

PATERNAL DEPRIVATION IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS:
A COMPARISON BETWEEN ADOLESCENT NEGRO GIRLS AND
ADOLESCENT MEXICAN-AMERICAN GIRLS FROM
FATHERLESS HOMES

by

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This study could not have been achieved without the love and understanding of my wife Noemi.

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CHAPTER I

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was to ascertain the association between the father's absence and the social functioning of girls in minority groups. Girls need both parents to serve as models to learn values and to develop attitudes and self-identification.¹ The girls studied were members of the Negro and Mexican-American ethnic groups and came from families who were recipients of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare.² A basic aim of this study was to obtain data about the girls' intellectual, emotional, social, and self-concept adjustment. It was assumed that a

¹ Absence of the father refers to his being out of the home due to reasons of death, divorce or desertion.

² Social functioning refers to the girl's ability to relate to authority figures such as teachers, her peer group, and the opposite sex, and her ability to achieve in the academic phase of school.

¹Waller, Gladys and Seymour S. Berkson, "Cultural and Individual Variables in the Integration of Girls," Culture and Society: Readings from the Negro Cultural Studies, ed. Marvin K. Opler (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 210.

²and refers to the Aid to Families of Dependent Children Program.

CHAPTER I

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The focus of this study was to ascertain the association between the father's absence¹ and the social functioning² of girls in minority groups. Girls need both parents to serve as models to learn values and to develop attitudes and self-identification.³ The girls studied were members of the Negro and Mexican-American ethnic groups and came from families who were recipients of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare.⁴ A basic aim of this study was to obtain data about the girls' intellectual, emotional, social, and cultural adjustment. It was assumed that a

¹Absence of the father refers to his being out of the home due to reasons of death, divorce or desertion.

²Social functioning refers to the girl's ability to relate to authority figures such as teachers, her peer group, and the opposite sex, and her ability to achieve in the academic phase of school.

³Thomas Gladwin and Seymour B. Sarason, "Cultural and Individual Personality Integration on Truk," Culture and Mental Health: Cross-Cultural Studies, ed. Marvin K. Opler (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 210.

⁴AFDC refers to the Aid to Families of Dependent Children program.

difference existed in the kind of adjustment experienced by Negro girls as compared with the adjustment of Mexican-American girls.

Theoretical Formulation

It is within the family setting that the child's concept of self and of others is learned. For a child, identification with both parents furthers development of values, attitudes and certain behaviors such as sex roles. Particularly for males and females, a meaningful identification with the parent of the opposite sex is considered of critical importance for subsequent socialization.¹ Within this frame of reference, it was assumed that the absence of the father will have a special effect upon children of either sex.

Most studies have focused upon the effects of the father's absence upon the male child. However, the literature reveals that girls have a number of issues to resolve such as problems of self-esteem, identity, and role clarification in order to achieve self-actualization.² If absent, the girl is handicapped in learning the similarities

¹Gladwin and Sarason, op. cit., p. 216.

²Self-actualization refers to the girl's feelings of esteem, her ability to derive satisfaction from peer group relations and to attain personal objectives.

and differences in male and female roles.¹

This study was undertaken as a response to the need for more knowledge regarding behavior and developmental problems of girls from fatherless homes. Findings of this nature could have both theoretical and pragmatic value in helping welfare departments and mental health clinics to provide improved services. Social workers in these agencies often work directly or indirectly with families in which the father is absent. Knowledge regarding the effects of the father's absence upon the adjustment of the girl can assist social work practitioners in knowing when and how to approach the female child and her problems. In short, more refined knowledge about factors which enhance or deter growth and development is valued for therapeutic intervention and for primary intervention goals.

It would appear that the effects of a fatherless home upon the girl might be visible in the school setting; not having a father in the home could result in her experiencing problems with teachers (particularly male) and other authority figures there. Further, his absence could deprive her of the male model essential for developing her understanding of the male's role and clarifying her own sex role;

¹Everett S. Ostrovsky, Children Without Men (New York: Collier Books, 1966), pp. 146-147.

an uncertainty about her own identity could result in an inability to relate to members of the opposite sex or an overly aggressive relationship with it, such as sexual promiscuity.

The foregoing statements assume added importance when applied to girls from minority groups such as the Negro and Mexican-American. The socialization process for girls in these ethnic groups is made more difficult due to the larger society's discriminatory attitudes and practices toward them.¹ Racial discrimination frequently blocks these minority groups from social advancement, causing them to give up their hope of ever functioning within the larger society.²

It was assumed that Negro girls from fatherless homes would experience greater problems in growth and development than would Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes. The institution of slavery prohibited the Negro male from assuming the role as head of his household; for survival purposes, the Negro female took on this responsibility.³

¹Eli Ginzberg and Alfred S. Eichner, The Troublesome Presence (New York: The New American Library, 1966), p. 18.

²Robert C. Jones, "Ethnic Family Patterns: The Mexican-American Family in the United States," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 53 (May 1948), p. 452.

³E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Family in the United States," Social Perspectives on Behavior, ed. Herman Stein and Richard A. Cloward (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1958), p. 53.

Remnants of this family structure are still evidenced today, as the lower socioeconomic Negro home still tends to be matriarchal. The mother encourages, protects, and sets goals for the children more or less on her own.¹

In contrast, the husband-wife relationship in the Mexican-American culture emphasizes the husband's manliness and his role as authoritarian patriarch.² The concept of the extended family is also more prevalent here. If the father should die or leave the home, family honor would demand that one of the male members of the family assume the role of paternal surrogate.³ Grandfathers, uncles or older brothers frequently function as the girl's model or protector.

Purpose

The central purpose of this study was to consider the effects of the father's absence upon adolescent Negro girls and Mexican-American girls from families who are recipients of the AFDC program in the Kings County Department of Public

¹Ginzberg and Eichner, op. cit., p. 4.

²Fernando Penalosa, "Mexican Family Roles," Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 30 (November, 1958), p. 680.

³Sister Frances Jerome Woods, "Cultural Conditioning and Mental Health," Social Casework, Vol. 39 (1958), p. 332.

Welfare. Specifically, it sought to study the association between the absence of the father and the adjustment of the girls. With respect to the same point, it also focused upon determining whether there would be a significant difference in the adjustment between the Negro and the Mexican-American girls.

Problem

The location of this study was the Kings County Department of Public Welfare, AFDC division, and four schools in the county. The formulation of the hypothesis was based upon the assumption that the absence of the father has effect upon the social functioning of adolescent Negro and Mexican-American girls. The following hypotheses were formulated to test this assumption.

Working Hypothesis: Adolescent Negro girls from fatherless homes tend to have greater problems in social functioning than adolescent Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes.

Null Hypothesis: Ethnic origin is not a significant factor in the social functioning of adolescent Negro girls from fatherless homes or adolescent Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes.

Statistical Hypothesis: A greater proportion of adolescent Negro girls from fatherless homes than of adolescent Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes will display problems in social functioning.

If the null hypothesis can be rejected, it might be possible to conclude that there is an association between

the family's ethnic origin and the girl's adjustment in adolescence. If the working hypothesis is accepted, then it might be possible to conclude that cultural patterns such as the extended family may enhance the social functioning of the adolescent Mexican-American girl. This finding would also suggest that despite the father's absence in the Mexican-American home, the girl's family remains a relatively stable unit. On the other hand, it would appear that the adolescent Negro girl's adjustment is impeded due to the absence of male relatives to serve as a model for her growth and development. Social workers seeking to reach these girls could do so more effectively if they were knowledgeable about the Negro culture, including its values and family structure. For example, they could articulate the needs of the girls to their mothers and jointly assist in meeting them.

If the null hypothesis is accepted, the possibility that the family's ethnic origin is not of central significance to the girl's adjustment must be considered. In addition, the research design may not be refined to a sufficient degree to identify certain behavior problems. The possibility also exists that the study sample was not large enough accurately to portray the girls' social functioning problems.

In addition to testing the stated hypotheses, four

basic questions were formulated better to understand the samples studied:

1. What does the pertinent literature say about the effect of the father's absence upon the girl?
2. How do 30 demographic and family structure characteristics differentiate adolescent Negro and Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes?
3. How did 3 questionnaire items completed by teachers and school counselors differentiate school performance levels for Negro and Mexican-American girls.
4. Did four interview items regarding social functioning differentiate the adjustment of a selected sub-sample of Negro and Mexican-American girls?

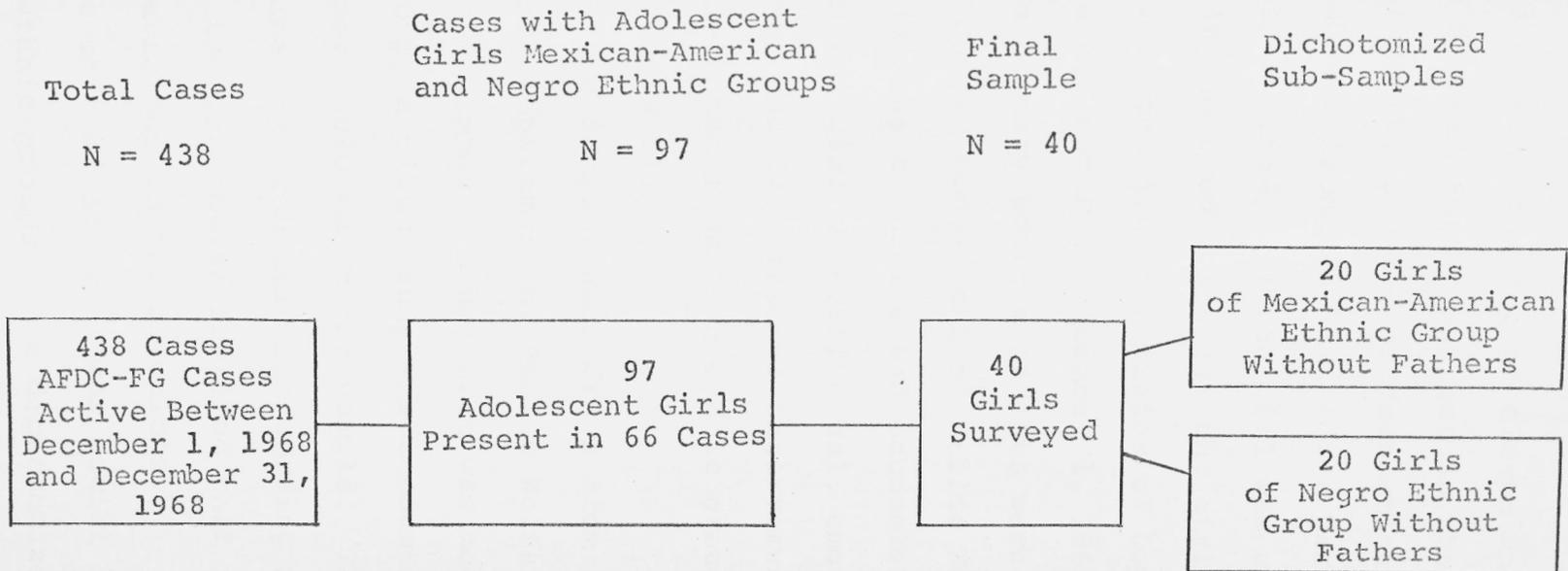
Methods and Procedures

The study sample consisted of twenty girls of Negro ethnic group and twenty girls of the Mexican-American group whose natural fathers were absent from the home. The sample came from Aid to Families of Dependent Children cases in the Kings County Department of Public Welfare. A flow chart is used to indicate the final dichotomized sample (see figure 1 on page 9).

The following criteria were set up for the subjects:¹

¹It was necessary to revise the criteria due to the small size of the population from which the sample was drawn.

FIGURE 1
FLOW CHART



Shrinkage
372 cases did not contain an adolescent girl between the ages 11 and 15.

Shrinkage of 57 cases:
52 cases the father had not been absent from the home for at least two years; 4 lived a great distance from the agency setting; and 1 lived with her grandmother.

(1) A girl between the age of eleven and fifteen years in which the natural father was not in the home; (2) due to reasons of death, divorce or desertion, the natural father had been absent from the home for a period of two years as of December 1, 1968; (3) the girl was attending school at the time of the study; and (4) the girl and her mother were recipients of the Aid to Families of Dependent Children program in the month of December 1, 1968.

The primary sources of data were: (1) case records of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare; (2) school records; (3) the teacher's and counselor's perceptions with respect to the girl's intellectual, emotional and social functioning; and (4) personal interviews with five girls, randomly selected from each ethnic group (see Interview Guide, Appendix B).

The two samples were drawn from a master list of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare. Each girl was given a code number. A key list was made; and, from each ethnic group, a pilot study was conducted on three subjects who were not included in the sample. They were interviewed to determine any problems with wording of the questions; a review of the procedures revealed that it was not necessary to make revisions in the questions.

The unit of analysis was social functioning dichotomized by ethnic groups. The dichotomized sample consisted

of twenty adolescent Negro girls from fatherless homes and twenty adolescent Mexican-American girls from fatherless homes. A three point scale (Good, Fair and Poor) was used to rate the girls' adjustment in three areas: intellectual, emotional, and social. Independent ratings of the cases were made by the researcher and another researcher in the three areas cited. All cases involving one and two-step deviations were discussed by both raters. In cases involving only one-step deviation, the higher rating was used (there were seventeen one-step agreements in the Negro girls' group and twenty-five one-step agreements in the Mexican-American girls' group). In instances where there was a two-step deviation, the intermediate step was agreed upon. Only the Negro girls' group had two-step deviations (three).

After the deviations within the three areas rated (intellectual, emotional, and social) were resolved, a composite overall rating was made for each case based on a formula.¹ The ratings in the three areas and composite ratings may be seen in Figures 1 and 2 (Appendix E).

The chi square test was used to determine whether statistically significant differences were present at the .05 level.² Recapitulation tables were used in chapters

¹See Appendix D.

² $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$ o = observed frequency, e = expected frequency.

two and three to show percentages and the computed chi square with accompanying probability value for the significance of the difference. These figures were obtained by cross-tabulating the dichotomized sample of forty adolescent girls with the informational characteristics and the interview items. The data were distributed on 2 x 2, 2 x 3, and 2 x 4 frequency tables.

Summary

This study focused on determining whether there was an association between the father's absence and the social functioning of adolescent Negro and Mexican-American girls. The samples were obtained from Aid to Families of Dependent Children cases that were active in the Kings County Department of Public Welfare between December 1, 1968, and December 31, 1968. A working and null hypothesis was formulated to test this assumption. Chapter II contains a review of pertinent previous research, information about the agency setting, and a description of the study sample. The questionnaire and the interview guide data are analyzed in Chapter III. Chapter IV summarizes the primary findings and discusses the implications for practice and research.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Review of the Literature

A review of pertinent literature reveals that few studies have focused on the absent father situation with regard to adjustment problems of the female child. Ostrovsky found girls not having a male model in the home appeared to lack the basic understanding of a father-child relationship. These girls, feeling inadequate, were prone "to create" an imagined father of their own who possessed superhuman powers and qualities.¹ Tiller reported that girls from fatherless families tended to display a high degree of dependency upon the mother, pseudo-maturity, and idealization of the father.²

Lynn and Sawrey compared the adjustment of girls from father-absent families with the adjustment of girls from families in which the fathers were present. They found that

¹Ostrovsky, op. cit., p. 8.

²As cited by D. B. Lynn and W. L. Sawrey, "The Effects of Father-Absence on Norwegian Boys and Girls," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, Vol. 59 (September, 1959), p. 258.

girls from father-absent families experienced poor adjustment and were more dependent upon the mother than were girls from families with fathers.¹

Bach, in a study related to girls in doll-play fantasy, found that girls from families with absent fathers produced fewer aggressive fantasies than did girls from father-present families, and created an idealistic fantasy picture of the father. In addition, the fathers displayed little hostility and exerted no authority. The girls from the group with a father in the home were more overtly aggressive toward the father-doll figure.²

A study by Shafer, Pintler, and Sears focused on two groups of preschool children from father-present and father-absent homes in doll-play situations. The children from homes where the father was absent tended to fantasize less aggression than did the children who had fathers in the home. The children who had fathers in their homes were more overtly aggressive toward the doll depicting the father figure.³

¹Ibid., p. 262.

²G. R. Bach, "Fatherless Fantasies and Father Typing in Father-Separated Children," Child Development, Vol. 17 (March-June, 1946), p. 71.

³E. S. Shafer, M. N. Pintler and P. S. Sears, "Effects of Father Separation on Pre-School Children's Doll Play Aggression," Child Development, Vol. 17 (1946), p. 2.

Ball compared the school adjustment of students from broken homes with that of students from homes which were intact. Findings revealed significant differences between these two groups with regard to school adjustment.¹

In general, the literature appears to indicate that the absence of the father does have some effect upon the development and behavior of girls. Findings tend to indicate that these girls fantasize ideal fathers, have difficulty in expressing aggression, distort expectations of father roles, and have difficulty in adjusting to the school setting. In addition, some authors suggest the possibility of other factors such as society's attitude toward the broken home as contributing to the girl's adjustment problems.

The Agency Setting

The Kings County Department of Public Welfare is situated in Hanford, California, in the central San Joaquin Valley of California. The county itself, ranks thirty-fifth in land area within the State and has a population of approximately sixty-eight thousand persons.

The Kings County Department of Public Welfare operates under the supervision of the California State Department of

¹John C. Ball, Social Deviancy and Adolescent Personality (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962), p. 67.

Social Welfare.¹ It provides a broad range of programs such as Aid to Families of Dependent Children, Aid to the Totally Disabled, Aid to the Blind, Old Age Security, Medi-Cal, Child Welfare, and a General Relief program.

The Aid to Families of Dependent Children program was originated under Title IV of the 1935 Social Security Act as amended.² In California, the program is administered on the county level by the Department of Public Welfare, which functions as a delegate agency for the Board of Supervisors, but operates within guidelines laid down by the Federal and State Governments. In order to be considered dependent, the child must have been deprived of a parent's support due to his absence, death, incapacitation, or unemployment.³

There were 1,234 open cases in the Aid to Families of Dependent Children's program when this study was conducted (December, 1968). The Anglo ethnic group comprised the largest segment, 796 clients (65 per cent). The Mexican-American group ranked second with 261 clients (21 per cent),

¹California, Welfare and Institution's Code (1963) Sec. 425-444.

²William Haber and Wilbur J. Cohen, Readings in Social Security (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), pp. 107, 116.

³Information regarding the Agency setting and the description of its programs was obtained from an interview with Paul Allen, Jr., Director of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare on February 7, 1969.

and the Negro group of 172 clients (14 per cent) ranked third. All of the girls who participated in this study were in families involved in the AFDC-FG program.¹

Description of the Sample

The study sample of forty adolescent girls was selected from 438 AFDC-FG cases active in December, 1968. Three hundred cases were rejected, as they did not contain an adolescent girl between the ages of eleven and fifteen years. Ninety-seven cases were found that had girls eleven to fifteen years of age. Fifty-two girls were not used, as the father had not been absent for at least two years. Four girls were rejected as they lived a great distance from the agency setting. One girl was not used as she lived with her grandmother. The baseline characteristics used in this study were selected for the purpose of identifying factors which might contribute to the girl's stability and patterns of functioning. (see Table 1, page 18)

In Table 1 (see page 18), the findings on the baseline characteristics of the total sample reveal that almost half (19) of the girls were thirteen to fourteen years of age. An inspection of the item on education revealed that

¹AFDC-FG refers to Aid to Families of Dependent Children's Family Group.

TABLE 1
SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENT
GIRLS OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN AND
NEGRO ETHNIC GROUPS

Characteristics	Group A Mexican-A.		Group B Negro		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Age:						
11 - 12.99	6	30	8	40	14	35.0
13 - 14.99	9	45	10	50	19	47.5
15 and over	5	25	2	10	7	17.5
	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Grade in School:						
5th and 6th	2	10	6	30	8	30.0
7th and 8th	11	55	12	60	23	57.5
9th and 10th	7	35	2	10	9	22.5
	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Length of Residence:						
Under 4 years	2	10	3	15	5	12.5
4 years or over	18	90	17	85	35	87.5
	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Ordinal Position:						
Only child and first born	4	20	4	20	8	20.0
Second and third born	8	40	10	50	18	45.0
Fourth, fifth, sixth born and over	8	40	6	30	14	35.0
	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Family Size:						
5 or less persons	10	66.7	12	85.7	22	75.9
Over 5 persons	5	33.3	2	14.3	7	24.1
	<u>15^a</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>14^b</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>100.0</u>

^aFive of the families in Group A include two or more sisters.

^bSix of the families in Group B include two or more sisters.

the majority (16) of the girls were in the eighth grade. Most (35) of the girls had lived in the same community for four or more years. Slightly more than one-fourth (11) of the girls occupied the second born position in their families. Over three-fourths (22) of the girls came from families of five or less children.

A survey of the sub-sample of Mexican-American girls revealed that twenty-five percent (4) were over fifteen years of age. Thirty-five percent (7) were in grades nine and ten (grades approximating middle adolescence). The families of the Mexican-American girls displayed a high tendency to remain in the same locality. Ninety percent (18) of the girls had lived in the same community for four or more years. An equal number (4) of the girls occupied the second, third and sixth or higher positions in their families. Approximately two-thirds (10) of the girls came from families of five or fewer children.

However, an equal number (2) of Negro girls were over fifteen years of age and were in grades nine and ten. The majority (17) of the Negro girls came from families which had resided in the same locality for four or more years. Slightly more than one-third (7) of the Negro girls occupied the second born position in their families. Over three-fourths of the girls came from families of five or fewer children.

An inspection of the Negro and the Mexican-American girls on the items of age and grade revealed some differences. Five of the Mexican-American girls were fifteen years of age or over as opposed to only two of the Negro girls. Seven of the Mexican-American girls were in the upper grade level (9th to 10th years) as compared to two of the Negro girls. The groups were similar with regard to the item on number of years in the same community (see Table 1); eighteen of the Mexican-American girls had lived in the same community for four or more years as opposed to seventeen of the Negro girls.

One trend revealed the Negro group as having a higher number of girls (7) in the second born position than did the Mexican-American group. Another trend indicated that more Negro girls (12) came from families of five or fewer children than did the Mexican-American girls.

Table 2 depicts most of the total sample (21) as being under six years of age when they lost their fathers. By comparison, most of the Mexican-American sub-sample lost their fathers between the ages of 6 months and two years. A majority of the Negro girls (12) lost their fathers between the ages of seven and ten years. However, a comparison between the Mexican-American and Negro girls revealed that most of the Mexican-Americans had lost their fathers at an earlier age. Thirteen Mexican-American girls were under

TABLE 2
AGE WHEN THE FATHER
LEFT THE HOME

Age Father Left Home	<u>Group A</u>		<u>Group B</u>		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Less than 6 years	13	65	8	40	21	52.5
7 to 10	5	25	9	45	14	35.0
11 to 13	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12.5</u>
Totals	20	100	20	100	40	100.0

seven years of age when they lost their fathers, as opposed to eight of the Mexican-American girls.

The two ethnic groups were similar with regard to the presence of significant others in the home.¹ Seventeen of the Mexican-American girls lived with only one adult, the mother, in comparison to sixteen of the Negro girls.

A survey of the data in Table 1 reveals that only one of the six demographic items, grade in school, significantly differentiated between the Mexican-American and the Negro girls. Six of the Mexican-American girls in grades seven and eight were rated in the high adjustment category as opposed to four of the Negro girls. A comparison of the girls by the other four identifying items of age, length of residence, ordinal position, and family size tended to indicate that there was little difference between the two ethnic groups.

Table 4 contains data on the mothers of the total sample. The age range was 30 to 53 years, and the mean age 34.8 years. A survey of the Mexican-American mothers revealed that the age range was also 30 to 53 years. While the mean age was 38.6 years. In contrast, the age range of

¹Significant others refers to father figures such as stepfathers, older brothers, brothers-in-law, and unrelated single males. Three Mexican-American girls had paternal surrogates residing in their households as compared to four of the Negro girls.

TABLE 3

BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF FORTY ADOLESCENT
GIRLS OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN AND
NEGRO ETHNIC GROUP

Ident. Items	Study Sample				No.	Percent	Chi Square Value	d.f.	Probability Value
	Mex.-Amer. (N=20)		Negro (N=20)						
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent					
Age:									
11 - 12.99	6	30.0	8	40.0	14	35.0	.177	2	.95 P .90
13 - 14.99	9	45.0	10	50.0	19	47.5	.516	2	.90 P .75
15 - 15.99	5	25.0	2	10.0	7	17.5	.364	1	.75 P .50
Grade in School:									
5th and 6th	2	10.0	6	30.0	8	40.0	.333	2	.90 P .75
7th and 8th	11	55.0	12	60.0	23	57.5	.665	2	.75 P .50
9th and 10th	7	35.0	2	10.0	9	22.5	2.217	2	.90 P .75
Length of Residence									
Four years or over	18	90.0	17	85.0	35	87.5	.101	2	.95 P .90
Ordinal Position:									
Only child and first born	4	20.0	4	20.0	8	40.0	.364	1	.75 P .50
Second and third born	8	40.0	10	50.0	18	45.0	.500	2	.90 P .75
Fourth, fifth, sixth born and over	8	40.0	6	15.0	14	35.0	.522	2	.90 P .75

Family Size:									
5 or less									
Persons	10	66.7	12	85.5	22	75.9	.213	2	.90 P .75
Over 5									
Persons	5	33.3	2	14.3	7	24.1	.272	2	.90 P .75

Note: For the purpose of computing chi square the under four years category was deleted.

^aFive of the families in the Mexican-American group include two or more sisters.

^bSix of the families in the Negro group include two or more sisters.

TABLE 4
MOTHER'S DATA

	Group A	Group B	Total
Age:			
Range	30 to 53 yrs	30 to 50 yrs	
Mean	38.6 yrs	41.5 yrs	
Education (No. of Years of Formal Schooling) ^a			
7 to 9 years	12	8	20
9 to 11 years	1	3	4
11 years and over	0	1	1

^aN=13 for Group A as four of the mothers have more than one daughter in the sample and data for three mothers was not available. N=12 for Group B as six of the mothers have more than one daughter in the sample and educational information was not available for two of the mothers.

the Negro mothers was 30 to 50 years and the mean age 41.5 years. A comparison of the two groups of mothers revealed that the Mexican-American mothers' age range was slightly wider but that the mean age was lower than that of the Negro group. The majority of the mothers (12) in both groups were housewives.

Only minimal data were available on the fathers in each group. The age range of the Mexican-American fathers was narrower (34 to 41 Years) than was that of the Negro fathers (34 to 54 years). However, the mean age of the Negro fathers was 42.4 years, as compared to 36.3 years for the Mexican-American fathers. Educational information was not available for most of the fathers. The majority of the Mexican-American fathers were farm laborers. This employment information was not available for most of the Negro fathers.

Summary

Two groups of twenty adolescent girls composed the sample for this inquiry. These forty girls came from families who were recipients of the Aid to Families of Dependent Children Program between December 1, and December 31, 1968, in the Kings County Department of Public Welfare. Findings revealed that when the baseline characteristics were cross-tabulated with the Mexican-American and the Negro

girls' groups, only one of the six items significantly differentiated the social functioning of these two ethnic groups.

Chapter III will focus on an analysis of the responses to four questionnaire items and four interview questions. These items are compared by ethnic group. The results of the Chi Square will be used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The focus of this chapter is on the analysis of data obtained by the three instruments used in this inquiry: a research schedule, a questionnaire, and an interview guide. The research schedule was used to collect identifying information from the case records of the Kings County Department of Public Welfare regarding the girls in the study sample and their family characteristics;¹ the questionnaire was applied in the schools to obtain the teachers' and counselors' perceptions of the girls' social functioning;² in order to provide supplementary information regarding the girls' adjustment, the interview guide was administered in the homes of a random of girls from both ethnic groups.³

Table 5 contains information regarding the school

¹Only partial data were available on seventeen items listed on the research schedule, as this type of information was not always available in the case records.

²The intellectual, emotional, and social areas were also included in the research schedule as some of the teachers were unfamiliar with the social functioning of many of the girls. The school counselors' perceptions were obtained in this regard.

³Ethnic groups refers to the Mexican-American and Negro girls.

TABLE 5

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT OF FORTY ADOLESCENT MEXICAN-AMERICAN
AND NEGRO GIRLS FROM FATHERLESS HOMES

School Adjustment Rating ^a	Mexican-American Girls (N=20)		Negro Girls		Total	Percent
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
High Adjustment	8	40	8	40	16	40.0
Medium Adjustment	9	45	8	40	17	42.5
Low Adjustment	3	15	4	20	7	17.5

^aHigh adjustment refers to a rating of "good," medium adjustment to a "fair" rating, and low adjustment to a "poor" rating.

^bThe Chi Square test was not applied, due to the similarity of the frequencies obtained.

adjustment and/or social functioning of the girls. In examining the total sample, it is observed that the girls are nearly equally distributed over the three adjustment categories. The medium adjustment bracket contains the largest number of girls. The high adjustment category ranks second with 16 girls.

A survey of the Mexican-American and the Negro girls' groups revealed that there is no significant difference in their school adjustment. The Mexican-American ethnic group has a slightly higher number of girls (9) in the medium adjustment bracket than does the Negro girls group (8). These two groups have an equal number of girls (8) in the high adjustment category.

Six identifying items were cross-tabulated to see whether there was a significant difference in the school adjustment between the Negro and the Mexican-American girls. An inspection of these data revealed that only one of the six descriptive items (grade in school) significantly differentiated between the two ethnic groups. The Mexican-American group has six girls (in the 7th and 8th grades) in the high adjustment category as opposed to four of the Negro group.

It is observed that the other four demographic items of age, length of residence, ordinal position, and family size did not differentiate between the two ethnic groups nor

did they approach significance. (see Table 3 pages 23 and 24 in Chapter II)

Interview Data

Ten girls (five from the Negro group and five from the Mexican-American group) were randomly drawn and interviewed to provide supplementary data regarding the girls' school adjustment (see Table 6). The interviewer sought to assess each girl's outlook on life, who the important persons in her world were, the nature of her worries and of her attitudes toward school.

All of the Mexican-American girls excepting one (case 2), displayed a considerable degree of anxiety at the beginning of the interview. However, with the exception of case 3, all of the girls appeared to relax as the interview proceeded.

All of the girls indicated a positive outlook toward life, expressing definite satisfaction with the way things were going for them. Case one stated that she enjoyed being a teenager. Only one girl (case 3) listed both parents as being the significant persons in her life. Case two indicated that her aunt and her peer group were the most important persons to her. Three girls (cases 1, 4 and 5) listed obtaining good grades and getting into college as their chief worries. Case two was the only girl who expressed a dislike

TABLE 6

DESCRIPTIVE DATA ON TEN ADOLESCENT GIRLS
FROM FATHERLESS HOMES

Case	Age	Ethnic Group	Grade	Attitude Toward Life	Important Persons	Worries	Attitudes Toward School
1	13	Mexican-American	7	Things are going fine. Easy to be a teenager.	Mother. No mention made of her father.	About grades and doing well in school.	Positive attitude toward school, teachers, and peers. Sees school as preparing one to be successful. Wants to be a secretary.
2	15	Mexican-American	10	Life if fine. The world is a good place to live.	Friends and an Aunt. The Aunt has a sense of humor and listens to her problems.	Stated none.	Hasn't considered a career. Strongly dislikes school; likes some of her teachers. Gets along fine with peers.
3	13	Mexican-American	7	Things were fine with her.	Parents. Corresponds with father. Likes adults.	Stated none.	Likes school, teachers, and peers. Admires her science teacher. Wants to be a nurse.

4	14	Mexican-American	8	Enjoys life. Things are alright for her.	Mother. Made no mention of her father.	Getting good grades.	Likes school, teachers, peers. Sees school as valuable to prepare for a occupation. Wants to be a secretary.
5	14	Mexican-American	8	Life is pleasant for her.	Mother. Made no mention of her father.	About getting into college, becoming someone.	Enjoys school. Likes her teachers, and peers. Has two close friends.
6	13	Negro	8	Enjoys life.	Mother and siblings. Made no mention of father.	None stated.	Likes school, teachers, and gets along well with peers. Lots of friends. Wants to be a nurse.
7	14	Negro	9	World is an enjoyable place to live. Not difficult to be a teenager.	No one.	None.	Dislikes school; a waste of time. Dislikes her teachers and likes her peers.

Case	Age	Ethnic Group	Grade	Attitude Toward Life	Important Persons	Worries	Attitudes Toward School
8	15	Negro	9	Enjoys life.	Parents. Father visits often; takes her to school. Feels close to him.	Stated none.	Likes school, teachers, and peers. Does not see any value in school.
9	11	Negro	5	Things were going fine for her.	Mother.	Stated none.	Likes school and all her teachers but one. Likes her peers. Has several friends.
10	14	Negro	8	Enjoys life.	Mother.	Getting old; old people have no fun.	Likes school and female teachers. Does not like male teachers because they are too strict. Lots of friends. Wants to be a professional dancer.

for school. Two girls (cases 1 and 4) stated career aspirations, desiring to be secretaries.

In the Negro group, two girls (cases 9 and 10) were reluctant to participate in the interview. They appeared to have considerable difficulty in relating to the interviewer.

All five of the Negro girls stated that they enjoyed life. Only one of the girls (case 8) indicated that both parents were important to her. Another girl (case 7) stated that no one was of significance to her. Case 6 listed her mother and siblings as the significant persons in her life. All the girls except one (case 10 worries about getting old) stated that they had no worries. However, these girls did not appear to be very certain of their beliefs.

Two girls (cases 7 and 8) viewed school as a waste of time, while one girl (case 10) expressed a dislike for male teachers. Two girls (cases 6 and 10) stated future vocational choices, desiring respectively to be a nurse and a professional dancer.

In observing the responses of the Negro and the Mexican-American girls in the sub-samples, some similarities and differences were noted. All of the girls in both groups stated that they enjoyed life. The majority of the girls in the two ethnic groups listed only their mothers as the important persons in their lives and had positive attitudes toward school.

The Mexican-American girls indicated that they had worries; however, the Negro girls listed no worries, but appeared unsure of their statements. Further, more Mexican-American girls tended to display positive attitudes toward school; that is an ability to see it as having specific value for them.

Summary

A survey of the total sample revealed no significant difference in the school adjustment of the girls, as nearly equal numbers were rated in all three adjustment categories (high, medium and low). Further, only one demographic item, age, significantly differentiated between the Mexican-American and the Negro girls' groups.

Similar responses were obtained to a series of interview questions from two sub-samples of the Negro and the Mexican-American ethnic groups. Both groups stated a positive outlook on life, however, more Mexican-American girls tended to see school as being of specific value to them.

The final chapter will focus on the findings and interpretation of the data. Implications for social work practice and suggestions for future research will be indicated.

adolescent Negro and Mexican-American girls. The fourth question dealt with how interview items regarding the social functioning differentiated the adjustment of a selected sub-sample of adolescent Negro and Mexican-American girls.

A review of the research literature indicated that girls from fatherless homes appeared to lack the basic understanding of a father-child relationship and suffered from low self-esteem due to the lack of a father in the household. These girls were prone "to create" fantasy fathers who were endowed with superhuman powers.¹ Tiller reported that girls from fatherless homes tended to display a high degree of dependency upon the mother and idealization of the father.² Bach, in a study related to doll-play fantasy, found that girls from fatherless homes produced fewer aggressive fantasies than did girls from father-present families; that is, they experienced difficulty in acting out their hostility. These girls also created imagined fathers who had no defects or weaknesses.³

The identifying items and family structure characteristics did not significantly differentiate the social functioning of the total sample. A survey of the demographic

¹Ostrovsky, op. cit., p. 8.

²Lynn and Sawrey, op. cit., p. 258.

³Bach, op. cit., p. 71.

and family structure characteristics revealed more similarities than contrasts between the Negro and the Mexican-American girls. The majority of these items did not significantly differentiate between these two groups of girls. However, the item grade in school revealed a significant difference in the social functioning of the two ethnic groups. More Mexican-American girls than Negro girls attending junior high school (grades 7 and 8) were rated in the high adjustment category. The reason for this finding is a little unclear. However, in speculating, the possibility exists that perhaps cultural resources (exposure to male models via the extended family) may be enhancing the Mexican-American girl's ability to relate to authority figures, particularly male teachers, who tend to be more prominent in secondary schools than in the elementary school levels.

While not significant, the item of age indicated that the Mexican-American girls tended to be older than did the Negro girls, but they also tended to have lost their fathers at an earlier age. The Mexican-American mothers were younger than the Negro mothers, but tended to have fewer years of formal education.

An examination of the teachers' and school counselors' questionnaire items did not significantly differentiate the social functioning of the total sample, as the majority of the girls were rated to be making a fairly positive adjustment

(medium-high). Further, these questionnaire items revealed no significant difference between the social functioning of the Negro and the Mexican-American girls. Nearly equal proportions of girls from these two ethnic groups were rated in the fair, medium, and high adjustment brackets. In examining some of the specific areas such as intellectual and social, it is to be noted that several of the girls from both ethnic groups were doing well scholastically, with some on the honor roll. Other girls were seen by their peers as leaders.

In speculating regarding the fairly positive adjustment being made by the total sample and by the two subsamples, it appears that compensating factors may be operating within the girl's family to off-set the effects of the father's absence from the home. For example, strengths of the mother, stable residence patterns, and the influence of older siblings (particularly older brothers). Some of the mothers appeared to react to the loss of their husbands by marshalling their personal abilities to meet such family responsibilities as child-rearing. The majority of the families had remained in the same community for at least eight years. A relatively nonmobile family can derive security from remaining in a town where relatives and friends are available to lend emotional support. Older siblings who have been successful in education and employment endeavors

may provide examples for the girls in this sample to follow.

An interview guide was administered to the total sample to obtain supplementary data about the girls' attitudes toward life and toward significant others. The majority of the girls expressed positive outlooks toward the world in general, but tended to list their mothers as the only significant persons in their lives. However, only the Mexican-American girls admitted to having worries. While most of the girls in both ethnic groups viewed school as a positive experience, the Mexican-American girls appeared better able to see education as serving a specific purpose for them, such as preparation for a career. These findings, while not significantly differentiating the school adjustment of the two sub-samples, tend to suggest that the Mexican-American mothers may be putting more emphasis upon the value of education than are the Negro mothers.

In conclusion, the findings sustain the null hypothesis, as the data did not significantly differentiate between the social functioning of adolescent Negro and adolescent Mexican-American girls. While the father's presence may be a factor in the adjustment of the adolescent girl, these findings suggest that other factors such as strengths in the relationship with the mothers and other variables may have influenced the coping patterns of the girls.

In evaluating the findings of this inquiry, some limitations must be considered. School records were the primary source used in obtaining the information. The amount and depth of information obtained varied in some cases, and depended upon how well the teachers knew the girl. In addition, the adjustment assessments are based on judgements.

Implications for Research

The findings of this inquiry raise additional questions regarding further research in the area. For example, would more refined criteria, a larger sample, or a longitudinal study produce the same findings as did this study? A study comparing the adjustment of boys and girls from fatherless homes to assess the effects of the father's absence upon them could be fruitful.

Implications for Practice

Although, the adjustments of a majority of the girls were rated in the medium-high adjustment category, certain girls experienced considerable difficulty in their social functioning. Some of their adjustment problems might be resolved or alleviated by early intervention by a social worker. Male social workers in welfare departments or in school settings might be able to serve as models for the girls, to clarify the role of the opposite sex or to develop

the girls' own sexual identity.

The inclusion of a social worker on the school staff places him closer to a particular girl who is experiencing adjustment problems and permit him to observe her in the school setting. Collaborative efforts of the school social worker and the teacher might be a more effective approach to dealing with the girl's social functioning difficulties.

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Boston

Clark, Robert...
New York

Cleason, Susan...
Little, ...

Erington, Brian...
Boston

Frazier, ...
New York

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APPENDICES: Attached are the current
overall results of the study for the students
in your class. Each student's score is attached
on a separate slip of paper.

We value and appreciate your cooperation in
the classroom. Your cooperation is essential
to the success of the study. We are
thankful for your cooperation.

APPENDICES

1. How many students in your class?
 2. How many students in your class were present on the day of the study?
 3. Do you have any other information to report on the study?
- Thank you for your cooperation.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX A

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Code No. _____

Date _____

Instructions: Efforts are being made to assess the current overall academic and social functioning of certain students in your class. Each student is identified by the attached slip of paper.

We value and appreciate your comments. Would you respond to the questions listed below as they pertain to the identified student. Note: Please destroy the slip of paper identifying the student. All information will be treated in a professional and confidential manner. We appreciate your cooperation and participation in this study.

1. How would you rate the performance of this girl in your class?
2. How would you rate this girl's performance with respect to the other students in your class?
3. Do you have any concerns about this girl's function in the following areas:

Intellectual: (for example, is she working below her potential?)

Emotional: (for example, does she cry in class, display overt hostility or otherwise appear in need of therapy?)

Social: (for instance, does she relate well to her peers; is she withdrawn?)

4. Is there anything else you would care to add that would assist in understanding this girl's functioning?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Code No. _____

Date _____

The researcher explained the confidential nature and the purpose of the interview (i.e., to learn how the girl feels about the status quo (her world), who is important in her life, about her concerns and problems and her attitude toward school. The interview was semi-structured and covered the following areas:

- A. Her perception of the status quo (how things are going for her, or how she feels about the world):
- B. Her perception of significant people in her life (parents, teachers, peers, and others):
- C. Concerns or problems (what kind of things does she worry about, i.e., self-esteem, school performance, family problems and social relations):
- D. School Milieu. (How does she view the class, teachers, peers, and learning.):
- E. Additional comments and observations: Other things which the child is able to relate which might assist in understanding her world.

Thank the informant and reassure her of the confidentiality of the interview.

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Code No. _____

Date _____

A. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION (The Subject)

1. Age (mo. & yr.) _____
2. Birthplace (city and state) _____
3. Residence (no. of yrs. in comm.) _____
4. Ethnic Group: Mexican _____ Negro _____
5. Ordinal position _____
6. No. of Sibs _____ Age range _____
7. Sing. others in home _____
8. I.Q. assess. _____
9. Grade _____

B. FAMILY STRUCTURE

The Mother:

10. Age _____ 11. Birthplace (city and state) _____
12. Occupation _____
13. Education (grade completed) _____
Vocational Training Program _____
14. Religious Affiliation: Catholic _____
Prot. (cite sect) _____ Jewish _____
Other (cite) _____

15. Current Marital Status: Married _____
 Divorced _____ Separated _____
 Widowed _____
16. General Physical Health _____
17. General Emotional Health _____
- The Father:
18. Age _____ 19. Birthplace (city and state) _____
20. Occupation _____
21. Education (grade completed) _____
 Vocational Training Program _____
22. Religious Affiliation: Catholic _____
 Prot. (cite sect) _____ Jewish _____
 Other (cite) _____
23. Current Marital Status: Married _____
 Divorced _____ Separated _____
 Widowed _____
24. General Physical Health _____
25. General Emotional Health _____
26. Length of absence of Father from the home _____
27. Whereabouts _____
28. Type and frequency of contact between subject and father:
- Telephone _____ Correspondence _____
 Home visits _____ None _____
29. Siblings:
- Physical disabilities _____

30. Emotional Problems _____

C. THE SUBJECT

Current Intellectual Functioning:

31. Intellectual functioning as assessed by the counselor:

32. Teacher's comments on intellectual functioning:

Current Emotional Functioning:

33. Presence of symptoms or indices of emotional disturbance:

34. Involvement with professional helpers in the school system:

D. CURRENT SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

35. Participation in extracurricular activities:

36. Leadership ability:

37. Peer relationships:

38. Classroom behavior:

39. Overall school adjustment: Excellent _____

Marginal _____ Good _____ Poor _____

40. Additional Information (Other pertinent comments):

41. Case Excerpts:

APPENDIX D

CRITERIA FOR ADJUSTMENT RATINGS

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT

Criteria:	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Academic Performance	Highly Satisfactory	Low side in some areas	Low
(b) Attitudes toward school and learning	Positive	Not pronounced	Negative
(c) Attitudes toward teachers	Positive	Not pronounced	Negative
(d) Peer relationships	Positive	Minimal	Negative

- Favorable (good) - Satisfactory academic performance, positive (or constructive) attitudes toward learning and responsibilities (e.g. homework) compatible relationships with peers.
- Favorable Qualified (fair) - Same as above but with concerns in one area.
- Unfavorable (poor) - Evidence of problems in academic performance, relationships with school teachers and peers.

APPENDIX E

FINAL JUDGMENTS: GROUP A

<u>Cases</u>	<u>Academic</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Composite</u>
1.	P	F	G	F
2.	F	G	G	G
3.	F	G	F	F
4.	P	P	F	P
5.	G	G	G	G
6.	F	G	F	F
7.	F	G	G	G
8.	G	G	F	G
9.	F	G	F	F
10.	G	G	G	G
11.	P	F	F	P
12.	P	P	F	P
13.	F	F	G	F
14.	G	G	G	G
15.	F	F	F	F
16.	G	G	G	G
17.	F	G	F	F
18.	F	G	G	G
19.	F	G	F	F
20.	F	F	F	F