, 25 and 37 per cent respectively.

In 1980 the home situation in any family appeared to be partly a reflection of conditions in the family of origin and partly due to the personal characteristics of the couple and their circumstances.

Table 4.4 shows that male unemployment was greater in the previous five years in the multiply deprived families than in the non-deprived, the difference between groups being far greater in relation to groupings of families based on deprivation in 1980 than in 1952. Second, there was a difference in the number of jobs an individual had held since leaving school — using the 1952 groupings, 16 per cent of the non-deprived had had nine or more posts since leaving school as compared to 29 per cent of the deprived and 36 per cent of the multiply deprived; but using the 1980 groupings the rates were 12, 31 and 51 per cent respectively.

It was clear that, just as with women, the parents of the multiply deprived men were more likely to live locally than those of the non-deprived. Contact with siblings appeared to be more frequent in the case of the multiply deprived than the non-deprived, probably because of their proximity. Just as with women, more of the men from families with multiple deprivation thought that society did not do enough for the poor and was unfair to them but the differences are significant only when the data is distributed according to definitions of family deprivation based on 1980 rather than

1952 criteria. Even so, the rate in the multiply deprived was a mere 27 per cent, suggesting either a relatively poor appreciation of social and economic differences or a remarkable generosity of attitude in the face of wide inequalities in society.

*Table 4.4 Family of formation 1979-80
Social and family factors*

	Non-Deprived Group (1979-80)		Deprived Group (1979-80)		Multiply Deprived Group (1979-80)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Females						
Age of female partner when first married or cohabited	21.4 yrs		20.2 yrs		19.5 yrs	
Age of male partner when first married or cohabited	22.8 yrs		23.9 yrs		24.5 yrs	
Partners knew each other more than 2 years prior to current marriage/cohabitation	48/67	72	104/168	62*	31/53	58*
Either partner married before	0/74	0	52/180	29	24/59	41**
Couple get irritable with each other once a week or more	5/67	7	47/157	30	25/50	50
B. Males						
Employment in previous 5 years	Non-Deprived		Deprived		Multiply Deprived	
Mean length of time unemployed	0.9 months		9.1 months		14.6 months	
Family						
Contact with siblings at least fortnightly	24/63	38	83/149	56	28/48	58
Society						
Society unfair to you	4/72	6	27/163	17	14/51	27
C. Unemployment in 1980 According to 1952 Criteria						
Male unemployment previous 5 years: mean length of time unemployed	3.6 months		6.2 months		11.7 months	

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table
reflect
pattern
in the
similar
mobilit
and wo
so in th

Table 4

A. Items c
Marital
Family
Three c
Family
No edu
of v
No edu
of r

B. Criteria
Marital
Parent
Poor ca
Social c
Poor m
Educati

Total r
Percentage

Marital

Data
of depri
tributor
accordin
marital c
deprived
defining

Table 4.5 shows other individual items or features which reflect deprivation in 1980. They demonstrate expected patterns — for instance, marital quarrels were more common in the multiply deprived than the non-deprived. We see similar differences in respect of family size and family mobility. On the item 'no educational achievements of men and women' the rates were high in all groups but particularly so in the multiply deprived.

Table 4.5 Families of formation: some items of deprivation 1980

	Non-Deprived Group 1980		Deprived Group 1980		Multiply Deprived Group 1980	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
A. Items of Deprivation						
Marital rows	0	00	27	17	18	36
Family mobility	19	21	47	25	17	28
Three or more children	9	13	56	32	33	56
Family size: current family	1.9		2.3		2.7	
No educational achievement of women	24	34	142	78	55	92
No educational achievement of men	33	46	126	77	47	92
B. Criteria of Deprivation						
Marital disruption	0	0	71	40	36	62
Parent illness (mother)	0	0	58	32	29	48
Poor care and cleanliness	0	0	41	22	29	48
Social dependence	0	0	63	33	44	73
Poor mothering	0	0	48	27	35	58
Educational handicap	0	0	119	63	51	85
Total 'n'	67-75		164-189		50-60	
Percentages only						
	Non-Deprived Group 1952		Deprived Group 1952		Multiply Deprived Group 1952	
Marital disruption	21		31		44	

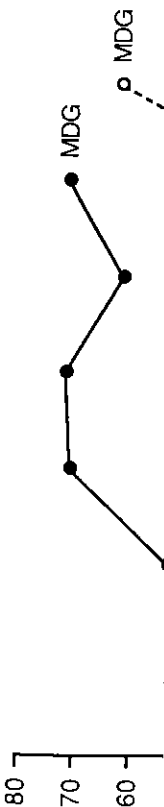
Data are also given relating to the frequency of the criteria of deprivation in 1980 and reveal a similar frequency distribution to other variables. When the families were classified according to earlier deprivation in the family of origin, marital disruption rates ran between 21 per cent in the non-deprived and 44 per cent in the multiply deprived; when defining family deprivation using the 1980 criteria, they run

from nil to over 60 per cent. Similar patterns occurred in the other five criteria. Thus the differences are always greater between non-deprived and multiply deprived families when the defining criteria relate to the family of formation rather than the family of origin.

Figure 4.1 gives the prevalence of the indices of deprivation in the families in 1952 and 1980. The percentages of each of the criteria were estimated in 1980 in relation to the self-same groups. It must be emphasized that the 1952 data were based on the total population; the 1980 curves are that self-same population and are based on estimates for that population. We have tried to ensure that the defined deprivations were broadly comparable, although in some (such as illness) this was less so than in others. It will be noted that, while there is a marked convergence of the curves, the convergence is not even.

Nevertheless, these constitute important life cycle changes. Some might consider them merely a manifestation of a regression to the mean, but this is too simple an explanation. We see considerable divergence of the curves in relation to marital disruption, dependence on social welfare and poor mothering. The most dramatic changes occur in our two extreme groups: the group which is defined as non-deprived in the first generation shows evidence of some disadvantage in the second generation, notably in the areas of marital disruption and parental illness; the multiply deprived group, by contrast, shows considerable reduction in the areas of overcrowding and poor care. However, in marital disruption, poor mothering and social dependence, the multiply deprived still show considerable differences from the non-deprived group. Finally, the high rates of educational insufficiency must have a basis in factors associated with deprivation in family of origin.

The interpretation of these findings is essentially dependent on the methodology of the longitudinal design. Over the last three decades there have been both changes in living conditions and changes in standards. The life cycle changes described above, represented by a reduction in the incidence of all types of disadvantage, probably reflect a real change in social circumstances. This was the time of the economic expansion from 1950-65 (when the Prime Minister of the day, Harold Macmillan, was reminding the British electorate that



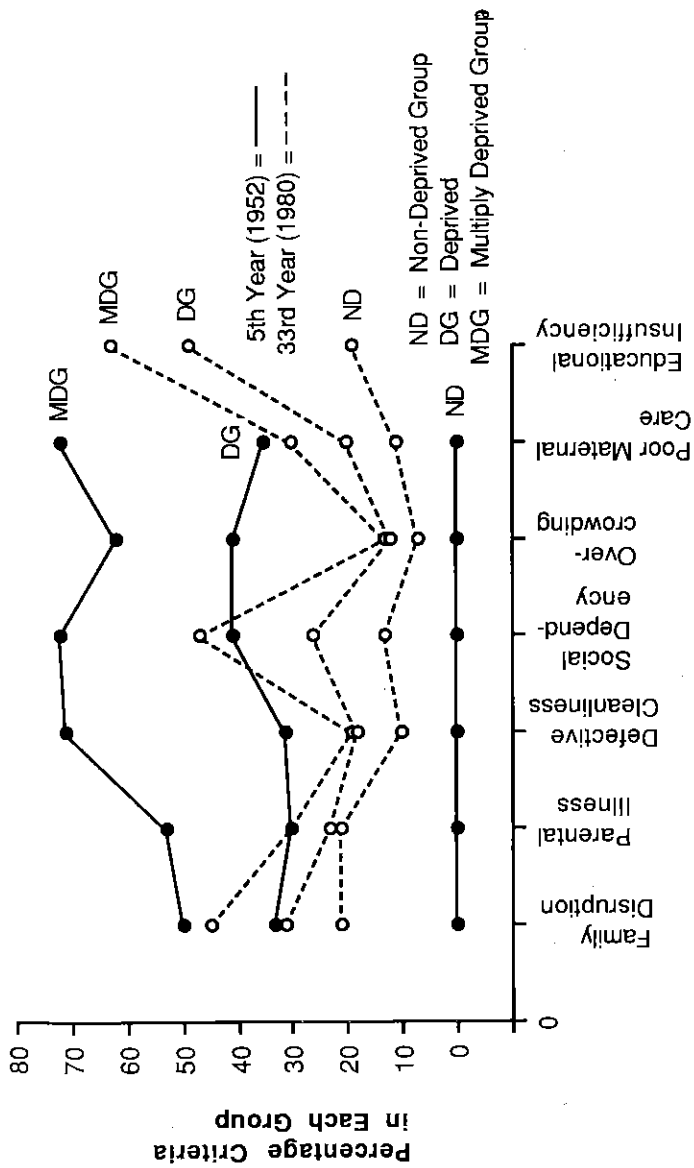


Figure 4.1 Profile of criteria of deprivation in the study groups in 1947 and 1979-80 at the 5th year (Generation I) and 33rd year (Generation II)

they had 'never had it so good'). The assessment of disadvantage in the second generation was undertaken during a harsh economic era of financial inflation and recession, and we think that the rate of social dependency reflects the social circumstances of the time. In times of economic recession families who were previously the most disadvantaged will prove to be the most vulnerable. Lower rates of overcrowding reflect not only differences of definition but real and considerable improvement in housing circumstances in post-war Newcastle to 1980. Finally, the high rates of marital disruption are likely to represent a real phenomenon of modern times.

Recent life events

While there have been extensive studies of the impact of recent life events on adult disorders (Holmes and Rahe, 1967) particularly in relation to depression (Brown and Harris, 1978; Paykel, 1974), research into the impact on child development and child disorder is less well advanced. The adult research, together with the early methodological papers of Coddington (1972) and Gersten *et al.* (1974), provided a groundwork for applications to children by Monaghan *et al.* (1979) and Goodyer *et al.* (1985).

A variety of conditions have now been studied: asthma (Zlatich *et al.*, 1982); adolescent pregnancies (Coddington *et al.*, 1979); behaviour problems in pre-school children (Earls, 1980). Correlations have been reported between negative life events and adolescent pregnancies, and also between marital stress and behaviour problems in pre-school children. Some workers have looked specifically at children attending child psychiatric clinics and have found clear-cut causal relationships with adolescent psychiatric disorder as compared to controls (Vincent and Rosenstock, 1979); others report variable associations (Goodyer *et al.*, 1985) or merely limited associations (Steinhausen and Radtke, 1986) or none at all (Steinhausen, 1983). Steinhausen and his colleagues explored the value of differentially weighting the life events rather than merely giving equal weight to each event, but concluded this was not a fruitful exercise. They did, however, demonstrate that distant, rather than recent, undesirable life events seemed to be more predictive of psychiatric disorder, and in this respect pointed to the effect

of lack of fa
lack of stimula

In contrast,
recent stressfu
period increas
between three

Any work
desirable and
and those with
of vulnerable i
stresses but, c
clusion that
mostly confin
1974; Tennan
child marryi
psychiatric di
a child); sim
individual (su
events within
1974). Brown
events with a
psychiatric dis

Our object
adverse life e
(Coffield *et a
deprived fami
logical vulner
undesirable c
wished to ex
origin and in
of formation.
Recent Life
developed sp
children and
within those
the point of
cerned to stu
groups rather
and specific d
presumed imp*

The Recen
standard que

of lack of family warmth, inconsistency of control and lack of stimulation.

In contrast, research in Newcastle has demonstrated that recent stressful life events occurring over a twelve-month period increased the relative risk of psychiatric disorder by between three to six times (Goodyer *et al.*, 1985, 1986).

Any work in this area needs to consider the impact of desirable and undesirable events, entrance and exit events and those with variable degrees of threat. In a small number of vulnerable individuals, even pleasant events may constitute stresses but, on balance, recent research has led to the conclusion that the association with psychiatric disorder is mostly confined to unpleasant events (Rutter, 1981a; Paykel, 1974; Tennant and Andrews, 1978). Exit events (such as a child marrying) were more strongly associated with psychiatric disorder than entrance events (such as birth of a child); similarly with events beyond the control of an individual (such as serious family illness) as compared with events within his control (such as an engagement) (Paykel, 1974). Brown and Harris (1978) also report that it is only events with a long-term threat which appear to predispose to psychiatric disorder.

Our object was to investigate the hypothesis that recent adverse life events are more common in deprived families (Coffield *et al.*, 1981). More specifically, we expected that deprived families, because of their greater social and psychological vulnerability, would be prone to an accumulation of undesirable experiences throughout their lifetimes. We wished to explore this vulnerability both in the family of origin and in relation to current deprivation in the family of formation. For these purposes we adapted Coddington's Recent Life Event Schedule (1972) which had been developed specifically for use in relation to families with children and focuses on any undesirable events occurring within those families. We then examined these events from the point of view of the eldest child. Since we were concerned to study the impact of adverse life experiences in groups rather than the relationship between specific events and specific disorders, we did not grade the severity of their presumed impact on individuals or families.

The Recent Life Events Schedule was a semi-structured standard questionnaire submitted by the social interviewer

during the home interview. The interviewers concerned themselves only with those life events occurring in the twelve months prior to the interview. Before commencing the questions they gave the family a standard explanatory introduction. For this purpose, the term 'family' included all forms of household unit listed on p. 50. For the questions relating to children, the eldest child in each family was treated as the index person and all the other children in the family were viewed as siblings. Thirteen categories of events were considered to cover the major life events likely to occur within a family in the span of a year, some of which are listed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 *Recent life events in family of formation*

A. Groups Defined According to Deprivation in Family of Origin						
	Non-Deprived Group		Deprived Group		Multiply Deprived Group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Family illness	12	19.7	48	29.6	25	36.8*
Mean total score	2.31		2.67**		3.09***	
Standard deviation	2.01		2.01		2.50	
Total 'n'	61		162		68	
B. Groups Defined According to Deprivation in Family of Formation						
Distribution of some events	Non-Deprived Group		Deprived Group		Multiply Deprived Group	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Family illness (includes children)	13	17.3	66	34.9**	28	46.7**
Family accidents	14	18.7	42	22.2	20	33.3*
Increase in family arguments/tension	18	24.0	59	31.2	23	38.3*
Problems of progress at school	3	4.0	22	11.6*	11	18.3**
Adult difficulties with the law	3	4.0	10	5.3	8	13.3*
Financial deterioration	3	4.0	20	10.6	9	15.0*
Total score (2 +)	44	58.7	139	73.5*	49	81.7**
Mean total score	2.13		2.83***		3.73***	
Standard deviation	1.72		2.12		2.72	
Total 'n'	75		189		60	

Note: Significant difference from the NDG: all one-tailed test.

All one-tailed: *p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .01 (test)

Relationship of and recent life
Table 4.6 shows the three criteria occurred only the multiply c and therefore comparing the sum for each of the exist between multiply depr average, both adverse life ev

The familie vation in the from both de desirable rece children show the multiply c family accide with the law a deprived famil one-tailed test not necessaril and exit event events. When there are very and both of similar to the that the differ when the gr deprivation ci

Inevitably s recent life ev criteria used t and question circularity of excess of un in families wh

*Relationship of deprivation in the family of origin
and recent life events in family of formation*

Table 4.6 shows that the only significant difference between the three criterion groups was in family illness, and that occurred only in the multiply deprived. However, on average, the multiply deprived had more children than the deprived, and therefore more opportunities for family illness. Comparing the summed scores of undesirable recent life events for each of the three groups shows that significant differences exist between the non-deprived and the deprived and also the multiply deprived groups. Thus it would appear that on average, both deprived groups experienced significantly more adverse life events than the non-deprived.

The families were then reclassified according to deprivation in the family of formation, and significantly more from both deprived groups experienced a wide range of undesirable recent life events — more family illness and more children showing problems in progress at school. In addition, the multiply deprived families experienced significantly more family accidents, arguments or tensions, adult difficulties with the law and deterioration in finances than did the non-deprived families. Because significance levels were based on a one-tailed test, the magnitude of significant differences was not necessarily great. No differences occurred on entrance and exit events, family and school mobility, and employment events. When the undesirable recent life events are summed there are very significant differences between non-deprived and both of the deprived groups. This overall pattern is similar to the picture with the previous classification, except that the differences between the criterion groups are greater when the groups are defined according to their current deprivation circumstances.

Inevitably some of the items which constitute undesirable recent life events may also be indirectly represented in the criteria used to define deprivation in the family of formation, and questions therefore arise regarding the extent of circularity of this data. But, even so, there remained an excess of undesirable experiences during the previous year in families who are currently categorized as deprived.