

THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY

A Sociological Study of the socio-economic problems facing single parents in Port Elizabeth

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PORT ELIZABETH

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ABSTRACT

Field of Study

This study represents the first known exploratory study on the single parent family in the Port Elizabeth region.

In 1986, the Human Sciences Research Council completed a study of 300 White single parents drawn from lists of children from single parent families at 13 primary schools in the Pretoria School Board District. The report investigated the needs and problems of single parent families, the existence or lack of support facilities in the local communities, and considered and listed the positive factors found in the single parent situation.

The study described in this dissertation is a similar quantitative descriptive study using the survey method. The study provided a description of a sample of 107 White single parent families in Port Elizabeth drawn from a volunteer group. The description consisted primarily of statistical data presented as frequency and percentage distributions in tables which range the Port Elizabeth data next to that of the Pretoria study. This provided an easy means of comparison as well as some indication of what the national data might look like if such were available.

✓ The investigation included the widowed, divorced, separated and unmarried single parents, as well as the legal adoption of children by a single (never-married) person.

A questionnaire, similar to the one used in Pretoria, was constructed using both structured categories and explorative questions. These categories and questions were also incorporated into the interviews and interview schedules done by the researcher and used for comparative analysis tabulations.

The study was spatially confined to the magisterial district of Port Elizabeth and represents an exploratory study highlighting the socio-economic problems facing the single parent family.

### Results of the Study

1. Generally, results compared very well with the Pretoria study. Discrepancies were noted in those categories where large percentage variances occurred.
2. Of the Port Elizabeth sample, 9,3% consisted of unmarried/never married single parents compared to a 2,7% in the same category in the Pretoria study.
3. It was characteristic of both studies that the majority of single parent families were of more than two years duration.
4. The Port Elizabeth study appeared to have a larger proportion of unemployed and 'proprietor' single-parents who did not need financial assistance, than did the Pretoria study.
5. The majority of the single parents in the Port Elizabeth study were in the 36-45 year age category, while in the Pretoria study, the significant age category was 26-35 years..

### General Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the study illustrated the financial situation of single parents in Port Elizabeth. Household chores and employment problems were researched. The availability of facilities in the region catering for single parent families was explored. Support systems as well as the bio-psychological and social well-being of single parents was examined. Relationships between the respondents and their ex-spouses, in-laws, their parents, the children, and childrearing patterns were emphasized in the study. Finally, the perception of life satisfaction, the future, and general comments received from the single parents who participated in this study, were noted. All information gathered was processed by Computec, a computer company, whereupon the data was analysed and recorded by the researcher prior to the writing up of the research results.

Research findings showing both the positive and the negative aspects of the single parent family in Port Elizabeth were included in the study. These results formed the basis for recommendations and options for the future and are presented in the final chapter.

Personal comments made by the single parents during the interviews and written on the comment page of the questionnaire are quoted throughout the study.

Where possible, comparisons between the Pretoria study and the Port Elizabeth study, have been made.

As it was decided not to generalize broadly from findings on 107 White single parent families, this study hopes to offer important information on, and insight into, the problems and strengths of single parent families in Port Elizabeth. It also provides advisory and experimental material which could serve to benefit any researcher who might do a follow-up study in this research area in the future.

To my parents, Bert and Vi.

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## INTRODUCTION

Auguste Comte saw the family as the smallest potentially self-sufficient unit of society and believed that, "the whole human race might be conceived of as the gradual development of a single family" (Martindale, 1981 : 78). The basic thought which underlies the Port Elizabeth study is the dissolution of such a family. "Single-parent" or "one-parent" families are terms used interchangeably in this study to represent unmarried, widowed, separated or divorced parents.

The designation of specific years as 'The Year of the Youth', 'Woman', 'Family' ..., has, for the last decade, focused attention on specific areas of everyday life. Society has taken note of various facts, figures and dysfunctions relating to the specific phenomena which have received much attention and public exposure over the last few years. The single parent family is just one of the many phenomena which encompasses youth, women and the family mentioned above.

Coinciding with the more visible single parent family situations depicted in soap operas as well as the role the mass media plays in general family life, a large number of single parent families in Port Elizabeth came to the attention of the researcher. It was felt that a deeper look into the single parent phenomenon was warranted. Because single parent families had been studied in Pretoria, it was decided to undertake a similar investigation to determine the most important needs and problems single-parent families encounter in the Port Elizabeth area. Not only was the researcher interested in the needs and problems of single parents but also in their opinions.

The population of the study was limited to White single parent families in Port Elizabeth in order to contain research costs and the volume of data, and to avoid the problems which would have arisen in attempting to gain entry to the non-White areas in the current socio-political situation. Furthermore, as no figures relating to single parent families were obtainable for Urban Black populations, this section of Port Elizabeth's single parent families had necessarily to be omitted from this study. Topics which were concentrated on, were divorce and illegitimacy. As a starting point the researcher began by reviewing various sources of literature on the subject of single parent families.

(i) Literature Overview

As the number of single parent families has increased, so has public concern about them, but this does not necessarily mean that 'the public' view single parent families as an acceptable alternative form of family. It is generally found that single parent families are considered a deviant form of family from the two-parent family (Zastrow, 1982 : 31). Separation, divorce and illegitimacy still carry social stigma in many circles (Gongla, 1982 : 5; Weiss, 1979 : xii-xiii; Page, 1984 : 72). Such social attitudes do not mean that single parent families are not successful, in fact, some are more successful than stressful two-parent families (Barry, 1979 : 65-73; Bowen, 1982 : 77-85; Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981 : 276-286).

The single parent family has many facets which society condemns. Negative attitudes toward unmarried mothers for example are noted regularly in the literature (Page, 1984 : 72-155; Wallis, 1985 : 41-42). 'Stigma' is generally attached to this marital status.

The need for research in a particular field is usually derived from the popularity of, or exposure of, the subject matter by the mass media, researchers, or fact-finding missions. For purposes of clarification, the following is a resumé of the literature which led to this study.

Starting with the work by Benjamin Schlesinger (1982), there have been at least twelve reviews of literature dealing with some aspects of the single parent family, with special reference to children living in these families in the United States of America and Canada up until, and including the year, 1979. He lists these reviews in "Children's Viewpoints of Living in a One-Parent Family" as,

Reviews of the Literature - Children in One-Parent Families  
United States and Canada - 1968-1979

| <u>Author</u>            | <u>Year</u> | <u>Topic</u>                                  |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|
| Herzog, Sudia            | 1968        | Fatherless Homes                              |
| Bigner                   | 1970        | Fathering                                     |
| Brandwein, Brown, Fox    | 1974        | Divorced Mothers                              |
| Ross, Sawhill            | 1975        | Female-Headed Families                        |
| Schlesinger              | 1976        | Children of Divorce                           |
| Orthner, Brown, Ferguson | 1976        | Single Parent Fatherhood                      |
| Schlesinger              | 1976        | Motherless Families                           |
| Schlesinger              | 1978        | One-Parent Families                           |
| Luepnitz                 | 1978        | Children of Divorce-<br>Psychological Aspects |
| Lewis                    | 1978        | Single Fathers                                |
| Orthner, Lewis           | 1979        | Fathers who have custody                      |
| Longfellow               | 1979        | Children of Divorce                           |

and states that, "The authors state that much can be learned by careful analysis of detailed descriptive studies; that useful information does not have to come from neat, precise, experimental testing of discrete, theory-based variables."

(Schlesinger, 1982 : 2-3)

Schlesinger's statement (1982 : 1-2), maintaining that 18% of all American children under the age of 18 years live with one parent only, is in conflict with that of Horton and Hunt (1984 : 244), who maintain that the figure for [one parent living with children under 18 years of age (1981),] should be 7,6%. Lipman-Blumen (1984 : 111) claims that "... 19 percent of all families with children at home were maintained by one parent, up from 11 percent in 1970."

In a review of marriage and family in the U.S.A., Gongla (1982 : 9) sees the single parent family consisting of a mother and her children as a phenomenon that has become a significant family form in recent times,

The perspective of most research until recently appeared to be: when a marriage dissolves, the family dissolves; if a marriage never starts, a family never starts. But, as Sprey (1979 : 155) says: 'Divorce (or death) ends a marriage but not a family.' The family changes, but it remains a family. If we are to learn anything about this family form, we must focus on it as a functioning system and examine it in its own right.

She continues by stating that,

Most of the research gave little or no consideration to how the individual or the family interacted with and were affected by the environment outside the immediate family unit. We are left with a picture of the single parent family as divorced from the larger world - existing in a social vacuum.

(Gongla, 1982 : 12)

Single parent families have a need for many services which are not always available. Aspects such as social services, accommodation, occupational opportunities, childcare options, social prestige, financial problems and community support relating to the needs of single parent families and the lack of these facilities, are discussed in many research reports: Gongla, 1982 : 12-17; Schlesinger, 1982 : 5; Snyman, 1986 : 1-7; Weiss, 1979 : 15-293. The researcher decided to concentrate on these needs/problems in this study.

Dr Ina Snyman points out that of the 30 studies (excluding her 1986 study) done in South Africa on single parent families, all were completed between the period 1970 to 1984. These studies do not all cover the same aspects of single parent family life. King (1970), for example, researched for an unpublished M.A.-dissertation on "The unmarried mother - a theoretical and psychodynamic approach." Johnston (1984), submitted a M.A.-dissertation on "The effects of a divorce adjustment programme on a mixed sex group".

Fuchs (1980), who did a study in the Western Cape which was exploratory and descriptive and whose findings were evaluated by the present researcher, used a broad overview of literature to arrive at an understanding of one-parent families in "an as yet predominantly two-parent society". Prof Anna Steyn who delivered a paper titled "'n Navorsingsprogram vir die Gesins- en Huwelikslewe" at the Twentieth Congress of the South African Sociological Association in Durban (1-3 July 1987) gave a statistical comparative report of divorce figures in different countries and compared these to South Africa. The present researcher has selected some of these figures and reproduced them in graphic form to illustrate, comparatively, the escalation of divorce in selected countries and in South Africa between the years 1920 and 1980. The graph will be presented in the chapter dealing with divorce and serves as an illustration of divorce trends over the years in South Africa.

Previous studies reflect research interest in specific types of single-parenthood rather than on single-parenthood as an entity. The literature studied illustrates a broad study of single parenthood ranging from the divorcee (representing most of the respondents in the Port Elizabeth sample) to the legal adoption of a child by a single person. It would need a large study to explore all aspects of single parenthood. It is not the intention of the researcher to attempt such a study here.

(ii) Brief History

An examination of the history of the institution of marriage and the demands such a formal institution makes on the partners and society at large is necessary in order to understand the obligatory functions needed to maintain such an institution within a society. Only by looking back at earlier family structures, can today's single-parent phenomenon be viewed in its correct light.

In medieval times, most marriages bound a man in a legal contract with his future wife's family and, in particular, to her father. The guarantee of the accrual of financial gain to the male was virtually a prerequisite before a marriage was contracted. The future husband in turn, would offer his wife-to-be protection and would be solely responsible for her behaviour. Because, however, plagues, general diseases and wars lead to shorter life-expectancy than today, many women were left widows and had to maintain households and care for the children. Re-marriage became the norm in most social groups and in many societies, it became customary for a man to marry his brother's widow although he might already be married.

Up to the Reformation, the canon law of the church of Rome deemed marriage an unbreakable bond. Many people felt trapped within their marriage. From the Reformation on, marriage came to be treated as a civil contract regulated by the state and a contract that could be legally broken. Set rules, bookkeeping, registration, files and reports were used as a precedent for the recording of marriages. By having recourse to official documentation, the validity, or otherwise, of a marriage could be easily proved.

Millions of people throughout the world marry each year. This societal normative process presupposes that these husbands and wives will remain together until death them do part. Yet it has been said that the marriage stakes are like a lottery: "The pursuit of individual happiness through wedded love has gone far to turn marriage into a romantic lottery, ... In 1832, John Stuart Mill wrote to Harriet Taylor that 'Marriage is really, what it has been

sometimes called, a lottery : and whoever is in a state of mind to calculate chances calmly and value them correctly is not all likely to purchase a ticket. Those who marry after taking great pains about the matter, generally do but buy their disappointment dearer." (Report of the Committee on One-Parent Families. Vol. 1. July 1974 : 21).

Reviewing the general thoughts of Ralph Ober in Grollman (1969 : 143) the institution of marriage seems threatened when he says,

The average marriage lasts seven years. Six out of seven divorced persons remarry. Nearly half of all remarriages fail again. Two of every three divorces involve children, making more than half a million children affected annually by the breakup of their parents' marriage. It should also be noted for the record that one of every four minor children lives in a home that has been torn by divorce or separation.

These figures are alarming, and become even more so when we realize that the totals are augmented by the addition of some 250,000 unwed mothers each year.

(Grollman, 1969 : 143)

The obvious single parent family figure that this statement predicts for the United States of America is alarming when one considers the numbers of people involved in the single parent family situation.

The majority of people, at one time or another in their lives, marry. The resulting union is not always one of happiness or one of permanence. The following table illustrates the number of divorces in South Africa between 1974 and 1984:

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>NUMBER OF DIVORCES</u> | <u>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1974        | 9907                      | 11145                     |
| 1975        | 10730                     | 12386                     |
| 1976        | 10850                     | 13815                     |
| 1977        | 9864                      | 13019                     |
| 1978        | 11456                     | 14849                     |
| 1979        | 13813                     | 18123                     |
| 1980        | 16543                     | 21039                     |
| 1981        | 17065                     | 22167                     |
| 1982        | 17683                     | 22224                     |
| 1983        | 16661                     | 20313                     |
| 1984**      | 17568                     | 21271                     |

\*\* Sentrale Statistiekdiens: Egskeidings, Suid-Afrika, 1971.  
Verslag nr. 07-04-05.

Sentrale Statistiekdiens: Verslag nr. 07-02-17, Huwelike en  
1985 Egskeidings Blankes, Kleurlinge  
en Asiërs 1983, Suid-Afrika.

Sentrale Statistiekdiens: Huwelike en Egskeidings 1984 -  
1985 Blankes, Kleurlinge en Asiërs  
Pretoria.

(Steyn, 1987 : 10)

No one supposes that all these couples are still unmarried today, however, as the fate that awaits those who marry cannot be predicted. Divorce rates seem to be on the increase, yet, this does not imply that there are more unhappy marriages. "The divorce rate does not necessarily imply that there are more unhappy marriages. It may simply mean that more people who are unhappily married today seek divorce because they find less reason to stay married. Women demand not only equality within marriage but the right to dissolve an unhappy marriage because of contrariety of mind (incompatibility). During the process of rapid social and economic revolutions, legislatures have tended to favor more liberal divorce laws too, for both wife and husband." (Grollman, 1969 : 6).

With the number of marriages increasing annually and the divorce rate as high as it is, the single-parent family becomes more apparent as a relatively new and developing social form in modern societies all over the world.

The statistics for marriage breakdown show that a large proportion of the population is affected. In an article titled "Divorce affected 179 206 children in decade" it was clearly stated that in Cape Town a total of 179 206 minor White, Coloured and Indian children had been affected by divorce cases in the decade 1975 to 1985 and this figure represented an increase of 80 569 over the previous decade. (Eastern Province Herald, 26 May 1987). These figures highlight the single-parent family.

(iii) The Single-Parent Family

Divorce affects not only the children, but all the participants taking part in the formation of single parent families. Divorce, whatever the reason, is the main cause of single-parent families today. The dissolution of marriage is a cyclical process affecting the lives of fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, parents, friends and the family in toto. As we, too, will fill most of these roles at one time or another in our lives, we, too may be affected by divorce.

When single parenthood occurs, it is a time of crisis for the majority of families. Whether the single parent category occurs by divorce, death, separation, wanted or unwanted pregnancy, it remains a time of crisis for most members of the family. There is a very strong tension/anxiety factor at this time, and adjustments have to be made by all members of the family concerned. Changes or innovations take place with a view to successful parenthood; alterations and adjustments to role patterns and to interaction between family members. The family goes through a process of re-birth and the single parent family is formed (Viljoen, 1982 : 20-21).

The researcher began by addressing the personal problems of the 'deserted' spouse. A general lack of confidence, a deflated self-image of being 'left-out-in-the-cold' as it were, or worse, 'left for another', creates a stereo-typed divorcee or separated-from-her-husband stigmatization or label. Such a labelling process pre-supposes that the 'victim of circumstances' follows the expected norms of one of these given roles. These roles allow the single-parent very few outlets for self-expression, pleasure or personal betterment. The need for affection and the 'replacement' of a spouse in the form of a new partner prevents many single-parents furthering social contacts with past and future friends, as many 'friends' find the now 'single' person, a threat or competitor, to their own or 'possible' future relationships with the opposite sex.

In an article, "Move to show needs of the single parent", Mrs Reis, president of the Witwatersrand Single Parent Group says, "The need to make the public aware of the emotional and social needs of single parents has become a priority. ... Divorcees, widowed people and never married mums are not part of the married community and the public is not aware that they also need company" (The Star, 30 June 1987).

The unmarried mother can experience acute rejection by members of society who refuse to accept her circumstances. Feelings of isolation, guilt and resentment can combine with feelings of suspicion and distrust of the public who, to the unmarried mother, seem hyper-critical of her social position. Some unmarried mothers in the study felt their status was considerably lower than that of the single girl. Because of society's censure a sense of failure and shame can invade the unmarried mother. As she does not fit into the normal social patterns expected of women as wives who are mothers, many unmarried mothers sense they have become 'social outcasts'.

Though older 'moral' patterns and social responses persist, there are indications that these may be changing, at least in the United States of America.

In his book on Stigma, Concepts in Social Policy, Page (1984 : 95) has this to say about the changing attitudes of society in general: "In this climate of opinion, compassion for the disadvantages suffered by one-parent families has grown quickly. The old tariff of blame which pitied widows but attached varying degrees of moral delinquency to divorced or separated women or to unmarried mothers is becoming irrelevant in the face of the imperative recognition that what chiefly matters in such situations is to assist and protect dependent children, all of whom ought to be treated alike irrespective of their mothers' circumstances." Zastrow (1982 : 31) comments, "Today the negative stigma attached to being single and pregnant is not as strong as it once was, but it is still frowned on by some."

The life-style of the child or children from a single parent family must be considered. The psychological, physical and social aspects of child behaviour have to be taken into account if the impact the single-parent family has on the way a parent considers child-rearing is to be understood. For the younger child who might be experiencing difficulties coping with his 'new' family, there are publications which help single parents explain the 'new' family situation. A series for small children, 'A Golden Learn About Living Book' has among its titles, (Seuling, 1985) What Kind Of Family Is This? (a book about stepfamilies) and Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore (a book about divorce) (Boegehold, 1985). Special 'notes to parents' are included in this type of literature, to help the parent explain their family situation to their child or children. The concern and sensitivity shown by the authors in these two children's books illustrates how much trouble is being taken to help the single parent family child in a crisis situation.

Physical changes occur when the single parent family is going through this crisis period. In general, the household routine is re-organized to include duties done by the single parent and the children combined. If there is a lack of financial support from the ex-spouse or other previous sources, the new household may have fewer material possessions. Single parenthood often 'guarantees' a lower standard of living. In some cases, the drop in available finances changes the family pattern radically and the single-parent finds that he/she has more responsibilities and duties than he/she had as a husband/wife in a two-parent family. The lack of a father/mother figure on which a young boy/girl can model his/her life-style, for example, can be a continuous source of concern for the mother/father who finds this role impossible to fulfil. Dr Dolores Luiz, senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Port Elizabeth addressing a seminar for single parents held by the Women's Bureau of South Africa in Port Elizabeth had this to say, "You have a son?" she asked the women. "Then would you like him to walk like you?" (Eastern Province Herald, 22 June 1987). It is doubtful, however, whether two--parent family parents set the perfect model in each case. The lack of training in boyhood skills and education around the household, information on his physical growth and training for future social events are a few of the experiences that some boys may be denied by not having a father on whom to model their behaviour. But, here again, are there not many children in two-parent families who experience similar situations? Much will depend on the extent to which the single-parent is able to either fulfil the required roles or to compensate for their lack by ensuring contact with male role/female role figures.

The selection of an unsuitable mate (a human error made by one partner or both) can disrupt the family unit, married or not. For this reason, some single-parent families may be preferable to two-parent ones. The benefits of a single-parent family should also, therefore, be studied. The decision to remain or become a single-parent family has brought happiness to parent and children alike, their self-defined needs having been satisfied. An alcoholic father who beats his wife and does not support the family

financially or emotionally, is probably more disastrous to the family than if the mother were solely in control of all aspects of her family's life as a single parent.

The absence of one parent will no doubt always change the way a family functions. The extent to which the family's functioning is affected depends on a variety of factors. Listing these factors becomes a puzzle with a multitude of facets, as there are certain influences which will affect one family but not another. Nonetheless there are a few important factors which seem to predominate:

Social class, residence and the life-style the single parent family had known prior to its formation, could change and affect the stability of its members. The social change and possible loss of status generally could change behavioural patterns and leave the single parent family members with a lowered self-esteem.

The duration of the marriage is very significant to the impact its dissolution can have on all the family members concerned. This dissolution of the two-parent family may force the single parent family to rely on a variety of support systems to get its members 'back on their feet' to being successful or functional members of this new family form.

In a research project on successful single-parent families, Barry (1979 : 72) lists a number of groups who may have supportive and therapeutic advantages for the well-being of single parent families.

Some ways in which family therapists may be of help to parents and children in the early phases of transition to a single-parent life-style include establishing:

- 1) group or individual help for couples before custody arrangements are settled - to learn about alternatives and to evaluate their own feelings about co-parenting after the separation
- 2) classes for parents who want to share custody, to discuss issues and teach skills
- 3) mediation services for parents who want to resolve issues in conflict out of court
- 4) divorce groups to assist adults in the process of emotional separation from a mate
- 5) support groups for single mothers, pregnant out of marriage
- 6) groups for widows and widowers
- 7) divorce adjustment groups for parents and their children
- 8) consultation and evaluation services for parents concerned with the well-being of their children following a divorce
- 9) therapy groups for children whose parents are divorcing or who are already divorced
- 10) individual and/or group supportive therapy for people who are undergoing the divorce process in isolation or with unusual difficulty

Many of these services are already in existence, although they are not always available in the communities where the need for them exists. Undoubtedly, other new services will continue to be developed which address the needs of families in the midst of change.

In a study of the single parent, questions regarding the nature and the origin of the single-parent family have to be asked. What is the single-parent family? How is it formed? Why do we have single-parent families? When are they most likely to appear in a society and under what conditions? What does the structure of the

single-parent family look like? How does the single-parent family function? The characteristics and the causal explanations of single-parent families can be endless. While to draw any, or exact conclusions about the nature of single-parent families at this early stage is premature, it is hoped that this study will produce an exploratory insight into the single parent family.

Divorce and illegitimacy as major contributing factors to the formation of single-parent families are highlighted in Chapters four and five of the study. Both these topics have been well researched in the past. In this study the researcher has endeavoured to show statistics for both divorce and illegitimacy in Port Elizabeth.

From the outset, the importance of the legal aspects of separation, divorce, illegitimacy and widowhood came to the fore. (The Law Department at Vista University in Port Elizabeth was consulted and the section on the De Jure attitude towards the single parent family in South Africa owes its existence partly to the help and assistance of colleagues in this department.)

This study explores the basic problems of the single parent family in Port Elizabeth and gives an assessment of the sociological aspects of the single-parent family in our society. The study cannot be conclusive here as it is an exploratory study, but it may stimulate interest and lead other researchers to follow up on the work already done.

The researcher offers this study as a contribution to such an initiative.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyse some aspects of the social structure and behaviour of single parent families in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area. The researcher also attempted to discover what attitudes single parents held in regard to their position and how they saw their role within the South African context. These attitudes were then compared with those of the Snyman single parent study done in 1986.

The present survey thus reflects the attitudes of a sample of White single parents living within the Municipal boundaries of Port Elizabeth and does not in any way pretend to represent the attitudes of all White single parents in this city or in the rest of South Africa.

In 1985 there were 4 568 739 Whites living in South Africa. The total White population in the urban area of Port Elizabeth, (excluding areas such as Beachview, Cannonville, Colleen Glen, Sardinia Bay, Kini Bay and Theescombe), was 135 779 (Population Census, Central Statistical Services, Pretoria, 1986). (The Pretoria study took a sample from 372 175 Whites living in Pretoria in 1985).

It is pertinent to point out at this juncture that the researcher's quest was to assess on a microcosmic basis the nature, character and interactional processes relating to the single parent family in the region under study.

The single parent family in Port Elizabeth differs in a number of ways from other family forms appearing in Port Elizabeth society in that:

- (a) It is not represented in any statistical reports.
- (b) It is widely overlooked as a social problem in the area.
- (c) There appears to be no official policy to aid the single parent family in Port Elizabeth or in South African society in any way.
- (d) Single parents in Port Elizabeth are volunteering information in order to improve their position within society.
- (e) To date, a single parent group has not been successfully established in this area.

This survey is an exploratory study reflecting the attitudes of single parents towards their positions in Port Elizabethan society and attempts to highlight the grievances held by single parents within the local community.

#### 1.2 THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

No single comprehensive study on single parents in Port Elizabeth has been documented therefore much supposition was necessary in the formulation of hypotheses. After consulting the Human Sciences Research Council, it was decided to base the present study on Dr Ina Snyman's study of single parents in Pretoria.

For the purposes of the Port Elizabeth study, the main propositions were:

- (a) The facilities catering for single parent family's in Port Elizabeth are limited.
- (b) Single parents who have financial security appear to manifest different attitudes towards society from single parents who need financial assistance.
- (c) Most single parents feel that their return to single person status threatens the friendships of their past.

- (d) Single parents are generally labelled negatively by society as regards sexual relationships as they are seen as easily available for sexual encounters.
- (e) Childrearing is a major problem for single parents in Port Elizabeth, and facilities are limited in the area.
- (f) There are cases where single parent families are more successful than the previously existent two-parent families.

In this study, the researcher shows how 'single parents' experience social and economic problems as well as 'how single parents view their position in society'.

The researcher anticipated that many responses would not accord with the main propositions and therefore the following secondary propositions were formulated:

- (a) Most respondents would be female, as in the Snyman study, and therefore give a female view of the single parent family.
- (b) Single parent fathers would also be interviewed, but were expected to represent a small percentage of the sample.
- (c) The way in which single parent status was reached was expected to influence the respondent's attitude towards the single parent situation.
- (d) The number of economically dependent children in the single parent family was expected to influence the attitude towards the single parents' position in society.
- (e) Statistics obtained from this study were expected to differ considerably from the Pretoria study.

While the researcher realized that it is not possible to control variables in sociological testing as can be done in the natural sciences in laboratory experimentation, it was certainly possible to determine the influence on the end result, any one of the test variables might have had on the answers received. The formulation of the set of questions thus proved to be a major factor in determining the reliability of the results obtained. In each question in the section on personal particulars, an illustration of

comparative figures was used and where the researcher thought it was necessary, via a graph. Where no graphs or tables were used, the factors were discussed in analytical or descriptive form. (In order to ensure that a comparison of the responses could be made with the Pretoria study, the questionnaire had to be very similar to that of the Snyman study. The questionnaire used in the present study appears in the appendix).

### 1.3 RESEARCH ALREADY DONE IN SOUTH AFRICA ON THE SUBJECT

In order to obtain more information about research that had already been done in South Africa, the researcher wrote to the Human Sciences Research Council. A computer print-out was received listing all research done in the field of single parenthood. It was discovered that few single parent family studies were being done. Inquiries about available statistics on White single parents did not meet with much success, however, the HSRC Division for Sociological and Demographic Research did stress the need for research in this field. Dr H.G. Strydom wrote that Dr Ina Snyman had delivered a paper on single parenthood in the South African context at a co-operative programme on marriage and family life during 1985. The contents of her paper were of great use to the researcher as much information was obtained and a lot of literature reviewing time was saved by this report.

After reviewing this paper, the researcher found that only 20 out of 30 reports were on White single parent studies and could be traced. Only 1 report appeared on general single parenthood, that is, not applying to a particular type of single parent (divorcee, widow/er, unmarried mother/father) and was available (Snyman, 1985 : 6-19). The general circumstances, problems, needs, of all the different types of single parents received most of the attention in 11 of these reports in their general research questions, and out of the total number of reports, 30 in all, 8 were descriptive, and 4 investigative survey studies. According to Snyman there were no evaluative reports of findings in other studies done on single parent families and the present study therefore offers a starting

point in comparing Dr Snyman's results, with the results of the study done here. Comparative tables, figures and graphs will be drawn up throughout this study to illustrate where the Snyman study was at variance with the Port Elizabeth study.

It is therefore noted that although the researcher mainly describes the single parent family in Port Elizabeth, a description such as this is complemented by comparison with another such work, in this case, that of the 1986 Pretoria study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THE FAMILY AS A SOCIOLOGICAL INSTITUTION AND SOME DEFINITIONS

As a starting point, the researcher has taken an opening paragraph from a textbook for university students which describes the structure of the family as follows: "Like all institutions, the family is a system of accepted norms and procedures for getting some important jobs done. Defining the family is not easy, as the term is used in so many ways. A family may be: (1) a group with common ancestors; (2) a kinship group united by blood or marriage; (3) a married couple with or without children; (4) an unmarried couple with children; (5) one person with children" (Horton and Hunt, 1984 : 232).

In order to analyse and locate the family within a social structure one has to look at the variants of three different basic forms:

- (1) The nuclear family, based on one husband and wife.
- (2) The polygamous family, with a husband and several wives; or a wife with several husbands.
- (3) The extended family, which may include other relatives.

All three structures were found in ancient cultures, and all three exist today. (None is morally superior or inferior to the others, none more civilized or more primitive, none inherently better or worse. They are simply different. In fact, some might be better suited to particular circumstances.) Although the three basic forms of family: nuclear, polygamous, and extended, continue to exist around the world, a trend towards the nuclear pattern is obvious and this trend is not hard to understand. The independent nuclear family, being small, is relatively mobile, and is well-suited to societies where one or both spouses may repeatedly change their place of work. Such is the case in complex technological cultures, where the nuclear family has reached its most typical, modern expression.

Different types of families occur in different types of cultures and societies. It is not possible to deal with all the types of families in all societies. Those types which have predominated in the modern world are used to illustrate the various forms these families can take. The two main types of family, the extended and the nuclear family, remain relatively static throughout their existence, but transitory family forms also appear at certain stages of family growth. The single-parent family could become a two-parent nuclear family again, if the single parent re-marries (Goldman, 1981 : 141).

There is constant interaction between the family and other societal institutions especially since the effects of industrialization have taken over many of the roles once dominated by the family alone, as a social unit. The socialization process of a child starts at home, but in the early years of the child's life, transfers to other socializing agents, and is no longer the duty of family members. The development of the child in the family thus changes in modern society as compared to pre-industrial families. (A dominant theoretical viewpoint today is that the family's role has become less important in social life).

With technological change and increased specialization of tasks and activities, previous family concerns such as health, welfare, education, economy and religion, have been taken over by new well-defined social organizations and institutions.

In earlier times the family was the central social unit, and the individual members, especially the children, were regarded as subordinate to the family. The child depended upon his/her family for the satisfaction of most of his/her needs, that is, what was done for the child in earlier times was done by the family. The home was the school, the church, the playground, the factory and the hospital. The family used to be, or at least so it seems to us - the locus of the most significant, most intense, and warmest human relationships.

The transfer of familial functions from the home to the factory, the school, the Courts of Law, the clinic, has meant considerable loss of control by parents over their children. Today, the child functions more as an individual in his own right, less as a representative of his family. Some parents view this as the breakdown of family life and see it as a loosening of family ties. Allan (1985 : 7) sees it thus,

While the more simplistic forms of the 'loss of function' and 'family breakdown' thesis are questionable, more sophisticated analyses, like that provided by Talcott Parsons, warrant fuller consideration. Parsons is in agreement with other writers that the family no longer performs some of the functions it once did, but he sees this change in a rather more positive light than some. He is sceptical of the claim that family life is becoming disorganized and, in line with his wider theoretical speculations, argues instead that a process of specialization and differentiation has occurred.

Indeed, the family still remains responsible for socialization, affection, companionship and sexual regulation. However, formal education, religion and social control have 'more or less' been taken over by the school, the church and the state, respectively.

The family group cannot be understood without reference to its interpersonal relationships and its social interaction. There are biological, psychological, social and economic factors which fuse the family bonds together. All these factors play a part in the quality of interaction and help to ensure that a family is functioning harmoniously. It is towards the social factors which bind the family which this study now looks.

The social purposes of the family are:

- to protect its members from danger through social unity and through the co-operation of its members in times of trouble;
- to provide food and shelter and other material necessities for the family;
- to develop personal identity and a self-image for its members based on the family identity;
- to pattern sexual roles preparing its members for their maturation process;
- to train members to accept social responsibility and fulfil certain social roles;
- to cultivate an affectionate bonding towards other members of the family thus keeping the unity intact;
- to support its children through the learning process while encouraging individual ability, creativity and initiative;
- to instruct its members to recognize authority and understand why there has to be negative sanctioning in the form of punishment.

The importance of the role the family plays within society gives it a central position in society. Because the family is a social agency controlling a variety of social behaviours and activities and almost everyone is born into a family, it not only acts as an expressive or emotional social unit but serves as an instrumental agency for the larger social structure as well. One such instrumental function is that of informal social control through which the family can put pressure on the individual to conform or adjust his/her behaviour and bring him/her 'into line' with the rest of the family and society. The contributions of the family help to maintain order and stability within society and it is for this reason that the family plays an important role in the deterrence of various forms of deviant behaviour. A breakdown in family structure generally results in the lessening of its control over the individual. Different forms of social control are therefore necessary as society takes over the role of controlling individual behaviour.

2.1.1 The extended family

The extended family is widely accepted today mainly for its past historical success. Large families of the past were advantageous for many reasons. Economic self-sufficiency with co-operation expected from all family members was the major reason why the extended family of the past was successful. Added to this self-sufficiency was the supportive emotional role that a large membership could offer. Numbers gave security and therefore a protective cocoon could be spun around the unit thus creating the feeling of belonging to a secure independent social unit. Any member of the family who fell ill or grew old, could be supported and his/her function in the family filled, as there was always someone standing by to assume his or her duties and take care of him or her. The advantages of the extended family are fondly remembered by all who recall the sense of security such a family gave to their childhood. This 'rosy' view of the extended family, is, however, often grossly distorted by time and distance, for there is much misapprehension in the popular mind about the size of families of the past (Goode, 1982 : 92-108; Nye and Berardo, 1973 : 40-43). The type of household which has become more predominant in America for example, can be seen in the following table: (Note the increase in one parent families and persons living alone).

TABLE 1 : COMPOSITION OF UNITED STATES HOUSEHOLDS,  
1970 AND 1981

| <u>Type of household</u>              | <u>1970</u> | <u>1981</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Family households:                    |             |             |
| Married couple, no children under 18  | 30.3%       | 29.6%       |
| Married couple with children under 18 | 40.3        | 30.3        |
| One parent with children under 18     | 5.0         | 7.6         |
| Other (e.g., extended)                | <u>5.6</u>  | <u>5.7</u>  |
| Total                                 | 81.2        | 73.2        |
| Nonfamily households:*                |             |             |
| Persons living alone                  | 17.1        | 23.0        |
| Other                                 | <u>1.7</u>  | <u>3.8</u>  |
| Total                                 | 18.8        | 26.8        |

\* Maintained by a person or persons who do not share their quarters with any relatives.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports: Household and Family Characteristics, March 1981, ser. P-20, no. 371, March 1982, p. 2. (Horton and Hunt, 1984 : 244).

#### 2.1.2 The nuclear family

The trend towards the nuclear family (consisting of a father, mother and children living apart from other relatives), many researchers believe, was a result of the industrialization process which took place after the Industrial Revolution.

Within the division of labour characterizing the industrial society, the major functions of the nuclear family are privacy and the need to meet the personal needs of its members. The emotional and intellectual needs of husbands and wives are not always satisfied and alternative forms or structures take shape within the nuclear family, which change the traditional structure and function usually accepted by society.

These alternative forms such as 'open marriages', 'swinging couples' and 'commuter marriages' (spouses live in separate residences for varying lengths of time) are more feasible styles of nuclear families to some married couples and can offer the couple more individuality, privacy and isolation. Whether the success rate of this family-type will make it a more popular lifestyle for many people, no one can predict (Stein et al., 1977 : 341-380). The future will dictate whether the modern family will succeed.

The modern family : a success story or not? There are alternatives to the nuclear family. Stein et al., (1977 : 381-419) has mentioned singlehood, old age communes, lesbian/gay marriages and urban religious communes (the 1960s, 1970s hippie cult immediately comes to mind!) which do not form from within the nuclear family, but are formed as an alternative to the nuclear family. Even these alternative forms of family life have to be considered in fully understanding the possibilities of future family lifestyles.

### 2.3 DEFINING THE FAMILY

At the beginning of this chapter it was established that defining the family was not an easy task. The researcher offers a few alternative definitions to illustrate just how difficult it will be to arrive at a conclusive definition. A social theorist from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manchester comments,

There are, therefore, a variety of definitions of the family available for different purposes. There are legal and administrative definitions, there are statistical and demographic models and there are ideal typical definitions of, for example, the 'nuclear family' or the 'extended family'.

(Morgan, 1975 : 8)

Goode (1982 : 8) attempted to explain the nature of the family in the U.S.A., as follows:

If we use a concrete definition, and assert that 'a family is a social unit made up of father, mother, and children,' then only about 35 percent of all U.S. households can be classed as a family.

(Goode, 1982 : 8)

Here he pointedly exposes the weakness of such an exclusive definition. In doing so, he adds that in some societies polygamy might exclude certain aspects of such a definition due to differing cultural values. Clearly he is correct. A cross-cultural perspective therefore becomes necessary.

What is the family? Most of us think we know what a family is. But when we set out to define the term clearly and distinguish the family from the nonfamily, we run into problems immediately. This is true not only on a cross-cultural basis but even in our society.

(Nye and Berardo, 1973 : 30)

From cross-cultural references to legally accepted definitions, there is still much confusion regarding these definitions. Legal terms are still being modified, added to and subtracted from in order to establish the correct terminology applicable to legal practices.

By going back in time we uncover a few concepts of what the family meant to past civilizations. In this definition "household" and "family" are discussed as one and the same by Henslin (1980), causing even more confusing terminology.

The family of these [Hebrew, Greek and Roman] great civilizations of the West was a household community of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of members ('familia' is the Latin term for household). Only some of the members were related by blood and by far the larger part were servants and slaves, artisans, friends, and distant relations. In its patriarchal form (again culturally variable), this large community was formally held together by the role of eldest male who more nearly resembled the general of an army than a modern husband-father.

(Henslin, 1980 : 511)

In a recent national conference on the family held at the University of Port Elizabeth, Mr E. Harvey of the Department of Health and Population Development defined the family as:

The family can be defined as a social arrangement based on marriage and a marriage contract including recognition of the rights and duties of parenthood, common residence of husband and wife and children and reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife.

("The Family: A Future Orientation". National Conference. 17-18 August 1987.)

In the light of the current confusion about the definition of families perhaps one should revert to David Popenoe's definition.

The family is a group of kin who live together and function as a co-operative unit for economic and other purposes.

(Popenoe, 1983 : 350)

(A definition used in many first-year courses and undergraduate studies in South African universities today).

Basically this definition might be too broad to stimulate the imagination of many, however, it has been used in this study by the researcher as a definition of the family.

However, it is the single parent family which is focused on in this study.

How can this form of family be defined? Is it recognized as a family at all? What are the factors which have to be considered in defining the single-parent family as a family? Fuchs (1980) says, "As the use of numerous different terms to describe the one-parent situation is so confusing, it is suggested that existing terms be used more restrictively, each to define one specific concept only." Statistics in the United States of America point to increasing numbers of single parent families, is this a problem for society?

Do single parents and one parent families pose a serious problem for society? Do children need two parents? No definitive answers are yet available. It is clear, however, that such arrangements are increasing. There are now approximately 3.5 million one-parent families, with a total of about 7 million children (in U.S.A.).

(Zastrow, 1982 : 31)

The growing phenomenon of one-parent families in the U.S.A., Canada and South Africa, is confirmed by Gongla (1982 : 5), Schlesinger (1980 : 25) and Fuchs (1980 : 32-51) respectively.

Weiss (1979 : xii-xiii) asks "is it good or bad to be a single parent?" and reminds us that "The way we evaluate single parenting depends on the alternative we have in mind. This alternative could be a malfunctioning parental couple (a two-parent family) who are not necessarily better parents for their children."

With these thoughts in mind the researcher has chosen to use a workable definition at this stage - one which will be suitable for the purposes of this study. The definition selected to define this phenomenon is:

the single parent family is a relatively modern alternative form of a family whereby one parent has been given or assumes sole custody of his/her child or children and takes full responsibility for the future functioning of this family.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY AS A MODERN DEVELOPMENT; AN INTRODUCTORY ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIOUS KINDS OF SINGLE PARENTS

All those who intend to marry at some time in their lives and have or adopt children, are potential single-parents as are those who propose not to marry but to have or adopt children. The single-parent family is not a new phenomenon but just one that has become more visible. Yet, although the heightened visibility of the single parent family has made society more aware of the plight of some single parent families, there are not many support systems catering for the needs and readjustments of single parents and their families.

In this connection, Benjamin Schlesinger comments:

Seldom is there anyone from whom single parents can expect moral and emotional support, advice, encouragement, praise, or even fault-finding. Isolation from normal community life to some degree is the fate of parents without partners ... They don't seem to fit any of the normal social patterns. They are the self-styled 'fifth wheels' of society.

(Schlesinger, 1975 : 9)

An assessment of the various types of single parents and the circumstances that produce them, is essential in a study such as this.

In the light of family processes, the single-parent family represents the re-birth of an intact family into a different form of family life which demands new and altered roles and functions from the family members. The conditioning required of the family members in adapting to this new life-style has a profound impact on all the participants. Disruptions will naturally occur and problems may arise in the 'new' family.

The ways in which single parent families are formed are:

- 1) through the death of one of the parents, leaving the remaining spouse a widow or widower, with sole custody of the children;
- 2) by legal divorce whereupon one of the parents is granted custody of the children;
- 3) when the two parents are separated from one another (whether legally or not) and one of these parents takes on the responsibility of and/or the custody of the children;
- 4) due to the decision of the unmarried mother (or father) to keep the child or children and not have him/her or them adopted; and
- 5) by the legal adoption of a child or children by a single/never-married person.

A brief comment on these different forms of single parent families will act as a background for discussion in the chapters to follow.

For purposes of clarification the researcher has classified the single parent family into five different groups:

- 1) the widow or widower;
- 2) the divorced single parent;
- 3) the separated single parent;
- 4) the unmarried mother;
- 5) single parent status by legal adoption;

and mention is made of the role of the single parent father in the text that follows the section on these criteria.

### 3.1.1 The Widow/The Widower

The sudden loss of a spouse through death can leave the bereaved partner totally unprepared for their new role in life, unless, for example, in the case of a long illness, the widow/er has had time to prepare for and adjust to a single parent lifestyle. Besides the grief of losing their partner

and the traumas associated with death in general, they often become solely responsible for the well-being of the family. The widowed have to adjust to more responsibility and a possibly lower standard of living even while they cope with the loneliness and emotional turmoil of the mourning period.

Society generally views the bereaved sympathetically. This is seen by Viljoen in an article titled "Enkelouerskap" as,

Oor die algemeen erbaar geskeide persone of nooitgetroude enkelouers 'n groter mate van stigmatisering of etiketering as die weduwees of wewenaars wat enkelouers is. Van weduwees en wewenaars word verwag om te treur en te rou oor die maat wat oorlede is en veel simpatie en bystand word gewoonlik aan hulle gesinne gegee - al is dit dan ook dikwels net aan die begin.

(Viljoen, 1982 : 20)

Numerically, there are usually more widows than widowers as women tend to marry men older than themselves and men tend to die earlier than women. (Scanzoni and Scanzoni, 1981 : 615). It should thus be expected that the research sample will contain more widows than widowers. This was the case in the volunteer group of Port Elizabeth single parents.

### 3.1.2 The Divorced Single Parent

For most people, divorce is as much a crisis situation as the death of a spouse. The divorced person may experience feelings of rejection, anger and despair, and a sense of loss; all experiences which are apparently very similar to those experienced in widowhood. Because the newly divorced person is forced to cope with his/her new social position, he/she has to adjust, not only his/her life-style, but also his/her attitudes to his/her new role in his/her family, in particular, and his/her new role in society, in general.

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Schlesinger (1975 : 8) sees a transformation from two-parent family to single-parent family as a time of crisis and comments:

When a marriage has ended, whether by death, separation, desertion, or divorce the now-single parent must face a complete reorientation in his life. He or she now makes all major decisions, virtually on his or her own, with no partner to present another viewpoint.

The personality of the divorcee changes. Personal appearance, vocational attitudes, social and sexual re-adjustments take place in order to change the 'old' identity to the 'new' one, that of the divorcee. ✓

Sole responsibility for the family can become a burden as they may have to sacrifice their own freedom and forego personal opportunities in order to accommodate their families' needs.

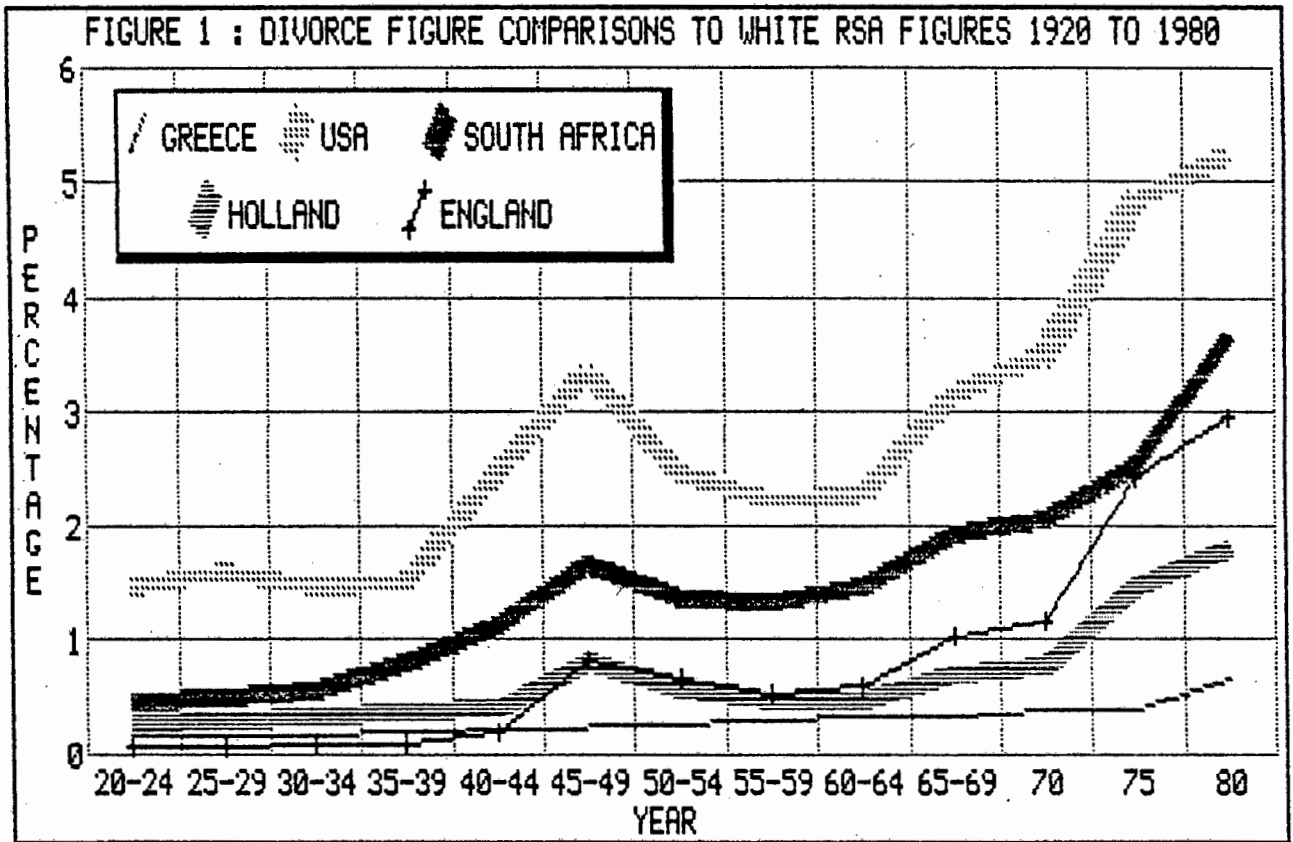
Many divorcees are not prepared to forego the possibility of having a happy family life. They divorce and re-marry, rather than continue with an unsatisfactory marriage. A psychologist notes:

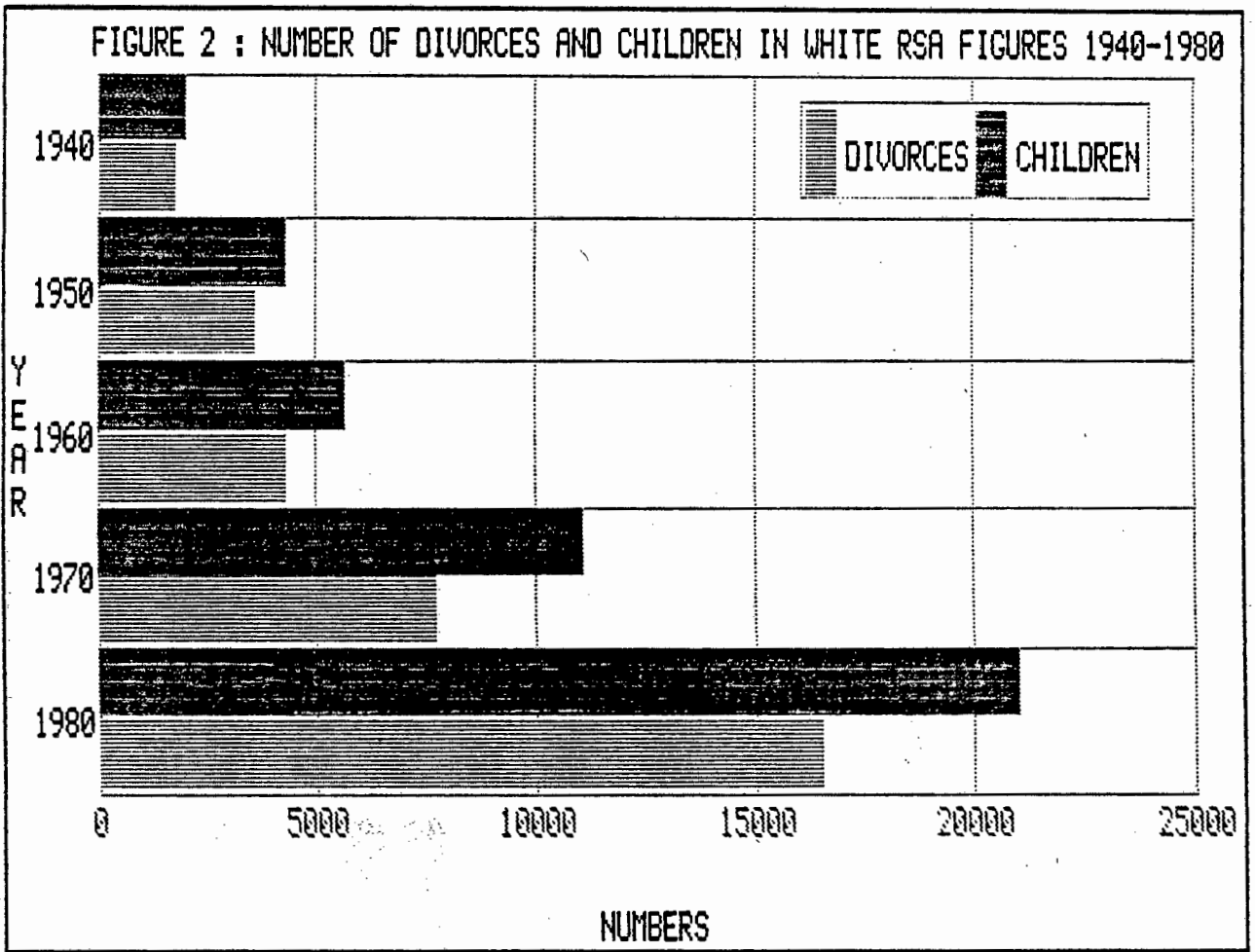
One-third of all first marriages now end in divorce. Yet within 3 years of a divorce, 75 percent of both males and females remarry (Stevens-Long, 1984). As more women work and become more emotionally independent, they have fewer reasons to stay in unsatisfactory marriages - particularly since the religious, economic, social, and legal obstacles to divorce have weakened in the past 20 years.

(Morris, 1985 : 362)

The following two graphs represent a comparison of the divorce figures from 1920 to 1980, for four countries together with those of South Africa's White population (Figure 1). Other information given (Figure 2), includes, the number of divorces which have taken place in South Africa amongst the White population group and the number of children affected by these divorces (1940 - 1980). It is interesting to note not just the escalating divorce rate but, the high rate of divorces represented by the South African figures, which are second only to those of the United States of America of the countries compared.

The data used in Figure 1 was obtained from the United Nations : Demographic Yearbook, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1984. The percentage axis shows the raw score divorce figure per 1000 of the population of the countries represented in the graph. The raw scores were used for comparative purposes only.





(Steyn, 1987 : 10)

Unless the children involved in a divorce are very young the breaking up of their two-parent family can be a very traumatic experience for them (Mitchell, 1985 : 179). Parents need to discuss what is happening to the family with the children. There are now several books available, written specifically to explain divorce to children (Gardner, 1970; Grollman, 1969; Seuling, 1985). Such books help parents to handle their children's fears and insecurities with confidence and sensitivity. Great care has been taken by the authors of such books to give a clear description of what the children of divorced parents can expect from their future life-style.

The positive aspects of a new life style are brought to the attention of the reader in most, if not all, books of this nature. A self-help aid can inspire children to overcome the emotional problems experienced before, during, and after, the divorce and thus reduce the parents' responsibilities during the divorce process.

Because divorce (and its variations) cover such a vast field, it is not possible to do more in this dissertation than touch very generally on the points relevant to the research. The following divorce figures were obtained from the Office of the Registrar at the Supreme Court in Port Elizabeth.

TABLE 2 (A) : NUMBER OF 'WHITE' DIVORCES GRANTED IN PORT ELIZABETH

|      |   |      |
|------|---|------|
| 1980 | = | 958  |
| 1981 | = | 1049 |
| 1982 | = | 1041 |
| 1983 | = | 1090 |
| 1984 | = | 1137 |
| 1985 | = | 1001 |

When the divorce figures are compared to the marriage figures for the same period, (obtained from the Regional Office of the Central Statistical Services in Port Elizabeth) it appears that there are many single parents in the Port Elizabeth area. In 1985, for example, there were 1001 'White' divorces and 1189 marriages in Port Elizabeth. This could look as if it were an erroneous figure, however, it must be considered that many of the 1001 divorces were married in different years prior to 1985 and therefore this total could appear to be statistically incorrect. (It should be borne in mind that the figures for illegitimacy, separation and legal adoption (by single persons) are not accounted for in the following table).

TABLE 2 (B) : NUMBER OF 'WHITE' MARRIAGES IN PORT ELIZABETH

|      |   |      |                    |
|------|---|------|--------------------|
| 1980 | = | 1440 |                    |
| 1981 | = | 1462 |                    |
| 1982 | = | 1395 |                    |
| 1983 | = | 1320 |                    |
| 1984 | = | 1365 | (Report 07-02-18)* |
| 1985 | = | 1189 | (Report 07-02-19)* |

\* Letter dd. 10-03-86 Ref. 12/1 Mr C.J. Bosman (Central Statistical Services)

3.1.3 The Separated Single Parent

✓ Separation is seen in a more negative light than either widowhood or divorce.

The separated partners can have ambiguous feelings of being neither single nor married. The separated person might feel embarrassed when explanations become necessary to explain the absence of the other partner. Socially, therefore, the separated person is a bit of a misfit. The children involved in a separation are also in a dilemma as to how to explain their parents' separation to others.

The possible uncomfortable position all parties may find themselves in does not appear to make separation an ideal form of family life. The single-parent family in this form appears less practical, and less socially acceptable, than outright divorce. Separation does not appear to be of more benefit than divorce for any of the family members as far as the maintenance of a stable family life is concerned. There are, however, separated single parent families who would disagree with this point of view.

Any discussion of separation needs to take into account whether the separation is legal or by mutual consent of the marriage partners. If the separation is by mutual consent, very little stigma is likely to be attached to the relationship in that 'nothing legal' has yet been imposed on the two-parent family and such separation could be construed as temporary.

Legal separation, however, might be considered by society to be similar to divorce, although "The South African Law of Husband and Wife" says,

As long as judicial separation formed part of our law, the effect of a separation agreement, formal or informal depended largely upon whether or not it had been entered into justa causa, that is to say, in circumstances which would have justified a judicial decree of separation. But judicial separation has been abolished, and it would seem that as a result a deed of separation is effective only as long as both spouses are willing to abide by it.

(Hahlo, 1985 : 321)

This point is amplified by Goode, who writing about American law says:

The legal differences among separation, annulment, desertion, and divorce cannot be ignored, but they should not obscure the similarity of behavior throughout this large category of marital dissolution.

(Merton and Nisbet (eds), 1976 : 523)

An interesting case of separation exists in the Port Elizabeth data. The separated single parent's husband had been transferred to the USA at the time of extreme mutual acrimony, and divorce became a distinct possibility. The transfer arrived at a most felicitous time for both partners. The family was forced into a separation which

allowed time for the partners to adjust to their one person status, for the children to complete their schooling, the wife to qualify for a green card to live in the United States and for the final transfer arrangements of the family to the United States of America to be made. This couple plan to start divorce proceedings when the family arrives in the United States. The wife plans to live in the South with family and friends and to start a new life. The husband is happy to remain in the position he is in at present, thus ensuring United States citizenship for his entire family. The example of this family shows how a period of separation can be beneficial to the whole family. In this example the children will continue to have two homes in which to stay and two countries in which to visit. They will also enjoy the prospect of the benefits of a choice of parent and home as the parents have already agreed to joint custody.

#### 3.1.4 The Unmarried Mother \*

The social stigma often attached to single-parenting is highlighted by the moralistic attitude of society, in general, to the unmarried mother.

Gongla (1982 : 5) points out that recently, there has been an increase in never-married mothers in the U.S.A.. She says that in 1979 for example, 1,5 million children lived with never-married mothers and 7,2 million children lived with either divorced or separated mothers. Evidence of such a large number of unmarried/never-married mothers immediately results in concern for the welfare of the children living in such a situation. An article in Time Magazine states:

Each year more than a million American teenagers will become pregnant, four out of five of them unmarried. Together they represent a distressing flaw in the social fabric of America. Like Angela, Michelle and Stephanie, many become pregnant in their early or mid-teens, some

30,000 of them under age 15. If present trends continue, researchers estimate, fully 40% of today's 14-year-old girls will be pregnant at least once before the age of 20. Says Sally, 17, who is struggling to raise a two-year-old son in Los Angeles: 'We are children ourselves having children.'

(Time Magazine No. 49, 9 December 1985 : 39)

Concern, for unmarried mothers and their offspring in South Africa, is reflected in articles such as "Teenage mothers causing concern" (Weekend Post, 11 July 1987) which followed other articles on teenage pregnancy recently in the area of research. In February 1986, the researcher applied directly to the Provincial Hospital in Port Elizabeth for the figures for births to unmarried mothers. Information was also received on the number of such babies who were later adopted. (The figures are for the years 1981 - 1985)✕

TABLE 2 (C) : NUMBER OF 'WHITE' UNMARRIED MOTHER BIRTHS IN PORT ELIZABETH

|       |   |                                  |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1981  | = | 131 children (47 adopted)        |
| 1982  | = | 131 children (46 adopted)        |
| 1983  | = | 150 children (53 adopted)        |
| 1984  | = | 104 children (29 adopted)        |
| 1985  | = | <u>152</u> children (42 adopted) |
| TOTAL | : | 667 children (217 adopted)       |

Because of anticipated social stigma, unmarried mothers generally have a lowered self-image and because they have a negative self-image it is very difficult for them to improve their social status. They may develop feelings of distrust and suspicion towards other people thus alienating those who might feel well disposed to them. They thus cut themselves off from social communication. It is sometimes difficult

for them to enjoy a 'healthy' relationship with men. Rearing their children alone may remain a problem in their lives. There are women, however, who actively choose to have a child but remain single. The role feminism plays in such a decision is considered below.

#### 3.1.4.1 Feminism

There is an increasing tendency among some women to want babies and children but not husbands. This type of single-parenting is one of conscious choice and not by default as in divorce or by an unwanted pregnancy. The emergence of this form of single-parenthood as a lifestyle is a response by some women to their dissatisfaction with the traditional view of marriage. Many women remain single to avoid being subjected by men to the passive and submissive role many men expect women to play in a male-female relationship. Any woman belonging to a radical feminist movement (which probably advocates the total elimination of sex roles) will be likely to contemplate such a single parent lifestyle. Stein et al., (1977 : 381) agree that there are women who do not wish to have a two-parent family lifestyle.

The traditional role of the woman as wife and mother, subordinate to her husband, has undergone a great deal of change through the rise of the 'egalitarian' or 'modern' woman. This 'modern' woman has a different conception of her role in society. Hypothetically, the 'modern' woman has become more interested in a commitment to a career. She uses her abilities and skills to enter the labour market seeking economic opportunities equivalent to those sought by men. Her previously prescribed gender roles no longer apply in a changing society where she now becomes a working woman and possibly a working mother. The choice to have a child or children would depend on the rewards or gratification this event could give her. The choice remains hers.

The following is an illustration of the changing role of women in today's society:

The women's liberation movement has had a great influence on the women of some families; so much so that such women are re-examining the traditional roles in which they have been cast. Many of the publications which appeared between 1963 and 1975, see this liberation movement as a revolution of the downtrodden rebelling against their masters. Titles such as The Feminine Mystique, Rebirth of Feminism and Woman's Place have appeared, inspiring many women to play a more active role in society.

(Merton and Nisbet (eds), 1976 : 550 - 551).

Fewer women appear to be willing to tolerate the social restrictions that they once accepted. The role of women in society has gone through social change, therefore changes have occurred in the women's role in the home. Such changes have led to a change in experience for the whole family. The roles traditionally filled by men are being successfully filled by women. An example of this can be seen inter alia in the political field. The political success of women such as Indira Ghandi, Golda Meir and Margaret Thatcher are frequently held up to view. More recently, women have been reminded of great women rulers of the past like, Cleopatra, Catherine the Great, Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria (Lipman-Blumen, 1984 : 182 - 195).

This is an illustration of the underplayed strength these 'great women' have shown to the world. The female strength shown in these few examples is not always noted when men characteristically discuss the 'weaker' sex. In many cases, men have prejudged the potential talents and capabilities of women.

Jean Lipman-Blumen (1984 : 111) writes that between 1970 and 1982 the number of American families maintained solely by women rose from 5,5 million to 9,4 million. Such an increase in the female maintenance of families cannot be overlooked in

a study on single parenthood. The changing shape of the family structure combined with the change in roles, both male and female, within the family are evident from the wide variety of family patterns which exist to-day.

Titles, terms of address for women, as well as carefully considered inoffensive ways of showing no sexist bias, have altered many of the standard societal practices of the past. The re-labelling of chairman or chairlady as chairperson is one such example. Ms appearing on addressed envelopes in place of Miss or Mrs serves as another example of people who are sensitive to labelling.

Charvet (1982 : 68) in his book, Feminism, names three types of feminism:

1. Individual Feminism,
2. Socialist Feminism and,
3. Radical Feminism.

Extracting a few of Karl Marx's thoughts found in his 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts', Charvet (1982 : 68) states "... that women are to be understood as fully equal species - beings with men" and that, "... it is obvious that an adequate Marxist feminist theory would have to relate changes in the family."

The old ideal of a two-parent family is being challenged by the increasingly common merging of the two-parent role into one. Proponents of modern ideologies are thus likely to question the belief that the two-parent home is the optimum environment for the development of the child. (Compare Fuchs, 1980 : iii.)

Single parenting, for women 'going it alone', is considered a challenge by a growing number of feminists and a number of single parents in the Port Elizabeth sample, and not as a disaster.

### 3.1.5 Single Parent Status by Legal Adoption

This is a relatively new form of single parenthood and many consider it an insignificant one as only in exceptional cases does this phenomenon occur in society. Very little information on this type of parenting was received. What information was available revealed that the legal procedures to be followed in the single parent adoption of a child result in a very stressful experience. Furthermore, single persons wishing to legally adopt a child have to have very specific qualifications, before they will be considered as adoptive parents.

Where a single person adopts a child there must be a difference of at least twenty-five years in ages, unless the child is of the same sex as the adoptive parent, in which event there must be a difference of at least eighteen years.

(Nathan, 1983 : 81)

The law demands a careful scrutiny of the single parent's competence, reputation and parental capabilities.

An effort has been made to at least broach the hitherto largely untapped and new field of adoptive single parenting through field interviews and survey studies. The data accumulated represents only a start in this relatively unexposed area of social research.

### 3.2 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER AS A SINGLE PARENT; AN OVERVIEW

The role of the single father is almost always overlooked in a consideration of single-parenting. The divorced, separated or unmarried mother is the most obviously visible single-parent. Any discussion of single-parent families highlights childcare and looks at the problems related to this type of family mainly from the mother's angle. While single-parent motherhood has been researched, discussed and studied frequently in the past, the specific role of the father in a single-parent family has been almost completely neglected. The following clarifies this neglect:

Until recently, little research on the role of the father in marriage or after marital separation has been reported ...

Information available on the number of single-parent fathers indicates that more men are now being awarded custody of their children and that the men in our study are part of a small but growing number of fathers who are rearing their children after marital separation. Census data show that (in the U.S.A.) from 1960 to 1974 the number of male-headed families, with children and no spouse present, increased from 296,000 in 1960 to 836,000 in 1974.

(Fitzgerald and Walraven (eds), 1984 : 221)

There were seven examples of single father families in the Port Elizabeth study.

The ability of the single-parent father to provide suitable childcare is sometimes questioned. Doubt about the single-father's competency is rooted in the traditional views regarding men and childcare which are embedded in past and present socio-cultural norms. One such view is that,

The single father may have to overcome considerable prejudice, which may be partly justified in that he is probably untrained in many aspects of childcare. However,

any such tasks can be delegated to housekeepers or may be undertaken by a female relative. Many fathers do cope successfully with child-rearing tasks.

(Gerdes et al., 1981 : 214)

Today the participation by men in all spheres of domestic activities appears to have increased. This participation includes childcare which is emphasised as follows:

Because of the renewed emphasis on the importance of fathering, particularly in the U.S.A., an increase in the number of single fathers can be expected. Men are also beginning to insist on their rights as fathers and the American 'equal-rights-for-the-sexes' movement strives to present an equitable claim by fathers for the custody of children.

(Rogers, 1979 : 243 - 244).

Recent findings have shown that the generally 'forgotten partners' of unmarried mothers, the unwed fathers, are beginning to assert their role as the parents of a child, as the following suggests:

A recent study partially funded by the Ford Foundation revealed that many young fathers are not only willing but eager to help their partner and offspring. The project, coordinated by New York City's Bank Street College of Education, offered vocational services, counselling, and prenatal and parenting classes to nearly 400 teenage fathers and prospective fathers in eight U.S. cities. At the end of the two-year program, 82% reported having daily contact with their children; 74% said they contributed to the child's financial support. Almost 90% maintained a relationship with the mother, whom they had known for an average of two years.

(Stengel, 1985 : 49)

Rogers (1979 : 244) comments on a study by Helen A. Mendes (1976) which reveals that working single fathers in the U.S.A. find the difficulties of co-ordinating work and household chores no different from those working mothers have and that being a single father does not pose any threat to their masculinity.

While the discussion refers directly to the single father in America, it can be expected that single fatherhood will become a matter of concern for South African single parenting, as the American influence filters through to our South African society. Participant responses to the Port Elizabeth study, show in fact, that while the single father may need occasional help from friends, neighbours, family and even the social services, the single father seems to be coping with his situation far better than one would have thought possible. A discussion of American single fathers makes the point that:

One day of overwork and excessive worry is a common occurrence in the lives of most people. It is the cumulative effect of many such days with few prospects of any substantial ease up that makes life hard to bear. This was the lot for many of our fathers. In spite of all their burdens, however, 92.2 per cent said they had no regrets about their decision to care for their children on their own.

(George and Wilding, 1972 : 168 - 169)

### 3.3 THE IMPACT ON THE CHILD OF A SINGLE PARENT FAMILY <sup>to</sup>

Whether the two-parent family is dissolved by divorce, death or separation, the psychological turmoil which faces the child in the formation of a single-parent family is immense. The child is further affected by the social and economic crisis which the evolving single-parent family may face. The child has to learn to accept, adapt and cope with the single-parent family situation.

*Conclusion*  
*factor's raising single parent*  
*Adolescence*

The possible problem of having to explain the family situation to friends and neighbours, who undoubtedly will ask questions about the new family arrangement, is one which the child has to face alone. Many single families <sup>Conclusion</sup> change neighbourhoods and send the children to new schools. A change in the family status is a particular traumatic experience for the child and one which can become a major crisis in its life.

In addition to the social, psychological and economic factors, the stressful situation the child is experiencing at the time of its parents' separation, may develop feelings of lowered self-esteem, rejection and a 'caught-in-the-middle' conflict situation. The child may be confused about which role it is being expected to play in the parental drama, where the entrances and exits are, and whether to remain backstage or not. (Goffman's dramaturgical approach comes to mind.)

Many children, because they 'side' with one of the parents, find themselves in ambiguous situations. The child tries to help the parent handle its difficult surroundings. The anxiety linked to this disruption in the child's life may add to an already negative outlook causing further unhappiness, resentment and adjustments in its social make-up. Is the problem not perhaps that the child tries to take on a more adult role and to sublimate its own childlike feelings?

Schlesinger (1982) refers to a study of the effects of divorce on children:

Longfellow (1979), also examines the studies related to the effects of divorce on children. She cautions the reader not to accept only clinical studies of divorced children, which seem to find antisocial and aggressive behaviour among divorced children. Her review seems to suggest that it is the type of conflict which parents have during the divorce, which directly affects the adjustment of the child in divorce. Thus unhappy, anxious, fearful, angry, arguing, hostile parents will produce problems in children of divorce. On the other hand, a parent with positive social network supports of family and friends, and a satisfactory relationship to the ex-spouse will enhance the adjustment of a child in the divorce.

(Schlesinger, 1982 : 1)

Most single parents in the Port Elizabeth study concurred with Schlesinger's belief that the support of a positive social network and a good relationship with the ex-spouse are crucial to the positive social adjustment of the divorced parent's child.

### 3.4 AN EXAMPLE OF A SOCIAL AGENCY AS AN AID TO SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

To-day there are social organisations which have recognized the impending dangers that may exist for the child and the single parent after the break up of the two-parent family. One such organization, The Family and Marriage Association of South Africa, provides a social and therapeutic service to the single-parent family. In answering a letter from the "Single Parent", Port Elizabeth, and published under the heading "Well-Being of Children the First Consideration", this organization states,

We [FAMSA] do divorce counselling of individuals and would be more than willing to start groups of this nature and encourage single parents who are keen to get together in a group or to come for individual counselling, to contact us ...

We already do work in several schools in the three centres [Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown and East London] and when we become aware of problems among children because of divorce, we try to meet the need.

In this regard we are also considering starting groups for children and adolescents who have step-parents and who would like to speak to and share with others about their difficulties.

(Eastern Province Herald, 7 November 1985)

It is apparent, therefore, that besides the clinical agencies such as psychologists and school psychologists, social agencies are indeed playing a part in attempting to help single-parent families. The encouragement of single parent families could even lead to re-marriage and a reconstituted family, although this should not be construed as a necessarily ideal outcome.

The possibility of re-marriage and reconstituted two-parent families does not necessarily solve the child's problems. Step-children and step-parents are not always amicable towards each other in a new household. In many cases the child might find this new arrangement worse than living in a single-parent family. There are, therefore, pro's and con's to reconstituted two-parent families. The success of these families depends largely on the interpersonal relationships between its members and the degree of conflict which occurs in their formation, as well as how these conflicts are overcome.

This study focuses on the multiplicity of difficulties that face the single parent family.

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVORCE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE CREATION OF THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY : SOME STATISTICS INDICATIVE OF THE PHENOMENON

After a period of relative stability following the post-World War II peak, divorce rates began to soar in the 1960s and have continued to escalate up to the present, though at a more gradual rate over the past five years. The rising incidence of divorce within modern society has renewed a long-standing concern that the institutions of marriage and the family may be in serious trouble.

An important theoretical issue is the causal connection between marital dissolution and the creation of the single-parent family. In order to clarify the trends of divorce in society today, an initial study must be made of current attitudes towards separation and divorce, the causes and consequences of divorce and the data from previous statistical longitudinal research relating to divorce. Thornton (1985) has shown an indication of divorce trends:

During the past 100 years divorce has increased by approximately a factor of 10 in the United States; whereas only about 5% of the marriages of the 1960s terminated in divorce, 50% of the marriages of the 1970s will do so if current rates continue (Preston and McDonald 1979; Weed 1980). The increase in divorce was especially rapid during the 1960s and 1970s, when the divorce rate doubled (Cherlin 1981). Attitudes toward separation and divorce also appear to be changing. McRae (1978) reported that between 1958 and 1971 'divorce was being removed from the realm of the morally absolute' with people increasingly willing to consider the circumstances of the specific situation instead of imposing an absolute rule against divorce.

(Thornton, 1985 : 856-857)

#### 4.1 SOCIETAL ATTITUDES TOWARD DIVORCE

Pollard (1958 : 1) remarks:

There are many shades of opinion on divorce, but the two dominant schools of thought are, on the one hand, those who think divorce is always wrong, on the other, those who think that divorce, while regrettable, is sometimes necessary and right. The extreme supporters of the first view are found in the Roman Catholic Church ... Those who support divorce believe that marriage is made by and for man; that marriage and divorce are essentially human institutions to be judged by their usefulness and in the same spirit as one decides whether to buy a house or accept a new job. If they work badly they can be changed.

Many people find themselves faced with a choice of whether to marry or not. To-day co-habitation is generally accepted in most western societies. Little attention, however, has so far been given to the enhancement and improvement of relationships between premarital couples as a grooming process for future married life. What is to be expected from marriage today does not always relate to yesterday's concept of marriage and family as, in many cases, the parental family no longer serves as a suitable model for many young couples in our complex society. The young couples' experience of the norms, values and expectations of two different and, often conflicting, stances on morality and marriage may lead to confusion in their own attempts to build a secure, healthy family life.

#### 4.2 DIVORCE (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) AND THE FAMILY

The impact that divorce has on the structure as well as on the functioning of the family creates new roles for all members concerned. Thus a new form, the single-parent family, takes shape.

This form of family life does not always represent the conventional image of a family. However, it is a form which is becoming more evident in our everyday lives. Society should, therefore, concern itself with the influence that divorce may have on the fabric of modern society.

The following tables both illustrate divorce trends in the United States of America (Cherlin, 1981 : 22-23) (In Figure 3 the annual divorce rates for 1920 - 1978 were taken from the figures for divorces per 1000 married women aged 15 and over; for 1860 - 1920 they were taken from figures for divorces per 1000 existing marriages):

FIGURE 3: ANNUAL DIVORCE RATES - USA 1860 TO 1978

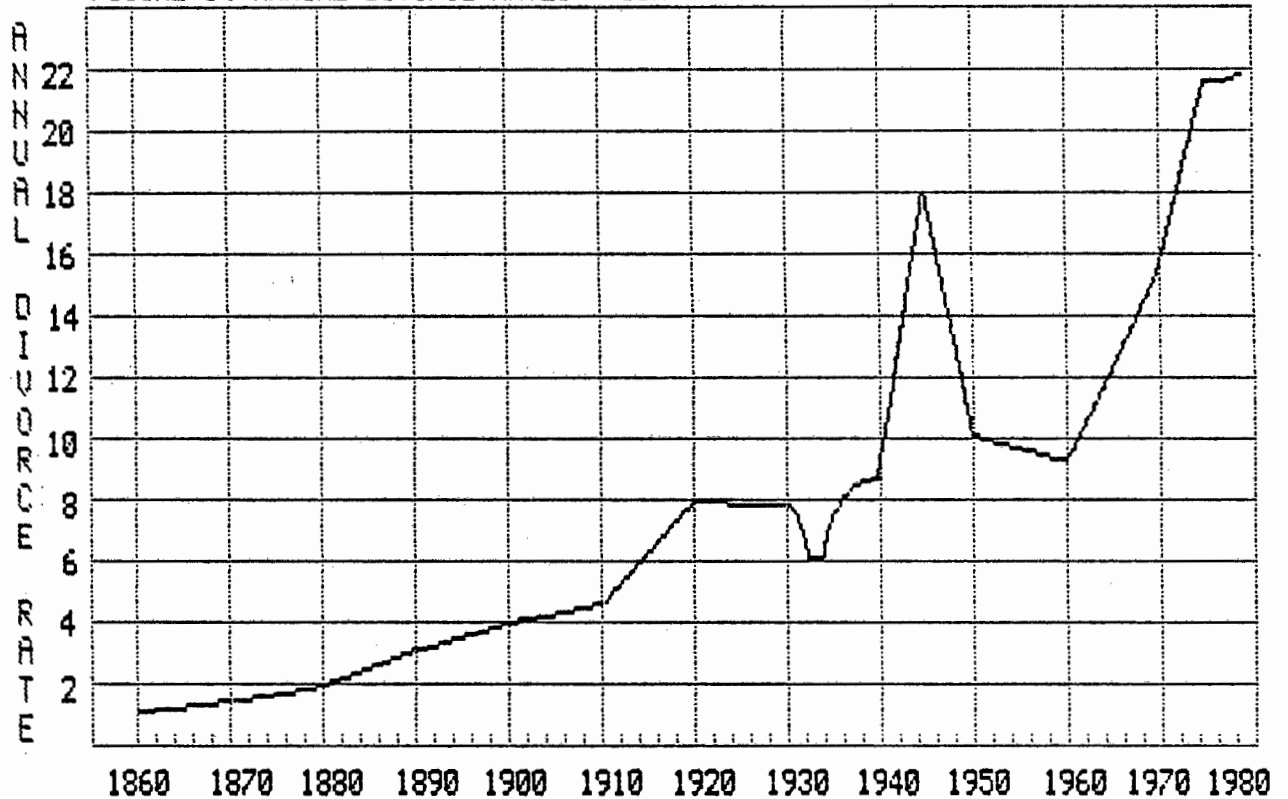
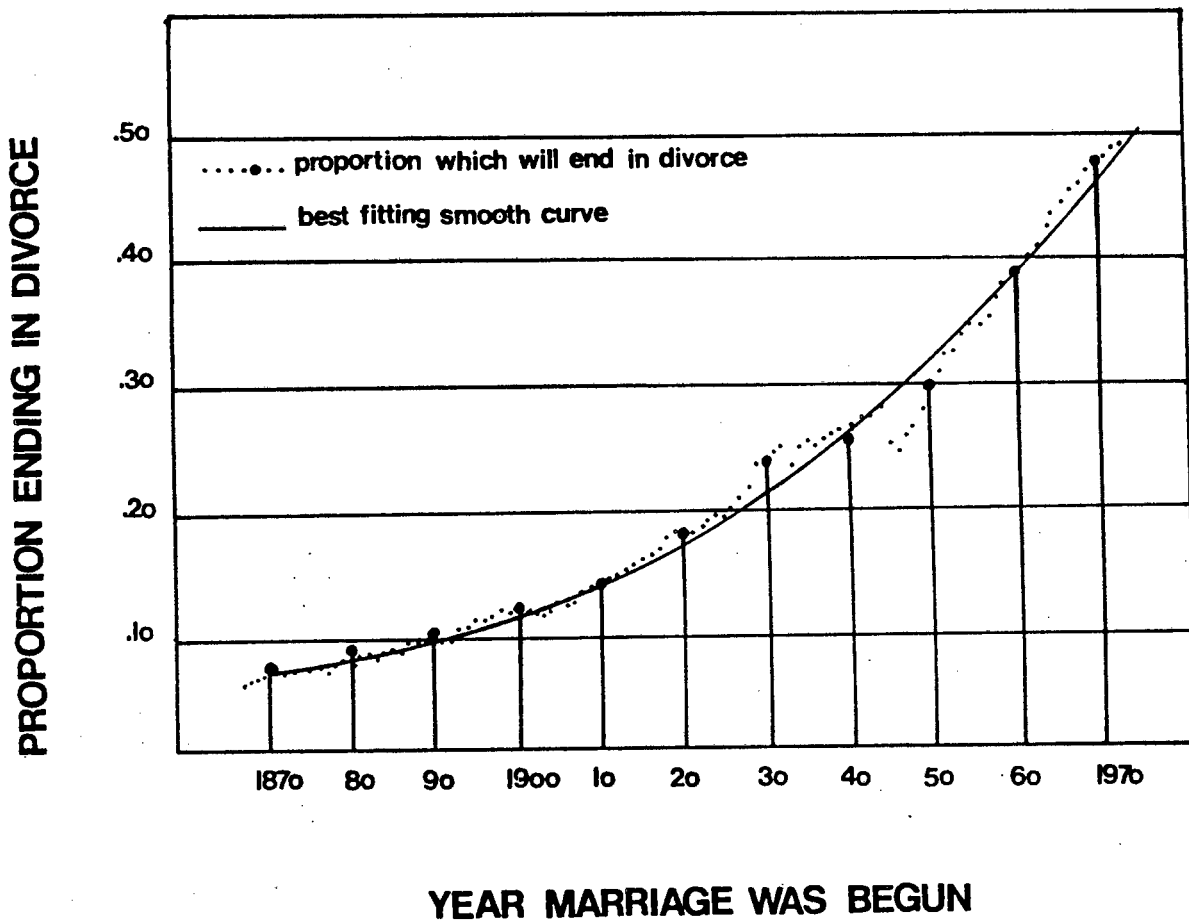


FIGURE 4 : PROPORTION OF MARRIAGES BEGUN IN EACH YEAR THAT WILL END IN DIVORCE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (1867 - 1973)



Common sense tells us that divorce disturbs home-life psychologically and emotionally and disrupts the regular patterns of family behaviour. The children are sometimes 'caught-in-the-middle' and act as go-betweens during this period of family crisis.

Stroup (1966 : 571) comments that,

The use of children as pawns in a marital cross fire is a potential corollary of the divorce process. It is doubtful that anyone who has observed custody battles would believe that the effect can be positive for the child. Not only does the child suffer, but the strain on the father and mother during this period touches not only their relatives and friends, but society as a whole.

Postdivorce adjustment, which no member of an emerging single parent family can avoid, can be an extremely difficult period for the whole single parent family. Readjustment to single parenthood is more stressful if the relationships within the larger/extended family had previously been cordial but have broken down through resentment of, and bitterness towards, some members of the family.

Rodman (1967 : 259 - 260) points out that Sorokin, in his "The Crisis of Our Age", criticizes the modern family system and paints a black picture of the family of present-day society. Burgess et al, quoted in Rodman (1967) however, have this to say about the 'companion family' in what they see as an attempt at the revival of the traditional family pattern:

The form of the family that appears to be emerging in modern society may be called the companionship family because of its emphasis on intimate interpersonal association as its primary function. Other characteristics of the companionship family are the giving and receiving of affection; the assumption of equality of husband and wife; democracy in family decisions, with a voice and a vote by the children; the personality development of its members as a family objective; freedom of self-expression which is consistent with family unity; and the expectation that the greatest happiness is to be found in the family.

(Rodman, 1967 : 259 - 260)

#### 4.3 A NEW LIFE-STYLE

Divorce puts an end to marriage and makes both people single again. One parent of the two people going through this divorce process, having had a child or children, now becomes a single-parent in a single-parent family.

While most people are unsettled by changes to their lives, this is especially so for single parents, who feel under pressure because they now have to cope alone with day-to-day practical problems. Feeling psychologically battered after the divorce, sometimes with much bitterness and resentment, a single-parent family can drive the pressures of everyday life into the home situation with astronomical force. In rebuilding a life both for themselves and their children, single-parents find that once the wounds have healed, that a new way of life with a new set of problems emerges. The sooner the new circumstances are dealt with and accepted the sooner the new family is able to adjust to its new life.

There are single parents who feel the need to change their personal lives. They remove the parent label, stop playing the parental role, leave the children with family or friends and head for a new social life as a single person again. It is not surprising therefore that in many parts of the world today 'singles bars' have become popular as a meeting place for divorced persons wanting to form associations with other divorced persons. It must be noted too, that a single person is not necessarily only interested in an introduction to the opposite sex, even if it is for sex. (There were three known cases in the Port Elizabeth study where divorce was the result of the spouse finding another partner of the same sex and/or discovering that a homosexual relationship was preferred to their marriage situation. Latent homosexuality will not be discussed in this study.)

For the purpose of this study, the word 'single' connotes any person divorced, separated, single (not married that is or never married) who wishes to be introduced to a member of the opposite sex with a view to forming a liaison agreeable to both parties. Making 'new friends' is what these 'social clubs' are all about for both men and women. Men after all feel the same pain, guilt, failure and rejection that divorce brings to women. The singles clubs act as a supportive agency for many single parents who are not able to cope with the divorce process and with the inevitable readjustment to single parent status.

Many divorced single parents feel isolated and insecure after the divorce. They go through the trauma associated with the dissolution of their marriages not realizing that they are not the only people going through a divorce.

According to Kathy Godwin, of the National Council for the Divorced and Separated, most divorcees feel insecure about joining a singles club after their divorce.

I felt I was the only person who'd ever gone through anything as terrible as this, but when I finally plucked up courage and went along to my local club, I realised that there were lots of people even worse off than me.

(Search, 1979 : 68)

It is this type of general statement about the practical realities of the divorce situation which brings the position of the divorcee in society to the attention of society.

While it is not possible to examine all the facets of divorce, it is possible to highlight a few of the, sometimes overlooked, personal feelings of those involved and realize that very little has really been done by society to help those families who have suffered the trauma of divorce.

#### 4.4 DIVORCE - A SIGN OF THE TIMES

In the words of retired Judge Saul Solomon of the Rand Supreme Court of South Africa forty years ago:

The familiar contention that if a marriage has become a failure, it is a mockery and a sham not to end it - is to-day of common acceptance. It has been adopted in our legal theory, and judging by the number of decrees of divorce, its success has been striking.

(Goodman, 1947 : 15)

Marital disruption has become a grave social problem. The problem of divorce is receiving more attention from churches, lawyers, welfare workers, marriage guidance councillors, psychologists and people interested in rehabilitation work, than ever before. The combined efforts of social workers to combat the negative and detrimental effects of disrupted homes have helped in certain instances in finding solutions for the problems which stem from divorce. However, divorce rates persist in their upward trend, a clear sign that divorce continues to play a prominent role in the changing structure of family life in South Africa. (Compare Table 5.)

This does not necessarily mean that married couples are not increasing in numbers (see Table 4). In fact, as the total figures represented in Table 4 show, married couple figures have increased by 63,124 couples between the period 1980 - 1984. This applies to the 'White' population group in South Africa only.

A look at the crude rate of marriages shows a drop in percentages in 1983 and 1984 indicating that marriage was a less prominent occurrence in South Africa in these two years than in 1980, 1981 and 1982.

Goode (1982 : 152 - 161) makes the following comments about the changes and trends in the divorce rates:

- \* In each of the four years 1975 to 1978, there were over one million divorces in the United States.
- \* Almost all countries are now experiencing a general upward trend in divorce rates and this trend is likely to continue for some time in the future.
- \* Both divorce and marriage rates follow the business cycle, increasing during periods of prosperity and decreasing during periods of depression.
- \* At the present time, almost any married person can feel that he or she has some alternative if the present marriage is very unhappy.
- \* Perhaps the most important general finding is that marriages between couples of different religious backgrounds are more likely to end in divorce, and people of the same religious background are less likely to divorce, whether they are Catholic, Protestant or Jewish.
- \* More liberal divorce laws 'cause' higher divorce rates, but they are passed because more people want a divorce.

Table 3 is Goode's tabulation of the relationship between certain social, economic and religious backgrounds and a propensity, or otherwise, for divorce.

TABLE 3 : BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER  
OR LESSER PRONENESS TO DIVORCE:

GREATER PRONENESS

LESSER PRONENESS

Urban background

Rural background

Marriage at very young ages (15-19)

Marriage at average ages  
(males, 23, females, 22)  
or older ages

Shorter acquaintance before marriage

Acquaintance of two or more years  
prior to marriage

Short engagement, or none

Engagement of six months or more

Parents with unhappy marriages

Happily married parents

Couples who do not attend churches,  
or are of different faiths

Couples who attend church regularly,  
are Catholic, or adhere to the same  
church

Lower social rank

Higher social rank

Kin and friends disapproval of the  
marriage

Kin and friends' approval of the  
marriage

General dissimilarity in background

Similarity (homogamy) of background

Disagreement of husband and wife on  
role obligations

Agreement of husband and wife on role  
obligations

(Goode, 1982 : 161)

TABLE 4 : MARRIAGE SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE WHITE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1980 - 1984

| <u>MARRIAGES</u> |   |        |   |                                   |
|------------------|---|--------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Year             | Population<br>midyear<br>estimates<br>1 000 | Number | Crude rate<br>(Number of<br>marriages<br>per 1 000<br>population) | Married<br>couples<br>(Estimates) |
| 1980             | 4 358                                       | 45 165 | 10,0  | 1 061 850                         |
| 1981             | 5 603                                       | 46 653 | 10,1  | 1 077 059                         |
| 1982             | 4 674                                       | 46 649 | 10,0  | 1 093 673                         |
| 1983             | 4 748                                       | 44 982 | 9,5   | 1 110 988                         |
| 1984             | 4 807                                       | 44 840 | 9,3   | 1 124 974                         |

TABLE 5 : DIVORCE SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE WHITE POPULATION OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1980 - 1984

| <u>DIVORCES</u> |        |  |   |  |
|-----------------|--------|--|---|--|
| Year            | Number | Crude rate<br>(No. of divorces<br>per 1 000 popu-<br>lation) | Specific<br>(Divorce rate<br>No. of divorces<br>per 1 000<br>married couples) | Children<br>(Total no. of<br>minor children<br>involved) |
| 1980            | 16 543 | 3,65   | 15,6  | 21 039   |
| 1981            | 17 065 | 3,71   | 15,8  | 22 167   |
| 1982            | 17 683 | 3,78   | 16,2  | 22 224   |
| 1983            | 16 661 | 3,51   | 15,0  | 20 313   |
| 1984            | 17 568 | 3,69   | 15,6  | 21 271   |

Note: Statistics for Coloureds and Asians have been omitted by the researcher as they have no bearing on the section of the relevant population group being studied. (Central Statistical Services, 16 August 1985.)

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 ILLEGITIMACY AS A MAJOR FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY

The 'Social Revolution' in sexual behaviour and standards combined with social attitudes toward this sexual behaviour has lead to a new generation of adolescent sexuality which deviates from the traditionally accepted sexual mores. In a world of drugs, discotheques, free-love, freedom of expression, wild parties and sexually explicit literature and films, young adults are exposed to a vast array of sexual stimuli, which many find difficult to ignore. Such causes apply, mainly in the United States, but are less relevant in South African society than are poor education, poverty, anomie and the general tone set by the present-day economic and socio-political atmosphere.

Guidelines for the role behaviour of young men and women are no longer as clearly defined as in the 'pre-permissive' times. It is the very lack of clearly defined social mores that leads to the condonation of permissive behaviour. Society itself is confused about what contributes permissiveness. A mother-to-be, who does not know exactly what her moral duty should be, can find herself in a moral dilemma through the sociological pressures exerted on her by society at a time when she can least afford emotionally to experience anxiety.

Laslett et al, (1980 : xiii - xiv) remark that "Sexual behaviour has never anywhere been confined to procreative behaviour, procreative behaviour confined to marriage, and marriage confined to the official celebrations established by society."

Laslett et al.'s observation does not conform with the Christian doctrine which lays down that sexual expression be confined to procreation otherwise it is sinful.

### 5.1.1 Teenage Pregnancy

The sexual revolution is epitomised by changing societal attitudes towards sexual activity. The trend towards an acceptance of a wide range of sexual activity has led to a different set of values and the loosening of earlier structures on premarital sex. The change in attitude to sexual behaviour, which has stemmed from the sexual revolution in the mid-1960s, has led to conflict between the generations.

Large numbers of adolescents are now quite openly having sexual intercourse whenever they choose. Yet, many of them remain ignorant of birth control and are unwilling to accept the responsibility that will arise in the event of an unwanted pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy, notwithstanding freely available oral contraception is becoming a major sociological problem, as it is on the increase throughout the world.

In the United States of America it has been noted that:

As a result of the sexual revolution, the rate of adolescents ages 15 to 19 having babies has tripled in the 35 years from 1940 to 1975.

(Craig, 1983 : 355)

This statement becomes even more significant when put into percentages and figures: "More than one million adolescent girls become pregnant each year; over 65% of these girls are not married. About 60% of the girls complete their pregnancies and bear children. About 550,000 babies, then, are born each year to teenage mothers (National Center for Health Statistics, 1980). This presents a problem for society as a whole. Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and concerned citizens agree that many young mothers are not prepared to care for their infants." (Craig, 1983 : 357.)

An overriding social concern then is to help young mothers to thrive and become productive as they grow towards their own adulthood and nurture their young. When this challenge is taken up the results can be surprising, as many unwed mothers who face the demands of motherhood are successful when given assistance.

In a recent Time Magazine article (No. 49. 9 December 1985), "Children Having Children", Claudia Wallis, expresses the view that teenage pregnancies are "corroding America's social fabric" as each year more than a million American teenagers become pregnant, with four out of five of them unmarried.

Ignorance of the role that education, psychological factors, family relationships and biological factors play, is cited as the major drawback for developing mature sexual behaviour patterns among adolescents.

Wallis further comments: "And yet, for all their early experimentation with sex, their immersion in heavy-breathing rock music and the erotic fantasies on MTV, one thing about American teenagers has not changed: they are in many ways just as ignorant about the scientific facts of reproduction as they were in the days when Doris Day, not Madonna, was their idol."

Wallis continues in the same article:

It is this naiveté and ineptitude coupled with less openness in American Society generally about birth control that according to Guttmacher researchers, constitute one of the most striking differences between American adolescents and their European peers. In Sweden teenagers are sexually active even earlier... and they are exposed to even more explicit television. However, the Swedish National Board of Education has provided curriculum guidelines that ensure that, starting at age

seven, every child in the country receives a thorough grounding in reproductive biology and by age ten or twelve has been introduced to the various types of contraceptives.

Teenage pregnancy will be looked at in this section as a single category. The researcher did not wish to qualify whether these pregnancies were "unwanted" or "unmarried."

Pregnancy rates differ from country to country. Guttmacher's studies seem to show the availability of sex-education, a society's 'openness' about sex, the degree of ease with which teenagers are able to acquire birth control information, services and devices, is related to the rate at which teenage pregnancies occur in a particular society. Governments are very conscious of the rise and fall in the teenage pregnancy statistics, as a rise in the statistics adds to the welfare burden of the state.

In a local article entitled, "Teenage mothers causing concern" Bessie Bouwer (Weekend Post, 11 July 1987) emphasises the following point made by Mrs Penelope Aarts (the Eastern Cape organiser of the Family Planning association) at a conference of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysers-unie in Paarl in a discussion of teenage pregnancies and prostitution: that improved sex education programmes at Eastern Cape schools and a greater involvement by parents could greatly reduce the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies. It was further reported to the conference that 10,1% of all babies in the Western Cape were born to teenagers. Delegates were told that sexually active children would not easily relinquish physical relationships. It was further pointed out that if teenagers were to regard the reproductive process with respect, it was essential that they be provided with information on both the physical and psychological aspects of sex.

In the same article it appears that there has been no marked increase in teenage pregnancies in the Eastern Cape, but figures show that girls are falling pregnant at an earlier age than previously.

The birth figures last year, for four Eastern Cape hospitals showed that one 12-year-old and eight 13-year-old girls gave birth. In the 14-year age group, 51 girls gave birth and 170 girls in the 15-years group had babies (Weekend Post, 11 July 1987).

#### 5.1.2 The Unwed Mother

When the basic structure of the family unit, upon which our society has been traditionally based, deviates from the norm, the community is affected in numerous ways. The unwed mother and her child become a burden on society and need the support of welfare resources, health departments, housing and educational schemes. The community has to support these fatherless families by subsidizing, at least financially, the unwed mother's effort to care for her child.

Social 'labelling' and stigmatization of both the unwed mother and her child almost always occurs. Society surrounds an unmarried mother with restrictions. She is labelled a 'bad' woman and little effort is made to protect her or the baby. Young (1954 : 14) points out:

Certainly the child is punished quite as severely as the mother, if not more so, and in many a case the law and public sentiment conspire to visit the 'sins' of the parents upon the child and deprive him of opportunity for a normal and productive life.

The effect of general social attitudes are startling if one takes into consideration the social tragedy that illegitimacy has caused through the use of terminology such as 'bastard', 'baseborn', 'adulterine' and the like, all of which brand the mother and child and offer them little more than degradation within their own society. Punishment and discrimination consistently make the mother and the child feel guilt because

of their sinful violation of the moral codes. Once these sins have been perpetrated the 'sinners' are made to bear the guilt without hope of society's forgiveness and their reinstatement to respectability.

Nowadays, some women want a child but do not want a husband. Such a decision remains a matter of personal choice and the unwed mother bears all the responsibilities of a two-parent family. Other unmarried mothers, whether for religious, social or personal reasons, find the idea of having an abortion in conflict with their code of ethics, and choose to suffer social stigmatization by going ahead with the illegitimate birth of their child. For all unwed mothers, there are choices to be made. The hardships encountered after these illegitimate births have to be faced by most unwed mothers, whether the pregnancy has been one of choice or not. In conclusion, Roberts ed., (1966 : 8) illustrates how illegitimacy continues to be labelled and stigmatized in society today,

If society were to encourage or tolerate illegitimacy it would be contributing to its own demise. It is unlikely that our society will indulge in such suicidal behaviour.

### 5.1.3 The Unwed Father

The unmarried father's role has generally been overlooked as an integral part of the unmarried parent dilemma. It is possible that the reason for this is that the unwed mother is a more visible social problem whereas the unwed father is not.

In many cases, young fatherhood spells parental responsibility, which, at this early stage in a man's life, means financial and emotional support. Many young fathers are, however, unprepared for or unable to shoulder these responsibilities. The crises that a concurrence of adolescence, early marriage, and parenthood can give rise to

and the many psychological and socio-economic problems associated with the unmarried father's life in general, are noted in an article on fatherhood by LaBarre (1969 : 25) titled "The Double Jeopardy. The Triple Crisis - Illegitimacy Today."

These emotional problems of fatherhood, and especially of youthful fatherhood, may be expected to exert special force on the unwed father. But his problems are not merely psychological. Just as the girl has real medical and other problems, so also the boy has real socioeconomic and other problems. If he is known to be the father, he may be in real distress - from court action, potential long-term economic involvement, loss of schooling and ultimate socioeconomic achievement, unfavorable publicity that could hurt him or his family socially and financially, and so forth.

(National Council on Illegitimacy, 1969 : 25)

If the unwed father is unable to cope with all the problems facing him, his reaction might be to flee the situation and become (as many fathers-to-be in the past have been), a 'missing-father'. These 'missing-fathers' are usually depicted by an insensitive society as irresponsible hit-and-run artists who are not prepared to face up to the consequences of an unexpected and unwanted pregnancy. In his article, "The Missing-Father Myth" Stengel (1985) challenges this prevailing misconception by reference to the recent findings of a study funded by the Ford Foundation which reveals that many young fathers are not only willing, but eager, to support their partner and offspring.

The project, ... offered vocational services, counseling, and prenatal and parenting classes to nearly 400 teenage fathers and prospective fathers in eight U.S. cities. At the end of the two-year program, 82% reported having daily contact with their children; 74% said they contributed to the child's financial support. Almost 90% maintained a relationship with the mother, whom they had known for an average of two years.

(Stengel, 1985 : 49)

Programs such as those of the Ford Foundation offer hope in dealing with the single-parent families who, come into being as a result of an illegitimate birth. If the unmarried father is allowed and encouraged to play a supportive role towards his partner and offspring, satisfaction and renewed self respect from his participation in caring for his illegitimate child ensues.

## 5.2 THE DE JURE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Having considered the social status of illegitimacy, it is necessary to consider the legal status of legitimacy and illegitimacy, particularly in South Africa.

It is not always easy, sociologically, to clarify the link between legitimacy and illegitimacy. It is also not always clear what the legal rights of the single-parent or the illegitimate child are, or how laws of legitimacy determine the social placement of this family-type in society. Who has an obligation to whom, can only be determined by some form of legal code.

It is with this in mind that we now turn to a consideration of the legal position of all single-parent families in South Africa.

5.2.1 The Single-Parent Family in South Africa; An Overview

Sociological research combined with sound sociological wisdom will increasingly have to take systematic account of family patterns in South Africa. Since families are an integral part of our everyday lives and since single-parent families are a growing phenomenon in our society, it makes sense to look at these particular family patterns in order to increase our understanding and appreciation of them.

Industrialization and urbanization embrace varying forms of social and family life-styles. Values, norms, attitudes, and behaviour patterns undergo change through the modernization process and the resulting changes have to be considered by the law-makers. Many changes, have been made in South Africa to the laws on censorship, marriage and sexual practice. Legal changes are instituted to embody society's general acceptance of previously unacceptable norms that have become totally acceptable to the majority of the population. Social change is taking place continuously. The factors that can cause these social changes are too numerous to mention here. However, it is the new aspects of family life that these changes bring, that must be looked at when considering the single parent family lifestyle.

Newly established rules frequently have to take into account diminishing parental control of children's courtship and mate choices, increased sexual freedom and cohabitation of unmarried people and more expressive forms of individualism. All these changes in social behaviour and attitude add to the likelihood of an increase in single-parent families in the South African society of the future. The drawing up of new laws and re-classification of old laws concerning the family will be a result of social change in society. A few specific examples are discussed here.

### 5.2.2 Legitimate or Illegitimate Birth

It seems necessary at this stage to specify what legitimate birth is. Olivier (1976 : 322) gives the following legally accepted definition:

A legitimate child is one who was born of parents who were legally married to each other, either at the time of the conception of the child, or at any time between conception and birth of the child. If the parents of the child were not legally married to each other at any of these stages, the child is illegitimate.

South African law recognises three types of illegitimate children (according to de jure factors governing any child not born legitimate). The illegitimacy laws classify cases of illegitimacy according to the nature of the relationship which existed between the parents at the time of conception. Once the child has been classified as illegitimate there are subsequent laws which define the legal position of the child, many of which differ from those pertaining to legitimate children. The following types of illegitimate children are recognised:

1. Natural children (spurii)

Here both parents although unmarried at the time of conception, were competent to marry each other.

2. Adulterine children (adulterini)

These children born of parents, one or both of whom, at the time of conception, were married to someone else.

3. Incestuous children (incestuosi)

These are children born of parents, who at the time of conception were incompetent to marry each other because of their close relationship.

(Olivier, 1976 : 328)

The single-parent family may be the result of many such types of illegitimacy. In many cases, however, a subsequent legal marriage can switch the status of the child from illegitimate to legitimate. Society's attitudes toward both the parents and child may not necessarily be changed by such 'legitimizing' of the family.

### 5.2.3 Legitimation by Adoption

According to the provisions of section 70(1) of the Children's Act, a single-parent may adopt a child legally under the following circumstances:

If he/she is:

1. A widower or widow or an unmarried or divorced person;
2. A married person whose spouse is, and has been for an uninterrupted period of seven years immediately preceding the application for adoption, mentally disordered or defective; and
3. A married person who is separated from his or her spouse by judicial decree.

(Olivier, 1976 : 339)

It was noted earlier that an unmarried person may legally adopt a child if that person is twenty-five years older than the child if the child is of the opposite sex, or eighteen years older than the child if the child is of the same sex. In these cases the court would obviously have to be convinced that it is in the interests of the child before it will consent to the adoption. The legal implications of legitimization by adoption have to meet the standards set by the moral code of the society. To ensure that justice is done, objections may be made by members of the community at any stage of the proceedings through well defined legal channels.

5.2.4 Dissolution of Marriage by Death

Single parenthood is often the result of the death of either spouse. Legally the surviving spouse retains the natural guardianship and custody of all minor children from the marriage. If he or she sees fit, a legal guardian may be nominated upon whom a children's court may, if it deems fit, confer the exclusive right of parental power over minors in the family. The best interests of the minors are the priority concern in all such cases. However, as Hahlo (1975 : 328) points out, "If the husband is the first to die, the wife becomes, ... the natural guardian and custodian of the children of the marriage. The first-dying spouse cannot, by will or otherwise, deprive the survivor of the custody of the children."

At the time of death the family feels diminished as a unit. Dealing with the death of a spouse puts a tremendous amount of strain on the remaining partner who, notwithstanding socially supportive agents within society's structure, cannot always come to terms with their new single parent role. The legal ramifications of where each member of the family fits, help to clarify the new position of the single-parent family in society. Death can, therefore, give birth to new familial patterns through the formation of a one-parent family. //

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE SURVEY

#### INTRODUCTION

The initial collection of all statistics, figures and information on the single parent family life-style was one that posed a very interesting problem. All organizations which could have been associated with single parents in Port Elizabeth were contacted. It was discovered that no study of this nature had been done in the area and that there were no statistics available for single parents in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area. Furthermore, it was discovered that statistics for single parents in South Africa, as an entity, had never been calculated.

In order to obtain reliable, first-hand knowledge of the single parent, the researcher contacted various organizations who could be of assistance to the research project. This was done before 'going into the field' to conduct interviews with 107 respondents, all of whom volunteered to be part of this study as a result of an appeal in two newspaper articles.

The starting point of this study was a pilot study conducted by the researcher in mid-1986 which revealed that research into the single parent family was viable. These initial findings became the groundwork for the study to follow.

This study represents the first exploratory study done on single parent families in Port Elizabeth.

#### 6.1 THE SAMPLE

There was no volunteer corpus from which to draw a sample group. After careful consideration of ways in which a viable sample could be drawn, an article was placed in a local newspaper, the Eastern Province Herald, explaining the significance of a study of the single parent family. This article called for single parents who were prepared to volunteer information to contact the researcher. Both the researcher's home and office telephone numbers were given for the respondents' convenience. Confidentiality was assured to all prospective volunteers.

Public response to this article proved to be so great that the researcher was encouraged to investigate 38 of the 66 respondents who replied to the article personally. This became the pilot study in that the researcher took the opportunity of calling on all 38 respondents to test the questionnaire. The 38 respondents (who participated in both the pilot and the main study) were selected on a sequential basis from the 66 single parents who responded to the newspaper article. All these 66 single parents participated in the final study. Of the total 107 respondents, therefore, 41 single parents were obtained via 'snowballing' and 66 single parents were obtained via the newspaper article. The latter volunteer group of 66 single parents were therefore used to obtain the balance of 41 respondents interviewed for the purposes of the study.

Insight into the life-style of single parents in Port Elizabeth was gained by the researcher through this pilot study which incorporated both questionnaire and personal interviews.

Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining a population of single parents from government, educational and social institutions in the area. Letters were posted to all state institutions asking for permission to do research on single parent families. All letters of response gave negative answers to queries about other studies on single parent families in their specific fields.

It became apparent that the researcher would have to opt for a volunteer group as a sample. Two newspaper articles were published in a local newspaper, the Eastern Province Herald, calling for single parents in Port Elizabeth to contact the researcher at home or work to answer a questionnaire pertaining to single parent families from the White population group in Port Elizabeth.

The first article "Seeking Single Parents" (Eastern Province Herald, 20 February 1986) was followed by a second article "Big Response by PE Single Mums to Call" (Eastern Province Herald, 27 February 1986) providing an astonishingly successful response. The former article stated:

A sociology researcher is looking for single parents in Port Elizabeth to provide information that could lead to a more widely-based assessment of the phenomenon.

Mr Stuart Gatley, a sociology lecturer on the Zwide campus of Vista University, assured "Women's Herald" that the anonymity of his sources and the confidentiality of their information, were guaranteed.

He said it was surprising that up to now, there were no statistics at all to show how many single parents there were. (In Port Elizabeth and in South Africa) ...

In his original research among whites in Port Elizabeth, Mr Gatley hopes to come up with statistics that will lead to a much wider investigation. In his assessment he will be looking at the single parent family as a sociological unit.

What he hopes to establish is how society views such families, the problems they encounter and how they see themselves in society.

The focus of the research is on all aspects giving rise to the situation - widowhood, divorce, legal separation, the unmarried mother, unmarried father and legal adoption by single parents.

Mr Gatley will also look into the availability of social agencies, not clinics, but clubs and discussion groups where those concerned can talk about their problems.

...

Single parents willing to participate can contact Mr Gatley at Vista, 66-2755, Extension 13, or 2-5042 in the evenings.

(Eastern Province Herald, 20 February 1986)

A total of 107 single parents volunteered to fill in the questionnaire on single parent family life-styles. (One respondent handed her questionnaire in after the computer results had been completed and was not considered for the purposes of the study).

Of those who volunteered 21 were widows/ers (19,6%), 73 were divorced (68,2%), 3 were separated (2,8%) and 10 were unmarried/never married single parents (9,3%). There was no response from a single person who had achieved single parent status through legally adopting a child.

There were 100 female and 7 male respondents.

These figures are similar to the 1986 HSRC study done by Snyman. The percentages were:

|                   | <u>PTA</u> | <u>P.E.</u> |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Widow/ers         | = 18,3%    | 19,6%       |
| Divorced          | = 73,0%    | 68,2%       |
| Separated         | = 3,0%     | 2,8%        |
| Unmarried mothers | = 2,7%     | 9,3%        |

The unmarried mothers figure for the Pretoria study represents a difference of 6,6% from that of the Port Elizabeth study. The researcher could not establish why there should have been such a large response difference between the two samples, but suggests that one explanation could be the snowball sampling method used in the Port Elizabeth study which introduced more unmarried mothers through those respondents already interviewed.

The male respondents in Snyman's study represented 6,0% of the sample. The male respondents in the Port Elizabeth study represented 6,5% of the sample. There seems to be a general correlation between Snyman's and the Port Elizabeth study sample.

Obtaining personal comments on their single-parent family situation from respondents in Port Elizabeth was a relatively easy task. Transcripts of the personal interviews with single parents and the voluntary comments made by them on the last page of the questionnaire were used to illuminate the statistical data given in the study.

Most of the qualitative research findings in this dissertation were obtained during the personal interviews in the pilot study. Dr Snyman did a pilot study on 22 single parents for her project compared to the 38 single parents chosen for the Port Elizabeth pilot study.

Over 220 children (an average of 2.06 children per single parent family) were involved directly or indirectly in the study. A statistical breakdown for the number of children in the Port Elizabeth study is:

|  |   |                            |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| 35 single parents had 1 child only                   | = | 35 children                |
| 41 single parents had 2 children                     | = | 82 children                |
| 21 single parents had 3 children                     | = | 63 children                |
| 10 single parents had 4 children <u>or more</u>      | = | minimum <u>40</u> children |
| <u>Total number of children considered in study=</u> |   | <u>220+</u> children       |

(It is not possible to calculate the exact number of children involved in the study, since the questionnaire did not ask for a figure greater than 4 or more).

Family size was measured by the number of children in the family, the single parent, and whoever else was living permanently in the same household with the single parent and the children.

The occupation of the majority of the sample of single parents fell into the clerical or administrative field (45,8%). Most respondents had reached Std 9 or 10 on the educational qualification scale (44,9%), and most had been single parents for 5 years or more (49,5%).

The average age of the respondents was between the ages of 36 and 45 years (50,5%). Most of the respondents were English-speaking. The lack of language balance detracts from the study, but is probably a result of the instigating newspaper articles appearing only in the English newspapers circulated in the Port Elizabeth area. Use was not made of the Afrikaans newspaper as the response to the first article was overwhelming and it was thought that 66 respondents (38 of whom were chosen for the pilot study) would be enough for a research project of this size. (The newspaper selected has the greatest circulation in the Port Elizabeth area).

From these 66 respondents, the rest of the sample was obtained, via snowball sampling, totalling 107 single parents in the final analysis. All information gained from these 107 respondents was recorded and put on a computer disc.

#### 6.1.1 Pilot study

All those respondents who volunteered to participate in the study gave their names, addresses and telephone numbers to the researcher. Having obtained the telephone numbers and addresses of all the respondents, the researcher set up interviews with 38 of the respondents at an average of 3 per day in order to evaluate where the study was going to have its impetus and to test the hypotheses as well as the questionnaire to be used.

At this stage, all the interviews were personally conducted by the researcher. The respondents were asked all the questions appearing on the questionnaire read to them by the researcher. Respondents' answers were recorded by ticking the relevant answers. Replies were double-checked to avoid any possible errors in the recording of the data.

If the respondent was Afrikaans, the author interviewed in Afrikaans and marked the answers off on the English questionnaire, as the Afrikaans questionnaire was not available at this stage of the research. (Because of the possible discrepancies which could arise by using such a method, it was decided for the main study to translate the questionnaire into Afrikaans. The availability of a mother-tongue questionnaire would also facilitate rapport between researcher and respondent.) No language hostility occurred during any of these interviews as bilingualism on the part of the interviewer seemed to remove any possibility of this happening.

Appointments were also confirmed telephonically on the day prior to an appointment. On reaching the respondent's home, the usual procedure for the researcher was to knock on the door, introduce himself to the person opening the door and politely ask to see the respondent with whom the interview had been arranged.

To put the respondent at ease immediately, the researcher encouraged an easy-going, relaxed approach to all interviews. This approach quite clearly made each respondent feel less threatened by the researcher, (a stranger in the house) and less embarrassed by the prospect of discussing the respondent's past, present and future life styles in detail. Because of the sensitive nature of this study, the researcher felt that the opening phase of the interview was crucial. If the initial phase was handled incorrectly, non-co-operation by the respondent could result.

Six major points were clarified to all single parents being interviewed:

- 1) that whatever the respondent said during the interview would be treated in the strictest confidence and that no names, addresses or other personal information would be forwarded to any other party;
- 2) that the completed questionnaires would have no names on them and that the respondent would, therefore, remain anonymous;
- 3) that the researcher was only interested in what the respondent thought and felt about the topics listed in the questionnaire and that the respondent should be reassured that no further personal questions would be asked;

- 4) that only the researcher would have access to the respondents' replies and that any question which the respondent considered too sensitive could be avoided by a simple 'I would not like to answer that question' or a 'no reply' answer;
- 5) that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that the respondent should answer exactly the way he or she felt about the respective question, that is, answer as honestly as he/she thought was possible at the time;
- 6) that the researcher was only interested in the respondent's answers to the questionnaire and not any personal opinions of his/her husband, wife, family or friends. It was also made clear to the respondent that a spontaneous reply was more acceptable than one which was carefully thought out or planned; or which was an answer the respondent thought the researcher would like to hear; or which was what the respondent felt he/she should say.

#### 6.1.2 Evaluation of Pilot Study

- 1) Major problems which occurred while doing the pilot study:
  - (i) Co-ordinating a set time for the interview did not always suit both researcher and respondent.
  - (ii) A large percentage of the 38 respondents wanted to spend more time elaborating on the replies. This was time consuming. (One interview took nearly 4 hours to complete as the respondent insisted on giving full details to every question asked by the interviewer).

- (iii) Many respondents lived in the same area and it was not always possible to see them on the same day, so transport costs were increased when a return journey to the same area had to be made.
- (iv) Some questions were not clear to the respondents during the pilot study. These questions were checked and re-worded to avoid any ambiguity.

2) Major successes while doing the pilot study:

- (i) Many respondents had suggestions to make and these were noted and used where applicable to the study.
- (ii) Snowball sampling was used effectively to gather more respondents during the pilot study, as many respondents knew other single parents who were willing to participate in the study. These 'new' respondents were contacted by the 'pilot study' respondents and telephoned the researcher at a later date to volunteer information. These respondents became part of the sample of 107 single parents who comprise this study. Snowball sampling was one of the major successes of the pilot study.
- (iii) Once the researcher had administered the questionnaire a few times, it took less time to prepare for the remainder of the interviews.

The results of the pilot study were rewarding in that all the respondents interviewed were most co-operative and only too willing to help should they be called upon to do so at a later stage.

The pilot study was a most encouraging start for the researcher in his collection of data from single parents who participated in the initial exploratory study.

## 6.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The aid of an expert was sought in order to overcome any initial research problems which might occur during the various stages of the research process. The researcher decided to contact Dr Snyman of the Institute for Sociological and Demographic Research directly (by telephone) in order to discuss the possible problems which could occur during the research process. A clear picture of what to expect and where discrepancies could occur in such a study were pointed out and noted by the researcher.

After having formulated a variety of questionnaires it was decided to approach Dr Ina Snyman again this time for a copy of her questionnaire. The questionnaire was then adapted to suit the purposes of the Port Elizabeth study. Different coding systems and programming techniques were used and some variables discarded or altered in order to confine the study to the Port Elizabeth context.

Dr Snyman's study, "Enkelouerskap in Pretoria : Probleemdimensies, stutfaktore en die behoefte aan gemeenskapfasiliteite by 300 enkelouergesinne" published by the Human Sciences Research Council (Verslag S-143) in 1986, has been summarized by her in a HSRC report, and is easily accessible.

The questionnaire used in the Port Elizabeth study was considered a fairly long one consisting of 119 questions. For the purpose of analysis the questionnaire was split into 3 parts. A covering explanatory page was titled and signed by the researcher and space was provided on which the respondent could make comments on and/or suggestions about the questionnaire and any personal comments he or she wished to make about the single parent family or life in general. (See appendix B).

The body of the questionnaire took the most basic numerical form possible so that the respondent would be able to answer the questions and follow the instructions in the questionnaire with ease.

The relative lack of understanding of those respondents who had a lower educational level became more and more evident as the study progressed. In such cases, the researcher intervened by filling in the questionnaire together with the respondent. Any discrepancy or answer viewed by the researcher as dubious, was immediately clarified by appealing again to the respondent. It is also relevant to note that in most cases corrections were not needed.

A computer system was used to get fast and accurate results in the quantitative analysis of the survey. The base program used was the "Archive" database from Psion which is available for many computers including IBM compatibles. For this Study a QL-Sinclair with 128 kilobytes memory was used. The program instructions had to be custom written. Each questionnaire had to be stored as one record in the file.

To input or display such a long string, (monitors only display 80 characters per line) it was necessary to split the string into different parts, which proved to be time-consuming. Future questionnaires should ideally have parts with a maximum of 80 answers or less, or have more parts.

## THE MAIN STUDY

### 6.2.1 Administering the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to enable all single parents answering the questions put to them to understand fully what was required of them in their answers. The simplest possible language was chosen, but where necessary, questions, which were unclear, could be explained by the researcher.

There were 120 questions which had to be answered by all single parents. Each questionnaire took an average of thirty minutes to complete. As both the semi-formal introduction and the completion of the questionnaire were considered major parts of the interview, the approximate time spent with each respondent extended to a full hour period. The longest time taken for any one interview was four hours. Many questions had to be repeated, particularly to many of those single parents who had had little formal education. Any question which posed a problem in the interview was clarified by the author who then rephrased the same question in another way so that the single parent could fully understand its meaning. No question was omitted in the interview, nor was a new question asked until the previous one had been clearly and fully answered.

The list of respondents revealed an overwhelming percentage of female respondents and this imbalance could suggest that there are far more female than male single parents. But, as the research project comprised a volunteer group of single parents in Port Elizabeth (and because there were only seven male single parents who volunteered any information for the study) it was decided not to try to control the sex variable by selecting a 50-50 relationship amongst the respondents. The disproportional male/female response could act as a catalyst for future statistical and comparative studies in this field.

No respondent refused to answer any question. In fact elaborated answers were the rule rather than the exception. The question on age produced unexpected humour from some of the respondents. All respondents answered this rather pertinent question.

The area of illegitimacy was approached very carefully, but here again, there was no difficulty in getting the necessary co-operation from single parents.

Respondents answered freely when questioned about their annual income and approximations were entered on the questionnaire where exact figures were unavailable. Many single parents were confused by the annual or monthly salary required by the question. This point was clarified to the mutual understanding of both the interviewee and the interviewer.

All replies were recorded as they were received from each respondent, but later edited for incorporation into this dissertation.

#### 6.2.2 Presentation of Questionnaire

The names of all single parents who had telephoned the researcher to volunteer information on single parent attitudes, beliefs or life-styles, were recorded. Telephone numbers and addresses were noted and appointments were made to meet either in the respondent's home or at a public coffee bar or meeting place where the interview could be conducted.

The researcher dressed in a semi-formal manner, with short hair and a clean-shaven look. A cordial rapport was established as soon after the initial introduction as possible in order to 'gain access' to the inner personality of the respondent. Most respondents were very hospitable. Many of these single parents also volunteered more information than was required and were only too happy to find a good listener in the researcher. Such single parents tried to turn the interview into a general 'chit-chat' by discussing their entire life history. In such cases the researcher intervened by directing the respondents' attention

back to the questionnaire. This was done in a very polite manner in order not to upset the person being interviewed.

### 6.3 COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

As all respondents were volunteers and as the researcher had spoken to each volunteer at least telephonically, it was relatively easy to explain to the respondents what the survey was all about. Although personal contact had been made prior to the respondent filling in the questionnaire, it was decided to add a covering letter as well in an attempt to make the completion of the questionnaire as attractive an exercise as possible for the single parent concerned.

The pilot study gave no indication of likely respondent boredom, so it was decided to keep to the original questionnaire.

In constructing the questionnaire, the nature of the people to whom it was being sent - a volunteer group of single parents - became the overriding criterion as it was thought that most members of this group would want to elaborate extensively about their life-styles as single parents.

Many respondents made comments about the questionnaire, as they were invited to, on the last page. Some of the comments were:

Respondent Number 52 said:

I hope I have filled this in correctly considering it has been a few pages. I used every couple of evenings when I got a chance to breathe in peace. Good luck with your studies. If you are trying to sum me up let me help.

Number 47 said:

Filling in this made me more aware of the pain of being a single parent. It seems you have done a great job. Well done.

Respondent 45 maintained:

I do feel that it is very relevant as regards the single parent who is divorced as to who the plaintiff is/was. It alters the whole tone of the questionnaire.

Single parent 17 wrote:

Although it may appear from several answers that I have contradicted myself it is not actually so. My frame of mind now after 16 years since I divorced is strong and positive. This cannot help but show in the questionnaire, however the early days were not so rosy and that too will show.

Another respondent 6 replied:

Thank you for asking me (the researcher clarifies that this respondent was a volunteer, but was being polite in thanking him here) to participate in the survey. The questions were most interesting but confusing at times. Hope something good comes out of this.

Another example, Number 103 in the study briefly thanks the researcher thus:

Thank you I have enjoyed doing this questionnaire.

A more negative reply from respondent 79 concluded:

I would have enjoyed filling this in more if the information was not in such depth - too many pages.

After completing the questionnaire Number 65 said:

Answered enough questions already.

As can be seen from the above sample of statements made by respondents on the comment page of the questionnaire, most viewed the questionnaire positively, a few respondents told the researcher verbally that, had the questionnaire been double its length, they would still have completed it. The major objective from the researcher's point of view was to have all questionnaires completed so that both he and the single parent could benefit from the result.

#### 6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Each respondent's questionnaire was given a code number 1 to 107 to maintain anonymity at all times. A list of these numbers appears next to the names they represent and all the particulars of that respondent can be withdrawn from the computer programme at any given time by the researcher. This accessibility allows for an in-depth study into any one of the 107 questionnaires.

While a fully descriptive individual response study is not the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen to highlight research findings which are comparable to the Pretoria single parent families study where applicably relevant material warrants it. Examples of single parent comments, suggestions and opinions, which appeared at the back of each questionnaire in the Port Elizabeth study, will be quoted throughout this chapter, when and where applicable qualitative reference is necessary.

Only frequency and percentage distributions have been presented in this study due to its aim which is purely exploratory and descriptive in nature. Moving into the field of cross-tabulations, more sophisticated data analysis takes one into the realm of explanatory studies which was not the aim of the study.

The researcher was not looking at the kinds and types of single parent families and their relationships to other variables. Such cross-tabulations would be inappropriate in this study due to the initial goal of the study. The classification of single parents into divorcee, widow/er, separated, unmarried and single parents by legal adoption can be used in multi-variate cross-tabulation. Mention of this factor is made here only for the possible extension of this study, or as a recommendation for future studies on the topic of single parent families.

The researcher has endeavoured, however, to illustrate cross-tabulations in the age category; standard of living category; the changing financial position category and the domestic help category; as examples of possible future cross-tabulations.

6.4.1 Comparative Analysis of Human Sciences Research Council Study (1986) : Snyman, I.

Population

White single parent families in Pretoria compared to White single parent families in Port Elizabeth.

Sample

300 single parents were drawn from 13 primary schools in Pretoria compared to 107 single parents drawn from volunteers and snowball sampling, as no authority was obtainable from school boards or the Department of Education to draw a sample from this source in the Port Elizabeth area.

6.4.2 Questionnaire results and comparative breakdown of data analysis between two single parent studies: one in Pretoria and one in Port Elizabeth using percentages for these comparative purposes due to the numerical disparity between the two groups (where applicable, numbers from both studies have been included in the tables).

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

1) Marital Status

TABLE 6 : MARITAL STATUS

|                                       | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u>                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
|                                       | <u>%</u>              | <u>%</u>   |
| widow/er                              | 18,3                  | 19,6   |
| divorced                              | 73,0                  | 68,2   |
| separated                             | 3,0                   | 2,8  |
| unmarried                             | 2,7                   | 9,3  |
| combination divorced/<br>widowed etc. | 3,0                   | N/A (this aspect was<br>not considered in the<br>P.E. study) |
|                                       | <u>100%</u>           | <u>99,9%</u>   |

The frequency distribution of the two studies is generally comparable except where the Port Elizabeth study included more unmarried single parents and failed to differentiate between the combination of marital statuses and other variables thus recording a N/A response with no comparable figures in this category. (See Figure 6).

TABLE 7 : PERIOD OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD OF RESPONDENTS

2) Period of Single Parenthood

|              | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|              | %                     | %                            |
| < 1 months   | 0,7                   | 0,9                          |
| 2-3 months   | 1,0                   | 1,9                          |
| 4-6 months   | 2,0                   | 0,0                          |
| 7-12 months  | 6,0                   | 5,6                          |
| 13-18 months | 9,0                   | 6,5                          |
| 19-24 months | 7,3                   | 7,5                          |
| 25-60 months | 29,3                  | 28,0                         |
| 61 + months  | 44,7                  | 49,5                         |
|              | <hr/> 100%            | <hr/> 99,9%                  |

The Pretoria and Port Elizabeth studies show very similar data in each section dealing with the period of single parenthood of the respondents. Only in the 4-6 months category did the Port Elizabeth sample not have any respondents.

FIGURE 5 : PERIOD OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD

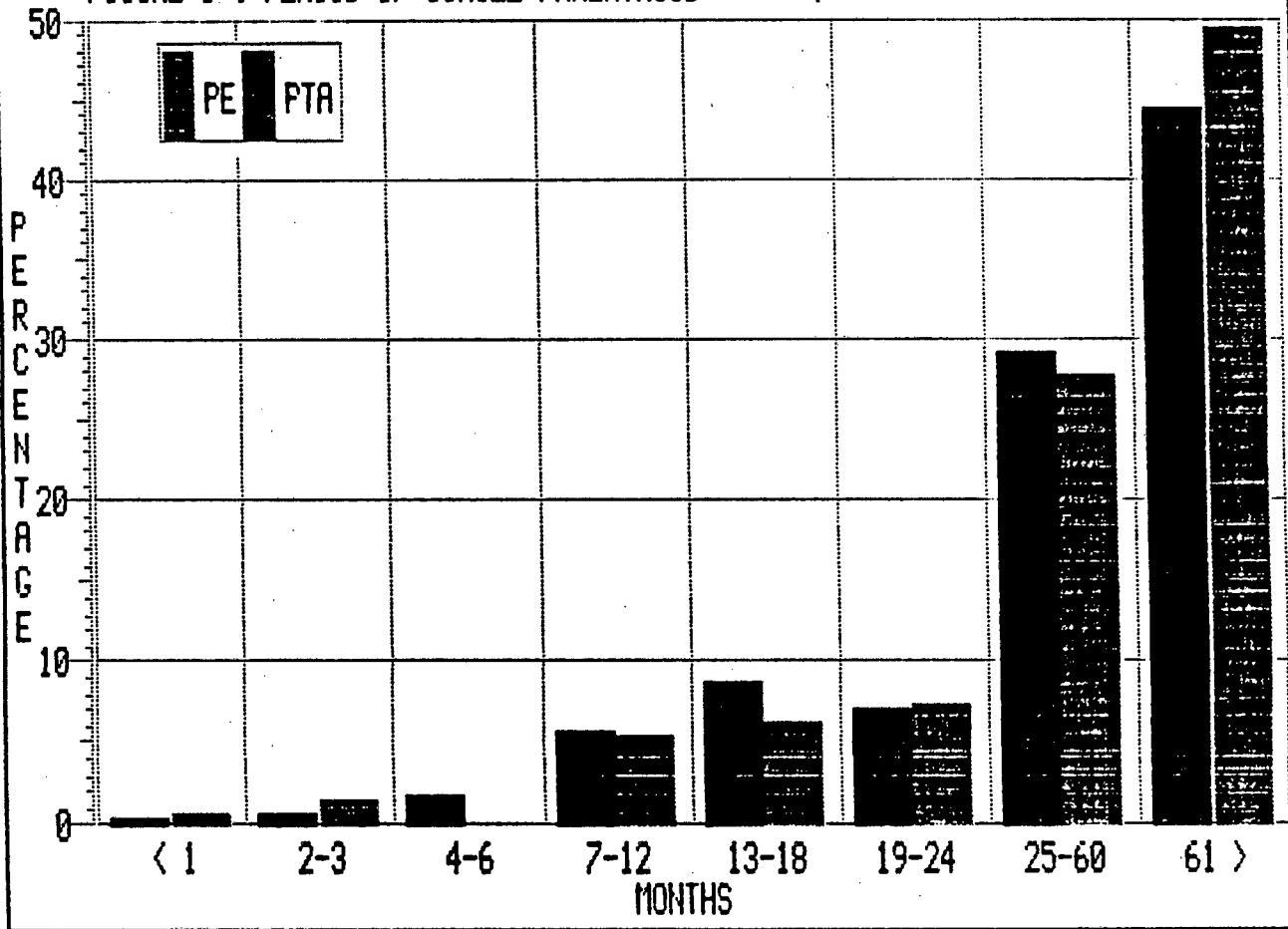
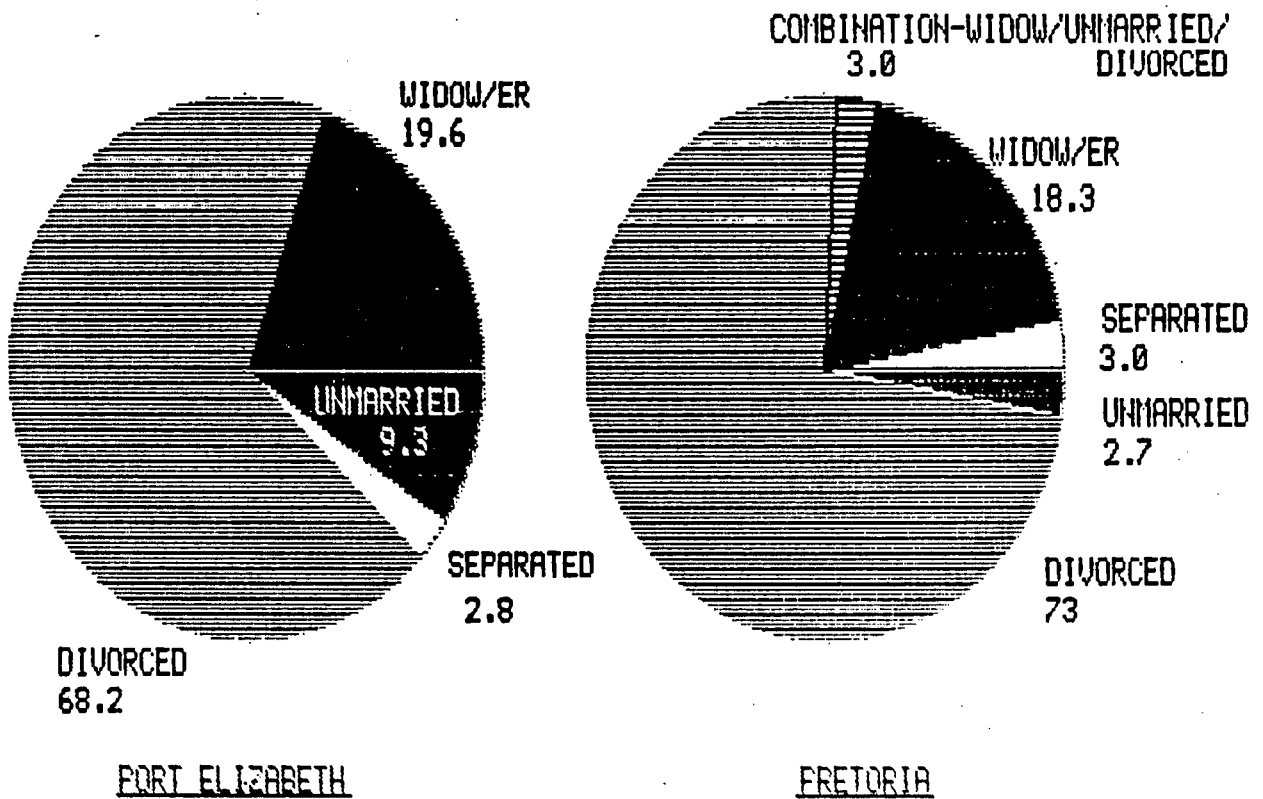


FIGURE 6 : MARITAL STATUS IN PERCENTAGES



3) Highest Educational Qualification

The use of different classifications in the two studies, makes it difficult to compare results. Snyman listed Standard 5 and lower, 6, 7 and combined a category of Standard 8 and 9. The Port Elizabeth study did not have as many educational qualification categories. Standard 8 or lower was taken as one category and Standard 9 and 10 were combined. Furthermore, the Port Elizabeth study had a category for post graduate qualifications and specified a Standard 10 plus diploma or degree category.

In order to get some form of comparative analysis from these two studies the only two areas which could be compared were for those with lower or more than standard 10 as shown in the following table:

TABLE 8 : COMPARABLE EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION ANALYSIS  
FROM BOTH STUDIES

|                  | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                  | %                     | %                            |
| Std 10 and lower | 74,6                  | 63,3                         |
| Std 10 +         | 25,3                  | 32,7                         |

This educational qualification category shows that the Port Elizabeth sample consisted of a slightly higher percentage of post-matric educated respondents. It is the only significant difference in this category. It must also be added that the majority of Pretoria respondents were in the Standard 8 and 9 category (40,3%) whereas the majority of Port Elizabeth single parents appeared in the Standard 9 and 10 category (44,9%).

Respondent 19 feels that due to her age, a good education and the ability to earn a good salary, single parenthood was made easier than for other single parents who were young, not as well educated and/or able to earn well. She qualified her attitude in the following manner:

I became a single parent when over the age of thirty and I was well-educated and able to earn well. I feel the stress on young, less well-off single parents is tremendous and that support groups would stop hasty second marriages. I feel child support payments should come from a government department and NOT personally from the father especially if he pays irregularly. It should NOT be a woman's lot to fight each month to get the money. (This is) humiliating, extends divorce pain and harms the child's image of the father.

4) Occupation

A fairly different result is shown in the Port Elizabeth study in the 'unemployed', 'unpaid worker', 'housewife', 'retired' category (17,8% P.E. as against 9,3% PTA) and also in the 'proprietor' response (4,7% P.E. vs 0,3% PTA). An attempted explanation of these differing percentages would result in inferences on too broad a basis and therefore no explanation was sought. Actual employment figures for each city were not available from the Department of Statistics in Port Elizabeth or in Pretoria, thus it was not possible to show how representative these figures could have been.

TABLE 9 : OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

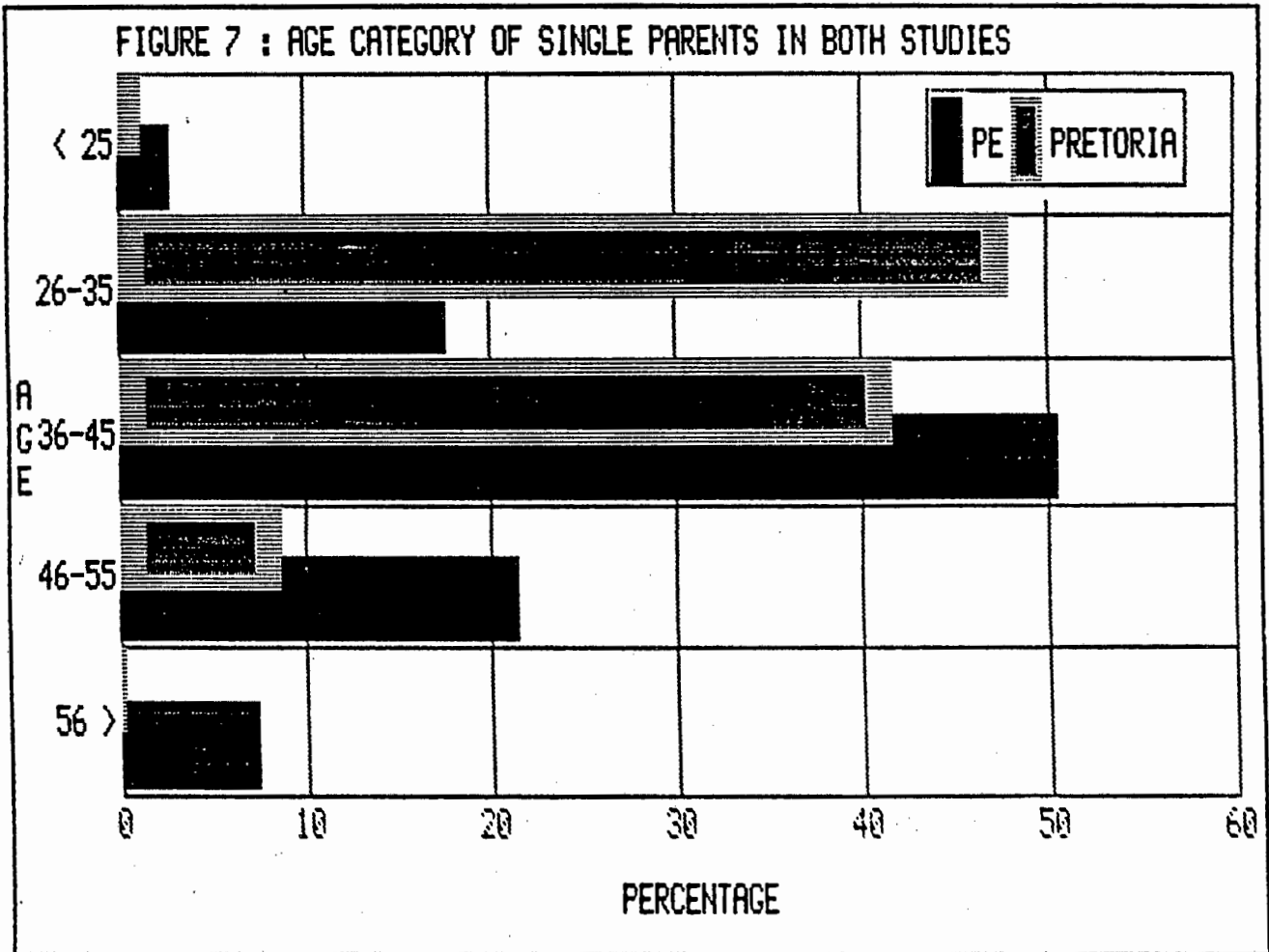
|                                     | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                                     | %                     | %                            |
| Unemployed etc.                     | 9,3                   | 17,8                         |
| Clerical, Admin. etc.               | 55,3                  | 45,8                         |
| Professional, technical, management | 20,7                  | 18,7                         |
| Salesperson                         | 6,0                   | 8,4                          |
| Factory worker                      | 4,3                   | 0,9                          |
| Housekeeper, cook etc.              | 2,7                   | 0,9                          |
| Security worker                     | 1,0                   | 0,9                          |
| Proprietor                          | 0,3                   | 4,7                          |
| Other                               | 0,3                   | 1,9                          |
|                                     | 99,9%                 | 100%                         |

5) Age

There was no respondent in the Port Elizabeth study below 16 years of age. The Pretoria study used < 25 years as its starting point compared to the Port Elizabeth study which used < 16 years as its starting age.

TABLE 10 : AGE OF RESPONDENTS

|       | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|       | %                     | %                            |
| < 25  | 1,3                   | 2,8                          |
| 26-35 | 48,0                  | 17,8                         |
| 36-45 | 41,7                  | 50,5                         |
| 46-55 | 8,7                   | 21,5                         |
| > 56  | 0,3                   | 7,5                          |
|       | 100%                  | 100,1%                       |



This category showed a low percentage of respondents in the 26-35 year category in Port Elizabeth and a high percentage in the 46-55 year group. The volunteers in the Port Elizabeth sample were older than the respondents in the Pretoria study (see Figure 7).

Of the 21 widows/ers in the Port Elizabeth study sample, the age category showed that:

- 2 were between the age of 26 and 35 years
- 6 were between the age of 36 and 45 years
- 9 were between the age of 46 and 55 years
- 3 were between the age of 56 and 65 years
- 1 were between the age of 66 years or more.

These figures illustrate that 42,9% of the 21 widows/ers were in the 46 to 55 years age group category.

Of the 73 divorced single parents in the Port Elizabeth study, the age category represented:

- 1 respondent between the age of 16 and 25 years
- 12 respondents between the ages of 26 and 35 years
- 44 respondents between the ages of 36 and 45 years
- 13 respondents between the ages of 46 and 55 years
- 3 respondents between the ages of 56 and 65 years

Converted into percentages, the above figures for respondents in the data were 1,4%, 16,4%, 60,3%, 17,8% and 4,1% respectively, showing that the majority of divorced single parents in this study were between the ages of 36 and 45 years.

The sample in the Port Elizabeth study only produced 3 separated single parents. One of these respondents was in the 26-35 years of age category, one was in the 36-45 years and one in the 46-55 years category. The representation of separated single parents was very limited in the Port Elizabeth sample. It was noted that these single parents were all separated because they had agreed to this arrangement. (There were divorcees who mentioned in the study that they had felt separated from their spouses for years even though they had only recently decided to get a divorce.)

The unmarried mothers interviewed in the Port Elizabeth study represented age category figures of:

2 in the 16-25 year category

4 in the 26-35 year category

3 in the 36-45 year category

1 in the 66 years or more category.

(The last respondent figure was a special case in that this mother had volunteered to tell the researcher all about the social and economic problems, particularly the stigma she had experienced as a single mother).

6) Religion

Religion was another category not considered in the Pretoria study, but which the researcher in the Port Elizabeth project felt was significant. The percentages were interesting in that the majority of respondents came from the Dutch Reformed Church (20,6%) category. What was unusual was that 71% of the respondents were English-speaking and only 18,7% Afrikaans speaking. The next highest percentage was 18,7% in both the 'Methodist' and the 'No Church Affiliation' categories.

On the question of religion and its positive or negative influences a separated single parent (number 80) wrote "if there were 40 pages I would have asked for 45" at the top of the comment page, and continued:

My husband decided to start his own business although he had no capital. Being extremely religious he believed 'the Lord would provide'. On many an occasion the children lived on either mealie meal or bread and coffee for breakfast, lunch and supper for days. Knowing there was no food in the house did not worry him at all as at such times he would decide this was his week for 'fasting and praying' - very convenient! So it went from bad to worse, until we were forced to sell our house after 5 years at a loss and move to a small wood and iron house in Newton Park.

Being extremely religious my husband felt he had not done anything wrong. Cinema, dancing, live shows, drinking were all sinful. Going to church, taping sermons, and then coming home, locking himself in the bedroom and listening to the tapes - which made him very depressed and emotional - is not my way of life. He still lives like this.

There are normally two sides to every story and I am very stubborn and prefer to have my independence. Although he said he did not mind my working I had known for years that he resented my earning money and felt that I should have handed my cheque to him each month like good Christian husbands' wives should do - but that was not for me.

At present I am quite happy on my own but I do wish at times I had more social life. I enjoy meeting people but seem to work myself to a standstill and do not get out as much as I'd like to. I HOPE I DIDN'T BORE YOU WITH THE 'STORY OF MY LIFE'.

HOUSING

7) Accommodation

The majority of the Port Elizabeth respondents (49,5%) lived in a house (PTA 33,7%), whereas the majority of the Pretoria respondents (57,3%) lived in flats in highrise buildings (P.E. 30,8%). This difference could be due to several factors: the younger single parents in the Pretoria sample had not as yet accumulated enough money to buy a house; perhaps houses were cheaper to rent or buy in Port Elizabeth; the single parents in the Port Elizabeth sample had more education, money and are older; and that the availability of houses in Port Elizabeth was greater than in Pretoria. A larger proportion of Port Elizabeth respondents lived in townhouses or maisonettes (10,3%) than in Pretoria (1,7%).

Single parent 26 finds that her major problem is housing:

The major problem is that my accommodation is inadequate. My home is overcrowded so the children do not enjoy staying with me. I also have financial problems, as I have no income other than my salary. At the time of the divorce I was left destitute and have been forced to work in an office. I do not enjoy office work and am very unhappy. Like most divorcees, I am lonely and unhappy most of the time. I am unhappy especially now as I have been struggling to find other employment for 8 months. (My unhappiness might influence my answers, as I am in a very low mood at present due to stress.) I blame myself for not making any effort to make friends - I believe that my attitude is totally wrong. It is difficult to meet men as very few decent men will attend single clubs because of the stigma attached to them.

8) Accommodation owned, rented or free

A vast discrepancy appeared between the two groups possibly because in Port Elizabeth the study had more proprietors in the sample, perhaps implying that the Port Elizabeth respondents were better equipped financially to own their accommodation and/or have fully paid for it. (PTA = 4,0%, P.E. = 16,8% paid off privately owned property). However, in the Pretoria study, 22,3% of the respondents rent their accommodation and are economically independent or state subsidised while only 1,9% of the Port Elizabeth respondents fall into these categories.

(The way in which the Port Elizabeth sample was drawn could indicate that one can expect a more educated group with a higher income to respond to press articles as was the case in this study.)

One could infer from these figures that there are more opportunities for state-assisted accommodation in Pretoria than there are in Port Elizabeth. Of the Pretoria single parents 43,0% were very happy with their accommodation arrangements whereas only 29,9% of the Port Elizabeth single parents felt very happy about theirs.

An examination of the unattractive aspects of the accommodation arrangements showed that 8,3% of PTA respondents compared to 0,9% of the PE respondents felt that their accommodation consisted of uncomfortable housing, was situated in a poor environment and that they could not afford better. Housing was discussed again in relation to taxation. Single parent Number 39 said:

Housing - This aspect should be looked into, particularly by Government and/or Welfare Bodies. Much is done for the Elderly - very little, or nothing, for the "S.P." (single parent). Most of us are not "S.P.'s" by design or choice but in most cases by force of circumstances, having been given little or no time to prepare ourselves either emotionally or financially for single parent status. I would say that for most "S.P.'s" housing is the most costly item. The search for adequate housing gives rise to both emotional and financial anxiety, not to mention lack of physical security.

Taxation - this should be reviewed and "S.P.'s" should be taxed at a lower rate than is presently the case. Taxation is my personal 'hobby-horse'!

These two items are the major concern - I personally feel that if the financial burden placed on (or faced) by most "S.P.'s" could be eased, then a number of other worries may well cease to exist, as I'm quite sure most of the trauma experienced in single-parenthood probably comes from financial insecurity. Subsidised housing would be a wonderful place to start, with subsidised and/or free recreation facilities (like sport centres) following a close second. With mental and physical well-being there usually comes peace!

9) Change of Accommodation Standard

One of the closest comparative set of figures appeared in this category.

TABLE 11 : CHANGE OF ACCOMMODATION STANDARD

|                           | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                           | <u>%</u>              | <u>%</u>                     |
| Improved a great deal     | 10,0                  | 12,1                         |
| Improved                  | 18,0                  | 15,0                         |
| Remained the same         | 46,3                  | 44,9                         |
| Deteriorated              | 18,3                  | 19,6                         |
| Deteriorated a great deal | 7,4                   | 8,4                          |
|                           | <u>100%</u>           | <u>100%</u>                  |

Most single parents in both studies felt that their accommodation standard had remained much the same after separating from the two-parent family. In the case of unmarried mothers, most respondents said their environment had remained the same after the birth of their child/children.

For the widows/ers 76,2% or 16 of the 21 in this subsection of the Port Elizabeth study sample, said that their standard of living had remained more or less the same, (14,3% deteriorated, 9,5% improved). The divorced single parents differed remarkably from the widows/ers. The following figures show that:

11 or 15,1% of the 73 divorced single parents felt their standard of living had improved a great deal;

9 or 12,3% of the divorcees answered 'improved';

28 or 38,4% said the standard of 'accommodation had remained more or less the same;

18 or 24,7% said their standard of accommodation had deteriorated; and,

7 or 9,6% of the respondents were adamant that since becoming a single parent, their standard of accommodation had deteriorated a great deal.

Of the unmarried mother respondents in this category, 70% or 7 of the 10 unmarried mothers, said their standard of accommodation had improved. Mention must be made of the fact that as the single parents in this category get older, so their financial standard could change. Most people gravitate toward an improved standard of living and the relevance of the replies in this category would depend on the period of single parenthood experienced by the respondents in the study.

10) Household Members

In the Port Elizabeth study 61,7% and of the single parents lived with their children only compared to 74,4% in the Pretoria study. The percentages for single parents living alone (their children being at boarding school) were 12,1% in Port Elizabeth and 3,0% in Pretoria. The totals for single parents who live with their children and/or alone (at times) are 73,8% (P.E.) and 77,7% (PTA). Judging by the studies most single parents appear to live alone with their children.

11) Respondents' feelings about their accommodation arrangements

Of the single parent samples, 66,3% (P.E.) 82% (PTA) felt either happy or very happy about their present accommodation arrangement compared to and 8,4% (P.E.) 6,7% (PTA) who felt unhappy or very unhappy about them. The answers of the remainder of the sample were neutral:

neither happy or unhappy. The magnitude of the Pretoria figure was surprising and suggests that most single parents are happy about their present accommodation arrangements.

12) Attractive and unattractive aspects of accommodation arrangements

The Pretoria study highlighted the most attractive aspect of the accommodation as the "Konsekwente opvoeding vir kinders" (Snyman, 1986 : 90) at 26,0% and the most unattractive aspects as both the loneliness, being a single parent, and living in a poor environment (the result of uncomfortable housing or not being able to afford better) (28,0%). Of the Port Elizabeth single parents group, 29,0% felt the increase in their family unity and closer ties with children to be the most attractive features of the arrangements and 28,0% felt loneliness to be the least attractive feature. Single parent number 1 is an example of one of the single parents who does not feel that living with her ex-husband helps the family situation and finds closer ties with her child in a single parent family, she stated:

I have found that my boyfriend, the child's father, places far more restrictions on my life and on me than my child even has. In the period on my own, living with my son, I was earning a good salary, living well, spending my days with my son and working nights. I made friends with whom I chose, had a very active social life, could be and say whatever I wanted. Now that we live together (with the father) I am expected to behave as most wives would, settled and conservative. My son was very happy with me alone and most behavioural problems, although trivial, have only arisen since being together, although he adores his father.

Personally I prefer being on my own with my son but I feel my reasons are selfish.

This response showed a tendency toward a more independent life-style for the respondent, who seemed to see her situation previously as a single parent as more attractive than her present one.

### FINANCES

#### 13) Income

In the Port Elizabeth study 3,7% of the sample receive regularly income from insurance policies and contributory pensions as opposed to 17,0% in the Pretoria study. The 13,3% discrepancy between the two studies is a source for further research and no definite conclusions can be inferred from the figure in this study. Interestingly, the major source of regular income in both studies was salary and earnings - PTA 90,7%; P.E. 81,3%. On the question of maintenance single parent number 38 replied:

I feel that the Justice Department should pay more attention to unpaid maintenance, claims and in dealing with the custody of children, as many single parents rely on regular maintenance to survive.

#### 14) Future Financial Security

Figures in this response showed similarities between the studies. These were:

TABLE 12 : FUTURE FINANCIAL SECURITY

|   | Pretoria (PTA) |        | Port Elizabeth (P.E.) |        |
|---|----------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
|   | %              | %      | %                     | %      |
|   | YES            | NO     | YES                   | NO     |
| Investments: savings,<br><u>fixed property</u>            | 47,7           | 52,3   | 48,6                  | 51,4   |
| Insurance: life,<br><u>educational etc.</u>               | 56,3           | 43,7   | 37,4                  | 62,6   |
| Annuities: retirement,<br><u>endowments, pension fund</u> | 78,3           | 21,7   | 60,7                  | 39,3   |
| <u>Medical aid</u>  | 81,0           | 19,0   | 65,4                  | 34,6   |
| <u>Other</u>  | 3,0            | [97,0] | 10,3                  | [89,7] |

The figures appearing in brackets [ ] represent the total of 291 in the Pretoria group and 96 in the Port Elizabeth group who had no other type of financial security other than those mentioned in the study. While these figures do not necessarily mean that these respondents do not have any financial security arrangements, the figures do indicate the limited areas in which most single parents are represented.

Single parent No 70 (a recently widowed father) pointed out the need for insurance in order to ensure financial security:

My wife and I separated, by mutual agreement, in January 1985. My wife and daughter moved to Cape Town where my daughter started Std VI (High-school). In May my wife and I agreed that the separation was not successful due mainly to my wife being unable to find employment. On 2 June 1985 my wife had an angina attack. I flew to Cape Town, and, as soon as my wife was able to travel brought her and my daughter back to P.E. My daughter thus had to adapt to a new school in mid-year.

In March 1986 my wife became ill (vomitting and nausea). This was treated symptomatically until mid-May when a barium meal X-ray revealed a polyp pressing on her duodenum. A biopsy showed this polyp to be benign. But when she was operated on (2/6/86) to remove the polyp, the surgeon found that her entire abdomen was a mass of untreatable cancer. My wife died on 12/7/86, 3 days after I had told her that she had, at most, 6 weeks to live.

We had no insurance on my wife's life. Typically male, I had always assumed that I would die first. Had this been the case, my wife would have been well provided for. Since we were married in community of property, our joint estate is close to being insolvent, and is still being liquidated.

I cannot, therefore, overemphasise the necessity of there being sufficient life insurance cover on both partners in a marriage, at least to cover funeral expenses and the cost of winding up a joint estate where the marriage is in community of property.

I do not, at this time, own property. When my wife and I separated, we sold our house and split the proceeds between us. These funds have been exhausted by:

1. Each of us setting up house on our own, and
2. the cost of my spending a month in Cape Town and bringing my wife and daughter back to Port Elizabeth after my wife's heart attacks.

If our estate had been insolvent all our furniture and personal items, including the car, would have been sold and my daughter and I would have had no option other than to move into a boarding house, and start again. I am 52 years old and this would have ruined any life I might have had should I reach pensionable age, as well as ruining the chance of tertiary education for my daughter.

I am quite willing to discuss the matter or provide any further information you may require.

15) Change in Financial Position

Of the Port Elizabeth single parents, 39,2% had improved their financial position since single parenthood whereas 41,3% of the Pretoria sample had improved on their financial position. Of the Port Elizabeth group, 45,8% of the single parents had experienced a deterioration of their financial position as opposed to only 31% of the Pretoria group. These figures represent a very high percentage of single parents who have had to accept a deterioration in their standard of living with the change in their marriage status. Maintenance from the ex-spouse becomes an important factor in the effort to maintain a reasonable standard of living. It should be noted that the percentages recorded in "improvement of financial position" are unexpectedly high. This statistic supports the contention that for some, a single parent family is financially more viable than the two-parent family. (See Figure 8). Single parent number 55, a divorcee, stated:

I would maybe suggest that maintenance be increased to keep up with the cost of living. Usually the amount paid, as in my case, only covers the cost of a full-time maid.

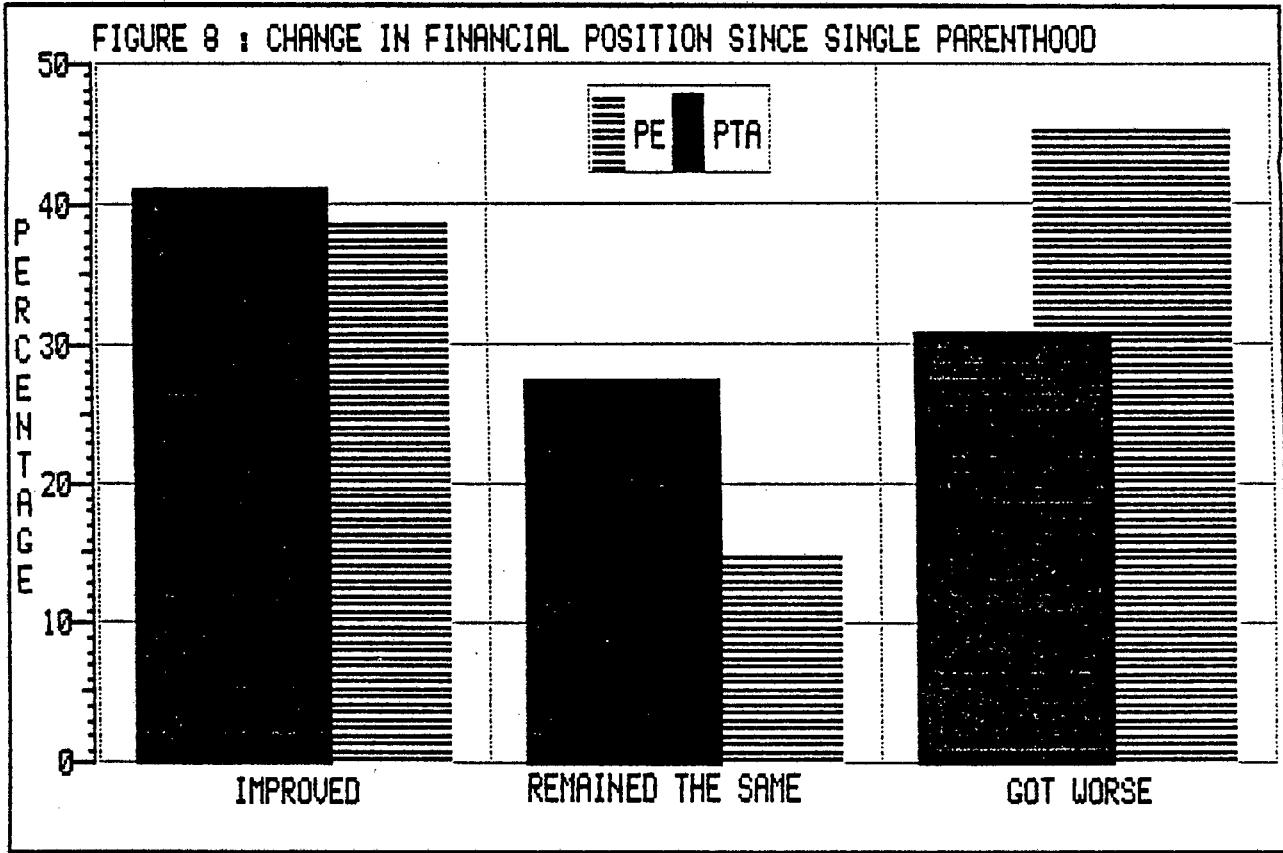
The widows/ers' opinions in the Port Elizabeth study were very evenly distributed. Of the 21 widows/ers in the sample 33,3% said that their financial position had improved, 33,3% maintained that their financial position had remained the same as it was before the death of their spouse and 33,3% felt that their financial position had deteriorated.

Of the 73 divorced single parents the percentages in this category were:

|                             |   |              |             |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| Improved a great deal       | = | 9,6%         | ( 7)        |
| Improved                    | = | 32,9%        | (24)        |
| Remained the same as before | = | 8,2%         | ( 6)        |
| Deteriorated                | = | 30,1%        | (22)        |
| Deteriorated a great deal   | = | <u>19,2%</u> | <u>(14)</u> |
|                             |   | <u>100%</u>  | <u>(73)</u> |

The divorce figures in the Port Elizabeth study therefore show that 49,3% of these respondents said their financial position had deteriorated. However, 42,5% of the respondents felt their financial position had improved. The latter figure was very positive when compared to the other single parents in the Port Elizabeth study.

The unmarried mothers in the Port Elizabeth study sample had a very even distribution in this category. Of the 10 unmarried mothers in the sample, 3 answered 'improved', 3 replied 'remained the same as it was before' and 4 felt that their financial position had 'deteriorated'.



16) Additional Expenses

General household expenses such as bills previously paid by the ex-spouse, appeared to be the major additional expenses incurred by new single parents. Financial support for the children, rent, servants, and salary were the next most frequent additional expenses. In the Port Elizabeth study, respondents surprisingly placed transport expenses (petrol, car repairs, bus fares) fairly high on their list of major additional expenses.

HOUSEHOLD TASKS

17) Domestic help

These figures represent those single parent families who employed domestic help:

TABLE 13 : DOMESTIC HELP

|              | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|              | %                     | %                            |
| Full-time    | 30,3                  | 34,6                         |
| Part-time    | 32,0                  | 28,0                         |
| Occasionally | 6,0                   | 10,3                         |
| None         | 31,7                  | 27,1                         |
|              | 100%                  | 100%                         |

Cost and availability of domestic help in Pretoria and Port Elizabeth were areas in which the researcher sought appropriate statistical data. The Department of Manpower and the Department of Statistics in Port Elizabeth could not furnish particulars regarding cost or availability of domestic help in the areas concerned.

In the Port Elizabeth study, 28,6% (6 of 21 respondents) of the widows/ers did not employ domestic help, 33.3% kept full-time domestic help and 19.0% in both the 'part-time' and 'occasionally' categories was scored by these widows/ers.

Of the 73 divorced single parents, 26,0% did not employ domestic help. Full-time and part-time domestic help was hired by 64,3% or 47 of the 73 divorcees. It was therefore assumed that the majority of divorced single parents employed domestic help in order to cope or run a single parent family. Whether this aspect produced a more successful single parent situation could not be determined by the researcher. Because such a question was not included in the questionnaire, further research could produce a result in this area of study.

All the separated single parents (3) in the Port Elizabeth study sample employed part-time domestic help.

Forty percent of the unmarried mothers did not employ domestic help and the remaining 60% employed full-time and part-time help (50% full-time, 10% part-time) in the Port Elizabeth study.

Of the 107 single parents interviewed, 78 employed domestic help compared to the 29 who did not. This percentage of 72,9% represents a fairly high occurrence of domestic employment. Two-parent family (domestic help employment) figures were not available at the time of the study done in Port Elizabeth.

Children in a single parent family generally help their parent. Those children who 'seldom' or 'never' help are few (P.E. 5,6% and 0,9% respectively, PTA 2,9% and 3,2% respectively).

Domestic assistance from the ex-spouse was low in the Pretoria study: of the 85,4% who were able to help, 79,2% never helped. In the Port Elizabeth study, 42,1% of the total sample 'never' helped. Excluding widows, respondents representing 62,5% of a possible 67,3% of those ex-spouses who could help, did not assist in any household tasks whatsoever.

An interesting aspect noted by the researcher was the lack of assistance from in-laws, ex in-laws or the parents of the reputed father. The figures of 2,8% (P.E.) and 4,7% (PTA) reveal a very low percentage of help from in-laws who, after all, still had grandchildren in the single parent family and could, therefore, be expected to maintain an interest in their children's well-being. In neither the Port Elizabeth nor the Pretoria study did the grandparents/in-laws appear to feel it incumbent on them to continue to fill their traditional roles as grandparents once the family had broken up.

#### EMPLOYMENT

##### 18) Single Parent has to go to work

Many female single parents who had maintained a close relationship with their children throughout their married lives, now had to go to work. Childrearing was considered more satisfying and rewarding by many single parents as illustrated by Bowen (1982 : 79) who states:

These mothers would have exchanged domestic and maternal duties for outside employment only under financial hardship.

Whereas 97,7% of the Pretoria group had to go to work for financial reasons, only 53,3% of the Port Elizabeth group gave financial reasons for their working. Of the rest of the Port Elizabeth sample 15,0% said they had always worked, 3,7% went to work for social reasons and 28,0% had other reasons for going to work.

Only 9,3% in the Port Elizabeth study said that single parent status hindered progress in the job situation. An exact comparison of 9,3% was recorded in the Pretoria study.

Questioned on employer sympathy towards the single parent situation, 14,0% of the Port Elizabeth group and 8,4% of the Pretoria group said their employers were totally unsympathetic. Of the Port Elizabeth group 8,4% and 10,0% of the Pretoria group felt they were discriminated against when applying for a job. These percentages appear to be fairly low but they still show a possible lack of understanding on the part of many an employer about the needs and difficulties of the single parent.

#### 19) Self-employment

The figures for self-employment 6,5% (P.E.) and 2,2% (PTA) only suggest that more Port Elizabeth respondents were self-employed than the respondents in the Pretoria study and was merely of statistical interest to the research. The figures showed a 4,3% difference in the total number of self-employed single parents in favour of the Port Elizabeth single parents which is the only significant difference in this variable used for interest purposes only.

20) Workplace

Of the Pretoria single parents, 95,6% worked away from home in the city where as 94,3% did so in Port Elizabeth. In the Port Elizabeth study, 18,7% were unemployed as opposed to 9,3% in Pretoria. In both studies the majority of single parents, therefore, work away from home in the city.

Full-time, daytime employment occupied 89,0% of the Port Elizabeth single parent group and 88,9% of the Pretoria group. Of the Port Elizabeth group 75,9% are happy with this arrangement and do not wish to alter their working arrangements as opposed to only 61,8% of the Pretoria group.

21) Progress in job is hindered due to single parent status

✓ An almost identical percentage of respondents in each of the studies felt they are affected in their job by being single parents, 9,3% (P.E.) and 9,6% (PTA). These percentages represented 28 respondents in Pretoria and 10 respondents in Port Elizabeth who answered 'yes' to the question - a combined total of 38 out of 407 single parents for both studies. Thus, approximately one tenth of single parents appear to feel they are hindered in their working environment owing to their single parent status.

Some single parents also felt there were factors which limited their prospects for promotion. Such parents feel they could not exploit promotion possibilities when these would mean:

- a. more travelling away from home
- b. further study
- c. full-time work
- d. more time spent at work, (thus less time spent with the children at home)
- e. even if promoted, single parents would not have the same advantages as married employees.

Only 25 out of 28 (PTA) respondents answered this question, whereas all 10 in the Port Elizabeth group gave reasons why single parenthood prevented promotion.

Of the Port Elizabeth group 18,7% felt they had to make compromises in their jobs as opposed to 12,1% of the Pretoria group. Reasons given by the respondents for the need to compromise their employment situation were: longer hours in the Pretoria study; and in the Port Elizabeth study, the feeling that breaking away from an interesting routine to a less dynamic job in order to work shorter hours and thus spend more time with the children, was important to the family.

## 22) Employer Sympathy

The Pretoria figure for 'Employer sympathy' was very high at 83,5%. In Port Elizabeth 69,0% of the employers were sympathetic toward single parent employees. Respondents in the Port Elizabeth sample indicated that their employers were seldom aware of the single parent status of many of their employees and that the question did not thus apply. It is not clear why single parent employees in the Port Elizabeth group do not make their employers aware of their single parent status and why the employers are not aware of, nor concern themselves with, their employee's family status. This may mean that many employers do not think that single parenthood is an issue in the workplace. If this is so, employer awareness of his employees' family status could be a fruitful field of research for an industrial sociologist with a view to alleviating the single parent's difficulties in the work place.

TABLE 14 : EMPLOYER SYMPATHY

|                          | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                          | %                     | %                            |
| Employer does not know   | 8,1                   | <u>13,8*</u>                 |
| Employer sympathetic     | 83,5                  | 69,0                         |
| Employer not sympathetic | 8,4                   | <u>17,2**</u>                |
|                          | —                     | —                            |
|                          | 100%                  | 100%                         |

\* 13,8% and,

\*\* 17,2% represent a total of 31% of Port Elizabeth employers who are either unsympathetic or unaware of the single parent family situation.

Both studies showed that those employers who do show sympathy towards single parents, do so mainly by giving them time off in times of crisis.

There were 17 (P.E.) and 49 (PTA) single parents who changed jobs because of their new single parent status. Reasons for change of employment ranged in this category from 'higher salary' and 'better benefits' to 'negative attitude of former employer', 'housing', 'new job involves less stress' and 'switching to a shorter day'.

Of the respondents, 12,9% (P.E.) and 10,0% (PTA) felt that they were discriminated against by the interviewer when applying for a job. These percentages suggest an unreasonably high level of discrimination against single parents in South Africa. A viable study could perhaps be made of the nature of the discrimination against single parents in South Africa.

FRIENDSHIP

23) New Friendships

The statistics show a similarity in response between the Port Elizabeth and the Pretoria study.

TABLE 15 : NEW FRIENDSHIPS

|                | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| New friendship | %                     | %                            |
| Yes            | 83,3                  | 85,0                         |
| No             | 16,7                  | 15,0                         |
|                | 100%                  | 100%                         |

In the category relating to loss of contact with friends, the results differed: 9,3% (P.E.) as opposed to 24,3% (PTA). The 15% discrepancy between the two studies is inexplicable, particularly since the number of respondents in the Pretoria study consisted of 73 out of 300 single parents.

24) Dating

The questions in this section dealt with problems relating to meeting with and dating the opposite sex. The researcher was not entirely convinced that all respondents answered the questions put to them with total honesty. The phrasing of these questions could possibly have caused many single parents, who felt threatened by them, to reply negatively or over-positively or alternatively not to reply to them at all.

The 'major problem with dating' was taken as an indicator of the single parents feelings towards members of the opposite sex. In the Pretoria study, 54 respondents answered this question and 30 respondents did so in the Port Elizabeth study.

TABLE 16 : DATING

|                                       | <u>PTA % (N)</u> | <u>P.E. % (N)</u> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Men use women who are single parents  | 11,1 ( 6)        | 36,7 (11)         |
| Baby-sitting problems                 | 25,9 (14)        | 3,3 ( 1)          |
| Not ready to date yet                 | 37,0 (20)        | 3,3 ( 1)          |
| Hold higher principles now            | 14,8 ( 8)        | 3,3 ( 1)          |
| Difficult to meet men                 | 7,4 ( 4)         | 46,7 (14)         |
| No time                               | 1,9 ( 1)         | 3,3 ( 1)          |
| Children react negatively when dating | 1,9 ( 1)         | 3,3 ( 1)          |
|                                       | <u>100% (54)</u> | <u>99,9% (30)</u> |

The Port Elizabeth study illustrates a high percentage of negativism on the part of female single parents in the 'men use women' category and, scored very highly in the 'difficult to meet men' category. Another factor considered in the studies was the availability of the social facilities in both centres. As the availability of Pretoria facilities are not known to the researcher, a comparison was not made for this factor between the two studies.

A comment on the facilities in Port Elizabeth would seem appropriate in the light of this statement.

As mentioned in the Single Parent Group section, there are no single parent organizations or clubs in Port Elizabeth with the exception of the attempt by the CMR (Christelike Maatskaplike Raad) to form one very recently. The results of this attempt are not available, as to date only two meetings of this newly-formed group have taken place.

Other than the scattered crèches and daycare centres for the caring of children during working hours, Port Elizabeth has very little to offer in the way of facilities catering exclusively for the single parent family in regard to meeting and mixing with members of the opposite sex.

Famsa (see text) has attempted to form a single parent group, based on sharing the therapeutic/counselling services this organization has to offer. However, the main functions or purposes of Famsa are the latter services and this could be the reason why such a group has not been formed under the auspices of this association in Port Elizabeth.

With regard to dating members of the opposite sex, the single parent has limited opportunity for meeting other single persons other than in those places frequented by single people. Single parents are restricted in many instances by the fact that their children and other responsibilities do not allow them the opportunity to live or enjoy the life of a single person.

The 46,7% shown in the Port Elizabeth study illustrates this problem of female single parents who find it difficult to meet men, as against the 7,4% of the Pretoria sample, which does not compare even slightly with the Port Elizabeth figure.

This problem was seen by the researcher as a major area of concern for single parents in Port Elizabeth and one which needs urgent attention.

25) Future Marriage

The statistics showed that Port Elizabeth single parents were more hesitant to say 'yes' to future marriage and many felt unsure about the prospect of marriage: 9,3% and 49,5% respectively.

TABLE 17 : FUTURE MARRIAGE

|                           | <u>Pretoria (PTA)</u> | <u>Port Elizabeth (P.E.)</u> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|                           | <u>%</u>              | <u>%</u>                     |
| N/A - e.g. not interested | 24,0                  | 14,0                         |
| Yes                       | 20,3                  | 9,3                          |
| No                        | 35,4                  | 27,1                         |
| I don't know              | 20,3                  | 49,5                         |
|                           | <u>100%</u>           | <u>99,9%</u>                 |

In both studies over fifty percent of single parents felt either that children do not hinder the prospect of a future marriage or that the question was not applicable as they did not know if their children would be a hindrance or not. Single parent number 44 had this to say about future marriage prospects:

So many single parents send out 'help' signals. These fall on deaf ears most of the time - as a result the first person who comes into the life of the single parent and offers kindness, is showered with love by the single parent. Such a relationship often results in 'marriage on the rebound'. Often the new relationships are made for convenience' sake (true love is lacking). I think this is a sad situation because, had that single parent learnt to live and love him/herself, he/she would have allowed themselves the time to gain the ultimate freedom, that of choosing their 'sole mate' in life. I believe with guidance, we single parents must, and are able to, learn to live with ourselves first, before we rush into the mistake of re-marriage merely because we need someone else or feel we must depend on someone else for our ultimate happiness.

26) Single Parent Groups

A single parent group was started by the CMR (Christelike Maatskaplike Raad) in Port Elizabeth. Respondent number 22, one of the Port Elizabeth study single parents said this about the CMR group: "At their first meeting on 21 February 1987, about 20 female single parents attended. A subsequent meeting was held on 21 March 1987 and was attended by half the number but included at least one male."

The figures for membership of a single parent group do not include membership of this newly-formed group. The statistics given on the basis of the Port Elizabeth sample could, change in the event of the new group proving successful. Single parent number 13 stated:

There is a great need in Port Elizabeth for Single Social Clubs.

Quite a number of such clubs have come and gone in the 10 years I've been divorced. None of them last very long. The women all seem to make good use of such clubs but the men seem disinterested, as they seem to feel there is a stigma attached to the clubs. Because men do not attend, after a while the women also stay away.

TABLE 18 : MEMBERSHIP OF SINGLE PARENT GROUPS

| Membership |   | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|------------|---|--------------|---------------|
|            | <u>I am a member</u>                      | 2,7          | 5,6           |
| Yes        | I was a member, but no longer participate | 3,6          | 5,6           |
|            | <u>But I intend joining</u>               | 2,4          | 7,5           |
| No         | By choice                                 | 31,0         | 28,0          |
| Never      | Don't know of any single parent groups    | 60,3         | 53,2          |
|            |   | <u>100%</u>  | <u>99,9%</u>  |

Both studies asked respondents how a single parent group would be of benefit to the single parent in each of 5 categories.

The Port Elizabeth replies (where most respondents replied to all the sections) revealed the following statistics:

TABLE 19 (A) : HOW WOULD A SINGLE PARENT GROUP HELP  
THE SINGLE PARENT?

PORT ELIZABETH

|  | %         | (N)  | %        | (N)  | %          | (N)  |
|--|-----------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
|  | Very much |      | Somewhat |      | Not at all |      |
| Socially (making friends)  | 20,5      | (22) | 34,6     | (37) | 44,8       | (48) |
| Recreation (outings, fun occasions)  | 19,6      | (21) | 31,8     | (34) | 48,6       | (52) |
| Emotionally (give support, share experiences)  | 17,8      | (19) | 32,7     | (35) | 49,5       | (53) |
| Practically (home repairs, baby sitting)   | 9,3       | (10) | 16,8     | (18) | 73,9       | (79) |
| Intellectually (gain insight into personal problems, learn from guest speakers ....) | 22,4      | (24) | 31,8     | (34) | 45,8       | (49) |

The statistics drawn from the Pretoria study:

TABLE 19 (B) : HOW WOULD A SINGLE PARENT GROUP HELP  
THE SINGLE PARENT?

PRETORIA

|                | %         | (N)  | %        | (N)  | %          | (N)  |
|----------------|-----------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
|                | Very much |      | Somewhat |      | Not at all |      |
| Socially       | 21,0      | ( 4) | 31,6     | ( 6) | 47,4       | ( 9) |
| Recreation     | 31,6      | ( 6) | 26,3     | ( 5) | 42,1       | ( 8) |
| Emotionally    | 42,1      | ( 8) | 26,3     | ( 5) | 31,6       | ( 6) |
| Practically    | 15,8      | ( 3) | 5,3      | ( 1) | 78,9       | (15) |
| Intellectually | 47,4      | ( 9) | 26,3     | ( 5) | 26,3       | ( 5) |

The statistics for both studies show that the majority of respondents answered in the 'NOT AT ALL' section and that the lowest scores appeared in the 'Practically' section. This result raises the question of whether a single parent group is of any real help to single parents. Although one must not overlook the 'very much' needed help in certain areas, it is doubtful if the answer lies here. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why single parent groups have not been successful in Port Elizabeth? It is perhaps necessary to ask each single parent what they would personally want from such a group.

#### SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- 27) Both studies were concerned with finding out what support systems, both public and private, and what activities, were available to help single parents cope with their day-to-day difficulties. Bowen (1982 : 80) takes note of support systems and says,

The social network of the formerly-married mother was defined, at the most general level, as consisting of those persons (kin and non-kin) and single-parent organizations with whom she "maintains contact and has some form of social bonds" (Adams, 1964, p. 64). On the other hand, maternal role satisfaction was conceptualized as a subjective dimension of a woman's sense of pleasure and competence in negotiating with her children.

TABLE 20 : SINGLE PARENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

(Persons giving single parent help and assistance)

PORT ELIZABETH

|   | %         | (N)  | %        | (N)  | %          | (N)  |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
|   | Very much |      | Somewhat |      | Not at all |      |
| Relatives, family, your<br>older children                                       | 48,6      | (52) | 35,5     | (38) | 15,9       | (17) |
| Friends and neighbours  | 28,0      | (30) | 34,6     | (37) | 37,3       | (40) |
| Boy/girlfriends   | 14,0      | (15) | 14,0     | (15) | 72,0       | (77) |
| The ex-spouse or reputed<br>father  | 8,4       | (9)  | 16,8     | (18) | 74,8       | (80) |
| Professional people e.g.<br>family G.P., social workers,<br>psychologists, etc. | 11,2      | (12) | 19,6     | (21) | 69,2       | (74) |
| Minister of religion  | 13,1      | (14) | 12,1     | (13) | 74,8       | (80) |
| In-laws, ex-in-laws,<br>parents of reputed father                               | 11,2      | (12) | 13,1     | (14) | 75,7       | (81) |

PRETORIA

|                     | %         | (N)   | %        | (N)  | %          | (N)   |
|---------------------|-----------|-------|----------|------|------------|-------|
|                     | Very much |       | Somewhat |      | Not at all |       |
| Relatives etc.      | 55,0      | (165) | 23,3     | (70) | 44,7       | (65)  |
| Friends etc.        | 24,6      | (72)  | 30,7     | (92) | 44,7       | (134) |
| Boy/girlfriends     | 21,0      | (63)  | 19,7     | (59) | 59,3       | (178) |
| Ex-spouse           | 2,0       | (6)   | 9,3      | (28) | 88,7       | (266) |
| Professional people | 13,3      | (40)  | 10,7     | (32) | 76,0       | (228) |
| Minister            | 11,7      | (35)  | 16,3     | (49) | 72,0       | (216) |
| In-laws             | 10,3      | (31)  | 14,3     | (43) | 75,4       | (226) |

Single parent number 56 believes that becoming a single parent has not been too traumatic for any of the family members:

I would like to mention that I am lucky to be part of a very close, big family without which my life style would have been very different. My children have had the privilege of growing up in a loving atmosphere where although they have been deprived of a father who is part of their lives 24 hours a day, he still plays a very active part in their everyday lives. Fortunately my ex-husband and I have remained on very good terms, even after his re-marriage a few years ago.

When I was first divorced 13 years ago, my father saw my children daily with the result they didn't notice the change in our home-life too much. My parents were able to ensure that we remained in our own home, so that the children and I still had the security of our own surroundings.

The following tables, (Table 21 (A) and 21 (B)) were used to compare and illustrate the differences between the Pretoria study and the Port Elizabeth study. These tables show how single parents see the type of activities which help single parents cope with their situation.

These tables are followed by Table 22, which shows how single parents in both studies felt about the least support they received from outside people or agencies. Percentages showed similar feelings regarding the lack of support in both studies.

TABLE 21 (A) : ACTIVITIES WHICH HELP SINGLE PARENTS  
TO COPE WITH THEIR SITUATION

PORT ELIZABETH

|   | %         | (N)  | %        | (N)  | %          | (N)  |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|------------|------|
|   | Very much |      | Somewhat |      | Not at all |      |
| Faith, trust in God   | 54,2      | (58) | 15,9     | (17) | 29,9       | (32) |
| Making extra money, e.g.<br>taking a second job                             | 11,2      | (12) | 14,0     | (15) | 74,8       | (80) |
| Meeting and making new<br>friends, socializing and<br>entertaining          | 18,7      | (20) | 34,6     | (37) | 46,7       | (50) |
| Joining clubs, taking<br>courses  | 15,9      | (17) | 23,4     | (25) | 60,7       | (65) |
| Talking to a counsellor,<br>trying to understand what<br>went wrong         | 6,5       | ( 7) | 17,8     | (19) | 75,7       | (81) |
| Working off steam e.g. in<br>a gym, through playing<br>sport, etc.          | 19,6      | (21) | 18,7     | (20) | 61,7       | (66) |
| Moving to a new environ-<br>ment  | 15,9      | (17) | 17,8     | (19) | 66,3       | (71) |
| Allowing yourself to blow<br>up, cry, get angry, etc.                       | 18,7      | (20) | 39,3     | (42) | 42,1       | (45) |
| Learning new skills, e.g.<br>how to drive, fix things etc.                  | 25,2      | (27) | 29,0     | (31) | 45,8       | (49) |
| Doing things with the<br>children and taking care<br>of the home and garden | 48,6      | (52) | 33,6     | (36) | 17,7       | (19) |
| Other   | 14,0      | (15) | 3,7      | ( 4) | 82,2       | (88) |

TABLE 21 (B) : ACTIVITIES WHICH HELP SINGLE PARENTS TO  
COPE WITH THEIR SITUATION

PRETORIA

|   | %         | (N)   | %        | (N)   | %          | (N)   |
|---|-----------|-------|----------|-------|------------|-------|
|   | Very much |       | Somewhat |       | Not at all |       |
| Faith, trust in God   | 81,0      | (243) | 13,3     | (40)  | 5,7        | (17)  |
| Making extra money, e.g.<br>taking a second job                             | 7,3       | (22)  | 10,3     | (31)  | 82,4       | (247) |
| Meeting and making new<br>friends, socializing and<br>entertaining          | 14,7      | (44)  | 34,0     | (102) | 51,3       | (154) |
| Joining clubs, taking<br>courses  | 7,7       | (23)  | 6,0      | (18)  | 76,3       | (229) |
| Talking to a counsellor,<br>trying to understand what<br>went wrong         | 7,7       | (23)  | 16,0     | (48)  | 76,3       | (229) |
| Working off steam e.g. in<br>a gym, through playing<br>sport, etc.          | 11,6      | (35)  | 14,7     | (44)  | 73,7       | (221) |
| Moving to a new environ-<br>ment  | 31,0      | (93)  | 21,7     | (65)  | 47,3       | (142) |
| Allowing yourself to blow<br>up, cry, get angry, etc.                       | 41,7      | (125) | 29,3     | (88)  | 29,0       | (87)  |
| Learning new skills, e.g.<br>how to drive, fix things etc.                  | 13,3      | (40)  | 11,7     | (35)  | 75,0       | (225) |
| Doing things with the<br>children and taking care<br>of the home and garden | 51,7      | (155) | 34,3     | (103) | 14,0       | (42)  |
| Other   | 7,3       | (22)  | 1,0      | (3)   | 91,7       | (275) |

TABLE 22 : LEAST SUPPORT

|  | PTA % | P.E. % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Ex-spouse or reputed father/mother                     | 88,7  | 74,8   |
| Professional people, e.g. G.P.,<br>social worker, etc. | 76,0  | 69,2   |
| Minister of religion                                   | 72,0  | 74,8   |
| In-laws, ex-in-laws, parents of<br>the ex-spouse       | 75,4  | 75,7   |

The statistics for the Pretoria study show that single parents consider 'faith, trust in God' to be of great help in their situation (81,0% : 243 out of 300). In the Port Elizabeth group 54,2% (58 out of 107) answered that 'faith, trust in God' were of great help in their lives. Single parent number 16, a widow, blaming her lack of self-discipline, said:

Motherhood is always a complex state. I am sometimes sad that tiredness and frustration turn me into my 'worst' self. It is unfair on my children. The fault lies in a lack of emotional self-discipline so it cannot be blamed entirely on my situation.

BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING

A correlation was expected between the support systems available to them and the way in which single parents chose to release tension. The statistical response to 'pray, go to church' disputes the previous 'support systems' section (81,0% and 54,2% answered 'faith, trust in God') in that only 5,6% of the Port Elizabeth study and only 2,0% of the Pretoria group say they pray or go to church to cope with tension. The figures represented below show other ways in which single parents seek to relieve the tension in their lives.

TABLE 23 : COPING WITH TENSION

|   | PTA % | P.E. % |
|---|-------|--------|
| Take tranquilisers, sleeping pills,<br>tonics, etc. | 24,0  | 16,8   |
| Exercise, work hard at something, etc.              | 19,7  | 21,5   |
| Talk to friends, family, etc.                       | 2,7   | 6,5    |
| Pray, go to church                                  | 2,0   | 5,6    |
| Smoke, take alcohol                                 | 6,0   | 10,3   |
| Become aggressive                                   | 1,0   | 0,9    |
| Overeat, sleep a lot, spend money                   | 1,3   | 5,6    |
| Cry   | 2,0   | 1,9    |
| I do nothing, relax and forget it                   | 31,0  | 16,8   |
| Combination   | 10,3  | 14,0   |
|   | 100%  | 99,9%  |

A fairly large percentage of both the groups had experienced a 'breakdown stage' since becoming a single parent (15,9% P.E. and 15,3% PTA). The closeness in the statistics for the two groups show that plus/minus 15% of single parents experience a breakdown stage at some time or another in their lives.

In the Pretoria study the causes of this breakdown stage were mainly the loss of the spouse or shock of pregnancy (33,3%) and depression due to the single parent situation (31,1%). In the Port Elizabeth study, depression due to the single parent situation (45,5%) and pressure of financial, practical and social problems (27,3%) were the two main causes of a breakdown.

Single parent number 47, a widow briefly referred to her reaction on completing the questionnaire:

Filling this in made me more aware of the pain of being a single parent - time has enabled me to accept the day to day issues and I haven't been in touch with the pain for a while.

Even though my life has been all right on the surface, I certainly wouldn't recommend it! It seems you have done good work - well done.

TABLE 24 (A) : EXTENT TO WHICH THE SINGLE PARENT IS SUFFERING AT PRESENT

|                                | %       | (N)  | %       | (N)      | %     | (N)   | %      | (N)   | %    | (N)  |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|---------|----------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|------|
|                                | All the | time | Most of | the time | Some- | times | Seldom | Never |      |      |
| <u>PORT ELIZABETH</u>          |         |      |         |          |       |       |        |       |      |      |
| Feel overworked and fatigued   | 8,4     | ( 9) | 16,8    | (18)     | 48,6  | (52)  | 13,1   | (14)  | 13,1 | (14) |
| Feel faint and dizzy           | 0,0     | ( 0) | 0,9     | ( 1)     | 18,7  | (20)  | 21,5   | (23)  | 58,9 | (63) |
| Cry easily or feel like crying | 0,9     | ( 1) | 7,5     | ( 8)     | 40,2  | (43)  | 24,3   | (26)  | 27,1 | (29) |
| Feel easy prey socially        | 3,7     | ( 4) | 10,3    | (11)     | 22,4  | (24)  | 12,1   | (13)  | 51,4 | (55) |
| Feel nervous or shaky inside   | 2,8     | ( 3) | 11,2    | (12)     | 29,9  | (32)  | 16,8   | (18)  | 39,3 | (42) |
| Feel alone or lonely           | 5,6     | ( 6) | 21,5    | (23)     | 39,3  | (42)  | 15,0   | (16)  | 18,7 | (20) |
| Feel tense or keyed up         | 7,5     | ( 8) | 15,9    | (17)     | 41,1  | (44)  | 13,1   | (14)  | 22,4 | (24) |
| Feel fearful or afraid         | 4,7     | ( 5) | 7,5     | ( 8)     | 27,1  | (29)  | 29,9   | (32)  | 30,8 | (33) |
| Feel downhearted or depressed  | 7,5     | ( 8) | 10,3    | (11)     | 43,9  | (47)  | 20,6   | (22)  | 17,8 | (19) |
| Feel commercially exploited    | 0,0     | ( 0) | 8,4     | ( 9)     | 18,7  | (20)  | 18,7   | (20)  | 54,2 | (58) |
| Feel hopeless about the future | 4,7     | ( 5) | 6,5     | ( 7)     | 23,4  | (25)  | 17,8   | (19)  | 47,6 | (51) |
| Feel too tired to enjoy life   | 2,8     | ( 3) | 7,5     | ( 8)     | 29,0  | (31)  | 23,4   | (25)  | 37,4 | (40) |
| Notice my hands are trembling  | 2,8     | ( 3) | 2,8     | ( 3)     | 9,3   | (10)  | 17,8   | (19)  | 67,3 | (72) |

TABLE 24 (B) : EXTENT TO WHICH THE SINGLE PARENT IS SUFFERING AT PRESENT

|                                   | %           | (N)             | %            | (N)    | %     | (N)   | %    | (N)  | %    | (N)   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-------|
|                                   | All the     | Most of         | Some-        | Seldom | Never |       |      |      |      |       |
|                                   | <u>time</u> | <u>the time</u> | <u>times</u> |        |       |       |      |      |      |       |
| <u>PRETORIA</u>                   |             |                 |              |        |       |       |      |      |      |       |
| Feel overworked and<br>fatigued   | 6,3         | (19)            | 10,3         | (31)   | 50,0  | (150) | 16,7 | (50) | 16,7 | (50)  |
| Feel faint and dizzy              | 2,0         | (6)             | 0,7          | (2)    | 14,7  | (44)  | 12,3 | (37) | 70,3 | (211) |
| Cry easily or feel<br>like crying | 3,7         | (11)            | 5,7          | (17)   | 35,3  | (106) | 20,3 | (61) | 35,0 | (105) |
| Feel easy prey socially           | 1,7         | (5)             | 6,3          | (19)   | 14,7  | (44)  | 13,3 | (40) | 64,0 | (192) |
| Feel nervous or shaky<br>inside   | 4,3         | (13)            | 6,3          | (19)   | 28,0  | (84)  | 12,4 | (37) | 49,0 | (147) |
| Feel alone or lonely              | 8,0         | (24)            | 8,3          | (25)   | 41,7  | (125) | 13,7 | (41) | 28,3 | (85)  |
| Feel tense or keyed up            | 5,0         | (15)            | 10,3         | (31)   | 39,0  | (117) | 16,7 | (50) | 29,0 | (87)  |
| Feel fearful or afraid            | 3,0         | (9)             | 3,0          | (9)    | 22,0  | (66)  | 18,3 | (55) | 53,7 | (161) |
| Feel downhearted or<br>depressed  | 1,6         | (5)             | 5,7          | (17)   | 45,7  | (137) | 22,0 | (63) | 26,0 | (78)  |
| Feel commercially<br>exploited    | 3,6         | (11)            | 5,7          | (17)   | 17,0  | (51)  | 12,0 | (36) | 61,7 | (185) |
| Feel hopeless about the<br>future | 2,0         | (6)             | 2,7          | (8)    | 10,3  | (31)  | 8,7  | (26) | 76,3 | (229) |
| Feel too tired to enjoy<br>life   | 0,7         | (2)             | 3,7          | (11)   | 8,0   | (24)  | 11,6 | (35) | 76,0 | (228) |
| Notice my hands are<br>trembling  | 2,0         | (6)             | 1,0          | (3)    | 10,0  | (30)  | 6,7  | (20) | 80,3 | (241) |

Single parent number 17, a divorced single parent, showed how time had affected her feelings:

Although it may appear from several answers that I have contradicted myself, that is not actually so. My frame of mind now, after having been divorced for 16 years is strong and positive. This cannot help but be reflected in my response to the questionnaire. However, the early days were not so rosy, and that too will show.

It was clearly visible that the majority of single parents in both studies did not suffer greatly as seen by the 'all the time' response category percentages. Most of the higher percentages appeared in the 'never' and 'sometimes' categories in both the studies. (Table 24 (A) and Table 24 (B)).

30) Social Acceptance

According to Barry (1979 : 73):

It is estimated that two out of every five children born during the 1970s will have spent at least part of their growing years in a single-parent household. Until very recently - and to a lesser extent, even now - single parents have had to contend with a certain amount of social prejudice, often within themselves as well as in their communities.

The ranking of social acceptance from most accepted (1) to least accepted status (4) of unmarried mother, widow/er, divorced person and separated person was found to be very relevant in both instances.

TABLE 25 : RANK OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE  
(The Pretoria figures appear in brackets)

|                  | <u>1st</u> | <u>2nd</u> | <u>3rd</u> | <u>4th</u> |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                  | P.E.(PTA)  | P.E.(PTA)  | P.E.(PTA)  | P.E (PTA)  |
| Unmarried mother | 3,7( 2,0)  | 7,5(12,0)  | 10,3(18,0) | 78,5(68,0) |
| Widow/er         | 91,6(86,3) | 5,6( 7,7)  | 1,9( 3,7)  | 0,9( 2,3)  |
| Divorced person  | 6,5( 9,7)  | 43,0(44,7) | 39,3(33,0) | 11,2(12,6) |
| Separated person | 3,7( 2,0)  | 40,2(35,7) | 45,8(45,3) | 10,3(17,0) |

31) Health change

The number of single parents who did not have any health problems (P.E. 64,0%; PTA 46,7%) was much higher than those who have had health problems since becoming single parents (P.E. 22,0%; PTA 24,3%). Their children showed an even higher percentage of not having had health changes. (P.E. 82,2%; PTA 75,7%). The researcher had anticipated a much higher negative health response than was received from the respondents.

32) Relationship with ex-spouse or the reputed father/mother

(i) Contact Frequency

Of the Port Elizabeth group 25,3% have very irregular or never have contact with their ex-spouses compared to 34,9% of the Pretoria group. The statistics for those who describe their relationship at present as friendly, civil or hostile are as follows:

TABLE 26 : TYPE OF CONTACT WITH EX-SPOUSE

|          | PTA % | P.E. % |
|----------|-------|--------|
| Friendly | 39,6  | 37,3   |
| Civil    | 44,1  | 42,7   |
| Hostile  | 16,3  | 20,0   |
|          | 100%  | 100%   |

(ii) Problems with ex-spouse

Only the most difficult problems were highlighted. A comparison of the statistics, for those respondents for whom there appeared no particular problem or for whom the category was not applicable (unmarried mothers), showed a marked difference: (P.E. 48,6%; PTA 26,0%)

TABLE 27 : MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM WITH EX-SPOUSE

|                                      | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Broken communication                 | 9,4          | 10,3          |
| Many fights                          | 15,1         | 4,7           |
| Affairs, new wife, girlfriend, etc.  | 11,0         | 2,8           |
| Alcoholism, gambling, etc.           | 15,1         | 1,9           |
| Excessive passivity                  | 20,0         | 0,9           |
| Indoctrinates children               | 8,2          | 2,8           |
| Arguing over childcare               | 2,0          | 7,5           |
| Finances and no maintenance          | 7,3          | 19,6          |
| Other family members become involved | 9,4          | 0,9           |
| N/A                                  | 9,4          | 48,6          |
|                                      | <u>99,9%</u> | <u>100%</u>   |

(iii) Marriage Counselling

The question asked was "would it [marriage counselling] have helped?"

TABLE 28 : WOULD MARRIAGE COUNSELLING HAVE HELPED?

|                   | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| I don't know      | 13,1         | 47,7          |
| To a large extent | 13,6         | 13,1          |
| To some extent    | 13,6         | 9,3           |
| Not at all        | 59,7         | 29,9          |
|                   | <u>100%</u>  | <u>100%</u>   |

It appears that Port Elizabeth single parents felt financial/maintenance problems were the main complaint with ex-spouses, whereas Pretoria single parents' figures illustrated alcohol, aggression and passivity as the main problem experienced with ex-spouses.

The replies clearly indicate that Port Elizabeth single parents were more unsure whether marriage counselling would have helped than the Pretoria single parents (of whom most felt strongly that it would not have helped at all). All the respondents in the Port Elizabeth group answered the question, while only 243 (81,0%) of the Pretoria group did so. The 'I don't know' percentage in the Port Elizabeth study could be exaggerated. The percentage for the 'not at all' response in the Port Elizabeth study was lower than expected (if all respondents answered this question) because the group includes widows who would presumably also have responded in this section.

The next question referred to was "Marriage counselling could not have helped prevent the single parent situation." It was felt that the reasons for the percentage anomalies in Table 28 would perhaps become clear in the light of the statistics for the combined Pretoria and Port Elizabeth studies. Both studies reflect the highest percentages in 'spouse was too negative and damage had been done, irreparably' categories. It was in these two categories that the reasons for the percentage anomalies for the previous question became more clear.

[The frequency of responses in part 2 of the Port Elizabeth study questionnaire compare now with the continuous figures of the Pretoria study].

Single parent number 6, a divorcee wrote in response to the question on 'would marriage counselling have helped':

We were not only experiencing difficulty with our marriage but were new to South Africa. We did not know how to go about solving our problems. Our immaturity at that stage was not obvious to us, as it is now. We were 23 and 27 respectively and reluctant to confide in anyone not known to us.

Single parent number 11, a very positive unmarried mother, when asked about premarital counselling specified that hers was an "unusual situation - (I) had been declared barren by experts years previously - the child was wonderful.

33) Profile of Respondent's Dependents

(i) Total Number of Economically Dependent Children

TABLE 29 : TOTAL NUMBER OF ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENT CHILDREN

|      | PTA % | P.E. % |
|------|-------|--------|
| None | 0,0   | 2,8*   |
| 1    | 27,7  | 41,1   |
| 2    | 36,3  | 39,3   |
| 3    | 27,0  | 14,0   |
| 4    | 6,7   | 0,9    |
| 5    | 2,0   | 1,9    |
| 6    | 0,0   | N/A*   |
| 7    | 0,3   | N/A*   |
|      | 100%  | 100%   |

\* In the Port Elizabeth study no single parents had 6 or 7 children, so there were no figures for these two categories. The rather high 2,8% figure for the 'NONE' responses in the Port Elizabeth sample reflects the fact that only 104 of the 107 respondents had economically dependent children.

TABLE 30:

(ii) Age, sex and educational level of economically dependent children (The figures are given a clear number for for the purposes of comparison. The percentages have been adapted differently in each of the two studies and are therefore not comparable in this table. The total number of economically dependent children are P.E. = 187; Pta = 661)

| T=187 (P.E.)<br>661 (Pta)<br>economy-<br>cally de-<br>pendent<br>children | AGE in years |           |           |          |         | SEX       |           | EDUCATIONAL LEVEL |           |          |          |          |         |          |
|---|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
|   | 0-5          | 6-10      | 11-15     | 16-20    | 21+     | Male      | Female    | Pre-school        |           | Std      | Std      | Std      | Post    | Other    |
|   | % (N)        | % (N)     | % (N)     | % (N)    | % (N)   | % (N)     | % (N)     | Std 1             | Std 2-5   | 6-8      | 9-10     | School   | % (N)   |          |
| *   |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Oldest  |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Child (PE)  | 7,5( 8)      | 15,0( 16) | 25,2( 27) | 42,1(45) | 7,5( 8) | 49,5( 53) | 47,7( 51) | 15,0(16)          | 12,1( 13) | 24,3(26) | 27,1(29) | 18,7(20) | -       | -        |
| (Pta)   | 0,3( 1)      | 38,8(116) | 42,3(127) | 17,3(52) | 1,3( 4) | 53,0(159) | 47,0(141) | 25,3(76)          | 42,3(127) | 19,3(58) | 8,7(26)  | 3,0( 9)  | 1,4( 4) |          |
| 2nd Oldest  |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Child (PE)  | 5,6( 6)      | 12,1( 13) | 26,2(28)  | 9,3(10)  | 2,8( 3) | 31,8( 34) | 24,3( 26) | 12,1(13)          | 13,1( 14) | 21,5(23) | 6,5( 7)  | 2,8( 3)  | -       | -        |
| (Pta)   | 7,3(16)      | 48,6(106) | 39,5(86)  | 4,1( 9)  | 0,5( 1) | 47,2(103) | 52,8(115) | 38,0(83)          | 48,2(105) | 10,6(23) | 1,4( 3)  | 0,5( 1)  | 1,3( 3) |          |
| 3rd Oldest  |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Child (PE)  | 3,7( 4)      | 2,8( 3)   | 8,4( 9)   | 1,9( 2)  | -       | 8,4( 9)   | 8,4( 9)   | 3,7( 4)           | 7,5( 8)   | 4,7( 5)  | 0,9( 1)  | -        | -       | -        |
| (Pta)   | 22,7(25)     | 48,2(53)  | 27,3(30)  | 1,8( 2)  | -       | 49,1(54)  | 50,9(56)  | 57,3(63)          | 39,1(43)  | 1,8( 2)  | 0,9( 1)  | 0,9( 1)  | -       | -        |
| 4th Oldest  |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Child (PE)  | 0,9( 1)      | 0,9( 1)   | 0,9( 1)   | -        | -       | 0,9( 1)   | 1,9( 2)   | 1,9( 2)           | 0,9( 1)   | -        | -        | -        | -       | -        |
| (Pta)   | 28,6( 8)     | 46,4(13)  | 25,0( 7)  | -        | -       | 57,1(16)  | 42,9(12)  | 71,4(20)          | 25,0( 7)  | -        | -        | -        | -       | 3,6( 1)  |
| 5th Oldest  |              |           |           |          |         |           |           |                   |           |          |          |          |         |          |
| Child (PE)  | 0,9( 1)      | 0,9( 1)   | -         | -        | -       | 1,9( 2)   | -         | 1,9( 2)           | -         | -        | -        | -        | -       | -        |
| (Pta)   | 42,9( 3)     | 42,3( 3)  | 14,2( 1)  | -        | -       | 71,4( 5)  | 28,6( 2)  | 85,7( 6)          | -         | -        | -        | -        | -       | 14,3( 1) |

\* 3 responses had no economically dependent children therefore the total respondents represented totalled 104 single parents and not 107 in the Port Elizabeth study.

TABLE 31 :

(iii) An example, using the Port Elizabeth study figures, of permanent residence of economically dependent children

|                          | With custodial parent |      | With non-custodial parent |     | With grand-parents |     | With relatives |     | With friends of the family |     | In children's home, place of safety, foster care etc. |     | Boards at a special school |     | Placed in a boarding school |     | Other |      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------|---------------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|---|-----|----------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-------|------|
|                          | %                     | (N)  | %                         | (N) | %                  | (N) | %              | (N) | %                          | (N) | %   | (N) | %                          | (N) | %                           | (N) | %     | (N)  |
| Oldest Child<br>T=104    | 74,8                  | (80) | 1,9                       | (2) | -                  | -   | 0,9            | (1) | -                          | -   | 0,9   | (1) | -                          | -   | 7,5                         | (8) | 11,2  | (12) |
| 2nd Oldest Child<br>T=60 | 47,7                  | (51) | 0,9                       | (1) | -                  | -   | -              | -   | -                          | -   | 0,9   | (1) | -                          | -   | 4,7                         | (5) | 1,9   | (2)  |
| 3rd Oldest Child<br>T=18 | 15,0                  | (16) | -                         | -   | -                  | -   | -              | -   | -                          | -   | -   | -   | -                          | -   | 0,9                         | (1) | 0,9   | (1)  |
| 4th Oldest Child<br>T=3  | 2,8                   | (3)  | -                         | -   | -                  | -   | -              | -   | -                          | -   | -   | -   | -                          | -   | -                           | -   | -     | -    |
| 5th Oldest Child<br>T=2  | 1,9                   | (2)  | -                         | -   | -                  | -   | -              | -   | -                          | -   | -   | -   | -                          | -   | -                           | -   | -     | -    |

This table of figures is an illustration of a similar table in the Pretoria study showing that the majority of children reside with their custodial parent. In the Port Elizabeth study, 152 of the 187 economically dependent children lived with their custodial parent, whereas 574 of the 661 children in the Pretoria sample lived with theirs. The next largest figure appeared in the boarding school column in both studies: 14 (P.E.) and 57 (Pta).

34) Accommodation Arrangement

Most of the single-parent children were living permanently with their custodial parent: P.E. 81,3% (152/187); PTA 86,8% (574/661). When asked how satisfactory they felt this accommodation arrangement to be, the majority of the single parents (P.E. 91,6% : PTA 96,3%) felt the arrangements were satisfactory. Only a small percentage of the children in the samples do not live with their custodial parent. The reasons given by parents for this arrangement include: in Port Elizabeth : limited finance and at the request of the child; and in Pretoria: supervision and protection; the job responsibilities of the custodial parent; and at the request of the child or children and/or the non-custodial parent.

35) Homework Supervision

Most single parents supervised their child or children's homework: P.E. 49,5%; PTA 58,3%. There was a surprisingly high 20,6% no response figure for single parents in P.E. (PTA: 1,3%). Possible reasons for the high figure are that: the Port Elizabeth study had the highest figure for both the older and the young children groups; and the Port Elizabeth sample had fewer economically dependent children than the Pretoria study.

TABLE 32 : Child Supervision

Child Supervision (The following table represents the different people or institutions taking responsibility for the supervision of the child or children.

|                            | Respon-<br>dent | Rela-<br>tives | Friends | Child<br>himself/<br>herself or<br>siblings | Child-<br>minder<br>or baby-<br>sitter | Domestic<br>Help | Creche or<br>Day-care<br>centre | School    | Respondent and<br>domestic (i.e.<br>combination of any<br>two of these) | No<br>response<br>N/A |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------|---|--|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------|
|                            | % (N)           | % (N)          | % (N)   | % (N)                                       | % (N)                                  | % (N)            | % (N)                           | % (N)     | % (N)   | % (N)                 |
| <b>Mornings</b>            |                 |                |         |   |  |                  |                                 |           |   |                       |
| (PE)                       | 11,2(12)        | 1,9( 2)        | 0,9( 1) | 8,4( 9)                                     | - -                                    | 6,5( 7)          | 2,8( 3)                         | 53,3(57)  | 6,5( 7)   | 8,4( 9)               |
| (Pta)                      | 1,7( 5)         | 1,0( 3)        | - -     | 0,4( 1)                                     | - -                                    | 0,4( 1)          | 2,1( 6)                         | 80,3(233) | 14,1(41)  | - -                   |
| <b>Afternoons</b>          |                 |                |         |   |  |                  |                                 |           |   |                       |
| (PE)                       | 17,1(19)        | 6,5( 7)        | 0,9( 1) | 16,8(18)                                    | - -                                    | 12,1(13)         | 3,7( 4)                         | 19,6(21)  | 14,0(15)  | 8,4( 9)               |
| (Pta)                      | 19,7(57)        | 9,0(26)        | 1,0( 3) | 13,5(39)                                    | - -                                    | *13,4( 9)        | 1,4( 4)                         | 1,7( 5)   | 11,7(34)  | - -                   |
| <b>Evenings</b>            |                 |                |         |   |  |                  |                                 |           |   |                       |
| (PE)                       | 63,6(68)        | 2,8( 3)        | - -     | 5,6( 6)                                     | - -                                    | 2,8( 3)          | - -                             | 5,6( 6)   | 11,2(12)  | 8,4( 9)               |
| (Pta)                      | 94,1(273)       | 0,4( 1)        | - -     | 0,7( 2)                                     | - -                                    | - -              | - -                             | 1,7( 5)   | 3,1( 9)   | - -                   |
| <b>Weekends</b>            |                 |                |         |   |  |                  |                                 |           |   |                       |
| (PE)                       | 66,4(71)        | 2,8( 3)        | 0,9( 1) | 5,6( 6)                                     | - -                                    | - -              | - -                             | 5,6( 6)   | 10,3(11)  | 8,4( 9)               |
| (Pta)                      | 92,4(268)       | 2,1( 6)        | - -     | - -   | - -                                    | 0,4( 1)          | - -                             | 0,4( 1)   | 4,8(14)   | - -                   |
| <b>School<br/>Holidays</b> |                 |                |         |   |  |                  |                                 |           |   |                       |
| (PE)                       | 40,2(43)        | 7,5( 8)        | 1,9( 2) | 14,0(15)                                    | - -                                    | 6,5( 7)          | 2,8( 3)                         | - -       | 18,7(20)  | 8,4( 9)               |
| (Pta)                      | 44,3(129)       | 24,4(71)       | 1,4( 4) | 3,1( 9)                                     | - -                                    | 5,5(16)          | 1,4( 4)                         | - -       | 15,1(44)  | - -                   |

The Pretoria study reflected 28,6% (83) and 4,8% (14) as the figures for 'naskoolsentrum' care in the afternoons and school holiday categories respectively.

\* This figure was accepted by the researcher as printed in the Snyman report, however the percentage and number appear incorrect.

36) Use of Crèche and Day-care Centres

The researchers in both studies took cognisance of the use of child-care facilities and both studies reflected a large percentage of respondents who did not use these facilities, as well as noting the availability of child-care facilities in the community.

Barry (1979 : 73) states clearly,

Social services and resources important to the single-parent household (such as quality day-care for children or after-school recreational programs) are often not available or difficult to find.

Where crèche facilities existed in their area, single parents, in both studies, said they used them to a limited degree: P.E. 9,3%; PTA 7,8%. Both studies showed that crèche facilities in other areas in the cities were used very seldom P.E. 3,7%; PTA 1,3%. Over 70% of the combined number of respondents in the two studies do not use crèche facilities, whether they are in the immediate neighbourhood or in other suburbs in the city. It was necessary to establish just why these facilities were not being used.

The Pretoria study figures show only those respondents who felt that this question warranted a response.

37) Reasons for not using a crèche in the area

TABLE 33 : REASONS FOR NOT USING A CRÈCHE IN THE AREA

|                                       | <u>P.E.</u> |       | <u>Pta</u> |      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------|------------|------|
|                                       | %           | (N)   | %          | (N)  |
| Not needed, children too big          | 47,7        | (51)  | 67,2       | (39) |
| Look after children myself            | 6,5         | ( 7)  | 15,5       | ( 9) |
| Crèche too expensive                  | 0,9         | ( 1)  | 6,9        | ( 4) |
| Family members take care of children  | 5,6         | ( 6)  | 10,4       | ( 6) |
| Children in boarding school           | 6,5         | ( 7)  | N/A        | *    |
| Maid takes care of children           | 7,5         | ( 8)  | N/A        | *    |
| They are unhealthy and unsatisfactory | 0,9         | ( 1)  | N/A        | *    |
| N/A                                   | 24,3        | (26)  | N/A        | *    |
|                                       | 99,9%       | (107) | 100%       | (58) |

\* Not asked in Pretoria study.

Day-care or after-school facilities proved as underused as the crèche facilities in the Port Elizabeth study. In the Pretoria study, however, although 50,3% of the single parents did not use these centres, 33,7% supported those facilities in their area. Similar reasons to those given for not supporting the crèches were given in both studies for not taking advantage of after-school facilities in the area or elsewhere in the city.

38) Effect of the Single Parent situation on the children

TABLE 34 : CHILDREN'S ACCEPTANCE OF SINGLE PARENT SITUATION

(Pretoria figures in brackets)

|                                     | In the beginning |        | Now   |        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| N/A                                 | 1,9              | (34,0) | 0,9   | ( 2,7) |
| Well                                | 30,8             | (24,7) | 60,7  | (71,7) |
| Merely accept it                    | 18,7             | ( 8,7) | 25,2  | (17,3) |
| Badly                               | 26,2             | (26,7) | 3,7   | ( 4,7) |
| I don't know                        | 7,5              | ( 1,3) | 3,7   | ( 2,3) |
| They do not understand it<br>as yet | 15,0             | ( 4,6) | 5,6   | ( 1,3) |
|                                     | 100,1%           | 100%   | 99,8% | 100%   |

An analysis of the data shows that the children blamed the reputed father/mother or ex-spouse (P.E. 23,4% and PTA 23,7%) for their family situation. The second highest figure occurred in the 'no one' response (P.E. 37,4% and PTA 63,7%) Similar responses were given in both studies.

The children in both studies are inclined not to attempt to re-unite parents (P.E. 68,0%; PTA 71,2%). Where mother/father substitutes are concerned, however, the Pretoria study, reflected a greater number of children who showed a need for, or have substitutes for, the 'lost' parent.

It may be deduced from the Port Elizabeth response to the category 'difficult to meet men', that there are few available mother/father substitutes in the Port Elizabeth area and this lack may be reflected in the very high figure for the Port Elizabeth study. The researcher wishes to stress that this deduction is merely an attempt on his part to account for the discrepancy between the Port Elizabeth and Pretoria studies, and may not be applicable to the relevant data collected in the study. It must be stressed, however, that the 64,5% P.E. study response of 'No, there are not any father/mother substitutes for the children', is very high compared to the 34,3% Pretoria study figure.

In Table 35 the child or children's behavioural problems were estimated by their single parents. The percentages represented here are applicable to the Port Elizabeth study only. They act as an informative rather than comparative illustration of how the respondents viewed their child/children's behaviour problems. These percentages do not therefore, claim to be a true reflection of the 'actual' behaviour problems of the single parent family's children, but only wish to offer the reader an indication of 'possible' behavioural problems facing single parent children today. This could be done by using the Port Elizabeth study as an example only.

TABLE 35 : Child behavioural problems

(An example of the emotional, personality, behavioural problems experienced by children of single parents in the Port Elizabeth study)

|   | Problem not exhibited before becoming a single parent |                                      |                              |                                      | Problem exhibited to some extent before becoming a single parent |                                |  |                                |                               |               |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
|   | (1)   | (2)                                  | (3)                          | (4)                                  | (1)  | (2)                            | (3)  | (4)                            | (5)                           | N/a           |
|   | Problem started but improved soon afterwards          | Problem started and is still evident | Problem has only started now | Problem has still not been exhibited | Problem has remained the same                                    | Problem has deteriorated since | Problem initially improved but then deteriorated | Problem improved straight away | Problem is only improving now | - no response |
|   | % (N)   | % (N)                                | % (N)                        | % (N)                                | % (N)  | % (N)                          | % (N)  | % (N)                          | % (N)                         | % (N)         |
| Fights and bullies, is destructive, can't control temper or is aggressive       | 8,4( 9)   | 2,8( 3)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 37,4(40)                             | 6,5( 7)  | 2,8( 3)                        | 0,9( 1)  | 3,7( 4)                        | 0,9( 1)                       | 35,5(38)      |
| Does not want to go to school, plays truant, has difficulty adjusting to school | 2,8( 3)   | 2,8( 3)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 47,7(51)                             | 3,7( 4)  | - -                            | 1,9( 2)  | 0,9( 1)                        | 1,9( 2)                       | 37,4(40)      |
| Has difficulty going to bed at night, bed wets, and/or has nightmares           | 7,5( 8)   | 3,7( 4)                              | - -                          | 43,0(46)                             | 6,5( 7)  | 0,9( 1)                        | - -  | 0,9( 1)                        | 2,8( 3)                       | 34,6(37)      |
| Gets into serious mischief, takes things belonging to others                    | 2,8( 3)   | - -                                  | 0,9( 1)                      | 50,5(54)                             | 2,8( 3)  | 0,9( 1)                        | - -  | 0,9( 1)                        | 2,8( 3)                       | 38,3(41)      |
| Attempts to run away, disappears for several hours                              | 0,9( 1)   | 0,9( 1)                              | - -                          | 51,4(55)                             | 3,7( 4)  | 0,9( 1)                        | - -  | - -                            | 1,9( 2)                       | 40,2(43)      |
| Refuses to eat or overeats  | 2,8( 3)   | 1,9( 2)                              | 1,9( 2)                      | 47,7(51)                             | 6,5( 7)  | - -                            | - -  | 0,9( 1)                        | 2,8( 3)                       | 35,5(38)      |
| Other   | - -   | 0,9( 1)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 25,2(27)                             | 1,9( 2)  | - -                            | - -  | 0,9( 1)                        | - -                           | 70,1(75)      |
| Stutters, twitches, has a tic, nailbites, thumbsucks                            | 1,9( 2)   | 1,9( 2)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 50,5(54)                             | 7,5( 8)  | - -                            | - -  | - -                            | 0,9( 1)                       | 36,4(39)      |
| Tells lies or hides the truth   | 3,7( 4)   | 5,6( 6)                              | - -                          | 43,9(47)                             | 3,7( 4)  | 1,9( 2)                        | - -  | - -                            | 3,7( 4)                       | 37,4(40)      |
| Suffers from phobias, obsessions or other fears                                 | 1,9( 2)   | 5,6( 6)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 44,9(48)                             | 7,5( 8)  | 0,9( 1)                        | - -  | 1,9( 2)                        | 0,9( 1)                       | 35,5(38)      |
| I shy, timid clinging, overdependent, doesn't want to play with others          | 6,5( 7)   | 1,9( 2)                              | 0,9( 1)                      | 48,6(52)                             | 2,8( 3)  | - -                            | 0,9( 1)  | - -                            | 2,8( 3)                       | 35,5(38)      |

39) Assistance with children's personality, emotional and behavioural problems

A similarly high percentage of respondents in both studies sought professional assistance for their children's problems - P.E. 32,7% and PTA 32,3% . A large percentage (P.E. 29,9%; PTA 34,0%) handled these problems themselves. Only 24,0% of the single parents in the Pretoria study and 13,1% in the Port Elizabeth study had no problems with their children. It should be noted, however, that in the Port Elizabeth study 5,6% answered with a 'not applicable' response which could reflect that some single parents interpreted this block as meaning 'no problems' and ticked it accordingly.

Single parent number 12, (separated) remarked:

I think there is a definite transition period between the initial feeling of 'I've been a failure. Will I make it on my own? Am I a social outcast if I don't have a partner? and 'I've made it. I have direction. The marriage break-up was constructive. I like my independence. I respect myself and thereby I am more open to my children's needs, feelings and moods.' At the same time so few people seem to get to this second stage. I realize that somewhere I've been extremely lucky. Perhaps counselling for single parents is needed, in and with the co-operation of the community. The counselling should not be seen to be a 'clinical', 'non-fun' or an 'abnormal' experience. Such counselling is particularly essential for the children's acceptance of the situation which does not necessarily have to be bad because it is different or because there's less money - it could be much more fun.

Single parent 29 commented:

In answer to question 117: My children never realised their father had a drinking problem or that he was dating other women. The divorce was a complete shock to them, especially to the eldest - whom her father and I had protected too much from reality.

40) The respondents' relationship with their children

Most single parents enjoy being with their children (P.E. 86,0%; PTA 93,0%); very few enjoy their children only 'sometimes' (P.E. 13,1%; PTA 7,0%) and only one respondent in the Port Elizabeth study said she definitely did not enjoy being with her child. This respondent was interviewed by the researcher and once this was done, the reasons for the negative answer became quite clear.

The respondent had, as a single women, married a widower whose child from his previous marriage came to stay with them. The child, however, rejected this new arrangement from the start. The respondent had been married to the widower for 6 months, when he died, leaving her with an adolescent child who was her stepchild, but of whom she was the custodial parent. The child apparently despises her stepmother. It is assumed that the conflict situation still prevails in this household in which two people through circumstances beyond their control have been forced into an unfortunate relationship.

Single parent 52 gave a chatty response:

I hope I have filled this questionnaire in correctly considering I have had to fill in a few pages every couple of evenings, when I have had the chance to 'breathe in peace!' Good luck with your studies! If

you're trying to sum me up let me help ... I am a divorced mother of 2 pretty healthy, exceptionally lively children that have given me grey hairs and a 'fishwife' mouth. I love them dearly but I could 'kill' them daily the way they fight and carry on - the one is very dominant, the other submissive - it certainly ain't no picnic!!!!

41) CHILDBREARING

There are many parental responsibilities with which the single parent has to cope when taking over the leadership role once played by both parents in a two-parent family. The 'missing' parent is not always available when a crisis occurs or a decision has to be made. The single parent can, thus, also be called a 'lone parent' when this moment arrives. Many single parents experience tremendous problems when they are faced with the 'lone partner' role for the first time. It can be very difficult for a parent who has no recourse to second opinions or advice on which to base his or her decisions.

In both studies, discipline, leadership and worry, are the main problems facing single parents. The difficulty of fulfilling both mother and father roles was the next most major problem. Dealing with sex questions scored higher than expected by the researcher. In tables 36 and 37, the Pretoria and Port Elizabeth figures for the childrens' reaction to crisis and the most difficult parental area for the single parent, are as follows:

**TABLE 36 : A table representing the children's reaction/behaviour during crisis and non-crisis situations in the Port Elizabeth study as an example.**

|   | To a large extent | To some extent                 | Somewhat | Somewhat | To some extent | To a large extent |  |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------|--|
|   | % (N)             | % (N)                          | % (N)    | % (N)    | % (N)          | % (N)             |  |
| Unconcerned, unsympathetic not understanding at all | 4,7( 5)           | 3,7( 4)                        | 8,4( 9)  | 14,0(15) | 19,6(21)       | 43,9(47)          | Concerned, sympathetic, totally understanding                                |
|   |                   | [NO. RESPONSES = 5,6% = (6) N] |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Cruel, mocking or insulting                         | - -               | 4,7( 5)                        | 6,5( 7)  | 17,8(19) | 20,6(22)       | 44,9(48)          | Respectful and kind  |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 5,6% = (6) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Humiliating or belittling                           | - -               | 2,8( 3)                        | 8,4( 9)  | 21,5(23) | 30,8(33)       | 30,8(33)          | Supportive, praising, boosts respondent's morale, self-esteem and self-image |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 5,6% = (6) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Disgracing respondent or the family                 | - -               | 0,9( 1)                        | 8,4( 9)  | 15,0(16) | 18,7(20)       | 51,4(55)          | Loyal, a source of pride for the family                                      |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 5,6% = (6) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Competing with single parent for family leadership  | 2,8( 3)           | 2,8( 3)                        | 10,3(11) | 15,9(17) | 19,6(21)       | 44,9(48)          | Accepting responsibility as leader, has team spirit                          |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 3,7% = (4) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Rejecting   | 1,9( 2)           | 1,9( 2)                        | 7,5( 8)  | 9,3(10)  | 15,9(17)       | 58,9(63)          | Loving, warm accepting   |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 4,7% = (5) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |
| Totally unhelpful, unco-operative, unreliable       | 1,9( 2)           | 2,8( 3)                        | 7,5( 8)  | 11,2(12) | 33,6(36)       | 38,3(41)          | Helpful, co-operative, reliable  |
|   |                   | [NO RESPONSES = 4,7% = (5) N]  |          |          |                |                   |  |

TABLE 37 : MOST DIFFICULT PARENTAL AREA FOR A SINGLE PARENT

|   | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| No problems   | 20,6         | 6,5           |
| Discipline, leadership, worry   | 36,0         | 24,3          |
| Fulfilling both mother/father roles   | 23,3         | 15,9          |
| Sex questions   | 7,7          | 6,5           |
| Babysitting care/transport of children  | 1,0          | 3,7           |
| Handling unacceptable friends, environment, etc.                                      | 0,3          | 7,5           |
| Emotional inability to give attention to the needs of the children, no patience, etc. | 5,0          | 11,2          |
| Homework help   | 1,7          | 1,9           |
| Unable to provide financial security  | 1,7          | 17,8          |
| Other   | *N/A         | 4,7           |
| Handling physical/spiritual problems, etc.  | 2,7          | *N/A          |
|   | <u>100%</u>  | <u>100%</u>   |

\* N/A to that particular study.

42) Childrearing Style

It was very interesting to note how single parents felt about their particular childrearing style. Unfortunately, it was not possible to compare the responses of the single parents with the opinions of their children. The researcher would have liked to have done this in order to establish whether parents and children evaluated the parent's childrearing style in the same way.

TABLE 38 : CHILDREARING STYLE

|                                     | PTA % | P.E. % |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Strict                              | 38,4  | 43,9   |
| Relaxed                             | 29,3  | 17,8   |
| In between                          | 27,0  | 19,6   |
| Varied                              | 3,0   | 15,0   |
| Let children get away with too much | 1,3   | 2,8    |
| N/A                                 | *N/A  | 0,9    |
| Very strict                         | 1,0   | *N/A   |
|                                     | 100%  | 100%   |

\* Not applicable to that particular study.

Single parent number 30 said:

The answers I have given to the questionnaire do not reflect exact reality, because I have been divorced for 12 years. My son was a baby when I was first divorced and I can, therefore, give more than one answer to most questions as circumstances have changed as the years have gone by.

Another single parent number 71 proudly commented on her successful childrearing capabilities:

I have been divorced for 16 years and my son (20) is in the army and my daughter (18) is working in Windhoek. I still have a 9 year old daughter at home, so you could say I am a divorced, unmarried single parent. It's been tough going but my 2 elder kids are wonderful and have turned out to be very decent human beings, which I partly contribute to their having spent the last 5 years of the schooling in boarding school in the Karoo, away from the city. Even my ex-mother-in-law is proud of their up-bringing inspite of their not having a father!

43) School Performance

In the Port Elizabeth study 49,5% of children did not change school compared to 42,3% in the Pretoria study. The ratio between the two studies for those who had changed school only once was 23,4% (P.E.) : 33,4% (PTA).

If one takes into account the possibility that the first set of figures could include many children that were too young for school in the first place, the remaining percentages do not look very promising. This is especially so when one considers the 'five or more' category where the percentages were P.E. 6,5% and PTA 3,3%. The Pretoria study showed that 24,3% of single parent children made two or more school changes while in Port Elizabeth 27% of the respondent's children changed school twice or more. The statistics relating to changes in school performance for Pretoria were 43,5%. As these statistics are very close to the 50% level, one could perhaps predict that there is an even chance that a child's school performance will be affected if there is a change in family status. (Such a change of status would include: parental change; or change from a two-parent family to a single parent family; or if he or she were from a single parent family as in the case of unmarried mothers' children.)

The statistics relating to school standard failure, 15,0% (P.E.) and 15,7% (PTA), suggests on a balanced average, that plus/minus 15% of all children in single parent families will probably fail one or more standards at school. Average figures for the failure of children in two-parent families in the Port Elizabeth region, were not obtained by the researcher, so it was not established

✓ whether single parent family children have a higher percentage of standard failures than the children from two-parent families. A large percentage of the single parents miss going to work in order to look after the children when they are sick (36,5% P.E. and 52,0% PTA). This is perhaps a reason why single parents experience problems in the workplace. [SEE SECTIONS 21, 22 and 23 in this chapter]

Children from single parent homes seldom seem to miss school, as both studies show high percentages in the 'no days missed' category - P.E. 99,1%; PTA 99,3%.

TABLE 39 : LACK OF RESOURCES FOR FUTURE STUDY OF THE CHILDREN  
BECAUSE OF SINGLE PARENT SITUATION

|                     | PTA % | P.E. % |
|---------------------|-------|--------|
| N/A                 | 0,4   | 11,2   |
| Yes                 | 7,3   | 12,1   |
| No                  | 79,0  | 59,8   |
| I don't know as yet | 13,3  | 16,8   |
|                     | 100%  | 99,9%  |

✓ The statistics in Table 39 suggest that single parents actively prepare for their children's future. Many of the parents interviewed by the researcher in the Port Elizabeth study confirmed that they 'lived only' for the future of their child or children. In fact, in quite a considerable number of cases the parents deprived themselves of many of life's luxuries in order to give their children the best chance of a good future.

44) Ex-spouse/the reputed father or mother's relationship with the children

TABLE 40 : CHILDREARING ASSISTANCE

|  | PTA % (N) | P.E. % (N) |
|--|-----------|------------|
| N/A - e.g. deceased                      | 18,3 (55) | 19,6 (21)  |
| Regularly, on his/<br>her own initiative | 13,9      | 16,3       |
| Whenever asked                           | 7,7       | 12,8       |
| Grudgingly assists<br>when asked         | 0,8       | 7,0        |
| Very seldom assists                      | 15,9      | 19,8       |
| Never assists                            | 58,0      | 38,4       |
| N/A responses                            | 3,7 ( 9)  | 5,8 ( 5)   |

(i) Childrearing Assistance from ex-spouse

These figures have been calculated in an attempt to explain the anomalies which became apparent in the results of the following questions:

Question 82(b) differs from question 83 in the Pretoria study where widowed respondents numbered 55 and 56 respectively. The reasons for this alternate figure were not explained in the study.

In the replies to part 2 (code 91) in the Port Elizabeth questionnaire, the percentage for the 'no assistance by ex-spouse in childrearing' category differs from that of the previous question. The only explanation for this anomaly can be that the respondent changed his/her mind after he/she had made the previous reply and the anomaly is thus accepted as such. One must, therefore, presume that the exact percentage for each of the questions lies somewhere between the two given percentages.

(ii) Contact between ex-spouse and children

The statistics reflecting the contact between children and the parent not living with them was very similar for both studies: P.E.: NEVER = 10,3%, NO CONTACT = 10,3% and PTA: NEVER = 11,5%, NO CONTACT = 14,8% . Those single parents who felt that too little time was spent by ex-spouses with their children were in the majority in both studies.

TABLE 41 : CONTACT BETWEEN EX-SPOUSE AND CHILDREN

|  | PTA % | P.E. % |
|--|-------|--------|
| <u>e.g. ex-spouses who spend time with children (PTA, N = 179; P.E., N = 64)</u> |       |        |
| Too much time  | 3,9   | 3,1    |
| Just enough time   | 40,8  | 40,6   |
| Too little time  | 55,3  | 56,3   |
|  | 100%  | 100%   |

After the children had been in contact with the ex-spouse, 16,9% of the Port Elizabeth single parents had problems with the children compared to 27,3% of the parents in the Pretoria study. The type of problems in both studies, associated with these visits were a combination of disciplinary and emotional problems. Single parent number 36, a divorcee, mentioned:

When couples file for a divorce, welfare organisations should be called in on all cases where there are children concerned. The welfare organisation should try and educate both parents not to belittle the other spouse in front of the children. The differences are between husband and wife and I do not see why the children must suffer by having to listen to the conflict. Parents going through a divorce always put

the blame (with lies) on each other resulting with 'your father did/said ...'. The child is then confused about where his/her loyalties lie. Our pride is hurt and we take it out on our children. I think this is the main reason for there being 'problem' children in divorced families.

Food for thought: I asked my ex-husband why he never had the children on a regular day over the weekend and his answer was: 'Do you realise how difficult it is to give them back after enjoying only a day with them and having to go back to an empty house?'

(iii) Do the children enjoy father/mother's visit?

The majority of children enjoy spending time with the ex-spouse. In the Pretoria study the statistics of 41,0% (PTA) and 44,8% (P.E.) reflect either those children who do not have contact with their other parent or that the question was not applicable to the respondent (in the case of widows/ers).

(iv) Does the ex-spouse (i.e. the spouse not living in the single parent family) enjoy being with the children?

In the Port Elizabeth study 34,8% of the single parents said their ex-spouses enjoyed being with their children compared to 32,4% in the Pretoria study. The figures for the two studies are very similar and suggest that at least a third of ex-spouses not living in single parent families thoroughly enjoy their children. Those respondents interviewed (and who fell into this category) could not clarify for the researcher the way in which their ex-husbands or wives enjoyed having their children for weekends and/or holidays.

(v) Does the ex-spouse manipulate the children?

The following sets of figures were obtained for the answers to this question: 'YES' 10,3% (P.E.) and 16,4% (PTA); 'NO' 41,1% (P.E.) and 46,3% (PTA). 11,2% (P.E.) and 7,8% (PTA); ticked off the 'I don't know' category and a 'not applicable' response of 37,4% (P.E.) and 29,5% (PTA) was obtained in this question's response category. As the replies in both the studies reflected much the same spread, these figures were accepted by the researcher as being representative of single parents who believe their ex-spouses do, or do not, manipulate their children.

A comparison was made of the 40 single parents in the Pretoria study and the 11 single parents in the Port Elizabeth study who answered 'yes' to the manipulation question. In both samples it was found that the two main reasons given by respondents for believing that their ex-spouses were manipulating the children were: that the ex-spouse attempts to influence the children against the custodial single parent; and, that the ex-spouse accuses the single parent of training the children incorrectly.

45) Single mothers

The difficulty mentioned most often by the single mothers in both studies was in the 'making of decisions/filling both roles' category: 40,0% (P.E.), 36,7% (PTA). The major worry for unmarried mothers was in the 'future of the children' category: 33,4% (P.E.), 27,4% (PTA).

The major concern for single mothers in both studies, was the future of the children and the fear of their future financial security.

46) Single fathers

The single fathers in the Port Elizabeth study considered handling the practical day-to-day problems their major difficulty as single parents. The single fathers in the Pretoria study found fulfilling both parental roles' their major problem. Where the children were directly concerned, socialization and role identity were considered the two major worries by the single fathers in both groups.

Only one single father in each study was not the legal custodian of the children in the single parent family. The majority of single fathers had been awarded custody of the children by an order of the court. The statistics for custodial fathers were as follows: P.E. = 4, PTA = 12, with 6 of the 19 respondents in the Pretoria study and 3 of the 7 in the Port Elizabeth studies being widowers.

Because there were far fewer single fathers represented in the Port Elizabeth study than there were in the Pretoria study, the statistical response for single fathers in the Port Elizabeth study may be unreliable and an increase in single father respondents may alter the percentages dramatically.

Single parents numbers 91 and 93, who are both single fathers commented:

Number 91

A child feels love and security from a very young age and he/she should be allowed to stay with the parent of his/her choice.

The idea that mothers can care best for the children is obsolete. If the child wants to stay with a particular parent and that parent is capable of

caring for the child in the same manner or better than the other parent, the wish of the child should be considered. No pressure should be put on children to visit the other parents if they do not feel like it.

Number 93

You will see that I did refer to having suffered a financial loss - two salaries are better than one. It, however, grieves me in this respect that my ex-wife is actually financially far better off than I am and yet she is not prepared to contribute anything towards our son's well-being or future well-being. (She is still single as well.) I make sure that he does not want for anything but there is still a lot that can be done for him. The breaking up of parents must be one of the most tragic things that can happen to a child.

47) Unmarried Mothers

There were 10 unmarried mothers in the Port Elizabeth sample and 12 in the Pretoria study who answered questions in this section. In neither of the studies did all unmarried mothers answer all sections. The total number of replies do not always, therefore, correspond to the 10 and 12 respondent totals given above. Because the sample was very small in this category, only 2 or 3 replies may have resulted in a statistic suggesting a majority of cases.

Although the Pretoria study showed an average percentage of 18,2% in most of the categories, in the Port Elizabeth study unmarried mothers found 'stigma' and 'the difficulty of fulfilling both parental roles' the hardest thing they had to face in their role as single parents.

In the category relating to the acceptance by the unmarried mother's parents of her child, 100% (P.E.) and 75,0% (PTA) of the unmarried mothers' parents accepted the child or children wholeheartedly and only in the Pretoria sample did 8,3% of the mothers' parents not accept the children at all.

The effect of unmarried-mother status on the daily life of the single parent did not give radically negative results. Although there may be an uncomfortable feeling at first, this feeling usually changes later to a feeling of acceptance on the part of the single parent and most unmarried mothers do not have a problem with their status in everyday life.

Single parent number 37, an unmarried mother said:

As an unmarried mother I feel that society has not moved ahead very much these last thirty years, as the stigma against unmarried mothers is still very, very acute. Women can get as many divorces as they choose and are still acceptable but the majority of people are very harsh in their attitude toward the 'unmarried mother' who had the courage to keep her child. Luckily for me, most of my old friends are still my friends but only because I legally adopted my own child in England before returning here. I wrote to them that I had adopted a baby (single women are allowed to adopt in England). Even though I think some see the resemblance they have had the graciousness not to comment, as they are genuine friends. My actions have left me with a life-time of

guilt, but I did it mainly to protect the child, who will be 27 years in May 1987. He knows the truth, but does not bear any ill-will towards me. However, I still feel deeply for all unmarried mothers, for the 'unmarried' are still lepers.

48) Widows/Widowers

The question on the hardships facing widows/ers was considered here. In the Port Elizabeth study 76,4% of the widows/ers answered in the category 'no one to talk to about problems/loneliness/mate needed' where this aspect applied to the worst thing that widows/ers had to face after the death of their spouses. This result differed from the Pretoria study as added information was scored in the Port Elizabeth survey and therefore this figure cannot be compared with any of the Pretoria statistics. In the Pretoria study 25,4% of the widows/ers responded in the 'no one to consult about problems' category. Although the Port Elizabeth and the Pretoria categories are similar, they were not scored for comparative analyses, therefore, the researcher mentions the results only for those interested in this area of the study.

49) Divorced Single Parents

Of the divorced parents in the Port Elizabeth study, 29,7% considered having no one to talk to; being alone; being rejected by friends; to be their major difficulty as divorced persons. The statistics for the category relating to the effect of societal attitudes on the single parent's status showed that 13,1% of the sample felt that their new status was felt to be a threat to other marriages and relationships. The category on financial pressure was responded to by 15,0% of the single parents in the Port Elizabeth study.

In the Pretoria sample, 21,2% of the respondents felt that the stigma attached to divorced people was the major problem single parents had to face. The fulfilling of both parental roles (14,6%) and financial pressure (13,7%) were the two problems considered by Pretoria divorcees to be their next most difficult problems.

Societal attitudes toward the divorced person varied a great deal in both studies.

TABLE 42 : EFFECT OF SOCIETAL ATTITUDES ON DIVORCED SINGLE PARENT STATUS

|                                       | <u>P.E.</u> | <u>PTA</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
|                                       | % (N)       | % (N)      |
|                                       | T = 70      | T = 226    |
| No problem                            | 41,4 (29)   | 64,6 (146) |
| Lower status                          | 2,9 ( 2)    | 8,4 ( 19)  |
| Threat to other marriages and friends | 18,6 (13)   | 6,2 ( 14)  |
| Loss of social contact and popularity | 15,7 (11)   | 6,2 ( 14)  |
| Easy social prey (opposite sex)       | 7,1 ( 5)    | 5,7 ( 13)  |
| Discrimination at work                | - -         | 0,9 ( 2)   |
| General discrimination                | 10,0 ( 7)   | 7,1 ( 16)  |
| People feel sorry for me              | 1,4 ( 1)    | 0,9 ( 2)   |
| Combination                           | 2,9 ( 2)    | N/A*       |
|                                       | 100%        | 100%       |

\* Not considered in the Pretoria study.

50) Perception of life satisfaction and financial security

(i) Present situation regarding life in general

TABLE 43 : PRESENT SITUATION REGARDING LIFE IN GENERAL  
e.g. HOME, WORK

|                      | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Very good            | 28,3         | 21,5          |
| Good                 | 52,0         | 45,8          |
| Neither good nor bad | 17,0         | 28,0          |
| Bad                  | 2,0          | 2,8           |
| Very bad             | 0,7          | 1,9           |
|                      | <u>100%</u>  | <u>100%</u>   |

It may be deduced from the statistics in Table 43 that most single parents have a positive perception of life satisfaction in general. Whether this response was simply because they are facing up to the realities of their situation or whether they were trying to demonstrate to the researcher that their situation is not a negative one generally, is a matter which the researcher could not overcome in a questionnaire of this nature. In an attempt to justify the single parents' response an analysis was made of question 112 code 10 in Section 3 of the questionnaire in the Port Elizabeth study which asks: 'Do you feel you live less comfortably now than you did before becoming a single parent?' It was found that very few single parents in either of the studies gave positive responses. In fact the majority felt that they live more comfortably now as a single parent family.

TABLE 44 : DO YOU FEEL YOU LIVE LESS COMFORTABLY NOW  
THAN BEFORE BECOMING A SINGLE PARENT?

|          | Always<br>(very<br>much) | Most of<br>the time | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
|----------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------|-------|
| PTA (%)  | 22,0                     | 11,0                | 12,3      | 10,0   | 44,7  |
| P.E. (%) | 17,8                     | 12,1                | 20,6      | 14,0   | 34,6  |

The major negative response appeared in the 'unable to save' category where 47,7% of the Port Elizabeth group and 46,0% of the Pretoria group felt they were unable to save in their single parent situation.

(ii) Aspects of two-parent family which the single parent misses most

In the Port Elizabeth study, 41,4% of the respondents stated that they missed nothing from their previous marital life compared to 36,0% of respondents in the Pretoria study. The major aspect of married life the respondents missed most (P.E. = 38,1%; PTA = 41,7%) was companionship. Categories relating to the 'loss of material possessions' and 'financial security' also drew a fairly large number of responses: P.E. = 30,2%; PTA = 33,8%.

(iii) Problems

The categories dealing with 'major problem', 'minor problem' and 'no problem' drew the largest response in the finance section in both studies. The second most significant problem area was 'lack of resources in times of crisis e.g. always having to rely on, depend on and organize everything oneself'. In this category, percentages varied between the two groups, however, the range, compared to other replies, proved they were the two highest scored on the checklist.

TABLE 45 : THE TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD

|   | <u>Major problem</u> | <u>Minor problem</u> |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Finances</u>                             |                      |                      |
| PTA (%)                                     | 30,0                 | 35,5 (Of all         |
| P.E. (%)                                    | 46,7                 | 31,8 respondents)    |
| <u>Lack of resources in times of crisis</u> |                      |                      |
| PTA (%)                                     | 20,7                 | 32,8 (Of all         |
| P.E. (%)                                    | 41,1                 | 36,4 respondents)    |

Single parent number 7 remarked:

[My major difficulties were:]

dealing with the unpleasant nature of the litigation; dealing with the corruption of persons afraid of 'rocking the status boat'; keeping a balance between a supportive and a hands-off policy in the child's struggle to control his interaction with his father.

(iv) Nicest aspect about being a single parent

TABLE 46 : NICEST ASPECT ABOUT BEING A SINGLE PARENT

|   | <u>PTA %</u> | <u>P.E. %</u> |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Nothing nice                            | 11,7         | 13,1          |
| Independence (in general)               | 46,6         | 40,2          |
| Relaxed now                             | 26,0         | 5,6           |
| Financial security                      | 0,7          | 0,0           |
| Generally a better life,<br>more secure | 1,7          | 9,3           |
| Less work                               | 0,3          | 2,8           |
| Look after children better              | 5,3          | 8,4           |
| Better relationship with<br>children    | 7,0          | 11,2          |
| Something to live for                   | 0,7          | 9,3           |
|   | <u>100%</u>  | <u>99,9%</u>  |

(There was one N/A response in the Port Elizabeth study).

The category 'Independence' reflected the highest percentage of responses made by the respondents in both studies. It can thus be inferred that single parents find the independence they now have to be the nicest aspect of being a single parent. No other score came close to the score this category reflected, implying that 'independence' could be one of the main reasons why some single parents choose to retain their single status rather than remarry. Questioned on remarriage, 27,1% of the Port Elizabeth single parents did not see themselves marrying again in the future and 49,5% said they did not know if they would marry again.

An example of one such single parent was single parent number 54, a happy unmarried mother, who said:

I have a very nice life at present. I live like a 'queen' at the moment. I am very happy! My boyfriend is exceptionally good to us.

(v) Nicest aspect for the children of single parents

TABLE 47 : NICEST ASPECT FOR THE CHILDREN OF SINGLE PARENTS AS SEEN BY THEIR SINGLE PARENTS IN THE TWO STUDIES

|  | PTA % | P.E. % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Nothing  | 20,4  | 21,5   |
| Peaceful, less discipline, no fights between parents   | 35,0  | 29,9   |
| Children more settled                                  | 11,3  | 8,4    |
| Closer family ties                                     | 18,4  | 23,4   |
| Don't know   | 8,6   | 9,3    |
| No change in situation, children accept and understand | 3,3   | 2,8    |
| Two households now, greater benefits                   | 3,0   | 4,7    |
|  | 100%  | 100%   |

Schlesinger (1982 : 14) summarizes the advantages and disadvantages for the children,

Among some of the changes which our children experienced in becoming a one-parent family were moving to a new neighbourhood, a shift in contact with maternal and paternal relatives, and a new experience in their contact with the non-custodial parent.

It is of interest to note that at least half of the children had not had any parental communication about the pending separation. They felt in most cases upset and unhappy about the separation, and found certain advantages and disadvantages in living in a one-parent family.

Advantages and Disadvantages in  
Being in a One-Parent Family  
(in order of importance)

| <u>Advantages</u> |                         | <u>Disadvantages</u>        |   |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1                 | closer to mother        | not closer to father        | 1 |
| 2                 | more responsibility     | smaller dwelling            | 2 |
| 3                 | helping in household    | helping in household        | 3 |
| 4                 | get along with siblings | come home to an empty house | 4 |
| 5                 | more friends            | more responsibility         | 5 |
| 6                 | trusted more            | moving to a new area        | 6 |
| 7                 | moving to a new area    | not get along with siblings | 7 |
| 8                 | closer to father        | less friends                | 8 |

(Schlesinger, 1982 : 14)

51) Need for Social Services

Bowen (1982 : 79) sees social services as playing a very important role in the lives of single parent families. He observes that:

The "strength of social network" was conceptualized in this study to refer to the frequency of contact and the intensity of involvement (that is, strength of ties and degree of support and satisfaction derived) maintained between the formerly-married mother and specific persons and organizations in her social network.

The Pretoria study examined the need for social services in great depth. The researcher felt that the questionnaire gave a fairly accurate assessment of the stated needs of single parents as regards social services. Most of the single parents in the Port Elizabeth study group (24,3%) named social support groups (a single parent group) as their first choice of social service support.

The researcher found the apparent lack of reliance on religious institutions shown by single parents and their families in Port Elizabeth most surprising. Either there are sufficient numbers of organizations offering this service or there is no need for it in the Port Elizabeth area. Further research in this field could perhaps account for the result reflected in the Port Elizabeth study.

Single parents were asked finally about the location of social services, should they be required. In the Port Elizabeth group 35,5% chose 'near your home' as did 21,4% of the Pretoria single parent sample. Both the studies showed the highest scores in this section of the category relating to the location of social services.

Single parent number 24 suggested:

As the single parent phenomena has become so widely spread, I feel personally, that persons from this group, who have learned to cope with the situation should form a permanent advisory body. Some of us, like me, have come out on top, although I would not have said I would 2 years ago. In giving strength and support one also receives. Sometimes it is easier for the children to talk to someone other than their parent. There could/should be an organisation similar to Life Line where persons can be referred for specific needs. There should be groups teaching each other how to help oneself on the practical as well as emotional side.

Discussion groups, involving both mothers and fathers should be organised so that single parents are able to air problems, like feeling odd in society, feeling let down, guilty, rejected, bewildered, numb or angry. In these groups, (I would like both mothers and fathers involved) the point should be stressed that it is not a get-together where a new spouse will be found. I feel that such an impression would keep many away and draw the "wrong" ones. Such groups should be for people who want to cope and don't quite know how. Through my situation I have become quite outgoing and have always looked for help and tried to

give help. There are many single parents who just hide and they should be reached. In most cases it's the children, who are after all the future, who suffer the most and when we help ourselves, we help them.

Single parent number 5, felt that more clubs and recreation facilities are needed by single parent families.

1) If existing clubs/churches/sports clubs or otherwise invited single families to join (for special events or permanently): the single family would be normalised and the complete family would find out that single parent families are still people.

Integration would be natural rather than the obvious 'singles' collection of people.

2) These clubs/churches could provide the facility of regular films/speakers/booklists for reading.

3) Senior organizers (as above) could either counsel or refer individual problems i.e. be a friend.

Respondent 105 highlighted the need for social services:

I think not having someone to talk to who knows and understands, is the biggest problem. Perhaps a sort of 'help mekaar' club taking care of all the facets facing both men and women would be the answer. Running the home for men/organizing funds for women,

dealing with single parents, emotional problems/ children's problems, all these facts could be considered. Like a 'call-a-family' thing. A brother/sister set-up for mutual benefit could help but not on a specific one-to-one basis. Stress should be placed on the availability of a group such as this, giving the single parent the opportunity to decide in which area these services could help him or her most.

A fully comprehensive research finding could not be drawn up in a study of this size and much of the data selected covered a wide range of topics. Only the main areas of study and the major research findings were listed. The questionnaire appearing in the appendix gives an indication of the area which was researched in this study.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW

7.1 MAJOR RESULTS OF THE STUDY

7.1.1 Research findings showing the positive aspects of the single parent family in the Port Elizabeth study

Many of the studies on single parenthood reveal that single parenthood can be successful. This study is no exception.

Single parents generally were found to have a positive attitude to single parenthood: 66% were happy or very happy with their accommodation arrangements at the time of the study; 40,2% stated they enjoyed their new independent life-styles as single parents in answer to the question 'what is the nicest thing about being a single parent?'; and only 13,1% of the respondents thought that there was 'nothing nice' about being a single parent.

Many of the advantages of single parenting have become obvious to those involved with successful single parent families. Cases involving drunk, wife-battering, unemployed, and abusive husbands have been reported in the mass media and portrayed in drama, fiction and film. The sadness and conflict in such two-parent family homes has encouraged many a husband and wife to 'go it alone' as a single parent family. Single parents can enjoy more personal independence than in two-parent families and many of the respondents in the study stated that increased personal independence was one of the aspects of single parenthood they liked the most.

Some felt that a better relationship had developed between themselves and their children since they had become members of a single-parent family. The category 'more peaceful family, with closer family ties' rated a 53,3% respondent response.

Some single parents considered that making changes - a new job, new neighbourhood, new friends and a new environment for the entire single parent family, - was the major reason for their success. Of the respondents, 68,3% said things were either going well, or very well for them at the time of this study.

Sixty out of 75 single parents received benefits from their employers who understood their single parent situation and sympathized with them. The major area in which employers showed their sympathy and understanding of the single parent situation, was that of allowing their employees time-off.

Finance was frequently mentioned as a major problem by many of the respondents. It would seem (although money does not solve all problems) that those single parents who are financially better-off are coping more easily with single parenthood than those single parents who are struggling financially. Those single parents who did not have financial problems, also showed greater interest in the study and in some cases offered to help the researcher find more participants. (Five of the single parents from the lower income and educational group asked the researcher how they would benefit financially by answering the questionnaire).

Access to, and the availability of, amenities within the community adds to the 'easier' life-style of a single parent family. A single parent who does not have to transport children to and from recreational, childcare or entertainment facilities, has more free time to pursue personal interests.

7.1.2 Negative aspects of the single parent family in the Port Elizabeth study

Financial commitments which do not allow the single parent family to maintain its previous standard of living, are a major negative aspect of single parenting. It is not always an easy task for the single parent to explain to his/her children why it is no longer possible for them to have the material things they were accustomed to having in the past.

The Port Elizabeth study revealed that 'sole responsibility' was the major problem encountered by respondents after 6 months of single parenthood. Other difficulties experienced by the Port Elizabeth respondents included loneliness, generalized-pressure and the difficulty of making new friends. The response to the category 'turmoil after divorce, or death etc.' suggests that the first six months appears to be a most stressful period for most single parents.

Snyman also considers that extra/sole responsibility is a major negative factor in the lives of single parents.

Ekstra eise word aan alle bronne van die enkelouergesin gestel, onder andere fondse, tyd, huisruimte, vaardighede en fisiese en psigiese energie, en beslissings oor die aanwending van sulke bronne kry al meer die karakter van krisiskeuses

(Snyman, 1986 : 5).

Lack of childcare and recreational facilities in the community may add to the hardships suffered by an indigent, already pressured, single parent.

The personal life of the single parent may be greatly affected by single parenthood, in that many seek a replacement for their husband or wife and this leads to 'starting over' for many who are now single again - but this time, with children. A few single parents mentioned

that they experienced problems when a lover/boyfriend/girlfriend did not accept or get-along-with the children.

Ten of the 22 single parents in the Port Elizabeth study who had had a nervous breakdown and suffered from severe depression, gave their divorce, widowhood, separation or unmarried motherhood as the major cause of the breakdown. All the widowed single parents considered the death of their spouse as having been a crisis in their lives.

The single-parent fathers in the Port Elizabeth study stated that their greatest difficulties arose in the fulfilment of a combined mother-and-father role and in coping with practical problems when there was no-one with whom to discuss them. Because the single-parent father sample was very small (7), their responses to the questionnaire should not be taken as being representative of the possible responses of all single parent fathers in Port Elizabeth.

One divorced single parent admitted openly that the only thing she missed from her previous life style was sex on a regular basis. It is very possible that many more single parents feel the same way, but felt socially and emotionally inhibited from divulging these personal feelings in an interview.

### 7.1.3 General observations based on the Port Elizabeth survey

Financially secure single-parent families may have certain advantages over two-parent families. That financial security is a key factor in successful single parenting is evident from the fact that most of the positive responses to single parenting came from respondents from the more affluent suburbs of Port Elizabeth. The education level of each respondent played a major part in the degree of co-operation

the researcher received from the respondents. The higher the educational level of the respondent, the more co-operation was received and the easier it was for the researcher to make appointments, keep appointments, return questionnaires and fill out the forms. The researcher also had fewer queries from the higher educational group about what was expected of them.

By way of contrast, some of the less well-educated respondents were less co-operative than their better educated peers. One less well-educated divorced single parent believed emphatically that her ex-husband had sent the researcher to spy on her. This was after she had volunteered to answer the questionnaire and had had second thoughts about her introduction by a friend to the researcher. A great deal of explaining had to be done to convince her that her suspicions were unfounded. In general, more time had to be spent on explaining the study (and the role the respondents had to play in it) to the less educated single parent than to the better educated single parent.

Most single parents said they were unaware of any supportive single-parent organization in Port Elizabeth. Although previous attempts to establish a single-parent group in Port Elizabeth, have been unsuccessful, another attempt has recently been made to start a viable group. The response by single parents to the group has not, however, been very positive. Yet, this type of organization should be a priority in this region in order to serve those single parent families who need such a facility, in order to help them cope with their new situation.

The results of the study revealed that loneliness and isolation were major aspects of a single parent's suffering. Many single parents in the study mentioned the difficulties of 'getting back into the social scene' and of 'relating to people of the opposite sex'. It was stressed in some cases by single parents that it was a mistake to go out and look for a partner. The ideal way for single parents to meet people appears to be by joining study groups or clubs that

cater for their interests. It was emphasized too, that the support of friends and a support group were crucial to the well-being of the single parent, as being alone and without a mate could be a stressful experience for single parents who had grown accustomed to their previous two-parent family lifestyles and friends.

Mention has not been made of the importance placed by single parents on their forgiveness of their former partner. Such forgiveness is important not only for the sake of the children, the health and peace-of-mind of the single parent, but also for the general well-being of the single parent family as a whole. The divorced single parents also felt that the divorce put an end to the trauma that preceded it. Most of the respondents stated that staying together with the ex-spouses for the sake of the children would have been more harmful to the children than the divorce, as the children were invariably very unhappy, confused and insecure. Many single parents in this study felt that it was important not to degrade their ex-spouse in front of their children, as such criticism could result in the conflict (previously experienced in the two-parent family) recurring in the single-parent family. Most of the single parents felt that they had to get on with their lives and that the hurt they presently felt would heal. Most of them believed there was something for them to look forward to in the future: a new relationship; new friends; or, as many put it, a new "lease-on-life".

A newspaper article quotes Dr Dolores Luiz, a senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Port Elizabeth, as saying, "There is no ideal family, there is a healthy family" (Eastern Province Herald, 22 June 1987). The positive side of divorce offers the single parent the possibility of personal growth and of taking control of his/her own life.

The divorced single parent has to learn how to become both a mother and a father. This change of roles from either a mother or father role is important for the socialisation of the children. It was made particularly clear to the researcher by the respondents in this study, that fulfilling both parental roles was an obstacle many single parents had to struggle to overcome. Many children suffer role identity crises during the rites-de-passage of their adolescence. The children of single parents, particularly, need a father/mother figure who can, with understanding, ease them through such crises.

Widowed single parents felt that it was not easy to overcome the pain, grief and distress that death brought to them and their children. Most felt, however, that the sooner they could put themselves 'back on their feet' the better it would be for all the members of the single parent family.

Mrs Tia Wessels, Director of Child and Family Welfare in Port Elizabeth acknowledges that being a single parent 'is not an easy predicament' to live with, and stresses, "As a single parent you are not alone. She said that 40 to 45 per cent of all children in South Africa came from single-parent families." (Eastern Province Herald, 22 June 1987).

## 7.2 SPECTRUM OF VIEWS BY SINGLE PARENTS

The researcher chose a selected number of responses from the qualitative results of the sample of 107 replies. Only those responses most informative about, and relevant to, single

parenting were extracted from the data and from the researcher's interview notes, for use in the dissertation. It is anticipated that insight into the opinions and circumstances of single parents will be gained through this selection. All the selected comments have been edited to facilitate a clearer understanding of their points of view. In order to guarantee the anonymity of all those who participated in the study, the numerical code of the respondent as used in the data analysis, is used as a reference number.

(It was intended, initially, to retain the original wording of the respondents' comments, to show the relationship between the respondents' educational level (as revealed by their language use) and their attitudes to single parenthood. In many cases, however, because the original writing did not lend itself to fluent reading and easy comprehension, corrections were made.)

### 7.3 OVERVIEW: OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The single parent family has, as an alternative family form, acquired an indispensable and specialized place in society. Although the marriage and remarriage rates confirm that society still places a great deal of faith in the two-parent family, the South African figures for divorce, separation, unmarried mothers, and never-marrieds undermine the foundation of this faith.

The Port Elizabeth study provides data appropriate for assessing the life-style of the single parent family in Port Elizabeth in descriptive form. In the Pretoria study it was made perfectly clear that:

Although it would not be advisable to generalize broadly from findings on 300 mainly urban White single parent families, a small-scale sample study like this one provides important information on the problems and strengths of single parent families. It also provides useful pointers to the fields in which service delivery could be experimented with.

(Snyman, 1986 : ix)

One of the most important findings of the investigation was the obvious need for the co-ordination of support services in the Port Elizabeth area. Each of the support groups or organizations which could offer assistance to single-parent families catered for a variety of general social services. Famsa, Child and Family Welfare Society, hospitals, all have a diverse group of clients, patients, or families to whose needs they attend. As a consequence, none of these organisations, specifically focus attention on the single-parent family. The needs of the single-parent family cannot be answered by each organisation in isolation. At a recent national conference on the family, held at the University of Port Elizabeth in August 1987, it was recommended that all the representatives of social services should meet so that ways could be discussed to create a viable and functional inter-service communications network. It was noted that in order for such a network to be viable, it would be necessary to set up a programme which would link the services of psychologists, churches and welfare, recreation and charity organizations, thus creating a network which could aid single-parent families across a broad spectrum. It was further felt that single parents themselves should be instrumental in setting up a single-parent group which could refer single parents in difficulties to those organisations which could help them. The call for single parents to join a single-parent group has not been successful in the past and although one such group has recently been started, the Port Elizabeth study revealed that the majority of single parents in Port Elizabeth feel that such a group would be of only limited help. Whether Port Elizabeth has a large enough single-parent population to maintain such a group is unknown. A survey would have to be done to establish what response there would be from single parents for starting a single-parent group. The researcher felt that future researchers would have to reconsider past failures and pose the question, "Is the lack of support not apathy or psychologically induced?"

The potential for forming a successful single-parent organization should exist in the Port Elizabeth area, as similar types of single-parent organizations have been established in other centres in South Africa such as Johannesburg and Durban. Contact with these successful organizations could give guidance to a new group on group management and on the major needs of single parents that have been identified in other areas. The major tasks of such an organization would be:

- to aim at integrating the single parent family into society;
- to identify the lack of facilities in the local community;
- to create needed facilities; and
- to involve the single-parent family in self-help programmes in order to stimulate the active participation of all its members in the local community.

A childcare and/or recreational centre would be of major benefit to single-parent families in Port Elizabeth. The Port Elizabeth study showed the preferred need for centres located near the homes of single parents. However, centres at a local community centre or even at a single-parent group centre would be satisfactory. Facilities at a single-parent group centre could include childcare, recreational and entertainment facilities, so that the centre would be a place where single parents and their children, could meet, mix and enjoy themselves on a regular basis. It is realised that while such a centre is an ideal, the likelihood of its creation is remote because of lack of funds.

Financial security for the single parent family remains the ultimate 'bugbear' of most single parents. It is recommended that a government body should be created to look into the financial difficulties facing single parents. Taxation relief, special accommodation, less expensive medical services and free schooling are areas which could be considered in order to lessen the financial

burden of the single parent. Tax concessions (for example a lower tax rate) and special tax deductions (for example increased allowances for single-parent children) are possible ways in which the government could help the single parent financially. Special single parent tax-scales would have to be drawn up and approved by the Department of Finance. (One of the single parents said she spent R300-00 per month on crèches and day-care centres for her children to be looked after while she was at work. This money was not tax deductible and she felt that it should be for single parents.)

Another area of concern for many working single parents is the lack of employee supportive programs for single parents. Businesses should be educated towards a greater awareness of their single-parent employees. Many of the respondents in the Port Elizabeth study felt that alternative working hours or 'flexi-time' should be considered by businesses, as many single parents found that they did not spend enough time with their children. The parents felt that children too often left alone or with their peer groups could develop personality problems if there were no positive role models present in their socialization process.

(One single parent in the Port Elizabeth study was particularly upset by the lack of co-operation she had received from her daughter since the death of the father of the family. The mother believed that this lack of co-operation stemmed from her having been unable to spend time with her daughter since her husband's death.)

Being a single parent can be psychologically demanding. The demands of being the sole authoritative and/or responsible member of the family can create many personality disorders for the single parent, and the children are often the outlet for emotional problems. Stress, pressure, anxiety and the associated psychological problems make therapeutic facilities an essential part of the services needed by single-parent families. The breakdown of the intimate, primary

relationships and other indispensable functions of family life have an effect on all its members. The single parent can find that the newly formed single-parent family is an area of desperate isolation. Lack of adult communication, stimulation, intellectuality and sex, which previously played a major part in the single parent's former two-parent family life-style, may all be lacking in the new single-parent family. Re-adjusting to single-parent status is sometimes difficult and there are times when a single parent's self-esteem and attitudes towards his/her single-parent status are negative. Many female single parents in the Port Elizabeth study felt lonely and had difficulties with dating because they felt that men use women who are single parents. Furthermore, most of the women found it was very difficult to meet men, as there are few places a woman can go on her own to meet, mix and enjoy men's company. In Port Elizabeth there are few places where a single mother can go on her own, as there is a stigma attached to any single mother who goes to a public place to meet men.

Emotional and social isolation was a recurring complaint of the single-parent mothers, most of whom emphasised the lack of the availability of suitable men. Those single mothers, who had recently been divorced felt the lack particularly of available men for dating and friendship.

Social isolation and unsolved or poorly solved problems cause more emotional upset ... causing more inability to take steps that will solve the problems ... and so on.

(Hiltz, 1977 : 57).

But then, single parents have to consider the options before divorcing or separating,

So today when when someone has to choose between something he doesn't like and nothing at all, it's said that he has a Hobson's choice. People who are unhappy about their marriage also have a Hobson's choice. They must choose between a bad marriage and no marriage at all. Some people stay in the unhappy marriage, and some decide to have no marriage at all. Those who stay in the bad marriage often continue to fight and to be unhappy. Those who decide to get a divorce are usually sad and lonely at least for a time.

(Gardner, 1970 : 31-33).

Solutions to the need for single parents to share their lives with some other significant person were apparent throughout the study and worth mentioning here. The issue is well expressed by Luepnitz:

Like the single parents, loneliness was ranked very high by joint parents. Joint fathers ranked it as their number one stressor, and mothers ranked it number two. One difference in the reasons for loneliness described by joint- and single-custody parents was that many of the latter felt that the full burden of child rearing was a source of loneliness that loomed large. None of the joint parents cited that as a cause of loneliness. Instead, their accounts centered around the absence of an intimate relationship. Here is one example:

At first it was terrible. The person who knew me best was saying she didn't love me, and that meant I was completely unlovable. With time and new relationships, of course, that has improved a lot. (Joint father G, musician, daughter is eight, alternate years.)

(Luepnitz, 1982 : 140).

In the Port Elizabeth study, childrearing was another major concern of single parents. The South African courts usually award the custody of the children to the mother. In many of these cases, the mother is suddenly confronted with all the responsibilities normally shared by both parents in a two-parent family. As the proposition of joint custody was mentioned by one single parent in the study, the matter was taken into consideration by the researcher.

While joint custody is not the usual custodial order handed down by South African courts in divorce cases, the advantages (and disadvantages) of the phenomenon should be considered as it might be relevant to future recommendations for the improvement of the lives of single-parent families. Joint custody could be the answer to the difficulties of single-parent childrearing as more responsibility could be taken by both parents for the post-divorce family.

#### Joint Custody: The Answer?

The mental-health community appears to be divided into two camps on the question of joint custody. In one camp are clinicians who believe that joint custody is just an excuse for parents to stay married and to triangulate children into their love-hate dance. In the other camp are clinicians who believe that joint custody would cure a host of divorce-related ills such as defaults in child support and parental child snatching. Some even contend that if parents knew they would be bound to retain responsibility for their children, they would take more seriously the decision to have children in the first place.

Much more research is needed before we could conclude with confidence what the best custodial arrangements for children of different ages would be. Research on how joint custody works under conditions of varying parental enthusiasm will be extremely helpful. The new California law will result in many more awards of joint custody. California thus provides us with a laboratory where our hypotheses about children's best interests can be tested.

My conclusion, based on these fifty families, is that joint custody at its best is superior to single-parent custody at its best.

(Luepnitz, 1982 : 150-152).

The acceptance of this type of arrangement by the courts of law in South Africa is still a matter for discussion. The application of joint custody in two differing societies might not be viable as the 'average' divorcing family in the USA could be vastly different from its counterpart in South Africa. The special problems relating to the South African single parent family in a cross-cultural study therefore need to be researched.

Kalish and Visher (1982) suggest that the grandparents of divorced children may add to the easing of single parent family turmoil:

If divorced and remarried children will offer their children's grandparents warm relationship possibilities, even if the grandparents are parents of the former spouse, these older persons will have the opportunity to become very special people in the lives of their grandchildren and stepgrandchildren. It is difficult to love again, after being hurt, but many grandparents of divorce and remarriage have been able to build bridges rather than walls, and they find the rewards well worth the risks involved.

(Kalish and Visher, 1982 : 140).

In a research project on successful single-parent families in which twenty-five single parents volunteered to share their positive family experiences, Barry (1979) found that:

Both taped interviews and questionnaire responses indicate the great importance of supportive social contacts for all 25 volunteer single parents. Almost all listed their extended family (parents, brothers, sisters, even grandparents, uncles, aunts) as major sources of moral support and often practical help as well. Practical help given by family members included child care on a regular or emergency basis, and financial help when needed. None of the 25 parents had experienced major criticism or lack of emotional support from their families. Fourteen of the 25 listed family members as their first resource for help in an emergency.

(Barry, 1979 : 67-68).

Very few social and economic options appear to be open to single parents in Port Elizabeth, or South Africa for that matter. Should single parenthood continue to be of low priority to society, South Africa may soon have figures similar to the United States of America:

In 1979, about 1.5 million children lived with never-married mothers compared with 7.2 million children living with their divorced or separated mothers (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980 : Table H).

(Gongla, 1982 : 5).

In the realization that such ratios could soon become true for South Africa, researchers will have to make their contribution towards alleviating the social and economic problems facing single parent families.

Information on the single-parent family's adaptation to single parenthood in society should be continually collected through research in order to increase society's knowledge and understanding of single parenthood. In order for single parents to maintain stable family units within society, help should be available to them at all times. All trends in the figures and ratios of divorced, unmarried, never married and separated single parents should be monitored by researchers in order to identify the significance of these trends.

A major preventative step towards decreasing the number of single-parent families, particularly by lowering unmarried/father figures, would be to educate South African youth at an early age about the necessity for contraception once adolescent sexual maturity has been reached.

Marriage counselling for all young people intending to get married would perhaps go some way towards ensuring that marriages were entered into more knowingly. Preparation and training for future married life should be part of school educational programmes. Discussions on marriage choices for the maintenance of happy two-parent families (perhaps through the introduction of a course in family sociology in the school curriculum) could prevent the formation of a marriage 'destined' to end up in divorce or separation.

The Port Elizabeth study is a contribution to research into the single-parent family phenomenon in South Africa. It is hoped that this contribution will lead to further research which will draw conclusions upon which practical recommendations on social support for single parent families will be based. Until a broad national study on single parenthood is done, however, there will be no conclusive South African figures and findings to report. A national research report would be necessary before a national policy could be formulated to deal with the problems and needs of single parenting.

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APPENDIX A

SINGLE PARENTS IN PORT ELIZABETH

6 Driftsands Drive  
Humewood  
PORT ELIZABETH  
6001  
Tel: 25042

Dear respondent

I am currently engaged in research for a Master's degree in Sociology, through the University of Cape Town. The subject for my research is 'Single Parents: Social and Economic Problems facing single parents and their children today'.

What I am primarily looking at, is to highlight the role of the single parent in Port Elizabeth and to make the positive and negative aspects of this lifestyle more visible to the society at large. (The founding of a Single Parent Society could also be a result of this study!).

Letters of appeal for respondents were published in the Eastern Province Herald in February 1986.

All those involved in 'The Single Parent Situation', be they divorced, separated, widowed or unmarried single parents, were invited to contact me. The result has been tremendously encouraging. The number of single parents who have made contact now numbers over sixty. This is significant, for there are very few studies of this nature world-wide and not much is known about the single parent situation in South Africa.

All those who contact me are guaranteed unconditional confidentiality. Should any material be needed for inclusion in my research report, names and details will be altered to preserve the individual's anonymity and privacy. Furthermore, only I will have access to my research material.

I would appreciate your co-operation in my research in the form of filling in a questionnaire, which need not be signed. You may telephone me at 041-25042 or write to the above address.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

STUART GATLEY (MR)

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Research Project on Urban White Single Parent Families

NB All the information given in this schedule is confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of scientific analysis.

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This study investigates the world of single parent families in Port Elizabeth - particularly the social and economic circumstances - in order to highlight the many varied social and economic problems facing single parents and their children today.

Your participation in this study will remain confidential and all information given here will be discarded once the study is completed. Names and addresses only help to control whom I have visited.

Answering a questionnaire of this nature may be difficult and sometimes distressing and therefore I apologize in advance for any inconvenience.

Any results gained from this study will be put forward in the form of recommendations for the improvement of social services and facilities for single parents. Your co-operation therefore in replying is greatly appreciated and I would like to thank you for your careful and honest replies to the questions thus making the study more scientific.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED. WHERE YOU ARE UNCERTAIN, TICK THE ANSWER NEAREST TO YOUR INTENDED ANSWER OR PUT N/A FOR A NOT APPLICABLE RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION.

THANK YOU



1 FOR  
OFFICE  
USE ONLY

7 What is your highest educational qualification?

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Std 8 or lower               | 1 |   |
| Std 9 or 10                  | 2 |   |
| Diploma                      | 3 |   |
| Degree                       | 4 |   |
| Post graduate qualifications | 5 | 8 |

8 What is your present occupation? (Please give a precise description of your job e.g. I am a shorthand typist in a tyre factory.)

.....

9

9 What is your age in years?

|                    |   |    |
|--------------------|---|----|
| Less than 16 years | 1 |    |
| 16 - 25 years      | 2 |    |
| 26 - 35 years      | 3 |    |
| 36 - 45 years      | 4 |    |
| 46 - 55 years      | 5 |    |
| 56 - 65 years      | 6 |    |
| 66 years or more   | 7 | 10 |

10 What is your home language?

|                  |   |    |
|------------------|---|----|
| Mainly English   | 1 |    |
| Mainly Afrikaans | 2 |    |
| Both equally     | 3 |    |
| Other            | 4 | 11 |

1 FOR  
OFFICE  
USE ONLY

11 To which religious denomination do you belong?

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| NGK/GK/NHK            | 1 |
| Apostolic             | 2 |
| Anglican              | 3 |
| Roman Catholic        | 4 |
| Methodist             | 5 |
| Lutheran              | 6 |
| Congregational        | 7 |
| Other                 | 8 |
| No church affiliation | 9 |

12

12 What type of accommodation are you living in at present?

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| House                              | 1 |
| Semi-detached house                | 2 |
| Maisonette or townhouse            | 3 |
| Flat or a high rise block          | 4 |
| Outhouse, garage or garden flat    | 5 |
| Boardinghouse or residential hotel | 6 |
| Room(s) in a house or flat         | 7 |
| Other (specify) .....              | 8 |

13

13 Do you own this accommodation, are you renting it or is it provided free of charge?

|                         |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Privately owned         | Paid off                                       | 1 |
|                         | Still paying instalments, receiving a subsidy  | 2 |
|                         | Still paying instalments, receiving no subsidy | 3 |
| Rented                  | Privately rented                               | 4 |
|                         | Economic or state assisted                     | 5 |
| Provided free of charge | Provided by employer                           | 6 |
|                         | Provided by relatives                          | 7 |
|                         | Provided by friends                            | 8 |
|                         | Provided by other (specify) .....              | 9 |

14

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14 Since becoming a single parent, how has the standard of your accommodation changed?

|                       |          |                                |              |                           |    |
|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----|
| Improved a great deal | Improved | Remained more or less the same | Deteriorated | Deteriorated a great deal |    |
| 1                     | 2        | 3                              | 4            | 5                         | 15 |

15 With whom are you living at present? (Please state the relationship to you of everyone residing permanently in your household e.g. grandmother, boyfriend, etc.)

..... 16

16 How do you feel about this present accommodation arrangement mentioned in Question 15?

|            |       |                           |         |              |    |
|------------|-------|---------------------------|---------|--------------|----|
| Very happy | Happy | Neither happy nor unhappy | Unhappy | Very unhappy |    |
| 1          | 2     | 3                         | 4       | 5            | 17 |

17 (a) What do you like best about the arrangement mentioned in Question 15?

..... 18

17 (b) What do you like least about the arrangement mentioned in Question 15?

..... 19

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INCOME

18 Do you get regular income from the following?  
(Please mark all items.)

|  | Yes | No |    |
|--|-----|----|----|
| Salary, earnings   | 1   | 2  | 20 |
| Family, children, relatives, ex/in-laws, parents of reputed father                 | 1   | 2  | 21 |
| Social pension: old age pension, UIF, disability grant, maintenance grant, etc     | 1   | 2  | 22 |
| Insurance policy, contributory pension   | 1   | 2  | 23 |
| Contributions by reputed father of your child or ex-spouse e.g. maintenance order  | 1   | 2  | 24 |
| Boarders, lodgers  | 1   | 2  | 25 |
| Contributions by boy/girlfriend  | 1   | 2  | 26 |
| Contributions by friend/s  | 1   | 2  | 27 |
| Dividend and interest bearing investments, property rental, estate or trust income | 1   | 2  | 28 |
| Other (specify) .....  | 1   | 2  | 29 |

19 Which one of these regular sources is your major source of income?  
.....

30

20 What provision have you made for the future?  
(Mark all items.)

|   | Yes | No |    |
|---|-----|----|----|
| Investments in savings, in fixed property       | 1   | 2  | 31 |
| Life or educational insurance                   | 1   | 2  | 32 |
| Retirement annuities, pension funds, endowments | 1   | 2  | 33 |
| Medical aid                                     | 1   | 2  | 34 |
| Other (specify) .....                           | 1   | 2  | 35 |

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21 Since becoming a single parent, how has your financial position changed?

|                       |          |                                    |              |                           |    |
|-----------------------|----------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----|
| Improved a great deal | Improved | Remained the same as it was before | Deteriorated | Deteriorated a great deal |    |
| 1                     | 2        | 3                                  | 4            | 5                         | 36 |

22 What additional expenses have you encountered since becoming a single parent? (e.g. petrol, telephone, household insurance, life insurance etc.) List three of the most important new expenses.

|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| ..... | 1 | 37 |
| ..... | 2 | 38 |
| ..... | 3 | 39 |

HOUSEHOLD CHORES

23 Do you employ domestic help?

|     |              |   |    |
|-----|--------------|---|----|
|     | Full-time    | 1 |    |
| Yes | Part-time    | 2 |    |
|     | Occasionally | 3 |    |
| No  |              | 4 | 40 |

24 Do your children help around the home?

|                               |   |    |
|-------------------------------|---|----|
| N/A - e.g. children too young | 0 |    |
| Yes, of their own initiative  | 1 |    |
| Yes, they are expected to     | 2 |    |
| When asked                    | 3 |    |
| Sometimes                     | 4 |    |
| Seldom                        | 5 |    |
| Never                         | 6 | 41 |

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25 To what extent does your ex-spouse/the reputed father of your child assist in homemaking, home maintenance and repairs, financial affairs (e.g. income tax returns, financial advice, car repairs and servicing), etc?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N/A - e.g. deceased, too far away, not necessary, etc | 0 |
| Regularly, on his/her own initiative                  | 1 |
| Whenever asked  | 2 |
| Grudgingly assists when asked                         | 3 |
| Very seldom   | 4 |
| Never   | 5 |

42

26 If your ex-spouse/the reputed father cannot or does not assist in homemaking, home maintenance and repairs, financial affairs, etc, who is helping you? (Mark all items.)

|  | Yes | No |    |
|--|-----|----|----|
| No one   | 1   | 2  | 43 |
| Relatives, family members, children                | 1   | 2  | 44 |
| Professional helpers                               | 1   | 2  | 45 |
| Friends and neighbours                             | 1   | 2  | 46 |
| In-laws, ex in-laws, parents of the reputed father | 1   | 2  | 47 |
| Boy/girlfriend                                     | 1   | 2  | 48 |

EMPLOYMENT

27 Since becoming a single parent, have you had to go to work?

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| Yes | I have had to go to work for the first time  | 1 |
|     | I have had to go back to work after a long absence   | 2 |
|     | I have had to go to work but <u>not</u> for reasons directly related to my single parent situation | 3 |
| No  | I am currently looking for a job   | 4 |
|     | I have always worked   | 5 |
|     | I have not had to go to work   | 6 |

49

28 If you have had to go to work due to factors directly related to your single parent situation, please name the major reason why:

.....  
 .....

50

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29 If, since becoming a single parent, you have had to go to work either for the first time or after a long absence or you are currently looking for a job, did you, or do you need any training or retraining in order to get a job?

|     |   |     |   |    |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|

51

(Questions 30-37 should be answered only by those respondents who are currently employed.)

30 Are you self-employed or do you work for others?

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| I am self-employed | I work for others |
| 1                  | 2                 |

52

31 Where do you work?

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| From home e.g. dressmaking, real estate work |  | 1 |
| Away from home                               | In town (i.e. locally)                   | 2 |
|  | In another town e.g. Despatch, Uitenhage | 3 |
| Sometimes away from home                     | Sleep at home every night                | 4 |
| Sometimes away from home                     | Sleep at home some nights                | 5 |

53

32 (a) When do you work?

|                                    |                          |   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
|                                    | Day                      | 1 |
| Full-time                          | Night                    | 2 |
|                                    | Shifts                   | 3 |
|                                    | Partly day, partly night | 4 |
| Part-time                          | Day                      | 5 |
|                                    | Night                    | 6 |
|                                    | Shifts                   | 7 |
|                                    | Partly day, partly night | 8 |
| Irregularly, e.g. promotional work |                          | 9 |

54

(b) Would you like this arrangement (mentioned in Question 32(a)) to change?

|     |   |    |   |
|-----|---|----|---|
| Yes | 1 | No | 2 |
|-----|---|----|---|

55

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(c) Please explain your reason:
.....
.....

33 (a) Does your situation as a single parent prevent you from getting on in your job in any way? (e.g. does it interfere with your job performance, your chances of promotion, etc?)

Yes 1 No 2 57

(b) If YES, please explain the major way in which your situation prevents you from getting on in your job?
.....
.....

58

34 (a) Since becoming a single parent, have you had to make any compromises in your job?

Yes 1 No 2 59

(b) If YES, please specify by giving an example:
.....
.....

60

35 (a) Is your present employer/immediate senior sympathetic to your situation as a single parent?

N/A - e.g. employer does not know 0 Yes 1 No 2 61

(b) If you answered YES or NO, give one example of how your employer/senior shows this:
.....
.....

62

1

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36 If you have ever had to change your job because of factors directly related to your single parent situation, please explain why this occurred: (if you have never had to change your job because of factors directly related to your single parent situation, answer N/A).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

63

37 Do you feel that you have ever been discriminated against when applying for a job because you are a single parent?

|     |   |     |   |    |   |    |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|----|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 | 64 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|----|

FRIENDSHIP

38 Do you still maintain regular contact with some of the friends you had before becoming a single parent?

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| N/A - e.g. I had none, I have moved from town | 0 | 65 |
| With most                                     | 1 |    |
| With a few                                    | 2 |    |
| With none                                     | 3 |    |

39 Have you made any new friends since becoming a single parent?

|     |   |    |   |    |
|-----|---|----|---|----|
| Yes | 1 | No | 2 | 66 |
|-----|---|----|---|----|

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40 Are you dating at present?

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| Yes | Living with ex-spouse, girl/boyfriend or the reputed father | 1 |
|     | Every day   | 2 |
|     | Several times a week  | 3 |
|     | Once or twice a month                                       | 4 |
|     | Less than once or twice a month                             | 5 |
| No  | Not at present, but I have since becoming a single parent   | 6 |
|     | Never since becoming a single parent                        | 7 |

67

41 Do you have problems meeting members of the opposite sex or partners ("affairs")?

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| N/A - e.g. I haven't started looking for partners yet, etc. | Yes | No |
| 0   | 1   | 2  |

68

42 (a) Do you have problems with dating members of the opposite sex or partners ("affairs")?

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| N/A - e.g. I am not interested in dating at present; I am living with someone, etc | Yes | No |
| 0  | 1   | 2  |

69

(b) If you answered YES to Question 42 (a), please give an example of the major problem you have or have had with dating.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

70

43 (a) Do you see yourself as marrying or remarrying in the foreseeable future?

|                           |     |    |              |
|---------------------------|-----|----|--------------|
| N/A - e.g. not interested | Yes | No | I don't know |
| 0                         | 1   | 2  | 3            |

71

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(b) In what way do your children hinder or promote your chances of or your decision to marry/remarry? (Answer N/A if necessary.)

.....  
 .....

72

**SINGLE PARENT GROUP**

44 Are you currently a member of a single parent group?

|       |  |   |
|-------|--|---|
| Yes   | I am a member                            | 1 |
|       | I was a member but no longer participate | 2 |
| No    | But I intend to join                     | 3 |
|       | By choice                                | 4 |
| Never | Don't know of any single parent groups   | 5 |

73

45 To what extent would a single parent group help you?

|   | Very much | Some-what | Not at all |    |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|----|
| Socially (I would make friends with some of the members; my children would make friends with some of the members' children) | 1         | 2         | 3          | 74 |
| Recreation (a place to go/an outing/a fun occasion)   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 75 |
| Emotionally (members would give me support, I would identify with them and we could share our experiences)                  | 1         | 2         | 3          | 76 |
| Practically (home repairs, babysitting)   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 77 |
| Intellectually (I would gain greater insight into my problems, I would learn a lot from guest speakers, etc)                | 1         | 2         | 3          | 78 |

1

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SUPPORT SYSTEMS

46 To what extent have the following persons given you help and assistance in coping with your single parent situation?

|   | Very much | Some-what | Not at all |    |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|----|
| Relatives, family, your older children                  | 1         | 2         | 3          | 79 |
| Friends and neighbours                                  | 1         | 2         | 3          | 80 |
| Boy/girlfriend  | 1         | 2         | 3          | 81 |
| The ex-spouse or the reputed father                     | 1         | 2         | 3          | 82 |
| Professional people e.g. family GP, social workers, etc | 1         | 2         | 3          | 83 |
| Minister of religion                                    | 1         | 2         | 3          | 84 |
| In-laws, ex-in-laws, parents of reputed father          | 1         | 2         | 3          | 85 |

47 To what extent have the following activities helped you cope with your single parent situation?

|   | Very much | Some-what | Not at all |    |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|----|
| Faith, trust in God   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 86 |
| Making extra money, e.g. taking a second job                          | 1         | 2         | 3          | 87 |
| Meeting and making new friends, socializing and entertaining          | 1         | 2         | 3          | 88 |
| Joining clubs, taking courses   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 89 |
| Talking to a counsellor, trying to understand what went wrong         | 1         | 2         | 3          | 90 |
| Working off steam, e.g. in a gym, through playing sport, etc          | 1         | 2         | 3          | 91 |
| Moving to a new environment   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 92 |
| Allowing yourself to blow up, cry, get angry, etc                     | 1         | 2         | 3          | 93 |
| Learning new skills, e.g. how to drive, fix things etc.               | 1         | 2         | 3          | 94 |
| Doing things with the children and taking care of the home and garden | 1         | 2         | 3          | 95 |
| Other (specify) .....   | 1         | 2         | 3          | 96 |

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BIO-PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING

48 To what extent are you suffering from the following?

|                                | All the time | Most of the time | Some-times | Seldom | Never |     |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------|-------|-----|
| Feel overworked and fatigued   | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 97  |
| Feel faint or dizzy            | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 98  |
| Cry easily or feel like crying | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 99  |
| Feel easy prey socially        | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 100 |
| Feel nervous or shaky inside   | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 101 |
| Feel lonely and alone          | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 102 |
| Feel tense or keyed up         | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 103 |
| Feel fearful or afraid         | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 104 |
| Feel downhearted or depressed  | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 105 |
| Feel commercially exploited    | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 106 |
| Feel hopeless about the future | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 107 |
| Feel too tired to enjoy life   | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 108 |
| Notice my hands are trembling  | 1            | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 109 |

49 Very often people who find themselves in stressful situations feel the need to take or to do something to cope with tension. What, if anything, do you take or do (or have you taken or done) to cope with tension?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

110

50 (a) Since becoming a single parent, have you ever experienced a breakdown stage?

|     |                                  |   |   |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Yes |                                  | 1 |   |
| No  | But I have come very close to it |   | 2 |
|     | Never                            |   | 3 |

111

(b) If YES, what brought it on?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

112

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51 If you had to rank the following in order of social acceptance, with 1 standing for the most accepted and 4 standing for the least accepted, how would you do it?

|                  | Fill in rank number |     |
|------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Unmarried mother |                     | 113 |
| Widow/er         |                     | 114 |
| Divorced person  |                     | 115 |
| Separated person |                     | 116 |

52 (a) Since becoming a single parent, has your health changed in any way due to the single parent situation?

|     |                                     |   |     |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Yes | But only in the beginning           | 1 |     |
|     | Ever since becoming a single parent | 2 |     |
|     | But only now                        | 3 |     |
| No  | Never                               | 4 | 117 |

(b) If YES, please explain in what way: .....

.....

118

53 (a) Since you became a single parent, has your children's health changed in any way? (A general perspective is required.)

|                             |                                   |   |     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| N/A - for unmarried mothers |                                   | 0 |     |
| Yes                         | But only in the beginning         | 1 |     |
|                             | Ever since the situation occurred | 2 |     |
|                             | But only now                      | 3 |     |
| No                          | Never                             | 4 | 119 |

54 (b) If YES, please describe in what way.

.....

.....

.....

.....

120

RELATIONSHIP WITH EX-SPOUSE OR THE REPUTED FATHER

1 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

(This section, i.e. Questions 55-58(b) should not be answered by widows or widowers or never married single parents.)

55 How frequently do you see or speak to your ex-spouse/the reputed father?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| N/A - e.g. deceased, whereabouts unknown | 0 |
| I live with him/her                      | 1 |
| Every day                                | 2 |
| Several times a week                     | 3 |
| Once a week                              | 4 |
| A few times a month                      | 5 |
| Once a month                             | 6 |
| Less often than once a month             | 7 |
| Once or twice a year                     | 8 |
| Very irregularly or never                | 9 |

121

56 How would you describe your relationship with your ex-spouse/ the reputed father

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| N/A - e.g. deceased | 0 |
| Friendly            | 1 |
| Civil               | 2 |
| Hostile             | 3 |

122

57 Describe the most difficult problem you have or have had with your ex-spouse/the reputed father since the onset of single parenthood (if none, answer N/A).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

123

58 (a) To what extent do you feel premarital/marriage counselling could have prevented your single parent situation?

|              |                   |                |            |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| I don't know | To a large extent | To some extent | Not at all |
| 0            | 1                 | 2              | 3          |

124

(b) Please specify why: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**1** FOR  
OFFICE  
USE ONLY  
  
**125**

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**NB ALL THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THIS SCHEDULE IS CONFIDENTIAL AND  
WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OF SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS.**

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The following pages investigate the single parent child/childrens' lifestyles and the problems which they could be experiencing within the single parent family.

Names and addresses only help to control whom we have visited.

---

2 FOR  
Code No. OFFICE  
000-999 USE ONLY

PROFILE OF RESPONDENT'S DEPENDENTS

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

1-3

59 Total number of economically dependent children: .....

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

4

60 Age, sex and educational level of all economically dependent children:

| Name | Age | Sex | Educational level |
|------|-----|-----|-------------------|
| 1    |     |     | 5-7               |
| 2    |     |     | 8-10              |
| 3    |     |     | 11-13             |
| 4    |     |     | 14-16             |
| 5    |     |     | 17-19             |

61 Permanent whereabouts of each economically dependent child:

KEY

- Living with his/her custodial parent 1
- Living with his/her non-custodial parent 2
- Living with grandparents 3
- Living with relatives 4
- Living with friends of the family 5
- Placed in a children's home, place of safety, foster care, etc 6
- Lives or boards at a special school 7
- Placed in a boarding school 8
- Other (specify) ..... 9

Permanent whereabouts of each economically dependent child:

|         |  |    |
|---------|--|----|
| Child 1 |  | 20 |
| Child 2 |  | 21 |
| Child 3 |  | 22 |
| Child 4 |  | 23 |
| Child 5 |  | 24 |

62 (a) When were these arrangements, mentioned in Question 61, made?

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Before becoming a single parent | 1 |
| After becoming a single parent  | 2 |

25

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26

(b) Are you generally satisfied with these arrangements  
(mentioned in Question 61)?

|     |   |    |   |  |
|-----|---|----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | No | 2 |  |
|-----|---|----|---|--|

63 (This question should be answered only by those respondents  
who have children not living with their rightful custodian.)

To what extent does each of the following best explain why  
some of the children are not living with their custodial  
parent?

|  | To a large extent | Some-what | Not at all |    |
|--|-------------------|-----------|------------|----|
| Financial reasons  | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 27 |
| Lack of supervision and protection at home                   | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 28 |
| Work commitments of the custodial parent                     | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 29 |
| Accommodation problems                                       | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 30 |
| Child has special needs, e.g. he/she is handicapped          | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 31 |
| Parent finds it difficult to control or discipline the child | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 32 |
| Child has been legally removed                               | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 33 |
| Child or non-custodial parent requested this arrangement     | 1                 | 2         | 3          | 34 |

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

64 Who is mainly responsible for supervising the children living permanently with you? (If you have no children living with you, write N/A across the question.)

|                 | Respondent | Relatives | Friends | Child him-/herself or siblings | Childminder/Babysitter | Domestic help | Creche or day-care centre | School | Respondent and domestic (i.e. combination of any of two of these) |    |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------|---|----|
| Mornings        | 1          | 2         | 3       | 4                              | 5                      | 6             | 7                         | 8      | 9   | 35 |
| Afternoons      | 1          | 2         | 3       | 4                              | 5                      | 6             | 7                         | 8      | 9   | 36 |
| Evenings        | 1          | 2         | 3       | 4                              | 5                      | 6             | 7                         | 8      | 9   | 37 |
| Weekends        | 1          | 2         | 3       | 4                              | 5                      | 6             | 7                         | 8      | 9   | 38 |
| School holidays | 1          | 2         | 3       | 4                              | 5                      | 6             | 7                         | 8      | 9   | 39 |

65 Who supervises your children's homework? .....

40

66 (a) Are there any crèche facilities in your area and do you use them?

|   |  |                                    |   |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Yes - there are crèche facilities in my area              | Yes - I use them                           |                                    | 1 |
|   | No - I don't use any                       |                                    | 2 |
|   | No - I don't use them, but I do use others |                                    | 3 |
| No - there are none (or - I don't know of any) in my area | Yes - I use others                         | But would use those in my area     | 4 |
|   |  | And would not use those in my area | 5 |
|   | No - I don't use any                       | But would use those in my area     | 6 |
|   |  | And would not use those in my area | 7 |

41

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

(b) If you responded to answer Categories 2, 5 or 7 in Question 66(a), please explain why. (e.g. children grown up or in school.)

.....  
 .....

42

67 (a) Are there any after-school centres in your area and do you use them?

|   |  |                                    |   |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Yes - there are after-school centres in my area           | Yes - I use them                           |                                    | 1 |
|   | No - I don't use any                       |                                    | 2 |
|   | No - I don't use them, but I do use others |                                    | 3 |
| No - there are none (or - I don't know of any) in my area | Yes - I use others                         | But would use those in my area     | 4 |
|   |  | And would not use those in my area | 5 |
|   | No - I don't use any                       | But would use those in my area     | 6 |
|   |  | And would not use those in my area | 7 |

43

(b) If you responded to answer Categories 2, 5 and 7 in Questions 67(a) please explain why?

.....  
 .....

44

THE EFFECT OF THE SINGLE PARENT SITUATION ON THE CHILDREN:

68 To what extent were the children prepared for the single parent situation?

.....  
 .....

45

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

69 How do they accept the situation? (A general perspective is required.)

|                                  | A                | B   |    |    |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----|----|----|
|                                  | In the beginning | Now | A  | B  |
| N/A                              | 0                | 0   |    |    |
| Well                             | 1                | 1   |    |    |
| Merely accept it                 | 2                | 2   |    |    |
| Badly                            | 3                | 3   |    |    |
| I don't know                     | 4                | 4   |    |    |
| They do not understand it as yet | 5                | 5   | 46 | 47 |

70 Whom do the children blame for the situation? (Answer all items.)

|                              | N/A - e.g. children too young to understand | Yes | No |    |
|------------------------------|---|-----|----|----|
| Themselves                   | 0   | 1   | 2  | 48 |
| Respondent                   | 0   | 1   | 2  | 49 |
| Ex-spouse/the reputed father | 0   | 1   | 2  | 50 |
| I don't know                 | 0   | 1   | 2  | 51 |
| No one                       | 0   | 1   | 2  | 52 |
| Other (specify) .....        | 0   | 1   | 2  | 53 |

71 Have the children ever tried to reunite you and your ex-spouse/the reputed father?

|   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| N/A - e.g. ex-spouse is deceased, children too young, etc |   | 0 |    |
| Yes   | But only in the beginning                     | 1 |    |
|   | All the time                                  | 2 |    |
|   | Not in the beginning, but they are trying now | 3 |    |
| No  |   | 4 | 54 |

72 Do the children look for father/mother substitutes in your friends, relatives, etc?

|  | N/A - e.g. children too young, etc | Yes | No | I dont know |    |
|--|------------------------------------|-----|----|-------------|----|
|  | 0                                  | 1   | 2  | 3           | 55 |

73 Are there any acting father/mother substitutes for the children?

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| N/A - e.g. children too young, etc | Yes | No | I dont know |    |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|-------------|----|
| 0                                  | 1   | 2  | 3           | 56 |

74 Since becoming a single parent, have any of your children ever exhibited any, or changes in any, of the following personality, emotional or behavioural problems?

2

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| ENCIRCLE ONE OF THE APPROPRIATE NUMBERS ON THE RIGHT (unmarried mothers to respond to Number 1-4 only)<br><br><u>ANSWER ALL ITEMS</u> | Before becoming a single parent, the problem was not exhibited |  |                                  |  | Before becoming a single parent, the problem was exhibited to some extent |   |  |                                    |                                   |    |
|---|--|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|
|   | Un becoming a single parent:                                   |  |                                  |  | Un becoming a single parent:  |   |  |                                    |                                   |    |
|   | The problem started but improved soon afterwards               | The problem started and is still evident | The problem has only started now | The problem has still not been exhibited | The problem has remained the same   | The problem has deteriorated ever since | The problem initially improved but then deteriorated | The problem improved straight away | The problem is only improving now |    |
| Fights and bullies, is destructive, can't control temper and/or is aggressive   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 57 |
| Does not want to go to school, truants, and/or has difficulty adjusting to school   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 58 |
| Has difficulty going to bed at night, bedwets and/or has nightmares   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 59 |
| Takes things that belong to others and generally gets into serious mischief   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 60 |
| Disappears for several hours at a time and/or has attempted to run away   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 61 |
| Refuses to eat or overeats  | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 62 |
| Stutters, twitches, has a tic and/or engages in nailbiting or thumbsucking  | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 63 |
| Tells lies or hides the truth   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 64 |
| Suffers from fears, phobias and/or obsessions   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 65 |
| Is shy, timid, clinging, over-dependent on parents, doesn't want to play with others  | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 66 |
| Other specify .....   | 1  | 2  | 3                                | 4  | 5   | 6                                       | 7  | 8                                  | 9                                 | 67 |

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

75 Since becoming a single parent, what type of assistance have you had in dealing with your children's personality, emotional or behavioural problem/s? (e.g. family doctor, teacher has given advice, etc)

.....

68

RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILDREN

76 Do you feel you spend enough time with your children?

| N/A | Too much time | Just enough time | Too little time |
|-----|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 0   | 1             | 2                | 3               |

69

77 Do you enjoy being with your children?

| Yes | No | Sometimes |
|-----|----|-----------|
| 1   | 2  | 3         |

70

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

78 Since becoming a single parent, to what extent do you feel that the following labels could have applied to your children as a group, during crisis and non-crisis situations? Please circle one point on the scale in every row to indicate your view.

|  | To a large extent | To some extent | Somewhat | Somewhat | To some extent | To a large extent |  |    |
|--|-------------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------------|-------------------|--|----|
| Unconcerned, unsympathetic, not understanding at all | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Concerned, sympathetic, totally understanding                                | 71 |
| Cruel, mocking or insulting                          | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Respectful and kind  | 72 |
| Humiliating or belittling                            | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Supportive, praising, boosts respondent's morale, self-esteem and self-image | 73 |
| Disgracing respondent or the family                  | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Loyal and filling the respondent or family with pride                        | 74 |
| Competing with you for family leadership             | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Accepting respondent as leader, family has a sense of team spirit            | 75 |
| Rejecting  | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Loving, warm and accepting   | 76 |
| Totally unhelpful uncooperative, unreliable          | 1                 | 2              | 3        | 4        | 5              | 6                 | Helpful, co-operative, reliable  | 77 |

79 What is the most difficult parental area for you as a single parent?

.....  
 .....

78

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

80 How would you describe your childrearing style, e.g. strict relaxed, etc?

.....  
.....

79

81 What is the total number of school and/or pre-school changes that all your children have experienced since you became a single parent? (Respondents with children too young for pre- or formal schooling to answer N/A)

.....  
.....

80

82 (a) Have there been any changes in any of your children's school performance since you became a single parent?

81

|     |   |     |   |    |   |              |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 | I don't know | 3 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|

(b) If YES, please specify, .....

.....  
.....  
.....

82

83 (a) Have any of your children failed any standards since you became a single parent?

83

|     |   |     |   |    |   |              |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 | I don't know | 3 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|

(b) If YES, please specify the total number of failures for the whole family.

.....  
.....  
.....

84

84 (a) Do you ever have to miss work to look after your children when they are sick?

|                                     |   |       |   |           |   |       |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------|---|-----------|---|-------|---|
| N/A - e.g. respondent does not work | 0 | Never | 1 | Sometimes | 2 | Often | 3 |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------|---|-----------|---|-------|---|

85

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(b) Do any of your children have to miss school to do household chores, pay accounts, etc?

|     |   |     |   |    |   |  |    |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--|----|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 |  | 86 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--|----|

(c) If YES, please specify the total number of schooldays missed by the family per month:

.....

.....

87-88

85 As a single parent, do you envisage that any of your presently economically dependent children will have to forego further educational or occupational training because of the need to bring money into the home, because of the lack of funding or because of any other reason directly related to your single parent situation?

N/A 0 Yes 1 No 2 I don't know as yet 3 89

EX-SPOUSE/THE REPUTED FATHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN

(This section, i e Questions 86-92(b), should be answered by divorced and unmarried persons only.)

86 (a) To what extent does your ex-spouse/the reputed father render assistance in childrearing?

|                                      |   |    |
|--------------------------------------|---|----|
| N/A - e.g. deceased                  | 0 |    |
| Regularly, on his/her own initiative | 1 |    |
| Whenever asked                       | 2 |    |
| Grudgingly assists when asked        | 3 |    |
| Very seldom                          | 4 |    |
| Never                                | 5 | 90 |

(b) Please describe the major type of assistance your ex-spouse/the reputed father gives in childrearing? (If none, answer N/A)

.....

.....

91

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

87 Please describe the contact your children and your ex-spouse/ the reputed father have, e.g. he visits them every weekend.

.....  
.....

92

88 To what extent do your children enjoy going to your ex-spouse/ the reputed father?

.....  
.....

93

89 To what extent does your ex-spouse/the reputed father enjoy playing with your children?

.....  
.....

94

90 Do you think they spend enough time together?

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| N/A           | 0 |
| Too much time | 1 |
| Just enough   | 2 |
| Too little    | 3 |

95

91 (a) Do you experience any problem(s) after your children have returned from a visit to your ex-spouse/the reputed father?

|     |   |     |   |    |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|

96

(b) If YES, please specify the major problem experienced

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

97

92 (a) Do you think your ex-spouse/the reputed father manipulates your children?

|     |   |     |   |    |   |              |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|
| N/A | 0 | Yes | 1 | No | 2 | I don't know | 3 |
|-----|---|-----|---|----|---|--------------|---|

98

(b) If YES, please explain why:

.....  
.....

99

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

FOR SINGLE MOTHERS ONLY: (QUESTIONS 93-94)

93 What is the hardest thing about being a single mother?

.....  
.....

100

94 As a single mother, what is your major worry about your children?

.....  
.....

101

FOR SINGLE FATHERS ONLY: (QUESTIONS 95-98)

95 What is the hardest thing about being a single father?

.....  
.....

102

96 As a single father, what is your major worry about your children?

.....  
.....

103

97 (a) Are you the legal custodian of the children?

|     |   |    |   |  |
|-----|---|----|---|--|
| Yes | 1 | No | 2 |  |
|-----|---|----|---|--|

104

(b) If NOT, how soon after the divorce or separation, etc was finalised, did you take over the responsibility of your children?

.....  
.....

105

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

98 To what extent do the following explain why you have been awarded, have sought or have taken custody of your children?

|   | To a large extent | To some extent | Not at all |     |
|---|-------------------|----------------|------------|-----|
| I am a widower  | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 106 |
| I have always fulfilled the parental role   | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 107 |
| I was awarded custody by court  | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 108 |
| My ex-wife is unable to care for the children financially, physically, emotionally, etc | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 109 |
| I believe myself to be the better parent  | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 110 |
| My ex-wife cannot discipline or control the children                                    | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 111 |
| My ex-wife did not want the children  | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 112 |
| My children requested this arrangement  | 1                 | 2              | 3          | 113 |

FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS ONLY: (QUESTIONS 99-101)

99 What is the hardest thing about being an unmarried mother?

.....  
 .....

114

100 (a) To what extent do you feel your parents accept your children?

|                                 |   |     |
|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| N/A - e.g. parents are deceased | 0 |     |
| Wholeheartedly                  | 1 |     |
| Merely accept them              | 2 |     |
| Not at all                      | 3 | 115 |

(b) How do they show this?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

116

2 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

101 How does your position in society as an "UNMARRIED MOTHER" affect your daily life e.g. influence the actions and attitudes towards you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

117

FOR WIDOWED PERSONS ONLY: (QUESTIONS 102-103)

102 What is the hardest thing about being widowed?

.....  
.....

118

103 How does your position in society as a "WIDOW" or "WIDOWER" affect your daily life e.g. influence the actions and attitudes of others towards you?

.....  
.....

119

FOR DIVORCED PERSONS ONLY: (QUESTIONS 104-105)

104 What is the hardest thing about being divorced?

.....  
.....

120

105 How does your position in society as a divorced person affect your daily life e.g. influence the actions and attitudes of others towards you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

121

3 FOR  
 Code No. OFFICE  
 000-999 USE ONLY

TO BE ANSWERED BY ALL RESPONDENTS

PERCEPTION OF LIFE SATISFACTION AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

1-3

106 Taking all things into account, (your job, where you live, your way of life, etc), how would you say things are going for you and your children these days? Would you say things are:

|                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Very good            | 1 |   |
| Good                 | 2 |   |
| Neither good nor bad | 3 |   |
| Bad                  | 4 |   |
| Very bad             | 5 | 4 |

|     |  | Always | Most of the time | Some-times | Seldom | Never |    |
|-----|--|--------|------------------|------------|--------|-------|----|
| 107 | Can you manage on your income without a lot of anxiety?                                | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 5  |
| 108 | Are you able to save?  | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 6  |
| 109 | Do you feel at ease about spending   | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 7  |
| 110 | Do you feel you are managing the family's finances adequately                          | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 8  |
| 111 | Do you feel financially secure?  | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 9  |
| 112 | Do you feel you live less comfortably now than you did before becoming a single parent | 1      | 2                | 3          | 4      | 5     | 10 |

113 What do you miss most from your previous life? (If nothing, answer N/A)

.....

.....

  11

3

 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

114 **NB:** THIS QUESTION SHOULD BE ANSWERED ONLY BY THOSE RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN SINGLE PARENTS FOR MORE THAN SIX MONTHS. OPPOSITE EACH ITEM ON THE LEFT, PLEASE PUT A MARK SHOWING WHETHER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN MAJOR PROBLEMS, MINOR PROBLEMS OR NOT PROBLEMATICAL FOR YOU SINCE BECOMING A SINGLE PARENT. (Answer all items.)

| <u>Problem checklist</u>   | <u>Major problem</u> | <u>Minor problem</u> | <u>No problem</u> |    |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----|
| Finances, e.g. lack of finances, difficulty in handling finances   | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 12 |
| Employment, e.g. finding a job or conflict between your situation and your job                             | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 13 |
| Accommodation, e.g. finding accommodation or the present arrangement                                       | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 14 |
| Your children (their behaviour, having them around all the time)   | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 15 |
| Your relatives, ex-spouse, the reputed father, in-laws, etc  | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 16 |
| Personal problems, e.g. lack of recreation, lack of freedom, etc   | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 17 |
| Practical problems, e.g. home repairs, having no car   | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 18 |
| Social problems, e.g. loneliness, meeting people, dating   | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 19 |
| Interpersonal problems, e.g. attitudes of people, feeling easy prey  | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 20 |
| Lack of resources in times of crisis (always having to rely on, depend on and organize everything oneself) | 1                    | 2                    | 3                 | 21 |

115 (NB This question should be answered by all respondents.)

During the first six months of your single parenthood, what do you consider to have been your worst three problems?

- 1.....
- .....
- 2.....
- .....
- 3.....
- .....

|  |    |
|--|----|
|  | 22 |
|  | 23 |
|  | 24 |

3 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

116 What would you say is, for yourself, the nicest thing about being a single parent?

.....  
.....

25

117 What do you think is the nicest thing for your children about your being a single parent?

.....  
.....

26

THE NEED FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

118 If an organization could provide services or facilities specifically for single parents and their families, name three services or facilities that you feel should be provided. Please specify in order of priority:

- 1.....
- .....
- 2.....
- .....
- 3.....
- .....

27

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29

119 Where should the service that you consider to be the most important i.e. the one you have listed under Number 1 in Question 118, be located?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Near your home   | 1 |
| At a local school  | 2 |
| At a local church  | 3 |
| At a welfare agency  | 4 |
| At any government department   | 5 |
| At a local community centre  | 6 |
| At the Department of Health and Welfare                                | 7 |
| At a single parent group   | 8 |
| Other (specify e.g. close to work, bus terminus, shopping centre, etc) |   |
| .....  | 9 |

30

