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SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND PARENTAL PERFORMANCES:
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN
FEMALE SINGLE PARENTS

DISSERTATION

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By

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This is a descriptive study of the statistical association between the amounts of financial-emotional supports available and their impact on the degree of difficulty in the performance of the parental roles of a nonrandom sample of eighty-six Mexican-American female single parents from McAllen, Texas. The sample was divided into four socioeconomic status categories.

A total of twenty-nine variables were correlated: twenty independent, financial-emotional and nine dependent parental performance variables. The twenty variables were defined in terms of socioeconomic resources: child-care availability and satisfaction, nature of personal/children problems, and frequency of interaction with significant others defined emotional supports. Parental role performances were defined in terms of having children with medical, learning or emotional problems, and the degree of difficulty in caring for sick children, spending time with them, yelling and screaming, use of corporal punishment and feeling overwhelmed by parental demands.

Analyses indicated that these families functioned in a

stable and viable manner, with little evidence of disintegration or "pathology." The parents had extensive social networks comprised of kin, coworkers, and friends, and they interacted with these support people on a regular basis, usually several times per week, but at the same time the parents rarely interacted with the ex-husbands or ex-in-laws. The majority of ex-husbands had never made any support payments and rarely saw their children.

The single parents did not evidence unmanageable problems in caring for their children, or in asserting control and authority over them. Corporal punishment, yelling and screaming, and other discipline problems were minimal issues, and were not more severe or serious than before the divorce. The mothers were satisfied with the available child-care and the general growth of their children, but felt they continuously carried a tremendous burden, and all indications are that, even with sources of different kinds and levels of support. Finally, a number of recommendations were made for further research hypotheses, issues, and public policy formulations.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

This study explores financial and emotional support available to Mexican-American female single parents and their children, and the performance of the parental role. The parental role of the single parent is influenced by the adequacy of available financial and emotional support. It is expected that the more adequate the levels of support the lower the probability that the parents will feel overwhelmed, isolated and depressed. Lower levels of support will result in detrimental effects on the parents' ability to care for and satisfy the emotional needs of their children. As the levels of support become more adequate, it is expected that the parents will be able to better care for their children and parental authority and child care will be more satisfactory. In this study the strength of the relationship between support and parental performance will be studied. The goals of the study are as follows:

- (1) To describe and analyze the statistical association between social support and parental performance of child-care tasks based upon a preliminary, descriptive study of a nonrandom sample of Mexican-American female

single parents.

- (2) To assess the degree to which the results may be influenced by the ethnicity or geographical area of single parents when compared with results from studies of Mexican-American female single parents from other areas of the United States (New Mexico, California), or of studies of black and white female single parents;
- (3) To partially replicate work in the two available studies of Mexican-American female single parents (1,2), with modifications of the questions and the use of a composite questionnaire derived from a number of sources;
- (4) To describe and statistically analyze data of the sources, kinds, and amounts of financial support as aspects of support for the parents and their children (see Questionnaire) in terms of
 - a. employment/unemployment,
 - b. occupation,
 - c. family income,
 - d. child-support payments,
 - e. level of completed education, and
 - f. number of times in the past twelve months that an ex-husband has missed child-support payments;
- (5) To describe and analyze data of the sources and kinds of emotional support as aspects of support for Mexican-American female single parents and their children including

- a. severity of personal problems,
 - b. child-care availability, and
 - c. child-care satisfaction;
- (6) To describe and analyze data of the nature of the performance of the parental role, specifically child-rearing tasks and problems including
- a. medical, learning, and emotional problems of the children,
 - b. and the degree of difficulty in meeting eight child-rearing tasks;
- (7) To analyze data of the degree to which maternal roles differ with socioeconomic status (four categories) of Mexican-American female single parents; and
- (8) To posit a number of hypotheses that focus on areas for further research, issues and topics based on the results of this limited, descriptive study.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social Support Systems and Parental Role Performance

In the following review of the sociological literature of female single parents, their support systems and parental roles, an overview is presented of several issues that make up the content of the three empirical areas of this study: financial and emotional support, and the parental role performance. In the last section of this review the specific research findings of studies that focus on Mexican-American female single parents are discussed briefly.

The review is organized in such a manner that the relevant issues are as follows: financial support, emotional support, and parental roles. Financial support is discussed in terms of the research literature that focuses on female single parents and the following topics: (1) employment status of the single mothers, (2) educational achievement and implications for (3) income, and (4) occupational status. These variables are interrelated and influence one another. Poverty and child-support issues are briefly discussed as they impact single mothers' financial and emotional support, as well as their effects on the role performances of the single mothers. The discussion of emotional support and parental role performance overlap, and an effort has been

made to show a general pattern of consequences for these mothers based on their support systems and their relationships with their children.

The number of single parent families in the United States has increased sharply in the 1980's. In 1984 single parent families accounted for over one-fourth (twenty-six percent) of all families in the United States (46). In that year, there were over 8.5 million single parent families, of which ninety percent were headed by women (21). The proportion of all single parent families headed by women has remained relatively constant since the 1960's, and although the number of male single parents with children under eighteen years of age has tripled since 1970, male single parents account for only three percent of all single parent families in the United States (36, 45).

The majority of female single parents are divorced, have never been married, or are separated or abandoned. Over eighty percent of all female single parents fall in these four categories (46). It has been estimated that as many as seven out of ten children born in 1980 will live in a single parent family before they are eighteen, almost all of them with their mothers (46). The single parent experience very frequently is characterized by high rates of participation in the labor force, constant juggling of multiple responsibilities of job and family, and often a lack of adequate emotional and financial support (8).

This is an experience, apparently, that more and more women will encounter, as the number of female single parent families is expected to increase through 1990, by approximately one-third (18).

A crucial aspect of the growing number of female single parents and their children is the issue of sources of financial support for these families. Women who depend on child-support may be less able to exercise control over their lives and provide adequately for their children. The source, amount, and stability of income will affect their sense of control over their lives (3). Because child-support payments are sometimes part of the total financial support available to the female single parents, dependence on support payments interferes with their ability to function effectively in an autonomous manner (3).

Child-support payments may grant the ex-husband the de facto right to pry into the affairs of the family (14, 20). Child-support is an emotionally charged issue that represents a lingering tie between parents who are trying to end their relationship. The issue of support money may be a symbol of pain, revenge, control, or dependency, perhaps some of the factors that led to the termination of the relationship in the first place (34).

Moreover, the high rates of default in child-support payments are indications of serious potential problems. A substantial number of non-custodial fathers default at some

point in their agreement to provide support (34). Some never make payments, some miss periodically, and some pay what they are supposed to pay. There is a pattern that indicates there is little relationship between default rates and either the fathers' occupations or incomes. Non-custodial fathers not substantially complying with support orders or agreements are not distinguished by different levels of income or occupational statuses (13, 46).

In 1983, the most recent year for which statistics are available, half of the men who were supposed to pay support paid in full, a fourth made some payment, and another fourth paid nothing at all. In 1983, the unpaid child-support bill nationwide was three billion dollars (48). Of women who did receive child-support payments in 1983, the average monthly payment was approximately \$195. Indeed, when one includes female single parents who have never been married, four out ten mothers in 1983 had no support agreement at all (46).

The receipt of child-support payments apparently varies with ethnicity (43). As of the spring of 1982, approximately sixty percent of all female single parents in the United States (five million) had been awarded child-support payments (45). However, this percentage is a national average; seven out of ten white mothers, but only one-third of black mothers, and four out of ten Hispanic single mothers, had received support agreements in 1982. Non-white female single parents

are not only less likely to be awarded child-support payments, but they are also much more likely to be poor (43).

In 1982, poor female single parents were awarded child-support payments in only forty percent of the cases; of these, only sixty percent received some payment, with the average amount received by poor female single parents being approximately \$120 per month (34). The female single parents who are most needy are the ones least likely to have been awarded support payments; if they were awarded payments, they received a very small amount on the average. When inflation is taken into account, the purchasing power of child-support payments declined by approximately sixteen percent (in real terms) between 1978 and 1981 (45).

In 1984, Congress amended the Social Security Act to strengthen child-support enforcement in the states. New guidelines mandated enforcement coverage for all children (not just AFDC recipients), and provided federal incentive payments to the states for all cases. The states were required to (1) expedite procedures for support orders in the judicial system, (2) establish child-support guidelines for judges and other officials by October 1, 1987, and (3) adopt automatic wage withholding after one month of nonpayment (found to be the most effective means of collection) (15).

These changes in policy were meant to remedy three persistent failures of the support system: (1) high failure

rates in obtaining support orders from courts; (2) the very small sums awarded when support orders are obtained; and (3) the failure to collect payment even though the payor was delinquent (32). Should a marriage fail, women with children, regardless of their previous economic circumstances are usually poorer. Changes in family composition, e.g., the absence of a father, greatly increase the number of families below the poverty line (46). Marital disruptions significantly increase white women's chances of becoming poor, and virtually determine them for black female single parents. Non-custodial fathers generally increase the level of real income after a divorce, separation or abandonment; even when their income declines, it is still less than half of what the female single parents will lose in financial support (24). Given the high probability of a downward economic spiral for most female single parents, it is not surprising that some kinds of economic support often must come from external sources, e.g., public assistance in the form of cash transfers (Aid to Dependent Children, hereafter referred to as AFDC) or non-cash transfers (food stamps, Medicaid, subsidized housing). Between 1951 and 1981 the number of poor black female single parents who received AFDC more than doubled, while the number of poor white, female single parents increased by one-fourth (49).

While child-support and public assistance payments may

be unreliable or inadequate or both, participation in the labor force may make income a more stable source of support. By 1980, six out of ten black and white female single parents, and four out of ten Hispanic single parents, were working outside the home (47). In general, sixty percent of all married women with school-age children participated in the labor force, but eight out of ten female single parents with children in school were in the labor force (8).

Most women support their families by working outside the home, not by child-support payments or public assistance alone. These parents are often the sole providers for their children, and while joining the work force does provide a stable income, unfortunately, most full-time female single parents are concentrated in gender-segregated occupations. Most women work in occupations traditionally dominated (in terms of numbers) by females, and have little promotion potential; consequently, approximately a fourth of all black, white, and Hispanic female workers are overeducated for their positions (43). Approximately one-half of all white, black, and Hispanic women are underemployed, one consequence of being overeducated (12).

Women comprised almost two-thirds of the increase in employment between 1972 and 1982; the occupations that experienced the greatest growth were occupations with low wages, few benefits, poor working conditions, high labor turnover, little chance for advancement and promotion, and

often, capricious supervision (11). Approximately a fifth of all black and white and Hispanic women are employed in relatively low-paying jobs which require less than three months of training. Not surprisingly, approximately forty percent of white, black, and Hispanic women are concentrated in clerical jobs, with Hispanic women being especially underrepresented among professional, technical, and kindred workers. Hispanic women, however, are overrepresented among operatives, where they comprise a fifth of all employed Hispanic women, compared with ten percent for white and black women (40, 47).

It is apparent that although participation in the labor force may ensure a more stable source of income, the concentration of women in large numbers of gender-segregated, low-status, low-income "women's jobs" has a detrimental effect on their economic support systems. Female single parents may work full-time the entire year and still be near-poor or poor (28). Of female single parent families where the mother does not participate in the labor force, over half are poor; approximately twenty percent are poor if they only work part-time, and ten percent are poor if she works full-time (8). Employment and income will not raise these types of families very far above the poverty line; most will still be near-poor.

In 1980 the median income for working single mothers was \$12,000 for white and \$9,000 for black mothers. For

non-working white mothers the median income was \$5,000 and for black mothers it was \$4,000 (8). By 1980 full-time work at the minimum wage was (\$6,540) was under the poverty level of \$6,570, the poverty cut-off point for a family of three in the United States that year. In 1980 thirteen percent of all women (but only 4.5 percent of all working men) earned less than \$7,000 annually. While ninety percent of all full-time male workers earned over \$10,000 that year, only fifty percent of all full-time working women earned that much (12), and only ten percent of all full-time working women earned over \$20,000 annually (43).

While the economic status of women is dismal in general, black and Hispanic women are the most disadvantaged, especially in the Southwest, where eighty-five percent of all Mexican-Americans in the United States live. Generally, Hispanic women earned one-half the median income of white men, while black and white women earned fifty-four and sixty percent, respectively (47). In the Southwest the proportion of female Mexican-American median income to white male median income was follows: Colorado, forty-nine percent (i.e., female Mexican-American median income is forty-nine percent of white median income); Arizona, forty-seven percent; New Mexico, forty-four percent; and Texas, forty-four percent. These median incomes are lower than the median incomes of black and white women, and of Mexican-American males. Mexican-American women, as a social category, have

a relatively low level of education achievement compared with white or black women in the Southwest. Approximately forty-nine percent of all Mexican-American women have eight years or less of education (comparable figures for white and black women are ten and nineteen percent, respectively), and twenty percent have a high school diploma (compared with seven percent for whites and thirty-one percent for black females). Only three-and-a-half percent of all Mexican-American women have four years of college or more (compared with seventeen percent for white and ten percent for black women) (45).

A second and related major dimension of support available to the single mother is emotional support, especially in her relationships with her children. Financial support is rather straightforward and clear in its conception and meaning, but emotional support is not. As used here, emotional support refers to primary relationships through which individuals try to protect the ego from the negative effects of stressful circumstances (31). Emotional support implies resources gained through social relationships with other people. It is the assurance that the person is cared for, loved, esteemed, valued, and part of a network of communication and intimacy; as used in this study, emotional support is also associated with the network that provides assurance for parenting (4, 9, 31, 50).

The relationship between emotional and financial

support to single parents in the performance of the parental roles has been recognized in the sociological literature (2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 39, 41, 51). The degree to which emotional supports and networks exist and operate to help single parents cope with the performance of their parental roles affects the development of the children (7). The sociological literature indicates that this interaction is patterned, and that the emotional support available to female single parents is important for the performance of the parental role.

Female single parents who cope adequately with the parenting role have a network of relatives and/or friends to turn to for help; if they do not, they seem to feel overwhelmed, depressed, and isolated in their efforts to keep their families together. The support available and the mothers' satisfaction with that support are significantly related to a number of childrearing practices, e.g., protectiveness, responsiveness to the children's demands, obedience standards and corporal punishment or spanking. Mothers dissatisfied with their personal relationships appear to have harsher and more restrictive relationships with their children (10). The mothers who are estranged from their relatives or friends and fail to receive support from them are more likely to experience stress which has deleterious effects on their ability to care for their children (16). The positive supports from other people

cannot be overemphasized when children are a twenty-four hour responsibility, because the children cannot provide support, especially emotional support, for the mothers. The mother-child(ren) relationship is not emotionally reciprocal; rather, the children's love is demanding of the mother rather than supportive. The female single parent not only has to fulfill overall family responsibilities, but she has little relief from her role (17). There are few, if any, "time outs" in this type of family.

It is not only the temporal and emotional pressures generated by the absence of her ex-husband after the end of the relationship that produce stress. The lack of emotional support has an impact on needs for intimacy and sexual gratification, since it restricts social and recreational activities, as well as contacts with male adults.

The quality of parental authority, child-care, and external support systems do undergo qualitative changes after the divorce (30). Mothers worry about "how to be both mother and father" to their children. Since most housework and child-care duties are seen by most people as women's responsibilities, relatives and friends may be more quick to provide help to fathers than to mothers (5).

It appears that the year following divorce is very crucial. Certain qualitative changes have to be made in a new modified, nuclear family headed by a mother. The first year seems to be the most disorganized; slow changes begin

to occur after the first year of divorce which may lead to more stable coping patterns for the family (26). Divorced mothers are more likely to assert more direct controls and impose parental will on their children than married mothers. In spite of these problems of overextended resources and everincreasing child-care needs, female divorced parents believe their actions promote the independence of their children (27).

The Mexican-American Female Single Parent Family

The number of empirical sociological studies that have analyzed the Mexican-American family have been, until recently, severely limited, not only in number, but in empirical support for the conclusions and generalizations which were made. According to Padilla (35), there were only seventeen articles on Hispanic families ("Hispanic" families includes more than just Mexican-American families) in the 1950's, fifty-seven articles in the 1960's, and over 150 articles in the 1970's. Although there has been a dramatic increase in interest in the study of the Mexican-American family, the conclusions offered and the inferential leaps made in the 1950's and 1960's, often based on nonexistent or questionable empirical support, generally presented stereotypical, pejorative, and racist generalizations of la familia (22, 25, 29, 37). These studies were of the Mexican-American two-parent, intact, parents-living-together with their children.

With the political and ideological shifts that occurred in the social sciences in the 1970's, a framework emerged which was more appreciative of the subtleties and nuances of Mexican-American family life (1, 19, 33, 42). This revisionist perspective led to a crucial analysis of existing Mexican-American family studies and a questioning of previous conclusions and the myths and stereotypes that had become the conventional wisdom. Unfortunately, these sympathetic and empathic studies also tended to present overly idealized and romanticized stereotypical images of Mexican-American families, largely without benefit of empirical data or support (38). The empirical data on the Mexican-American female single parent family are limited. The data on the sources, kinds, and amounts of support available to Mexican-American female single parents are not only limited, but are sometimes inconclusive. The impact of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender upon this particular type of single parent family has not been addressed.

The limited number of studies indicate that aspects of Mexican-American female single parents' lives show a number of patterns. The physical and social proximity of the barrrios (neighborhoods) offered both emotional and **economical resources** to single parents not usually available to or deemed desirable by black and white female single parents. These Mexican-Americans had larger kinfolk networks than

blacks. The majority of single mothers lived in the same neighborhood as their relatives (especially parents). Even when they did not live in the same barrio as their close kin, the great majority still lived in the same city. There were few mothers with no relatives in the city. A few (twenty percent) lived with other relatives as part of an extended family, but these mothers tended to be younger and their families tended to be smaller than those not being in an extended family. Mexican-American female single parents consistently rely on kin regardless of geographical accessibility, unlike white and black female single parents, who tended to rely much more on friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Even in areas with an unusually high proportion of potentially helpful female single parents (e.g., a "female ghetto" or public housing project), Mexican-American female single parents still turned to relatives.

Another pattern is that some sources of emotional and financial support are rarely utilized by Mexican-American female single parents. Where white and black women consistently rely on friends, Mexican-American parents do not; neither do they rely on neighbors or co-workers. There is little evidence that fictive kin (comadre, compadre) are utilized as sources of support (35). Public assistance is utilized only as a last resort. The high proportion of poor Mexican-Americans in the United States (approximately thirty percent of all Mexican-Americans in the United

States are classified as poor), indicates that many have no recourse but to utilize public assistance. Because of difficulties in establishing credit, commercial organizations are rarely used by Mexican-American female single parents; financial support is much more likely to come from relatives.

Resource specialization networks of social support appear to operate in the lives of the Mexican-American female single parents. They turn to their parents for direct services and financial aid in times of dire necessity (illness, money, child-care) as well as emotional support. In general, parents are the major sources of emotional support (35). Most of the Mexican-American female single parents cited one relative with whom they discussed their emotional problems, mostly someone of the same gender. For example, sisters are usually utilized for problems involving relationships with men. Sometimes the eldest brother of the single parent will enact the role of surrogate father for his sister's children (35).

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CHAPTER III

THE STUDY OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE SINGLE PARENTS

The Mexican-American family is increasingly important as an area of study. There are several reasons to focus on Mexican-American female single parents: (1) there are few empirical studies of this type of family; (2) the nature of the parental role has not been studied; (3) the limited number of studies available focus on poor and/or working-class parents only; (4) the nature of primary relationships and support networks appears to differ from other ethnic/racial groups; and (5) this type of family has been seen by some as deviant, and an obstacle to upward mobility for Mexican-Americans.

The number of studies that focus on the nature of life for Mexican-American female single parents is severely limited to apparently two specific articles (2, 18). Most of the studies of Mexican-American families have been of married couples, not single parents. The information available is minimal compared with either white or black female single parents. There has been little effort to build a body of empirical data of Mexican-American female single parents that might be used in generating further empirical studies and theory building.

While there are some data on emotional and financial

support systems of Mexican-American female single parents, there is little data on the nature of their parental role. This area has been addressed extensively for white and black female single parents, but not for Mexican-American parents. Thus far, it appears that the parental role of Mexican-American female single parents differs from black and white female single parents, and this difference is due to culture, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

The two studies available utilize relatively homogeneous samples of poor or working class women. The two studies use either a poverty-stricken and unemployed sample (18), or a predominantly working-class sample (12). Neither study utilizes more than one category of income. Mexican-American female single parents are not all unemployed and poor, nor are they all working class. Surely differences occur among these single parents.

There are apparently strong and persistent ethnic-cultural differences between Mexican-American female single parents and white/black family structures and values. The traditional Mexican-American extended family (the famous stereotypical family) has been seen to value extended familism. Is the single parent a reflection of that supposed general cultural ideal and practice? Research findings strongly suggest that the differences between Mexican-American female single parent families, black and white female single parents are explained, at least in part,

by different kinship and primary relationships. Mexican-American women often are seen as having ties with their families-of-origin and other relatives. These differences appear even when socioeconomic status is controlled.

Mexican-American families have been seen as a rather homogeneous socioeconomic group that favors and actually has a rather extended, local, kinship network, made up of many relatives living in close spatial proximity, whom they visit frequently, in the process exchanging mutual aid of many kinds, both emotional and financial (8, 10, 11, 16). These Mexican-American extended families often have been characterized as deviant from non-Mexican-American families and as obstacles to upward mobility in an urban-industrial society (3, 4, 11). Some social scientists such as Redfield (15) and Talcott Parsons (12, 13) saw the extended family as a hindrance to upward mobility, because of the constraints it placed on geographical mobility. In urbanized, technologically-sophisticated societies, the labor force requires mobility. Alvirez and Bean (1) concluded that acculturation, urbanization and upward mobility resulted in a decline of the extended Mexican-American family. Even more recent researchers have found a strong persistence of extended familism in spite of other changes in time (5, 6, 7, 14, 17). Keefe (6), in her study of degree of familism between Mexican-Americans and whites, concluded that there was greater sociability among Mexican-Americans. It is

important to see relatives regularly and to be with one another. Whites are more mobile and contact with kin may be more frequent by mail and telephone, but exchange of support remains important, especially between primary relatives (6, 7). Keefe's data (6) indicate whites value relatives as highly as do Mexican-Americans, but that the difference is that Mexican-Americans differ in the need for the physical and spatial proximity of relatives. There is strong evidence that, contrary to some views, such as those of Redfield (15) and Parsons (12, 13), families based on extended kinship do achieve upward mobility (9). Winch (19) found that strong familistic values (for Jews) contribute to upward mobility, in the face of anti-Semitism, racism, and prejudice, and finally, Keefe and Padilla (7) reached the conclusion that both socioeconomic status and upward mobility are positively correlated with the extended familism of Mexican-Americans. Keefe (6) also admonished that "social scientists must look to the structural characteristics of the larger system which promote inequalities between ethnic groups rather than blame the cultural traits of ethnic minorities for any differences in achievement."

This review of the literature suggests that the structure of the female parent Mexican-American family be examined clearly and systematically. The financial support and emotional needs of this type of family are necessary factors in

studying a family type of an increasing proportion of our population.

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CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The Sample and Its Limitations

For the purposes of this small, preliminary, descriptive study, a sample size of eighty-six Mexican-American female single parents was obtained from the McAllen, Texas, urban area. In this study a Mexican-American female single parent is a single parent who has maintained and headed her own household for at least a year, with one or more of her own single (unmarried) children under eighteen years of age living with her. The ex-husband does not reside in this household. The sample is heterogeneous, consisting of four broad sub-samples of Mexican-American female single parents. The four categories were "lower," "lower-middle," "upper-middle," and "upper," categories, as determined by Hollingshead's two-factor index of social position (5). The two occupational dimensions of the categories were based on the following criteria: the Mexican-American female single parents whose occupations were service workers, technical, sales, administrative, professional or managerial were designated as white-collar workers. The four educational dimensions of the four categories were based on the following criteria: Mexican-American female single parents whose education achievement was less than a high school diploma

were designated as being in the lower category; parents who were high school graduates were designated as lower-middle; and those who had attended or completed vocational-technical schools, junior or community college, or had attended college were designated as upper-middle respondents. Single parents who were college graduates from a four-year college, had done graduate work or received a graduate or professional degree were assigned to the upper category. The four categories that resulted were lower-blue-collar, lower-middle-white-collar, upper-middle-white-collar, and upper-white-collar. The primary reason for a heterogeneous sample of single parents is to address the question of intragroup and intergroup differences in the nature of support and parental roles. It is assumed that differences in socioeconomic status (here defined in terms of education and occupation) will be reflected by differences in emotional and financial support (see Purposes of the Study). This study differs from the other two available studies of Mexican-American female single parents, which were homogeneous in socioeconomic status.

The nonrandom sample consisted of eighty-six female single parents. Because the first year of divorce seems to be the most chaotic and disorganized, all the single mothers must have divorced no later than January 1, 1985. Among the lower category of Mexican-American female single parents, some parents were included in the sample if they had not

been formally divorced, but nonetheless seemed to function as ongoing female-headed households. Sometimes, because of money, language-barriers, socialization processes, or some other factor, some poor people bypass the judicial system when dissolving a marriage. The effects, however, are the same for the single parent as if she were formally divorced because she must function as the lone breadwinner providing care for the children. The inclusion of non-formally divorced in the sample may prevent the results of this study from being biased as in other types of studies. All the female single parents resided in McAllen, Texas, or its immediate area and all the respondents were volunteers; they were not paid to participate in the study. Announcements were placed in the newspaper in the McAllen area, and recruitment utilized newspaper, plus word of mouth, snowballing techniques, judgmental techniques, and quota sampling techniques. Because an effort was made to analyze the degree of intragroup differences of Mexican-American female single parents, the categories of middle-white-collar and upper-white-collar respondents had to be oversampled, and the category of lower-blue-collar respondents had to be undersampled. In McAllen, Texas, the Spanish-origin population of twenty-five years of age and over is distributed so that sixty-three percent have not finished high school and only seventeen percent have finished high school, with nine percent having finished four years or more of college.

If a sample was drawn that reflected these education statistics (stratified sampling) and the sample size was eighty-six, the middle educational categories would have too few cases, as would the upper educational category, but the lower group would have had too many respondents.

The primary problem with this sample was that it was not based on probability sampling techniques. The chief criterion of the quality of a sample is the degree to which it is representative, the extent to which the characteristics of the sample are the same as those of the population from which it was drawn (1). A probability sample is an excellent method of drawing a representative sample, a sample representative of the population of McAllen, Texas Mexican-American female single parents. Probability sampling techniques also make it possible to estimate the amount of error in a particular sample, decreasing the sampling error, partly by every member of the total population having some known nonzero probability of being included in the sample. This technique, of course, implies availability of a sampling frame, an available listing of the members of the population, *i.e.*, a listing of all the Mexican-American female single parents in McAllen with their children who have been divorced at least a year and head their own households. Even better would be a process of stratified sampling of Mexican-American female single parents into relatively homogeneous strata before they were sampled (to some extent

this was done). This method would have improved the sample's representativeness by reducing sampling error.

Unfortunately, most of these desirable characteristics of probability did not apply to the sample for this study. The sample used in this study was a sample of convenience, chosen by a number of nonprobability methods, such as word of mouth, quota and judgmental techniques. If judgmental selection techniques are used, a thorough knowledge of the population and its elements is implied. This may not always be true. Criteria for including or excluding cases or respondents may be the result of personal bias. If a researcher uses quota sampling techniques, the quota frame (proportions that different categories represent) must be accurate and it is often difficult to obtain up-to-date information for this purpose; all statistical data from the Census Bureau are out of date when they are released to the public; it takes time to collect and organize data. A second problem with quota sampling techniques is that bias may exist in the selection of cases within a given category. Dependence on public announcements or word-of-mouth to recruit volunteers does not mean that the sample ultimately selected will be representative of the Mexican-American female single parent population of McAllen, Texas, because people who answer advertisements for volunteers may or may not be representative of the population that the researcher is trying to study. Finally, with nonprobability sampling

techniques the researcher cannot interpret the sample findings as the basis for inferences about a particular population. Generalizations about the population of McAllen, Texas, Mexican-American female single parents are not possible.

Since this study is a preliminary, descriptive study, nonprobability sampling methods were used. The goal was to describe this particular sample; no attempt was made to generalize beyond this particular sample. The enumeration and listing of all the Mexican-American female single parents and their children in McAllen would be extremely time-consuming and expensive. It was considered that for the purposes of this study, nonprobability sampling methods would suffice. Finally, almost without exception, the available studies of female single parents in the sociological literature use nonprobability sampling methods. There is strong precedent for using nonprobability sampling methods in studying female single parents, whatever their ethnicity.

A brief descriptive profile of McAllen, Texas is described as follows. According to Census Bureau data (8), in 1979 the mean family income for married-couple families was \$22,317, and \$9,696 for female householders-no husband present families, the latter earning forty-three percent of the former. In 1979, thirty-five percent of all households had incomes under \$10,000 and only twenty-four percent had incomes of \$25,000 or more annually. That same year 26.4

percent of all residents of McAllen, Texas, had incomes which were below the poverty level and twenty-eight percent of all Mexican-American female single parents were poor; approximately forty-nine percent of the poor were related to children eighteen years of age and younger. In this community, approximately one-fourth (twenty-four percent) of the people were foreign-born, overwhelmingly from Mexico. Among the adults, approximately thirty-five percent did not speak English well or did not speak it at all (Census Bureau designations). Among the younger population (ages five through seventeen), twenty-two percent did not speak English well or at all. Of Mexican-Americans twenty-five years old and over in McAllen, fifty-five percent did not have any education beyond the eighth grade (thirty-two percent have completed four years or less of school), and sixty-three percent did not have a high school diploma; at the same time, only nine percent of the Mexican-Americans (twenty-five and over) had four years of college or more. Finally, the Mexican-American population was young (median age was 21.1; currently the median age in the United States is 34 years), and growing rapidly. The fertility rate for women 35-44 was an average of 3.6 children per women (8).

This section of The Sample and Its Limitations will conclude with a brief demographic profile of the eighty-six Mexican-American female single parents in the sample. The eighty-six parents were divided into four socioeconomic

status categories: (1) lower, twenty-seven parents; (2) lower-middle, twenty-three parents; (3) upper-middle, eighteen parents, and (4) the upper category, which comprised eighteen single parents. The average number of children per mother varied by socioeconomic status category: (1) the average number of children per mother was 2.8 for the lower category, (2) 3.2 children in the lower-middle category, (3) 2.2 children in the upper-middle category, and (4) 1.8 children in the upper category. Income was divided into three categories: under \$5,000, \$5,000-\$14,999, and \$15,000 and above. Thirty-two parents (37.2 percent) had incomes of less than \$5,000; thirty-three parents fell in the \$5,000-\$14,999 range (38.4 percent); and twenty-one parents (24.4 percent) had incomes of \$15,000 or more. Twenty-five parents (29.1 percent) were unskilled or manual laborers, twenty were semi-skilled or skilled, and thirty-two parents were white-collar professionals (37.2 percent). Thirty-two were teenagers (38.4 percent) when they first married, and seventy were between fourteen and twenty-four years old when they first married, but only seven were teenagers when their first child was born. The youngest female single parent was twenty years old, and the oldest was fifty-two years old. Ten parents admitted having been born in Mexico. All twenty-seven female single parents in the lower socioeconomic category lived in a public housing project in McAllen, Texas.

The Questionnaire

The data collected for this descriptive study were obtained by interviewers through the administration of a questionnaire. The respondents were shown a copy of the questionnaire at the time of the interview, but the interviewer marked the answers to the questions. Since the entire sample was voluntary, respondents chose the place and time for the interview, so as to inconvenience them as little as possible. The overwhelming majority of respondents chose their homes as the site, and met with the interviewer after work. This approach was more personal and efficient than simply sending the questionnaire through the mail for the respondents to answer and return. In addition to the personal communication, an even more compelling reason for direct interviewing was that mailed questionnaires do not generally have a high enough rate of return. It was assumed that if the interviewers and respondents had copies of the questionnaire items, any phrases, words or questions that the respondents did not fully understand could be clarified "on the spot" by the interviewer, so that for the vast majority of the sample cases, one visit and one sitting of approximately an hour to two hours, was sufficient.

The questionnaire itself is a composite created from several questionnaires that have been used in other studies of female single parents in the United States (see the Appendix for the Questionnaire). Items or questions were

abstracted from these questionnaires that served the needs of this particular study, and in some cases, some of the wording was modified to fit more closely the needs of this study (2, 3, 4, 6). The questionnaire was pre-tested on approximately twenty-five Mexican-American female single parents to correct problems of content, phrasing, language or relevance that may have manifested themselves. Because no major problems were encountered or discovered, the twenty-five pre-tested respondents became part of the total sample.

The questionnaire itself was designed to measure the areas of concern in this study: financial and emotional supports, and parental role performance. There are twenty-nine questions in the instrument. The level of measurement is nominal or ordinal, primarily ordinal, and most of the questions are closed-ended, with some employing the "other" category (see Appendix). An effort was made to use short sentences rather than long ones; negative items and terms were avoided whenever possible, and an effort was made to avoid phrasing questions in any particular way so as to solicit predetermined answers. The questionnaire was also translated into Spanish so that Mexican-American female single parents who did not speak or understand English could be included in this sample. For the purposes of this study monolingual-Spanish respondents could not be excluded from the sample; fewer than ten percent of the respondents were monolingual-Spanish. The interviewers used were bilingual and basically bicultural.

The Statistics

Descriptive statistics are statistical methods that may be used for presenting quantitative data in a more manageable format (1). These methods allow researchers to reduce large data matrices to more manageable summaries that permit easier descriptions, understandings, and interpretations. However, descriptive statistics only describe some of the characteristics of the data "at hand." They say nothing beyond the immediate data. It is not the intention of this study to make assertions, generalizations, or inferences about the larger population from which this sample of Mexican-American female single parents was chosen, whatever that population really is.

Descriptive statistics that summarize the relationships between or among variables are called measures of association. A measure of association is the assigning of a numerical value to describe the degree of strength or magnitude of a relationship between variables. It is the degree to which variation or change in one variable or pair of variables is related to variation or change in another variable. Measures of association indicate how strongly two variables are related to each other, in essence, indicating to what extent characteristics of one sort and characteristics of another sort occur together. To what extent does prior knowledge of a case's value on one variable better enable the researcher to predict the case's value on another variable? Many

measures of association are based on a proportionate reduction of error (PRE) model. It is based on a comparison of the number of errors that would be made in trying to estimate the attributes of a variable for each of the cases, and the number of errors made if the joint overall distribution was known, and were told for each case the attribute of one variable for each time one was asked to guess the attribute of the other. However, a measure of association only tells the researcher the strength of the degree of relationship. It is within this context that the term "relationship" is used throughout this study.

The choice of a particular measure of association depends in part upon the level at which the variables are measured. Therefore, an important criterion is to select a statistic appropriate for the level of measurement of the variables, remembering that statistics developed for one level of measurement can always be used with higher-level measurements or variables, but not with variables at a lower level. The level of measurement of each of the variables in the researcher's data is the most important basic information that the researcher must have before selecting the appropriate statistical techniques. A statistic designed for a given level of measurement is more appropriate since it uses more of the available information. Secondly, for purposes of this

study, proportional reduction in error (PRE) statistics are preferred since the PRE model allows for easier and more direct interpretation. The values do have direct interpretation, and they can be compared with other statistics of this type. All of these non-probability statistics can be determined from a computer program (7).

Nominal levels of measurement make no assumption whatever about the values being assigned to the data; the number itself is merely a name or a label, and no assumption of ordering or distance between categories is made, and any numbers assigned are symbols. There are several measures of association possible, depending on the nature of the data and the way they are manipulated. Possibly the strongest nominal-level statistic for measures of association is Lambda. Lambda used the PRE model by allowing a higher percentage of improvement in the ability to predict the value of one variable once the value of the other variable (e.g., an independent variable) is known. Lambda is not restricted to only large tables, but can be used with two-by-two tables, and has a direct interpretation, by measuring how large the improvement is relative to the original error; this statistic may be computed symmetrically, in which no assumptions are made about which variable is dependent, and it measures overall improvement when prediction is made in both directions.

Lambda was the measure of association preferred in this study for nominal-level measurements of variables.

Nominal-level measurement methods do not take into account the order or the distance of the values of the variables, but ordinal level measurements do. Each value can be assigned a numerical rank on the basis of some criterion. Ordinal variables occur frequently in sociological literature and research, but statistical methods for the analysis of such variables are not as well developed as for other types of variables. All of the measures of association at the ordinal level use information about the ordering of categories of different variables by considering every possible pair of cases, by checking to see if their relative ranking on the first variable is the same as their relative ranking on the second variable, or if the ordering is reversed. With many tied ranks it becomes more difficult to use the ranking numbers as a basis for any measure of association. The manner with which ties are dealt with is the primary difference among the different statistics at this level.

Gamma is an ordinal level measure of association. Gamma is based on the ability to estimate values on one variable by knowing the value of another variable (PRE), based on the ordinal arrangement of values. The values (-1.00 to +1.00) represent direction (positive values-concordant values predominate; negative values-disconcordant values predominate)

as well as magnitude, and gamma can achieve a value of -1.00 to $+1.00$ under a variety of conditions other than when all the cases fall on a diagonal. With gamma, with any pair of cases, one estimates that their ordinal ranking on one variable will correspond to their ordinal ranking on the other variable, and no adjustments are necessary for either ties (there are quite a few ties in this study) or table size. Gamma is a better statistic to use when there are many tied ranks than is Spearman's rho. With the coefficient of gamma it is possible to calculate values for three-way to n-way tables. These qualities make gamma a very useful measure of association. In this study gamma is the preferred ordinal level measure of association.

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CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS

This chapter describes the statistical measures of association correlated between the twenty independent variables that were studied in the financial-emotional support questions of the Questionnaire (Appendix I) and the nine dependent variables, those questions that were asked in the parental performance section of the Questionnaire. Measures of association between the independent variables and the nine dependent variables are discussed in the following order: (1) Children With Medical Problems, (2) Children with Learning Disabilities, (3) Children With Emotional Problems, (4) Caring for Sick Children, (5) Time With the Children, (6) Yelling and Screaming, (7) Corporal Punishment, (8) The Children's Problems, and (9) Feeling Overwhelmed. The tenth subsection is the Concluding Summary and briefly discusses the basic and strongest patterns found in the computed statistical measures of association between the independent variables and each of the nine dependent variables (discussed in this chapter). Some of the research topics and issues that need to be addressed as a result of the findings summarized in the first nine subsections are also addressed. The coefficient values and descriptive categories used in this chapter are

presented in Appendix II.

Children With Medical Problems

The vast majority of Mexican-American female single parents did not have children with medical illnesses or problems. A medical illness or problem was one that required the services of a doctor, whether or not the female single parent felt she could afford the services of a medical professional; it is possible that the child would need a doctor, and yet, he or she would not get one. Only fourteen of the eighty-six parents had children with medical problems.

Three independent variables were moderately or substantially associated with parents who had children with no medical problems. There was a moderate association between the ex-husbands seeing the family once a month if at all and having children who did not have any medical illnesses, $y=.351$; there was a substantial measure of association between the ex-husbands who did pay child-support payments and the single parents who did not have any sick children, $y=-.556$; and there was also substantial correlation between those female single parents who were actually receiving child-support income and had medically healthy children, $y=.575$ (1). Those female single parents with medically healthy children received more regular child-support income and saw their ex-husbands infrequently, usually once a

month.

Most of the remaining measures of association were low in magnitude. Social status, education level and required legal child-support, church attendance, frequency of interaction with brothers, sisters, co-workers, and best friends were slightly associated with having such children ranging from $y = -.110$ (frequency of church attendance) to $y = .272$ (social status category and education level). The association between the frequency with which female single parents saw their parents (actually, a lot) and not having sick children, was negligible, $y = .026$. When the female single parents sought advice regarding problems with children, they were as likely to talk first with friends as with primary (family) relatives.

Children With Learning Difficulties

The majority of the eighty-six Mexican-American female single parents had no children with learning problems in school. Only eighteen parents had children with learning problems. All the gamma relationships between the sixteen independent variables (financial and emotional support questions in the Questionnaire; see the Appendix) and the presence of children with learning difficulties were negative, four measures of association were moderate in strength, ranging from $y = -.307$ to $y = -.447$, while only one independent variable, the perceived quality of child care,

was substantially negative $y = -.507$. The four independent variables moderately and negatively associated with the dependent variable were child-support payments, the frequency which the ex-husband missed support, the employment status of the single parent, and whether or not the ex-husband was legally required to pay child support. The remaining eleven gamma coefficients were negligible to low in strengths of associations, ranging from $y = -.011$ to $y = -.219$. Most of the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable were very weak (low or negligible). In general, there was a lack of association between the dependent variable and most of the independent variables.

All the gamma coefficients were negative, in the negligible to low range. Disregarding the sign (negative) the numerical values range from $y = .011$ (Frequency of church attendance) to $y = .219$ (the frequency with which they saw their best friends).

General findings were relatively clear. Seventy-one Mexican-American female single parents saw their ex-in-laws no more than once a month; seventy-eight single parents saw their ex-husbands no more than once a month; only seven single parents never saw their sisters, and nine parents never saw their brothers, while all the other single parents saw them at least once a month. Seventy-four Mexican-American female single parents saw their parents at least once a month; yet, more female single parents never

saw their parents than their sisters or brothers. Twelve single parents had no best friends, and never saw their parents or their co-workers (socially). Fifty-four female single parents saw their best friends at least two or three times a week, and fifty-six female single parents saw their parents at least two or three times a week. These patterns and tendencies did not vary by education level, social status category or income differences.

There were four moderate positive and negative associations between independent variables and single parents who had children without learning difficulties in school. A moderate relationship was found between those female single parents without children with learning difficulties in school and having actually received child-support payments $y = -.307$, having being employed outside the home, at least part-time, $y = -.382$, and having court mandated child-support awards. The strongest measure of association found was between parents who perceived the available child-care to be at least good in quality and who had children without learning difficulties, $y = -.507$.

There were three independent variables that had no statistical association with the dependent variable when lambdas were computed: (1) To whom do you turn to first when you are feeling sad, lonely, or depressed, or when you need to talk? The second independent variable was: (2) To whom do you turn to first when you need advice about

your children or when you are having problems with your children? The third independent variable was: (3) To whom do you turn to first when you have a problem in a relationship with a man? Regardless of whether or not the Mexican-American female single parents first talked to friends or relatives, or kept their concerns about personal problems, men or children to themselves, the vast majority of the female single parents (sixty-nine) did not have any children with learning problems in school; only eighteen female single parents had children with learning problems in school.

The patterns for the female single parents with no children with learning problems were as follows: twice as many Mexican-American female single parents first talked to friends and acquaintances as to relatives when they felt the need to discuss children's school problems. Female single parents who had children with learning problems in the past turned first to friends and acquaintances. Whether or not the female single parents had children with school problems at the time of the study, in the past, when they had had problems, they turned to, first friends, second relatives, or much less often, they talked to no one.

Children With Emotional Problems

In this subsection the dependent variable was, does any one of your children have a behavioral or emotional problem? Few Mexican female single parents had children

with emotional problems; seventy-three single parents of a total of eighty-six single parents did not have children with emotional problems. Attending church at least once a week, and seeing their brothers and sisters at least two or three times a week were moderately and positively associated with not having children with emotional problems, ($y = -.387$); the degrees of association between seeing the brothers and sisters at least two or three times a week and not having children with emotional problems were $y = -.328$ and $y = -.336$, respectively. The strongest measure of association found for this dependent variable was between the frequency with which the Mexican-American female single parents saw their co-workers socially and not having children with emotional problems. The gamma coefficient was substantial in strength, $y = -.509$. The remainder of the independent variables were in the negligible to low magnitude of strength, ranging from $y = -.091$ to $y = -.264$. In general and most strongly, single parents who did not have children with emotional problems saw their co-workers socially more often than the single parents who had children with emotional problems. The remaining independent variables were in the negligible to low categories of association; in the low category of association were the number of times the single parents saw their ex-in-laws, $y = -.113$, best friends, $y = .245$, and ex-husbands, $y = .264$; also low in magnitude were the number of times the ex-husbands missed child-support payments,

$y=.158$, and whether or not the ex-husbands were legally required to make support payments, $y=.198$. There was a lower degree of association between all these variables and having children with emotional problems.

There were three independent variables measured at the nominal level that showed there was no association because the modes used to predict the dependent variable were all within subcategories of the independent variables, the Mexican-American female single parents who had no children with emotional problems. Three questions asked the single parents to whom they turned to first when they: (1) felt sad and lonely and needed to talk, (2) needed to talk about the children or had problems with them, and (3) had problems in relationships with men. Although at the time of the study few Mexican-American female single parents had children with emotional problems, when, in the past, they had problems, the parents first discussed the problem children with friends, 57.5 percent, and second, with primary relatives, 27.4 percent. Very few single parents, 15.0 percent, discussed problems involving men with their relatives. Most parents discussed men with friends or no one.

Caring for Sick Children

There was a moderate degree of association between whether or not the ex-husbands were legally required to

make child-support payments and the dependent variable: How much difficulty do you now have taking care of the children when they are sick? The gamma coefficient was $\gamma = .351$. This moderate association between these two variables was an exception; all the remaining independent gammas were low. Most single parents did not have difficulty caring for sick children. Having difficulty meant that the female single parents did not feel that they had the emotional and financial supports or resources necessary for them to adequately take care of their children; the feeling would have been that the children were not adequately provided for by the parents. The moderate association was between absent male parents who were legally required to make child-support payments and single parents who did not have difficulties in taking care of the children when the children were sick. Sixty-six (of eighty-six) Mexican-American female single parents experienced very little or no difficulty taking care of sick children, and twenty parents had either moderate difficulty (seven) or a great deal of difficulty (thirteen) in taking care of sick children. Their ex-husbands were less likely to have legal responsibility for child-support payments.

The only consistent pattern in analyzing the independent variables and their associations with the dependent variable of degree of difficulty in caring for

sick children was a tendency for the independent variables to be in the range of negligible to low association, ranging from $y = -.055$ (How often they saw their parents) to $y = -.271$ (Ex-husbands required to make child-support payments?).

The frequency with which the single parents saw various other people (parents, ex-husbands, ex-in-laws, best friends, co-workers, brothers and sisters) was negligibly associated with the dependent variable under analysis in this subsection.

Although one financial independent variable was moderately associated with the dependent variable, the other socioeconomic independent variables manifested a low pattern of association: amount of child-support income, whether or not they were employed, whether or not the ex-husbands were making child-support payments, their social status (lower, lower-middle, upper-middle, upper), level of education and family income. Child-support income (actual payment) and working (employment status) are somewhat lower in association, but not extraordinarily lower. In general, there was a low association between financial support available and having been able to experience little or no difficulty in caring for sick children. The same general trend was evident in the independent variables that indicated emotional support.

There were three nominal-level independent variables (emotional support) that had lambda coefficients of zero. Because the lambda measures of association were zero, the

percentages were examined to see if there were percentage differences between each of the three independent variables and the dependent variable. In general Mexican-American female single parents had little or no difficulty in caring for sick children, but some patterns were evident. More female single parents first turned to friends, secondly to primary relatives, and thirdly they approached no one if they wanted to discuss personal problems or needed advice regarding their children. If the Mexican-American female single parents wanted to discuss personal problems or needed advice regarding their children, they consulted friends or kin. If the Mexican-American female single parents wanted to discuss problems in relationships with men, relatively few approached any of their relatives, preferring to approach friends or no one. However, these patterns did not greatly affect the female single mothers' ability to take care of sick children.

Time With the Children

The following distribution and proportions were found for all sixteen independent variables, regardless of whether the variables were financial or emotional support variables: thirty-seven Mexican-American female single parents (43.0 percent) did not have any difficulty in finding time to spend with their children, seventeen female single mothers (19.7 percent) experienced very little difficulty,

seventeen female single mothers (20.9 percent) experienced a moderate amount of difficulty spending time with their children, five mothers (5.8 percent) experienced a good bit of difficulty, and nine mothers (10.4 percent) experienced a great deal of difficulty in finding time to spend with their children. In general, fifty-four female single parents (62.8 percent) did not experience more than very little difficulty. There was a continuum of degree of difficulty as perceived by the female single parents, ranging from no difficulty to a great deal of difficulty. The degree of difficulty increased as the single parents perceived that there was not enough financial-emotional support or that job and parental roles strains increased.

For the first time, however, a new pattern emerged, that a wider distribution of answer categories. There were a total of thirty-two female parents who experienced a great deal of difficulty. The majority of Mexican-American female single parents did not have serious difficulties in setting time aside to be with their children. Thirty female parents were unemployed, permitting them to spend more time with their children. Only eight female single parents (9.3 percent) who worked had to care for their children themselves. Fifty-seven parents indicated that friends, neighbors, or relatives (66.2 percent of the sample) cared for their children when they had to work outside the home. Twenty-one parents indicated

that schools or day-care centers cared for the children, and seventy-one Mexican-American female parents felt that the quality of their children's care was good or excellent. Only fifteen parents (17.6 percent) felt the quality of child-care was only fair or poor.

The general pattern of association between the dependent variable (How much difficulty do you have now spending time with the children---reading, playing, picnics, etc.?) and the sixteen ordinal-level, independent variables was low or negligible in magnitude. Most were very low positive associations. There was no pattern of differentiation between financial or emotional support variables in terms of one category predominating over the category of variables. While socio-economic status variables were associated with having had little or no difficulty in finding time to spend with children, the magnitudes were low and indicated that most female single parents either never saw their ex-husbands or saw them only once a month. Whatever the social status category (lower, lower-middle, upper-middle or upper) of the female single parents, most parents were having none or very little difficulty in finding enough time to spend with their children. Forty-seven ex-husbands (54.6 percent) never made any child-support payments, but their ex-wives still did not experience any more or less difficulty than the Mexican-American female single parents who did receive child-support

payments. The female single parents who saw their co-workers frequently (socially) were moderately associated with not having any or having very little difficulty spending time with their children, a gamma coefficient of $+ .487$. Along with the high frequency of seeing co-workers socially, being employed was substantially associated with little or no difficulty in finding time to spend with children, $y = .530$. The other moderate association was between the level of income and not having problems finding time for the children (the mode for all three income categories was no difficulty or very little difficulty), $y = .304$. Generally, while this pattern followed many aspects of the first four dependent variables (mostly low associations), for the first time there were more types of answers given to the dependent variable question.

Three questions asked to whom the Mexican-American female single parents turned to first for advice about their children, discussions of personal problems or discussions specifically of problems in relationships with men. While most female single parents did not have moderate or high levels of difficulty in finding time to their children, in the past when they had these problems the female single parents had turned to (1) friends and acquaintances, (2) primary relatives, or (3) no one, in that order, to discuss feelings of loneliness or depression. However, the pattern was different if they wanted to discuss problems in

relationships with men. Then they first approached their friends and acquaintances (46.51 percent) or they kept the problem to themselves (39.53 percent). Only twelve female single parents discussed men with their relatives (13.95 percent).

Yelling and Screaming

In the measures of associations between the dependent variable (Do you now have more difficulty in disciplining and controlling your children by having to yell and scream more at them since the divorce?) and the independent variables, four independent variables were in the low range of association, and only one was moderately associated in strength with the dependent variable. There were two nominal-level independent variables (problems in relationships with men; needed advice about problems with children) that resulted in the dependent variable being a better predictor of the independent variables than the reverse, as originally computed, but the improvement that resulted when this was done was very negligible.

In the low range of association the following associations with the dependent variable resulted: there was a low and negative association between attending church at least once a week and not yelling and screaming more at the children since the divorce to discipline them, $y=-.289$; there was a low and negative association between seeing the

brothers at least two or three times a week and not having to yell and scream at the children, $y = -.228$; and there was a low and negative association between seeing the ex-husbands very infrequently (no more than once a month for some parents and never seeing the ex-husbands for others) and not having to yell and scream at the children, $y = -.176$. The two positive low measures of association were between having friends to discuss problems about relationships with men and not having to yell and scream to discipline the children, $\lambda = .109$, and secondly, having ex-husbands who were not legally required to make child-support payments and not yelling at the children, $y = .305$. All the remaining independent variables, in their individual associations with the dependent variable, were either not associated statistically or were negligible in association. The perceived quality of child-care available and the need to talk to someone about personal problems, in their association with the dependent variable, were zero. The negligible measures of association ranged between $y = -.023$ and $y = .089$.

Most Mexican-American female single parents had little or no difficulty with having to yell and scream more at them to discipline them. Fifty-six single parents were employed, and fifty-four parents had court-awarded child-support payments, but thirty-eight ex-husbands missed child-support payments, most missing payments most of the

time; at the same time forty-seven single parents had gotten no child-support payments at all in the past twelve months. The Mexican-American female single parents experienced higher levels of yelling and screaming at their children if the ex-husbands were legally required to make child-support payments, if the ex-husbands were seen several times a week, and if the ex-husbands actually made payments. The single parents had, of course, been single parents for over a year at least, and most of them rated the available child-care as good or excellent. Perhaps the brothers served as surrogate fathers and disciplinarians. In general, the female single parents did not have to scream and yell at their children more since the divorce to adequately discipline them.

Corporal Punishment

There were several independent variables that had low and negative associations with the dependent variable: Do you now have more difficulty in disciplining and controlling your children by having to spank them more since the divorce? The remaining independent variables had mostly negligible associations with this particular dependent variable. No relationships with the independent variables were moderate, substantial or very strong in magnitude of association. In general, a rather low level of association was found for only seven independent variables. The vast

majority of Mexican-American female single parents had very little or no difficulty in disciplining their children. Difficulty with discipline resulting in more spanking since the divorce is a continuum from no difficulty to very little, to moderate to a great deal of difficulty, as perceived by the female single parents. As the level of difficulty increases the single parents have to resort more and more to corporal punishment, resulting in harsher and undesirable relationships with their children. Only fifteen female single parents experienced a moderate amount or a great deal of difficulty in disciplining the children, resulting in more spanking.

There were several independent variables that had low measures of association with the dependent variable. The vast majority of female single parents indicated they rarely had to resort to spanking to discipline their children. Low measures of association were found between rare spanking of children and having ex-husbands who did not make child-support payments, $y = -.140$, seeing brothers two or three times a week regularly, $y = -.171$, and having ex-husbands who were not legally obligated to make child-support payments, $y = -.185$. Low measures of association were also found between the rare spanking of children by single parents and perceiving the availability of child-care at least good in quality, $y = -.216$, and attending church at least once a week, $y = -.232$. The remaining independent variables were

in the negligible range of association, ranging from $y=-.075$.

The Children's Problems

In general the majority of Mexican-American female single parents had very little or no difficulty in talking with their children about the children's problems and experiences. Seventy-one female single parents were in this category. The degree of difficulty is a continuum of rising difficulty, where the female single parent feels she is not adequately communicating with her children, thereby failing to meet some very important non-physical child-care needs. The continuum ranges from no difficulty to very little, to moderate to a good bit, to a great deal of difficulty as perceived by the female single parents. The dependent variable was the question: How much difficulty do you now have in talking with the children about their problems and experiences?

Only three independent variables had moderate degrees of association with the degree of difficulty the female single parents had speaking with their children. There was a moderate degree of association between seeing the ex-husbands very infrequently (once a month at most) and having time to talk to their children. There was a moderate degree of association between seeing their parents very frequently (two or three times a week) and being able to spend time talking to their children, $y=-.320$, and between seeing their best friends at least two or three times a week and having

time to discuss different things with their children, $y=.437$. The remaining independent variables ranged from a negligible to a low degree of association with the dependent variable. The gamma coefficients ranged from $y=.040$ to $y=.291$. Half of the female single parents never saw their ex-husbands. Even some of the female single parents who never saw (or perhaps no longer had) their best friends had little difficulty talking to their children.

Feeling Overwhelmed

There was only one independent variable that had a moderate degree of association with the dependent variable, the association between being employed and having had feelings of being overwhelmed by the demands of the children, $y=-.338$. Forty-eight single female parents (out of eighty-six) experienced either moderate, a good bit, or a great deal of anxiety because of the demands of the children, $y=-.338$. Forty-eight females is not an inconsequential number. The dependent variable was, How much difficulty do you now have with feelings of being overwhelmed by the demands of the children? This continuum increases in levels of stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy and isolation, the feeling of too few sources of help and too many responsibilities.

At a lower level of magnitude of association there appeared a pattern of variables that seems to reflect the moderate degree of association between being employed and

having feelings of overwhelming responsibilities. There was a low measure of association between being lower or lower-middle in social status and having experienced a higher level (moderate, good bit, a great deal) of feeling overwhelmed, $y = -.129$. This association was apparent in the association between having no more than a high school diploma and having experienced higher levels of anxiety. The following socio-economic status independent variables were related to low levels of association with this particular dependent variable. The higher the income category, the more likely the single parents felt more intense pressure, $y = -.116$; there were low levels of association between ex-husbands who were legally required to provide child-support payments and higher levels of having felt overwhelmed, $y = .156$, and ex-husbands who never missed support payments and higher feelings of being overwhelmed, $y = -.122$. It should be noted however, that the associations are slight, not strong and tenacious. How often the single parents saw relatives, including parents, and other people, was negligible in magnitude of association; being employed and having experienced higher levels of feelings of being overwhelmed was moderate in strength. A close look at the data for this subsection indicated surprisingly large numbers of female single parents who experienced higher levels of having felt overwhelmed by the demands of the children, even though they seemed to have emotional and financial resources that seemed to offer strength with other tasks.

Concluding Summary

The concluding section of The Results chapter will summarize the patterns found through the statistical analysis of the measures of association between the independent variables and each of the dependent variables. Included in this section will be several empirical issues based on the results of this particular preliminary, nonrandom, small-sample study. Several specific areas for further research based on the general patterns found in this study will be outlined, while more general empirical and policy issues are discussed in the next chapter.

There were several demographic patterns characteristic of this sample of Mexican-American female single parents. The majority of female single parents were participants in the labor force (only thirty single parents were out of work), and overrepresented in the lower category (no high school diploma, blue-collar, unskilled or semi-skilled, living in a public housing project). Of a sample size of eighty-six parents, thirty-two had family incomes of less than \$5,000, thirty-three parents were in the \$5,000-\$14,999 category, and twenty-one parents had family incomes of more than \$15,000. Fifty-four parents had court-awarded child-support payments, but a total of forty-seven female single parents never received any child-support income, regardless of whether or not the mothers had court awards of support. Most parents did not receive child-support payments, but they were more likely

to receive child-support payments if they were either in the upper-middle or upper socioeconomic status category. The majority of Mexican-American single parents (seventy) perceived the quality of the available child-care arrangements to have been good or excellent. Only eight parents provided all the child-care themselves with the remaining seventy-eight mothers having relied on relatives (thirty-four), friends and neighbors (twenty-three), or schools and/or day-care centers (twenty-one). Sixty-seven female single parents attended church services at least once per month, but nineteen did not ever attend church. These female parents had rather extensive networks of communication. Overwhelmingly, they saw their parents, brothers, and sisters at least two or three times per week. They saw their best friends socially as often as they saw their relatives and best friends. These relatives and friends provided most of the child-care for the single parents. The female single parents did not see their ex-husbands or ex-in-laws, on the average, more than about once per month. Only eight single parents saw their ex-husbands or former in-laws once a week or several times a week. The female single parents definitely did not discuss problems they had in relationships with men, with parents, brothers or sisters. Most discussed this issue with their best friends, coworkers, or with no one. This pattern was also evident, but to a lesser degree, when the female single parents wanted to discuss a personal problem. As many female single parents turned to their

best friends first as turned to relatives first for advice about problems. These demographic patterns are further strengthened by the statistical patterns found in the social support systems and parental role performances that resulted from the computation of measures of association between the independent variables and the dependent variables.

Most of the Mexican-American female single parents were in the following categories: overwhelmingly the parents did not have children with medical illnesses, behavioral or emotional problems, or learning difficulties in school. In part because they had enough supportive individuals they could call on, most did not have any difficulty in caring for sick children. The vast majority, since the divorce, had not had to resort more often to yelling, screaming or spanking their children to discipline them than they had before the divorce. The parents also found enough time to talk to their children, discussing the children's problems and experiences.

The statistical analyses yielded the following conclusions. At the substantial and moderate levels of magnitude of the measures of association (see preceding subsections for more detailed analyses of these patterns; also see Appendix II) a number of independent variables assumed a higher magnitude of association with the dependent variables. The Mexican-American female single parents who did not have children with medical, learning or emotional problems did not see their ex-husbands or former in-laws, except once

per month. The female single parents were much more likely, in comparison to those who did not have problems, to manifest other characteristics. These parents were more likely to have worked outside the home, to have been awarded child-support payments by a court, and to have actually received child-support payments. The ex-husbands defaulted less often and did not visit the ex-wives and children more than approximately once a month, if at all. The single parents had what they considered to be good or excellent day-care for their children, and just as importantly, were not socially or physically isolated. They interacted with their parents, best friends, brothers and sisters, and coworkers very frequently, on the average two or three times weekly. With this extensive network of friends and relatives for support, apparently not having a steady male companion was not detrimental to the lives of these female single parents. It appears that support for problems that involved children and day-care availability came from parents, brothers, and sisters. Support for personal problems in general, and men in particular, came from people outside of the family of origin. Former in-laws seemed to provide little, if any, emotional or financial support. Having all these sources of financial and support did produce somewhat unexpectedly higher levels of feelings of being overwhelmed by the demands of the children. Perhaps because these feelings were not continuous, it is a normal and expected reaction given the responsibilities.

At a lower level of strength of associations levels of education, family income, and social status category (upper-middle or upper status) were associated with not having sick or problem children, not yelling excessively, screaming and/or spanking, spending time with the children, including discussing the children's problems, and higher levels of feeling overwhelmed by the needs of the children.

In general, the results parallel results from other studies that have been done (1, 2). There was an extensive network of communication and interaction involving parents, brothers and sisters. Most single parents were not receiving support payments regularly, and they saw their ex-husbands infrequently. They tended to attend church regularly, but like black and white female single parents, the Mexican-American female single parents had significant others in their support networks who were not immediate relatives. The coworkers assumed relatively major importance as sources of support, and although this was not the case in other studies, this pattern is not unusual for black and white female single parents (see the review of the literature in Chapter II). The female single parents in this study seemed to have utilized patterns of support common to other Mexican-American women and black and white single parents, and like other female single parents, these parents appeared to function as basically sound, stable and viable families.

Because this study was preliminary, used a non-random sample, and was limited to only eighty-six respondents subdivided into four social status categories, it produced tentative results, and therefore more empirical research is needed to address issues that were raised as a result of this study. Ideally, a larger and random sample would be available, with the questions having more depth and being more open-ended. Then results could be compared to other samples of Mexican-American female single parents, and to black and white female single parents. More research is needed in the following areas in the forms of both empirically descriptive studies and research hypotheses-testing:

- (1) In this study, social status, education, occupation and family income differences were not as strongly associated as expected with the dependent variables. To what degree would socioeconomic status differences surface and impact support networks and child-rearing tasks in a random sample? How much do each of the socioeconomic status variables affect child-rearing tasks specifically? Or is socioeconomic support not as relevant and important as emotional support variables?
- (2) In the results of this study certain people appeared to be very significant others: parents, brothers, sisters, best friends, and coworkers. What specific emotional and/or financial supports do each of these people provide, and in what amounts, including

- a. How much financial support is provided by whom and how often? Does frequency of interaction result in concrete financial assistance, and how much does it on the person's socioeconomic status or does it?
- b. Specifically, what is the nature of emotional support? What is provided and in what areas of personal and familial needs?
- c. Why did so few Mexican-American female single parents turn to relatives for advice in relationships with men, and to what extent is this pattern dependent on ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status or age?
- d. Are there differences between female single parents who see their ex-husbands and former in-laws often or on a regular basis and those who do not? This study suggested that seeing ex-husbands and ex-in-laws may be detrimental to the familial well-being or the level of stress indicated by the mothers.

(3) Is the pattern of female single parents having experienced relatively higher levels of feeling overwhelmed by the needs of the children unique to this sample or can it be generalized to a random sample? Why this anomaly when in other areas the female single parents seemed to be able to function at a relatively high level of competency and independence?

(4) What specific problems and issues do the single parents discuss with their children? What problems do

the children experience, and how different are the children's experiences from those of children in intact families?

(5) If the children were not discipline problems, how are they disciplined, and what specific communication processes do not necessitate yelling, screaming, and spanking more than before the divorce? Does the difference vary by the gender and ages of the children?

(6) What kinds of problems do the female single parents experience when they come into conflict with male companions, and

(7) What impact has the new child-support payment enforcement emphasis in Texas had in the lives of Mexican-American female single parents and their children? How often do they proceed through the criminal justice system to secure what is owed them?

(8) Finally, is it possible to empirically and quantitatively describe, explain, and measure the degree to which the daily lives of Mexican-American female single parents are affected by the issues of sexism, racism, and classism, racism from the outside and sexism and class prejudice and discrimination from within the group called Mexican-Americans or Chicanos? It appears that to a greater degree than almost every other category of people in this society, Mexican-American females pay penalties for being non-white, female, divorced, and poor.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

Three interrelated areas of recommendations are discussed in this chapter: (1) a number of suggestions for further research, specifically on Mexican-American female single parent households; (2) a number of recommendations regarding public policy issues designed to provide positive, external financial and emotional support for female single parents; and (3) several suggestions for areas of sensitivity and empathy for professional providers who interact directly with female single parents. In reality all three areas impact, directly and indirectly, on each other. Professional intervention strategies are defined, structured and limited by decisions and resources, and unfortunately, policy decisions and programs are sometimes implemented on the basis of fragmentary, contradictory, or stereotypical information. Ideally, public policy decisions affecting female single parents should be informed, clearly conceptualized, with a goal of accounting for as many consequences as possible over periods of time that reveal changing circumstances, needs, and priorities. Female single parents should be given as much consideration in their own right as any other category of people.

Further Research on Mexican-American Female Single Parents

Empirical data bases are needed in many areas regarding the different types of Mexican-American female single parents. At this time little is known about this category of single parents in any depth. The findings and results of this study are very tentative, and while they may be suggestive, the fact remains that the results are based on a small nonrandom sample. A top priority is a current, continuously-updated, comprehensive, regional and national demographic profile of Mexican-American female single parent households that is representative of the tremendous diversity found within this ethnic-racial group. It is imperative, for further research and theory-building, that reliable data bases be available in the following areas: number of households, labor force participation rates, levels and ranges of education, occupations and income, family sizes, sizes of cities of residence, rural versus urban residence rates, employment/unemployment status, rates of underemployment, lengths of status as female single parent households, remarriage rates, differences in child-support awards and payments, number of households below the poverty line, public assistance programs participation rates, formal religious affiliations, church attendance rates, leisure activities, voluntary association rates, degree of geographical mobility, rates and levels of savings, home ownership versus renting rates, amounts and ranges of mortgages and rental payments, automobile ownership

rates, number of pre-school and other age-specific categories of children, medical and health insurance coverage, work absenteeism rates, children's school performance records, and day-care availability, utilization, and costs. These data bases are indispensable and necessary. The obstacles are extremely formidable without these data, and attempts at even preliminary theory-building become unrealistic if the researcher cannot describe the population being analyzed to begin with, or how that population has changed over time.

Once the data bases are available research can begin, through research hypotheses, the process of theory-building, by empirically ascertaining the exact nature and extent of formal and informal, internal and external, the support systems or networks available over time to Mexican-American female single parent households, including the processes involved in defining changing circumstances, needs and priorities. The exact nature, depth, and extent of these support networks have yet to be clearly defined, conceptualized, operationally defined and integrated with other aspects of every life processes, problems and satisfactions. Research hypotheses should focus on the different financial, emotional and familial factors or variables, and the exact processes of emergence, stability and change over time, at the personal and institutional levels. What particular kinds of individual, familial, and institutional sources of support, at what levels, and for how long, provide adequate help so

that female single parents function adequately and competently? What is the nature of the different kinds of communication processes that promote strong and viable single parent households? Hypotheses need to be generated that measure the degree of integration with the large non-Mexican-American community because Mexican-American women have to bear the brunt of racial prejudice and discrimination, class stereotypes, and internal and external sexism and gender exploitation. Now that female single parents have been "found" to suffer many injustices, i.e., many white women are suffering, it is time to address the needs of other kinds of women who may have different problems and needs, and whose solutions require different intervention strategies for different socioeconomic categories. It is an empirical question to what degree different types of supports, at different levels, affect different aspects of financial, emotional and familial health and viability. There is apparently a hierarchy of needs, levels and sources of supports, and this hierarchy appears to vary, to some degree, from black and white female single parents, and there may be differences within the Mexican-American female single parent population.

Research hypotheses also need to be generated regarding the lives, needs and problems of Mexican-American children who live and grow up in single parent households. At this point all the questions directed at these children are open

to preliminary and basic research hypotheses. More exact information is needed on the nature of the relationships these children have with other children, both parents, friends, relatives, and educational institutions, and on the degree to which differences are caused by or are the result of different kinds of emotional and financial support networks. What do these children do inside and outside the households? To what degree and in what areas are they different from children who grow up in "intact" homes? Are they overburdened with responsibilities and what are the long-term consequences for these children? Do these children develop in stronger manners than children in intact homes?

These children are living in households where time allocations are affected by the basic fact of having only one custodial parent. Research is needed that will address the following issues: the relationship between support networks and time-consuming restraints; who is more important to the family in terms of time- the relatives or friends? In what areas of support are they important? This would mean research hypotheses that tell us the amount of time spent on child-rearing tasks and job responsibilities, plus any strain between the two; how much time do single parents allocate to their own needs and what are those needs? How much time do the absent fathers spend with their children? How much time does the absent father spend in what areas of child-care? How do time allocation constraints affect job motivation and

performance, the mothers' mental and physical health, child-care, leisure time, and the different areas of the parental role performance?

The research perspective here is that female single parent households are not inherently pathological, incomplete, or deviant. It is not the intention to predict beforehand that this type of family "needs" to go through a transitional phase, and eventually become "better" by again becoming a nuclear family in the traditional manner, i.e., man or husband present. The goal is to posit hypotheses to see what factors and processes will enable this type of family to function adequately and harmoniously, so that the needs of all the members are met, the mother included, not just the children.

Several Policy Recommendations

There are a number of structural patterns and factor that have tremendous impacts on female single parents, social forces that affect each female single parents in many ways. Most of the patterns operate to create institutionalized gender-based inequalities, prejudice and discrimination, i.e., sexism. Because these practices are seemingly invisible and operate through large bureaucratic organizations that reflect unequal access to power, opportunities and resources, female single parents are affected negatively and disproportionately. A number of major changes are necessary at the policy level.

It is necessary for the changes to include policy makers and corporate decision-makers. Gender-segregation in the workplaces hurts women. Incentives must be provided that encourage government and corporate elites to give women equal access to job training programs and non-sexist promotion and evaluation procedures. Pay inequities for comparable work should be eliminated and incentives provided for businesses and employers to provide training, education, and realistic child-care policies that recognize that there is no longer a mutually-exclusive dichotomy of work and family responsibilities because female single parents work outside the home in greater proportion than women in any other marital category or status. However, they still have to provide child-care, since so few of the absent, non-custodial fathers end up with the children. Adequate, affordable, and quality housing and transportation systems should be provided by government and business that take into account the unique needs of working single parents. Major resources need to be allocated to providing high-quality, flexible, day-care centers available to all working mothers regardless of income. Employers should provide employees benefit packages that reflect the needs of the working female single mothers and not just their children. The workplace should minimize job and family role strains.

Professional Providers

Intervention strategies for professional helpers should emphasize that being a female single parent is a worthy and legitimate status. Female single parents should be given basic information and options for resources and decisions that reflect their needs as they see and define them, and that also recognize that female single parents know what is best for themselves and their children, if they have options and informations, and access to decent resources.

Female single parents should have available resources to help them develop interaction skills to cope adequately as single parents, and to develop their own informal and formal support networks. Development of emotional and financial resources and support networks takes time, planning, and experience. It might be emphasized that internal support derives from making some time available for herself to meet her own needs without guilt or accusations. It is normal to need time to oneself and for oneself, and help from other people. The thrust of intervention should not force her to get into ill-advised marriages as a solution to her problems and needs. Her skills as a single parent and their enhancement should be the primary goal.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

DATE OF MARRIAGE: _____

DATE OF DIVORCE: _____

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: _____

AGE AND GENDER OF EACH CHILD: _____

Social Support System

Financial Support

1. Are you currently:
 0. _____ Unemployed
 1. _____ Employed
2. What was your total family income from all sources for last year before deductions?
 0. _____ Less than \$5,000
 1. _____ \$5,000-\$14,999
 2. _____ \$15,000 and above
3. As part of your divorce settlement, did a court award you child-support payments?
 0. _____ Support not required (awarded)
 1. _____ Support required
4. How many times, in the past twelve months, has your ex-husband missed a child support payment?
 0. _____ He is not required to make child-support payments
 1. _____ (Write in the number of times he has missed)
5. How much money, on the average, does your ex-husband pay in child-support per month? \$ _____
6. How many grades of school have you completed?
 1. _____ Less than a high school diploma
 2. _____ High school graduate
 3. _____ Beyond a high school diploma, but less than a baccalaureate degree
 4. _____ Baccalaureate degree or beyond

Emotional Support

Please use one of the following categories to answer questions

1, 2, and 3:

0. No one

1. Primary relative(s)

2. Friends and Acquaintances

1. _____ To whom do you turn to first when you are feeling sad, lonely, or depressed, or when you just need to talk to someone?
2. _____ To whom do you turn to first when you need advice about your children or when you have problems with your children?
3. _____ To whom do you turn to first when you have a problem in a relationship with a man?

Use one of the following categories to answer questions

4-10:

0. Never

1. Once a month or so

2. Several times a week

4. _____ How often do you see your parent(s)?

5. _____ How often do you see your ex-husband?

6. _____ How often do you see your brother(s)?

7. _____ How often do you see your sister(s)?

8. _____ How often do you see your best friend(s)?

9. _____ How often do you see your ex-husband's relatives?

10. _____ How often do you see your closest friend from work?
11. How often do you attend church services? 0. _____ Never
 1. _____ Once or twice a month 2. _____ At least once a week.
12. If you work away from home, how are the children cared for? 0. _____ They care for themselves 1. _____
 Regular public school or day-care center 2. _____
 Friend(s) 3. _____ Relative(s).
13. In general, how would you rate the quality of child-care available to your children? 1. _____ Poor or fair
 2. _____ Good 3. _____ Excellent.

Parental Role Performance

Please use one of the following categories to answer questions 1-9:

0. Never
1. Very Little
2. Moderate Amount
3. A Good Bit
4. A Very Great Deal
1. Does any one of your children have a medical problem, chronic illness, or disabling condition? _____
2. Does any one of your children have slow development or a learning difficulty (speech, reading, etc.) in school?

3. Does any one of your children have a behavioral or emotional problem?_____
4. _____How much difficulty do you have now taking care of the children when they are sick?
5. _____How much difficulty do you have now spending time with your children reading, playing, picnicing, and so on?
6. _____Do you now have more difficulty in disciplining and controlling your children by having to spank them more than before the divorce?
7. _____Do you now have more difficulty in disciplining and controlling your children by having to yell and scream more since the divorce?
8. _____How much difficulty do you have now in talking with your children about their problems and experiences?
9. _____How much difficulty do you have now with feelings of being overwhelmed by the demands of the children?

APPENDIX II

Gamma

Coefficient Values:

Appropriate Category:

+1.00	Perfect Positive Association
+0.70 to +0.99	Very Strong Positive Association
+0.50 to +0.69	Substantial Positive Association
+0.30 to +0.49	Moderate Positive Association
+0.10 to +0.29	Low Positive Association
+0.01 to +0.09	Negligible Positive Association
0.00	No Association
-0.01 to -0.09	Negligible Negative Association
-0.10 to -0.29	Low Negative Association
-0.30 to -0.49	Moderate Negative Association
-0.50 to -0.69	Substantial Negative Association
-0.70 to -0.99	Very Strong Positive Association
-1.00	Perfect Negative Association

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