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WOMEN'S AUTONOMY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN A PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARÍA DE LOURDES MATTEI

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1983

Psychology Department



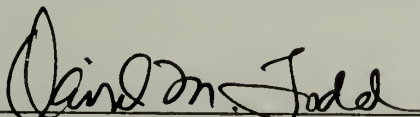
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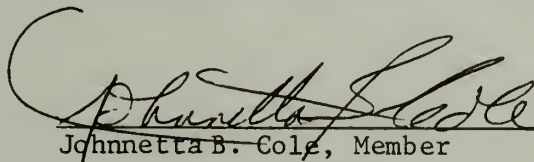
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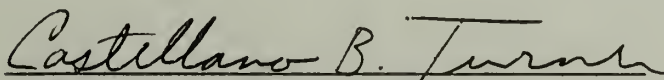
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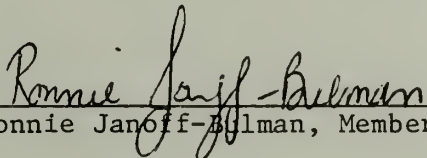
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## DEDICATORIA

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Mi dedicatoria no estaría completa sin enfatizar la importancia y ofrecer el debido reconocimiento a una persona que con su confianza en mí contribuyó significativamente al impulso creador de este estudio: a mi madre, María de Lourdes Sánchez.

Yo quise ser como los hombres quisieron que yo fuese:  
un intento de vida;  
un juego al escondite con mi ser.  
Pero yo estaba hecha de presentes,  
y mis pies planos sobre la tierra promisoro  
no resistían caminar hacia atrás,  
y seguían adelante, adelante,  
burlando las cenizas para alcanzar el beso  
de los senderos nuevos.

"Yo Misma Fui Mi Ruta"

Julia de Burgos



ABSTRACT

Women's Autonomy and Social Networks in a Puerto Rican Community

(September 1983)

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Directed by: Professor David M. Todd

This study explores the relationship between women's autonomy and their social networks. The importance for women of the relational context for self-determination is emphasized.

Forty, employed Puerto Rican women living in the Boston metropolitan area were interviewed. This interview consisted of three parts: (1) demographic information, (2) autonomy questionnaire and (3) social network map. The woman's level of autonomy was measured by her contribution to decision-making in two areas: household-budget management and birth control. In order to study the social context of autonomy, five structural social network characteristics were measured: size, density, heterogeneity of membership, geographic dispersion and strength of network ties.

It was hypothesized that the woman's total autonomy level would relate significantly with her network's size, density and heterogeneity. In addition, it was predicted that the network's density would relate inversely to its size and heterogeneity. Furthermore, network size was hypothesized to be positively related to membership diversity.

Predicted relationships between the total autonomy measure and social network variables did not receive support in this study. Nonetheless, a significant relationship between the woman's level of autonomy in decision-making in the area of birth control and the strength of ties in her network is strongly suggested. The importance of intimate ties in a woman's network is discussed focusing in the critical dimension that relational ties play in the struggle for self-determination.

Autonomy in household budget management was found to be a less useful indicator in this sample's decision-making patterns. Nevertheless, the household-budget component measure of autonomy related significantly with several demographic characteristics. Degree of control over household expenditures is associated with the woman's length of residence in the United States, marital status and household composition.

A particular kind of strength of ties, the relative concentration of intimate ties, was one of the most statistically important factors in the analysis of the data. It related positively with the participant's network size and heterogeneity of members.

Another important structural characteristic in the social networks of Puerto Rican women in this sample was membership diversity. The predicted relationship between network heterogeneity and size was confirmed. Furthermore, heterogeneity was associated positively with the number of network members living in Massachusetts (dispersion). It was also related to the woman's age and birthplace.

Discussion of the results center around the interrelationship between the social-relational context and woman's autonomy. It is argued that relational connectedness seems to enhance rather than impede efforts at self-determination. Structural network characteristics like size and member heterogeneity were found to be more significant in this area than density of ties.

Theoretical and methodological implications for future research in the study of women are addressed in the concluding section.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the main objectives of this study is to further the understanding of the Puerto Rican experience, in general, and the Puerto Rican woman in her community, in particular. This analysis requires an interdisciplinary approach in its efforts to grasp the Puerto Rican experience. This investigation will analyze the relationship between the Puerto Rican woman's level of autonomy in her family and community and certain dimensions of her social network. Although a detailed history of the sociopolitical situation of Puerto Rico and its people is beyond the scope of this paper, I will present a brief demographic outline of the community under study.

#### Puerto Ricans in the United States

During this century, several migratory waves of Puerto Rican people have flown in and out of the United States under a variety of political and economic pressures--e.g. high level of unemployment, colonial policies, rapid industrialization (see History Task Force's 1979 analysis of Puerto Rican labor migration experience). Most of the "Puerto Rican diaspora" has concentrated on the eastern seaboard (López, 1974). According to the 1970 census, Boston has the 10th largest population of Puerto Ricans (see Puerto Ricans in the United States, 1976, for a detailed demographic picture of this population).

In the United States, Puerto Ricans constitute part of the "Hispanic" population. The second largest "minority", Hispanics are not a homogeneous group. It is composed of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and other Spanish people (listed in order of population density) (Dieppa & Montiel, 1978). Within this group, Puerto Ricans are characterized by the following:

- they have the lowest educational level (median years 9.9 in the 25-34 age group)
- they have the lowest median income (\$4,969) (Dieppa & Montiel, 1978, p. 4).

To conclude this brief demographic profile of Puerto Ricans in the United States, Miranda King's (1974) description of the Puerto Rican woman in the United States is included:

The Puerto Rican man has a median income of \$5,613 a year; the Puerto Rican woman earns \$2,784 a year. Of all Puerto Rican males, 12 percent have income below \$2,000, compared to 34 percent of all Puerto Rican women. The men complete 9.3 years of school, while women finish 8.8 years. . . . Unemployment among Puerto Rican women is a whopping 17.8 percent--the highest rate among any Spanish origin group, and almost three times higher than the national average. . . . The Puerto Rican woman is often prevented from working by the number of small children in the family who need her care and attention, for the Puerto Rican population in the mainland United States is extremely young. The median age is 18 years. Of all Puerto Rican families, 76 percent have children under 18, and of all Puerto Ricans living in this country, 28.7 percent are under 10 years old. . . . The situation is further aggravated by the greater family responsibilities and income needs of larger families. Over half of these families have more than five members in the family (p. 25).

### Objectives of the Study

This study will explore the relationship between the working-class Puerto Rican woman's level of autonomy and the structure of her social network.

In order to do this, the woman's decision-making activities--her autonomous behavior--in two areas will be assessed: (a) birth control, and (b) household budget management. This measure will be correlated with several structural properties of the woman's social network. These properties include: (a) size, (b) strength of ties, (c) density, (d) heterogeneity of membership, and (e) dispersion of members.

The personal/political importance of an analysis of self-determination in its relational context (at an individual and collective level) is emphasized. In addition, the implications of such an analysis for women, and hence for all people's struggles for self-determination, are discussed.

### Literature Review

Women and autonomy. One of the basic assumptions made in this study is the importance of autonomy--at the individual and collective level--as a necessary condition for a truly emancipatory sphere of social interaction. By autonomy I mean self-determination, in the abstract sense of the word; and a process of decision-making-with-others, in an operational meaning of the concept.

The significance of autonomy in the transformation of society is expressed by Castoriadis (1980) in the following way:

Only equal men [and women] can be free, and only free men can be equal. Since of necessity there is power in society, those who do not participate in it equally are under the domination of those who do and are therefore unfree. . . . Conversely, there can be no equality in a society where men are not free, since the power exercised over those unfree men establishes an essential inequality (p. 95). . . . Liberty (autonomy) necessarily implies active and egalitarian participation in any social power that decides common affairs (p. 97).

The establishment of an autonomous society means a constant and dynamic "struggle for autonomy", a struggle in which "the creation of new forms of individual and collective life invade (by conflict and contradiction) all spheres of social life" (p. 103). (For a related lucid historical account of forms of equality, see Feher and Heller, 1977.)

A manifestation of this struggle is the growing efforts by women for self-determination in all social spheres (e.g., reproduction, labor force participation, equal rights). Given the historical legacy and institution of male domination in most social areas, it is of consequence to determine the meaning of autonomy for women, in general, and for different women, in particular. Addressing the dissimilarity in experience of autonomy for women, Miller (1977) points out:

Since women have to face very different consequences, the word autonomy seems possibly dangerous; it is a word derived from men's development not women's. . . . There is a further sense in which the automatic transfer of a concept like autonomy as a goal for women can cause problems. Women are quite validly seeking something more complete than autonomy as it is defined for men, a fuller not a lesser ability to encompass relationships to others, simultaneous with the fullest development of oneself. Thus, many of our terms need re-examination (p. 95).

Without having to coin another word, I believe that women can appropriate, that is, they can actively shape a meaning for the word that would



more accurately reflect their individual and collective struggles for self-determination. Nevertheless, Miller's insight is analytically helpful: women experience autonomy differently. They experience the struggle for autonomy, both in utopic vision and in concrete reality, differently. Although a detailed analysis of the psycho-social dimensions of autonomy for women is beyond the scope of this investigation, a general framework for its development will be outlined.

Chodorow (1978, 1979) provides an insightful and suggestive analysis of the psychosexual development of gender differences. Basing its account on object-relations theory, Chodorow examines the process of separation-individuation, i.e. psychological maturity, in human development. In most societies, mothering is done predominantly by women. This structural situation has definite effects on the development of gender differences. Speaking of the social nature of gender differences, Chodorow (1979) clarifies:

Gender difference is not absolute, abstract or irreducible; it does not involve an essence of gender. Gender differences, and the experience of difference, are socially and psychologically created and situated just as are differences among women. Difference and gender difference do not exist as things in themselves: they are created relationally, and we cannot understand difference apart from this relational construction (p. 53).

For a woman, the process of separation-individuation (i.e., the developmental process of psychological autonomy) takes a specific "relational" character:

. . . core gender identity for a girl is not problematic in the sense that it is for boys. It is built upon, and does not contradict, her primary sense of oneness and identification

with her mother and is assumed easily along with her developing sense of self. Girls grow up with a sense of continuity and similarity to their mother, a relational connection to their world (p. 64).

I believe that understanding women's struggle for autonomy in their relational context can help us understand other people's struggles for individual and collective self-determination. Prokop (1978), restating Horkheimer's definition of "true individuality", reminds us that "true individuality flourishes not in opposition to community but within and through it" (p. 54).

In the study of autonomy in its relational context, I will explore a concrete aspect of self-determination for women--decision-making participation. In the following section I will review relevant studies that have identified important variables in decision-making activities of different women.

Women's decision-making activities. Decision-making--the possibility of choice and active participation in decision-making--is a concrete process in which struggles for self-determination are carried out. One major area where women are constantly shaping this struggle is the fight for reproductive freedom:

The struggle for reproductive self-determination is one of the oldest projects of humanity, one of our earliest collective attempts to alter the biological limits of our existence. . . . Self-determination--liberation, that is--is an historical concept itself. What people want for themselves and what they find oppressive and will resist have changes over the centuries. . . . reproductive freedom cannot be isolated from other human freedoms. Reproductive patterns everywhere are determined by sexual morality, by the over-all status of women, by class formations, and by the nature of the struggle for social change (Gordon, 1977, pp. 403-404).

As Linda Gordon aptly points out, the struggle for self-determination is determined by historical and socioeconomical conditions. The history of birth control in the twentieth-century clearly illustrates this point. What for some women (upper- and middle-class women) meant reproductive choice, for other women (poor and Third World women) meant reproductive oppression (see Mamdani, 1972, and Mass, 1977, for lucid accounts of repressive population control policies in India and Puerto Rico, respectively).

In this study I will examine the decision-making activities of Puerto Rican urban working-class women (measure of level of autonomy) in two areas: (a) control over her body, i.e., reproductive determination, and (b) control over economic resources, e.g. household budget management. It is assumed that women's control over their bodies and access and control over economic resources are necessary pre-conditions for the exercise of self-determination.

Before reviewing relevant literature related to women's decision-making activities, I would like to clarify and emphasize that by decision-making activities I understand, participation in decision-making affairs. This term does not necessarily mean unilateral decision-making, although it might include this type of decision-making in some instances.

Sacks and Eisenstein (1979) conducted a year-long study on the autonomous decision-making activities of a group of 15 women participants. In their reports of the group experience, they found that group participation for these women actually enhanced personal autonomy.

Yaganisako (1977), studying women-centered kinship networks in



urban industrial societies, observed that:

. . .solidarity among female kin can be . . .thought of as an integral part of a social and cultural system that emphasizes autonomy but also entails mutual dependency among kin (p. 220).

In their research on Jamaican women's contraceptive decision-making and couple communication, Brody, Ottey and LaGranade (1974) noticed differences in women's decision-making patterns depending on the woman's life experiences. Women who made unilateral decisions on contraceptive issues were characterized by early pregnancy, greater number of mates, shorter relationships and a belief that most men are unreliable. Joint decision-makers were usually in institutionally stable relationships, i.e. legally married.

There is evidence to suggest that a great number of related factors affect women's decision-making activities. Beginning with Blood and Wolfe's (1960) influential study on conjugal power and decision-making, family studies have identified several influential factors (for a review and debate on Blood and Wolfe's hypothesis, see Safilios-Rothschild, 1969, 1970, 1972; Bahr, 1972, 1973; Sprey, 1972). It must be kept in mind that most of the family studies dealing with women's decision-making are interested in its effects on "conjugal power", or family power structure and organization (most studies do not address directly the issue of women's self-determination in the family). Some of the variables studied in family studies include: husbands' work integration (Kemper & Reichler, 1976) and attitudes (Arnott, 1972); wives' employment and commitment (Arnott, 1972; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970); geo-

graphical region (Bokemeir & Tait, 1980; Sawyer, 1973); age (Willie & Greenblatt, 1978); marital satisfaction (Madden, 1980); and life-cycle stage (Komarovsky, 1963).

Undoubtedly all of these factors contribute and affect decision-making possibilities and activities of women (as well as men's). In terms of the sample under study in this investigation (i.e. urban working-class Puerto Rican women), I will look at studies that report the effects of class, race and/or cultural dimensions on decision-making processes of women.

Reviewing four "classic" studies on power relations among Black families, Willie and Greenblatt (1978) stress the need to differentiate among these families. In their summary of findings, they stress the following:

The studies discussed in this paper are not presented as conclusive evidence of one predominant pattern existing among all black families. To the contrary, they suggest that black families do not constitute a monolithic pattern of family relationships. . . black families vary by social class as do white families (p. 693).

Cromwell and Cromwell (1978), as well as Mirandé (1977), denounce stereotypical assumptions in the study of Black and Chicano families, i.e. in the analysis by social scientists of the effects of race/culture and class in family relationships. All too often, Black families are labeled as "matriarchal" and Chicano families as "patriarchal"; broad generalizations that do not take into account equally important factors, such as class, in family organization and power structure.

When controlling by class, Cromwell and Cromwell (1978) found that

variations in self-perceptions in conjugal decision-making could not be accounted for by ethnicity alone.

While there is considerable discrepancy in perception between husband and wife self-reports on the same items within and across ethnicity, ethnic group membership by itself is not sufficient to explain the variance in these perceptions. Categorical labeling of family structure based on ethnic group membership is unwarranted and inappropriate (p. 757).

Bean, Curtis and Marcum (1977) report related results in Mexican-American families. In their study on the effects of wives' employment on marital satisfaction among Mexican-American couples, they conclude that class, rather than ethnicity, helped explain levels of marital satisfaction in their sample.

In their review of studies on Mexican-American and Chicano families Cromwell and Ruiz (1979) conclude that among working-class Mexican, Chicago and Anglo families there are more similarities than differences in their pattern of decision-making. They attribute "undocumented assumptions" about Hispanic families to a prevailing myth in the social sciences based on a model of "social deviance":

Stated briefly, differences between Hispanics and Anglos-- whether the differences are individual, marital, familial, or cultural and whether the differences are real, imagined, or exaggerated--are assumed to reflect negatively on Hispanics (p. 370).

I do not mean to imply that class is a "more determining" factor than race and/or culture (see Axelson, 1970, for an account of significant racial differences in male's perceptions of the working wife, when controlling by socioeconomic status). However, I do want to stress the

importance of taking into account class and race/culture in an analysis of social reality and their interrelated effects on gender relations.

Komarovsky's (1963) research on household expenditure decision-making seems to support the following generalization: there appears to be a curvilinear relationship between class and decision-making for women. That is, women from lower socioeconomic class seem to have higher decision-making influence than their middle-class counterparts.

Similar findings are reported by López-Garriga (1978) in her study of women's use of manipulative strategies in their efforts to resist patriarchal domination in the Puerto Rican family. Paradoxically, working-class women in Puerto Rico exhibited higher levels of autonomy (they used less manipulative strategies in their efforts of self-affirmation) than their middle-class sisters. Lopez-Garriga attributes this behavioral pattern--higher levels of autonomous behavior--to changing socioeconomic conditions on the Island. In particular, she stresses women's increasing participation in the labor force and concomitant access to economic resources as important conditions in the observed changes in the sexual politics of the family (e.g. working-class women's higher level of autonomy within the family).

Access to economic resources per se does not necessarily translate itself to more power or autonomy for women in their families and communities.

Drawing conclusions from her data on the effects of female employment on the structure of Austrian families, Szinovacz (1977) reminds us that "female employment does not necessarily lead families to develop egalitarian life styles" (p. 789).



Solien de González (1965) makes a similar observation about families where women play a dominant role. In some cases, a woman might exercise considerable influence and/or autonomy over economic decisions in the domestic sphere, but she might still be under a husband's "ultimate" authority, e.g. the Carib (p. 1544).

Studies that look at women's access to socially-valued resources (e.g. economic resources) seem to suggest that access and control over these resources is a necessary but not sufficient condition for women's empowerment and the exercise of self-determination.

Addressing the paradoxical situation of working and lower-class women in their families, Lamphere (1974) remarks:

Women exercise de facto control, and their strategies also focus on "economic" activities (e.g. the exchange of goods and services among a network of kin). But unlike Navajo, Eskimo, and Bushman women, who have decision-making ability in societies where authority is shared and where politics becomes domestic, working-class and Black women operate autonomously only in the domestic and not in the political sphere. . . . [Furthermore]. . . the domestic authority of women comes only at the expense of men, and at the same time, working-class and Black women (along with their men) do not have access to the centers of power or to an equal place in the labor force (p. 111-112).

In the case of welfare mothers, Bould (1977) noticed that, although women heads of households might be less dependent economically on men, the source (e.g. AFDC payments), as well as the amount of income, significantly affected the women's sense of personal fate control. She underscores the lack of attention paid to the effects of source of income on women and their families:

it is important to expand the concept of income to include source as well as amount. Income which has clear legal, moral and practical right is probably important in providing mothers the freedom and autonomy to plan for their own lives, as well as the lives of their children. . .(p. 348).

Taking these remarks into account--the limited nature of the relative autonomy of women--one can proceed to review studies that look at the effect of access to important resources for women in different contexts.

In rural regions, Sawyer (1973) found a negative correlation between wives' participation in farm decision-making and income, farm size and number of children. Salomon and Keim (1979) identified a highly valued (scarce) resource in a farming community in the Midwest--the ownership of land. In this farming community, Heartland, Illinois, women could inherit land (through bilateral inheritance laws and widow's rights), although men usually managed the family enterprise. Based on studies relating women's labor contribution and their status and power, they made the following assumption:

In Heartland, all women contribute some labor to the enterprise if only in the domestic sphere. A woman's labor contribution does not appear to affect her status in the family since it is assumed as natural. Any power a woman has can be traced to her possession of a scarce and valued resource (p. 112).

Their ethnographic data suggest that women's power is affected by several factors. Among them are woman's life-cycle stage, the organization and structure of power within the family and the woman's socializing and settlement pattern. In contrast to their husbands, women seldom go out by themselves, and are relatively isolated on their farms. This

situation prevents the formation of "female solidarity groups", an element which the authors concur has been recognized (Sanday, 1974) as important in the exercise of power in communities. In this context, the importance of women's relationships and contracts (i.e. formal/informal networks and/or organizations) beyond their domestic group is identified as an important dimension in women's power and status in her community.

Bokemeier and Tait (1980) did a comparative analysis of women's decision-making in two rural communities. In both communities, they report an increase in the number of women "power actors." By "power actors" they mean "an individual who has the reputation of: (1) more social power than others in the locality, (2) the ability to sway decisions on community issues, (3) the control of or access to needed resources, and/or (4) the ability to legitimize final decisions" (p. 239).

When certain variables were controlled for, variables such as industrial size and development, political/election structures and reform, population composition, geographical factors, type of local government and human services and welfare agencies (p. 249), two profiles of women as community power actors emerged.

In one of the communities, Prairie City, the women could best be described by what the authors call "the good companion female role" characteristics. Based on a Parsonian theoretical framework, they found support for two of this model's hypotheses:

--the degree of community efficacy of women power actors would be greater relative to socio-expressive issue areas (such as education and health) than to instrumental issue areas (such as business and government);



--the majority of women power actors would be in the empty nest stage in the family life-cycle, with few children living at home and with the role of housewife as their primary occupation (p. 242).

In this community, women power actors tended to be older and most of them were predominantly housewives.

By contrast, in Center Town, the other community under study, the women's personal and social characteristics were more consistent with the "resource" theoretical model. This model predicts that as more women have access to community resources, their involvement and leadership in political affairs would increase. Bokemeir and Tait found that women power actors in Center Town exhibited assumed characteristics of this model; most women were younger and held occupations and careers outside the home.

These authors point out that the profiles of personal and social characteristics of the two rural communities reflect different community power structures that can be explained by alternative interpretative models--explanations that are not mutually exclusive. In their discussion they conclude:

Theorists have failed to agree as to whether women, especially those in politics, have different bases of power, different styles of power, and, in addition, different personal and social characteristics. In evaluation of the theoretical frameworks reviewed, it seems that, while these theories suggest alternative explanations for sex differences in community power structures, they are not incompatible (p. 252).

In cross-cultural perspective, Huntington (1975) reviewed models that tried to explain women's labor participation in developing socie-

ties. She proposes an alternative framework for understanding changes in women's status in African developing societies. In contrast to Boserup's account (Women's Role in Economic Development) on the decline of women's independence and mobility with economic development, Huntington affirms:

The proper frame of discourse is not the decline in the economic independence of these women in relation to their men, but the extent to which the relationship of men to women is, in fact, that of aristocrats to peasants. In many of these societies, women's farming is the source of whatever wealth there is, and, despite women's rights in land tenure, men control women and women's production through their subordination in marriage, much as peasants are the traditionally subordinated producers of wealth for land-based aristocrats (p. 1007).

Criticizing the "romantic vision of independence and mobility in African societies", she explains:

The confinement of women to domesticity has made the women of modern industrial societies relatively powerless in the economy and polity, but domesticity is not as effective a force as female farming in forcing the burden of supporting the entire society upon women or in excluding women from all aspects of the modern world (p. 1011).

In her argument, she proposes a model that would more clearly specify the relationships among the diversity of variables that structure past and present societies, and its effects on women. Another study that explores the changes in power structure with women's access to economic resources is Salaff's (1976) account on the effects of working daughters on Hong Kong Chinese family decision-making patterns. Describing changes in the daughter's role within the family with her participation in the labor force, she concludes that although the daughter's contribution is

not considered enough to be given participation in all family decisions, her working does allow a greater degree of independence (e.g. more time to herself, variety of experiences).

In Puerto Rico, Scott (1967) related changing patterns in family decision-making patterns to socioeconomic conditions. In particular, he analyzed the effects of women's employment in fertility patterns. His data led him to conclude that wives' employment and higher level of education level were conducive to more equalitarian family organization, i.e. the breaking up of the traditional/patriarchal system of decision-making (see Stinner et al., 1975; Weller, 1968, for similar studies in fertility changes and socioeconomic conditions in Puerto Rico).

Among a group of Puerto Rican women heads of household in the United States, Vazquez Nuttal (1978) found a positive correlation between levels of nervousness and depression and lack of control in birth control issues.

Gonzalez et al. (1980) conducted a study on the impact of sterilization on Puerto Rican women in Hartford, Connecticut. The most important factor relating to sterilization was number of people in the household. Surprisingly, number of children was a less significant variable. Their interpretation suggests that this finding relates to "the physical and personal resources of the household unit" (p. 16). In their analysis of the sample's household composition, they observed that the women most likely to be sterilized were women heads of household. Summarizing their results, the authors point out:

. . .the data would seem to indicate that a variety of forces come together to narrow the options of Puerto Rican women, and

to provide a "push towards sterilization". . .factors such as household size, limited English language ability, less articulation of the health care system, and women-centered households. . . . These are factors which limit a woman's resources and support systems, limit her accumulation of knowledge, and limit the potential of understanding her situation by the health care system (p. 40-41; emphasis mine).

As these authors conclude, a woman's control over her body (e.g. through the exercise of reproductive freedom), as well as the woman's ties (e.g. her social network), greatly affect her decision-making possibilities/activities.

In this section, I identify two necessary conditions for autonomous behavior in urban working-class Puerto Rican women: (a) access and/or control over economic resources (e.g. wage) and, (b) control over her body (e.g. reproductive choice). Level of autonomy will be assessed by looking at women's decision-making activities in the areas of household budget management and birth control. These personal/political resources for women will be studied in the women's relational context, that is, in her family and community, through an exploration of the Puerto Rican woman's social network.

Women's social networks. A mature, autonomous ego is developed through its relationship with others. Restating the importance of autonomy, I agree with Castoriadis' analysis of its relationship to the individual and society:

. . .[the] active and positive aspect of liberty (autonomous society) is indissolubly linked with the question of the autonomy of the individual. An autonomous society implies autonomous individuals who cannot exist except in an autonomous society. But, what the individual does in regard to the collec-



tivity and to himself depends decisively on his social fabrication as an individual (p. 98).

This study involves an exploratory analysis of the relationship between women's autonomy level and an aspect of their "social fabrication", their social networks. What kind(s) of relationships do Puerto Rican women have? How do they affect the level of self-determination exercised in their families and communities? These are some of the questions explored in this study. Before addressing studies that relate to the nature and characteristics of women's networks, I will present a brief outline of the concept.

The social network concept: Background for an emerging paradigm.

One of the pioneering sociological studies that used the social network concept was E. Bott's (1957) Family and Social Networks. In her effort to understand the relationship between individual behavior and the environment, Bott presented the following famous hypothesis: "The degree of segregation in the role-relationship of husband and wife varies directly with the connectedness of the family's social network" (p. 60). Her work stimulated a great number of cross-cultural family studies. After a decade of numerous studies testing her hypothesis (see Bott's "Reconsiderations" in the second edition of her book, for a description and summary of empirical studies addressing her work), she concludes the following:

What, then, do all these studies add up to? Is the hypothesis established or disproved? Neither, I think. . . . The weight of empirical evidence and conceptual argument is that the hypothesis holds in the case of dense networks and segregated conjugal relationships, but that, when networks become more loose-knit, the type of conjugal relationship becomes unpre-

dictably variable. The factors involved and their relations to one another have not been fully studied and are sure to be complex (p. 290).

Another social science discipline that has its own development of the concept is anthropology. Several authors have traced the discipline's use of the concept to an interest in kin structures (Boissevain, 1979; Foster, 1978/79; Wolfe, 1978). Specifically, they trace the "beginning of serious theoretical thinking about networks" to Barne's (1954) work (Craven & Wellman, 1973; Mitchell, 1969; Wolfe, 1978 for summaries of the social network perspective in anthropology).

In his article "The Rise of Network Thinking in Anthropology", Wolfe attributes the anthropologist's interest in the study of urbanization as "the stimulus of the development of network analysis" (p. 55).

The importance of network analysis to sociology and urban anthropology can best be illustrated by the on-going debate on "the Community Question" (Wellman, 1979; most of the following discussion on this debate is based on Wellman's synthesis of the arguments).

According to Wellman there are three basic arguments that have developed in the study of urban communities:

- (a) "Community Lost" argument--this argument states that traditional, close-knit solidarity communities were eroded by industrial bureaucratic division of labor, characteristic of city life. The original community-of-origin primary ties become fragmented. The major effects of this state of affairs are reflected in social disorganization (e.g. poverty, crime, alienation).
- (b) "Community Saved" argument--in reaction to the "community lost" ar-

gument, this position holds that communal relationships and solidarity ties (e.g. kinship and friends) continue to develop in urban settings; in particular, this argument points out the usefulness of these urban networks in pooling resources for certain groups of urban dwellers (e.g. poor peoples).

(c) "Community Liberated" argument--this perspective has developed from the integration of different aspects of the "community lost" and "community saved" argument. It assumes the following:

- the separation of residence, workplace, and kinship group involves urbanites in multiple social networks with weak solidarity attachments;
- high rates of residential mobility weaken existing ties and retard the creation of strong new ones;
- cheap, effective transportation and communication reduce the social costs of spatial distances, enabling the easy maintenance of dispersed primary ties;
- the scale, density, and diversity of the city and the nation-state, in combination with widespread facilities for interaction, increase possibilities for access to loosely bounded, multiple social networks; and
- the spatial dispersion of primary ties and the heterogeneity of the city make it less likely that those with whom an urbanite is linked will themselves be densely knit into solidarity communities (Wellman, p. 1206).

I have outlined the basic premises of this debate in order to emphasize the importance of social networks in the understanding of urban social life. Cautioning against simple generalizations about social ties in contemporary urban reality, Wellman's critique of the "community lost" argument seems relevant here.

The Lost argument has usefully sharpened awareness of potential relationships between industrial bureaucratic divisions of labor and structures of primary ties. Yet, because of its assumptions that strong primary ties naturally occur only in densely knit, self-contained solidarities, the argument has unduly neglected the question of whether primary ties have



been structurally transformed, rather than attenuated, in industrial bureaucratic social systems (p. 1204-1205, emphasis mine).

In her study of Italian and Jewish families that emigrated to the United States at the turn of the century, Smith (1979) makes a similar argument. In understanding "the texture of social life in immigrant communities transplanted in the New World", she concludes:

[The] transformation of immigrants' lives from generation to generation illuminated a process of family change which in other circumstances took longer to develop. As the settings of work and community changed, the context in which family networks operated was altered, and old networks were loosened. But at the same time, new possibilities were created for new kinds of connections, across ethnic lines, at work in the large companies and in factories, in the new industry-wide CIO unions, in leisure activities and political clubs in the newer ethnically-mixed neighborhoods (p. 409).

It is of relevance, then, to analyze carefully the social network structure for different urban communities.

The analytical usefulness of the social network concept has been outlined by several researchers. Among them, Boissevain (1979) attributes the "enthusiasm of network analysis" to

. . .the theoretical shift in the social sciences away from the structural-functional analytical framework which dominated anthropology, sociology, and political science in Britain and the United States for the past 30 years (p. 392).

According to Todd (1980), the value in this type of analysis comes from its following characteristics:

First, it is a structural concept, which includes not only the aggregate qualities of an individual's acquaintances, but also the pattern or structure of their relationship to one another.

Secondly, it is an intermediate level of social structure between the microstructure of dyads, families and small groups, on the one hand, and the macrostructure of communities, culture, race and social class on the other (Granovetter, 1973). Finally, it is comprehensive with respect to the person, in that it cuts across the various life spheres and settings in which he or she is engaged (p. 1).

The theoretical and practical implications of an analysis of social networks for women will be outlined in the following section.

Importance of social networks for women. One of the analytical advantages of the social network concept for women, at a personal as well as a political level, is its potential for grasping women's reality beyond their domestic group. Feminist theorists (e.g. Rosaldo & Lamphere, 1974) have pointed out the historical consequences of the "split" between the private/personal/domestic sphere and the public/social sphere (see Zaretsky, 1976): the decline of women's status in their communities. Accepted, the "seclusion" of women to the domestic sphere--and its concomitant "exclusion" from political and economic life--has effects of consequence to women's status and power. This analytical distinction is overemphasized; it obscures the important ways in which these two spheres have developed and continuously shape each other (see Donzelot, 1979, for an historical account of this process in France). The social network paradigm has the analytical possibility of reaching beyond the woman's domestic domain (household/family) into her community.

In addition, this concept does not limit its analysis of networks to (a) its supportive characteristics, and/or (b) kinship ties. Addressing the issue of "support", Wellman (1981) makes this clarification:

We all know intuitively that ties are not always supportive; that support is transmitted in variable, often ambiguous ways;

that people often participate in several social networks in different spheres of their lives. However, the "support system" concept negates this sound intuitive knowledge of the complexities of ties and networks by denoting a single system composed only of supportive social relations. Its focus on a simple "support-non-support" dichotomy deemphasizes the multifaceted, often contradictory nature of social ties. . . . Its assumption that there are no conflicts of interest between "supporters" invokes the false promise of a common good (p. 3; emphasis mine).

In urban settings, and especially when dealing with relatively "new" immigrant populations—e.g. the Puerto Rican population in Boston --it is important to have ways of analyzing non-kin relationships in a person's networks (Craven & Wellman, 1973).

Another theoretical advantage of the social network concept for the study of women stems from its potential for analyzing the ties of different women: Yanigisako (1977), studying women-centered kin networks, speaks to the issue of "female centrality" in network ties:

. . .the term women-centered kin networks locates female centrality in the network of its bundling separate households without specifying the structural form in which this centrality is manifested. . .there appears to be a wide range of variation, not only between different research populations, but within them (p. 221).

The personal and political implications of the study of women's networks are multidimensional. At the personal level, there is evidence suggestive of a strong relationship between mental health and social networks. Although mostly concerned with the "support" aspect of network systems, psychologists are beginning to apply network analysis to mental health studies (e.g. Todd, 1980; Walker et al., 1977).

Mitchell and Trickett (1980) explain the appeal of the social net-

work and social support systems concepts in psychology:

First, they offer operational means of learning more about the everyday lives of persons in communities. . . . Second, the linking of social support to various aspects of psychological adaptation offers a theoretical base for developing broad based preventive interventions. . . . Third, the notions of networks and social support systems suggest a way of developing resources that puts less emphasis on treatment by professionals and more emphasis on embeddedness within a naturally occurring network of non-professional supportive relationships (p. 27-28).

A social network characteristic often identified as an important structural feature is density. Density usually refers to the level of interconnectedness among network members (excluding the ego). Two common assumptions found in the literature are that (a) support networks unequivocally help an individual cope regardless of the situation, and (b) denser networks are more supportive than lower density networks (i.e. higher interconnectedness among network members provides higher levels of support). Although the moderating effect of social ties is undoubtedly important (see Gore, 1978, on the effect of support networks and health consequences of unemployment; and Smith, 1980, on lack of social support and single parenthood), less emphasis has been placed on the nature of social ties (i.e. the structural characteristics of the network) and its relation to different life situations. One could speculate that what constitutes a supportive social tie in one situation could prove to be constrictive in another context.

One study that explores the relationship between support, network characteristics and an individual's life situation is Hirsch's (1980) research on natural support systems (NSS). The study tries to identify NSS that enhance dealing with major life changes. His sample consisted



of two groups of women: recent young widows and mature women that return to college. Measures of mental health, categories of support, and structural characteristics of NSS were obtained for all women. Hirsch's findings suggest that structural characteristics of NSS have a significant relationship to how the woman copes with major life changes. High density networks were significantly associated with poorer support (his previous research with college students also supports these findings, 1979). Furthermore, Hirsch reports that a denser network was related to less multidimensional friendships (friendships that involve at least two types of activities), smaller overall NSS and fewer friends. His discussion of the interrelationship of density, multidimensional friendship and network size is based on his analysis of two prototypical NSS. One model is what he calls the "extended family" system. This system is characterized by the homogeneous interactions among its members (lower dimensional associations), oftentimes relationships revolving around children (child-centered). According to Hirsch, this model represents a type of cultural ideal. In contrast, he found that a low density, multidimensional NSS, although less of a cultural ideal, seemed more adaptive in certain life situations (e.g. widowhood, return to college at an older age). Rands (1980) reports similar results in her study of changes in relationships of recently divorced people. After marital breakup (a major life change), women's networks (as well as men's) were smaller, less dense and more heterogeneous. She also noted that individuals with children tended to have stabler networks.

Other research that emphasizes the importance of weak (less dense) networks is Granovetter's (1973) study of ties of young, mobile profes-



changes (migration), their social ties in the new environment reflect continuity and cultural consistency.

The women studied grew up and learned their patterns of relating to others in a very different environment, society and culture than that in which they now find themselves. There is, therefore, great discontinuity in their personal social fields over their lifetimes, but a remarkable continuity in their personal social networks and support systems. Despite many differences by region and class among Puerto Ricans (Steward et al., 1956) and the fact that Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican community of New York are both changing, the women studied, whether schizophrenic or not, share many characteristics that reflect traditional rural Puerto Rican community patterns (p. 570).

This sample of women, then, showed striking stability and continuity in their "personal communities" in spite of living in a very different environment. By comparison, the women in Hirsch's study were experiencing recent life change (e.g. widowhood). Their life situation is one of transition (see Rands, 1980, for similar findings on the effects of transition in a person's network).

Other differences between the samples include education and income level. The women in Garrison's research came from a low-income, working-class community (only 12% of the sample were employed) and their education level was representative of the area ( $\bar{X} = 8.6$  years completed). Hirsch's sample had a mean monthly income of \$658 and a mean of 14 years of education.

One of the major differences found between schizophrenic and non-schizophrenic women in Garrison's study is the dependency pattern on kin. Except for the inpatient schizophrenic (who showed an almost exclusive intergenerational dependency), the "ideal/modal", less disturbed

group of women were more kin-oriented in their support core group. She found that "a progressive decrease in reliance upon kin ties is associated with a progressive increase in reliance on non-kin ties and a corresponding increase in the incidence and severity of emotional disturbance" (p. 591). Thus, women that deviated from the cultural, traditional pattern of relating to kin had higher levels of emotional distress.

Studies of networks of non-psychiatric, middle-class populations (e.g., Brannan, 1977) indicate that this group of people have networks that are more friend (less kin)-oriented. Further, it has been noted (see Granovetter, above), that, for these people, weaker ties can prove to be more adaptive. Therefore, one can conclude that what may constitute an adaptive coping network pattern for one group may have serious consequences for another. A variation/deviation of the "ideal" (whether cultural and/or class ideal) pattern of social relationships may imply different consequences for different women. In the case of working-class women, breaking with the kin-dependency pattern may be disadvantageous since reliance on kin is not only a matter of emotional support but of economic survival. The importance (and contradictory nature) of family ties for women will be discussed further at a later point.

Vazquez Nuttall (1978) studied different coping patterns among Puerto Rican women heads of household in the area of Boston. Emphasizing the structural complexities of the women's different coping strategies, she found five basic dimensions that characterize the women's adaptation styles: language-competence, social participation, child academic achievement, low anxiety, and educational status. One of the coping patterns featured a relationship between the woman's community

ties (measures of social participation) and reported levels of nervousness and depression. These women were also characterized by low levels of language competence, tendency to be full-time housewives and higher fertility level. Vazquez Nuttall concludes that:

One cannot tell whether these women were basically nervous and depressed people who did not have the energy to venture outside their homes to get more schooling or a job or whether they prefer to be housewives but get nervous and depressed because that role is not as satisfying in the United States as it was in Puerto Rico where there are relatives and friends galore (p. 12).

Since she did not measure social support and/or the nature of the woman's ties, i.e. her social network, it is unclear what the meaning of the relationship between community ties (social participation) and mental health is. In fact, what characterized women with lower levels of anxiety was high linguistic competence and full or part-time employment. Nevertheless, Vazquez Nuttall's findings do suggest an interconnection between social ties and mental health for low-income, women heads of households.

Relating depression to women's relationships, Bernard (1976) links the high ratio of female depression to an historical decline of women's homosociality (i.e. the way women relate to their own sex). According to Bernard's analysis socialization practices foster a "female way of being social" that emphasizes "bonds, affiliations and attachments" (p. 228). With the historical deterioration of female bonding--e.g. isolation of middle-class women in suburban households--their way of relating makes them more "vulnerable to the stresses of deprivation of such ties, and hence, to depression."

The historical importance of women's networks during the nineteenth century has been documented by Smith-Rosenberg (1979).

American society was characterized in large part by rigid gender role differentiation within the family and within society as a whole, leading to the emotional segregation of women and men. The roles of mother and daughter shaded imperceptibly and ineluctably into each other, while the biological realities of frequent pregnancies, childbirth, nursing and menopause bound women together in physical and emotional intimacy. It was within such a social framework. . . that a specifically female world did indeed develop, a world built around a generic and unself-conscious pattern of single-sex or homosocial networks. These supportive networks were institutionalized in social conventions or rituals accompanied virtually every important event in a woman's life, from birth to death (p. 317-318).

Furthermore, she makes the following observation:

Although most of the women within this sample would appear to be living within isolated nuclear families, the emotional ties between nonresidential kin were deep and binding and provided one of the fundamental existential realities of women's lives (p. 319). (See also Cott, 1977, for a similar analysis.)

At the socio-political level, the establishment of formal or informal groups for women has been identified as an important condition for empowerment (e.g. access to important resources in the community; see discussion on studies of women in rural regions above).

Leis (1974) studied women's groups, i.e. associations, in two related societies in West Africa, in the northern and southern regions of Nigeria. As she points out, the northern and southern Ijaw societies are very similar in many ways, allowing a relative "controlled comparison" of the variables under study. In this case, Leis wanted to determine factors involved in the formation of women's groups. She describes



the difference of the two societies in this area:

One of the villages, Patani, has several women's associations, which are patterned in much the same way as those of neighboring peoples on the mainland, except that they reflect the segmentary organization of the town with its separate and virtually autonomous sections. Among these people, women not only regulate themselves but also see through decisions that affect nonmembers, including the men of the village, who demonstrate little interest in, or capacity for, acting collectively in any but their own kinship groups. In the other village, Korokosei, women have no associations, and men are somewhat better able to work together in non-kin groups (p. 224-225).

Her data suggest the following factors contributing to the formation--or non-formation--of women's associations in these societies:

Both Patani and Korokosei women are the primary economic mainstays of their families, and both own and can use as they wish the products of their labor. Because of her marketing and trading, however, the Patani woman is better able to earn some income, which frees her from independence on her husband's labor and financial assistance. On the foundation of the independence gained from polygyny, she can participate in activities and groups on her own and over which her husband exercises no control. The Korokosei woman is restrained from any such independent activity. First of all, she cannot afford it, and second, she dare not flout her husband's authority for fear he will refuse to help her (p. 234-235).

Identifying and establishing determining factors involved in women's groups, e.g. social networks, can have potentially promising personal-political implications for the study of gender relations, and hence for all relations of domination. The value of organized activity is one of the historical legacies of progressive social movements (e.g. labor struggles in this century; see Wiessen Cook, 1979, for an historical case of women and support networks). Connecting the social ties of women--their structure, form, content--to their "personal" lives, e.g.,



the woman's particular life experience, is an important link. Granovetter (1973) makes a similar observation on the nature of community organization and personal ties. Speaking on the use of mass-media for organizing, he comments:

Leafletting, radio announcements, or other methods could insure that everyone was aware of some nascent organization; but studies of diffusion and mass communication have shown that people rarely act on mass-media information unless it is also transmitted through personal ties. . . otherwise one has no particular reason to think that an advertised product or an organization should be taken seriously. Enthusiasm for an organization in one clique, then would not spread to others but would have to develop independently in each one to insure success (p. 1373-1374).

It should be emphasized that social ties are complex and often times of an ambiguous and contradictory nature (see Wellman, above; Granovetter, 1973; and Fischer, 1980; for similar analysis on the complexities of social ties). The working-class Puerto Rican woman's contradictory position in her family and community clearly illustrates this point.

I have already commented on the paradoxical nature of some women's acquired relative autonomy (see discussion on working-class women decision-making power above). Before concluding this section, I would like to address some of the contradictions that face Puerto Rican, as well as other Third World women's attempts at self-determination.

In general, changing social conditions have affected women's position in her family and community in a variety of ways. One of these changes includes the shifting balance in the family's sexual politics (see Cintrón, 1974, for an analysis of this situation in the Puerto

Rican urban proletarian family); changes that have solidified in the process, contradictory expectations and positions for women at many social levels.

In her family, most women are still expected to be primary caretakers of children, while at the same time, economic pressures force the majority of women into a discriminatory labor market. On the one hand, her access to economic resources undermines patriarchal authority within the family; on the other, it has "doubled" women's labor (inside and outside the household).

Increasing attention is being focused on the important supportive functions the family plays for working-class women (e.g. Humphries, 1977). But as Sen (1980) insightfully clarifies:

The claim that the working-class family has beneficial aspects for women does not contradict the view that women are indeed subordinate to men within that same family. What is contradictory is not the analysis, but rather the position of women itself. To be dependent on the household, to perform long hours of unpaid and unhonored labor, and yet to be subordinate to the power and authority of husband and father is no easy situation. The mother whose private interests are always secondary, the daughter whose aspirations must give away to the son, know the contradictory nature of their membership in the family only too well (p. 84-85).

For Puerto Rican women, these contradictions express themselves in ways specific to their families and communities. Their families--in an analogous situation to other low-income families in the United States--encountering limited access to economic resources and faced with brutal sociopolitical discrimination, perform vital survival functions for its members (Stack, 1974; Humphries, 1977; Garcia-Bahne, 1977). In particular, families in Third World communities throughout the United States

affirm and maintain the cultural continuity of its people; the woman in these families is oftentimes seen as the "transmitter" of that culture.

In an analysis of the situation faced by most Chicanas, Garcia-Bahne (1977) comments on the relationship between family and community solidarity and autonomous behavior:

All factors in and outside the family, situational and historical, must be examined for developmental growth to take place. The Chicano family can thus be seen as a vehicle which incorporates those strengthening qualities that are necessary for social units to survive under exploitative conditions and paradoxically embodies those values which mitigate against the development and exercise of self-determination (p. 43). (For a table illustrating the positive and negative aspects of myths and stereotypes of the Chicano family, see p. 44-45.)

A social analysis that portrays the Puerto Rican woman, her family and community in simplistic ways can lead to mystifying and romantic visions of Puerto Rican "culture." While the preservation of the cultural heritage is a necessary aspect of the Puerto Rican people's struggle for self-determination, an acceptance of "traditional" patterns--like patriarchal family organization--goes against the empowerment and development of autonomy for its women. A static (non-dynamic) vision of "culture" militates against the struggle for self-determination at all levels, for all its people.

In this research, I hope to help build a more comprehensive analysis from which to understand and implement liberating conditions for Puerto Rican women, and hence, for her family and community (in the United States and in the Island). This endeavor is crucial for the theory and practice in the struggle for self-determination of all women, of all people.

Statement of the problem and hypotheses. This study explores the relationship between Puerto Rican women's level of autonomy and their social networks. The importance of self-determination in a relational context, both at the personal and at the socio-political level, is emphasized. Two central questions are addressed: what is the relationship between autonomy and social ties? and, what kind of social networks do Puerto Rican women have?

In an initial attempt to investigate these general questions, this study operationally defined autonomy as a woman's contribution to decision-making in two areas: household-budget management and birth control. The structural characteristics of the woman's social network measured were: size, density, strength of ties, dispersion and heterogeneity of network members. In addition, important background information (demographic characteristics) was gathered for each participant.

Recognizing the exploratory nature of this study, several possible relationships among the variables measured were formulated. In light of the analysis of the importance for women of decision-making and social ties as well as the review of the literature, the following hypotheses are presented:

Autonomy. The total measure of autonomy is expected to relate significantly to several network characteristics:

--Level of autonomy is expected to be inversely associated with network density.

--Level of autonomy is expected to be positively related to network size.

--Level of autonomy is expected to be positively associated with



heterogeneity of network membership.

--No predictions are made between level of the woman's autonomy and dispersion, nor between level of autonomy and strength of ties.

Social network. A significant relationship is expected between the following structural characteristics of the woman's social network.

--Density will be inversely related to network size.

--Density will be inversely related to heterogeneity of network.

--Size and heterogeneity of network membership will be positively associated.

--No predictions are made about strength of ties or dispersion of network membership.

Demographic characteristics. There were no predictions made between the demographic characteristics of the sample and the autonomy measure(s) or the social network variables measured.



## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Participants

The participants in this study were 40 Puerto Rican women employed in the Boston metropolitan area. In order to take part in the research, the women had to meet the following criteria:

- (a) currently employed a minimum of 15 hours a week,
- (b) no graduate training or education,
- (c) Boston (metropolitan area) resident for a minimum of 1 year,  
and
- (d) one child under the age of 16 living at home.

Rationale for participation criteria. The researcher was interested in studying decision-making and its relationship to social networks of working-class, employed women in an urban setting. A woman was considered Puerto Rican if she identified herself as such, even if she was not born in the Island, i.e. she is of Puerto Rican descent.

In order to meet criteria for employment--criteria (a)--an arbitrary number of paid hours a week (15) was determined by the researcher. Access to economic resources is assumed to have an important effect in decision-making. In this study, earned income is considered a necessary condition for decision-making in household budget management.

The participants were matched for type of occupation by limiting

the sample to women working in service-related employment. Previous research indicates (e.g. Brennan, 1977) that type of occupation relates to the nature of social relationships of an individual. In addition, criteria (b) controls for education level. It is assumed that the participant's education level is related to type of occupation.

Criteria (c) and (d) were considered important factors affecting the stability of the participant's social network. A one-year length of residence was chosen as the minimum amount of time necessary to establish and stabilize social relationships. Another factor deemed important in the stability of social ties (e.g. Rands, 1980) is the presence (or absence) of children. Furthermore, it is assumed that women with children establish different types of relationships than women without child-rearing responsibilities.

Demographic characteristics of the participants. In the sample studied, 88% of the women were born in Puerto Rico (only 5 of the 40 participants were born in the United States). Mean age was 32 years and 6 months old (range of 19-44 years of age) (See Table 1). The average length of stay in the United States was 17 years, with a mean of 11 for number of years in Boston. Seventy-three percent (29) of the women participating were married (either legally or consensually) at the time of the interview. A fourth of the sample was either divorced or separated and only one woman reported being single. Only 6 of the 40 participants (15%) had at least one kin member in the household (household composition). Women that had regular contact with two or more kin members were categorized as High in contact-with-family. Seventy-eight percent of the partici-

TABLE 1  
Background Information/Demographic Characteristics

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Birth Place		
Puerto Rico	35	88%
United States	5	12%
Marital Status		
Single	1	2%
Married (legally or consensually)	29	73%
Separated or Divorced	10	25%
Household Composition		
Living with Kin	6	15%
Living without Kin	34	85%
Contact with Family		
High	31	78%
Low	9	22%

pants came out High in this characteristic; nearly a fifth (22%) of the women reported not having regular contact with kin.

The participants' education levels included three categories: no high school degree, high school diploma, and some years in college. Eighty-five percent of the sample had either a high school degree and/or had attended college for some period of time. Only six of the women reported not having completed high school (see Table 2).

Sixty-five percent of the participants preferred speaking Spanish, 10% chose English, while 25% stated no preference between English or Spanish. In response to the question on Language Skill (level of proficiency in English), 25 participants stated knowing English well, 13 acknowledged having some knowledge of English, and only two manifested knowing very little or no English.

With the exception of eight respondents, all other participants were employed full-time. Their occupation in service agencies are grouped in the following general categories:

- (a) general clerical (17)--secretary, typist, receptionist
- (b) service workers (18)--interviewer, program coordinator, organizers, paraprofessional counselors ("community women"), advocates, health workers
- (c) teacher or teacher's aide (4)
- (d) cleaning (1)

Their income level ranged from \$3,000/year (part-time) to the \$12,000-15,000 bracket (full-time) with an average yearly salary of \$8,600.

TABLE 2  
Background Information/Demographic Characteristics

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Education		
No High School Degree	6	15%
High School	17	42.5%
Some Years of College	17	42.5%
Language Preference		
Spanish	26	65%
English	4	10%
Both	10	25%
Language Skill		
Knows English Well	25	63%
Knows Some English	13	32%
Knows Little or No English	2	5%



### Procedure

Structured interview. The researcher contacted several service agencies in the metropolitan area of Boston. These agencies were mostly located in predominantly Puerto Rican/Latin or minority communities (e.g. Villa Victoria in the South End). Once potential participants were identified, the interviewer proceeded to explain the criteria for participation, the general purpose of the study and the approximate length of the interview. If the woman expressed interest and met relevant criteria, the researcher made an appointment for the interview. The interviewer made clear that the appointment could take place either at home or at work, i.e. at the woman's convenience. Only one person decided not to participate stating that she was "too busy."

The 40 participants were interviewed by the author during the summer of 1981. The structured interview took an average of 35-45 minutes and was conducted in the participant's language of preference (Spanish, English or both). After assurance of confidentiality was guaranteed, the participant was asked to read the instructions (Appendix A) and sign the written consent form (Appendix B). (Instructions and consent form were adapted from Borrás, 1981.) In exchange for their participation, the author gave a copy of the book, Our Bodies, Ourselves (Nuestros Cuerpos, Nuestras Vidas) or offered referral information about psychological services and resources in the area.

The structured interview consisted of three main parts: Part I--Background Information (Demographic Information); Part II--Autonomy Questionnaire; and Part III--Social Network Mapping.

Part I--background information. The first section of the interview gathered important background information and demographic characteristics of the sample (Appendix C).

Part II--autonomy questionnaire. Autonomy, or autonomous behavior is operationally defined as the degree of decision-making in two areas: (a) household-budget management, and (b) birth-control. The woman's contribution to decision-making is considered an indicator of the participant's level of autonomy.

(a) Household-budget component: Item questions and scoring criteria. The household-budget item questions are based on previous research items identified as important in decision-making in the household (e.g., Blood & Wolfe, 1960) (Appendices D or E).

This component includes six questions on the participant's contribution to decision-making in areas such as money spent on food shopping, clothing, "big" purchases (e.g. car, house) and vacations. On these items the women were asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 her contribution to the decision-making process, and whether she carried out the decision alone or with someone else (shared). In addition, four of the item questions gathered information on who actually carried out the decision once it was made (i.e., who buys the food, who pays the bills, etc.).

In cases where the participant indicated that the decision-making was shared, she was asked to identify with whom the decision was made. Equal weight was given to decisions made shared or alone, but in order to obtain the highest rating on the scale the woman had to express equal participation in the decision-making process.

(b) Birth-control component: Item questions and scoring criteria.

The second component of the autonomy questionnaire obtained information about the woman's birth control history (Appendices F or G). The birth-control section is an adaptation of a questionnaire designed by Darity, Turner and Thieboux (1971) and Borrás (1981). Three questions required the participant to rate on a scale from 1-5 her contribution to decision-making in the area of birth control. These questions required that the woman specify whether the decisions were made alone or shared (and with whom). Other questions in this component addressed additional information like the woman's level of birth control education, her expectations and conflict(s) in this area.

Decisions reported as shared were given the same weight as decisions made alone as long as the woman stated equal contribution to decision-making. In the case of three birth-control items (questions 5, 6 and 7) women that indicated not having planned the decision were given the lowest score on the scale (i.e. it was considered that she contributed little or nothing to the decision-making process).

The total autonomy score for the participants was determined by adding the sum of the scores for each scaled item on the questionnaire (Household-Budget items 1.a; 2.a; 3; 4a,b,c; 5.a,b,c; and Birth-Control items 5, 6 and 7).

Part III--social network mapping. The third section of the structured interview was designed to determine several structural characteristics of the women's social network (Appendix H). The characteristics measured were:

- (1) Size of the network: defined as the number of people whom the participant identifies as having regular contact with;

- (2) Strength of ties: relates to the degree of relatedness and/or intimacy of the members;
- (3) Density of the network: measure of how many people in the woman's network relate to one another (i.e. know each other);
- (4) Homogeneity/heterogeneity of membership: refers to the types of relationships in the participant's social network (e.g. kin, friend, workmate, etc.); and
- (5) Dispersion of membership: geographical location of members.

(Definitions of structural characteristics are a variation of Walker et al., 1977.)

These characteristics were considered important structural features in describing and analyzing the sample's (working-class, urban Puerto Rican women) social networks.

Using a social network map as designed by Todd (1980) (Appendix I), the participant was initially asked to name and/or write the names of the people with whom she keeps regular contact (face-to-face, telephone or letter contact). Once the list of network members was completed, the woman determined the degree of closeness of each member according to the three levels on the map. The inner circle reflects the zone of intimacy, the middle-ring, the intermediate zone, and the outer ring, the zone of acquaintance. After each network member was placed on the map, the interviewer inquired about the nature of the relationship to each member (homogeneity/heterogeneity), where each member lives (dispersion), and degree of membership interconnectedness (density). If the woman's network comprised eight members or less, a density matrix (Appendix J) was used to determine member interconnectedness (the network density

matrix was taken from Rands, 1980).

Measurement of social network's structural characteristics.

- (1) Size: sum of number of people listed as network members.<sup>1</sup>
- (2) Dispersion: IN--sum of number of network members living in Massachusetts; OUT--sum of number of network members living outside Massachusetts.
- (3) Heterogeneity/homogeneity: number of types of relationships in the participant's network. Types of relationships: kin, friend, acquaintance, workmate-friend, workmate, church, school, other.
- (4) Strength of ties: sum of the number of network members in Circle 1 and 2, minus the sum of network members in Circle 2 and 3:  

$$\Sigma S(C1 + C2) - \Sigma(C2 + C3) = \Sigma S(C1 - C3).$$
- (5) Density: the proportion of number of actual linkages by number of possible linkages among network members  $\left(\frac{a}{p}\right)$  (Rands, 1980). (Density measures were calculated for only 27 of the participants.<sup>2</sup>)



## C H A P T E R   I I I

### RESULTS

Findings relevant to the statement of the problem and proposed hypotheses are reported in two sections: Autonomy and Social Network. Significant demographic characteristics are discussed within these two sections.

#### Autonomy

The main focus of this investigation is the relationship between autonomy and the structural characteristics of the woman's social network. The total autonomy measure (TAut) is the sum of the scaled item questions in the household-budget and birth control components of the questionnaire. For purposes of statistical analysis, this total sum was corrected in order to control for the effect of uneven number of questions in the two components, i.e. the measure is composed of the sum of the proportions of the scores obtained in the two component measures of autonomy. Means and standard deviations for the total autonomy measure (TAut) and its components (HB and BC) are presented in Table 3. Women in this sample had relatively less autonomy making decisions about birth-control than in controlling household finances. Correlation coefficients between the total and component measures of autonomy can be found in Table 4. The low correlation between the autonomy components suggests that they measure unrelated aspects of autonomy. For the sake

TABLE 3  
Means and Standard Deviations for Total  
Autonomy Measure and Its Components

	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>SD</u>
Total Autonomy Measure	53.2	8.5
TAut Measure	1.7*	
n = 40		
Household-Budget Component	41.3	6.8
HB Measure	.92*	
n = 40		
Birth Control Component	12.0	4.2
BC Measure	.80*	
n = 40		

\*sum of scores in terms of proportion

TABLE 4  
Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix  
for Total Autonomy and Its Components

	TAut	HB	BC
TAut			
HB	.56**		
BC	.90**	.13	

\*\*p < .001

of comparison, analysis of the total autonomy measure and other variables are included in the results. Frequency distributions for additional information about birth control practices of the participants are summarized in Table 5. It can be noted that although most of the women reported having used birth-control method(s) and are relatively well-informed, it is a conflictive area of decision-making.

A correlational matrix was computed for the total autonomy measure, its components and the social network variables. Results of these findings are reported in Table 6. It was hypothesized that the total measure of autonomy would relate significantly with the woman's network size, density and heterogeneity. The correlation coefficients for these variables did not reach significance. Thus, the predicted relationships between autonomy and size, density and heterogeneity of network membership were not confirmed. Interestingly and unexpected is the participant's level of autonomy and the strength of her social ties were found to be positively interrelated ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ). The greater proportion of network members close to the participant is significantly associated with higher levels of autonomy. The distribution of network members in the map circles is presented in Table 7. Further correlation between the size of the intimate circle and the autonomy measure did not reach but approached significance ( $r = .29, p = .07$ ). Table 8 summarizes the types of relationships reported in Circle 1. As can be seen from this table, most of the participants' intimate network members are family, friends and workmates-friends, in order of frequency.

Additional correlation coefficients were calculated between the two component measures of autonomy (HB and BC) and the social network

TABLE 5  
 Summary of Frequency Distributions  
 for Additional Information in Birth-Control Component

<u>Item Question</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
2. Reported use of birth-control method		
Yes	32	80%
No	8	20%
4. Reported knowing 3 or more birth-control methods		
Yes	40	100%
No	0	0%
8. Reported having conflict(s) in the area of birth-control		
Yes	17	43%
No	22	55%
Missing	1	2%
10. Reported considering not having children		
Yes	9	22%
No	27	68%
Missing	4	10%



TABLE 6

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix for Autonomy Measure(s)  
and the Social Network Variables

AUTONOMY MEASURE N	SOCIAL NETWORK VARIABLE					
	SIZE N = 39	IN N = 39	OUT N = 39	DENSITY N = 27	HET N = 40	STRENGTH N = 39
TAut N = 40	.22	.22	.01	.32	.10	.32*
HB N = 40	.08	.10	-.08	.36	-.29	.12
BC N = 40	.22	.22	.04	.21	.27	.33*

\*p < .05

TABLE 7

Distribution of Network Members in Social Network Map Circles

Participant	C1	C2	C3
1	0	0	4
2	1	1	0
3	19	9	0
4	2	1	14
5	3	1	7
6	5	8	0
7	11	0	0
8	3	2	0
9	3	2	0
10	3	7	0
11	0	3	7
12	1	1	0
13	8	7	0
14	7	0	0
15	3	1	5
16	2	2	0
17	2	7	0
18	2	7	4
19	10	20	4
20	2	1	0
21	4	2	0
22	8	12	0
23	3	0	7
24	3	0	0
25	41	21	0
26	4	2	0
27	3	5	0
28	5	10	0
29	10	10	0
30	29	0	0
31	37	35	9
32	3	1	4
33	5	1	0
34	5	3	0
35	4	4	0
36	8	0	7
37	12	38	0
38	7	2	0
39	18	9	0

TABLE 8

Composition of Social Network Membership in the Intimate Circle (C1)

<u>Type of relationship</u>	<u>Number of participants reporting this category</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Kin	30	77%
Friend	26	67%
Acquaintance	0	0%
Workmate-friend	14	36%
Workmate	3	8%
Other	5	13%

characteristics. Table 5 includes these results. The only autonomy measure to relate significantly to the network characteristics was birth control. There seems to be a positive relationship between the women's level of autonomy in the area of birth control and the relative strength of her network ties ( $r = .33, p < .05$ ).

Although no predictions were made about the participants' scores on the autonomy measures and the demographic characteristics of the sample, statistical analysis of the data revealed several significant results (only significant findings are reported). Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for the autonomy measures (TAut, HB and BC) and the demographic factors of Age, Years in U.S. and Years in Boston. The woman's level of autonomy in household-budget management was significantly associated with the number of years spent in the United States and Boston ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ;  $r = .39, p < .01$ , respectively). Additional statistical analysis showed that Years in U.S. and Age are not independent demographic factors. Partial correlations for these variables suggest that Years in U.S. accounts for most of the significant relationship with autonomy in household-budget management. For this sample, it appears that the longer the woman resides in the United States, the higher her HB autonomy level regardless of age ( $r = .28, p = .06$ , trend). These results are summarized in Table 9.

In order to analyze nominal demographic data and the autonomy measures, chi-square tests were conducted. The demographic characteristics included were: birth place (BP), marital status (MS), education level (ED), language preference (LP), language skill (LS), household composition (HCo), and contact with family (CwFA). The total autonomy measure

TABLE 9

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix for Autonomy Measure(s)  
 and Demographic Characteristics of Age, Years in U.S.  
 and Years in Boston and Additional Partial Correlation(s)

Autonomy Measure	Demographic Characteristics		
	Age	Years in U.S.	Years in Boston
TAut	-.11	-.04	.15
HB	.32**	.40***	.39***
BC	-.30	-.26	-.04

\*\*p < .05

\*\*\*p < .01

	Age	Years in U.S.
HB	.15	.30*

\*p < .06, trend.



and its components were dichotomized into High and Low groups on the basis of the median split for the purposes of the chi-square tests. This analysis showed a significant relationship between household-budget management and both marital status and household composition ( $\chi^2 = 9.01$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $\chi^2 = 6.39$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ , respectively). Tables 10 and 11 present these findings. Married participants tended to have lower levels of HB autonomy than separated or divorced ones. Further, lower autonomy levels in the management of household finances were associated with households that did not include kin members. There were no other significant associations between autonomy measures and the demographic characteristics of the sample.

#### Social Networks

One of the main purposes of this investigation is to explore the structural characteristics of the social networks of Puerto Rican women. The network characteristics studied in this study were: size (S), dispersion (number of network members living IN Massachusetts and number of network members residing OUT of Massachusetts), density (D), heterogeneity of relationships (HET) and the strength of the participant's social ties (STRE). Table 12 summarizes the means and standard deviations for each of the network variables.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for all the network characteristics. This correlational matrix is represented in Table 13. One of the hypotheses formulated in this investigation predicted a significant relationship between the participant's network density and size, as well as between its density and membership heterogeneity.

TABLE 10  
 Comparison of Household-Budget Management  
 Measure and Marital Status

	Marital Status		
	Single	Married (Legally or Consensually)	Separated or Divorced
Low HB	0	18	1
High HB	1	11	9

$$\chi^2 = 9.01, df = 2, p < .01$$

TABLE 11  
 Comparison of Household-Budget Management  
 Measure and Household Composition

	Household Composition	
	Living with Kin	Living without Kin
Low HB	0	19
High HB	6	15

$$x^2 = 6.4, df = 1, p < .01$$

TABLE 12  
Means and Standard Deviations  
for Social Network Structural Characteristics

<u>Social Network Characteristic</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Size n = 39	15	17
Dispersion		
In n = 39	14	16
Out n = 39	1	2
Heterogeneity n = 40	3	1
Density n = 27	.78	.27
Strength of Ties n = 39	6	10

TABLE 13

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix for Social Network  
Structural Characteristics: Size(S), Dispersion (IN,OUT),  
Heterogeneity (HET), Density(DEN), and Strength of Ties(STRE)

	Size	IN	OUT	HET	DEN	STRE
Size		.99***	.23	.59***	.22	.75***
IN			.11	.59***	.28	.73***
OUT				.08	-.40*	.32*
HET					-.14	.45**
DEN						.16
STRE						

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001



Neither of these relationships reached levels of significance. By contrast there is a negative interaction between network density and number of members residing outside Massachusetts ( $r = -.40, p < .05$ ).

Another important hypothesis in this investigation referred to the expected relationship between network heterogeneity and size. As predicted, there is a strong association between the diversity of network members and its size ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ).

Two of the structural features were found to have the most significant relationships with other network variables. These two characteristics were heterogeneity and strength of social ties. In addition to the predicted relationship between heterogeneity and size, member heterogeneity correlated significantly with number of network members living in Massachusetts (IN) ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ), and strength of network membership ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ).

Similarly, strength of ties seems to have a significant association with size ( $r = .75, p < .001$ ) and heterogeneity ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ). It also had a significant correlation with membership dispersion, both IN ( $r = .73, p < .001$ ) and OUT of Massachusetts ( $r = .32, p < .05$ ).

Other significant results between the network variables include the relationship between network size and number of members residing in Massachusetts ( $r = .99, p < .001$ ).

The analysis used to explore the possible associations between demographic data and the social network characteristics of the participants was analogous to the analysis used in the autonomy section. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for the variables age, years in U.S., years in Boston and the network characteristics. This analysis

revealed a significant inverse relationship between the woman's age and the heterogeneity of her network ties ( $r = -.39, p < .01$ ).<sup>3</sup> These results are presented in Table 14.

Chi-square tests were performed on the nominal demographic data and the social network variables (only significant results are reported). For the purposes of this analysis, the social network characteristics were divided into High and Low groups. Network variables of size, dispersion (IN, OUT), and density were dichotomized using the median split. Networks of participants who had four or more types of relationships were considered Heterogeneous; women with three or less kinds of ties were placed in the Homogeneous group. The High and Low groups for the network variable strength of ties were categorized according to the following criteria: a participant whose network members were concentrated on the innermost circles in the network map (C1 and C2) were placed in the High group; participants who listed most of their network members in the outer circles (C2 and C3) were put in the Low group. That is, High =  $\Sigma(C1 + C2) > \Sigma(C2 + C3)$  and Low =  $\Sigma(C2 + C3) > \Sigma(C1 + C2)$  or  $H_i = \Sigma C1 > C3$ ,  $L_o = \Sigma C3 > C1$ . Table 15 shows the only test reaching significance among these variables. Network heterogeneity was found to be significantly associated with the participant's birthplace ( $\chi^2 = 4.40, df = 1, p < .05$ ). The women born in Puerto Rico tend to have a more homogeneous network than the Puerto Rican women born in the United States. It must be noted that the validity of the chi-square presented in this section may be in question due to the relative small size of the sample. Nevertheless, they have descriptive qualities that will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

TABLE 15

Comparison of Network Heterogeneity and Birth Place

	Birth Place	
	Puerto Rico	United States
Homogeneous Network	24	1
Heterogeneous Network	11	4

$$\chi^2 = 4.40, df = 1, p < .05$$

TABLE 14

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix for Social Network  
 Characteristics and Age, Years in U.S. and Years in Boston

Social Network Variable	Demographic Characteristics		
	Age	Years in U.S.	Years in Boston
SIZE	.01	-.16	.13
IN	-.01	-.14	.16
OUT	.12	-.18	-.28
HET	-.39**	-.29	-.02
DENSITY	-.01	.15	.25
STRENGTH	.03	-.14	.03

\*\*p < .01

### Summary of Findings

The analysis of the data gathered in the structured interview of 40 Puerto Rican working women revealed both predicted and unexpected results.

Predicted relationships between the participant's network density and its size and heterogeneity were not confirmed. Even though the woman's level of autonomy correlates significantly with the strength of ties in the woman's network, the weak statistical relationship between the component measures of autonomy suggest that one examine decision-making in household expenditures and birth-control separately. In this research, results indicate that strength of network ties relates significantly to the woman's autonomy in decision-making in birth-control practices and not with her control over the household budget.

Autonomy in household-budget management is strongly associated with the woman's length of residence in the United States and in Boston. Other significant factors related to autonomy in household-budget management are the woman's marital status and whether or not she is living with kin.

On the other hand, level of autonomy in birth control practices is significantly related to the number and degree of closeness of the participant's network members.

Hypothesized relationships between density and other social network characteristics were not confirmed in this study: density was not found to correlate with size or heterogeneity of network membership. Nevertheless, the network's density appears to have a significant and inverse



relationship with the number of network members residing outside of Massachusetts.

Heterogeneity of members is one of the structural characteristics found to interact significantly with several other variables. As predicted, heterogeneity of network membership is significantly related to its size. Furthermore, it is strongly associated with the number of members living in Massachusetts. In addition, membership diversity tends to be related to both the woman's age and her birthplace.

Strength of ties was the other network structural characteristic to have a number of significant correlations. The relative number and degree of closeness of the woman's network ties is positively related to her network's size and diversity. Strength of network ties is also correlated with dispersion of members, i.e. with the number of members residing both in and out of Massachusetts.

Other unexpected but not surprising correlations included the positive relationship between network size and the number of network members living in Massachusetts. Thus, the participant's network size is comprised mostly of members who reside in relatively close geographical proximity.

## C H A P T E R   I V

### DISCUSSION

The present study explores the relationship between a woman's level of autonomy and her social relationships. This relationship is considered particularly relevant to women in their efforts at self-determination in their families and communities. It is argued that women must appropriate, and transform the meaning of autonomy so it is reflective of their experience. Women's psycho-social development is characterized by its embeddedness in relationships. Feminists as well as aspects of psychological theory (e.g. object relations theory) emphasize the importance of the relational context in the development of autonomy. Thus, this investigation examines the autonomous behavior of working Puerto Rican women in the context of their social networks.

Autonomous behavior is defined as the woman's contribution to decision-making in two areas: household-budget management and birth control practices. These two areas are considered necessary (although not sufficient) conditions for woman's self-determination.

Traditionally, women have not been expected and are oftentimes actively prevented from, behaving in an autonomous manner (these expectations vary according to the woman's class, culture and/or race). Therefore, the exercise of self-determination is a dynamic and continuous struggle for women. This struggle is carried out in the specific historical context of women's relationships within their families and com-

munities. Looking at women's relational networks could help us understand as well as promote this struggle.

This investigation assumes that certain network characteristics can maximize the possibilities for exercising autonomous behavior. These characteristics may be conducive to a variety of alternatives and options that could help women in their struggle. It could also help them transcend the oftentimes contradictory position in the communities to which they belong. Social network characteristics predicted to relate positively with autonomous behavior include size and heterogeneity of membership. Density was expected to be inversely associated with autonomous decision-making.

Research on social networks has identified certain social network characteristics important in stressful situations. Hirsch (1980) found that women in life crisis circumstances reported less satisfaction with emotional support received in dense social networks. Denser social networks were also characterized by less multidimensional friendships as well as smaller overall network size. Studying the effects of marital break-up in the social networks of women, Rands (1980) reports larger networks for women expressing greater desire for autonomy.

Analysis of the data obtained from the interview of a group of Puerto Rican working women living in Boston revealed no significant relationships between autonomy and their networks' size, density and heterogeneity. Nonetheless, there is a significant relationship between autonomy in birth-control practices and the strength of the woman's network ties.

The data suggest that the component measures of autonomy, household-

budget management and birth control be looked at separately (not combined). The component measure of decision-making in household-budget management (HB) did not discriminate sufficiently in this sample of Puerto Rican women, when compared with the participants' level of autonomy exercised in the control of their fertility. Thus, when discussing the significant relationship between autonomy levels and other measures in this study, the reference is to the birth-control autonomy measure. The HB measure did relate significantly to several demographic characteristics. These relationships and their research implications will be discussed at a later point.

#### Women's Autonomy and the Importance of Close Ties

A significant relationship between a participant's level of autonomy in decision-making in birth control and the relative concentration of intimate ties (strength of woman's ties) in her network is strongly suggested in this study. This association emphasizes the importance to women of emotional closeness in social ties and autonomy. High levels of autonomous decision-making was found to correlate positively with a greater concentration of close ties in the woman's network.

The literature's focus on density stresses the importance of the interconnectedness of network membership, i.e. it refers to the degree of integration in a person's community, not their "emotional connectedness." A commonly-held assumption is that a fragmented network, characteristic of urban life, leads to social decay (see Introduction for Wellman's argument on the "Community Question" in sociology). This study's findings indicate that the prevalence of emotionally close ties



seems to be a critical variable in the urban web of social relationships. Fischer (1980) summarizes his findings on the effects of urbanism on social networks as follows:

. . .Urbanism does not promote social isolation; it does seem to change the nature of social ties. . . . It does not seem to affect the quality of intimacy of social ties. Similarly, urbanism has no appreciable net effect positive or negative, on psychological well-being. . .these findings. . .tend to support the conclusion that urbanism changes style of life but not quality of life, and tend not to support ideas of urban alienation and distress (p. 24).

Most importantly, for women, the relevance of the significant relationship between autonomy and strength of ties in urban social networks gives weight to our initial argument: the relational context, in this case, the concentration of emotional ties in the social network is a critical factor in women's efforts at self-determination.

Although network size and heterogeneity were not found to interrelate significantly with the total autonomy measure, these structural characteristics correlated with the strength of ties in the women's networks. Higher levels of autonomy are associated with greater concentration of close links. Concomitantly, the prevalence of intimate relationships is significantly related to a larger network size and a more heterogeneous membership. Thus, women with networks characterized by more intimates also tend to have bigger as well as more diverse network ties. Diagram 1 illustrates this point.

The structural social network aspects important to autonomy raise a different but related issue: the quality of emotional closeness. As Garrison (1978) points out (see Introduction), certain types of close-



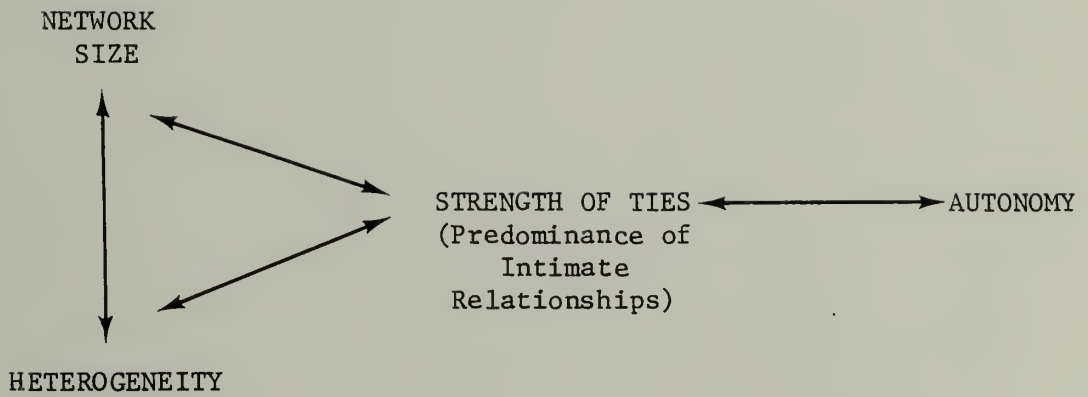


Diagram 1. Structural relationship between social network characteristics and women's autonomy (suggested by Todd, personal communication, 1982).

ness, e.g. almost exclusive intergenerational dependence, can be associated with severe psychological disturbance. Family therapists often emphasize the pathological effects of "enmeshment" (fused or undifferentiated relationship between people). Although exploring the psychological dimensions of different social networks was beyond the scope of this study, the results of this investigation indicate possible connections between important structural features and psychological correlates for autonomy. For example, a prevalence of intimate ties in a large and diverse social network may be related to important psychological dimensions for autonomy: a woman with mature interdependence, i.e. with close but differentiated and separate interpersonal relationships.

In her writings on moral development from the woman's perspective, Gilligan (1982) stresses the fact that women's view is one that centers on connectedness. Criticizing male bias in the field of human development, she claims:

By changing the lens of developmental observation from individual achievement to relationships of care, women depict ongoing attachment as the path that leads to maturity. Thus the parameters of development shift toward marking the progress of affiliative relationship (p. 170).

From this perspective, Gilligan argues that women's experience of connectedness can lead to moral development and growth.

. . .because women's sense of integrity appears to be entwined with an ethic of care, so that to see themselves as women in a relationship of connection, the major transitions in women's lives would seem to involve changes in the understanding and activities of care. Certainly the shift from adulthood witnesses a major redefinition of care. When the distinction between helping and pleasing frees the activity of taking care from the wish from approval by others, the ethic of responsi-

bility can become a self-chosen anchor of personal integrity and strength (p. 171).

### Birth-Control Practices

As the history for reproductive rights shows (see Gordon, 1977) women's control over their bodies has been--and continues to be--a constant source of conflict and struggle. Traditional values in the Puerto Rican community have usually espoused the view that a woman "should accept as many kids as God sends her" ("aceptar todos los hijos que Dios le manda"). In addition to this traditional view, differences in class and education shape the actual practices of decision-making in the control of fertility in the Puerto Rican community (see Borrás, 1982, for an overview).

The participants in this study were relatively well informed about birth control methods (100% of the women knew at least three methods, 80% reported having used some form of birth control). They also had similar education levels and were all employed in the service sector.

Research on the birth control patterns of Puerto Rican communities in the United States establishes the prominence of women's social links in decision-making in this area. In their study of the effects of sterilization on Puerto Rican women in a community in Hartford, Connecticut, Gonzalez et al. (1980) concluded that "at the present time, the most important source of information and support for the sterilization decision comes from family and friends" (p. 36). Borrás (1982) makes the observation that women tend to discuss birth control issues with people perceived as supportive of the decision (p. 34).

If a woman's choice or decision goes against the traditional values and expectations of her community, one could assume that a larger, more diverse network tie could maximize the possibilities for self-determination in the control of her fertility. Although network size and heterogeneity were not directly related to autonomous decision-making in birth-control, the most significant variable was the degree and number of network members close to the participant. Nonetheless, the greater number of intimate ties, the bigger and more heterogeneous networks the women had.

In order to explore further other aspects of decision-making of Puerto Rican women in this sample, a brief discussion of their management of household expenditures will be presented here.

#### Decision-Making in Household-Budget Management

Women's decision-making scores in the HB component measure of autonomy were not discriminate enough among the participants' levels of autonomy. Although one can state that control over household expenditures is an important dimension of autonomy for women, in the case of employed women it does not seem to be a useful indicator of autonomous decision-making. This highlights the importance of understanding the social context of women in determining aspects of their struggle at self-determination, i.e. autonomy can best be understood as an interrelationship between social structure particular to a group of women and their individual behavior more than as a static "personality trait." Thus, it seems that for employed women, control over household expenditures is not a powerful indicator of their autonomy level.

On the average, women scored higher on the HB autonomy measure than in the BC component measure. Another related interpretation is that for employed women exercising autonomy in household-budget management is less conflictive than being autonomous in making decisions about birth control. In fact, the traditional division of labor oftentimes delegates to women relative autonomy in the domestic sphere. Nonetheless, within the domestic sphere varying degrees of relative autonomy can be observed. Both marital status and household composition were significantly associated with the women's level of autonomous decision-making in HB. Lower scores in HB are associated with married women, as opposed to separated or divorced participants. These results may be indicative of the difficulties married women have in carrying out autonomous decision-making in the house (in spite of earning an income); difficulties which may be attributable to the expected subordination of women in their families. In terms of the sample's household composition most women in this study lived without kin members. When they live with kin women tended to higher HB scores. In several cases, women reported sharing their decision-making not with a spouse, but with her mother and/or children. These findings must be taken with caution since there is not enough variability in marital status and household composition (i.e. 70% were married, 85% were living with no kin members as part of the household) to forward any conclusive statements.<sup>4</sup> What these demographic characteristics do seem to indicate is the sample's traditional residence pattern, a household pattern found to be representative of other Puerto Rican communities in the United States. That is, women tend to be married (legally or consensually) and living in a nuclear



household with frequent contacts with kin members who oftentimes live in close geographical proximity (see Garrison, 1978, for an account of migrant Puerto Rican women living in New York City).

Another demographic characteristic related to the level of HB autonomy was the number of years the woman has resided in the United States (as well as number of years in Boston). Research with migrant populations suggests that length of residence (in the city) is not necessarily conducive to a change in traditional behavioral practices. In his study of Finnish immigrants, Haavio-Mannila (1976) found that a longer length of residence outside the country of origin did not imply an increase in the use and knowledge of health and welfare services. Garrison's research on Puerto Rican women indicates that even though migrant women undergo dramatic changes in their environment (e.g. rural to urban), they exhibit notable personal continuity in terms of their social relationships. Before turning to a discussion of the structural characteristics of the women's social networks, the following observation is made.

A popular assumption is that attitudes and expectations towards working women is more liberal in the United States than within Latin communities. This comparison, though, has never been fully addressed or properly documented. At the same time, owing to differences and changes in the labor force of the United States, it is frequently observed that women have more opportunities for employment (usually low-paying, unskilled positions) than the men. The incorporation of women into the labor force has brought significant changes to both Latin and non-Latin families and communities. More research is needed in order to make more

informed conclusions about the impact of length of stay in the United States for Latin women (e.g. research with migrant and non-migrant as well as employed and unemployed Puerto Rican women).

### Social Networks

One of the main objectives of this study is to begin exploring the social ties of Puerto Rican women. This investigation measured five structural characteristics of the social networks of working Puerto Rican women living in Boston: size, strength of ties, density, heterogeneity of members and its dispersion (the number of members residing both in and outside of Massachusetts).

These women's social networks were characterized by an average network size of 15 members. Most network members reside in geographical proximity, i.e. they live in Massachusetts. In fact, the larger the social network, the greater number of network members live within the state. These social relationships featured an average of three different types of social links. Thus, women had usually more than family and friends in their networks.

The average participant had a relatively dense social network (.78). Furthermore, 13 (32%) of the women described networks typical of other working-class communities (Cubbitt, 1973). These social networks reveal considerable overlap in their relationships: kin, friends and workmates consist of the same group of people. The network density results must be understood with caution since scoring difficulties limited the number of networks for which this measure was calculated, probably inflating the density measure. Nevertheless, this measure gives us an initial

density baseline from which to speculate both in this study as well as in future research in the Puerto Rican community.

Density is one of the most commonly measured characteristics in the social network literature. The convergence on this network variable stems from the interest of urban sociologists and anthropologists in determining the impact of urbanization in community life (see above). Wellman (1981) makes the following observation on density in network research:

. . .excessive reliance on density often brings on an acute case of "pastoral syndrome" with analysts nostalgically comparing contemporary networks with well-integrated, solidarity networks supposedly prevalent in preindustrial communities. . . . We need more differentiated conceptions of networks as well as of ties. The norm of a single, densely-knit network has too often led analysts to treat complex, ramified networks as tattered residues of defunct solidarities. We do better when we remove the normative idealization of density and inquire into what effects different structural forms have on the availability of supportive resources to network members. The evidence shows that both densely-knit and sparsely knit networks have their uses. . .(p. 25).

This investigation hypothesized several significant relationships between the social network variables. These predicted relationships included a significant correlation between density and size, as well as between density and network heterogeneity. Neither of these expected associations received support in the analysis of the results. Rands (1980) observed that research on the relationship between density and size shows inconsistent findings. Furthermore, different measurement methods for these variables further confounds conclusive comparisons and decisive interpretations.

The only social network variable found to correlate significantly

with density was the number of network members living outside of Massachusetts. Denser social networks tend to have fewer ties residing out of the state. Thus, as might be expected, closely knit networks have fewer geographically distant network members. Todd (personal communication, 1982) has suggested that this relationship may be more indicative of the participant's social network segmentation, i.e. one could consider network members in and out of Massachusetts as two subnetworks.

Strength of network ties was the most critical structural network feature in the analysis, i.e. it was the one social network characteristic that significantly related the most with other variables in this study. It has already been pointed out that higher levels of autonomy in birth control decision-making correlate significantly with the relative number of emotionally close network ties. In addition, strength of ties was found to relate positively with size, dispersion and network heterogeneity. A higher concentration of members close to the participant also characterized larger and more heterogeneous networks. These networks also tended to have greater numbers of members residing in, as well as outside, the state.

Wellman's (1979) findings suggest an analogous analysis in his study on the availability of help in the social networks of a community in Toronto:

The closer (stronger) the intimate relationship (as measured by the respondent's ordinal ranking of the intimates), the more the perceived availability of help becomes a salient defining component of that tie. Closeness is apparently the single most important defining characteristic of helpful intimate relationships. . . . Furthermore, all other significant variables predict to it, directly or indirectly (p. 122-123).



Accordingly, he found density to be a less central dimension in the mobilizing of help in the social networks of this community.

Hirsch (1979, 1980), on the contrary, identifies density as a crucial variable in his research on social networks. These contradictory findings may be explained by considering the differences in the samples under study. A possible source of difference may stem from the fact that Hirsch's subjects (as opposed to this sample) were undergoing stressful life circumstances.

Another interesting finding was the relationship between strength of the woman's ties and the network's membership dispersion. Networks with large concentration of intimates tend to have greater numbers of members residing in as well as outside of Massachusetts. These findings point to the fluidity of networks in the urban context.

In their study of rural-urban migration networks in Kenya, Ross and Weisner (1977) stress the importance of considering the migrants' place of origin and the city (in which they settle) as interdependent social systems:

Rural and urban social systems, while spatially separated, are often socially, economically, and politically interdependent. Cities in Africa are growing primarily as a result of rural migration, while the countryside is changing economically as a result of money earned in the city by these migrants. This linkage of city and country requires us to conceptualize social and economic life as a common social field in which both rural and urban residents can and do participate, rather than as two discreet social systems with a clearly marked border between them. . .people seek to maximize relations in both places by using resources derived from one setting to strengthen social ties and make life more secure in the other (p. 360-361, emphasis mine).

Moreover, they conclude by stating,



Familial networks are important innovations arising out of the need to maintain dual residences and resource bases rather than primarily the result of modernizing knowledge and information about new forms of social organization. These rural-urban networks are neither traditional nor modern; they are innovations drawing from both rural and urban resources (p. 371).

Similar to African migrant populations, Puerto Ricans harbor and sustain the hope of returning (eventually) to the Island. This hope is kept alive by the constant flow of resources and travel between Puerto Rico and the United States. Thus, maintaining strong ties with geographically distant network members is emotionally as well as economically important.

Describing the social network features of close relationships, Shulman (1976) makes the following comment,

Most respondents reported having a set of close relationships which include kin, friends and some neighbors. Relationships in the network tended to be continuing ones based on enjoyment and usually involved regular visits. A number of relationships, however, involved only rare occasions of direct contact suggesting that while face to face contact may be crucial for the establishing of close relationships, it is not crucial for sustaining them (p. 320).

Finally, the second most important network characteristic in the analysis was the heterogeneity of network members. Psychologists have often emphasized the importance of diversity in social relations. In order to analyze the complexity and variety of relational contexts in a person's social world, several methods have been utilized. For example, Hirsch (1979, 1980) looks at a relationship's dimensionality. A relationship is considered "multidimensional if and only if it involved engaging in a number of different kinds of activities or behaviors impor-

tant to" the individual (p. 265). Hirsch's research highlights multi-dimensional relationships as a strong predictor of students' satisfaction with their support network. Interpreting the advantages of this characteristic in the support networks of women undergoing major life changes, he states:

For both groups of women, the family had become a less important source of reinforcement. Widows largely needed to look outside the family to fill the social void left by their husband's death, as they typically had strong ties to their children. Students now considered not only family but also school and an eventual career as important parts of their lives. Thus, irrespective of other differences, both groups of women required NSS [natural support systems] which could support intensified involvement outside the family sphere (1980, p. 170).

Tolsdorf (1976) defines a similar aspect of social networks based on the relationship's content. A multiplex relationships encompasses more than one content area (conversely, a uniplex relationship includes only one content category). His findings revealed that the non-psychiatric (medical) group sustained a greater number of multiplex relationships. Further, there were different relational patterns for the non-psychiatric and psychiatric groups:

In summary, the psychiatric subjects reported fewer intimate relationships with their network members in a network that was more heavily dominated by family members, where functional people were in a more controlling and dominant position, and where overall there were relatively fewer but relatively more powerful functional people in the network. The medical group, on the other hand, reported more intimate relationships with more people in a network that was less dominated by family members and where functional people were on equal standing with subject in the exchange of support, advice, and feedback (p. 412-413).

Thus, the non-psychiatric group was characterized by a greater number of

close ties as well as less dependency on family members (i.e. more diversity in the network's relationships).

The predominant network pattern of severely disturbed migrant Puerto Rican women was found to include an almost exclusive reliance on kin, usually intergenerational dependency, as well as a very small network of kin (Garrison, 1978).

The present study measured network relational diversity or heterogeneity by enumerating the different types of relationships in the woman's networks (e.g. kin, friend, workmates, etc.). It was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between networks' heterogeneity and size. As predicted, this correlation was strongly supported. Women with larger social networks tend to have more diversified ties within their membership. Furthermore, network heterogeneity is also a characteristic of "stronger" networks (i.e. networks with a greater number of close relationships). Greater diversity in membership is also associated with larger numbers of network connections residing in Massachusetts.

Demographically, the participant's age tends to relate inversely to the diversity of her network composition. Younger women tend to have a more heterogeneous group of ties. It seems that as women's relational worlds expand with changing socio-economic conditions (e.g. participation in the labor force), especially in the case of younger generations, so do their networks.

Birth place of the participants was another demographic characteristic significantly associated with the woman's network heterogeneity. More homogeneous network ties were related to the group of women born in

Puerto Rico. The predominance of Island-born women in this sample (88%) precludes any definite conclusions about the implications of these results. Nonetheless, these findings may help delineate important factors in future research with this community: How do the social networks of migrant Puerto Rican women compare to women that remained in the Island? How do second- and third-generation women's networks in different parts of the United States compare, both with each other and with women in Puerto Rico? Even more precisely, in what ways are the social networks of these groups of Puerto Rican women similar, and how do they differ?

Furthermore, the richness of the interviews cannot be fully grasped in a statistical analysis of the information obtained. Although the study's main focus was to explore the structural characteristics of women's social networks and its relationship to autonomous decision-making, case study material can provide texture and important elaboration on the hypothesis presented here. The researcher was continuously struck by the similarities as well as the differences among the women interviewed.

In light of the above findings and the researcher's experience conducting this exploration of autonomy and social networks of Puerto Rican women, the following areas for future research are suggested:

(1) Class and Race--How do women of different class and/or racial backgrounds compare in the different components of autonomy? If working-class women are more dependent on their extended families (vs. on a one-man provider) for economic survival, how is their decision-making different from middle-class women? Are middle-class women less autono-



mous in decision-making around financial matters but more autonomous in decisions about their fertility? What other components are important in measuring autonomy for women? How does racial discrimination affect the social networks of different Puerto Rican women?

(2) Employment and Migration--Although the Puerto Rican experience of migration has been studied from a variety of perspectives (in literature, economy, politics), there is a noteworthy absence of this experience as it touches women. The effects of employment--or lack of--needs to be further analyzed. As mentioned previously, what are other important aspects of autonomy for women who hold employment? Furthermore, one may speculate about the effects of different kinds of employment (e.g. factory work, professional practice) in women's autonomy and social networks.

Other related areas of interest include investigating the social ties of women in different life-cycle stages (e.g. childless, widows) and in non-traditional lifestyles (e.g. lesbian women).

In several cases in this sample, the women identified having carried out decision making with the mother. Considering the mother-daughter relationship seems to be an important dimension in the study of autonomy for women.

It is hoped that the areas identified for future investigation spark discussion and further research relevant to other people's struggles for self-determination, especially as it concerns women.

#### Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

The findings of this exploratory study highlight the importance of



social relationships in the exercise of autonomous decision-making. Initially the exploration led to the identifying of structural network characteristics (e.g. density, size) that might facilitate or deter autonomy. Unforeseen, but in hindsight, expected was the significance of the relational closeness in the woman's social network. In contrast to commonly held (i.e. male-based) assumptions about autonomy, close ties seem to enhance rather than impede or "burden" self-determination. For urban, working-class (employed) women with children, autonomous decision-making in birth control is associated with a higher concentration of intimates in a social network further characterized by its larger size and member diversity. These results are presented with the purpose of generating debate and continued discussion rather than as conclusive data on women's experience. The research was conducted in an effort to contribute to the sparse fund of knowledge and information on Puerto Rican women, and as such, it affirmed as well as raised a variety of questions to be considered for further inquiry. Before speaking to several important areas for future research suggested by this study, some of its limitations will be addressed.

As often the case with limited resources, a larger sample would allow for more decisive interpretations as well as for wider generalizations. In terms of the structured interview, more items in the autonomy components of the measure may provide more comprehensive information about different decision-making activities. Furthermore, this study's findings strongly suggest that for employed women other dimensions of autonomy be explored.

In general, the social network approach provided, as expected, a

very useful tool for understanding some of the complexities of urban life. Nonetheless, the measurement of some of its structural characteristics need additional elaboration and refining. Particularly, the measurement of density proved to be one of the most intricate. The interview process could be designed as to allow for the gathering of more precise information on the network members' connectedness. Moreover, dispersion and density may be better understood if additional measures of the network's segmentation (subnetworks) are taken into account. For example, the relative density of different groups of network members (e.g. social links in and out of state) may provide useful information for an understanding of the impact of network interconnectedness. Thus, the flexibility of the social network paradigm accounts for its advantages as well as for its challenge.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>In cases where the participant was unclear or unsure about the number of network members in a particular category, e.g. precise number of workmates, church friends, etc., an average number was calculated based on the number of network members of a type given in the total sample.

<sup>2</sup>Density was only calculated for participants who clearly met the computational (scoring) criteria. The difficulties and complexity of measuring density will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

<sup>3</sup>Since the effects of age and number of years spent in the U.S. were not found to be independent further statistical analysis was conducted. A partial correlation coefficient revealed that the relationship between age and network heterogeneity almost reaches significance ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p = .06$ , trend) even when the effect of years in the U.S. is controlled for.

<sup>4</sup>This study was interested in women's contribution to decision-making--alone and/or shared--regardless of their marital status. Further research that compares women by marital status as well as in different life-cycle stages can give additional perspective on this subject.

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## APPENDIX A

### Instructions Interview Schedule/Instrucciones

This interview will consist of two parts. The first part includes questions about decision-making in two areas of your life, household budget management and birth control. The second part consists of an exercise to find out about the people you usually see or relate to. There are no right or wrong answers. On the whole the interview will take about one (1) hour. Do you have any questions? Let's start.

Esta entrevista consistirá de dos partes. La primera parte contiene preguntas relacionadas con decisiones sobre el manejo del presupuesto de su casa y sobre control de la natalidad. La segunda parte consiste de un ejercicio para obtener información sobre las personas que Ud. ve/conoce. En esta entrevista no hay contestaciones buenas o malas (correctas or incorrectas). En total, la entrevista tomara alrededor de una hora. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta? Comencemos.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form/Hoja de Autorización

"I am conducting a research project to find out about Puerto Rican women's decision-making and social relationships. I am a graduate student at the Psychology Department, University of Massachusetts. To do this study, I would like to ask you a series of questions. This information will be kept strictly confidential. Do you have any questions? If this sounds satisfactory to you, please sign the consent form below."

Authorization: I understand the extent of my involvement in this project and agree to participate.

---

Signature

Date

---

"Este es un proyecto de investigación sobre las decisiones de la mujer puertorriqueña y sus relaciones sociales. Yo soy una estudiante graduada en el Departamento de Psicología de la Universidad de Massachusetts, Amherst. Para llevar a cabo este estudio me gustaría hacerle una serie de preguntas. La información obtenida se mantendrá estrictamente confidencial. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta? Si está le parece aceptable, por favor firme esta hoja de autorización."

Autorización: Yo entiendo y estoy de acuerdo con my grado de participación en este estudio. Los propósitos generales y los detalles de mi involucimiento me han sido explicados satisfactoriamente.

---

Firma de la Participante

Fecha

APPENDIX C

Background Information/Informacion General Sobre La Participante

Name/Nobre:

Address/Dirección:

Tel:

Birthdate/Fecha y Lugar de Nacimiento:

Marital Status/Estado Civil:

Years in U.S./Años en E.U.:

Years in Boston/Años en Boston:

Education/Educación:

Occupation/Ocupación:

Income/Ingreso:

Language Preference/Idioma Preferido:

Language Proficiency/Destreza en Inglés:

Speak/Hablar \_\_\_\_\_ Read/Leer \_\_\_\_\_ Write/Escribir \_\_\_\_\_

Household Composition/Personas en su Casa:

<u>Name/Nombre</u>	<u>Relationship</u> <u>Tipo de Relación</u>	<u>Occupation or Age/</u> <u>Ocupación o Edad</u>
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APPENDIX D

Autonomy

Household Budget Management: I would like to ask you some questions about how money is spent in your household.

How Much Do You Contribute to Decisions on:

1. food shopping

(a) how much money is spent	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
	nothing	some	quite a lot	a lot	very much
(b) who does it?					alone _____ shared _____

2. clothes

(a) how much money is spent	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
(b) who does it?					alone _____ shared _____

3. what kind of car to buy?

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
					alone _____ shared _____

4. dwelling

(a) buying a house	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
					alone _____ shared _____

(b) choosing a place to live	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
					alone _____ shared _____

(c) moving to a new place      1      2      3      4      5

alone       
shared     

5. vacationing

(a) how much money is spent      1      2      3      4      5

alone       
shared     

(b) where to go      1      2      3      4      5

alone       
shared     

(c) when to go      1      2      3      4      5

alone       
shared     

6. Who pays the bills?

APPENDIX E

Autonomía

Manejo del Presupuesto Familiar: Quisiera hacerle unas preguntas sobre el manejo del presupuesto familiar.

Cuanto Ud. Contribuye a las Decisiones sobre:

1. comprar comida

(a) cuánto dinero se gasta

	1	2	3	4	5
	nada	algo	bas- tante	mucho	muchi- simo

(b) quién compra comida

sola \_\_\_\_\_  
compartida \_\_\_\_\_

2. ropa

(a) ¿cuánto se gasta?

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

sola \_\_\_\_\_  
compartida \_\_\_\_\_

(b) ¿quién compra la ropa?

3. ¿Qué tipo de carro se compra?

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

sola \_\_\_\_\_  
compartida \_\_\_\_\_

4. vivienda

(a) comprar casa

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

sola \_\_\_\_\_  
compartida \_\_\_\_\_

(b) escoger dónde se vive

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

sola \_\_\_\_\_  
compartida \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX F

Autonomy

Birth Control: I would like to ask you some questions about your decisions on birth control.

1. How many children would you say makes the best family size?
2. Have you and/or your partner used any methods to limit your family size?
3. If the answer to #2 is yes, what method(s) have you used?
4. What methods of birth control have you heard of?

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ sterilization (vasectomy, ligation, "tubes tied")

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ abortion

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ IUD (intrauterine coil or loop)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ contraceptive pill

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ diaphragm

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ spermicides (jelly, foam, cream, suppositories)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ rhythm

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ douche

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ coitus interruptus (withdrawal)

\_\_\_ \_\_\_ other, specify:

5. How much do you contribute to decisions on what method is used?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
nothing	some	quite a lot	a lot	very much	alone ___ shared ___

6. How much do you contribute to decisions on how many children to have?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
					alone ___ shared ___



7. How much do you contribute to decisions on when to have children?

1      2      3      4      5      alone \_\_\_\_\_  
shared \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever had any conflict regarding the use of birth control?

9. If the answer to #8 is yes,

(a) what kind of conflict did you have?

(b) how was the conflict resolved?

10. Have you ever considered not having children?

11. If you could start over, how many children would you have?

APPENDIX G

Autonomía

Control de la Natalidad: Quisiera hacerle unas preguntas sobre sus decisiones en el area de control de la natalidad.

1. ¿Cuántos hijos cree Ud. que hacen una familia ideal?
2. ¿Han usado/usan Ud. y/o su compañero-esposo algún método para evitar los hijos?
3. Si la contestación a la #2 es sí, ¿cuáles métodos ha usado?
4. ¿Qué métodos para evitar hijos Ud. conoce?

\_\_\_\_\_ esterilización (vasectomía, ligación o amarre de tubos)

\_\_\_\_\_ aborto

\_\_\_\_\_ IUD

\_\_\_\_\_ pastilla anticonceptiva

\_\_\_\_\_ diafragma

\_\_\_\_\_ espermaticidas (gelatina, "foam," crema, supositorios)

\_\_\_\_\_ ritmo

\_\_\_\_\_ duchas

\_\_\_\_\_ coitus interruptus

\_\_\_\_\_ otro, especifíque:

5. ¿Cuánto Ud. contribuye en la decisión de cuál método va ha usar?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
nada	algo	bas- tante	mucho	muchí- simo	sola _____
					compartida _____

6. ¿Cuánto Ud. contribuye en la decisión de cuántos hijos va ha tener?

1      2      3      4      5      sola \_\_\_\_\_  
 compartida \_\_\_\_\_

7. ¿Cuánto Ud. contribuye en la decisión de cuándo va ha tener un hijo?

1      2      3      4      5      sola \_\_\_\_\_  
 compartida \_\_\_\_\_

8. ¿Alguna vez ha tenido algun conflicto al evitar los hijos?

9. Si la contestación a la pregunta #8 es sí,

(a) ¿qué tipo de conflicto ha tenido?

(b) ¿cómo resolvió el conflicto?

10. ¿Alguna vez ha considerado no tener hijos?

11. Si pudiera empezar de nuevo, ¿cuántos hijos tendría?

APPENDIX H

Questions Social Network Map/Preguntas Mapa de Red Social

1. Size: In a blank piece of paper, write the names (or initials) of people that you usually see/relate or have contact with--including regular telephone contact--in the course of one month.

Tamaño: Me gustaría que escribiera en este papel, los nombres (o iniciales) de las personas con las cuales Ud. tiene contacto--incluyendo contacto regular por teléfono--durante el transcurso de un mes.

2. Strength of Ties: Place the names of these people in the network map according to the degree of relatedness: inner circle--zone of intimacy; middle-ring--intermediate zone; outer ring--zone of acquaintance.

Nivel/Grado de conexión: Coloque los nombres de estas personas en este mapa de acuerdo al grado de conexión (o cercanía): círculo de adentro--zona íntima; círculo del medio--zona intermedia; círculo de afuera--zona de conocida/o ("impersonal" e.g. doctor).

3. Homogeneity/Heterogeneity: Could you tell me the nature of your relationship to each person in these groups of people?

Homogeneidad/Heterogeneidad: ¿Me podría decir la naturaleza de su conexión con cada una de estas personas?

(a) kin/familia

(b) friend/amiga,o

(c) acquaintance/conocida,o

(d) other/otra: (e.g. compañera de trabajo, miembro de una misma organización, etc.)

4. Dispersion: Could you tell me where each one lives?

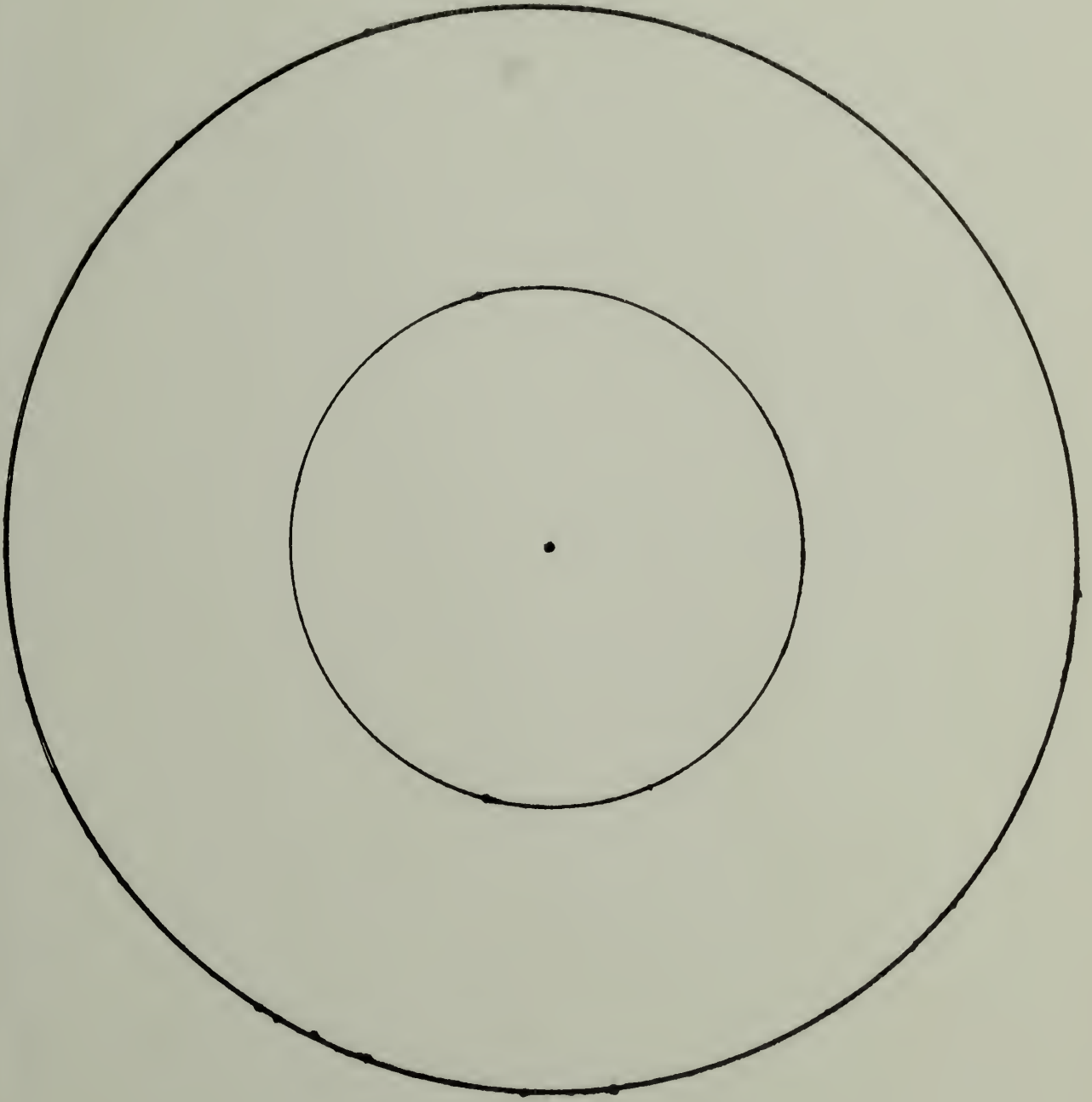
Dispersion: ¿Me podría decir donde vive cada una de estas personas?

- (a) neighborhood/vecindario
- (b) metropolitan area/area metropolitana
- (c) Massachusetts
- (d) U.S./E.U.
- (e) Puerto Rico
- (f) other/otro lugar:

5. Density/Densidad:



APPENDIX I



APPENDIX J

Network Density Matrix

	1. <u>        </u> and (2,3,4,5 6,7,8) know each other well?	2. <u>        </u> and (3-8) know each other well?	3. <u>        </u> and (4-8) know each other well?	4. <u>        </u> and (5-8) know each other well?	5. <u>        </u> and (6-8) know each other well?	6. <u>        </u> and (7,8) know each other well?	7. <u>        </u> and 8 know each other well?
1.							
2.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>						
3.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>					
4.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>				
5.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>			
6.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>		
7.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	
8.	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>	Yes <u>        </u> No <u>        </u>

