FATHERING IN JOINT CUSTODY FAMILIES: A STUDY OF DIVORCED AND REMARRIED FATHERS

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ABSTRACT

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This research explored the fathering experience of 44 divorced and remarried fathers with legal joint custody and at least one child under the age of 16. The fathers filled out a questionnaire and were interviewed about the frequency of their participation in various child care activities, their satisfaction during their participation in these activities, and their perceived influence on their child's growth and development. Three fathering measures were derived from the questionnaire. The father's perception of the relationship with the mother (coparenting relationship) was correlated with the fathering measures to determine if the amount of interaction between coparents and the amount of support or conflict in their relationship was associated with high or low scores on the fathering measures.

Results indicate that the sample fathers have maintained an active and involved relationship with their children which did not diminish upon remarriage. They are satisfied with the time spent with their child, and feel influential in their child's growth and development.

The quality of the relationship between coparents varied from highly supportive relationships to highly conflictual and antagonistic ones. In general, the amount of support or conflict within the co-

parental relationship, and the frequency of the coparental interaction, was not associated with any of the indicators of a father's involvement with his child. Fathers were able to sustain an involvement with their children without spport from their former wives and within conflictual circumstances.

Joint custody was considered to be the context within which fathers were able to negotiate a positive relationship with their child. Most fathers were strongly in favor of using the legal supports that are part of a joint custody agreement as a means of insuring both parents' attachment to their child after divorce. Joint custody appears to be an appropriate and desirable child care alternative in more kinds of divorced families than is currently accepted or encouraged. However, far more support from the legal and social systems is needed to help fathers continue to fulfill their responsibilities and obligations as parents after separation, divorce and remarriage.

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Dedicated to my father

ELMER L. KLAVANS

who said I'd never complete college

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

This study focuses on divorced and remarried fathers with legal joint custody. The purpose of the study is to explore fathering in joint custody families in which there is at least one child under the age of sixteen.

One out of every six children experiences the divorce of his or her parents (Glick, 1979). Divorce and its concomitant decisions about child custody are part of the future for an increasing number of families, and if current trends continue, by 1990 one third of all children will spend some of their time in a "single parent" home. Previous research suggests that it is the disruption of the child's relationship with a parent that is most detrimental to the child's postdivorce adjustment, and the reciprocal loss for parents that is harmful to their postdivorce adaptation. In particular, the postdivorce father-child relationship has been singled out as needing special attention and support (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). There are several reasons for this:

1. The father-child relationship is most at risk after a divorce. A recent survey by Furstenberg (1983) investigating postdivorce father-child contact, found that marital dissolution involves "either a complete cessa-

tion of contact between the father and child or a relationship that is tantamount to a ritual form of parenthood." The primacy of the mother-child bond within this century has put the father on the defensive. He must redefine what creates his ties to his child other than biology. Time and space, which tend to remain in the background of intact family life, often become painfully prominent to the divorced father. There is a growing estrangement and gradual withdrawal of the father from the child, yet little is known about how to minimize such behavior.

2. The predivorce father-child relationship is not predictive of the father's postdivorce relationship (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). Restricted access to a child can interfere with and attenuate a father-child bond that was close and loving prior to the divorce (Ahrons, 1980). On the other hand, the same does not appear to be true for the mother-child relationship. When a father obtains physical custody, the mother's connection to her child is usually sustained (Warshak, 1981). This is predictable when one considers the stronger negative social sanctions for mothers who do not maintain contact with their children.

3. Fathers, and their contributions to the emotional life of the family, have been neglected in previous research of both intact and divorced families (Herzog and Sudia, 1973). Past research reflects the bias against the importance of the noncustodial father-child relationship by stressing "father absence" as the salient characteristic of divorced families. In fact, Safilios-Rothschild (1969) expressed concern that family sociology might be better called "wives" family sociology since until recently women provided much of the knowledge about marriage and divorce.

The sociological literature reflects a consistent bias in its assumptions concerning appropriate parenting behavior. Nurturance is defined as a female quality (Polatnick, 1973), which when present in men is considered deviant (Bell and Vogel, 1969). Psychological theory has limited the role of the father in child development to a subsidiary one compared to the overwhelming importance of the mother. The suitability of men for child care is often questioned, and their attitude towards the fathering role have for the most part rarely been reported.

In 90 percent of divorces the mother is given sole custody and the father obtains visitation rights (Weiss, 1979). Consequently, most studies of divorced families have been of parents and children with traditional mother-custody arrangements. Research focusing directly on the divorced father with joint custody is limited, the heterogeneity of father "presence" has been neglected, and little thought given to fathers' potential for child care.

Joint custody has emerged since the early 1970's as a custody form that enables fathers, in general, to assume major child care functions that were often unavailable to many divorced fathers with traditional visitation rights. Since about 1978, several studies have focused on divorced fathers who have joint custody arrangements (Greif, 1979; Luepnitz, 1981; Ahrons, 1980; Roman and Haddad, 1978; Rosenthal and Keshet, 1981). However, the samples have been small. Of Greif's 40 divorced fathers, eight had joint custody. Luepnitz's study of joint and sole-custody families contained a joint custody sample of eleven families. Ahrons has studied the largest group of joint custody families: of her 41 parents, 19 were fathers, none were remarried, and all were interviewed one year postdivorce. Data from these studies suggest that a joint custody arrangement protects and

encourages ties between fathers and their children, and as a consequence prevents overburdening mothers with too much responsibility. Yet, joint custody, although achieving some acceptability in noncontested, harmonious divorces, is still controversial, especially when conditions are not considered ideal. Rosner (1981) found in a survey of of 45 judges, attorneys, and domestic relations officers, that most felt that joint custody should not be used or only used rarely. Their opposition was based on the belief that it is an unrealistic and doomed concept, because individuals who could not get along well enough to stay married could not cooperate enough to coparent, and that a joint custody arrangement would aggravate hostility between divorced parents.

Because joint custody is a relatively new phenomenon, there are few descriptive data on the diversity of joint custody arrangements. There is also little information about the heterogeneity of fathers' involvement with their children after divorce within different types of family structures. The present study focuses on the following questions: How do divorced and remarried fathers with joint custody perceive their involvement with their child in terms of their participation in child care activities, satisfaction with their participation, and influence on their child's growth and development? What factors potentially predict variations in a father's perception of his influence, participation and enjoyment of his child care activities within this population? How does the quality of the fathers' relationship with their former wives relate to their involvement with their child? How do joint custody fathers interact with their former wives in order to make decisions about their child? What are the different kinds of coparenting styles within joint custody

arrangements?

The following sections of the introduction describe the origin of the research idea, the theoretical assumptions underlying this research, and the definition of the terms used in this study.

Origin of Research Idea

A clinical interest in divorce and parenting stimulated this study. While leading a series of workshops for divorced men and women, the author observed that the effects of divorce on family reorganization were profound. For the divorced parents in the group, a frequent concern was the changing nature of their relationship with their children. Questions often arose about the difficulty of parenting a child when the mother and father were living in separate households. Furthermore, the custodial mothers (often defined as single parents) were usually overburdened with full-time child care and a full or part-time job. The noncustodial fathers (now defined as visiting parents) were responsible for child support, angry about alimony, and complained that they had infrequent and/or too concentrated a period of time with their children. They complained that they paid for the support of their children, but received little time with them in return. Disbelief at the deterioration of the father-child relationship following the divorce, and a sense of bewilderment about how to be a father within a changed family structure were prevalent feelings. Anger and frustration with custody and visitation were expressed by both mothers and fathers, and remained troublesome after remarriage when the addition of a new family member created an even more complex family structure.

Recognition of the fact that a family is reorganized by divorce, and not "broken", would possibly have alleviated some of the distress. In most

cases, a "single-parent" family is not the result of divorce; in fact this description does an injustice to the absent parent. Two households are formed after divorce, paternal and maternal. If the family is conceived of as "single-parent", it leads to the conceptual error of excluding the absent parent (usually father) from the definition of a divorced family, and the therapeutic error of not including the absent parent in the treatment of the "single-parent family." It was important for the participants to understand that divorce only dissolved the marriage, and that the father-child relationship could, in spite of this dissolution, remain intact.

A search of the divorce literature in the mid 1970's revealed a major shortcoming of the theories that described and explained family dynamics. Most models of healthy families were based on nuclear family models. For example, Minuchin (1974) used the concept of "boundary" to describe how families functioned. A normal, healthy, well-functioning family had clear boundaries around the spouse sub-system, the sibling sub-system, between the parent and child sub-systems, and between the family and the outside world. But what are the appropriate parent-child and coparental boundaries for a family which includes two "single-parent" households?

Another dimension of healthy family functioning in the intact nuclear family is that power rests with the parents. How does the concept of power apply to families in which there are two parents and two stepparents, and children going back and forth between two households? How should family roles be negotiated when a powerful parent-child coalition predates a new husband-wife relationship? How are male and female roles defined when there are no longer two people to divide the labor along traditional male/instrumental-female/expressive axes? The primary question becomes: how can theories of individual and family functioning that have been

derived from a nuclear family model be adapted to include people who live in divorced and remarried families?

As divorced parents gradually become aware of their new family structure, they find it necessary to negotiate a new relationship with each other in order to remain active parents. Although the ex-husband and wife often deny the necessity for an ongoing relationship the need to work out satisfactory arrangements for their children compels them to stay involved with each other. Thus, the parental and spousal roles heretofore fused, not only had to be separated, but also had to be restructured. Mead (1971) commented on the lack of recognition our society has for the indissoluble bond between parents who have had children:

> Another confusion ... comes from our refusal to treat the conception and production of a child as an unbreakable tie between the parents, regardless of the state of the marriage contract. Our present divorce style often denies the tie between the child and one of the parents, and it permits the parents to deny that--through their common child--they have an irreversible, indissoluble relationship to each other.

The already difficult job of coparenting is made even more difficult because lacking norms to guide them, divorced couples are confronted with the task of trying to coparent while not appearing too friendly. Schwartz (1967) has observed that we tend to be suspicious of former spouses who are successful in working out an amicable relationship.

> We find it difficult to understand how two persons who once shared a sexual relationship can neutralize, redefine and repattern that relationship, and yet this is precisely what is essential whether divorced spouses remarry or not.

The custody and visitation schedule agreed upon by the parents, or imposed by the court, constitutes the temporal and legal constraints within which

the relationship of a father and mother to their child and to each other has to be renegotiated. Structural manipulations, which include the custody form and the child care schedule, interact with individual-psychological factors and influence postdivorce family relationships. Clinicians, often overwhelmed by complicated individual and family problems, have, by and large, ignored these realities and overlooked effective methods of intervention.

Theoretical Orientation

Gregory Bateson (1979) advised scientists to examine their presuppositions of what ideas and questions are worth pursuing, since the social context of research conditions the results of the inquiry infinitely more than the methodological detail of the analysis.

The central assumption underlying this study of divorced fathers is that divorce and remarriage are life-cycle crises that cause structural changes in the entire family system. Parent-child and ex-spousal relationships must be redefined and clarified within a changed family structure. Divorce does not obliterate either one of the parent-child relationships or the relationship between the parents. Divorce potentially enlarges the experience of fatherhood for the father. He can perform expressive functions that are usually not assumed by him in a nuclear family due to a complex interaction of economic, social and personal factors. By studying the breach of the traditional family structure, a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of fathering is gained.

The functional theory of the family, as developed by Talcott Parsons defines the patriarchal nuclear family as the norm, and assumes a static social structure with clearly delineated functions for men and women. It

is a theory much less concerned with conflict than with harmony, and cannot explain instances of the family and the individual being fundamentally at odds.

The norms that developed from a Parsonian definition of the family led to the expectation that divorce was synonymous with an irreparably damaged relationship between the husband and wife that was not compatible with any but the most minimal amount of interaction. A common phrase in the 1950's was, "There is no such thing as a friendly divorce." The mother was the obvious choice as custodian for the children because of her traditional expressive functions within the nuclear family. The father, within this model, was limited to the instrumental functions of provider and authority that he performed within the marriage. A "healthy" divorce was defined as one in which one parent was frozen out of the system, in part to enable the former spouses to terminate their relationship with each other.

Within a systems theory perspective, divorce is conceptualized as a family transition crisis that causes structural changes in the family system. Divorce is precipitated by an internal crisis of relationship in which there is a deliberate dissolution of the primary subsystem of the family (Ahrons, 1980). A series of transitions follows which marks the family's change from married to divorced status. It is a process that results in the family's redefinition of its boundaries to include two households. The family system will continue to function, but with different rules governing its interrelationships.

Ahrons (1980) has coined the term "binuclear" to refer to the two nuclei which form one family system after a divorce--a binuclear family system. A binuclear family indicates a family system with two nuclear

households that permit both parents to continue their child-rearing obligations and responsibilities after divorce. It accepts an ongoing relationship between divorced spouses as they struggle to redefine their coparenting relationship.

The divorced family is a continuing family system; remarriage and the introduction of stepparents into the postdivorce families are part of the ongoing transition of family redefinition. A conceptual redefinition of the divorced family that includes interdependence between former spouses and the children, as well as a restructuring of parental roles, is central to the current study which explors the divorced father's relationship with his child.

Definitions of Terms

The terms that are used to describe the postdivorce relationship between parents, the legal status of the parents vis a vis their children, and the physical living arrangements that are created when one family splits into two residences, are inadequate and frequently used inaccurately. To prevent confusion, definitions of major terms as they have been used throughout this study are given below.

Custody. Custody is a legal term referring to the combination of rights, privileges, and obligations accorded to a person, usually a parent, for the care and well-being of another, such as a child (Weiss, 1979). Custody of a minor embraces the sum of parental rights with respect to the rearing of the minor and connotes a keeping or guarding of the child. It includes in its meanings every element of provision for the physical, moral, and mental well-being of the minor, including immediate personal care and control.

Sole custody. Sole custody indicates that there has been a full vesting of custodial powers in one parent, to the exclusion of the other. The parent with the custodial powers is the "sole custody" parent; the parent without the custodial powers is the "non-custodial" parent.

Joint custody. Joint custody is a legal arrangement that gives both parents an equal voice in the child's upbringing, education and general welfare. Parents are legally bound to consult with each other regarding important decisions. Both have custodial rights (Roman and Haddad, 1978).

It is most important to note that joint custody is a legal arrangement that does not imply anything about the physical living arrangements of the child, or what proportion of time the child spends at each parent's house. Legal joint custody refers only to fact that both parents have equal custodial rights with regard to their child.

Physical joint custody. Physical joint custody refers to an approximately equal split of the child's time between the mother's and father's homes. It does not have a precise legal meaning. "Equal" is commonly defined to be, at its most discrepant, a one-third/two-thirds division of the time. However, there are no precise standards for physical joint custody. Consequently, physical joint custody often is considered to exist when the mother and father define themselves as having it.

Most of the confusion about the meaning of joint custody is due to the lack of definitional clarity between legal joint custody and physical joint custody. Joint custody is popularly used to mean that the child spends approximately half the time in each home, and indeed most of the parents who have legal joint custody also have physical joint custody. But the concept of legal joint custody has a more precise, broader meaning than is commonly recognized and can encompass a variety of physical living

arrangements. A major purpose of this study is to explore the meaning of legal joint custody apart from physical child care arrangements. Thus, in this study, joint custody refers only to the legal custody form and not to the physical schedule of the child, unless indicated otherwise.

Visitation. Visitation is the legal right a non-custodial parent has to see his or her child. Visitation arrangements can be "reasonable" or "specified." A reasonable visitation order might read as follows:

> IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED, THAT the care, custody and control of the minor children born of this marriage should be awarded to the Petitioner, with the Respondent having reasonable visitation with such children.

Reasonable visitation is as the courts, lawyers, or parents decide.

On the other hand, specified visitation consists of court ordered times that the non-custodial parent can see his or her child:

> IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED THAT the Respondent shall have possession of the child on the first and third weekend of each month from 6:00 P.M. Friday, January 27, 1978.

Visitation is a concept that only applies to non-custodial parents. When the parents have joint custody, the concept of visitation is no longer applicable.

Coparenting. Coparenting describes the process of child-care after separation or divorce. The "coparental relationship" is the postdivorce relationship between both parents that permits them to continue their child-rearing obligations and responsibilities (Bohannan, 1971). It can be either active, with frequent communication and consultation, or quiescent, but all divorced parents have a coparental relationship, unless one parent has truly dropped out of sight.

The language that describes the postdivorce relationship between the

parents has been limited to terms such as "ex" and "former," and lacks the capacity to indicate a present relationship. The term "coparental relationship" is the only one that describes an ongoing process, with neither negative nor positive connotations, between divorced parents.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature will begin with a description of the changing definition of fatherhood from Freud's contribution in the early 20th century to the present. Following the discussion on fatherhood, is a brief history of divorce and the determination of child custody in the United States. The legal aspects of a custody award are described, including the disagreement between proponents of an award of sole custody and the proponents of an award of joint custody after divorce.

The research on postdivorce family reorganization and on divorced fathers is reviewed as background to the conception of this study. The literature on children and divorce is also discussed since it is relevant to the concerns and tasks of divorced fathers.

Fatherhood

In psychoanalysis and psychology, Freud's contribution (1924) provided the foundation for understanding the father's role in child development and for our thinking about the family in western culture. Since his theory originates from a biological orientation, he minimized culture as a factor shaping parental responses. Viewing the father as a patriarch, authori-

tarian, and somewhat removed from his children, he assumed that fathers were not important during early infancy and early child development, and only became significant figures in the child's life as a means of resolving the Oedipus complex, which occurs about the age of four.

Other psychological theorists that were biological in orientation such as Bowlby (1969) and Spitz (1965), developed theories of attachment and bonding which virtually excluded the father. Ainsworth (1964) expanded on Bowlby's work, and continued to exclude the possibility of the child's attachment to his father. Thus, the early literature, based on almost no direct research on fathers, implies that the father was useful as a role model, but not as a primary caretaker or love-object for his children. Exaggerated importance was attached to the mother-child bond, and only peripheral significance to the father for the child's emotional development, except during the Oedipal period. Not only was the father's role in child development underemphasized, but interest in nurturing a new offspring "seemed to be based on a pathologic feminine identification and competitiveness with the mother" (Burlingham, 1973).

In the 1950's the social science disciplines began to come into their own and to look at how cultural and social forces were shaping the role of the father. Parsons (1955) developed a formulation for parenting roles based on a gender division of behavior. He conceptualized the family as a small group in which the mother performs the nurturant tasks such as feeding and responding to emotional needs in relation to child-rearing. She is the expressive leader of the group. The father, in contrast, is characterized as the instrumental leader who facilitates the child's development of morality, behavior and cognitive skills. He stresses doing rather than feeling. In this view, the fathering bond is more social than

biological and depends more on the values and expectations of the given culture than on emotional bonding between child and parent (Rosenthal and Keshet, 1981). Furthermore, Parsons believed the mother combined both instrumental and expressive roles prior to the Oedipal period. However, he suggested that once the father became salient for the child, it was important that the maternal and paternal roles be clearly defined, as an overlap might be confusing to a child.

Concurrently, also in the 1950's, family systems theorists such as Ackerman provided a psychodynamic view of the individual within the context of the family. He believed that parental behavior cannot be linked to only the individual personalities of the parents, but must be examined through the reciprocal interaction of the other family members. Family systems theory stresses the context within which certain behaviors occur and the importance of forces external to the individual.

Some researchers who studied the quality of father-child interaction (Park and O'Leary, 1976; Pederson, 1975) asserted that the father is an important attachment figure in the child's social world and that the father provides a simultaneous but significantly different experience from the mother for the child. While the mother is described as the primary caregiver who nurtures the child, the father's role as the playful parent who readily engages in rough and tumble play and joyful diversions is emphasized. Herzog (1982) has portrayed the father as a "kamekazi," someone who "stirs up" the balance of the mother-child bond. Herzog believes that this function is essential in enriching the affective life of the child.

Thus, fathers are still viewed as intrinsically different from mothers in the functions they perform within the household environment (Lewis,

Feiring, Weintraub, 1981). Even when men increase their performance of household duties, women remain the primary caregivers of young children. When men hold their children, it is usually in order to play, which tends to be more arousing and physical in nature in contrast to that of mothers, which appears relatively more intellectual and didactic (Lamb, 1981). Current research on infants and children suggests that there are few significant differences in the way children attach to fathers and to mothers (Lamb, 1976; Biller, 1976; Herzog, 1973; Lewis, 1976). For example, Kotelchuck (1976) studied the reactions of 144 infants to a "separation-protest" situation and found that the infants were just as upset when their fathers left the room as when their mothers left. Park (1972) observed that fathers on a maternity ward differed little from mothers in how much they interacted with their children. The child's tie to his or her mother is crucial, but the tie appears to be neither exclusive nor unique. Abelin, following the work of Margaret Mahler, reported on the vital role the father plays in helping the child separate from its earliest attachment to the mother. Abelin states that for many children "the father relationship seems to develop side by side with the mother relationship from earliest weeks on, and to share many of its 'symbiotic' qualities."

Biological and social theorists have begun to investigate the male "nature." Biologists are looking at hormonal differences between men and women that potentially explain variations in gender behavior (Konner, 1982; Macoby and Jacklin, 1974). Several social scientists using a biologically-based rationale have emphasized the different proclivities of men and women for parenting behaviors in relation to male aggressivity or testosterone, stressing that in contrast to women who undertake the mothering role, cultural accommodations and practices play a much greater part in pre-

paring men for parenting (Rossi, 1977).

As social scientists have become more sensitive to changing family patterns and life styles the father has, however, at least gained a central place in the world of the child. Biller (1976) states:

> The presence and availabilty of fathers to kids is critical to their knowledge of social reality, their ability to relate to male figures, to their self-concepts, their acceptance of their own sexuality, their feelings of security. Fathers are important throughout a child's development.

That "fathering" is now an acceptable topic of research is obvious from the rapidly proliferating research documenting fathers' increased influence in intact families, by the increasing number of fathers who are given sole and joint custody of their children after divorce, and by the media that espouses the joys of fatherhood (Dullea, 1982, Pogrebin, 1982).

Until the last two decades, psychologists, sociologists, and psychoanalysts consistently and dogmatically reinforced cultural myths that assumed that men were limited in their nurturant and parenting capabilities. The following brief history of divorce and child custody law in this country reflects the bias against fathers as primary care-givers.

History of Divorce

The need for laws dealing with children of divorce became necessary only when divorce became possible. Although divorce in one form or another has been around since the institution of marriage, it was not an option for the average person until the latter part of the 19th century (Scanzoni, 1979).

Prior to the sixteenth century Reformation, marriage and divorce in Europe fell under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts. Marriage

was seen as sacred and holy and was handled entirely by the church. Roman Catholic courts granted divorce for three reasons: adultery, cruelty, or heresy, and remarriage was not permitted. After the Reformation in Europe, marriage was redefined as nonsacramental, at least by some of the Protestant churches, and fell under the control of civil courts. Adultery and desertion became grounds for secular legal divorce, and remarriage was permitted but only for "innocent" or "wronged" parties. Even though divorce began to be an option for the wealthy, it was so expensive and time consuming that few people made use of it (Woolley, 1979). In England, however, marriage remained in the hands of the church. The Anglican church still refused to consider desertion as grounds for divorce and prohibited remarriage.

The contrasting social norms of Continental and English Protestantism carried over into early American divorce patterns (Cott, 1976). In America, marriage was a civil contract which could be dissolved by secular authorities for reasons of adultery, desertion or cruelty. However, in opposition to the Crown, the idea that neither ecclesiastical nor civil law should hinder the individual's well being in matters of divorce and remarriage began to find some acceptance in America in the 18th century. By the later 1700's, perhaps for the first time since the days of liberal divorce laws in ancient Rome, ordinary citizens began to consider it legitimate to exit from marriages which were unfavorable.

Incidence of Divorce

Current figures suggest that divorce has evidently become an acceptable alternative to an unhappy marriage. During the period from 1970 to 1982, the number of divorced persons in the 25-to-39-year age bracket more than

tripled from about 1.3 million to 4.8 million (Glick, 1982). Based on the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey for 1980, the likely divorce experiences of young adults during their lifetimes is that 49 percent of the ever-married men and women 25-34-years-old in 1980 will eventually end their first marriage. This level is almost twice as high as the corresponding level for those in their early fifties in 1980 (25 percent), and nearly four times that for persons in their early seventies (13 percent). Children living with one parent numbered 13.7 million in 1982, two-thirds more than in 1970. This increase in the number of children living with one parent is all the more striking in view of the 10 percent decline in the total number of all children under 18 that occurred during the 1970-82 period. Glick predicted that on the basis of current rates of marital disruption at least one third of white children and nearly three-fifths of black children would experience family disruption by age 16.

Furstenberg et al. who conducted a national survey of 1,137 families, project much higher, stating that more than a third of all children, possible over half of all children, will have experienced family disruption by their early teens. Furthermore, they predict that within five years of the divorce, four out of seven white children will have entered stepfamilies compared to one out of eight black children. Remarkably, two-fifths of the children in their sample, whose parents married after 1966, had already experienced two or more family transitions, excluding deaths. Clearly, children of recent marriages are destined to experience highly complex family careers.

History of the Determination of Child Custody

> If there were archives on the history of child custody they would contain a fulsome supply of memorabilia on discarded presuppositions, presumptions, and prejudices (Freed, 1979).

The issue of child custody is frequently the only issue in a divorce that needs to be fully litigated. Since the custody determination is the context within which the post-divorce father-child relationship will be maintained, a brief history of the development of child custody laws can help in understanding the current dilemmas.

Presumptions in favor of either parent have changed according to shifting definitions of marriage, divorce, parenthood and childhood. For many centuries in England, and until the early part of the 19th century in America, the feudal system set the standards for determining child custody (Weiss, 1979). As with all property, English common law awarded fathers the custody of the children. Although American judges never fully adopted the English doctrine that fathers' had absolute right to children's custody, most American judges agreed that the best interest of the child would be served by awarding custody to the father. The father, if fit, ordinarily had custody of his children even if he had to hire a wetnurse to care for them. Women, in those days, were also considered to need the protection of men.

During the 19th century, and coincidental with the changes in the divorce laws, men were drawn out of their families toward income producing work. Industry required that laborers work long fixed hours at locations that were often far removed from the workers' homes. And initially, it was the brawn and endurance of men that industry sought. The consequences of the wrenching apart of work and home-life cannot be overestimated. For the

father, the central activity of fatherhood, father as provider, was sited outside one's immediate household. Of course, fathers had always been involved in the provision of goods and services to their families; but before the nineteenth century such activity was embedded in a larger matrix of domestic sharing (Demos, 1982). Now, being a father meant being separated from one's children for a considerable part of each working day.

Industrialization also brought with it stricter division of labor and roles within the family than had previously existed. Furthermore, children were excluded from the production-side of the economy for economic and humanitarian reasons. As fathers became unavailable to their children, and could no longer train young children to help in the way they had helped in agricultural communities, mothers assumed increased responsibility for domestic chores, childrearing and socialization.

The law of child custody traces the same shift in parental roles and influences. By the end of the 19th century, divorce law emphasized the child's rights instead of the parent's rights. The presumption of "child's best interest" is reflected in Chief Justice Brewer's legal opinion written in 1889. Almost all of today's custody statutes are based on his opinion:

> The parent(s) right to the custody of the child will depend mainly upon the question of whether such custody will promote the welfare and interest of such child...Above all things, (this is) the paramount consideration (Wooley, 1979).

Although there was a theoretical commitment to awarding custody of the child to the parent most likely to serve his or her best interests, maternal presumption was the rule unless the mother could be proven unfit. From the Civil War through the 1960's the mother was considered second to none, especially for children of "tender years" (preschool). At first the

"tender years doctrine" applied only until children reached the age of four but gradually the age increased and in practice the mother was preferred unless there was an overriding reason why she shouldn't obtain custody. The father usually obtained reasonable or specified visitation rights.

During the 1970's enough force was gathered to repeal some of the statutes that preferred the mother. As mothers demanded equality in the job market, fathers demanded equality at home. A presumption in favor of the mother was judged unfair discrimination on account of sex. Gender was no longer an acceptable basis for deciding with which parent the child would reside. In addition, judges were, by law, expected to treat as irrelevant the issue of which parent was in the right, but in practice, marital fault was not unrelated to custody adjudication.

Joint custody used to be viewed with caution and as an exception to the traditional sole custody awards. Now the trend seeks to legislatively mandate joint custody as the "normal, if not preferred, arrangement" (Schulman; 1982).

There are several factors related to the gentle movement away from sole custody to the mother which continues to be the prevalent disposition in about 90 percent of custody cases. The first factor is the recognition that children of divorce, and "single-parent" families, are a high-risk group. For example, half of the 7.2 million female-headed families are poor according to the U.S. government standards (Ross and Sawhill, 1975). Child support payments by visiting fathers are notoriously absent or unreliable; a report from the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families (1983) found that 65 percent of fathers who live apart from their children do not provide monetary support. The nationwide report found that

in 1978, 59 percent of all mothers of minor children with absent fathers were awarded child support payments. However, only 35 percent of these mothers actually received any money (Marriage and Divorce Today; 6/27/83).

In addition, traditional male/female, husband/wife, mother/father roles are being redefined as more women work outside the home (50 percent of all women work outside the home and 72 percent of divorced and separated mothers work full or part-time; Michigan Study of Income Dynamics, 1974). Fathers' and mothers' roles have become more flexible, often resulting in a team effort to manage childcare and work responsibilities. The breakdown of a marriage may not result in as severe a role adjustment for parents as it did in the past because the more roles and responsibilities a parent is familiar with in an intact family structure, the less difficulty he or she will have as a single parent (Gasser and Taylor, 1979). Moreover, whenever a mother goes to work outside the home, pressure is usually put on the father to be a more active participant in the care of the child. Thus, an award of joint custody becomes a means of continuing a division of labor that often had begun when the parents were married.

By an award of custody, the courts have intended to give to just one parent the rights and responsibilities for a child's care and control that had previously been possessed by two parents. Divorce meant that one parent (noncustodial) relinquished authority, and one parent (custodial) gained full control of the child. The legal presumption in favor of the mother dictated that she was the custodian of choice after divorce unless she could be proven unfit. Without a presumption in favor of either parent after divorce, it is a formidable task, indeed, to decide with which parent the best interests of the child lie. Judges are exhorted to award custody to the parent who is best for the child, without specifying what criteria

are to be used to make the decision. Many lawyers feel it is an exercise in futility to try and determine which parent is more fit since there are almost no absolutely positive or negative criteria for making such a judgment. During testimony to the N.Y. State Bar Association, Paul I. Birzon stated:

> The polestar by which the judges are expected to gain the solomonic wisdom by which to guide themselves through the thickets of a custodial contest is the all-encompassing and definitionless shiboleth of 'best interest of the child' ...lacking definitional content, the use of this amorphous jelly-like standard...infects the judicial decision-making process with highly individualized prejudices, preconceptions and predilections.

A presumption of joint custody is considered one method of resolving the "definitionless" concept of "best interest of the child" by assuming that both parents, as legal custodians, are in the best interest of the child, unless proven otherwise.

Postdivorce Family Reorganization

In about 90 per cent of divorces involving children, the mother obtains sole custody and the children physically reside with her (Weiss, 1979). There are no reliable statistics on how many families have joint custody, in part because there is no category for it on the census form and in part because of a lack of definitional clarity of the term.

Furstenberg et al. (1983) conducted a nationally representative survey of 1,337 children living in 1,049 households to study the amount of contact divorced children between the ages of 11 and 16 from 1,350 families had with their "outside" parent. Fathers represented 89 percent of the outside parents (which is consistent with the estimates of 90% of women receiving custody of their children). Astonishingly, fathers were more likely not to

have had any contact at all than to have seen their children even once in the past 12 months. Only one third of the children averaged one monthly contact or more with their fathers, and just one in six (16 per cent) had maintained an average of weekly contact. Mothers had a slightly higher level of contact with their children if they were the outside parent.

From their national survey, Furstenberg et al. conclude that a divorce not only severs the marital bonds, but often permanently ruptures the parent-child relationship, especially if the child is living apart from the father. The decision of the father to curtail contact may not be entirely voluntary. Custodial mothers may actively bar fathers from seeing their children, especially if they are dissatisfied with the level of material support provided by their former husbands.

Father-child contact in their sample was heavily linked with three factors: level of child support, race (white children saw their non-custodial parents more often than did black children) and education of the father (contact is more regular among college educated parents). The age of the child and the sex of the child did not seem to be related to father-child contact. Residential propinquity was a powerful predictor of paternal contact, but it was not a guarantee. When remarriage occurred on the part of the father, the contact with the child dropped substantially. Furstenberg (1981) proposed that sociological parenthood then takes precedence over biological parenthood, and the father's ties to his biological offspring are weakened.

Furstenberg et al. (1983) found little evidence of an increase in the number of couples who are co-parenting, even though joint custody awards have become more frequent within the past five years; only three percent of

their respondents had a joint custody arrangement. However, they suggest that this may be due to the fact that their data do not extend far enough into the present, and that if a new pattern is emerging, it has appeared only very recently. In the absense of data to the contrary, the authors concluded that marital dissolution typically involves either a complete cessation of contact between the father and child or a relationship that is tantamount to a ritual form of parenthood. Ongoing analyses of the data are attempting to discover what characterizes those cases where father-child contact is more often and more regular than the norm.

Visitation rights in sole custody

Visitation is the legal right given to the noncustodial parent to see his child. It is one of the most overlooked portions of a divorce decree (Johnson, 1979). Rarely acknowledged by the courts is the fact that an award of visitation to the noncustodial parent is a limitation of the custodial parent's authority--an internal contradiction felt by the parents. A visiting parent is the custodial parent for the interval of the visit, and the custodial parent must relinquish control during this time.

Goldstein et al. in their well-known book, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, (1973), and in their more recent book, Before the Best Interests of the Child, (1980) advocate giving the custodial parent total control of the child and placing visitation at the option of the custodial parent. They contend that no parent has sole custody so long as he or she is subject to rules of visitation. If the noncustodial parent has no legally enforceable rights to visit his child, the contradictions inherent in the custodial mother/visiting father model are resolved. The radical approach of Goldstein, Freud, and Solnit is based on the belief that the

courts cannot help a child maintain a positive tie to two people "who are at cross-purposes with each other', and that "by forcing visits, courts are more likely to prevent the child from developing a reliable tie to either parent." Further, it is felt by them that children need one person in authority, and will not trust a parent whose authority can be undermined by court-ordered visits with the noncustodial parent. Such court-ordered visits shift the power to decide when to visit from the custodial to the noncustodial parent. Courts are as powerless to forge affection by visitation as they are by decreeing any form of "joint", "divided" or "split" custody. Although the maintenance of the relationship between the child and his noncustodial parent is favored under appropriate circumstances, the noncustodial parent cannot play the same significant role in the child's life as before the divorce and "visits under favorable circumstances are, at best, a poor substitute for a parent in the family" (Goldstein, Freud, Solnit, 1973).

Goldstein, Freud, and Solnit developed the concept of "psychological parent" to define the individual(s) who is able to provide the necessary stability for the child. This is usually the parent who is in day-to-day interaction with the child. If both parents qualify as the psychological parent, then a drawing of lots is the suggested solution. The loser of the lottery "has little chance to serve as a true object of love, trust, and identification, since this role is based on his being available on an uninterrupted day-to-day basis."

A similar view is expressed by Dr. Edward Beal (1980), a psychiatrist:

> The California law which makes joint custody a favored option is a mistake. It's an attempt by the law to engineer social policy;

> it's unlikely that it will work. Some people still see children as property. They show a a willingness to trade off children for other property. As a child analyst, I favor women having the children after divorce. Fathers are not as appropriate in that role.

In opposition to the views expressed by Goldstein et al. and Beal, Carol Bruch (1978) asserted that most people prefer to do as the law states. Many parents, if left to their own devices, would avoid visitation were there not a sanction to assist in enforcing the court's decision. In support of her position, Bruch, who is herself a lawyer, cited a study conducted in England and Wales in 1977. This study revealed that fewer than 50 percent of noncustodial parents were visitng their children, even though only 17 out of the 290 cases of nonvisitation were situations in which the custodial parent refused access. Bruch felt that the legal structure can facilitate the relationship between parents and children and stated that she would like to see dual parenting orders, in which both parents are ordered to visit the child at scheduled times, regardless of custody determination. The effect of ordering a parent to visit a child when that parent does not want to visit was likened by Bruch to ordering parents who live with their children to be with their children when they do not want to. The alternative to dual parenting can be a harried, overburdened custodial parent or a babysitter. "Children are joint, and no logic requires than an inevitable consequence of divorce is the replacement of two parents by one" (Bruch, 1978).

Richard and Elissa Benedek (1977) have taken the position that the non-custodial parent should be awarded visitation rights which cannot be modified by the custodial parent. The typical format whereby one parent is sole custodian tends to mitigate the maximal involvement of both parents.

The Benedeks argue strongly that non-custodial parent visitation is the right of the child, and awarding visitation might be the push a father needs to visit his children in circumstances in which he might otherwise not, as well as the sanction he needs if the mother is obstructionistic. They feel that the non-custodial parent's absense is potentially more damaging to the child than his presence, even in tense situations.

Legal aspects of joint custody

In contrast to sole custody, joint custody awards both parents an equal voice in the child's welfare with full custodial rights. In 1979, only six states had custody statutes with express joint custody provisions. By March 1982, twenty-three states had joint custody statutes. Since 1980, joint custody legislation has been introduced in almost every jurisdiction, and in ten states amendments have been introduced to strengthen existing statutes. Most states recognize joint custody as an alternative but do not regard it as the norm, and award it only under optimal conditions. A judicial presumption for joint custody is a legal inference that takes for granted that both parents receive legal custody of their child instead of one parent receiving custody. A joint custody presumption statute mandates that joint custody be given first consideration by the courts. Sole custody, therefore, can be ordered only when the "presumption" is rebutted by evidence proving that joint custody is detrimental to those interests.

The only two states with "pure" presumptions--applying to all cases, from defaults to contested cases--are Florida and Idaho. California, Michigan, Nevada, and New Hampshire have "preference" statutes which apply only when the parents have already agreed to joint custody. Although the degree of weight accorded joint custody differs under "presumption" and

"preference" statutes, the effect of these statutes is basically the same: joint custody becomes the norm and is assumed to be appropriate for all or most cases. Sole custody is relegated to an exception that is appropriate and considered only after the court decides against joint custody. New York State defeated a judicial presumption for joint custody in 1982.

Case law can be used to argue in favor of joint custody or against it. For example, in New York, Levy v. Levy (1976) awarded joint custody because "by granting the parents an equal voice in the raising of their child much of the acrimony and ill will generated by the divorce will be ameliorated." In Perotti v. Perotti (1974), Justice Fine said:

> Common sense and experience suggests that the traumatic upheavals brought about by 'broken homes' are difficult enough for young chidlren, or even older ones, to understand and accept. By contrast the concept of 'joint custody' can serve to give that measure of psychological support and uplift to each parent which would communicate itself to the children in measures of mutual love, mutual attention, and mutual training. The string of security and stability that would flow from mother to child to father, with joint custody serving as the emotional fulcrum, would but strengthen the parent-child unit in what otherwise could be a completely destroyed marital home (New York State Supreme Court; No. 355; April, 1974).

On the other hand, the judge in an Oregon case (1977), Matter of the Marriage of Pergament, argued that:

> When a family is split by dissolution of the marriage the child of necessity can be in custody of only one parent and the custodial parent is given the primary responsibility for rearing the child. Equity does not require that the custody of the child be equally divided; the welfare of the child mitigates against such approach (Oregon Court of Appeals; No. 459; February, 1977).

Two recent well-known New York cases--Braiman v. Braiman

and Dodd v. Dodd reversed previous joint custody awards. In Braiman v. Braiman, it was held that joint custody was "insupportable" where the parents were so "severely antagonistic and embittered that such an award would only enhance family chaos." Chief Judge Breitel stated:

> Children need a home base. Particularly where alternating physical custody is directed, such joint custody could, and would generally, further the insecurity and resultant pain frequently experienced by the young victims of shattered families...It is understandable, therefore, that joint custody is encouraged primarily as a voluntary alternative for relatively stable, amicable parents behaving in a more mature civilized fashion...As a court-ordered arrangement imposed upon already embattled and embittered parents, accusing one another of serious vices and wrongs, it can only enhance family chaos. (N.Y. State Court of Appeals; No 296; June, 1978).

Chief Judge Breitel concluded that although joint custody may approximate the former family relationships more closely than other arrangements, it isn't to be substituted indiscriminately for an award of sole custody to one parent.

In the Dodd case, custody was changed from joint to sole custody for the mother because:

> The parties herein have made child rearing a battleground...During a 14 month trial period they have shared in all decisions and for most of the time they have divided physical custody equally. In all areas in matters both major and minor there has been conflict.

The court said:

> Joint custody, under the proper circumstances, may be the closest it is possible to come to the shattered ideal. The courts in dealing with the difficult issues raised by child custody litigation, should consider joint custody as an option, particularly in performing their little noted but frequently exercised role as mediator before trial.

> However, when one parent resists joint custody and refuses to be persuaded that it is workable, what will be the result for the children when it is ordered by the court? There appear to be no social science studies that will answer this question. The most ardent professional proponents of joint custody assume cooperation between parents and agreement about child rearing practices as basic requirements for joint custody. It is hardly surprising that joint custody is arrived at by consent (New York Supreme Court; No. 403; 1978).

What is not known in the Dodd case is whether an alternate living arrangement for the children, or more definitive legal guidelines established at the hearing would have enabled joint custody to work. During the "trial and error" period, there were no means of dealing with the errors, and no method of ascertaining whether awarding sole custody to one of the parents would have reduced the conflict.

The desirability of various custody alternatives for the child have been vigorously debated by the mental health and legal professions. Expert authorities in both fields argue for a presumption of sole custody to one parent with no enforceable visitation rights to the other (Goldstein, Freud, Solnit, 1973; 1980), for sole custody to one parent with specified visitation rights to the other (Bruch, 1978); or for a presumption of joint custody to both parents (Roman and Haddad, 1978). Undoubtedly, the potential positive and negative consequences of joint custody arrangements under a variety of circumstances need further exploration.

Fathers and Divorce

It is difficult to obtain literature pertaining to the relationship between a divorced father and his children, based on data obtained directly from the father, because there is very little of it. The earliest studies

of divorce were on single-parent families as deviants from the "normal" two parent home. Research emphasized the effects of divorce on the child or on the mother-child unit, and the father's adjustment went almost unnoticed. The emphasis was usually on dysfunctional outcomes, and strengths and coping capacities were generally not part of the outcome measures.

During the early to mid '70's, researchers began to study divorced families, and divorced fathers directly, asserting that the parents' adjustment could have profound effects on the subsequent adjustment of their children. The most prevalent concern of divorced fathers was the loss of their children (Rosenthal and Keshet, 1981; Dominic and Schlesinger, 1980); a finding substantiating the importance of the child to the father. Messinger et. al. (1979) sensitively described the transition that took place for the father after divorce, when he became aware both of the loss of casual, informal interaction with family members within a protected boundary, and of how much the nature of his relationship with his children depended upon the availability of this physical time-space setting.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) in their five year follow- up study of divorced families discovered that the frequency of the father's visits was not related to his feelings about his children. At the 18 month post-separation follow-up, half of the father-child relationships were significantly changed from their dominant cast during the marriage: 25 percent were closer and 25 percent had unexpectedly and strikingly deteriorated. These findings led them to the conclusion that there are serious limitations to using the predivorce father-child relationship as a reliable predictor of the postdivorce relationship. Often depression prevented caring and loving fathers from establishing a continuing relationship with

their children. The practical problems for visiting fathers, constraints of time and space, a bewildering sense of what to do and where to go with children of different ages, and the lack of boundaries about the extent of his authority, proved unsurmountable. Children who were visited infrequently were likely to suffer most, yet tragically fathers often did not understand how their lack of contact affected their children. The children could not appreciate that visits could evoke painful memories of the marriage and its disruption for the father, and interpreted a father's inconsistent visits as evidence of his lack of love or interest.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) advise that the father-child relationship should become a target for preventive intervention by mental health professionals because of the evidence that children who were visited infrequently were likely to suffer severely diminished self-esteem, and were often unable to assimilate the loss and intense hurt of the rejection during the five year follow-up period, and because fathers need to learn the complex maneuvers that will facilitate the creation and maintainance of close and affectionate bonds with their children.

Friedman (1980), a psychiatrist, discusses the potentially positive effects of divorce on the father-child relationship, and the opportunity divorce provides for increased nurturing experiences for the father. He suggests that although fathers now share more child care functions than they did in the 1950's and 1960's, there is often no necessity for them to exercise their full potential in the intact family. The challenge for divorced fathers revolves around an issue of sexual role identity. When there is a flexible sexual identity, a divorced father may discover that his nurturing capacities are greater than he had anticipated, and that his

sense of loss and alienation have been lessened. Even when the mother is hostile to the father, his involvement with the child prevents him from becoming a shadowy figure. He is able to achieve a kind of indestructibility as an object, which can only be beneficial for the child. In order for fathers to recognize and feel comfortable with their so-called maternal or feminine side, it is essential that there be periods of time adequate for the child and the father to achieve a true attachment to each other.

Fathers and Custody Arrangements

Rarely is there concern expressed in the psychiatric literature on divorce about what custody and visitation arrangements are beneficial for the father, nor is the father's well-being generally linked with the ultimate well-being of his children, or former wife for that matter. Since the life of the divorcing father so often involves a struggle to maintain contact with his child, it is important to be aware of how various child custody arrangements, visitation awards, and agreements can affect a father's ability to maintain a viable relationship with his child.

The legal custody arrangement and visitation schedule have emerged from some recent studies as structural variables that can significantly influence the task of family reorganization after divorce and remarriage. According to many experts, joint custody more than any other disposition is likely to prevent the profound sense of loss suffered by children whose parents divorce (Benedek, 1979; Abarbanel, 1979; Nehls and Morgenbesser, 1980), as well as the sense of loss experienced by fathers who divorce (Greif, 1979; Rosenthal and Keshet, 1981). The Benedeks (1979) advise that the typical format whereby one parent is sole custodian tends to mitigate the maximal involvement of both parents although there is the risk that

shared decision making may do nothing but expose the child to unnecessary confusion and trauma.

Nehls and Morgenbesser (1980) conclude from their research that with joint custody, children are more likely to receive the message that both parents love them, and neither has abandoned them, but Foster and Freed (1979), experts in family law, state that "agitation for joint custody really involves one upmanship since meaningful association with both parents is common under the traditional sole custody subject to visitation formula." Bruch (1978) advocates dual parenting orders that enforce the noncustodial parent's responsibility rather than joint custody.

Two studies of fathers with different custody forms provide additional data. Greif (1979) was interested in the father's perception of the amount of influence he had on his child after divorce (in ten areas of fathering). She examined "child absence" and its impact on a father's capacity to parent. Eighty percent of her sample of 40 fathers did not have custody and the other twenty percent had joint custody. Greif found that the father's perception of his degree of influence is most dependent on the nature of the postdivorce child-care arrangement. Noncustodial fathers experienced the most child absence and felt the most estranged from their children, while fathers with joint custody did not feel as isolated from their children, and in fact often described more closeness than before the divorce. In a self-reinforcing fashion, the greater the father's involvement with his child, the greater was his satisfaction as a father. Similarly, the more "child absence," the greater the danger of the father's withdrawal from the child, leading to "role loss." All of the joint custody fathers in Greif's study had high satisfaction scores. In addition, because of the equal power distribution in joint custody, the

children tended to be used less often for bargaining purposes than in sole custody arrangements. Greif concluded that joint custody is crucial to the positive postdivorce adjustment of fathers, and ultimately of their children.

Rosenthal and Keshet (1981) also studied divorced fathers. Their sample of 127 Boston fathers were divided into four groups: 1) full-custody or full-time fathers (49); 2) half-time or joint custodial fathers (29); 3) quarter-time noncustodial fathers who spent between 7-17 days a month with their children (21); 4) noncustodial fathers who saw their children once a week at the most (28). The happiest group consisted of joint custodial half-time fathers. These fathers also tended to have low levels of conflict with their ex-wives, which probably preceded their joint custody arrangement. Significantly, although hour for hour the "half-time joint custody father" may spend no more time with his child than the "noncustodial quarter-time father," he was more secure in his role because his child care arrangements were legal and not informal. Actually, the name "quarter-time father" is a misnomer because many of the fathers in that category spent as much time with their child as the "half-time father," and the category actually referred more to their legal status than to the amount of time spent with their child. Nevertheless, "half-time fathers" had more relaxed relationships with their children, without the problems caused by frenetic trips to the zoo and circus, and tended to speak of parental rights, not privileges.

Ahrons (1980) studied 41 divorced parents who have court awarded joint custody. She distinguished between the legal custody arrangement of the children and their physical living arrangement. The joint custody parents

were divided into the following three groups:

1. Alternating physical custody (eight parents): each parent had specified physical custody for specified periods of time.

2. Split or divided custody (two parents): two or more children were split between the parents.

3. Sole physical custody (31 parents): either the mother or the father had physical custody. The parent with physical custody is referred to as the residential parent (n=14) and the parent without physical custody is referred to as the nonresidential parent (n=17).

Joint custody had been chosen by the majority of the respondents, and in none of the cases were the courts involved in resolution of custody disputes. Eighty-four percent of the parents in her study reported to be satisfied with their arrangement because they felt that it was better for the child, and that each parent had more flexibility. About a third of the nonresidential joint custody parents felt they were "visitors" in the lives of their children and over half of the nonresidential parents reported dissatisfaction with their degree of involvement; they wanted more time with their children.

Abarbanel (1979) studied four families using an in-depth case study approach, and in all of the families she studied the children lived half-time in each home, and neither parent was considered a visitor. None of the children experienced the severe loss of one parent common to children in sole custody arrangements, and the parents were able to provide the necessary support and stability despite discrepant life-styles in two of the homes. Abarbanel's four families fulfilled almost ideal conditions for joint custody: both parents were committed to the arrangement, there was a flexible sharing of responsibility, geographic proximity, and support for

each other as parents.

Roman and Haddad (1978) write about custody from the father's view and assert in their book, The Disposable Parent, that joint custody should be a presumption in all divorces. They found that many of the problems that result from a divorce are due to the fact that children and their fathers become, in effect, divorced from each other. Their case histories demonstrate that, despite preconceptions to the contrary, the existence of two separate homes for the child does not appear to be unsettling. Physical inconvenience is secondary to the emotional stability that is created for a child who knows that both parents care about him and want him. The second class status of a visiting parent suggests that he is indeed disposable.

Atkin and Rubin (1976) unwittingly confirm the father's disposability when, in their advice to divorced fathers, they state:

> Children need a base that is home. Some fathers want their children who live with their mother to feel that Dad's house is also the child's home, i.e. that they should have two homes. This insistence that the children should believe they have two homes only emphasizes that they live in a divided world. Your home can be a place where they feel comfortable, accepted, loved--in short, where they feel at home. But their home is at their mothers.

Thus, the research on divorced fathers with joint custody arrangements is limited, by and large, to small samples of fathers who usually have their child half time and who have congenial relationships with the former wives. There is no research on how joint custody works for fathers under conditions of varying parental enthusiasm, and under a variety of arrangements.

Children and Divorce

A major focus of the divorce research has been on the children of divorce. The first "benchmark" studies are those of Kelly and Wallerstein (1975, 1976, 1977) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1974, 1975, 1976, 1977). They have been conducting a longitudinal study since the early 1970's of 131 children of divorce from 60 families in Marin County, California which is a white, affluent community with a high divorce rate. The children studied were "normal" with no previous psychiatric history and in all but one family the mothers had custody. The primary method of data collection was by in-depth interviews. From five years' worth of data, they have found that children who do best in adjusting to the postdivorce situation are those who have continued access to both parents, and that "the father-child relationship can be a determining aspect of the child's eventual capacity to cope with the parent's divorce" (1980). Many of the children in their study expressed an intense wish for greater contact with their fathers and, interestingly, both children who were visited infrequently and those who were visited frequently complained regarding the insufficiency of the visits. Grieving for the father and a preoccupation with reconciliation fantasies were related to a denial of the divorce. In most cases, the visitation pattern was fixed by 18 months after the divorce. Each child in the group who was well-adjusted and content with life had two loving, caring parents who remained very involved in their child's life. Central to the unhappiness of the children who were not as well-adjusted was often the fact that one parent, usually the father, had dropped out of their lives.

Wallerstein's most recent data (1983) on the psychological tasks of

the child after divorce suggest that the single most difficult task imposed by the divorce is that of absorbing loss, particularly the partial or total loss of one parent. The resolution of this task is greatly facilitated by the establishment of a reliable visiting pattern which "can enable father and child to restore a sense of psychic wholeness and rightness in their respective new roles of part-time parent and part-time child."

She states further:

> *It is reasonable that only if the loss of the* full-time presence of the departed parent is accepted by both parent and child does the visiting relationship and its potential become fully realizable...
>
> This task is, of course, most easily accomplished when the loss of the relationship with the father (or the mother) is partial, and the outside parent and child are able to establish and maintain a loving relationship within an ongoing, reliable visiting pattern or under conditions of a good joint-custody plan.

Another group of studies on children and divorce are those by Heatherington, Cox, and Cox (1976; 1978; 1979). In contrast to Kelly and Wallerstein's clinical approach, Heatherington et al. employed a quasi-experimental design. Their sample consisted of 48 middle-class divorced families with a preschool child, and a matched sample of 48 intact families with a preschool child. In all of the divorced families the mother had custody. Of particular relevance to *this study is the finding that the* fathers felt shut out of their children's lives. Fully one-third of fathers who had originally been highly involved parents, coped with the pain of seeing their children intermittently by seeing them less frequently during the two-year study. Despite, or because of, their sense of loss, they became increasingly less available to their children. Over the course of the two year period, 19 of the divorced fathers were seeing their

children once a week or more, 14 fathers saw them every two weeks, seven every three weeks, and eight once a month or less. Fathers who saw their children infrequently were less nurturant, more detached, and less affectionate than fathers who saw their children more often. Except where there was conflict and ill-will between the parents, or a psychological disturbance in the father, the frequency of the father's contact was associated with better functioning by the child and by the mother. When support and agreement occurred, disruption in family functioning was less extreme, and restabilization occurred earlier.

Hess and Camara (1979) compared the behavior of children in divorce and intact families, noting that the psychological structure of the family after divorce has not been examined apart from the event of the divorce a the absence of one parent. Their hypothesis was that the marital status of the parents and the quality of the relationship between them is less significant to the child than the relationship between the child and each parent. Child behavior in intact and divorced families was compared by an analysis of the association between family process variables and child outcome variables. The family process variables they examined were: the affective relationships between the father and the mother; the affective relationship between the child and each parent separately; and for divorced families, the amount of contact between the child and his or her non-custodial parent (i.e., the father). The outcome variables included the child's school functioning, social relationships, and aggression.

Contrary to their expectation, the level of parental harmony was not the most powerful factor in predicting the effects of divorce on children. For both divorced and intact groups alike, the relationship between the

child and each parent was a more important influence on child behavior than was marital status. The impact of the divorce on the children was mediated by the psychological structure of the family after divorce. The affective relationships that were maintained after divorce between the child and his or her parents were more important for the child's adjustment than was parental harmony. The critical factor seemed to be the quality of the relationship between the child and each of his or her parents, not the quality of the relationship between the parents.

Hess and Camara then tested to discover if a child with a close relationship with only one parent would do as well as the child with a close relationship with two parents. The children from the divorced families in their study were divided into three groups: those with positive relationships with both parents; those with negative relationships with both parents, and those with one positive and one negative relationship. The children who maintained positive relationships with both parents had lower scores on measures of stress and aggression than those with positive relationships with only one parent. As part of this research the quality of father-child interaction was evaluated. Since the mothers had sole custody in this sample, the frequency of the child's contact with the mother was not evaluated. Interestingly, the frequency of contact with the father was not as highly related to a positive outcome for the child as the duration of his visits with the child.

A unique approach to the study of children of divorce was an investigation by Luepnitz (1982) comparing child adjustment in maternal, paternal, and joint custody families. However, not only did she measure child adjustment, but she assesses the home atmosphere and the parents' adjustment to the divorce, and the level of ex-spouse conflict. She found

that the children's psychological adjustment did not differ according to custody type. That is--the self-concepts of children in maternal, paternal, and joint custody families were not significantly different from each other. However, children's self-concept scores were significantly lower in families that had sustained high conflict after divorce--regardless of custody type. But, there were no differences in the levels of ex-spouse conflict by custody type--joint custody parents did not report more conflict than the single-custody parents.

Conclusions and Study Questions

The divorcing father is the family member least considered in the psychiatric and social science literature on divorce, paralleling to some extent the generally short shrift given to fathers in the child development literature. For many fathers, marital separation creates a child-centered crisis in which the threat of losing or curtailing the relationship with their children is the source of severe anxiety and depression. Yet, the interdependent and reciprocal nature of the needs of fathers and their children during the task of family reorganization after divorce has generally not been recognized by mental health professionals. The difficulties inherent in mastering the exquisitely complex maneuvers of post-divorce fathering have been insufficiently appreciated, and the legal system has often further encumbered a relationship that under the best of circumstances needs encouragement.

Compensation for past neglect of fathers in the research literature has begun. Studies of families after divorce have found that for the majority of divorced fathers, the father's contact with the child diminishes after he moves out of the home. Among the factors associated with his continued

presence are a supportive relationship with his former wife, and legal joint custody of his child. Yet a gap remains in the literature about the experiences of joint custody fathers with both voluntary and involuntary child care arrangements. Weiss (1979) makes a plea for more research stating that:

> We do not know nearly enough about the implications for children and their parents of different approaches to the management of custody and visitation...it would be most useful if custody decisions could be informed by empirical findings on the consequences of various arrangements.

The major questions guiding the design of this study are based on the findings from earlier studies. The first question this study addresses is how fathers with joint custody perceive their involvement with their child, as defined by the amount of participation in child care, satisfaction during child care, and perceived influence on the child's development. The second question is whether the quality of the coparenting relationship is associated with fathers' participation, satisfaction, and influence. Does a highly conflictual, non-supportive relationship with the mother interfere with a father's ability to remain an active part of his child's life? Does a hostile coparental relationship attenuate a father's involvement with his child as Ahrons found in her research? What are the strengths and limitations of joint custody within various kinds of childcare and living arrangements? These questions were developed to generate empirical data that would help clarify the normative processes of fathering after divorce and provide guidelines for alternative approaches to joint custody fathering in divorced and remarried family structures.

CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN AND METHOD

Design of the Study

This exploratory study, about the multiple dimensions of fathering after divorce and remarriage, was designed to elicit descriptive data which would be used to explore the major questions of this research and generate hypotheses for further study. The state of knowledge is such that we are still working to identify and define the important variables that need to be considered before a more sophisticated study can be undertaken, for example a study that would compare fathering behavior within different custody forms.

Two approaches--a written questionnaire and an in-depth semi-structured interview--were selected to study this topic, because each technique of gathering data has its limitations. The primary method was an extensive self-report questionnaire given to the fathers that was designed to measure the frequency of multiple parent-child activities concurrently with the father's affectual experience in relation to undertaking these activities. A broad spectrum of factors with potential relevance was included.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was organized into the following sections:

A. Demographic data on the father and mother

B. History of the custody decision--the evolution of the joint custody decision, whether it was contested, and the father's current custody preference

C. Visitation schedule and living arrangements--detailed descriptive information about the visitation schedule of the children, and the father's satisfaction with the schedule

D. Fathering--fathering was operationalized to include the following behavioral and affective components: frequency of participation in child care activities, satisfaction during participation, and perceived influence on the child's development.

E. Coparental relationship--the relationship between the child's mother and father was operationalized to include the frequency and content of the interactions; the amount of support, conflict, and trust within the relationship; and the father's attitude towards his ex-wife.

F. Remarriage relationships (for remarried fathers only)-- the changes in the father's relationship with his child and ex-wife after remarriage.

The intent of the questionnaire was to measure various aspects of fathering that could be used to examine the heterogeneity of postdivorce father involvement according to salient aspects of the coparental relationship as well as other demographic characteristics of the father.

Interview. The secondary method of data collection was an in-depth personal interview of the father, which was audiotaped (See Appendix B). The purpose of this interview was to obtain a deeper understanding of the father's perception of his experience as reported in the questionnaire. The questions were organized to be parallel to those in the questionnaire, except that before beginning each interview a genogram of each

father's current family was obtained to assist in the discussion. The interview had items very similar to the questionnaire to allow the fathers to amplify and clarify their responses on the questionnaire.

Although the interview was not necessary to obtain the data about fathering behavior, and the process of contacting and visiting each father added additional time to the data collection period, it was felt that an interview would enrich the study in two ways. First, it added validity to the father's questionnaire responses by substantiating the results of the questionnaire through the researcher's opportunity to question responses that were contradictory or unclear. Second, by probing in more detail and depth the same areas covered in the questionnaire, the personal experiences of each father could inform and enrich the quantitative analysis and help clarify the relationships that emerged. For the remarried fathers especially, there was more opportunity in the interview to describe, in all its complexity, their new family structure. For the four fathers who had new children from the remarriage, the interview was the only time information was elicited about this topic. Thus, the purpose of the interview was to gain an increased understanding of the father's perception of his experience and to evaluate the validity of the quantitative responses. These two methods of data collection reflect the philosophy of this study, in which fathering is measured from several different angles, each view contributing to a more complete picture of the phenomenon.

Pilot tests. In order to refine the questionnaire and interview, five pilot interviews were conducted. During each interview a questionnaire about joint custody and parenting was given to a father to fill out

and his reactions to the questions were obtained both written and orally. An open-ended discussion that covered a broad range of subjects relating to divorce and remarriage was part of each pilot interview and provided additional information about issues relevant to divorced fathers.

Measurement of the Dependent Variable: Fathering

"Fathering" is a complex experience that, for conceptual purposes was defined as consisting of behavioral, affective, and influential components. The three scales that measure fathering (or father involvement) are:

1. Frequency of participation in child care activities
2. Satisfaction and enjoyment during participation in child care
3. Influence on child's development

Participation. The behavioral dimension refers to the frequency of the father's participation in child care activities that are part of a parent's role; it is concerned with how often an activity is performed. No attempt was made to assess actual time spent in each activity; it would be meaningless given the diverse child care schedules this group of fathers has. This behavioral dimension is referred to as "participation".

Fathers' frequency of participation was measured by a 23 item scale representing a range of parental responsibilities from daily responsibilities to less frequent responsibilities. Fathers were asked "Thinking about the past six months, when your child is with you, how frequently do you participate in the child care activities listed below?" The fathers selected their responses to each item from a five-point continuum ranging

from very often (five) to never (one).

Satisfaction. The affective dimension of fathering relates to the amount of satisfaction/dissatisfaction that is experienced during participation in each child care activity. This variable is referred to as "satisfaction." It was felt that the study of the fathering experience would be enriched by exploring the father's feelings when they are actually doing child care tasks. Behavioral and affective components of father involvement appeared, on the basis of the pre-test interviews, to exist independently of one another. It is possible to do something fairly frequently and be dissatisfied with the experience (e.g. discipline) or to do something infrequently but be pleased with the performance (e.g. attend school conferences).

Fathers' satisfaction and enjoyment during child care was measured by the same 23 items in the frequency scale. Respondents were asked, "Thinking about the past six months, how much do you enjoy (take satisfaction in) the child care activities listed below?" Fathers selected their responses to each item from a five-point continuum ranging from very dissatisfied (one) to very satisfied (five). In both the satisfaction and participation scales, a response of "not applicable" was also possible.

Influence. In addition, a measure of perceived direct and indirect effect of the father's influence on the child was included since quantity of direct contact does not necessarily address the potential authority of the father. This variable is called "influence." The amount of time fathers spend with children is not necessarily linearly related to the amount of influence they have. Even though fathers may spend relatively little time with their child they may still have a significant impact on

the child's development (Lamb, 1975). Important influences do not have to be direct (Lewis, Feiring, Weintraub, 1983). Even when a father interacts rarely with his child and has little direct influence on him or her, he may still exert a significant influence indirectly.

Influence on child development was measured by a ten-item scale representing significant areas of child development. Fathers were asked, "Thinking about the past six months, how much influence have you had in the following areas of your child's life?" The ten areas were: routine daily care, intellectual development, physical development, recreational activities, emotional development, teaching your child how to behave, religious development, social development, moral development, and giving your child a feeling of being part of a family. Responses were selected from a five-point continuum ranging from very low (one) to very high (five).

Thus, the concept of influence takes into account the potential for direct as well as indirect control over a child's growth and development, which is particularly important with this population. Six months was the time frame used for all of the fathering measures to allow for a response based upon an average amount of participation, satisfaction, or influence, depending on the father's childcare schedule and other intervening factors.

For all of the items that pertained to the father's involvement with his child, he was asked to respond only for his youngest child. Since about half of the fathers had more than one child in joint custody, and involvement differs from one child to another, it was felt that the responses would be more valid if they pertained to a specific child. The

youngest child was selected since the younger the child, the more involved the father is likely to be in his or her care. Also, the child care arrangements are potentially more problematic since the younger the child, the less he or she is able to go back and forth between homes independently.

Development of Fathering Measures

The participation and satisfaction scales were adapted from a ten item father-involvement scale used by Constance R. Ahrons (1979) in her research on divorced couples. Although her scale was used as a basis for the development of the scales used in this study, several modifications were made after the pilot interviews which suggested that by dividing the concept of "father involvement" into two components--a behavioral and affective one--a more refined measure of fathering could be obtained.

After redefining the concept of involvement, items were added to the scale based upon the suggestions of fathers during the pretest interviews. During the pilot test fathers were asked, "Are there any other activities that you perform?" From their responses, additional items were added to the scale. Because there is a wide range of children's ages, not all items are applicable to all fathers.

The influence scale was developed by Judith Greif for her research on divorced fathers (1979). Her scale was included in this study for two reasons. First, influence appeared to tap a different dimension of the fathering experience from participation and satisfaction. Influence would be possible from a distance; i.e., even when fathers were not with their child, they could influence their development. Second, the scale had been successfully used in Greif's study to measure fathers' percep-

tion of their influence after divorce. The alpha coefficient on the influence scale was .91 in her study, indicating high internal consistency.

Reliability analysis for participation, satisfaction and influence measures. The internal consistency of the scales used to measure fathering was obtained using Cronbach's alpha. This computes the average intercorrelations among a set of items. The computation was based on a "pair-wise matrix" which means that each case contributed all available data to the correlation matrix. This method of computation, compared to the list-wise matrix used for the independent variables, was chosen as a means of dealing with the missing data in the participation and satisfaction scales. The missing data are due to the fact that there was provision for a "not applicable" response since some of the items in the scale were irrelevant to children of certain ages. Because there are 23 items in the participation and satisfaction scales, it was felt that the reliability would not be compromised by this method. The reliability coefficients for the participation and satisfaction scales were each .85, and for the influence scale .89. Thus, all of the scales had good internal consistency.

Measurement of Independent Variables

Seven independent variables were included in the questionnaire to measure the coparental relationship between the mother and father. Two of the variables, "parenting" and "nonparenting", measured the frequency of interactions between the mother and father according to the purpose and content of the interaction. Three variables, "conflict", "support", and "trust" tapped the father's perception of the quality of the rela-

tionship between him and his former wife, and two variables, "attitude towards former wife" and "attitude towards former wife as a mother", measured the father's attitude towards his former wife as a person and as a mother. The time frame for all the independent variables was the past six months.

The parenting dimension of the coparental relationship consisted of ten items that described interactions between the parents that focused directly on child-rearing obligations and responsibilities, such as discussing school problems and talking about your child's accomplishments. Fathers were asked, "How often have the following parenting responsibilities been shared between you and your former wife within the past six months?" They selected a response to each item from a five point continuum ranging from never (one) to very often (five).

The nonparenting component of the coparenting relationship was measured by a 15 item scale constructed to assess the frequency of interaction in areas not concerned with child-rearing, such as talking about old friends and talking about your work. Fathers were asked how often they have related to their former wife in ways that do not involve parenting within the past six months.

Respondents selected the frequency category which described their interactions on a continuum ranging from never (one) to very often (five). If the purpose of the contact was to discuss child-related issues, then it was considered a component of the parenting scale; if the purpose was other than child-related, it was part of the non-parenting scale. By distinguishing between child-related and non-child-related contact, a more precise picture of what these divorced parents talked about and did together was obtained.

The conflict scale consisted of six items that measured the intensity of interparental conflict. For example, "When you and your former wife discuss parenting issues, how often does an argument result?" Fathers responded on a five point continuum from never (one) to very often (five). A low score equals low conflict (for the data analysis the scoring was reversed and a low score equals high conflict).

The support scale was composed of eight items that assess mutual parental support. For example, "If your former wife needs to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate?" Fathers responded on a five point scale ranging from never (one) to very often (five). A high score indicates high support.

The trust scale contained eight statements which expressed a range of feelings about a father's former wife; for example, "I feel that my former wife does not show me enough consideration," and "I feel that my former wife can be counted on to help me." Fathers were asked to agree or disagree with the statements on a scale from strongly agree (one) to strongly disagree (seven). Since some of the items were phrased positively and some negative, five of the items were recoded so that a high score (seven) consistently equals high trust.

Two scales measured the father's attitude towards his former wife. The first attitude scale contained two items which inquired about the father's feelings towards his former wife in general. The second scale, which measured a father's attitude towards his former wife as a mother, had three items. Each item in both scales was rated on a continuum of very negative (one) to very positive (five).

Development of Coparenting Measures

The parental and nonparental scales were adapted from the research by Ahrons on 54 divorced couples (1979). On the basis of her pilot studies, she divided coparental interaction into parental and nonparental components. This categorization was determined by the purpose attributed to the interaction by the interviewed parent. The parental scale contains questions such as "How often have you and your former wife talked about your child's accomplishments and progress?" The nonparental scale contains questions that do not involve parenting, such as "How often do you and your former wife talk about friends in common?" or "How often do you and your former wife have physical contact?" The alpha coefficients for her parental scales were .93 for women and .92 for men. The nonparental component was measured by thirteen items with alpha coefficients of .85 for women and .86 for men.

The conflict and support scales were also adapted from Ahrons' research on divorced couples. The conflict scale in her research contained four items inquiring about the frequency of arguments and hostility in the conversations, and had alpha coefficients of .88 for men and .89 for women. The support scale contained six items and asked for example, "How often did you feel that your former wife understood and was supportive of your needs as a father?" The alpha coefficients for her support scale were .75 for men and .74 for women.

The trust scale was developed by Robert Larzelere (1979) and has been used extensively with divorced and married couples. It consists of eight statements that indicate the extent to which one parent can depend upon and trust the other parent to be understanding and give assistance. In the current study it was used to tap another dimension of the rela-

tionship between the mother and the father because it expresses a variety of attitudes in a format different from the other scales measuring the coparental relationship.

Ahrons' four-item scale that measured a parent's attitude toward the parenting abilities of the former spouse was also used in this research. Items included questions such as "How often do your accept the parenting approach of your former wife?" The alpha coefficient for her attitude index was .89 for mothers and .85 for fathers.

Reliability analysis for coparenting scales. The measure of internal consistency for the independent variable scales was computed using Cronbach's alpha and were based on a list-wise matrix; that is, all 44 cases with complete data contributed to the correlation matrix.

The reliability coefficient for the ten item parenting scale was .89. The nonparenting scale had three items that had zero variance, so they were eliminated from the scale. The reliability for the remaining 12 items was .80. The conflict scale with six items had an alpha coefficient of .90; the support scale with seven items had an alpha of .82; and the trust scale with eight items had an alpha coefficient of .91. There were two items that measured the father's attitude towards his ex-wife, with an alpha of .70, and a three item scale that measured the father's attitude toward his ex-wife as a mother with an alpha of .72.

Sample Selection

The fathers were interviewed from March, 1982 through March, 1983. The sample fathers were obtained through personal and professional acquaintances and gradually through referrals from the sample fathers themselves. The separated fathers had to be separated for at least one

year, and the remarried fathers married for at least six months after a separation of at least one year. The minimum time criteria for length since separation and remarriage were to ensure some stability in the childcare arrangements. The remarried sample was included to obtain data on fathers who had joint custody for a longer period of time than those who were not remarried, and who had been through another family transition.

The joint custody child had to be under 16 years old, since the purpose of this research would not be served by studying children who were becoming independent of their parents. Since joint custody is predominantly a middle class phenomenon, the sample selection did not include other income groups.

The physical child care arrangements, or the proportion of time spent at each parent's home, were not a consideration for sample selection since one purpose of the study was to describe joint custody within a broad spectrum of living arrangements.

The sample was selected to obtain cases that would be theoretically relevant to the research problem. Representativeness was not an issue since the intent was primarily descriptive. Furthermore, a random sample would have been difficult to obtain in this area because the court records are sealed in New York State, and access to custody disposition would not have been possible. There are, however, advantages to a "snowball sample". There was considerable cooperation and enthusiasm from the subjects who volunteered, and a genuine interest in providing accurate information. This may have increased the validity of the responses.

Procedure for Data Collection

Initial contact was made with the father by telephone to inquire if he would agree to participate in a study about divorced fathers with joint custody. Usually a ten to twenty minute telephone conversation ensued for me to determine if the father qualified for participation and to obtain a decision as to whether or not he wanted to be involved. In all but two cases (who were not interviewed), the fathers were interested in helping other people gain an understanding of their situation and willingly volunteered. If the father lived nearby, the researcher personally delivered the questionnaire to him; if that was not practical it was mailed to him one or two weeks prior to the scheduled interview. In most instances the questionnaire was picked up at the time of the interview, but in a few cases the questionnaire was mailed back before the interview.

The interviews usually took place in the father's home in the evening, although occasionally in his office. Each interview lasted from one and one-half to two and one-half hours. If other family members were in the home, they were often included in a discussion after the interview was completed. After the interview, the questionnaire was reviewed for missing data or for any other questions about the items.

Plan of Analysis

The next two chapters (Chapter IV and Chapter V) present the findings from this study. Chapter IV describes the sample fathers, their former wives, and various aspects of their current life situations. Chapter V reports the analysis of quantitative data derived from the scales that measure fathering and the coparental relationship. The

quantitative analysis in Chapter V is divided into three sections.

1. Summary Statistics The mean, standard deviation, and range are provided to illustrate the trends and patterns of fathering and coparenting in this sample. The mean scale scores are given for the measures of the dependent variables:

1. Frequency of participation in child care
2. Satisfaction/enjoyment during participation
3. Influence on child's development

The mean scale scores are also given for the measures of the independent variables:

1. Coparental interaction about child rearing (Parenting scale)
2. Coparenting interaction not about the child (Nonparenting scale)
3. Conflict between coparents
4. Support from former wife
5. Trust of former wife
6. Father's attitude towards former wife in general
7. Father's attitude towards former wife as a mother

2. Correlation Coefficients. The three measures of fathering were correlated with the seven measures of the coparenting relationship, as well as with other demographic variables, to discover the strengths of the associations between a father's perception of his participation, satisfaction, and influence on his child, and his relationship with his former wife.

3. Multiple Regression. A step-wise multiple regression was performed on the dependent variables to determine the best predictors among the demographic and independent variables, of father participation, satisfaction and influence. As part of the regression analysis, a test for interaction was done on two of the independent variables which appeared to be strong predictors of the fathering dimensions of frequency of participation and influence on child development.

Father behavior and affect, like any social-psychological phenomena, are determined or shaped by multiple factors. Therefore, it was essential to utilize a technique such as multiple regression that acknowledged the complexity of this behavior, and attempted to disentangle the interrelationships of particular determinants impinging on the fathering dimensions.

Qualitative Data. Vignettes and quotations from the taped interviews are used to describe, illustrate and elaborate the variables used in the quantitative analysis and to enrich the discussion. The presentation of the findings reflects this shift in perspective from the individual level to group "summary scores", as if alternately wide-angle and close-up lenses were used, but as a result, a multi-dimensional picture that is quite graphic gradually emerges.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: QUALITATIVE DATA

Fathers

The sample of 44 white, middle-class fathers with joint custody live primarily in the New York-New Jersey area; thirty fathers are from New York and New Jersey; eight are from Pennsylvania; three from Massachusetts, two from Connecticut and one from Washington, D.C. Twenty-three fathers live in an urban area; sixteen in a suburban area, and five in a rural area.

Twenty fathers are legally remarried, and have been remarried an average of two years, with a range of between one and five years. Four of the remarried fathers have new children from their current marriage, all of whom are under three years old. Eight of the remarried fathers have wives who had been married before, and five of the wives have children from their prior marriage, some living with them. Altogether there are thirteen stepchildren ranging in age from nine to twenty-two years.

Fifteen non-remarried fathers are legally divorced and have been divorced between one and nine years; the average time since the divorce is three years and six months. Nine fathers are separated and have been

separated between two and seven years. Four of the 44 fathers had been married before, and three of these fathers have grown children from their previous marriage.

The ages of the men range from 31 to 53 years. The mean age is 40 years. Religious preference is varied. Twenty-seven of the fathers are Jewish, four are Catholic, one is Protestant, and twelve indicate that they have no religion. Nine fathers are very or somewhat religious, seven are moderately religious, and 28 consider themselves a little or not at all religious.

The educational level of this sample is relatively high. Twenty-four fathers have either a medical degree, law degree or a Ph.D.; eleven have a master's degree; four have a bachelor's degree; and five have completed high school. Occupations include doctors, lawyers, professors, writers, photographers, administrators, a glazier, a court reporter and businessmen.

Thirty-seven fathers (84 percent) had to modify their work schedules to accommodate their child care arrangements after the separation. Many of the fathers described the alterations that had to take place in their work. Some had to change jobs:

> I left my corporate job for teaching because I couldn't have adequate time with my child in a corporate position.
>
> I've chosen jobs that can accommodate my parenting priority. I've eliminated weekend job duties.
>
> I plan my schedule all with my child's schedule in mind.
>
> I work less.
>
> I don't see patients on days they live with me.

> I come home early despite work to do.
>
> I take jobs which permit me to pick him up and take him to school.
>
> I gave up an assignment that required travel because I did not like being separated from him.
>
> No weekend or late night work.
>
> I know I would have been further along in my career if I hadn't adopted this lifestye. I don't see that as a disadvantage, only a result.

Three fathers worked at their jobs for less than 20 hours a week; eleven fathers worked between 20 and 39 hours a week; twenty fathers worked between 40 and 49 hours a week; seven fathers worked between 50 and 59 hours a week; and three fathers work over 60 hours a week. Income of the fathers ranges from under $10,000 to over $60,000; the mean income is about $40,000.

Twenty-one fathers feel their financial situation is better now than before the separation; fifteen feel their situation is worse now; and eight feel there has been no change. Twenty-five fathers feel they have "enough" money for their needs all or most of the time, eight have enough money some of the time, and eleven feel they have enough money little or none of the time. Thus, nineteen of the fathers feel a financial strain, from moderate to severe.

Former Wives

Although not directly interviewed, data regarding the mothers were obtained from all of the fathers except one who felt it was a violation of his former wife's wishes to answer for her. Twenty-one mothers are living alone, ten are living with a man, nine are remarried, and three are living with other women (one in an acknowledged lesbian relation-

ship). The women's ages range from 28 to 47 with an average age of 36. Therefore, as a group, they are slightly younger than the men.

Twenty of the mothers are Jewish, three are Protestant, two are Catholic, eleven have no religion, and in six cases the father did not know anymore what his former wife's religion was. Six mothers are very or somewhat religious, four are moderately religious, and thirty-three are a little or not at all religious. Thus, the women are similar to the men in their religious preference, and how religious they are.

The women are less educated than the men, but are still relatively well-educated. Three women have either a Ph.D., M.D. or J.D. (as compared to twenty-four of the men); sixteen women have masters degrees, 19 have B.A. degrees, and five have a high school degree or less. Nineteen of the women are in social work, teaching, or nursing; one woman is a lawyer; one is a doctor; five are in clerical positions; eleven are in business or administrative positions; three are in the arts; and three are not employed. Sixteen of the mothers spend between 20 and 29 hours a week and eleven spend between 30 and 39 hours a week in occupationally-related work. In eleven cases, the fathers did not know how much time their former wives spent in occupationally-related work.

The mothers earn less money than the fathers, but they are also working fewer hours. According to the fathers, three mothers earn under $10,000 a year, 14 earn between $20,000 and $29,000 a year, nine between $30,000 and $39,000, two between $40,000 and $60,000, and in eleven situations, the fathers did not know how much money their former wives earn.

In general, the mothers' current financial situation appears to be

not as good as the fathers'. Twenty-seven of the fathers feel that their financial situation is better or much better than their former wife's financial situation, five fathers feel their situation is the same, and twelve feel their situation is worse or much worse than their former wife's current financial situation. Thus, the sample fathers and their former wives are well-educated and, for most of them, financially secure.

Decision to Separate

The initiation of the marital breakup was more frequently due to the wife than the husband. In 57 percent (n=25) of cases fathers stated that the separation was primarily due to the wife's initiation; in only seven cases was the separation based on the father's decision; and in twelve situations the decision was mutual. A common statement from the men whose wives left them was that they knew there were problems in the marriage, but at the time they did not think the problems were severe enough to justify a marital break. Now, however, most of the fathers who were left by their ex-wives, felt they personally benefited in ways they could not have anticipated and were thankful that their wives took the initiative. A few, though, remain convinced that divorce was not justified.

The awkwardness of the terminology used to describe a former marital relationship, but a current parenting one, was immediately apparent after the separation. There was confusion and ambivalence about how to refer to the family members of their former wife who were still related to their child, and how to refer to the woman that the father was no longer living with, but with whom he had produced a child. The most common phrase was "my ex-wife" which 72 percent (n=32) of the fathers used.

Fifty-two percent (n=23) used the phrase "my child's mother" and 27 percent (n=12) of the fathers used the phrase "my former wife." None of the fathers, despite its common usage in the professional literature, used the term "coparent" to refer to their ex-wife in a discussion. One father only referred to his ex-wife as "the plaintiff."

Joint Custody Children

Twenty-three fathers have one child in joint custody, twelve fathers have two children, eight have three children, and one has five children in joint custody. The ages of all the children range from three years to seventeen years. For the purpose of this survey, the father was asked to report on his youngest child in joint custody. These children range in age from three to fifteen years. The mean, median and modal age for the youngest child is eight years. Twenty-seven of the children are boys, and seventeen are girls.

Financial Arrangements

Eight fathers pay alimony to their former wives. Only one father claims to have missed any payments and this is because he became disabled after the award was made. Of the eight fathers who pay alimony, two are satisfied with the amount, two have mixed feelings, and four are dissatisfied with the amount of money they give their former wives, feeling it is too much.

Nineteen men give money for child support to their former wives. Most of the men, whether or not they are giving alimony and child support, are also responsible for other major child care expenses in some proportion to their income. Nine are dissatisfied with the amount, five have mixed feelings, and five are satisfied.

Alimony does not seem to be a major issue, but child support and property settlement remain a source of conflict. Nine fathers still have high disagreement with their former wife about child support, and eleven about the property settlement, which is quite remarkable considering the length of time since the separation for the couples in this sample.

Twenty-eight fathers feel their financial settlement was fair at the time of their separation, and sixteen felt the settlement was not fair. Thirty-three fathers feel there is little or no conflict now about financial arrangements. Where there were, and still are conflicts, most couples were able to resolve the financial conflicts themselves, but in six cases court action was needed, and in two other cases a lawyer or mediator was used to settle financial disputes.

Geographical Distance between Coparents

Fifteen fathers live within a mile of their former wives. Fourteen coparents live between two and six miles of each other. Thus, twenty-nine mothers and fathers (66 percent) live within six miles of each other. Eight coparents live between 10 and 15 miles, and five coparents live between 30 and 60 miles of each other. One father lives 150 miles and one father lives 1800 miles away from his former wife. Thus, there is a lot of variability in the geographical distance between the mother and father.

Joint Custody Decision

At the time of the separation, thirty-one fathers wanted joint custody, nine fathers wanted sole custody, two fathers wanted their wives to have sole custody, and two fathers wanted no formal arrangement.

Twenty-six of the mothers had wanted joint custody, eleven mothers wanted sole custody, three mothers wanted no formal arrangement, two mothers did not know which custody ararngement they wanted, one other wanted to be a non-custodial parent, and one wanted split custody (one child in each parent's home). Thus, there were more fathers than mothers who wanted joint custody (31 fathers compared to 26 mothers), and eleven mothers and nine fathers who wanted sole custody.

There were twenty-six couples for whom there was no disagreement at any time about joint custody. Thus, over half of the couples in this sample for practical or philosophical reasons agreed on this form of custody for themselves. For eighteen couples there was some amount of disagreement, from a little to complete, about the custody form, and for nine of these couples the court was involved in their custody dispute. Currently, thirty-seven fathers prefer joint custody for themselves, and feel it is also best for their child, but there are seven fathers who are dissatisfied with joint custody, and would prefer sole custody of their child. Four of these fathers who wanted sole custody have highly conflictual relationships with their former wives. They feel that if they had sole custody the conflict would be diminished because they would have more control over what happened to the child. The other three fathers would like to have the greater control of sole custody, but acknowledge that joint custody is best for their child.

Child Care Schedule

The child care schedule that must be negotiated after the parents separate represents the heart of the joint custody arrangement. Most of the fathers in this sample fought for physical as well as legal joint

custody, meaning that they wanted to have equal legal rights and, as nearly as possible, equal physical possession of the child. Fathers maintained that without regular contact with their child it was almost impossible to feel like an integral part of the child's life. However, to a greater or lesser extent, the schedule is in part determined by how far apart the mother and father live from each other.

Child care schedules have two components. The first is the actual amount of time that is spent with each parent, and the second is the way that the time is divided between the mother's and father's homes. Twenty-five of the fathers in this sample spend between 40 and 50 percent of each month with their child (12-15 days per month); nine fathers spend between 25 percent and 40 percent of each month with their child (6-11 days); four fathers spend less than 25 percent of the month, and six spend over 50 percent of each month with their child.

The amount of time, however, belies the complexity of how the time is to be arranged. The schedules reported include:

--- Alternating weeks between mother's and father's homes.

--- Weekends with the father except the last weekend of each month with the mother. Weekdays with the mother. Father sees the child once during the week.

--- Monday and Tuesday with father; Wednesday and Thursday with mother; Friday, Saturday, Sunday alternates each week between mother and father.

--- Three week cycle; father has children the first week, mother and father split the second week, and mother has the third week.

--- Child lives with mother in Florida (father lives in New Jersey). On all holidays of 4 days or more child lives with father. During the summer, child spends approximately 40 days with the father.

--- Six days with father and eight with mother during each 14 day period.

--- Five days with father and nine with mother during each 14 day period.

--- Three and one-half days each week with each parent.

--- Child is with father every Wednesday and Thursday. On alternate weeks child spends weekends with father. (i.e. three days one week with father, four days the next week).

--- Children spend Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from from 5 pm- 8pm, and Sunday from 9 am- 7:30 pm with father. The remainder of the time is with the mother.

--- Every week father has dinner with child. Every other weekend, child spends from Friday afternoon to Monday morning with father.

--- During the school year the child spends Sunday evening through Wednesday morning with the father, and from Wednesday afternoon through Saturday morning with the mother. Weekends are alternated between mother and father. For the entire summer the child spends two weeks with the mother and two weeks with the father.

--- The school year is split in half. Fall term the children are with father on weekends and with their mother during the week. Spring term is reversed and they are with the mother on weekends, and the father during the week.

The above variety of schedules has been given to illustrate the diversity of child care arrangements that exist. General guidelines can be developed, but each family's needs are so unique that the child care schedule has to be customized for each family. The complexities are increased not only by the holidays and summers, but by the changing needs of the parents as one parent or the other finds a new partner, remarries, moves, or changes jobs, and as the children grow up and express their own preferences.

Thirteen of the fathers and kids have had only one schedule since

their separation. Twenty-two fathers have had either two or three schedules and nine fathers have had five or more schedules. One father has had between 20 and 30 schedules.

At the time of separation, thirty fathers reported little or no conflict and 14 fathers reported moderate to severe conflict with the mother about the child care schedule. Thirty-six fathers claim that there is little or no conflict now about the child-care schedule, but eight fathers say there is currently moderate to severe conflict about the schedule. However, the fathers who are having difficulty now, may not have experienced any problems when they first separated from their wives, and it is only after one or the other parent has found a new partner or made a physical move, that difficulties emerge. For example, one couple split the week in half for two years, until the father started dating his current wife. After he remarried, he moved and had to give up Saturday nights with his child. Since he was the one who moved, he had to compromise on the time with his child. Four men went to court about the child care schedule and at the time of the interview three were planning to go to court to obtain more time with their child.

Currently, twenty-nine fathers are primarily satisfied with their current child-care schedule, nine have mixed feelings, and six fathers are dissatisfied. So, even though there may not be conflict about the schedule, there may be dissatisfaction. Even among the fathers who are primarily satisfied with the schedule, twenty-five fathers want more time with their child; nineteen like it the way it is; and nine fathers want the same amount of time but with a different schedule. Significantly, none of the fathers want less time with their child. The following comments illustrate fathers' dissatisfaction with the child-care schedule:

> I would prefer a more equal split of the weekend and work week, but the distance between our residences makes this impossible.
>
> I feel her mother should have visitation only.
>
> Because of my current unemployment, I cannot yet have my kids with me.
>
> I would prefer two weeks/two weeks, but the one week schedule was the children's decision.
>
> I would prefer that my son be with his mother on the nights that I have to teach late.

Thirty fathers (68 percent) feel that the schedule the child has now is the best one for the child. Representative comments were:

> The children get the best of both households; the parents have the advantage of co-parenting.
>
> His friends like to be with him at either home and he gets the best of both parents.
>
> It by now seems very natural and the relationships with both parents are good.
>
> It comes closest to best satisfying the needs and conveniences of all.

Thirteen fathers (32 percent) do not feel the current child care schedule is best for their child (even if the fathers are satisfied), but were unable to change it either due to the mother's objections or because of the distance between the mother's and father's homes.

A consequence of divorce when the parents share physical care of the child, is that the child lives in two households. Thirteen fathers claim there are no problems with their child having two residences. Twenty-one men felt that moving back and forth presented only minor logistical problems such as "Who has the raincoat?" or "School books and clothes are missing." In five cases, the father felt that non- cooperation by the mother was a problem, particularly when the distance between the mother's

and father's home is over ten miles:

> My former wife is reluctant to assume equal responsibility about driving time.
>
> Her mother doesn't take her on the days she is supposed to.
>
> His mother won't allow him to bring a particular toy and it is hard and embarassing to haul the stuff on the school bus.
>
> His mother is reluctant to let him have his things at my house and I do most of the driving.

Most couples are able to deal with the inconveniences routinely:

> We get together and redivide the clothes.
>
> We talk about the inconveniences and make do as best as possible, which often means the children will retrieve their favorite items.
>
> I make emergency trips and duplicate some items.

But other fathers state that they still have not dealt with the logistical problems, or that they continue to negotiate and argue:

> The better clothing tends to drift and stay at my ex-wife's home and the children are reluctant to to retrieve them. The standard excuse is that they are in the hamper.
>
> We yell, scream, cry.

Two fathers felt that living in two households was detrimental to the child, even if the schedule could be changed:

> She is not in a good environment when with her mother.
>
> The child should have one environment he can call his own. He shouldn't be jerked around.

In the quantitative analyses that follow, the child care schedule is referred to only by whether the father has the child less than half time, about half time, or more than half time. This method of grouping the data was chosen for the purposes of the analysis, but the variations have been presented above to elaborate on this concept.

As a final point, the confusion about where the child lives is reflected in the census form, which in 1980, still did not have a category for joint custody. When asked which parent claimed the child as resident of their household, eighteen fathers reported they claimed the child, eight fathers reported that the mothers claimed the child and eleven fathers do not know who claimed the child. But, in seven cases both parents claimed that the child lived in their household. Some children are definitely being counted twice.

Father's Attitude about Himself as a Parent

Fathers' high perceptions of themselves are reflected in the almost unanimous (91 percent) rating of themselves as excellent or very good fathers. Increased competence and higher quality involvement since the separation was expressed by twenty-eight (64 percent) of fathers. All but one father felt he was responsive to the needs of his child and important to the child's well being. Thirty-nine fathers felt they took considerable responsibility for their child's growth and development. Forty-two fathers were satisfied with their relationship with their child. Only eight fathers ever felt at any time like a visitor in their child's life, and those tended to be the fathers who lived further away from their child's mother and have less of an idea what their child was doing when at the mother's home. Thus, in general, fathers in this study felt very positively about themselves as parents.

Interaction between Coparents

The amount of telephone contact between coparents appears moderate. Twenty-seven fathers reported that they spoke to their former wives on

the phone at least once or twice a week. Fifteen fathers spoke only a few times a month, and for two fathers phone contact was less frequent than a few times a month.

Person-to-person contact, as expected, was less frequent than phone contact. Twenty fathers saw their former wives about once or twice a week, ten couples saw each other once or twice a month, and fourteen fathers saw their former wives less than two times a month. Thus, fourteen fathers (32 percent of the sample) have very minimal person-to person contact with their former wives (less than a few times a month).

Even with minimal contact, seventeen fathers would like to see their former wives even less often than they do now, but most recognize that the exigencies of their custody form do not allow for less frequent contact. Twenty-four fathers, though, are satisfied with the amount of contact. However, if there were no children involved, twenty-three fathers said they would never want to see their former wives again, and fifteen fathers said they would want to see her only rarely.

In all but two of the families, conflicts about child-rearing inevitably occurred. Fourteen fathers rarely felt good about how conflicts were handled, twelve fathers sometimes felt good, and sixteen fathers often felt good about the management of child-related conflicts.

The quality of the communication about parenting appeared only slightly better than the ability of the mother and father to satisfactorily resolve conflicts about their child. Twenty fathers had primarily positive feelings, thirteen fathers had mixed feelings, and nine fathers had primarily negative feelings about the quality of their communication about their child. Two fathers said there was no communication about parenting. Thus, for about one-third of the fathers there is an inabil-

ity to satisfactorily resolve conflicts and talk about child-related issues in a positive fashion. But, for nineteen fathers (43 percent), cooperation about parenting is better now than at the time of their separation, and in only eight cases is it worse.

Twenty-eight (65 percent) of the fathers said their former wives usually supported their relationship with their child, eight fathers sometimes had support, and eight fathers rarely or never obtained support from their former wives. Thus, about three-fourths of the fathers had some support for their relationship to their child.

Remarriage relationships

Ten of the twenty remarried fathers said that there were some changes in their relationship with their former wives after their remarriage. Half said the relationship was better, and half said it was worse. Ten of the remarried fathers felt that their relationship with their child changed after their remarriage, and all changes were for the better. Three of the fathers wanted to change the custody form from joint custody to sole custody after their remarriage because the reported "unreliability" of their former wives was making it difficult to establish a new home. All three wanted more time with their child and considered sole custody as a method of obtaining it.

All of the fathers except one felt that the relationship between his child and the child's stepmother was good to excellent. One father felt the relationship was fair. All five of the fathers who became stepfathers after their remarriage report that their relationship with their stepchildren and the relationship between the stepsiblings range from good to excellent.

Four of the fathers have a child under the age of three years from their remarriage. All fathers claim that the "new child," to their surprise, has been positive for them, their joint custody child, and their new family. One father described how his two children responded to their half brother:

> They adore him; I am surprised that they don't resent moving back and forth even though Sam remains with us. They seem to accept that the three of us (wife, child, and father) will be going away on vacation without them. There has been no real jealousy; the jealousy was when I got remarried.

He also described how the new child affected his relationship with his new wife:

> Sam has made our family a family. It used to be that I always defined our family as my kids and Nora but she used to define our family as me and her. Since Sam was born, she started to view my children as in her family. Our frames of reference are more the same now.
>
> Also, having a child has helped the relationship between my son and Nora (his stepmother). They have something in common that they didn't have before.

His former wife did not respond as positively:

> My ex reacted very badly to Sam's birth. She was very nonsupportive. I think she felt there would be less for her now that I had a new child. She lost something because now I had three children to care about, my interest in our two were dissipated somewhat. She lost some control over me, because before my only children were my ex-wife's.

Another father describes his children's responses to his two year old daughter.

> Alice makes the kids feel fantastic. She brings them out. Alice is that person to hug without anyone resenting it. She is a totally free base

to go to.

For this father, it was his chance to have an intact family again, and his new child takes the pressure off his older children:

> For me she is always here. That is what I do not have with joint custody. When my kids would leave, I always wanted them to stay. That is a heavy trip to lay on a kid.

The experience was slightly different for a father with two children in joint custody, a girl who is eleven and a boy seven years old, and a nine month old daughter from his remarriage.

> My seven year old takes care of the baby, plays with him and has a wonderful relationship with the baby. Sandra who is in a pre-adolescent period, is into a lot of new experiences and needs more of my time now. She isn't close to the baby. She is beginning to accept him now and is just beginning to spend more time with him. The baby has been a positive influence for them. They haven't lost anything but gotten more.

He is experiencing some difficulty finding the right balance:

> The hardest time for me is the balance. When the kids come I find it difficult to shift gears and give them more time than I give the baby. When the kids are there I spend less time with the baby. My wife is wonderful about this so it has worked out well.

> I would rather have my kids with me all the time, but the positive side of our contrived situation is that since this is my wife's first child, at least half of the time I can be with just her and our child.

Remarriage changed the fathers' relationships with their children and their former wives in half the cases (ten). All fathers reported that the changes in the relationship with the children were for the better; the changes with their former wives were mixed. The birth of a "new child" has been a positive experience for the four fa+thers and reportedly for their "joint-custody children" as well. Although remarriage adds new complications, it appears that joint custody can work

equally as well, or as poorly, in remarried as well as in divorced families.

Support from Family, Friends, Groups

Thirty-nine fathers have one or both parents alive. Thirty-one of these fathers felt that their parents' attitude towards joint custody was mostly positive and five fathers had parents whose attitude was mixed. Three fathers had parents whose attitude was mostly negative towards their having joint custody because the grandparents felt it was more apporpriate for the wife to care for the child. Regarding support from friends, thirty-two fathers had friends who had a primarily positive attitude towards their seeking joint custody, nine fathers had friends whose attitude was mixed, and one father said his friends strongly disapproved.

Half of the fathers knew of other men parenting in similar arrangements at the time of their separation, but the other half did not, and often were surprised when they found other men living in a similar fashion. One father who separated in 1977 expressed the development of his joint custody arrangement:

> We just thought of it ourselves. I had no idea anyone else was doing it. We invented the wheel.

Fifteen fathers said they talked to other men in similar situations to their own about the problems and satisfactions of their parenting arrangement. A theme that continually emerged during the interviews was a desire for some type of support group. A typical comment was:

> It would have helped to have had other divorced men around. I would have had some notion of how it could have worked out.

Only nine fathers joined any kind of support group such as Parents Without Partners or Equal Rights for Fathers. In general, the support these fathers received for their joint custody arrangement was from family and friends, rather than from professional or self-help groups.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Description of Fathering and Coparenting Measures

The following frequency distributions provide an overview of the fathering and coparenting dimensions. Table 1 describes the frequency of a father's participation in child care activities (when his child is with him), satisfaction during his participation, and the influence he feels he has on his child. The scoring is from 1=low and 5=high participation, satisfaction or influence.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY STATISTICS OF FATHERING MEASURES

	Frequency of Participation	Satisfaction during participation	Influence on child
Mean	3.79	4.30	3.83
S.D.	.44	.41	.72
Range	3.00 to 4.72	3.00 to 5.00	1.30 to 5.00

In general, there was a moderately high level of participation in child care as perceived by this group of men ($\bar{x}$ = 3.79). The items that

were rated highest were: putting your child to bed ($\bar{x}$ = 4.76), having dinner with your child ($\bar{x}$ = 4.56), and talking to your child about what he did during the day ($\bar{x}$ = 4.27). The lowest rated items were delegating tasks to child-care person ($\bar{x}$ = 2.77) and arranging for child care ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13). As expected, the items rated highest were activities that are part of a child's daily routine, not special events, except for the item, "talking to your child about what he did during the day." This item is a more optional behavior, and suggests participation beyond the routinely required activities.

The items rated lowest are associated with leaving the child in the care of another person, presumably while the father goes out. This indicates that fathers probably do not often go out when their child is with them. It should be noted, though, that none of the fathers scored under 3.0 on any item, which is the midpoint of the participation scale.

The mean perceived amount of satisfaction was very high ($\bar{x}$ = 4.30). The items that were enjoyed the most were playing active games with your child ($\bar{x}$ = 4.76) and having dinner with your child ($\bar{x}$ = 4.70). The item that was least satisfying to this group of fathers was disciplining your child ($\bar{x}$ = 3.38), which is interesting because it is a role fathers have been traditionally called upon to do. Like the participation scale, none of the items in the satisfaction scale were rated under 3.0.

Although the mean score indicates a moderately high level of influence ($\bar{x}$ = 3.83), there was a much greater range of scores on this scale than in the frequency or satisfaction scales. A possible explanation for the wide range of scores is that the amount of influence a father has on his child is sensitive to factors outside of his direct

contact with his child. For example, a father probably feels less influential when the child lives far away, or when he has a child care schedule which allows him to see his child only 25 percent of the time. On the other hand, he can still be very active and feel highly satisfied during the time he is with his child. The area in which fathers felt they had the most influence was the child's emotional development ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11), and the area with the least amount of perceived influence was the child's religious development ($\bar{x}$ =2.93).

Table 2 provides the mean scores, standard deviations, and ranges for the parenting scale (amount of child-related interaction) and the nonparenting scale (amount of non child-related interaction). The scoring is 1=low interaction and 5=high interaction between coparents.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY STATISTICS OF PARENTING AND NON-PARENTING SCALES

	Parenting Interaction	Non-parenting Interaction
Mean	2.80	1.69
S.D.	.79	.45
Range	1.00 to 4.70	1.00 to 2.83

There was a low-moderate amount of contact between coparents concerning child related activities ($\bar{x}$ = 2.80), with a large range from low

to high in the amount of interaction. The items rated highest were talking about your child's progress ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41), making major decisions about your child ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39), and talking about problems your child is having ($\bar{x}$ = 3.01). The items rated lowest were: talking about problems you are having with each other related to caring for your child ($\bar{x}$ = 1.91), talking about how your child is adjusting to the separation/divorce/remarriage ($\bar{x}$ = 2.32) and making day-to-day decisions regarding your child's life ($\bar{x}$ = 2.52). As expected, the lowest rated item involved communication between the mother and father about problems they were having with each other, obviously a touchy and sensitive area.

In contrast to the moderate amount of interaction about parenting activities, there was very little contact about non-parenting or non-child-related activities ($\bar{x}$ = 1.69) and little variation among fathers. Three items had zero variance (talking about reconciling, dating your former spouse, and having sex with your former spouse). The items with the highest scores were talking with your former wife about your family of origin ($\bar{x}$ = 2.27), talking with your former wife about your work ($\bar{x}$ = 2.23) and talking with your former wife about friends in common ($\bar{x}$ = 2.14), although none of the fathers scored above the mid point of this scale. In general, discussions between a mother and father were confined to issues regarding the child, making decisions about the child's life, and talking about problems and progress. The little non-child-related contact was largely about the mother's or father's family of origin, work and friends.

Table 3 provides the mean scores, standard deviations, and ranges for the conflict, support and trust scales. For the conflict scale, 1=high conflict and 5=low conflict between coparents; for the support

scale 1=low support and 5=high support between coparents; and for the trust scale 1=low trust and 7=high trust between coparents.

TABLE 3

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR
CONFLICT, SUPPORT AND TRUST SCALES

	Conflict	Support	Trust
Mean	3.17	3.21	3.80
S.D.	.97	.81	1.71
Range	1.00 to 4.67	1.57 to 4.86	1.14 to 6.71

Fathers generally perceived a moderate amount of conflict with their former wives, but there was a wide range of scores from very little conflict to very high conflict in the coparental relationships. Conflict items rated highest were: how often hostility was present in the interaction ($\bar{x}$ = 3.02), and how often the conversation was stressful or tense ($\bar{x}$ = 3.00). The lowest item was how often were there arguments ($\bar{x}$ = 2.52).

Fathers also perceived a moderate amount of support from their former wives. The item rated highest in the support scale was, How often does your former wife support and facilitate your relationship with your child, from 1=negative to 5=positive, ($\bar{x}$ = 3.70). The lowest rated item was, How would you describe your former wife's feelings towards you, from 1=negative to 5=positive, ($\bar{x}$ = 2.84). The range of scores on the con-

flict scale suggest that some fathers felt complete conflict with their former wives, but the range of scores on the support scale indicate that all fathers felt at least some support from their former wives.

Fathers had a moderate amount of trust in their former wives, indicated by a mean score of just under 4.0, which is the midpoint of the trust scale. The item rated highest was, my former wife shows me enough consideration ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20), and the item rated lowest was, my former wife is primarily interested in her own welfare ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13). The scores in the trust scale also varied widely from fathers who had almost complete trust in their former wives, to fathers who had almost no trust.

In general, what is interesting about the distribution of scores on the scales measuring the quality of coparenting interaction, are the variations in the coparenting relationships that exist. Although this sample of fathers all have joint custody, which means that they share with their former wives equal custodial rights, by no means do they all get along smoothly, according to the measures of conflict, support, and trust.

TABLE 4

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR SCALES MEASURING
FATHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS FORMER WIFE AS A PERSON
FATHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS FORMER WIFE AS A MOTHER

	Father's Attitude Towards Former Wife as a Person	Father's Attitude Towards Former Wife As A Mother
Mean	3.02	3.70
S.D.	1.15	.75
Range	1.00 to 5.00	1.33 to 5.00

The father's attitude towards his former wife is another indicator of the quality of the coparenting relationship. Presumably, the more positive his attitude towards her, the more supportive or cooperative is the relationship. The attitudes that fathers had towards their former wives ranged from completely negative to completely positive. But, they felt more positively towards their former wives' parenting abilities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.70) than they did towards their former wives in general ($\bar{x}$ = 3.02). This difference suggests an ability on the father's part to discriminate a mother's assets as a parent from her perceived liabilities as a person.

Thus, in general, fathers reported frequent participation in child care, high satisfaction with their participation, and a fairly high amount of influence on their child's development. Interaction with the former wife varied from low contact to moderate contact depending upon if there were child-related issues to discuss, in which case interaction was more frequent. The fathers' relationship with their former wives ranged

from very conflictuial and mistrustful to very supportive and trustful. The fathers' attitudes towards their former wives were more positive towards them as mothers than it was towards them in general. Now that there is a general overview of the parameters of the variables used in this study, the next section will explore the strength and significance of the relationships between the fathering and coparenting measures.

Relationship of Fathering Measures to Coparenting Measures

Tables five through eleven describe the relationship between the fathering measures (frequency of participation in child care, satisfaction during participation, and influence on the child), and the coparenting measures (frequency of interaction about child and non-child related issues, amount of support, conflict, and trust, and attitude towards the former spouse). The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of the associations between the dependent and independent variables. The .05 level of significance was chosen as a cut-off point to epresent a significant association. The correlations have been used to exlore the question of this study that high father participation in child care, satisfaction during his participation, and influence on his child's development is significantly associated with a more supportive, less conflictual coparenting relationship.

TABLE 5

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH
COPARENTING MEASURE OF PARENTING INTERACTION

Participation	.32*
Satisfaction	-.03
Influence	.44*

$p < .05$

There is a significant correlation between the frequency of the father's participation in child care activities, and the amount of parenting interaction between a father and his former wife and between the amount of influence he has on his child, and the amount of parenting interaction. The higher the frequency of participation, and the higher the amount of influence, the more contact there was between a father and his former wife about their child. Thus, high interaction between co-parents about their child was significantly correlated with high father participation with his child and high influence on his child.

TABLE 6

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH COPARENTING MEASURE OF
NONPARENTING INTERACTION

Participation	.06
Satisfaction	.05
Influence	.04

There are no significant correlations between the fathering measures and the amount of nonparental contact between coparents. Thus, the mother's and father's contact with each other, that did not involve their child, was not related to how much a father did, how satisfied he was, or how much influence he had. It was only the contact between coparents that was related to their child (Table 5) that was associated with the fathering measures of frequency of participation and influence on the child's development.

TABLE 7

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH COPARENTING MEASURE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN COPARENTS

Participation	-.15
Satisfaction	-.00
Influence	-.20

There are no significant correlations between the fathering measures and the amount of conflict a father perceives he has with his former wife. It is interesting that not only was the amount of conflict not related to a father's frequency of participation and amount of influence, but conflict was also not related to his satisfaction with his child-care behavior.

TABLE 8

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH COPARENTING MEASURE OF SUPPORT BETWEEN COPARENTS

Participation	-.03
Satisfaction	-.10
Influence	-.17

There are no significant correlations between the fathering measures and the support a father perceives he has from his former wife. Like the insignificant associations between fathering and conflict between co-parents, there was no indication that the amount of support a father felt he had affected his fathering or that his fathering affected the amount of support he received from his former wife.

TABLE 9

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH COPARENTING MEASURE OF
TRUST BETWEWEN COPARENTS

Participation	-.02
Satisfaction	.03
Influence	.05

There are no significant correlations between the amount of trust that fathers have in their former wives and the fathering measures. The insignificant correlations in this table and the amount of trust a father had in his former wife are consistent with the results of the associations between support and conflict and the fathering measures. The correlations in tables six, seven, and eight suggest that the quality of the relationship between the mother and father did not affect a father's involvement with his child, nor did his involvement with his child affect the quality of his coparenting relationship.

TABLE 10

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH FATHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDES HIS FORMER WIFE AS A PERSON

Participation	-.01
Satisfaction	.09
Influence	.05

The attitude a father has towards his former wife, whether positive or negative, was not associated with his participation in child care activities, satisfaction with his participation, or influence on his child.

TABLE 11

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH FATHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS HIS FORMER WIFE AS A MOTHER

Participation	-.07
Satisfaction	.09
Influence	-.08

Similar to Table 10, there is no correlation between the father's positive or negative attitude towards his former wife as a mother and his fathering experience. The results of these analyses indicate that whether or not a father feels good about his former wife as a person and a mother, or bad about her, his involvement with his child was not affected. Also, his participation with his child, satisfaction with his child care participation, and feelings of influence on his child did not affect his attitude towards his former wife in either a positive or negative direction.

Relationship of Fathering Measures to Antecedent Variables

Tables twelve through nineteen describe the correlations between the fathering measures and the antecedent variables of the father's marital status, age, education, and religiosity, child's age and sex, and the child care schedule and geographical distance between the coparents. The correlations between the fathering measures and these antecedent variables were examined to explore other variables significantly associated with the fathering measures.

TABLE 12

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH FATHER'S AGE

Participation	-.42*
Satisfaction	.10
Influence	-.16

*p<.05

The father's age is significantly negatively correlated with the frequency of participation in child care activities. That is, the younger the father, the more active he was with his child. This association is due to the fact that younger fathers have younger children (r=.41), and younger children require more care. There were no significant correlations between a father's age and the amount of satisfaction he experienced or how much influence he had, so that age was only associated with how frequently child care activities were performed.

TABLE 13

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH FATHER'S MARITAL STATUS

Participation	-.25
Satisfaction	.10
Influence	-.09

There are no significant correlations between the father's marital status and any of the fathering measures. However, there is a slight correlation between a father's marital status and his participation in child care activities in the direction of divorced fathers doing more than remarried fathers. This association is due to the fact that remarried fathers have older children (r=.48), and have a wife to help them, but even after fathers remarried, they remained active, satisfied, and influential with their children.

TABLE 14

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES WITH FATHER'S EDUCATION

Participation	-.35*
Satisfaction	.11
Influence	-.14

*p<.05

There is a significant negative correlation between the frequency of participation in child care activities and the father's education. Fathers who are less educated do more than fathers who are more educated. The reason for this association is not clear. The correlation between hours spent at work and education is not significant (r=.12), so that more demanding careers, often associated with higher education, does not explain this finding.

TABLE 15

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH RELIGIOSITY

Participation	.05
Satisfaction	.18
Influence	.11

There are no significant correlations between how religious a father is and any of the fathering measures. In general, though, this is a sample of not very religious fathers.

TABLE 16

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH CHILD'S AGE

Participation	-.47*
Satisfaction	.12
Influence	-.31*

*$p < .05$

The age of the child is significantly negatively correlated with father's participation in child care, and his influence on his child. The younger the child the more the father did and the more influential he felt he was. This expected high correlation suggests that the scales that measure father participation and influence are valid indicators of

TABLE 17

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES BY CHILD'S GENDER

Participation	.02
Satisfaction	-.07
Influence	-.28

There are no significant correlations between the child's gender and the fathering measures. Although the correlation between the child's gender and the amount of influence a father has on his child is not significant at the p=.05 level, it is significant at the p=.07 level. This suggests a slight association between these two variables in the direction of fathers feeling more influential with their sons than with their daughters. But, the participation and satisfaction a father experiences is not associated with the gender of his child.

TABLE 18

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH CHILD CARE SCHEDULE

Participation	.05
Satisfaction	.32*
Influence	.19

*p<.05

There is a significant correlation between the satisfaction that fathers experience while they are with their child and the amount of time they have them. The more time the father has with his child, the more satisfied he is during participation in child-care activities. Thus, a child care schedule with too little time for the father can interfere with the pleasure a father experiences during the activities they share together. The child care schedule does not, though, relate to his participation or influence.

TABLE 19

CORRELATION OF FATHERING MEASURES
WITH GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE
BETWEEN COPARENTS

Participation	-.13
Satisfaction	.06
Influence	-.27

The geographical distance between the mother and father is not significantly correlated with the fathering measures. However the correlation between influence and the distance between coparents is significant at the p=.07 level which suggests a slight relationship between the amount of influence a father feels he has on his child and the distance he lives from his former wife. Fathers who live further away from their child feel less influential than those who live closer to their child when the child is with the mother.

Summary of Significant Correlations

The only independent variable that is significantly correlated with the fathering measures is the "parenting scale" that measures frequency of interactions between coparents about child-related issues. Parenting interaction is significantly correlated with both frequency of participation in child-care activites, and the amount of influence a father perceives he has on his child's development. This correlation suggests that the process of interacting with his former wife about his child, independent of the quality of the relationship, is associated with high participation and influence. This finding will be explored later in the discussion section.

The antecedent variables significantly correlated with frequency of participation in child care are the father's age and education, and the child's age. The relationship between father's and child's ages and frequency of child care is obvious, but the relationship of education is not.

The child care schedule is the only antecedent variable significantly correlated with father's satisfaction during his participation in child care activities. Those fathers with less time with their children, are less satisfied when with their children, than those fathers with more time. Thus, this association suggests that when there is less time together than the father deems desirable, he does not enjoy the time with his child as much as a father with a child care schedule that permits more time with his child.

The antecedent variable significantly correlated with influence is the child's age, although the correlation with child's gender and the geographical distance between coparents are significant at the p=.07 level. It is obvious that fathers would feel more influential with younger than older children, and understandable that they would feel more influential

with sons than daughters and when children live closer rather than further away when not with their father.

Predictors of the Fathering Measures

A multiple regression was used to analyze the relationship between the fathering dimensions and the independent variables, and discover the best predictors of father participation, satisfaction and influence. A regression analysis is able to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables within a multivariate context. It was chosen as a method of examining the impact of the coparenting measures on the fathering measures while controlling for the antecedent variables.

Tables 20, 21, and 22 show the results of the regression analysis for the dependent variables of father's frequency of participation in child care activites, satisfaction with his participation, and the amount of influence he has on his child's development. One should be aware that because of the small sample size, due the exploratory nature of this study, the results of the regression analysis could be unstable in either a positive or a negative direction.

The first step in the regression analysis was to identify which demographic variables explained the most variation in the dependent variables. A step-wise selection was used to choose only the demographic variables that were significant at the .10 level and above. The significant demographic variables were then controlled for in regression analyses of the dependent variables of participation, satisfaction, and influence.

The correlation matrix revealed very high intercorrelations among

the seven independent variables (parenting interaction, non-parenting interactions, conflict, support, trust, father's attitude towards his former wife, and father's attitude towards his former wife as a mother). Therefore, a factor analysis was done to see whether there might be an underlying pattern of relationships that would enable the seven scales used to measure the coparenting relationship to be reduced to a smaller set of factors that would be taken as the independent variables for this study. The factor analysis identified only one dimension among the seven scales used to measure the relationship between the coparents. Because of the inability to "rotate the matrix" and find more than one dimension, the seven independent variables were combined into one composite measure to analyze the data. This was done by standardizing each variable, multiplying each variable by a regression weight according to how much variance each scale claimed in the composite, adding up the results of the products, and then adding a constant of fifty to make the number easier to work with. The composite measure of the coparental relationship will be referred to as the "global coparenting measure."

The factor analysis suggests that it is not feasible to assess the unique effects of the seven coparenting measures within the context of a regression analysis. Although the seven coparenting measures can be differentiated for conceptual or heuristic purposes, they represent aspects of one empirical dimension that cannot be differentiated for analytic purposes.

Regression for participation. Table 20 illustrates the best predictors of how frequently a father participates in child care activities and the amount of variance that is explained by each variable in the stepwise regression analysis.

TABLE 20

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION ON DEMOGRAPHICS AND GLOBAL COPARENTING MEASURE

VARIABLE	r	R^2	R^2_Δ	β
Child's age	-.47	.22		-.41*
Father's age	-.42	.28	.06	-.33*
Distance between coparent's homes	-.13	.34	.06	-.27*
Global coparenting measure	-.02	.36	.02	.14

*p<.05 level of significance

The most important predictor of the frequency of a father's participation in child care activities is the age of his child. The younger the child, the more time spent with the father. The amount of variance that is accounted for by the child's age is 22 percent which is a large amount of variance explained by one variable. The second predictor of participation is the father's age. The younger the father, the more frequently he participates in child care. This is expected since younger fathers tend to have younger children. The additional amount of variance that is explained by the father's age is six percent. The third most important factor in predicting frequency of father's participation is the geographical distance between the mother's and father's homes. The further the father is from his former wife, the less frequently he participates in

child care activities when he is with his child. An additional six percent of the variance is explained by distance. The reason that distance is related to frequency is that several items on the scale of child-care activities cannot be easily performed by both parents unless they live near each other (for example attending school functions). If the child lives primarily at his mother's house, and the mother's house is far from the father's house, the father is unable to perform some of the parenting functions.

When age of child, age of father, and distance between coparents are controlled for in the regression analysis, there is no significant relationship between the frequency of father's participation in child care and the quality of the coparenting relationship. The entire amount of variance explained by age of child, age of father, and distance between coparents homes is 34 percent, which is high. The coparenting relationship explains only an additional two percent of the variance. But the very slight correlation that does exist between the coparenting relationship and the father's participation in child care ($\beta = .14$) is in the expected direction of those fathers who have a more cooperative relationship with their former wife participating in child care more frequently.

The regression analysis indicates that the amount of interaction and the amount of conflict between coparents does not predict how frequently a father participates in activities with his child. It also suggests that universal factors common to parent-child relationships in all family structures, such as the child's and father's age, are more important determinants of frequency of participation than the coparenting relationship, which is specific to the divorced family. But geographical dis-

tance between the mother's and father's homes usually only exists with separated families. Presumably in intact families, the father lives with his child under the same roof. If the distance between parents can inhibit a father's activity with his child, then how far coparents live from each other should be an important consideration in restructuring the divorced family, if the goal is to sustain a father's participation with his child.

Regression for satisfaction. Table 21 describes the relationship between satisfaction and the independent variables.

TABLE 21

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF SATISFACTION ON DEMOGRAPHICS AND COPARENTING MEASURE

VARIABLE	r	R^2	R^2_Δ	β
Christian compared to Jewish	.02	.00		.15
No religion compared to Jewish	-.15	.02	.02	-.34
Religiosity	.19	.13	.11	.35
Child care schedule	.32	.20	.07	.28
Global coparenting measure	.01	.21	.01	.10

The best predictor of father's satisfaction with his care-giving activities is his religiosity. Fathers who are more religious are more satisfied than fathers who are less religious. The second predictor of satisfaction is his religion. Fathers with no religion are less satisfied than fathers who are Jewish or Christian. The amount of variance explained by religion and religiosity is 13 percent. The third predictor of father's satisfaction is his child care schedule, although it is not significant. Those fathers with more time with their child, are slightly more satisfied. Father's satisfaction with his child care schedule explains an additional seven percent of the variance of father's satisfaction.

Controlling for religion, religiosity, and the child care schedule, the relationship between the coparenting relationship and a father's satisfaction during participation in care-giving activites is not significant ($\beta = .10$). The total amount of variance explained after the last step in the analysis is 21 percent. The additional amount of variance explained by the coparenting relationship alone is only one percent. The very slight partial association that does exist is in the positive direction of those fathers with a better coparental relationship feeling more satisfied with their child care activities.

Thus, none of the variables considered in this study are significant predictors of the satisfaction fathers' experience while taking care of their child. In the discussion which follows the presentation of the findings, possible interpretations of this finding are explored.

Regression for influence. Table 22 describes the relationship between a father's influence on his child's development and the independent variables.

TABLE 22

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE ON DEMOGRAPHICS AND COPARENTING MEASURE

VARIABLE	r	R^2	R^2_Δ	β
Child's age	-.31	.09		-.51*
Distance between coparents' homes	-.27	.21	.11	-.33*
Child's gender	-.28	.31	.10	-.33*
Global coparenting measure	-.04	.33	.02	.20

*p<.05 level of significance

The age of the child is the most important predictor of how much influence a father perceives he has. The younger the child, the more influence the father feels he has on his or her development. The amount of variance in influence explained by the child's age is ten percent.

The second predictor of influence is the distance between the coparents' homes. The further apart the mother's and father's homes are from each other, the less influence the father feels he has on his child. The distance between the coparents' homes accounts for an additional 11 percent of the variance in the amount of influence.

The third predictor of infuence is the child's gender. Fathers perceive that they have significantly more influence on their sons than they do on their daughters. Ten percent more of the variance is accounted for by the child's gender. When the variables of child's age and

gender, and the distance between the coparents' homes are controlled for, the strength of the relationship between influence and the coparenting relationship is .20. The coparental relationship alone accounts for only two percent more of the variance after the age and gender of the child, and the distance between the mother's and father's homes have been controlled for. The amount of variance explained by all four variables is 33 percent. Although there is not a significant correlation between the quality of the coparenting relationship and the amount of influence a father feels he has on his child's development, there is a very slight positive relationship in the direction of those fathers with a more supportive and less conflictual relationship with their former wives feeling that they have more influence with their child.

Similar to the results of the regression analysis for "participation," the antecedent variables are the only significant predictors of the amount of influence a father perceives he has on his child. The only factor among the significant antecedent variables that can be manipulated is the geographical distance between the mother and father. The age and sex of the child are givens. That the influence a father feels he has is sensitive to how far apart he is from his child, further supports the desirability of close proximity between divorced parents to promote maximal parent involvement.

Test for Interactions. Table 23 shows the results of the test for interaction that was done for the independent variables of "child care schedule" and "geographical distance between the coparents' homes," to determine if the interactive effect would account for significantly more variance of the dependent variables than the additive effect of these variables. The interaction of distance and child care schedule could

either depress or enhance father participation, satisfaction, or influence, as distance is significantly correlated with participation and influence, and the child care schedule is significantly correlated with satisfaction. Also, since the child care schedule and to some extent geographic location are negotiable, information about the relationship of these variables to fathering would be useful in understanding and facilitating postdivorce family reorganization.

The interaction between the child care schedule and the distance between the mother and father significantly affected the father's influence on his child, but did not significantly affect participation or satisfaction.

TABLE 23

INTERACTION OF DISTANCE BETWEEN COPARENTS HOMES AND CHILD CARE SCHEDULE ON INFLUENCE ON CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

VARIABLE	r	R^2	R^2_Δ	β
Child's age	-.31	.10		-.57*
Child's gender	-.28	.18	.08	-.36*
Distance between coparents' homes	-.27	.31	.13	.19
Child care schedule	.18	.34	.03	.57*
Distance between coparents' homes and child care schedule	-.21	.43	.09	-.62*
Global coparenting measure	-.04	.45	.02	.16

*significant at the $p < .05$ level

The amount of variance accounted for before the interactions is 34 percent. When the interaction effect is added to the equation, 43 percent of the variance of influence is explained. Thus, the interaction increased the amount of variance explained by nine percent. The global coparenting measure explains only an additional two percent of the variance.

The form of the interaction between the schedule and distance is that the greater the distance between the father and his child, the lower his perceived influence on the child. Surprisingly, this inverse relationship is stronger when the father spends more rather than less time with his child. In other words the negative effect of living further away from his child is greater when he spends more time with his child instead of when he spends less time with his child. The reason for this finding is not clear, and should be investigated in future research.

In general, the findings suggest that the further a father lives from his child the less influential he will feel, and that more time with his child will not compensate for and could exacerbate his diminished feelings of influence. Furthermore, the effect of living close to his child can potentially compensate for scheduling deficiencies, but living far away, in combination with an inadequate schedule, interferes with a father's ability to feel influential on his child's growth and development.

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Summary of Data Analyses

The mean scores for the frequency, satisfaction and influence scales that measure fathering indicate that this group of fathers feels highly involved with their children. The sample fathers perceive that they actively participate in child care, enjoy their participation, and have substantial influence on their child's emotional development. The influence scale has the most variation from low to high on how influential a father perceives he is, and is the measure that is most sensitive to the effect of the antecedent variables.

The amount of interaction between coparents is associated with the content of the interaction. When the subject of the interaction is the child, there is a low to moderate amount of interaction between the fathers and their former wives. However, when the child is not the subject of the discussion, there is infrequent interaction between coparents. Possibly, one aspect of successful joint parenting may be the ability to limit the content of discussions between the coparents to subjects that pertain to their child. Or, perhaps coparents who are able

to interact about their child, seek each other out more frequently than coparents who do not discuss their child. However, when both coparenting scales are considered together, the frequency of interactions between the fathers and their former wives suggests that joint parenting of a child is not necessarily synonymous with frequent contact.

The quality of the coparenting relationships of the fathers in this group varies from highly supportive "ideal" arrangements, to highly antagonistic, conflictual ones. By no definition could most of the couples in this sample be considered ideal candidates for joint custody according to the requirement of being mutually supportive of one another. The amount of trust that the father has in his former wife would seem to be a positive indicater for a joint custody arrangment. Yet the trust scale has the lowest mean score of the three scales that measure the quality of coparental interaction.

The fathers' attitudes towards their former wives range from very positive to very negative, which is consistent with the ranges in the trust, support, and conflict scales. Their attitudes towards them as parents are more positive than their attitude towards them in general. The scores on the coparenting scales suggest that even if a father doesn't get along with his former wife and doesn't trust her, he can still acknowledge her importance as the mother to their child. The father's ability to segregate and compartmentalize the feelings he has towards his former wife as a mother from his general anger or hostility towards her suggests another aspect of the successful joint parenting arrangement.

There are significant correlations between the father's age, marital status, and education, and the frequency of his participation in

child care. Younger fathers, divorced fathers, and less educated fathers participate more frequently in child care activities than older, remarried, and more educated fathers. Also, the younger the child, the more frequent is the father's participation in child care.

The fact that divorced, younger fathers with the younger children feel the most influential and are the most active with their child is understandable within a life-cycle framework. Younger children require more care, and are usually easier to influence than older children. In addition, because there is often no one else to help, divorced fathers are frequently alone with their child and are able and needed to do more than fathers who have remarried.

The regression analysis confirms the significant correlations. The most important predictors of the frequency of the father's participation in child care activities were the child's age, and the father's age, and the geographical distance between the mother's and father's homes. As the distance between them increases, the father's participation decreases. A possible interpretation of this relationship is that if a child is not easily accessible to his or her father, the father may be unable to participate in some activities, such as school events, that he could do if he and his child lived closer. A certain breadth of activities may have to be sacrificed because of the distance.

There were no significant correlations between father's satisfaction with his child care and the independent variables. The regression analysis revealed that the most important predictors of the father's satisfaction with his child care activities were his religion and how religious he was. The more religious fathers felt the most satisfaction with their child care, and those with no religion felt the least. The

child care schedule is a slight predictor of a father's satisfaction; those fathers who see their child the most enjoy them them the most.

The child's age, father's age and the child care schedule are significantly correlated with the amount of influence a father feels he has on his child's development. Younger fathers, with younger children, who have the most time with their child feel the most influential. The child's age is also the most significant predictor in the regression analysis of how much influence a father feels he has on his child. The gender of the child is the second most important predictor; fathers feel that they have more influence with their sons than with their daughters. Geographical distance is also a significant predictor of how much influence a father perceives he has, as it is with frequency of participation. Fathers feel less influential as the distance between the mother and father increases.

To elucidate the effect of geographical distance on influence (which was significant in the regression analysis) it was combined with the child care schedule in a test for interaction. Significantly more variance of the father's perception of his influence was accounted for by the interaction between the distance and the child care schedule than by the additive effects of each variable considered alone. When the child care schedule is controlled for in the regression analysis, the further away a father lives from his former wife, the significantly less influence he feels he has on his child. Thus, the father's perception of the amount of influence he has on his child is more a function of the geographical distance between his and his former wife's home, than it is of the amount of time the child spends with him.

What is most apparent from the preceding analysis, is that the only

important predictors of the fathering measures are the antecedent variables. The power of the composite measure of the coparental relationship used in the regression analysis to predict fathering is very weak. The global measure indicates that the amount of conflict or support that exists between the mother and father does not significantly correlate with frequency of father's participation in child care, his satisfaction and enjoyment during his participation in child care, or his perceived influence on his child's development.

However, there are significant correlations that emerge between the independent variable of coparental interactions that focus on the child and the dependent variables of father participation and influence. The more contact that there is between the mother and father about the child, the more frequently the father participates in child care activities, and the more influence he feels he has on his child. Or, the more a father participates and the more influential he feels he is, the more often he talks about his child to his former wife.

Several questions emerge as a result of the preceding analyses: first, what accounts for the high involvement of this group of fathers with their child, in many cases, in spite of nonsupportive relationships with their former wives? Second, why is the quality of the coparental relationship a poor predictor of father behavior, satisfaction and influence, given that in previous research on divorced fathers, a father's postdivorce involvement with his child was highly correlated with a supportive relationship with his former wife? Third, what is the meaning of the correlation between coparental interaction about the child and father behavior and influence? These questions will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

> The trouble with writing about something on the frontiers of knowledge is that the frontier is likely to move while you are writing. (Brown, 1965)

Postdivorce Father Participation

A direct relationship to a child characterizes fathering outside of marriage, yet one legacy of divorce is the discontinuity of the father-child relationship. These phenomena describe this sample of fathers who are in general highly active and involved with their children within a changed family structure. It is clear, not only from the quantitative measures but from talking to the fathers, that in general there was very high participation in all aspects of child care. Items rated highest were ordinary activities such as having dinner together or talking to the child about the activities of the day. The high levels of participation in the child's life continued even after remarriage, when there was presumably another available adult. Only with older children and older fathers, and as distance between the mothers and fathers home increased, was there less involvement in direct care, all factors independent of the amount of support or conflict between fathers and their former wives.

Fathers as primary caregivers. Although there were no formal measures of the internal changes that took place as fathers began to parent

alone, what emerged from the interviews was an altered sense of consciousness as the fathers became the primary administrators of their childrens' daily lives when the children were with them. The theme that resonated throughout the fathers' experiences was the difference between having been a "helper" to their former wives, and having become the primary caregivers. Even those who were involved with their children from infancy usually had not learned to function in an administrative and organizational capacity.

> I was involved with my kids before, but my ex-wife really defined the household. I cooked a lot but she is the one who kept the kids clothes organized and knew what sizes they wore. She was the organizer of the household. When we were married the only decision I made was choosing my yogurt for lunch.
>
> When I was married and I was tired I would tell my wife to take care of him. There was a constant intervention from his mother to modulate our relationship according to how she wanted to see it go.
>
> When we were married I was always looking over my shoulder when I was doing my parenting thing. In some sense doing it by myself is terrific because I follow my feelings and instincts.
>
> When my wife and I separated, I realized my bond with with my child was through my wife; it was sort of like an indirect bond. In the beginning it was a very shaky experience for me
>
> I changed many diapers, took her for many walks, and was perfectly capable of feeding her. What I had not done was ever create a domestic nest.

These comments are consistent with findings from other studies that indicate in most intact families mothers are the administrators (even in dual career families); fathers seek more information from mothers than mothers do from fathers about parenting (Lewis et al.; 1981) and in general

fathers spend much less time in dyadic interaction with their children.

Although the above comments represent the majority experience there was a small minority who felt that they assumed major responsibility before the divorce and parenting alone did not create a major shift in their identity. In fact, one father felt he had less to do after the separation, since there was one less person in the household.

There was no discernible trend from the interviews between how involved a father was during the marriage and how involved he is now. Almost half of the fathers followed traditional paths in the marriage, where the mother took primary responsiblity for the house and child and the fathers saw themselves primarily as the economic provider. The other half of the fathers shared the child care, to a greater or lesser degree. Whether or not there was high or low involvement before the divorce, almost all the men now feel they take significant responsibility for the care of their child. In those situations where fathers were traditionally unavailable prior to divorce, the process of having direct responsibility for their child for periods of time alone altered their perception of themselves from secondary to primary caregivers.

The most frequently mentioned fear for these men after separation was whether or not they would lose their child. Typical comments were, "Will they love me? Will they remember me? How can I have a relationship with them?"

> My major concern was that I would lose
> B. and he would lose me. I gave away almost
> everything because I was sure she wouldn't let
> me have joint custody.

Or,

> "the only thing I had left from the marriage
> was the children, and I was afraid I was going
> to lose them. Being divorced is like when you
> learn you have a serious disease, life becomes

> a lot more precious. You are very conscious that your children cannot be taken for granted. They are a very scarce and very precious natural resource.

Most of the men felt vulnerable after the separation, indicating that no matter how much a part of their child's life they were, their position was not secure.

> I was conscious that if I just moved out of the house I would lose custody of the children. I didn't move out for a year until my legal rights were decided.

This theme was echoed again and again, that fathers had to remain in highly conflictual, unsatisfactory situations until there was a guarantee that their legal access to their child would not be compromised.

Only in those situations where there was both complete agreement about sharing child care in a joint arrangement, and the fathers had been fairly involved before the divorce, was there no concern about maintaining an active role in their child's life. How this fear translated itself into a desire for legal protection will be discussed in the section on joint custody.

Satisfaction with Fathering Behavior

The demands of literary exposition force a consideration of only one dimension of the concept of fathering at a time. Hopefully, certain interrelationships and interactions will become apparent in the process of trying to "pull together" the major implications of this study.

By distinguishing between the affective and behavioral components of father involvement, it was discovered that the satisfaction these men experienced was independent of how frequently they participated in child care activities, and often occurred in spite of a lack of support from

their former wives. The enjoyment obtained by the fathers was not only manifested in the high scores on the satisfaction measures but during the interviews as well. The positive or negative character of the coparental relationship was not associated with fathers' satisfaction with parenting, a significant finding which varies from results of other studies. Therefore, other explanations must be sought for their high satisfaction. Certainly time together is one factor, since those fathers who had at least half-time with their child were more satisfied than those who had less time. But even for those with significantly less than half time, the satisfaction scores were still high.

It is difficult to find references in the literature to the importance of the child for the father's growth and development. The concern is usually for the effect of the father's absence or presence on the child, as if the direction of influence were in only one direction. The data from the interviews suggest that men "need" their children, and the demands of that responsibility can become an important focus for their own psychological and emotional development. It would appear that once fathers began to take over as primary caregivers, their internal definition of themselves changed. Recognition of the importance of the child was expressed openly by most fathers:

> The big event in the divorce was that I was able to discover my son. One day he started to cry and said he needed to see me more...that turned me around.

> I really enjoy being a father. What does that mean? I enjoy teaching M. things. I really enjoy him, sharing things. Even though he drives me crazy sometimes, there is a powerful psychological bond between us.

> Being a father is the best and most successful thing I've done. Usually I

> do the least I can to get by; take the path of least resistance.

> About five years ago I went to California for three months. I missed the kids in a mild way, there wasn't a strong sense that I missed them. Now when I am not with them, there is a real strong wanting them.

> Having B. was the highest joy I had in my life. From the time I had my child I stopped aging. I have changed my way of being a man... through him I learned that control is not the only way of being a man...

Commitment. Based on the interviews with the fathers, their high satisfaction with their parenting appears connected to the commitment they have made to taking an active role with their child. Commitment is an inner event, as opposed to an observable phenomenon. The criteria the fathers used to judge commitment appeared to be more than actual time spent with the child, although that was a factor, but also priorities, and an adaptability and awareness concerning the child's needs. For example:

> If I was in a happy marriage, the priorities could be different. I could say I am going away for two days. But to go away for two days when he should be with me is a whole different message and I try not to do that.

Almost half of the fathers (n=21) felt they were more committed to their child than their wife was: the remainder felt an equal commitment. The greater dedication was expressed in fathers' attitudes toward the balance among their social, work, and parenting activities as compared to the balance they judged that their former wives had achieved. However, this is based only on the fathers reports, and if the wives were interviewed, the figures might be reversed. However, fathers judged their former wives' commitment, or lack of it, on the basis of behaviors they

interpreted as indicative of either an inability or an unwillingness of their former wives to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of their child. Only 20 fathers felt positively about the balance of their former wives' activities, compared to 32 fathers who felt positively about the balance among their own social, work, and parenting activities. Representative comments were:

> He is welcome at my house all the time. He is only welcome at his mother's during her three and one-half days and then she is supermom."

> The children get short shrift if there is a conflict with what is convenient for her.

> She gives up on parenting in order to do well at work and social activities.

> I think her social needs take a higher priority at times than is best for the children.

> Though she has improved, she periodically neglects her responsibilities and my daughter spends time at my apartment on the days and nights she is supposed to be at her mother's.

> I feel I am more important to D. and more committed to him. She put D. on the back burner.

About half of the fathers felt their commitment to their child was more intense and different from their commitment before the separation. Father who felt a change attributed it to their heightened awareness of their child's importance to them, and to conscientious efforts to meet their child's needs.

The high priority that fathers gave to their children, and frequent criticism of their former wives choices, raises several interesting questions. What exactly does it mean, that almost half of the fathers

feel they have a greater commitment to their child than their former wives? Is it necessary for the father to devalue his former wife to value himself? Can we equate "good fathering" with high commitment? Can one be overcommitted to a child? Can one be committed to a role (father) but not to the person that is part of the role enactment (child)? Is the concept of duty, a required moral obligation, part of their definition of commitment? What enabled this group of men to bind themselves emotionally and intellectually to the care of their child, where more typically men withdraw from their children after divorce?

Perhaps related to these thoughts on fathers and commitment are the change in priorities that often occur after divorce vis a vis a father's work demands. Usually out of economic necessity as well as due to social expectations, a father in an intact family gives priority to his work over his nurturing responsibilities. After separation, family life is often on a par with work for fathers with joint custody; it must be for him to fulfill his legal or contactual obligations to his child, although economic burdens may have increased. Child-care responsibilities become legitimate activities, and take on an importance at least (or almost) equal to the demands of work. This is demonstrated by the fact that thirty-seven fathers (84 percent) had to modify their work schedules to accommodate their child care arrangements.

Parenting alone after divorce requires hardship even in the friendliest situations, and requires enormous stamina when the divorce involves a bitter custody fight. There is pressure on the father and mother to justify the time, money, and effort spent in working out a joint custody arrangement. Even if a father's attitude towards child care initially was ambivalent or he did not anticipate the extent of his involvement,

once he began to be an advocate for himself as an involved father, his behavior had to become congruent with his publicly expressed beliefs. In such a situation, it is often hard to admit to ambivalence. One father expressed this:

> I want my kids but sometimes I think, which all parents think, god damn it, why don't they disappear. But, when you are involved in a battle like this you don't permit that side to come out.

Thus, the harder that any parent works at something, or the greater the hardships endured, the greater the dissonance generated by any suspicion that the goal has not been worth it; and the greater the necessity of believing that it has all been worthwhile. Perhaps some of the high participation, satisfaction and joy reported by the fathers in this study can be attributed to a need to achieve constancy between their beliefs and values, and their actions. If fathers are highly involved, they need to justify their high participation with values that endorse it; if they value high participation, then they must act in accordance with their beliefs. In either case, a dissonance between beliefs or values and behavior will create a state of tension which will motivate efforts to achieve consonance between their attitudes and actions.

Guilt was another theme that emerged, although it is not possible to do more than note its existence for some men as a motivation for some of their efforts, particularly if the break was "their fault". A feeling expressed fairly often was that divorce is bad for kids, that an intact family is best, and if you can not give your child the best family setup, at least give him the best of yourself. This was not the same as "making it up to the child." It was more like trying to do the best under the circumstances.

Predictors of Father Influence

The amount of influence a father perceives he has on his child after divorce taps an indirect as well as direct effect. It relates to control and an ability to effect certain behaviors from a distance. It is a different dimension from the actual behavior and enjoyment that occurs while carrying out certain child care functions. There is a greater spread of scores from low to high influence that doesn't appear in the other two fathering measures, which are more uniformly high.

Influence is very sensitive to the age of a child, and the strongest predictor of the father's perceived influence was the child's age. Fathers felt less influential with older children, and acknowledged their older childrens' independence. The second predictor of influence was how far the father was from his child when the child was at his mother's house. This effect was strengthened when the child care schedule was combined with the geographical distance between coparents. There is undoubtedly a critical distance beyond which influence declines. About two-thirds of the fathers lived within six miles of their coparent. The rest between about 10 and 60 miles, with one father who lived 150 and one father who lived 1800 miles from their former wives. Based upon the dissatisfactions of the fathers who had to drive and set up child care schedules according to the school week, once the distance began to involve an hour's drive, and physical residence at one home during the school week, difficulties emerged which could have led to diminished perception of influence on the child. The two fathers who lived very far from their former wives had their child less than 25 percent of the time, so they probably felt less influence not only because of the distance but

because of the time spent with their child.

Fathers, in general, felt less influential with their daughters than with their sons. The child's gender was the third predictor of influence. Particularly as the girls got older, some of the fathers said they felt less able than the mothers to deal with menstruation and other issues of adolescent girls.

> I'm conscious that I may not understand her needs.

> The girls seem to confide more in certain areas with my wife.

> Menstruation scares me.

In particular, many fathers expressed frustration at being unable to shop for clothes with their daughters as they got older.

> When my daughter tried on a bra, I had to go to the other end of the store.

Being able to accompany them to the ladies dressing room or ladies room when they were younger was another issue.

> I can't go into the ladies room when we are trying on clothes. That is the number one stumbling block. She can't button the buttons so she drapes it on and I finish it when she comes out.

> Did you ever stand outside the ladies room and wait for your 6 year old to come out and she doesn't come out? You sit there and wonder what's going on.

Many of the fathers acknowledged that we live in a sexist society and that it is hard not to be affected by sexism although there is an effort to resist it. But having influence over a daughter's development is not the same as finding it easier or harder to relate to her, and there was no discernible pattern in this respect.

Expansion of the father's role. On a theoretical level, role theory is of some assistance in attempting to understand the high degree of satisfaction, participation and influence experienced by this group of fathers. The role of most of the fathers in this study expanded after divorce to include activities and functions that were previously partially or exclusively performed by the mother. By striving and attaining skills necessary for performance of the role of a part-time single parent who can function alone with his child, an integration of a new identity appears to have occurred for many of the fathers. This identification as someone with an intense, active commitment to the care of his child, provided the father with enormous satisfaction and pride in his accomplishments.

> Now I feel more integrated and authentic about being a father (3 years later). I guess that means understanding where I end and he begins.

Traditionally, a man's identity has depended more upon command over economic resources than upon his relationship to his family members. Data from this study suggest that the experience of functioning as primary parent rather than secondary or auxilliary one, has enabled fathers to form and shape a new identity, and has changed the way they perceive themselves. For example:

> I am happier with them now and I feel better about myself now.

> I am more competent now; the quality is better.

> I had never really understood that I could take care of him before. I realized how important that part of my life (with my son) was to me. I hadn't realized it before. I felt relieved that I could take care of him; it wasn't a burden.

> I think I have always had nurturing qualities but they were sort of dormant before I began to be a co-parent. Coparenting is also a sense of obligation. I have something my son needs and isn't getting.

A generally very high level of confidence was expressed by most men:

> I feel I am doing a good job and being a parent is very difficult.

> I now feel competent in terms of disciplining; I never felt confident before.

On the other hand, the fathers who had their child less then twenty-five percent of the time often had difficulty when they were with the child, since there was not enough time to achieve a strong feeling of confidence and competence. One father explained:

> When I have the children, I'm nervous if I have nothing to do with them. I feel deficient in what I can do for them. I keep telling myself that being with them is enough, but I don't feel that way.

It is possible that the expansion of the parenting role helped compensate for the loss of the spousal role, so that the feelings of having failed in the marriage were made up by the satisfactions of increased competence with the child.

Joint Custody as an Act of Social Recognition

Reality is a matter of definition; a social situation has meaning according to how it is defined by its participants. The fathers' definition of their legal situation is a critical facet of their postdivorce arrangement which must be explored to understand and interpret the results of this inquiry.

Part of the force for a father's or mother's strong identification as a parent comes from performing with frequency, various activities that

are associated with taking care of a child. But to reinforce his or her identification with this role, there must also be acts of social recognition. Social demands are as necessary to identification as are the individual skills and abilitities (Biddle, Bruce, Thomas, 1955).

Legal recognition of the father's position as equal but alternate custodian of his child was an act of social recognition that was necessary for most of these men to feel that they were "legitimate" parents. Almost without exception, fathers indicated in the interview that they needed the legal status to complete their identification of themselves as having a significant and important effect on their child's emotional and physical development. There were two qualifying exceptions. The first was when the mother had chosen a lifestyle (such as homosexual or highly promiscuous or unstable) where, by most standards, the father would be considered the more fit parent, and his position was not threatened. The second was "ideal" situations when the father and mother had cooperated in a joint parenting arrangement for so long, that the the father's legal status was no longer very important to him. Legal acknowledgement was a necessary, but for the most part, not a sufficient condition. Most of these fathers felt they needed substantial time with their child and geographical proximity, as well as legal protection of their parental functions.

For most individuals who divorce, it is the first time they come into contact with the legal system, and for those who get involved in a custody fight, with the family court. The law carries enormous authority, and most people expect to live within its limits. Conviction was behind fathers' statements about the power inherent in a joint custody adjudication.

> Joint custody is important because it validates the father's importance. Children know parental love is constant and not fleeting; it isn't negotiable or arbitrary.
>
> It doesn't allow a father to fall into the trap of devaluing himself; it reminds him of his commitment and keeps him in the right direction when he feels vulnerable.
>
> It makes a statement to the child that there is a difference between parental love and romantic love.
>
> Joint custody limits the power of the mother.
>
> Joint custody was a guarantee that I would see my kids.
>
> When you have joint custody you are telling yourself constantly as well as the world around you that your values and commitment are to fathering and parenting even if you wonder if you are that good at it. It makes a statement for ourselves and keeps us in the right direction.
>
> Joint custody says that children are not an object of barter, they are not property to be divided like the house, car, and furniture.

Fathers advocated a legal guarantee for equal decision making power as especially necessary when there was high conflict between them and their former wives. Legal validation was critical for the continued commitment of fathers whose wives wanted sole custody and the power to determine the father's access to his child. Otherwise, as one father said:

> When a father is closed out, one way to handle the pain is just not to confront the source of your pain. A lot of fathers abandon their kids under traditional divorce situations, because they just can't reconcile themselves to the amount of pain as opposed to the amount of joy they are getting. Joint custody renurtures or reinforces being a father.

When there was a great deal of disagreement between a mother and father, they were not sharing parenting in the style of a couple with more similar beliefs. However, joint custody did provide a framework for "parallel parenting" to work. The force of a legal agreement needs more recognition and support as one method of providing the framework for joint parenting when parents are hostile to each other.

It might be worth noting again at this point that 37 of the fathers felt that joint custody was best for them and their child, and among those 37 were many with currently hostile relationships with their former wives. A father in particularly acrimonious circumstances said:

> My ex wanted me out and she wanted sole custody, have me visit every Sunday, if that. It was not that I valued my exwife's contribution. If I were a widower I think I would be a good father and I would have them all the time. I do not think they would be any less well off. But I felt that with a living mother, a child needs to have contact with both parents, and I would be depriving them of that. Because no matter what the parent is in my estimation, you are the parent.

Of the seven fathers who wanted sole custody, four had difficult relationships with their former wives and wanted sole custody as a means of coping with what they perceived as her unreliability. The other three wanted the power to decide what was best for their child because they did not like many of the decisions made by the child's mother. One of the fathers who felt his former wife was not a positive influence on his child said he could accept joint custody only because he felt it was really de facto sole custody. His former wife saw the child about one day a week and he made most of the decisions. Another father said that if he had to do it again, he would fight for sole custody because his ex-wife has been so uncooperative and hostile. But one of the seven fathers

who wanted sole custody for himself, felt joint custody was better for his child. Only four fathers felt that the mother's involvement was not important for the child; the other forty fathers claimed the mother's involvement was necessary for their child's healthy development.

One father had been in a protracted legal battle with his ex-wife for three years until the court ordered joint custody; his ex-wife had been fighting for sole custody. He, as well as several other fathers in high conflict situations, could not move out of the house until the decree was final because, as his lawyer said, "if you are thinking about joint custody of the children, you will never get it if you move out of the house. The judge will think you abandoned the children." Despite the bitterness and hostility that remained, he described how he and his exwife now divided parenting on a fifty/fifty basis:

> If you have conflict, you have to have the legal framework first, to bind the people's behavior. You have to have everything written down, signed by you and your ex-wife and lawyers as witnesses. You have to say if anybody violates this then it has to go back to court, and the person who violates it pays for court costs.
>
> If my ex prevents me from seeing the children by holding them longer than her custodial time, when I get them I can do the same thing.
>
> If you are a visiting parent and keep the children an extra day because she didn't allow you to see them, she can call the police, show them the custody order, show them the violation, that he is only a visiting parent and has no legal rights, and he can go to jail. With our situation, since we are both custodial parents, legally all either parent can do is see their lawyer. What you do is take away all those weapons that angry people will use. You make it impossible for them to do anything else. That allows the thing to work because you both know you have each other by the vitals. If you do it to me, I will do it to you.

For the majority of men, joint custody was the legal support they needed to sustain their perception of their significance to their child, and diminish their fears about the loss of the relationship, either through gradual attrition or by the mother's physically removing the child. A joint parenting arrangement was sustained without mutual support, as long as the parental rights of both parents were guaranteed by law.

The Coparental Connection

All of the fathers in this study maintained a direct relationship with their former wives. However, that relationship revolved around the mutual concern for their child; there was comparatively little additional contact.

Undoubtedly, a cooperative and mutually supportive relationship between divorced parents reduces the crisis-potentiating stress associated with divorce for all family members. Also, given current societal changes which include mothers in the labor force and fathers in the labor room, the issue has become not whether, but how, divorced parents can continue to share parenting effectively. Yet, there are antequated norms on how divorced spouses should relate, and little information on how they actually do relate.

This study did not directly focus on the postdivorce relationship between spouses; data from both mothers and fathers are necessary to investigate this process. However, within a systems framework, which considers the reorganization and redefinition of family roles as part of the divorce process, information from the father about his perception of the coparental relationship is relevant to his perception of his involve-

ment with his child.

In describing how fathers would like their relationship with their ex-wives to be, the phrase that occurred most frequently was "business-like." There was an acceptance of the need for contact, but a plea for it to be cordial, and confined to issues pertaining to the child, without the rancor and bitterness of the issues pertaining to the divorce. The phrase "I would like our coparental realtionship to be," elicited the following responses:

> Quiet, be able to talk about parenting issues without dumping all the other baggage onto the relationship.
>
> Civil; on business terms
>
> Cooperative and honest; she doesn't keep agreements
>
> Friendly, like old lovers.
>
> I would like it to be that, 'I hope your life is going well.'

Many fathers were quite amazed to discover that the relationship they had with their former wives was now acceptable to them, after several years of hostility.

> Right now, I wouldn't like our relationship to be any different, which is an amazing achievement and realization. A few years ago I would have answered differently.

In general, the hostility in the relationship decreases as time goes on, but several fathers said there had been no change in the amount of anger even after a couple of years, and for some, a deterioration of the relationship due to new circumstances in either parent's life. Information from the interviews suggests that the task for the fathers in bitter relationships was to distance themselves from the arguing and screaming

in order for them to accomplish the task at hand. Many of the fathers with disharmonious relationships found that "emotional distance" was the answer to their adaptation.

For example,

> When she starts to do her number on me I simply say, bullshit, I am not talking to you about it. Before, I would have engaged her, argued with her.

When decisions regarding the child had to be made, the issue often became one of how to resolve differences of opinion with the child's mother. For the fathers in nonconflictual supportive relationships, differences that arose were primarily negotiated by talking with each other. In high conflict situations, lawyers were sometimes brought into the negotiation. Resolution was often reached because the boundaries of the legal agreement were used to settle the dispute. Almost all fathers stated they tried to ignore all but major disagreements. A recurrent solution and trick to coping with behavior of their ex-wives that they found disagreeable, was to accept a loss of control over what happened at the "other house." In one fashion or another, decisions were made and children were not left in limbo, according to these fathers. In fact, many fathers said that joint custody was not hard for the child; it was the parents that had the more difficult task.

In most instances, the fighting that occurred between coparents, would not have been avoided with a sole custody disposition. The alternative of sole custody to either mother or father was not considered a viable means of reducing conflict, except for about four of the fathers in this sample.

High conflict relationships are most problematic, but focusing on

them obscures the fact that the majority of relationships within one to two years postseparation are primarily cooperative in nature, at least regarding the child. About three-fourths of the fathers had some support for their relationship to their child.

"Shared parenting" or "parallel parenting". One consideration, in evaluating the quality of the coparenting relationship appears to be how coparenting is defined. Joint parenting can be defined as "shared parenting" or as "parallel parenting" depending upon the nature of the coparental relationship. Shared parenting is defined as a process where divorced parents, each of whom is actively involved with their child, discuss and decide together what is best for the child. They are actively involved with each other.

> We wouldn't want to undermine each other. We support each other, and agree on 75 percent of things. We reconcile the rest somehow. We are lucky; she is competent, capable and responsible. There is a lot of interaction between me and my ex.

Parallel parenting exists when two parent are actively involved in their child's life, but not with each other. They do not discuss differences, but realize that each will do want they want.

> She thinks my choice of movies I take them to aren't good, and I think she is too much of a health food fanatic. We each promise to change.

> We do have joint custody. I have had to fight with her to make it clear that I do not have to say anything about what I do with the kids when they are with me.

If coparenting is defined as child-care tasks to be performed by each parent, independent of consultation with the other parent, then the quality of coparental interaction may be less important than if it is a

shared process. Coparenting has been defined as the process of caring for a child after the parents divorce, yet characteristics of different styles or types of coparental relationships have not yet been delineated.

Parenting interaction. The amount of coparental interaction that centered on the child (parenting component of the coparenting measures) was significantly correlated with the amount of fathers' perceived influence, and frequency of fathers participation with their children. The distinction between the parenting and nonparenting component of the coparental relationship must be kept in mind, because fathers' participation and influence do not relate to the amount of contact the father had with his former wife about subjects unrelated to their child. The frequency of contact the mother and father had with each other about non child-related issues was remarkably little. This suggests divorced parents can continue a parenting relationship while discontinuing a marital one.

"Parenting interaction" is the only one of the seven measures of the coparenting relationship significantly correlated with father participation and influence. In addition, the amount of support or conflict that existed as part of the parenting relationship does not explain the amount of "parenting interaction." There is almost as much discussion about the child in conflictual as in supportive relationships.

In Ahrons' (1980) research on divorced noncustodial fathers, parenting interaction was the most important predictor of father involvement, and the mother's supportive attitude toward the father was the second predictor. Thus, it was assumed that when the mother and father talked to one another, the tone of the discussion was more supportive than conflictual; otherwise, according to the argument in Ahrons' research, why would

interaction about child-rearing issues and a supportive attitude of the mother be important predictors of father involvement? The answer could be that her study of father involvement was with a sample of sole custody mothers and visiting fathers. Father involvement for noncustodial fathers is dependent upon support from the mother; in this sample of joint custody fathers, it is not.

Ahrons concluded from her study of noncustodial fathers that the quality of the relationship between divorced parents affected the amount and intensity of the father's involvement with his child. The data from this study only partially support her view. In this research, the amount of parenting interaction is correlated with the father's participation and influence, but the father's perceived support from his former wife did not significantly affect his participation or influence. With joint custody fathers, the father's relationship with the mother and her respect for his parenting approach was not associated with the amount of his involvement with his child. In other words, the joint custody mothers do not appear to be as powerful as the sole custody mothers in controlling the father's presence or absence; there is less risk of the discontinuation of the relationship, and he isn't as dependent on her good will for the survival of his relationship with his child.

This point is illustrated by one of the fathers in this study, a lawyer, who originally was a noncustodial father. He believed that women were more suited for care of young children than men, so when he divorced he chose to be a noncustodial father. For the first three years, he saw his son frequently and his relationship with his former wife was friendly and trustful, until she announced she was going to move to Florida be-

cause she liked warm weather. He then went to court to fight for joint custody, which he finally won although after she moved. As he said, "her moving showed she didn't value my relationship with our son." Although he feels he has less influence with his child than he did when their child lived closer, and he is continually enraged at his ex-wife for moving, he needed to affirm to himself, his ex-wife, and his child that he would not be denied access to his child, and that his child (now age 12) could not be denied access to him.

What needs to be explored, is why the father's frequent child-related interaction with his former wife contributes to high involvement with his child, or why high involvement with his child affects the frequency of child-related discussions. For example, does the process of actively communicating about his child enable a father to feel that he is an important influence on his child's growth and development? Possibly, in less cooperative situations, when a father must more aggressively fight for what he values for his child, he may feel more influential, and do more with his child to maintain his influence, than he would if there were more agreement between him and his former wife. On the other hand, if a father is active with his child and feels influential, he may want to be in more frequent contact with his former wife to discuss problems and progress. There is usually no one who is as intimately interested in the child's development as the child's parents. If a father is feeling like a "visitor", he may be helped to feel more involved by talking about his child with his former wife. If he can't commmunicate with his former wife, more active participation in his child's life may provoke grounds for discussion. When the relationship between a father's involvement with his child and his parenting relationship with his former wife is

understood, interventions can be designed to promote desired behavior, and prevent less desirable consequences. Further research is necessary to explain this relationship.

Limitations and Strengths of this Study.

Both the strengths and weaknesses of this study must be kept in mind while evaluating the results and implications of the findings.

A major strength of this research is that its subjects represent an unstudied group. Joint custody fathers have only recently begun to be studied, and samples have been small. In addition, there has been no previous research that has systematically included a sample or subsample of remarried fathers. Usually remarried fathers are excluded from the research study, or a few end up in the sample by default. Yet remarried fathers have had joint custody for the longest period of time and have negotiated a new family transition while retaining joint custody of their child.

The use of both quantitative and qualitative data is another strength of this study. The extensive quantitative data that were obtained with the questionnaire provided the structure for the analysis. Without the qualitative information, the analysis would have been limited to a mathematical analysis. The qualitative data not only enriched the discussion of the findings, but the experiences of the fathers added a personal dimension to the analysis which enhanced our understanding of fathers with joint custody.

Another important contribution of the qualitative data was to affirm the results of the quantitative data. There was consistency in the responses of the fathers on the questionnaire and their responses

during the interview. The qualitative data provided a means of substantiating the fathers' responses, thereby increasing the validity of the study.

There are also a number of limitations in this study. A major weakness is that this was not a random sample. A randomly selected sample would have permitted the findings of this study to be more confidently generalized to other populations of joint custody fathers, although at this time the population of individuals who have joint custody is not known. The sample only included white, middle and upper-middle class individuals and did not include other ethnic and income groups. Unfortunately, the inaccessibility of court records makes it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a random sample which would provide some indication of the population of divorced families with joint custody.

Given the variability of postdivorce family structures, it would have been desirable to have a larger sample size. If the sample were larger, comparisons could be made between groups of fathers with different family characteristics, such as with one, two or three children, or according to the child care schedule. Within group comparisons are not possible, however, with a sample of 44 fathers because there are not enough cases in each category to make meaningful comparisons.

A control group of fathers who did not have joint custody would have provided a comparison group for the fathers in this study. During the conception of this study, using two groups of fathers was considered. However, since there is so little descriptive information about men who have joint custody, a comparative study was considered premature. It was not known whether fathers who have selected joint custody are a priori different from men who become visiting fathers. Therefore, even though a

deliberate decision was made to study only fathers with joint custody, groups of fathers with sole custody and without custody would have enabled comparisons to be made.

Just as it would have added to the understanding of the phenomenon to have samples of fathers with different custody forms, studying the children and former wives of the fathers would have provided contrasting and differing perceptions of fathers behavior, providing a more valid picture of the situation. It was decided not to interview the ex-wives and children of the fathers primarily because of the constraints of time and money. But a benefit of not requiring the participation of both fathers and mothers, was that a more varied sample of joint custody fathers was obtained than if both parents had to agree to participate, and reside near one another.

Future Research Recommendations

The results of this study suggest several directions for further research. The first recommendation would be to study all members of the postdivorce joint custody family. The child's perceptions as well as the parents' perceptions should be obtained, including measures of the child's adjustment. An understanding of how joint custody is perceived by different family members would more clearly define its strengths and limitations for all who are involved.

Now that more is known about the variety of fathers who have joint custody, it would be useful to compare joint custody fathers with non-custodial fathers, controlling for some of the significant correlates of father involvement such as the age of the child, the child care schedule, and the geographic distance between parents. Comparative studies would

further illuminate what contributes to high paternal involvement and contact with the child after divorce and remarriage.

The coparental relationship also needs more exploration, especially as it relates to a father's involvement with his child. For some of the fathers in this sample it was very stressful to maintain contact with their former wives, yet frequent contact around child-related issues was correlated with higher frequency of participation in child care activities by the father, and more perceived influence on the child's growth and development. The coparental relationship is a significant part of a divorced parent's life, yet there is not enough information about how to support that relationship. Divorced parents have to be helped to continue a coparental relationship while discontinuing a spousal relationship, when the boundaries of each are often unclear. Without a more focused picture of what aspects of the coparental relationship tend to be problematic, it is difficult to help divorcing parents structure their relationship in a way that will minimize postdivorce conflict.

The effects of geographical distance and the child care schedule upon the parent-child relationship need further exploration. If the consequences of various schedules for children of different ages were known, then parents could arrange a child care schedule that would facilitate their involvement with their child, as well as address their child's needs.

Respondents' Reactions

Although reactions to the questionnaire and interview were not solicited, sometimes responses were volunteered by the fathers. The fathers' reactions are interesting since they provide a glimpse of the

effect the research had on the participants.

Reactions varied considerably. One father, who was not able to see his children more than about 25 percent of the week, and was in a battle for more time stated:

> The questionnaire made me feel very deficient. I love my children, but it made me feel deficient in the sense that I don't love them enough. The questions show some of your shortfalls in your interaction with the children.

More typically, respondents talked about the positive benefits of the questionnaire and interview.

> It was very helpful to me to do the questionnaire. It helped me focus on the positive side of what happened. It helped me see specifically what is good, and what was going on.

> I enjoyed doing the questionnaire; it clarified my feelings and confirmed that we have worked it out well.

> It was thought provoking; it made me aware that something is really there.

> I was shocked when you asked me what I would change about my relationship with my ex, and I couldn't think of anything. I don't think I would have realized that if you had not asked me.

Another father, the one whose ex-wife moved to Florida with his child, said:

> It brought up a lot of bad memories. It was interesting but not fun.

A father who has his child almost half time, but had to move because of work obligations stated:

> I feel good talking, even though it is painful. It is painful and difficult, but it gets into some authentic feelings about being a parent. I am amazed at the ineptness of most of the stuff on joint custody. There needs to be a

> book about how people feel who have it, and if they would recommend it to other people.

Most of the fathers in this study echoed the above view, that there is not enough information available from the people who have joint custody, and this was a primary motive for their participation. Almost all of the fathers said they would be willing to have their children interviewed and would be available for further research.

Implications for Mental Health Practice

Data from this study suggest some specific guidelines for social workers who are working with divorcing families, either in mental health agencies, in connection with the courts, or privately.

The most important decision divorcing parents have to make is how to continue to care for their children. Arrangements must insure, as best as possible, that the children will maintain close contact with both parents. Postdivorce child care arrangements should be structured to maximize the participation of each parent in child care and to minimize the potential for conflict between the mother and father.

The first step towards insuring that both parents, and especially fathers, sustain involvement is to try and negotiate a legal joint custody agreement. In that way neither parent has been disinfranchised, and the power to make important decisions has been retained by both parents. Fathers especially are inclined to be affected by the legal affirmation of their status. Legal custody helps sustain a father's convinction of his own significance to his child's positive development and can encourage and reinforce parenting behavior.

The quality of the relationship between the mother and father, especially at the time of the separation, does not predict whether a

joint custody arrangement can work. Many fathers in highly conflictual situations stated that joint custody could be successful if the legal agreement specifically enumerated the responsibilities of each parent, and did not depend on their good will towards each other as a means of resolving differences. If there is the legal and social expectation that parents must negotiate with each other, there is a higher likelihood that it will occur than if the expectation is that they are too embittered to even talk with one another.

Almost all couples at the time of their separation need to emphasize their differences so that they can endure the pain of separation and the break-up of the home. Frequently the antagonism and anger is a response to the deep disappointment and hurt each parent has experienced because of the failure of the marriage. If this is taken as an indication of their ability to coparent, rather than as a stage in the divorce process, then an opportunity to structure the postdivorce family in a way that maximizes the potential involvement of both parents will have been lost.

There is no evidence that joint custody creates problems after a remarriage or the birth of a child from a second marriage that in most instances would not have occurred if one parent had sole custody. Fathers who had stepchildren did not feel they were taking care of someone else's child while neglecting their own, and most reported good to excellent relationships with their stepchildren.

Obviously, there will be some situations in which joint custody will not be appropriate, but they should be thought of as the exception, not the rule. If one parent is destructive to the child then for the child's protection that parent should not have equal access. If both parents

continually use the child as a pawn in their battles, then sole custody might have to be considered. But the presumption should be for joint custody, not sole custody to one parent.

Physical custody of the child is a more complicated issue than legal custody. If the time cannot be evenly split, then the couple will need help in working out the child's living arrangements with the understanding that the arrangements are not written in stone, and can be modified as the needs of the parents and children change. However, the distance between the parents' homes is a critical factor associated with how influential a father feels with his child. Therefore, to the extent that it is possible, parents should be encouraged to live as close to each other as possible.

Joint custody is not easy for the parents. Most parents have the wish that they could have the child to themselves and that the other parent would disappear. Sometimes the child is all that is identified with what was good in the marriage. It is often unrealistic to expect couples to work out all the complexities of establishing two households during the crises of the dissolution of their marriage. Social workers should provide services during the process of divorcing and remarrying to assist parents who are working out arrangements for the care of their children. Divorcing couples should be prepared for the task of coparenting. At a time when there is often antagonism and highly destructive behavior between parents, mental health professionals must keep the needs of the entire family in mind while promoting as much cooperation and respect for one another as possible. Problems and difficulties should be anticipated, but not exaggerated. The task of coparenting within a joint custody structure is stressful and unfamiliar, and there

are few established guidelines. Groups for children, mothers and fathers would provide divorced families with support and guidance during periods of stress.This new form of postdivorce parenting needs attention from mental health professionals, and services should be provided in as many forms as possible.

The importance of children to their fathers, and the satisfaction that is derived by fathers from caring for their children should not be underestimated. It is not relevant to a father's postdivorce relationship with his child if he was a highly involved father before the divorce. If given the opportunity and encouragement, most fathers can become competent caretakers for their child. The fact that the father may have been a traditional "bread-winner" and not an active participant with his infant should not be a basis for deciding the postdivorce schedule.

Social workers are being used by the courts to educate them as to the advantages and disadvantages of different custody arrangements. Since little is known about how joint custody works, it is appropriate for social workers to consider it their responsibility to educate the court about new knowledge that is obtained from social science research indicating that joint custody is a viable option for divorced families in a variety of circumstances.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study demonstrate that the sample fathers have maintained an active and involved relationship with their children. They have taken on a wide range of child-care responsibilities and activities, are satisfied with the time they spend with their children, and feel influential in their child's growth and development. Fathers have become involved as primary administrators of their families, which is a role they rarely assumed before the divorce. Fathers have sustained what they define as meaningful involvement with their children, and have in no way given up or renounced their rights and obligations to their children. Remarriage, and the addition of new family members, did not diminish the father's involvement or commitment to his child. Contrary to the findings of Furstenberg et al. (1983), sociological parenthood did not take the place of biological parenthood when a father remarried a woman with children and became a stepfather.

The different kinds of family situations in which joint custody survives and thrives was unexpected. Even geographic distance did not create a major obstacle to coparenting in most instances. When coparents lived within a mile of each other, which half the fathers did, the logistical problems of the child care arrangements were relatively minimal. When coparents lived in different parts of the city, or in dif-

ferent cities, considerable ingenuity was used to maintain active involvement between the child and both parents. However, when the distance became too great between the father's and mother's homes, and the child spent most of his or her time with the mother, a father's perception of his influence on his child diminished. For maximal participation and influence of both parents, it is advisable for coparents to live as close to each other as possible.

Joint custody was considered by the fathers the best alternative for their children in 40 of the situations, and the best option for themselves in 37 cases. Although about two-thirds of the sample received some support in their role as father from their former wives, and were able to resolve differences about their children with some degree of satisfaction, for a third of the fathers this was not the case. High conflict situations engendered considerable bitterness and anger, but conflict, disagreement, and lack of support were not considered reasons to abdicate the joint custody arrangement. Instead, fathers asked for legal protection and help from legal and mental health professionals in negotiating and finding solutions to different opinions and values.

Joint custody fathers in nonsupportive relationships with their former wives were not undermined in their ability to be with their children, as fathers without custody traditionally have been. Their equal power in joint custody did not give the mother a legal advantage, and thereby prevented her from using that power to control the father's access to the child. The security of the father's legal position allowed him to function as a father somewhat independently of how good the coparental relationship was. Almost unanimously, fathers advocated joint

custody as a means of securing equal legal rights and responsibility for their child, and as a guarantee that they would not be dispossessed from their child's life. Although most of the fathers desired that their children live with them at least half time, when this was not possible, their legal status contributed to father's confidence in his position. The confidence, and freedom from the fear of being displaced, helped them sustain their commitment to their child.

The mothers and fathers in this sample were in moderately frequent contact with one another; about 60 percent (n=27) talked on the phone once or twice a week and the remainder less often, and less than half of the fathers (n=20) saw their former wives once or twice a week, the rest less frequently. Contact between the mother and father not regarding the child was minimal. Contact was moderate when the motivation for the interaction was to discuss their child. The more frequent the contact between the parents about their child, the more frequent was the father's participation in child care activities and the more influence he felt he had on his child's growth and development. The association between these behaviors suggests that either the process of coparental interaction promotes more child care activity and behavior by the father and a greater sense of influence, or it means that an active father who feels influential seeks out his former wife for discussion more often than a less active father does. The meaning of this association needs to be explored in future research so that appropriate means of support for mother, fathers, and children after divorce can be developed.

It appears that joint custody is an appropriate child care alternative in more kinds of family situations than is currently accepted or encouraged. Although two-thirds of the sample had relatively positive,

cooperative working relationships with their former wives, one-third had from moderate to major hostilities. Fathers can sustain high involvement with their child in conflictual, unsatisfactory relationships as well, or as poorly, as they can in supportive and satisfactory relationships with their former wives. In fact, where there was not good will between a father and his ex-wife, almost all fathers said that they especially needed the protection of joint custody. The contribution of the legal system in enforcing a child care arrangement when both parties are not in agreement has been underestimated, and the impediments to mothers and fathers working together to coparent after divorce exaggerated. In hostile situations, fathers felt it was unrealistic to depend on the good will between the mother and father, and contract law should be used to objectify and compartmentalize who is responsible for what.

Fathers stated that there are not enough social supports for fathers who want joint custody and who want to assume direct care of their children. Many fathers expressed a desire for groups of men in similar situations that would offer information as well as support and guidance to them, particularly during the separation phase of the divorce process, when they are in a crisis and most vulnerable. Problems between parents about their child can arise in the best of situations at any time, due to changes in the lives of the children, mothers, or fathers. There is a need for ongoing services that can be used by any family member whenever an impasse is reached, and before minor difficulties have a chance to fester and evolve into more serious problems.

Divorce was often an experience that, at least initially, decreased a father's self-worth, especially since in over 75 percent of the sample,

the wife initiated the separation. Successful parenting, on the other hand, appears to have enhanced fathers' feelings of value and helped to compensate for the loss of the intact family structure after divorce. Joint custody has more status than not having custody; and social affirmation for fathers who take an active role with their child (no one looks twice when a mother takes a child to the pediatrician) reinforced fathers' involvement with their children. Although fathers felt a loss of control over the child after divorce when the child spent time with the other parent, fathers in many situations felt they gained a more satisfactory relationship with their child after the divorce, perhaps because they had less to begin with. Direct care was not only satisfying, but reinforced fathers' definition of themselves as a significant parent. These factors strengthened fathers' conviction of their importance to their childs' growth and developement, thereby minimizing the risk of their withdrawal.

However, joint custody is not a process which should be idealized or touted as "the answer" to the pain of divorce and the stress of parenting and coparenting after the separation. For almost all of the fathers, it was the most satisfactory alternative and compromise to the various options after divorce. But considerable effort and pain was involved in making the arrangement work, and stress at some point in the process was experienced by virtually all of the fathers. The crisis of divorce and the hurt, anger and sense of loss that is experienced by everyone who divorces is not alleviated by joint custody. The loss of the intact family structure has to be accepted no matter what the postdivorce family structure. Divorced parenting is always difficult and problematic, and there are no easy solutions to how to raise a child in two households,

just as there are no easy answers to raising a child in one household.

Guidelines need to be developed that establish boundaries within which it appears joint custody has a chance of working. Results of this study indicate that the guidelines that have been used to recommend joint custody have been too narrow. Fathers in this sample were able to sustain high involvement with their children in many different settings with various amounts of support and help from former and current wives.

The task of postdivorce fathering and mothering needs far more support and affirmation from the legal and social service systems than they are currently receiving. Legal support is often unavailable for fathers who want joint custody if their former wives do not want it, and lawyers and judges even discourage parents who have no disagreement about joint custody from obtaining it. There are not enough social services available to educate and assist parents after divorce and remarriage, and before serious difficulties arise.

Research is needed on the mothers' and childrens' perceptions of joint custody arrangements to obtain a more complete understanding of the tasks and adjustments that are required of all family members who live within a joint custody family structure. Our society tries to preserve the family as long as it remains intact, only to neglect the family after it breaks down. It is now time to encourage the new configuration of parents and children that evolves after the intact family has dissolved.

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Appendix A

JOINT CUSTODY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Phone (home) _____

(work) _____

Today's date _____

Marital Status: _____

I.D.# _____

Please note:

1. The questions that inquire about your separation from your former wife refer to the physical separation (i.e. when you began living in a separate residence).

2. The phrase former wife refers only to the mother of the children for whom you have joint custody.

3. All questions that ask about your child refer to the youngest child for whom you have joint custody.

4. This face sheet will be removed from the questionnaire after you have completed it in order to insure the confidentiality of your responses.

PART 1A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please circle the number of the response that most closely applies to you, or fill in the requested information.

---

1. What is your current marital status? (circle only one)

   1. separated (whether legally or not)
   2. divorced
   3. separated or divorced and living with a new partner
   4. remarried

---

2. How many years were you married to your former wife (before your separation)?

   1. under 1 year
   2. 1 - 4 years
   3. 5 - 9 years
   4. 10 - 14 years
   5. 15 - 19 years
   6. 20 - 24 years
   7. 25 years or more

---

3. If you are separated (but not divorced), how long have you been living apart from your wife?

   _____ years _____ months

---

4. How long have you been divorced from your former wife?

   _____ years _____ months _____ not applicable

---

5. How much time was there between your separation and the divorce?

   _____ years _____ months _____ not applicable

---

6. If you are living with a woman, how long have you been living with her?

   _____ years _____ months

---

7. If you are remarried, how long have you been remarried?

_____ years _____ months

---

8. If you are remarried, did you live with your wife before you married her?

1. no (go to Question #10)
2. yes

---

9. If you did live with your present wife before you married her, for how long?

_____ years _____ months

---

10. Was your marriage to your former wife your first marriage?

1. no, previously married once
2. no, previously married twice
3. no, previously married three or more times
4. yes (go to Question #12)

---

11. If no to above, did your previous marriage(s) end due to the death of your spouse or by a divorce?

1st marriage: 1. death or 2. divorce
2nd marriage: 1. death or 2. divorce 3. not applicable
3rd marriage: 1. death or 2. divorce 3. not applicable

---

12. Were your parents divorced or permanently separated from each other?

1. no (go to Question #14)
2. yes

---

13. If your parents were separated or divorced, how old were you when they first separated?

1. under 6 years
2. 6 - 12 years
3. 13 - 17 years
4. 18 years and over

---

14. How old are you now?

_____ Age _____/_____/_____ Date of birth

---

15. In what religion were you raised?

1. Roman Catholic
2. Protestant
3. Jewish
4. other (specify)_____
5. none

---

16. What is your religious preference now?

1. Roman Catholic
2. Protestant
3. Jewish
4. other (specify)_____
5. none

---

17. How religious do you consider yourself now?

1. very religious
2. somewhat religious
3. not too religious
4. not very religious
5. not at all religious

---

18. What is the highest grade in school that you completed?

1. some high school
2. graduated high school
3. some college
4. Bachelor's degree
5. some graduate courses
6. Master's degree
7. Doctorate (M.D., Ph.D.) or law degree
8. technical degree (specify) _____
9. other (specify)_____

---

19. What is your current occupation?

_____

19a. What do you actually do in your job?

_____

_____

19b. How long have you been in this position?

_____ years _____ months

19c. Have you changed jobs since your separation?

1. no (go to Question #20)
2. yes

19d. Was your job change related to your separation?

1. no (go to Question #20)
2. yes

19e. If yes, what about your separation led to your changing jobs?

_____

_____

20. How many hours a week do you spend in occupationally-related work?

    1. under 20 hours a week
    2. 20-29 hours a week
    3. 30-39 hours a week
    4. 40-49 hours a week
    5. 50-59 hours a week
    6. over 60 hours a week

---

21. What was your own total gross income in the last year? (Include all sources, such as salaries, income from investment, interest, etc., but don't include income from new partner or spouse)

    1. under $10,000
    2. $10,000 - $19,999
    3. $20,000 - $29,999
    4. $30,000 - $39,999
    5. $40,000 - $49,999
    6. $50,000 - $59,999
    7. $60,000 - $69,999
    8. $70,000 - $79,999
    9. over $80,000

---

22. About what percent of your own yearly income is from your own employment?

    1. under 25%
    2. 25% - 50%
    3. 51% - 75%
    4. 76% - 90%
    5. 91% - 100%

---

23. How much of your household's present income is contributed by a new partner or spouse?

    1. none
    2. less than 25%
    3. 25% - 49%
    4. 50% - 75%
    5. more than 75%

---

24. How would you describe your financial situation now (net income available to you to spend from all sources including new partner or spouse) as compared to before your separation?

    1. much worse now
    2. worse now
    3. no change
    4. better now
    5. much better now

---

25. Based on your own best information and impression, how would you compare your present financial situation with your ex-wife's present financial situation? My financial situation is:

1. much worse than her situation
2. somewhat worse than her situation
3. about the same
4. somewhat better than her situation
5. much better than her situation

---

26. Do (Did) you pay alimony to your former wife?

1. no (go to Question #31)
2. yes

---

27. If you do pay alimony now, how much do you pay each month?

_____

---

28. For how many years are (were) you required to pay alimony?

_____ years _____ months

---

29. How do (did) you feel about the amount of your alimony payments?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

30. How frequently have (did) you missed alimony payments?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

31. Are you giving your former wife any money towards child support?

1. no (go to Question #35)
2. yes

---

32. If you do pay child support, how much do you pay each month for each child?

Child 1 _____ per month
Child 2 _____ per month
Child 3 _____ per month
Child 4 _____ per month

32a. For how long do you expect to be paying child support?

_____

---

33. How do you feel about the amount of your child support payments?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

34. How frequently have you missed child support payments?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

35. Are there other major expenses you are responsible for?

1. no
2. yes

If yes, please explain what they are_____

_____

_____

---

36. Did you feel your financial settlement was fair at the time of your separation?

1. no (please explain)_____

_____

2. yes
3. not applicable

---

37. How much conflict is there now about the financial arrangement between you and your former wife?

    1. none (go to Question #39)
    2. a little bit
    3. a moderate amount
    4. quite a bit
    5. a lot

---

38. If there are financial conflicts, how are they resolved? (circle all that apply)

    1. mutually by father and mother
    2. negotiated by lawyer
    3. negotiated by mediator
    4. by court action
    other (please explain)_____

    _____

---

39. Have there been any changes in the financial arrangements since your separation?

    1. no
    2. yes (please explain what kind of changes)

    _____

    _____

    _____

---

40. Which statement best expresses your feelings? I feel I have enough money:

    1. all of the time
    2. most of the time
    3. some of the time
    4. very little of the time
    5. none of the time

---

41. If you could change anything about your financial arrangements with your former wife, what would you change?

    _____

    _____

    _____

---

42. What is your former wife's current living arrangement?

1. living alone
2. living with a man
3. remarried
other (please specify)_____

---

43. If your former wife is living with a man, how long has she been living with him?

_____ years _____ months

---

44. If your former wife is remarried, how long has she been remarried?

_____ years _____ months

---

45. How old is your former wife?

Age / / Date of birth

---

46. In what religion was she raised?

1. Roman Catholic
2. Protestant
3. Jewish
4. other (specify)_____
5. none

---

47. What is her religious preference now?

1. Roman Catholic
2. Protestant
3. Jewish
4. other (specify)_____
5. none
6. don't know

---

48. How religious do you consider your former wife now?

1. very religious
2. somewhat religious
3. not too religious
4. not very religious
5. not at all religious

---

49. What is your former wife's current occupation?

_____

---

50. About how many hours a week does she currently spend in occupationally-related work?

1. under 20 hours a week
2. 20-29 hours a week
3. 30-39 hours a week
4. 40-49 hours a week
5. 50-59 hours a week
6. over 60 hours a week
7. don't know
8. not applicable

---

51. What is the highest grade in school that your former wife completed?

1. some high school
2. graduated high school
3. some college
4. Bachelor's degree
5. some graduate courses
6. Master's degree
7. Doctorate (M.D., Ph.D.) or law degree
8. technical degree (specify) _____
9. other (specify)_____

---

52. Approximately, what is your former wife's gross income in the last year? (Include all sources except new husband or partner)

1. under $10,000
2. $10,000 - $19,999
3. $20,000 - $29,999
4. $30,000 - $39,999
5. $40,000 - $49,999
6. $50,000 - $59,999
7. $60,000 - $69,999
8. $70,000 - $79,999
9. over $80,000
0. don't know

---

53. How would you describe your former wife's financial situation now (net income available to her from all sources including new husband or partner) as compared to before your separation?

1. much worse now
2. worse now
3. no change
4. better now
5. much better now
6. don't know

PART B. CUSTODY DECISION

This section is concerned with how you and your former wife arrived at a joint custody disposition. Please keep in mind that the questions in this section refer to the legal joint custody adjudication, and not to the individual visitation or child care schedule you have. The child care schedule will be dealt with in the following section.

54. How many children (biological or adopted) do you have?

_____

55. Please list the first name, age, sex, and residence of the youngest child for whom you have joint custody.

Name	Age	Sex	Legal Residence
		1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both

55a. Is the above child adopted?

1. no
2. yes

56. Please list the first names, ages, sexes, and residences of other children you have in a joint custody arrangement.

	Name	Age	Sex	Legal Residence
1.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both
2.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both

	Name	Age	Sex	Legal Residence
3.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both
4.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both

56a. If any of the above children are adopted, please list which ones.

_____

57. Please list the first names, ages, sexes, residences of any other children you have.

	Name	Age	Sex	Legal Residence
1.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both other_____
2.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both other_____
3.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both other_____
4.			1. male 2. female	1. mother 2. father 3. both other_____

57a. If any of the above children are adopted, please list which ones.

_____

58. How did you and your former wife learn about joint custody? (circle all that apply)

1. from friends
2. from divorce literature
3. from a counselor or therapist
4. from your laywers
5. from newspaper or magazine articles
6. from a TV or radio show

other:_____

_____

---

59. Who initiated the idea to seek joint custody of your child?

1. you did
2. your former wife did
3. you both did
4. the laywer for either you or your former wife did
5. the judge did
6. a counselor or therapist did

other (explain)_____

---

60. Which statement best describes your situation at the time of your separation?

1. we both wanted joint custody
2. she wanted joint custody and I didn't
3. I wanted joint custody and she didn't
4. neither of us wanted joint custody

---

61. How much conflict was there between you and your former wife about joint custody?

1. none
2. a little
3. moderate
4. much
5. very much

---

62. How long after your separation did you reach a decision regarding joint custody?

1. 0 - 3 months
2. 4 - 6 months
3. 7 - 9 months
4. 10 - 12 months
5. 13 - 18 months
6. 19 - 24 months
7. more than 24 months

---

63. How was joint custody decided upon?

1. mutually agreed upon by father and mother (without a lawyer or mediator, or before consulting one)
2. negotiated via a mediator
3. negotiated via lawyers
4. by court order (when agreement could not be reached)

other (specify) _____

_____

---

64. Have you changed the custody form since your separation?

1. no
2. yes

If yes, what type of custody did you initially have?

_____

How long did you have it? _____

Why did you change to joint custody? _____

_____

---

65. Was custody contested in court?

1. no
2. yes

---

66. What custody form did you want for yourself when you first separated?

1. father custody/visiting mother
2. mother custody/visiting father
3. joint custody
4. split custody (each parent has a child)
5. no formal arrangement

other _____

Why did you prefer the above disposition? _____

_____

66a. What custody form did your former wife want when you first separated?

1. father custody/visiting mother
2. mother custody/visiting father
3. joint custody
4. split custody (each parent has a child)
5. no formal arrangement

other _____

---

67. What custody form did you think would be best for your child when you first separated?

1. father custody/visiting mother
2. mother custody/visiting father
3. joint custody
4. split custody
5. no formal arrangement
other_____

Why did you think this form would be best for your child?_____

_____

68. What custody form do you want now?

1. father custody/visiting mother
2. mother custody/visiting father
3. joint custody
4. split custody
5. no formal arrangement
other_____

Why do you want this form?_____

_____

69. What custody form do you think would be best for your child now?

1. father custody/visiting mother
2. mother custody/visiting father
3. joint custody
4. split custody
5. no formal arrangement
other_____

Why do you feel the above form would be best for your child now?_____

_____

70. How do you feel about joint custody now?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

71. Would you recommend joint custody to others?

1. no
2. yes (go to Question #72)
3. maybe

If no or maybe, why not?_____

_____

---

72. What has been the attitude of your parents towards your having legal joint custody of your child (independent of your particular child care schedule)?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. not applicable

---

73. What has been the attitude of your friends towards your having legal joint custody of your child (independent of your particular child care arrangements)?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. not applicable

---

74. Since your divorce, have you ever belonged to any support groups (e.g., parents without partners, church groups, fathers rights)?

1. no (Go to Question #75)
2. yes

If yes, please specify which ones(s) and how helpful each one was:

	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

PART C. CHILD CARE ("VISITATION") SCHEDULE

This section deals with your specific child care arrangements or "visitation" schedule. Because there appears to be an almost infinite variety of schedules within joint custody families, please give enough details about your particular arrangement to describe it accurately. In other words, how is your child's time divided between your home and your former wife's home? If you have more than one child and the schedule is different for each child, please give the schedule for your youngest child.

---

75. What is the specific schedule for your child now? (i.e. which days or weeks does he or she spend at your house, and which at his or her mother's house? How are summers and holidays divided?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

---

76. How many child care schedules have you had since your separation? (either legally or informally arranged by the parents)

_____

---

77. How much disagreement was there between you and your former wife about your child care scheudle when you first separated?

1. none
2. a little
3. moderate
4. much
5. very much

---

78. How much disagreement is there now between you and your former wife about your child care schedule?

1. none
2. a little
3. moderate
4. much
5. very much

---

79. How do you feel about the child care schedule you and your former wife have now?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

80. Would you like to have a different child care schedule from the one that you have now?

1. no (go to Question #82)
2. yes

---

81. If yes to above, how would you like it to be different?

1. more time with my child
2. less time with my child
3. same amount of time but with a different schedule

Explain_____

_____

---

82. How flexible (i.e. ease with which temporary changes can be made) is your child care schedule now?

1. very flexible
2. somewhat flexible
3. mixed
4. somewhat inflexible
5. very inflexible

---

83. Which of the following ways do you use to arrange for changes in the schedule? (circle all that apply)

1. spontaneous call from you or from your former wife
2. when your child is picked up or brought home
3. the child arranges own changes
4. we adhere to court-ordered schedule and don't make changes

other (specify)_____

_____

---

84. How often does your child speak by telephone with his or her mother when at your house?

_____

85. Who usually initiates the call with his or her mother? (circle all that apply)

1. I do
2. your child does
3. mother does
other_____

86. How often do you have phone contact with your child when at his or her mother's house?

_____

87. Who usually initiates the call when your child is at his or her mother's house? (circle all that apply)

1. I do
2. your child does
3. mother does
other _____

88. When you are at work, how physically <u>available</u> are you to receiving telephone calls either from your child or about your child?

1. not available
2. rarely available
3. somewhat available
4. usually available
5. always available
6. not applicable

89. About how often <u>per week</u> in the last three months did you receive calls at work either

1. from your child? _____
2. about your child? _____ from whom? _____

90. What is the attitude of your parents towards your current child care schedule (independent of the joint custody disposition)?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. not applicable

91. What is the attitude of your friends towards your current child care schedule (independent of the joint custody disposition)?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. don't know

---

92. What is the attitude of the people at your place of work towards your child care schedule?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. don't know
7. not applicable

92a. How does your child feel about the schedule he/she has now?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied
6. don't know

92b. Do you think the child care schedule you have now is the best one for your child?

1. no
2. yes

Why or why not?_____

_____

---

93. How far is your house from that of your former wife?

_____

93a. How does your child usually travel between your house and your former wife's house?

1. Walk or bike. How many blocks? _____
2. Public transportation. Travel time? _____
3. Automobile. Driving time? _____
4. Long distance train or plane. Travel time? _____

---

94. How does your child get from one home to the other? (circle all that apply, and then underline the method used most often)

1. I bring him or her
2. my former wife brings him or her
3. my current partner/wife brings him or her
4. my former wife's husband/partner brings him or her
5. a babysitter or housekeeper
6. the school bus
7. child goes by himself or herself

other (please explain)_____

---

95. Who takes major responsibility for your child's transportation from one home to another?

1. mother
2. father
3. both
4. other_____

---

96. Does your child have a full set of clothes at each house?

1. no
2. yes (go to Question #97)

96a. If no, which home has the more complete set of clothes?

1. mother
2. father
3. neither

---

97. Does your child take any special toys or clothes back and forth from your to your former wife's home?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. usually
5. always

---

98. What kind of problems have you had with your child's moving between two households?

_____

_____

---

99. How have you dealt with the above problems?

_____

_____

---

100. In whose home do you think your child feels most comfortable?

1. mother's home
2. father's home
3. both homes

---

101. Did either parent remain in your original marital home after the separation?

1. no (go to Question #102)
2. yes

101a. If yes, which one?

1. mother
2. father (Go to Question #103)

---

102. How long after your separation did it take for your home to feel like a home to you?

_____

---

103. What is the sleeping arrangement for your child in your home?

1. child has his own room
2. shares room with siblings or stepsiblings
3. sleeps in living room or den
4. shares room with parent

other (specify)_____

---

104. How satisfied are you with the sleeping arrangement for your child in your home?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

105. What is the sleeping arrangement for your child in your former wife's home?

1. child has his own room
2. shares room with siblings or stepsiblings
3. sleeps in living room or den
4. shares room with parent

other (specify)_____

---

106. When your child is scheduled to be with you, do you allow him or her to sleep over at a friend's or relative's house?

1. no
2. yes

If yes, how often?_____

---

107. Do you have any regular household help?

1. no
2. yes

If yes, how often?_____

---

108. Do you have any regular child care arrangements (i.e., significant people who care for your child or day care or after-school programs) when you aren't with him or her?

1. no (go to next page)
2. yes

---

109. If you do have regular child care arrangements, what kind do you have, by whom, and how often?

_____

_____

109a. How do you feel about the child care arrangements you have when you are not with your child?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied
6. not applicable

109b. Do you know any other fathers who are parenting in an arrangement similar to yours?

1. no (go to Question #135)
2. yes

109c. If yes, do you ever discuss your own situation (questions or problems) with them?

1. no
2. yes

PART D. FATHERING

This part inquires about your involvement in numerous activities associated with fathering. If you have more than one child, please fill out this section for your youngest child.

In the following section, I would like to know the degree of enjoyment (i.e. satisfaction) you experience during your participation in the child care activities listed below. I would also like you to rate the frequency of your participation in each activity when your child is with you. There should be two responses for each question unless the response is "Not applicable" or "Never."

Enjoyment/satisfaction during your participation will be rated as:

1. Very dissatisfied
2. Somewhat dissatisfied
3. Mixed
4. Somewhat satisfied
5. Very satisfied
0. Not applicable

Frequency will be rated as:

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very often

How much do you enjoy (take satisfaction in): / How frequently do you participate in:	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
135. Going shopping with your child for any item that he or she needs	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
136. Dressing and grooming your child	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
137. Disciplining your child	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
138. Taking your child for recreational activities	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5
139. Attending school-related functions	1	2	3	4	5	0	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

How much do you enjoy (take satisfaction in):	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
140. Arranging for child care	1	2	3	4	5	0
141. Planning after school or daytime activities	1	2	3	4	5	0
142. Helping your child learn a new skill or complete a school assignment	1	2	3	4	5	0
143. Playing active games with your child such as ball, running, exercises	1	2	3	4	5	0
144. Playing quiet games with your child such as cards, drawing, reading	1	2	3	4	5	0
145. Discussing any concerns (fears, feelings that your child might have	1	2	3	4	5	0
146. Talking to your child about what he or she did during the day	1	2	3	4	5	0
147. Putting your child to bed	1	2	3	4	5	0
148. Comforting your child when he or she is upset	1	2	3	4	5	0
149. Fostering the religious training of your child	1	2	3	4	5	0
150. Fostering the ethical or moral training of your child	1	2	3	4	5	0

How frequently do you participate in:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
140. Arranging for child care	1	2	3	4	5
141. Planning after school or daytime activities	1	2	3	4	5
142. Helping your child learn a new skill or complete a school assignment	1	2	3	4	5
143. Playing active games with your child such as ball, running, exercises	1	2	3	4	5
144. Playing quiet games with your child such as cards, drawing, reading	1	2	3	4	5
145. Discussing any concerns (fears, feelings that your child might have	1	2	3	4	5
146. Talking to your child about what he or she did during the day	1	2	3	4	5
147. Putting your child to bed	1	2	3	4	5
148. Comforting your child when he or she is upset	1	2	3	4	5
149. Fostering the religious training of your child	1	2	3	4	5
150. Fostering the ethical or moral training of your child	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

How much do you enjoy (take satisfaction in):	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Not applicable
151. Spending time alone with your child	1	2	3	4	5	0
152. Arranging to have friends over for your child to play with	1	2	3	4	5	0
153. Including your child in household tasks	1	2	3	4	5	0
154. Having dinner with your child	1	2	3	4	5	0
155. Cooking for your child	1	2	3	4	5	0
156. Delegating tasks to child-care person and checking quality of work	1	2	3	4	5	0
157. Handling any problems that occur with your child at school (either with teacher or with peers)	1	2	3	4	5	0

How frequently do you participate in:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
151. Spending time alone with your child	1	2	3	4	5
152. Arranging to have friends over for your child to play with	1	2	3	4	5
153. Including your child in household tasks	1	2	3	4	5
154. Having dinner with your child	1	2	3	4	5
155. Cooking for your child	1	2	3	4	5
156. Delegating tasks to child-care person and checking quality of work	1	2	3	4	5
157. Handling any problems that occur with your child at school (either with teacher or with peers)	1	2	3	4	5

158. Who takes your child for routine dental and physical exams? Circle all that apply.

1. father
2. mother
3. other (specify)_____

159. Who takes your child to the doctor when he or she is sick? Circle all that apply.

1. father
2. mother
3. other (specify)_____

Thinking about the past six months, please circle the number that best indicates how much influence you have had in the following areas of your child's life:

		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
160.	The routine daily care and and safety of your child (grooming, bedtime, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
161.	The intellectual development of your child (skill acquisition, schooling, reading)	1	2	3	4	5
162.	The physical development of your child (sports, interest in one's body, health)	1	2	3	4	5
163.	Recreational activities of your child	1	2	3	4	5
164.	Teaching your child how to behave (manners, discipline, responsibilities)	1	2	3	4	5
165.	Emotional development of your child (overcoming fears, discussing feelings)	1	2	3	4	5
166.	Religious development of your child	1	2	3	4	5
167.	Moral or ethical development of your child (i.e., importance of telling the truth, not stealing)	1	2	3	4	5
168.	Giving your child a feeling of being part of a family (e.g., family gatherings)	1	2	3	4	5
170.	Social development of your child (peer friendships)	1	2	3	4	5

171. Are you influential in any other areas?

Specify: _____

Compared to before your separation, how much influence do you now have on your child's development?

1. much less than before the separation
2. somewhat less than before the separation
3. the same as before the separation
4. somewhat more than before the separation
5. much more than before the separation

		Much Less	Somewhat Less	Same	Somewhat More	Much More
172.	The routine daily care and safety of your child (grooming, bedtime, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
173.	The intellectual development of your child (skill acquisition, schooling, reading)	1	2	3	4	5
174.	The physical development of your child (sports, interest in one's body, health)	1	2	3	4	5
175.	Recreational activities of your child	1	2	3	4	5
176.	Teaching your child how to behavior (manners, discipline, responsibilities)	1	2	3	4	5
177.	Emotional development of your child (overcoming fears, discussing feelings)	1	2	3	4	5
178.	Religious development of your child	1	2	3	4	5
179.	Moral or ethical development (i.e., importance of telling the truth, not stealing)	1	2	3	4	5
180.	Giving your child a feeling of being part of a family (e.g., family gatherings)	1	2	3	4	5
181.	Financial affairs of your child (making decisions about money for the child)	1	2	3	4	5
182.	Social development of your child (peer friendships)	1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the best answer for you during the last six months.

183. How often do you find your child cooperative when he or she is with you?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

184. How often do you find your child cooperative with his or her friends?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

185. How often do you find yourself thinking about charac-teristics of your child that annoy you?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

186. How often do you find it interesting to be around your child?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

187. How often are you disappointed in your child?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

(During the last six months):

188. No parent is completely responsive to the needs of a child. How responsive would you say you are to your child?

1. very little
2. a little
3. somewhat
4. much
5. very much

---

189. In general, how much responsibility do you feel that you take for your child's growth and development?

1. very little
2. a little
3. somewhat
4. much
5. very much

---

190. Do you ever feel like a visitor in your child's life?

1. no
2. yes

If yes, how often, and at what times do you feel this way?

_____

_____

---

191. How do you feel about the relationship you have with your child?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

192. How do you feel about the amount of time you have with your child?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

(During the last six months):

192a. Would you prefer less time or more time with your child?

1. less time
2. more time
3. I like it the way it is

---

193. What kinds of activities and responsibilities have you enjoyed the most with your child?

_____

_____

---

194. What kinds of responsibilities or activities have you enjoyed the least with your child?

_____

_____

---

195. What do you think your child enjoys or admires about you?

_____

_____

---

196. When you come home, how often do you inquire about how your child spent his or her time when you were not with them?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

197. While you are away from your child, do you have a general idea of how your child is spending his or her time?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

Please circle the best answer for you:

198. How often have you felt a conflict between your work schedule and child care responsibilities?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

199. Have you changed or modified your work schedule in any way to accommodate to your child care responsibilities?

1. no
2. yes (Please explain)_____

_____

_____

---

200. How often have you felt a conflict between your social life and your child care responsibilities?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

201. Have you changed or modified your social life in any way to accommodate to your child care responsibilities?

1. no
2. yes (Please explain)_____

_____

_____

---

202. Some children seem to do well without active involvement of both parents. How important do you feel your active involvement is for your child's well being?

1. not at all important
2. not very important
3. it doesn't matter either way
4. important
5. very important

---

203. How important do you think it is for your child's well being for him or her to maintain an active involvement with their other parent?

1. not at all important
2. not very important
3. it doesn't matter either way
4. important
5. very important

---

204. How much do you feel the sex of your child affects your fathering?

1. not at all
2. a little
3. somewhat
4. much
5. very much

In what ways:_____

_____

---

205. Compared to when you were married to your former wife, how do you feel about your competence as a father? I feel:

1. much more competent now.
2. somewhat more competent now.
3. about the same.
4. somewhat less competent now.
5. much less competent now.

---

206. Do you have more or less contact with your child now than you had during your marriage? I see my child:

1. much more now.
2. somewhat more now.
3. about the same.
4. somewhat less now.
5. much less now.

---

207. How would you describe your overall adjustment to the divorce (or separation)?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor
6. good at first, now poor
7. poor at first, now good

---

208. In general, how would you rate yourself as a father?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

208a. How do you think your child would rate you as a father?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

---

209. How would you describe your child's emotional or mental health?

1. excellent
2. good
3. poor

Please explain: _____

_____

---

210. In general, how has your child's physical health been?

1. excellent
2. good
3. poor

Please explain: _____

_____

210a. Overall, how would you describe your child's adjustment to the divorce (or separation)?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor
6. good at first, now poor
7. poor at first, now good

210b. What does your child call you?

_____

PART E. RELATIONSHIP WITH FORMER WIFE

This section pertains to the frequency of contact and the quality of interaction between you and your former wife.

---

211. Looking back to the time when the decision to end your marriage was made, which of the following statements best reflects what you thought about the decision then?

1. My former wife decided to separate and I was completely against it.
2. Although my former wife pushed for the separation, I did play a part in the decision.
3. It was a mutual decision in which we both participated.
4. Although I pushed for the separation, my former wife did play a part in the decision.
5. I decided to separate and my former wife was completely against it.

---

212. Who actually initiated the separation?

1. yourself
2. your former wife
3. both

---

213. Thinking about the past 6 months, how often have you talked on the phone with your former wife?

1. every day or almost every day
2. about once or twice a week
3. a few times a month
4. less often than a few times a month
5. rarely or never

---

214. Thinking about the past 6 months, how often did you talk with your former wife in person?

1. every day or almost every day
2. about once or twice a week
3. a few times a month
4. less often than a few times a month
5. rarely or never

Thinking back over the <u>past six months</u>, please circle the answer that best reflects the frequency of occurrence of each situation.

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very often
0. Not applicable

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Not applicable
215.	When you and your former wife discussed parenting issues, how often did an argument result?	1	2	3	4	5	0
216.	How often did you feel hostility was present in the interaction when you discussed parenting issues?	1	2	3	4	5	0
217.	When you discussed parenting issues how often was the conversation stressful or tense?	1	2	3	4	5	0
218.	When your child complained about your former wife, how often did you find yourself agreeing or siding with your child?	1	2	3	4	5	0
219.	When your former wife needed to make a change in child care arrangements, how often did you go out of your way to accommodate?	1	2	3	4	5	0
220.	Did your former wife go out of the way to accommodate to any changes you needed to make?	1	2	3	4	5	0
221.	How often did you feel that your former wife understood and was supportive of your special needs as a joint custodial father?	1	2	3	4	5	0
222.	How often did you and your former wife have basic differences of opinion about issues related to child rearing?	1	2	3	4	5	0
223.	When you needed help regarding your child, how often did you seek it from your former wife?	1	2	3	4	5	0
223a.	How often did you dread talking with your former wife about issues relating to your child?	1	2	3	4	5	0
223b.	How often did you look forward to talking with your former wife about issues relating to your child?	1	2	3	4	5	0

There are a number of ways that former spouses continue to relate to one another after divorce in areas that do not involve parenting. Please circle the number that best represents how often you and your former wife related in these ways within the past six months.

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
224.	Talking about friends in common	1	2	3	4	5
225.	Discussing finances not related to your child	1	2	3	4	5
226.	Talking to each other about your marriage	1	2	3	4	5
227.	Talking about your families of origin (parents, brothers, sisters)	1	2	3	4	5
228.	Talking about new experiences you are having in your present lives	1	2	3	4	5
229.	Talking about personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
230.	Talking about why the marriage ended	1	2	3	4	5
231.	Talking about reconciling	1	2	3	4	5
232.	Helping each other with household tasks not related to your child	1	2	3	4	5
233.	"Dating" each other	1	2	3	4	5
234.	Having physical contact (hugging, kissing)	1	2	3	4	5
235.	Having sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5
236.	Talking about your work	1	2	3	4	5
237.	Seeing members of your former wife's family	1	2	3	4	5
237a.	Borrowing or lending each other money	1	2	3	4	5
237b.	Attending the same social activities (parties, etc.) but not together	1	2	3	4	5

How often have the following parenting responsibilities been shared between you and your former wife within the past six months?

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
238.	Making major decisions regarding your child's life (schools, camp)	1	2	3	4	5
239.	Making day-to-day decisions regarding your child's life (bedtime, what clothes to buy, TV watching)	1	2	3	4	5
240.	Talking about personal problems your child may be experiencing	1	2	3	4	5
241.	Talking about problems one of you is having in dealing with your child	1	2	3	4	5
242.	Planning special events in your child's life (birthdays, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
243.	Talking about your child's accomplishments and progress	1	2	3	4	5
244.	Talking about problems your child is having	1	2	3	4	5
245.	Talking about how your child is adjusting to the separation/divorce/remarriage	1	2	3	4	5
246.	Talking about problems you are having with each other related to caring for your child	1	2	3	4	5
247.	Discussing finances in regard to your child	1	2	3	4	5

248. Other (specify)_____

_____

Within the past six months, how much disagreement do you feel there has been between you and your former wife in the following areas that pertain to your child? CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER that best reflects your level of disagreement. If this area has been a problem between you and your former wife, CHECK ON THE LINE next to that area also.

1. No disagreement
2. A little disagreement
3. Moderate disagreement
4. High disagreement
5. Complete disagreement

		No disagreement	A little disagreement	Moderate disagreement	High disagreement	Complete disagreement	
249.	Discipline	1	2	3	4	5	____
250.	Eating habits	1	2	3	4	5	____
251.	Dressing	1	2	3	4	5	____
252.	Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	____
253.	Manners	1	2	3	4	5	____
254	Education	1	2	3	4	5	____
255.	Religious training	1	2	3	4	5	____
256.	Bedtime	1	2	3	4	5	____
257.	Friends	1	2	3	4	5	____
258.	Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	____
259.	Leaving with babysitters	1	2	3	4	5	____
260.	Child's household responsibilities or tasks	1	2	3	4	5	____
261.	Child's emotional needs	1	2	3	4	5	____
263.	Giving your child independence	1	2	3	4	5	____
	Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	____

In the next section, as in the previous sections, please consider only the **past six months**.

---

265. How often do you feel your former wife accepts your parenting approach even when it differs from hers?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

266. How often do you accept the parenting approach of your former wife?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

---

267. How often do you feel your former wife supports and facilitates your relationship with your child?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

267a. When you and your former wife have conflicts about child rearing, how often do you reach a resolution?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often
6. no conflicts

---

268. How often do you feel good about the way you both deal with the conflicts about child rearing?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often
6. no conflicts

---

269. How do you feel about the amount of time you and your former wife spend talking about your child? I would like:

1. much more time.
2. somewhat more time.
3. the same amount of time. (Go to Question #271)
4. somewhat less time.
5. much less time.

---

270. Can you tell me some of the reasons for your dissatisfaction with the amount of time you spend with your former wife discussing your child?

_____

_____

---

271. How do you feel about your relationship with your former wife in areas that do not involve parenting?

1. very satisfied
2. somewhat satisfied
3. mixed
4. somewhat dissatisfied
5. very dissatisfied

---

272. Would you like to be in contact with your former wife

1. more frequently than you are now?
2. less frequently than you are now?
3. about the same amount that you are now?

---

273. How would you describe your former wife's feelings towards you?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative
6. don't know

273a. How would you describe your feelings towards your former wife?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative

---

274. How do you feel about the balance among your social, work, and parenting activities?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative

Please explain: _____

_____

---

275. How do you feel about the balance among the social, work, and parenting activities of your former wife?

1. very positive
2. somewhat positive
3. mixed
4. somewhat negative
5. very negative

Please explain: _____

_____

---

276. How do you feel about your commitment to your child as compared to that of your former wife?

1. I am much more committed than my former wife.
2. I am slightly more committed than my former wife.
3. I am equally committed to our child.
4. I am slightly less committed than my former wife.
5. I am much less committed than my former wife.

---

277. How would you describe your communication with your former wife in relation to parenting your child?

_____

_____

---

278. Do you, your former wife, and your children ever spend time all <u>together</u>?

1. no (Go to Question #280)
2. yes

---

279. If you do spend time together with the children, how often, and under what circumstances?

_____

_____

Think back to when you and your former wife first separated, and circle the number that best reflects the changes from that time to now.

		much worse now	worse now	no change	better now	much better now
280.	The quality of your physical and emotional involvement with your child.	1	2	3	4	5
281.	The quality of the cooperation between you and your former wife with regard to parenting your child.	1	2	3	4	5
282.	Your satisfaction with your relationship to your former wife in areas that don't involve parenting.	1	2	3	4	5

283. If you didn't have a child, how often do you think you would want to talk to your former wife?

1. never
2. rarely
3. sometimes
4. often
5. very often

284. In which of the following circumstances would you ask your former wife to take care of your child during the time that your child is scheduled to be with you? (Please circle all that apply)

1. social engagements
2. vacation
3. work-related engagements
4. sickness
5. none

other (specify)_____

When a marriage ends, couples usually have to work out a number of issues relating to financial matters and their children. Below is a list of specific areas you and your former wife may have had to work out. Please circle the one number that best reflects the highest level of disagreement you and your former wife have had from the time you decided to separate until 6 months ago. Then indicate on each blank space when this highest level of disagreement occurred.

1. No disagreement
2. A little disagreement
3. A moderate amount of disagreement
4. Quite a bit of disagreement
5. Complete disagreement

	No disagreement	A little disagreement	A moderate amount of disagreement	Quite a bit of disagreement	Complete disagreement	
285. Child support	1	2	3	4	5	_____
285a. Alimony	1	2	3	4	5	_____
285b. Custody	1	2	3	4	5	_____
285c. Child care schedule	1	2	3	4	5	_____
285d. Property settlement	1	2	3	4	5	_____

Now circle the number that best represents the highest level of disagreement you and your former wife have had in the past six months:

286. Child support	1	2	3	4	5
287. Alimony	1	2	3	4	5
288. Custody	1	2	3	4	5
289. Child care schedule	1	2	3	4	5
290. Property settlement	1	2	3	4	5

291. If you have been in court disputing any of the above areas since your separation, please list which ones:

_____

292. If you plan to go to court to resolve any of the above areas, please list which ones:

_____

How often do you feel free to make decisions about your child without consulting your former wife on matters concerning:

		No disagreement	A little disagreement	A moderate amount of disagreement	Quite a bit of disagreement	Complete disagreement
293.	Medical or health issues	1	2	3	4	5
294.	School activities	1	2	3	4	5
295.	Day to day discipline for your child	1	2	3	4	5
296.	Financial decisions in regard to your child	1	2	3	4	5
297.	Planning special events in your child's life (parties, trips)	1	2	3	4	5

---

298. Whose household claimed your child in the 1980 Census?

1. mother
2. father
3. both
4. other

---

299. Whose household claimed your child as a dependent for income tax purposes in 1981?

1. mother
2. father
3. other

---

300. Whose household claimed your child as a dependent for income tax purposes in 1980?

1. mother
2. father

---

301. How do you refer to your former wife when speaking to others who do not know her? (circle all that apply)

1. my ex-wife
2. my former wife
3. my co-parent
4. my child's mother

other (specify)_____

People who are no longer married to one another have a wide range of feelings about one another. CIRLE THE ONE NUMBER that best reflects your agreement or disagreement with the following statements about your former wife **within the past six months**:

Agreement/Disagreement is rated as:

1. Strongly agree
2. Mostly agree
3. Agree somewhat
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Disagree somewhat
6. Mostly disagree
7. Strongly disagree

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Agree somewhat	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree somewhat	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree
292a. My former wife is primarily interested in her own welfare	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292b. There are times when my former wife cannot be trusted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292c. My former wife is perfectly honest and truthful with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292d. I feel that I can trust my former wife completely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292e. My former wife is truly sincere in her promises.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292f. I feel that my former wife does not show me enough consideration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292g. My former wife treats me fairly and justly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
292h. I feel that my former wife can be counted on to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART G(1). REMARRIED FATHERS

302. Was your wife married before?

1. no
2. yes

---

303. If yes, how many times?

_____

---

304. What does your child call his or her stepmother?

_____

---

305. How did your former wife respond to your marriage?

1. very positively
2. somewhat positively
3. mixed
4. somewhat negatively
5. very negatively
6. don't know

---

306. How would you describe the relationship between your former wife and your present wife?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor
6. no relationship

---

307. Has your remarriage changed your relationship with your former wife?

1. not at all (go to Question #327)
2. a little
3. somewhat
4. quite a bit
5. a great deal

---

308. If there were changes in your relationship with your former wife after your remarriage, is your relationship

1. much better than before?
2. somewhat better than before?
3. the same as before?
4. somewhat worse than before?
5. much worse than before?

---

309. Has your remarriage changed your relationship with your child?

1. not at all (go to Question #329)
2. a little
3. somewhat
4. quite a bit
5. a great deal

---

310. If there have been changes in your relationship with your child since your remarriage, is your relationship

1. much better than before?
2. somewhat better than before?
3. the same as before?
4. somewhat worse than before?
5. much worse than before?

---

311. How would you describe the relationship between your child and his or her stepmother?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

---

312. Did you desire a change in either the joint custody disposition or the child care schedule as a result of your remarriage?

1. no
2. yes (please explain)_____

_____

PART G(2). REMARRIED FATHERS WITH STEPCHILDREN

313. Please list the first names, ages, sexes, custody form, and residences of your wife's children.

	Name	Age	Sex	Custody Form	Legal Residence
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

314. Please describe their visitation schedule.

_____

_____

_____

_____

315. What do your stepchildren call you?

_____

316. How would you describe your relationship to your stepchildren?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

317. How would you describe the relationship between your child and his or her stepsiblings?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

---

318. How do you feel about yourself as a stepfather?

1. excellent
2. very good
3. good
4. fair
5. poor

---

319. Has becoming a stepfather changed your relationship to your child?

1. no
2. yes (in what ways?)_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Please tell me who is in your family? (A genogram was drawn.)

Joint Custody Decision

2. How did the joint custody decision evolve?

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of joint custody for you, your children and your former wife?

4. Do you feel that legal joint custody is important regardless of your child care schedule? Why?

Child Care Schedule

5. What is the current schedule for your child(ren) and how did it evolve?

6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your current schedule for you, your child, and your former wife?

7. If you could change anything about your schedule, what would you change (amount of time/specific schedule)?

Fathering

8. Thinking back to the time when you first separated, what was your major concern about being a divorced father?

9. In what ways have you changed as a father since the separation?

10. Do you feel that you have a different comitment to your child since your separation?

11. What are the most rewarding or positive aspects of being a father now?

12. What are the most difficult or troublesome aspects?

13. Does your relationship with your former wife (feelings towards each other) affect your relationship with your child(ren)?

14. Are there any child care responsibilities you feel could be better done by a woman? by your ex? Why?

15. Have you ever thought of just taking your child and going somewhere else where you would have him or her full time?

16. Have you ever thought of giving up custody and starting your own life without your child?

17. How do you feel when your time with your child is over?

18. How do you think your child feels when his or her time with you is over?

Former Spouse Relationship

19. Briefly, what were the reasons for your divorce?

20. How would you describe your relationship with your former wife now?

21. What have been the major changes in your relationship with her over time?

22. How would you like your relationship with your former wife to be?

Remarried Fathers

23. Has remarriage affected your perception of yourself as a father? If yes, how?

24. How has remarriage affected your relationship with your child? your former wife?

25. Describe the relationship between your child and his or her stepmother?

26. If you have stepchildren, how would you describe your relationship with them?

27. If you have stepchildren, how do they get along with your child?

Remarried Fathers with a New Child

28. How did your child respond to the birth of the new child?

29. Has your relationship with your child changed since the new child was born? If yes, how?

30. Has your perception of yourself as a father changed since the the new child was born? If yes, how?

31. How did your former wife respond to the birth of your child?

Wrap Up

32. If you had a good friend who was getting a divorce and had children, how would you counsel that person about being a divorced father? Would you recommend joint custody? your childcare arrangements?

33. Is there anything else about being a father with joint custody that you feel is important and that has not been touched upon in our discussion today?