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One-parent families two common assumptions---re-examined.

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ONE-PARENT FAMILIES

TWO COMMON ASSUMPTIONS-

RE-EXAMINED

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate two common assumptions that appear in the literature on the effects of divorce and single parenthood on children. The first assumption is that children reared in a one-parent family (OPF) are adversely affected by this experience and cannot be as "well brought up" as children in two-parent families (TPF). The second assumption is that in the case of separation and/or divorce the mother is the more competent parent to raise the children. The subject sample included 42 single divorced custodial parents (21 single mothers and 21 single fathers) and their 62 (6 to 16 year old) children. In addition, a control group of 20 TPFs and their 38 children were recruited through the single parents that participated. The measures employed were: (1) The Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1985), and (2) The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). In addition, a parent questionnaire (devised by the author for this study) and a semi-structured interview with the parent(s) were included to provide further comparative data. Two by two (Group by Sex) MANCOVA and ANCOVA procedures

were performed and yielded the following results with respect to the assumptions under study. First, the overall scores of children from OPFs did not differ significantly from children in TPFs on a measure of self-perception (SPPC) and on their parents' ratings of their social competence and behaviour problems (CBCL). However, there were some significant differences between these two groups on some of the subscales of these two tests. Second, the overall scores of children from single-father families (SFFs) did not differ significantly from children in single-mother families (SMFs) on the SPPC and the CBCL. However, it was found that children from same-sexed OPFs tended to rate themselves and were rated by their parents more positively than children from opposite-sexed OPFs. The implications of these findings were discussed and it was suggested that future research should focus on the positive qualities and characteristics of the OPF.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

With the dramatic increase in the number of one-parent families (OPFs) in both the United States and Canada, research addressing the impact of this family arrangement on children is required. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to contribute to the research base on the effects of single parenthood on children. More specifically, this study will investigate some of the assumptions about OPFs that appear in the literature. For example, in reviewing the research on OPFs, it seems that there are two common assumptions that pervade the psychological literature pertaining to the effects of divorce and single parenthood on children. The first assumption is that children reared in a OPF cannot be as "well brought up" as children raised in a two-parent family (TPF). Consequently, Gongla (1982) indicated that OPFs have frequently been viewed as a "social problem" or a "deviant family type" because these families do not live up to the ideal and norm of the TPF. Further, much of the research on the impact of divorce and single parenthood on children focuses on the negative consequences (i.e., behaviour problems) for the children

(e.g., Brown,1980). A second presumption is that in the in the case of separation and/or divorce, the mother is the more competent parent to raise the children.

The presumption that single parents cannot be as effective as parents in TPFs is consistent with both Freudian and Social Learning theorists who stress the importance of both parents in the child's development. It has been suggested that the role of the single parent is emotionally demanding and exhausting. Consequently the children reared in OPFs are at psychological risk (Weltner, 1982) and may be vulnerable to psychological disturbances (Lynn,1974). In support of this hypothesis is some research that has found substantial differences between children reared in OPFs and TPFs. For example, Wadsworth et al. (1985) found that children from OPFs scored significantly lower than children from TPFs on measures of vocabulary, visual motor co-ordination, and behaviour. These researchers reported that, according to the results on a psychiatric screening device (Rutter, 1970), children from OPFs behaved in a more anti-social manner and were "marginally more neurotic" than children from TPFs. Brown (1980) found differences between these two groups on a number of variables, including the following: income, behaviour problems, discipline, and truancy. Pleas (1976) reported that in a sample of high school students, there

were sizable differences in school performance (lower performance in the adolescent group from OPFs) and the adolescents from CPFs were referred more often for disciplinary action than were the adolescents from TPFs. In a sample of first and third graders, Singer (1978) found that children from OPFs scored significantly lower on a measure of self-concept than did a comparable group of children from TPFs. The research of Parish (Parish & Dostal, 1980; Parish & Taylor, 1979) also supports the hypothesis that children from OPFs perceive themselves less favourably than their peers in TPFs.

The results of a number of recent studies, however, suggest that most children reared in OPFs do not suffer significant long-term consequences and some may even benefit from this family arrangement. For example, Sclari (1976) found no overall differences in achievement among first to sixth grade students from OPF and TPFs. Berg and Kelly (1979) found no difference between a group of children (9 to 15 years) from OPFs and TPFs on a measure of self-esteem. Raschke and Raschke (1979) also found no significant differences between third, sixth, and eighth graders from OPFs and TPFs on a measure of self-concept. These authors concluded that the child's perceived amount of family conflict and parental unhappiness are more important factors contributing to a child's poor self-concept

than single parenthood. Weiss (1979) concluded that due to organizational differences between OPFs and TPFs, children reared in a OPF are forced to grow up faster, mature earlier, and generally develop independent skills and other abilities that their peers in the TPF do not attain at the same age. Santrock and Warshak (1979) found that the boys from single-father families (SFFs) were rated as more socially competent than a comparable group of boys from TPFs. Consistent with this were findings of an observational study of classroom social participation in preschoolers (3 to 5 year olds). In this study, Deutsch (1983) found few significant differences between the children from OPFs and TPFs. In fact, the only difference that emerged suggested that the preschoolers from OPFs tended to engage in more cooperative play and peer contacts than their peers from TPFs.

In an attempt to account for the apparent discrepancies in the research on the effects of single parenthood on children, it is important to consider the methodological design, subject samples, and dependent variables selected in the studies presented above. As can be seen from Table 1, the dependent measures utilized, as well as the researchers' stated topic/purpose for the study varied for the studies reviewed in this section. In addition, most of these studies

Table 1

Studies on One-Parent Families

Topic/purpose	Methodology	Sample	Demographic variable	Conclusions/critique
Ambert (1982)				
Examination of single parents	Interviews	20 single mothers 7 single fathers	Low vs. high SES groups (no low income SFs)	Economic status and adjustment of custodial parent as 2 important factors related to success of a SPF
Berg & Kelly (1979)				
Compared self-esteem of children from broken, rejected, and accepted families	Test--Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale	Children between 9-15	SES not stated. Random selection from participants in a related research	No difference between divorced group and intact accepted families. Warm family environment and parent-child relationship as 2 most important factors related to the child's self-esteem
Brown (1980)				
Compared children from OPFs and TPFs on a host of variables	School records	36,457 children from elementary through high school. 26 schools in 14 different states	No control for SES, etc.	Significant differences were found on the following variables: income, achievement, health, behaviour, discipline problems, etc.
Defrain & Eirick (1981)				
Assessment of SPs--adjustment and coping to single parenthood	Questionnaire devised by the authors	38 single mothers 33 single fathers	SM--avg. age 36 yrs. SF--avg. age 37.2 yrs.	Lifestyles between SM & SF similar. SFs--higher income and more years of education

Table 1 continued

Topic/purpose	Methodology	Sample	Demographic variable	Conclusions/critique
Deutsch (1983)				
Compared the classroom behaviour of children from OPFs and TPFs	Behavioural observation in pre-school classroom over 2 month period	35 children between 3-5 yrs. First born or only children	Claims white lower class group	No significant difference between the two groups
Fry (1983)				
Compared the child's perception of his/her single parent family (SFFs vs. SMFs)	(1) Structured interview; (2) Personality and mood tests including the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale	70 SMFs avg. age between 9-10 yrs.	Matching procedure (age, number of children cared for at home, marital status, SES)	According to the children's response, SFs can be as effective as SMS
Fry & Addington (1984)				
Compared adult perceptions of children in OPFs	Videotape and question sheet	Teachers (150), Social Workers (150), lay people (300)	SES, age, and years of work experience were matched	Supported hypothesis that professional's perceptions may reflect more negative expectations of boys from SFFs than SMFs

Table 1 continued

Topic/purpose	Methodology	Sample	Demographic variables	Conclusions/critique
Lowenstein & Koopman (1978)				
Compared self-esteem of boys living in SFFs and correlated with parents' self-esteem	Tests--(1) Self-Esteem Inventory; (2) Index of adjustment and values (parent)	20 SMFs 20 SFFs children--9-14 yrs.	Middle class--working full time. Controlled for income, parental adjustment and parental employment	No evidence to support differences between boys raised in SMFs and SFFS. Did find that contact with non-custodial parents is important
Parish & Dostal (1980)				
Compared self-concept of children from OPFs and TPFs	Personal Attribution Inventory for Children	738 children between 11-14 yrs. (Kansas)	No mention of control procedures for SES	Children from OPFs perceive themselves and their parents less favourably than children from TPFs
Parish & Taylor (1979)				
Compared self-concept children from intact, OPFs, and remarried families	Personal Attribution Inventory for Children	406 children between grades 3-8	No mention of control procedures for SES	Children from OPFs scored lower on self-concept measure than children from TPF
Pleas (1976)				
Compared high school students from OPFs versus TPF	1)Questionnaire 2)Rating Scale 3)School records	High school students	Randomly selected (OPFs) and matched for grade and sex	Students from OPFs referred more often for disciplinary action and school performance is lower than students from TPFs

Table 1 continued

Topic/purpose	Methodology	Sample	Demographic variables	Conclusions/critique
Raschke & Raschke (1979)				
Compared self-esteem of children from OPFs and TPFs	Questionnaires devised by the authors Piers-Harris	289 children--3rd, 6th, and 8th graders	Authors claimed schools represent a homogeneous population	No difference between self-esteem scores of children from OPFs and TPFs. Concluded that family conflict and/or parental unhappiness more important consideration than number of parents
Rosen (1979)				
Compared children's emotional adjustment to SFFs and SMFs	Interviews and administration of projective instruments (sentence completion, TAT, HFD)	92 children between 9-28; 25 children-control group	Middle class subjects were matched among the three groups	No evidence to support differences between children raised in SMFs and SFFs on measures of emotional adjustment. Children reported that contact with non-custodial is important
Santrock & Warshak (1979)				
Assessed effects of father custody on child development	1.Structured interviews; 2. Self-report scales; 3. Projective tests; 4.Videotape of parent-child tasks	60 children between 6-11 yrs. of age	Matched for age, family size and SES. Children from OPFs matched for sibling status and age at separation. Predominantly middle class	Boys from SFFs rated as more socially competent than boys from SMFs and TPFs. Evidence to support importance of same-sexed single parent and authoritative parenting

Table 1 continued

Topic/purpose	Methodology	Sample	Demographic variables	Conclusions/critique
Singer (1978)				
Compared self-concepts of children from OPFs and TPFs	Components of 3 tests: 1) California Test of Personality; 2)Primary Self-Concept Inventory; 3) When Do I Smile Test	Randomly selected 120 children--1st and 3rd grades	Not mentioned	Significant differences were found between children from OPFs and TPFs (at .05 level)
Solari (1976)				
Compared children's achievement scores between OPFs and TPFs	Tests--1)Iowa Test of Basic Skills; 2) Stanford Achievement Series	926 students (grades 1-6)	Not mentioned	Did not distinguish between SFFs and SMFs. Results did not show significant differences in overall achievement
Wadsworth (1985)				
Compared children from OPF and TPF on measures of behaviour, vocabulary, and visual-motor coordination	Interview including Psychiatric Screening device (Rutter)	12,743 children studies at 5 years	OPFs--lower income, less education, etc. Controlled these variables statistically	TPFs were rated higher on all three measures
Weiss (1979)				
Examined child's perceptions of family structure in OPFs	Interviews	Over 200 OPFs including children from 6 yrs. of age through adolescence	Not clearly stated, but it was mentioned that the sample included a wide range of educational and occupational backgrounds	The family organization differs between OPFs and TPFs. Children from OPFs developed capabilities for independent functioning and assume responsibility earlier than children from TPFs

failed to control for the confounding effects of important demographic variables (i.e., socioeconomic status and parents' education). Further, some of these studies did not take into account: (1) the sex of the child (e.g., Berg & Kelly, 1979), (2) the sex of the single parent (e.g., Parish & Dostal, 1980), (3) the reason for the single parent status (e.g., Brown, 1980), and (4) the length since marital separation/divorce (e.g., Wadsworth et al., 1985).

The presumption that single mothers are better able to care for their children than single fathers likely stems from the general attitude that the mother is the most important parent in the emotional stability and personality development of the child. Fry and Addington (1984) refer to this attitude as "maternal pre-eminence," and further comment that "...stereotype and stigma are ascribed to divorced fathers for their presumed inability in child rearing and an assumption is made of negative effects on children (p. 333)." This attitude has significant implications for the legal system and for the parents "battling" for custody of their children. While the number of fathers contesting custody increases, research addressing the effectiveness of the single father and the impact of this arrangement on the child is lacking (Lewis, 1978).

Rosen (1979) interviewed and administered projective instruments to a group of subjects (between the ages of 9 to 28 years) from single mother, single father, and TPFs. He found no meaningful differences in general adjustment between the three groups. Rosen indicated that the regular contact with the non-custodial parent appeared to be important for these individuals.

A study conducted by Ambert (1982) compared both single mothers' and single fathers' perceptions of their children and their relationship with them. An additional variable that was considered was the socioeconomic status (SES) of the single parent. Ambert was unable to locate any single fathers from the low SES group. The difficulty in locating such a group has been identified by other researchers (for example, Orthner et al., 1978). A comparison of the parents' perceptions of their children revealed that all of the single fathers reported that their children were not manifesting any significant behaviour problems whereas the single mothers listed some of the following : truancy, disrespectfulness, incidents of shoplifting and vandalism, juvenile delinquency, and poor mother-child relationship. Ambert suggested that these results may be partially attributable to SES factors since mothers in the high SES group had less problems and reported a more satisfactory rela-

tionship with their children than did the mothers in the low SES group. However, the single fathers appeared to be functioning better than the single mothers in the high SES group. Ambert related this finding to the hypothesis that our society favours the single father role over the single mother role. According to Ambert, the single father receives authority and respect quasi-automatically from his children and does not suffer the decline in social status that the single mother experiences. Further, Ambert reported that the single father is far more likely to receive offers of help from others than the single mother receives.

As mentioned previously, Santrock and Warshak (1979) compared children from SFFs, SMFs, and TPFs, and found that boys from SFFs were more socially competent than the boys from either of the other two groups. These boys were rated as warmer, possessing higher self-esteem, being less demanding, more mature and sociable, and behaving more independently. These results support the idea that it is important for there to be a same-sexed parent in the child's life. Boys from SFFs were rated higher than the girls from SFFs on several measures and the reverse was true for the children from SMFs.

However, the research by Ambert (1982) and the results of other studies (for example, Lowenstein & Koopman, 1978)

indicate that it is not the sex of the parent that is the most important factor affecting children in SPFs, but rather the psychological adjustment and financial situation of the custodial parent. Further, as there is some reseach to suggest that as a group, single fathers are typically in a better financial position than single mothers (Chang & Gray, 1983), it is plausible that single fathers can be as effective as single mothers in rearing their children.

From the research presented, it appears that there is evidence to support and refute the two presumptions discussed above. With respect to the three variables that relate directly to this study (i.e., self-esteem, social competence, and behaviour problems) the research has yielded contrasting results. For example, Singer (1978) reported that children from OPFs scored significantly lower on a measure of self-esteem than children from TPFs, while Berg and Kelly (1979) and Raschke and Raschke (1979) did not find significant differences between children from OPFs and TPFs on the same measure of self-esteem (Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventory).

In studies assessing social competence, Santrock and Warshak (1979) reported that children from OPFs reared by the same-sexed parent were rated as more socially competent than their same-sexed peers raised by an opposite-sexed parent. In a study comparing children from OPFs and TPFs,

Deutsch (1983) found that preschoolers did not differ significantly on various measures of social competence. In fact, on certain measures the children from OPFs performed better than children from TPFs.

Finally, with respect to the association between children from OPFs and behaviour problems, there is some research to support the hypothesis that various behaviour problems (i.e., aggressiveness, delinquency, and truancy) are more frequent in OPFs as opposed to TPFs (e.g., Brown, 1980).

As previously discussed, many of the studies in this area can be criticized on methodological grounds. In addition, a major shortcoming in the research on the impact of single parenthood on children is the lack of child-centered research (Lewis, 1978). Further, when researchers address the issue of the effect of single parenthood on children, information concerning the children is frequently obtained indirectly through interviews with the single parent (e.g., George & Wilding, 1972). Research obtaining information directly from children of single parents is important as it may provide a further understanding of the impact of separation/divorce and single parenthood on children. Although the reliability and accuracy of childrens' perceptions may be questioned, information obtained from the parents concerning their children may also be a

"distortion" of the actual situation. Therefore, it is likely most beneficial to investigate the perceptions of both the parent and the child.

The Present Study

In order to assess the accuracy of the presumptions discussed earlier, children (between the ages of 6 to 16 years) living in OPFs (both SMFs and SFFs) and in TPFs were compared on a variety of measures assessing these childrens' self-perceptions, self-esteem, social competencies, and the frequency and severity of their behaviour problems.

The present study attempts to eliminate some of the methodological shortcomings of previous research by controlling for important extraneous variables that have frequently been confounded in the past (i.e., reason for single parenthood, length of separation, child's gender, and availability of the non-custodial parent). In addition, a control group of children from TPFs was included which allows for a comparison to be made between OPFs and TPFs. Interviews with both the parent and the child were arranged allowing for information to be obtained directly from the child. Finally the selection of instruments represents a significant improvement over the measures used in previous studies. For example, the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983), which is completed by

the parent, is a new measure that is objective and provides a comprehensive assessment of a wide range of social competencies and behaviour problems. The Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1983), which is completed by the child, assesses the child's self perceptions in a number of areas including general self-worth. Research suggests that the advantage of this instrument lies in its ability to avoid the social desirability factor that confounds other measures of self-esteem. A further discussion of these instruments is presented in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II

Method

Subjects

Participants in this study were 42 single divorced custodial parents (21 SFFs and 21 SMPs) and their 62 (6 to 16 year old) children. These single parents were recruited through various chapters of Parents Without Partners, in the Detroit and Windsor areas. In addition, four single fathers were recruited through Fathers for Equal Rights. The following criteria were established for inclusion in the experimental group: (1) the child must be between the ages of 6 to 16 years, (2) s/he must have lived in a one-parent arrangement for at least one year, (3) his/her parents must be either separated or divorced, and (4) the child must attain a standard score of at least 85 on the PPVT-R (Dunn & Dunn, 1981). A control group of 20 TPFs and their 38 children was obtained by asking the single parents who participated in the study for names and permission to contact friends and/or relatives who have children in the 6 to 16 year age group. This procedure was not completely successful as a number of single parents were unable to provide names of TPFs. According to some single parents, this is attributable

to their loss of social contact with TPFs after their divorce. As a result, some OPFs provided names of more than one TPF. The control group of TPFs was recruited in this way so as to provide additional control over a number of extraneous variables (i.e., age, parents' rearing patterns, social status, values, etc.).

In general, the average single parent who volunteered for this study was white, in his/her mid thirties, and had 13 to 14 years of education. In addition, most single parents had been in this familial arrangement for at least two years and had custody of two children on average. With respect to socioeconomic status, most of the single parents fell into the lower middle to middle class ranges. However, it should be noted that the single mothers' incomes were substantially lower than those of the single fathers. A comparison of the three groups with respect to the demographic variables is presented in Tables 2 and 3 and is further discussed in the Results section.

Measures

Three dependent measures with established norms were utilized in this study. Two of these (The Self-Perception Profile for Children and The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised) were administered to the children while The Child Behaviour Checklist was completed by the parent(s). The following is a brief discussion of these instruments.

Table 2

Demographic Variables According to Family Type

	Family type					
	SFF		SMF		TPF	
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Parent's age	37.0	5.0	38.4	4.6	36.1	5.4
Parent's education	14.2	2.1	13.2	1.6	14.8	2.3
Years as a SP	3.9	2.0	6.0	2.8	-	-
Years married	10.3	4.9	10.5	4.8	14.8	4.1
Number of children	2.1	0.9	2.7	1.2	2.9	1.1
Family income[a]	32.0	13.0	17.8	9.0	37.4	14.0

[a]In units of a thousand

Table 3

Total Number, Gender, Age, and Position in the Family of Subjects According to Family Type

Variables	Family type SFF	SMF	TPF
Number of children	28	34	38
Male	17	16	18
Female	11	18	20
Age - M	11.2	11.6	11.5
SD	2.6	2.4	2.6
Sibling position - M	1.6	2.1	2.0
SD	0.7	1.1	1.0
Only children	5	3	2

The Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC).

The original Perceived Competence Scale (Harter, 1979) consisted of twenty-eight statements designed to assess a child's perceived competence in four ability areas including general self-worth. Each of the four subscales included seven items that were derived through factor analysis. More recently, Harter (1983) revised the original scale and modified the names of these scales. These subscales include: (1) Scholastic Competence (i.e, perceived academic abilities), (2) Social Acceptance (i.e., perceived popularity and acceptance by peers), (3) Athletic Competence (i.e., perceived athletic ability), (4) Physical Appearance (i.e., perceived satisfaction with one's height, weight, etc.), (5) Behavioural Conduct (i.e., perceived satisfaction with one's behaviour, doing the right thing, etc.), and (6) Global Self-Worth (i.e., perceived sense of self-worth). Once again, these scales were derived through factor analysis. As a result of the expansion of this instrument to include items not directly related to perceived competence, Harter modified the name of the instrument.

The SPPC offers a number of significant advantages over other measures of self-esteem. First, the response format is not merely a "yes" or "no" (which would reflect either the presence or absence of the item). Instead, there are two decisions to be made for each item. Initi-

ally, the child must decide which statement best suits him (for example, "Some kids feel that they are good at their school work but other kids worry that they cannot do the school work assigned to them"). Then the child must indicate if the statement that he selected is "sort of true" or "really true" for him. A second important advantage of this measure is that it appears to have a low correlation with social desirability. Other purported measures of self-esteem (i.e., Piers-Harris and Coopersmith) have been criticized in this regard (Wylie, 1979). Third, Harter recognizes that children do not see themselves as equally competent in all skill areas. Consequently, different subscales reflecting various skill areas are necessary. However, there are some disadvantages associated with this instrument. For example, since the SPPC is a self-report measure the responses provided are prone to individual biases and possible "distortions." In addition, as only means and standard deviations are provided for each subscale (based on only four studies) the interpretive value of the scores obtained is limited. See Appendix A for a copy of the the SPPC.

In support of the reliability of the SPPC, Harter (1985) cites four studies conducted in the Colorado area that included children (grades 3 to 8) from reportedly lower middle to upper middle class neigh-

bourhoods. Internal consistency reliabilities ranged from .71 to .86 for all six subscales across the four samples. In addition, Harter (1985) reported that significant sex differences were found on the SPPC. For example, boys scored consistently higher than girls on Athletic Competence while girls tended to score significantly higher than boys on Behavioural Conduct. The construct validity of the SPPC is partly assured by the method used to derive the factors. Factor analyses with an oblique rotation consistently yielded a five-factor pattern (replicated in three studies). The Global Self-Worth Subscale was not expected to emerge as a clean factor as Harter hypothesized that childrens' self-worth judgements would be based on different tpyes of information, possibly involving different domains of the SPPC. As this is a relatively new instrument the available reliability and validity data is minimal. However, Harter reports that additional research has been undertaken in this regard.

The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL). The CBCL is comprised of two basic scales that provide information relating to a child's: (1) Social Competence, and (2) Behavior Problems. The first scale includes twenty items that assess seven categories of information including: sporting interests, hobbies, membership in

organizations, major responsibilities/chores, friendships, and current school performance. The parent(s) is (are) asked to: (1) list the child's activities, organizations belonged to, and chores; (2) indicate, by comparison to children of the same age, how much time the child spends at these items; and (3) for the sporting activities and hobbies, indicate, once again by comparison to children of the same age, how well the child performs. From these responses a Social Competence Profile is derived. This profile includes three scores: (1) Activities, (2) Social, and (3) School. Separate norms are provided by sex and age levels (i.e., 4 to 5, 6 to 11, and 12 to 16 years).

The Behaviour Problems Scale consists of 118 items. Using this instrument the parent is asked to rate each item on a three point scale (0=not true, 1=somewhat or sometimes true, and 2=very or often true) with the child's behaviour in the past six months as a point of reference. Factor analysis yielded eight or nine factors depending on the subject's age and gender. These factors reportedly assess the following types of behaviour problems: Schizoid, Uncommunicative, Obsessive/Compulsive, Somatic Complaints, Social Withdrawal, Hyperactivity, Aggressiveness, Delinquency, Immaturity, Sex Problems, and Cruelty. The identified factors differ according to the gender and age of the subject. The factor analysis also yielded two broad band

factors (Externalizing and Internalizing). These factors were derived from a study involving 2,300 clinic referred children from a wide geographic range as well as from different clinical settings. Norms are available for non-clinical children as well. The standardization population consisted of 1,300 children (fifty children of each gender at each age level). On this scale, raw scores are converted into T scores and are considered significant if the T score exceeds 70.

As this is a relatively new instrument, research investigating the validity and reliability of this measure is not extensive. Most of the work that has been done is reported in the CBCL manual (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). They report that the research has supported the reliability of this instrument. For example, in one study, intraclass correlations for the individual items after one week were .955 for the 118 behavior problem items and .99 for the 20 social competence items. After three months, these correlations were still significant (.84 for the behaviour problem items and .97 for the social competence questions). The overall intraclass correlations for inter-parent agreement on the individual items were .985 for the 118 behaviour problems and .97 for the 20 social competence items. One week test-retest reliability for the scaled scores ranged from .69 to .99 for the Behaviour Problem Scale and

.68 to .96 for the Social Competence Scale. In both cases, most correlations were in the .80 and .90 range. The stability of these scores over 6 and 18 months was assessed and the Pearson correlations were generally within the .50 to .70 range for both behavicur problems and social competence in the various sex/age groups.

According to Barkley (1985), the factor analytic techniques used to derive the various factors supports the construct validity of the CBCL. The concurrent validity of the CBCL is supported by research that yielded moderate to high correlations (.52 to .92) among similar factors on the CBCL and on the Conner's Revised Behaviour Checklist. Costello & Edelbrock (1984) found a significant correlation (.79) between the total Behaviour Prcblem score and the total symptom score from the Diagncstic Interview Schedule for Children-Parent Report (DISC-P). Finally, the discriminative validity of the CBCL has been demonstrated by research that has differentiated various populations on the Behavicur Problems and Social Competence Scales. For example, Mash and Johnson (1983) found that the Social Competence scores were significantly lower for hyperactive versus normal children. Seagull & Weinshank (1984) found that seventh grade students who were labelled depressed by their teachers' ratings, tended to score significantly lower on Social

Competence than a matched group of non-depressed students.

After reviewing the available literature on the CBCL, Barkley (1985; p. 411) concluded that "there can be little doubt that this is the most well developed, empirically derived scale for assessing both behaviour problems and social competence in children available to date." A copy of the CBCL was not included in the Appendix as copyright laws prohibit the photocopying of this instrument.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R). The PPVT was originally developed by Dunn (1951) and was revised in 1981 by Dunn and Dunn. The PPVT-R is a non-verbal, multiple-choice test designed to assess the receptive vocabulary skills of children and adults (ages 2 1/2 and older). Improvements over the original test include: (1) excellent item analysis procedures to select new items, (2) improved standardization (i.e., normative group), and (3) the use of standard scores in place of the deviation IQ for the derived score.

As the PPVT-R is a new instrument, reliability and validity data are minimal. However, as it is quite similar to the PPVT, research supporting the validity and reliability of the PPVT can be applied to the PPVT-R as well. Dunn and Dunn (1981) cite research that has demonstrated moderate to high correlations between the PPVT and various

intelligence tests (i.e., Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised and the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test). However, Dunn and Dunn (1981) refer to this instrument as a measure of receptive vocabulary and not as a measure of intelligence. The significant correlations between the PPVT and various measures of intelligence are not unusual as research with the WISC-R has found that the Vocabulary Test correlates the highest with the Full Scale IQ score (Wechsler, 1974).

The Parent Questionnaire. This instrument, which is exploratory in nature, was specifically constructed for this study and was included in an attempt to obtain additional information relating to the parents' perceptions of their relationship with their children, attitudes toward parenting, and the family situation. Some of the items on this questionnaire were adapted and modified from the Home Environment Questionnaire (Sines, 1983).

Factor analytic procedures with varimax rotation were performed both including and removing the four questions that differentiated the parent questionnaires given parents from OPFs and parents from TPFs. These results and a copy of the questionnaire are provided in Appendix B. This statistical procedure yielded one significant factor that consisted of 8 statements from the questionnaire. This factor appears to

assess the parents' overall perception of his/her relationship with the children. However, two statements that would be expected to be related to this factor (i.e., "I enjoy being a (single) parent" and "I sometimes feel trapped as a (single) parent") were not included. The fact that these items did not load on this factor sheds some doubt on the accuracy of the interpretation of the factor.

Procedure

Initially, an attempt was made to conduct a study consisting of an entirely Canadian sample. In this regard, letters were sent to the presidents of various Parents Without Partners (PWP) and One Parent Association of Canada chapters in the Toronto area. In addition, two trips were made to Toronto to address various single parent groups and recruit subjects for the study. This procedure resulted in a list of only three single parents. Consequently, it was decided to limit the study to the Detroit and Windsor areas.

As mentioned earlier, most of the single parents who volunteered were obtained through various PWP chapters in the Windsor and Detroit areas. The Vice-President in charge of Public Relations for the Huron Valley Region was contacted and he provided a list of 14 PWP chapters and the names and phone numbers of the presidents of each chapter. Most of these presidents were contacted in order to arrange

for the most suitable method for recruiting subjects in their respective chapters. An advertisement was placed in the monthly newsletter of these chapters and personal trips were made to briefly address the individual PWP chapters. The nine PWP chapters that were selected represented a wide geographic and demographic section of Detroit.

The letter that was inserted in the PWP monthly newsletters (see Appendix C) was purposely written to reflect a positive approach to the OPF. It was the author's opinion that this type of letter was necessary as his initial experience with single parents suggested that they perceived research on OPFs to be focused mainly on identifying the negative qualities of the OPF. Therefore, the letter was intended to demonstrate that the author held no preconceived biases against the OPF. However, it must also be noted that this "biased" letter may have affected the single parents who were recruited (i.e., encouraging only "successful" OPFs to participate or in some way telling the single parent what the author's objective is).

Recruiting single mothers was not a difficult task. However, single fathers were a much more difficult population to locate. Through personal contacts made through the recruitment period and interview phase, it was discovered that an organization for custodial and non-custodial single fathers existed. The Executive Director of Fathers for Equal

Rights was contacted. An advertisement was placed in their monthly newsletter and a brief presentation was made at their monthly business meeting. This procedure proved successful as the final four single fathers needed for this study were found.

The usual format for the home interview involved an initial introduction to all family members. Following this, the parent was given the CBCL and the Parent Questionnaire and was asked to complete these forms while the child(ren) was (were) interviewed individually. In most cases, the parent did not remain in the same room unless he/she expressed a strong preference to do so or if there were no other available rooms.

Once the child was seated, s/he was welcomed and s/he was asked if s/he knew the purpose of the interview. In most cases the children were aware that this had something to do with being in a OPF. The PPVT-R was the first test administered and the following instructions were provided,

> I have some pictures to show you. See, there are four pictures on this page. Each of them is numbered. I will say a word; then I want you to tell me the number of the picture which best tells the meaning of the word. Let's try one. Tell me the number of the picture which best tells the meaning of _____. Good! Now I am going to show you some other pic-

tures. Each time I say a word, you say the number of the picture which best tells the meaning of the word. As we go through the book you may not be sure you know the meaning of some of the words, but look carefully at all of the pictures anyway and choose the one you think is right. What number is ___?

Once the criterion for discontinuing the test were met, the following instructions were provided for the SPPC,

I have some questions here, and as you can see from the top of your sheet where it says "What I am like", I am interested in what you are like, what kind of person you are like. This is a survey, not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Since kids are very different from one another, each one puts down something different.

First let me explain how these questions work. There is a sample question at the top, marked (a). I'll read it out loud and you follow along with me. This question talks about two kinds of kids and I want to know which kids are most like you.

(1) So, what I want you to decide first is whether you are more like the kids on the left side who would rather play outdoors, or whether you are more like the kids on the right side who would rather watch T.V. Don't mark anything yet, but first decide which kind of

kid is most like you, and go to that side of the sentence.

(2) Now, the second thing I want you to think about, now that you have decided which kind of kids are most like you, is to decide whether that is only sort of true for you, or really true for you. If it's only sort of true then put an X in the box under sort of true; if it's really true for you, then put an X in that box, under really true.

(3) For each sentence you only check one box. Sometimes it will be on one side of the page, another time it will be on the other side of the page, but you can check only one box for each sentence. You don't check both sides, just the one side you like the most.

As it was anticipated that some children below the age of eight years might have some difficulty reading and understanding the statements, the examiner read the statements to these children and explained any difficult words. Once the child completed both instruments, s/he was thanked for his/her cooperation and was asked to inform the parent that we were finished.

Once the parent returned, the completed forms were reviewed to insure that all items were answered. Then the semi-structured interview (see Appendix D) was conducted.

After this was completed, the parent was asked if the purpose of the study was understood and if s/he would like feedback concerning the results of the study. Firally, the family was thanked for their participation and ccoperation. The entire home visit took between one to three hours, with most sessions lasting approximately 90 minutes.

CHAPTER III

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there are any significant group and sex differences among children from single-mother (SMFs), single-father (SFFs), and two-parent families (TPFs) on measures of the child's self-perceptions (SPPC) and the parent(s)' perceptions of their child's social competence and behaviour problems (CBCL). More specifically, two common assumptions that appear in the literature on the effects of separation/divorce and single parenthood on children were examined. The first assumption is that children reared in a one-parent family (OPF) are adversely effected by this experience and are not as "well brought up" as children from two-parent families (TPFs). If this assumption is accurate, it should be expected that children in OPFs would score siginificantly lower on a measure of self-esteem and should be rated by their parents as more of a behaviour problem than children in TPFs. The second assumption is that in the case of separation and/or divorce, the mother is the more competent parent to raise the children. Support for this assumption would be demonstrated if the children from SMFs as compared to the

children from SFFs: (1) rated themselves higher on a measure of self-esteem, (2) were rated higher by their parents on a measure of social competence, and (3) were rated lower by their parents on a measure of behaviour problems. In addition, a brief semi-structured interview and questionnaire completed by the parents provided additional comparative data.

Before examining these results, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate whether there were significant group effects among these three groups with respect to the demographic variables. Using the Hotelling-Lawley Trace Test as the criterion measure (this test was used for all of the MANCOVA procedures) significant group effects were found among children from SFFs, SMFs, and TPFs ($F(18,100)=21.14$, $p<.001$), and between children from OPFs and TPFs ($F(9,52)=40.31$, $p<.001$) and SFFs and SMFs ($F(9,32)=2.75$, $p<.05$). The ANOVA results (see Table 4) indicated that the following demographic variables yielded significant group effects: (1) family income, (2) parents' years of education, and (3) number of years married. Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean values for these demographic variables by group suggested that: (1) single mothers' incomes were significantly lower ($p<.05$) than either of the other two

Table 4

ANOVA Results for the Demographic Variables

	SFF, SMF, TPF		OPF, TPF		SFF, SMF	
Variables	DF	F value	DF	F value	DF	F value
Family income	2,59	14.07****	1,60	11.43****	1,40	17.20****
Parents' education (years)	2,59	3.18*	1,60	3.68	1,40	3.10
Parents' age	2,59	1.18	1,60	1.50	1,40	0.92
Years married	2,59	6.04***	1,60	12.24****	1,40	0.03
Number of siblings	2,59	1.22	1,60	0.69	1,40	1.75
Years as a single parent	-	-	-	-	1,40	8.22**
Relationship with spouse	-	-	-	-	1,40	1.68
Frequency of contact with noncustodial parent	-	-	-	-	1,40	0.07
Child's relationship with noncustodial parent	-	-	-	-	1,40	1.16

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .005$
****$p < .001$

groups (i.e., SFFs and TPFs), (2) parents from TPFs had significantly more years of education than single mothers ($p<.05$), and (3) parents from TPFs were married significantly longer than either single parent group ($p<.05$). This latter difference was expected as these parents were still married while the single parents were not.

The comparison between SFFs and SMFs with respect to the demographic variables revealed two significant differences: (1) family income, as discussed above and (2) the number of years as a single parent. A review of the mean values for this latter variable indicated that single mothers were single parents for a significantly longer period of time than the single fathers ($p<.05$).

Aside from the four demographic variables discussed above (family income, parents' education, number of years married, and number of years as a single parent), none of the other variables were significantly different across the three comparisons. These include: (1) parents' age, (2) number of siblings, (3) parent's relationship with the ex-spouse, (4) the child's frequency of contact with the non-custodial parent, and (5) the child's relationship with the non-custodial parent. The latter three variables only pertain to the comparison between SMFs and SFFs.

The Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). Table 5 provides the mean scores and standard deviations of the children by group and sex for the six subscales of the SPPC (Scholastic Competence, Athletic Competence, Social Acceptance, Physical Acceptance, Behavioural Conduct, and Global Self-Worth). As previously mentioned, there were some significant group effects among the three groups with respect to certain demographic variables. Consequently, a two-way (Group by Sex) multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was performed. This procedure was utilized to control for the possible confounding effects and influence of these demographic variables (i.e., family income, number of years married, and number of years as a single parent). In addition, analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were calculated for the individual subscales of the SPPC (see Table 6).

The MANCOVA results comparing children from SMFs, SFFs, and TPFs revealed overall significant group ($F(12,170)=1.92$, $p<.05$), Group by Sex interaction ($F(12,170)=1.86$, $p<.05$), and sex effects ($F(16,86)=3.88$, $p<.01$) on this measure. In addition, the ANCOVA results yielded a significant group effect on Scholastic Competence. Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean scores across the three groups demonstrated that children from TPFs scored significantly higher on this subscale than children from SFFS

Table 5

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the SPPC by Group and Gender

	SFF						SMF						TPF					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Scholastic competence	16.27	2.9	14.83	5.3	15.63	4.1	16.33	3.8	17.74	4.0	17.12	3.9	18.72	3.1	17.80	4.3	18.24	3.8
Athletic competence	18.27	4.2	13.33	3.8	16.07	4.7	18.00	2.7	14.32	3.6	15.94	3.7	16.22	3.6	15.65	3.8	15.92	3.7
Social acceptance	19.00	3.6	17.33	4.2	18.26	3.9	17.53	3.5	18.32	4.1	17.97	3.8	17.22	2.4	19.65	3.5	18.50	3.2
Physical appearance	19.80	2.3	17.25	4.5	18.67	3.6	17.47	2.3	17.63	3.9	17.56	3.2	17.06	3.2	16.55	4.5	16.79	3.9
Behavioural conduct	18.47	2.4	15.17	5.6	17.00	4.4	14.53	2.7	17.74	4.7	16.32	4.2	17.67	3.4	16.75	3.4	17.18	3.4
Global self-worth	20.67	2.8	18.50	3.1	19.70	3.1	17.40	3.4	18.84	3.0	18.20	3.2	18.84	3.2	18.30	3.4	18.58	3.3

Note. The scores on the six subscales of the SPPC range from 6 to 24. The higher the score, the higher the perceived self-competence on the subscale.

Note. The scores on the six subscales of the SPPC range from 6 to 24. The higher the score, the higher the perceived self-competence on the subscale.

Table 6

ANCOVA Results for the Six Subscales of the SPPC

	SFF, SMF, TPF		OPF, TPF		SFF, SMF	
Variables	DF	F value	DF	F value	DF	F value
Scholastic competence						
Group	2,96	6.39***	1,97	7.32**	1,59	5.33*
Sex	1,97	0.00	1,97	0.00	1,59	0.00
Group by sex	2,96	0.57	1,97	0.15	1,59	0.92
Athletic competence						
Group	2,96	0.44	1,97	0.02	1,59	0.37
Sex	1,97	13.64****	1,97	7.87**	1,59	17.35****
Group by sex	2,96	3.22*	1,97	5.82*	1,59	0.34
Social acceptance						
Group	2,96	1.41	1,97	2.16	1,59	1.87
Sex	1,97	1.46	1,97	4.03*	1,59	0.01
Group by sex	2,96	2.99	1,97	4.66*	1,59	0.51
Physical appearance						
Group	2,96	2.60	1,97	4.56*	1,59	2.55
Sex	1,97	2.21	1,97	0.85	1,59	2.51
Group by sex	2,96	1.46	1,97	1.16	1,59	3.03
Behavioural conduct						
Group	2,96	1.97	1,97	4.00*	1,59	0.00
Sex	1,97	.003	1,97	0.01	1,59	0.07
Group by sex	2,96	4.68**	1,97	0.12	1,59	8.31**
Global self-worth						
Group	2,96	2.49	1,97	2.74	1,59	2.51
Sex	1,97	0.54	1,97	0.14	1,59	0.09
Group by sex	2,96	2.25	1,97	0.04	1,59	5.01*

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .005$
****$p < .001$

($p<.05$). A significant Group by Sex interaction effect was noted on Behavioural Conduct. An inspection of the mean scores on this subscale indicated that children living with same-sexed single parents scored higher than children living with opposite-sexed single parents. This interaction, which is discussed in greater detail below, was also significant on the ANCOVA results comparing children from SMFs and SFFs. Finally a significant sex effect was found on Athletic Competence regardless of the comparison. A review of the mean scores by sex on this subscale demonstrated that boys scored significantly higher than girls regardless of the family type ($p<.05$).

The MANCOVA results (using the Hotelling-Lawley Trace Test) comparing children from OPFs and TPFs revealed an overall significant sex effect ($F(6,88)=2.42$, $p<.05$). Group ($F(6,88)=1.84$, $p<.1$) and Group by Sex interaction effects ($F(6,88)=2.19$, $p<.06$) were not significant. An examination of the ANCOVA results for the individual subscales of the SPPC revealed some of the same significant effects previously discussed (i.e., a significant group effect on Scholastic Competence and both a sex and Group by Sex interaction effect on Athletic Competence). In addition, a significant group effect was noted on Physical Appearance. An inspection of the mean scores on this subscale indicated that children from

OPFs scored significantly higher than children from TPFs ($p<.05$).

The MANCOVA results comparing children from SFFS and SMFs yielded significant group ($F(6,50)=2.57$, $p<.05$) and sex ($F(6,50)=3.79$, $p<.005$) effects. The Group by Sex interaction effect ($F(6,50)=1.66$, $p<.2$) was not significant on the SPPC. The ANCOVA results for the six subscales of the SPPC revealed a significant group effect on Scholastic Competence and a sex effect on Athletic Competence (as previously discussed). One-way ANCOVAs comparing boys and girls living with same-sexed and opposite-sexed single parents were calculated. These results yielded two significant group effects for the boys on the SPPC subscales: (1) Physical Appearance ($F(1,28)=6.47$, $p<.01$) and (2) Behavioural Conduct ($F(1,28)=7.62$, $p<.01$). In both cases, a review of the mean scores suggested that boys living in SFFs scored significantly higher than boys from SMFs. Overall, the boys from SFFs rated themselves higher than the boys from SMFs on five of the six subscales of the SPPC. The only exception to this pattern was that boys from SMFs rated themselves higher than boys from SFFs on Scholastic Competence. The results of the one-way ANCOVA comparing girls living in SMFs and SFFs did not yield any significant group effects. However, the pattern (i.e., children living with a same-sexed single parent

scored higher than children living with an opposite-sexed single parent) was evident on inspection of the mean scores for the girls. As a group, the girls from SMFs scored higher than their female peers in SFFs on all six subscales of the SPPC. However, none of these differences reached a statistically significant level.

The previous analyses established that there are some significant differences among the three groups regardless of the comparison. However, these results do not address whether children from OPFs perceive themselves as having many more problem areas than children from TPFs. In an attempt to investigate this issue, the childrens' scores on the SPPC were compared with the overall mean scores and standard deviations for each scale. Individual scores that were at least one standard deviation below the mean for that scale were identified as a problem area for that child. Table 7 provides the frequency and percentages of the child's identified problem areas by both group and sex. A review of this table suggests that overall the three groups (SFFs, SMFs, and TPFs) do not differ substantially with respect to the percentage of children identifying a problem area. The only exception to this conclusion is the low number of children from SFFs who scored significantly below the

Table 7

Frequency and Percentages of Children's Identified Problem Areas on the SPPC and CBCL

	SFF						SMF						TPF					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Variables	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
SPPC																		
Scholastic competence	2	13	5	42	7	26	3	19	3	17	6	18	1	6	5	25	6	16
Athletic competence	2	13	5	42	7	26	0	0	5	28	5	15	3	17	6	30	9	24
Social acceptance	2	13	3	25	5	19	2	13	4	22	6	18	3	17	2	10	5	13
Physical appearance	0	0	3	25	3	11	1	6	4	22	5	15	4	22	7	35	11	29
Behavioural conduct	0	0	3	25	3	11	4	25	4	22	8	24	0	0	1	5	1	3
Global self-worth	0	0	2	17	2	7	7	44	3	17	10	29	3	17	5	25	8	21
CBCL																		
Social competence T	1	7	3	25	4	15	4	25	3	17	7	21	0	0	2	10	2	5
Behaviour problems T	1	7	3	25	4	15	4	25	4	22	8	24	3	17	7	35	10	26
Internal T	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	1	3	1	6	2	10	3	8
External T	1	7	1	8	2	7	0	0	1	6	1	3	1	6	2	10	3	8

average on the Global Self-Worth Scale. In particular, no boys from SFFs fell intc this range, while 44% of the boys from SMFs fell into the "problem" range. This pattern was not evident for the girls from SMFs and SFFs as the percentage of girls falling one standard deviation belcw the average were roughly equivalent in both groups.

The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL). The CBCL consists of twc sets of scales: (1) Social Competence, and (2) Behaviour Problems. The results of each are presented separately.

Table 8 provides the mean scores and standard deviations by group and sex for the Social Competence Scale as well as for the three subscales that comprise this scale (i.e., Activities, Social, and School). A Mancova (Group by Sex) was performed comparing the children from the three groups on the Social Competence Scale. Table 9 provides the ANCOVA results for the Social Competence Scale of the CBCL for each of the three separate comparisons.

The MANCOVA results comparing children from SMFs, SFFs, and TPFs revealed an overall significant sex effect ($F(6,87)=9.00$, $p<.001$) on this measure. The group and ($F(12,172)=0.73$, $p<.7$) and Group by Sex effects ($F(12,172)=1.10$, $p<.3$) were not significant. Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean scores by sex for the overall Social Competence

Table 8

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Social Competence Scale of the CBCL by Group and Gender

	SFF						SMF						TPF					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Social competence[a]																		
Raw score	19.84	2.8	19.21	3.2	19.57	2.9	18.37	3.9	19.76	3.3	19.15	3.6	21.31	3.1	20.90	3.6	21.09	3.3
T score	49.19	8.1	46.91	8.7	48.21	8.3	45.20	11.1	48.05	9.3	46.79	10.1	53.94	10.4	51.55	10.9	52.68	10.6
Activities[b]																		
Raw score	7.69	1.5	7.92	1.3	7.79	1.4	7.37	1.6	8.37	1.7	7.93	1.7	13.56	21.1	8.78	1.4	11.04	14.6
T score	48.44	5.0	49.92	5.5	49.07	5.2	47.20	6.9	50.32	6.2	48.94	6.6	51.33	5.1	51.65	4.3	51.50	4.7
Social[b]																		
Raw score	7.19	1.8	6.38	1.6	6.84	1.7	6.57	2.2	6.37	1.7	6.46	1.9	7.36	1.8	7.03	2.0	7.18	1.9
T score	48.94	8.1	46.00	8.0	47.68	8.1	45.20	10.2	45.37	8.3	45.29	9.0	48.50	6.9	47.75	8.8	48.11	7.8
School[c]																		
Raw score	4.91	1.0	4.92	1.4	4.91	1.1	4.60	1.2	5.02	1.2	4.85	1.2	5.42	1.1	5.13	1.0	5.26	1.0
T score	49.5	7.4	46.08	12.5	48.04	9.8	47.73	9.2	47.37	10.8	47.53	9.9	51.83	7.4	48.30	8.9	49.97	8.3

[a]The Social Competence score is the sum of the 3 variables (Activities, Social, and School) and ranges from 0-30. The higher the parents' ratings of their children's social competence.
[b]The scores on this subscale range from 0-12.
[c]The scores on this subscale range from 0-6.

Table 9

ANCOVA Results for the Social Competence Scale of the CBCL

	SFF, SMF, TPF		OPF, TPF		SFF, SMF	
Variables	DF	F value	DF	F value	DF	F value
Activities T score						
Group	2,97	1.00	1,98	2.05	1,60	0.02
Sex	1,98	2.03	1,98	1.47	1,60	2.02
Group by sex	2,97	0.46	1,98	0.62	1,60	0.22
Social T score						
Group	2,97	0.64	1,98	0.36	1,60	1.05
Sex	1,98	0.37	1,98	0.26	1,60	0.18
Group by sex	2,97	0.30	1,98	0.00	1,60	0.64
School T score						
Group	2,97	0.00	1,98	0.00	1,60	0.10
Sex	1,98	1.40	1,98	1.64	1,60	0.18
Group by sex	2,97	0.36	1,98	0.32	1,60	0.23

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .005$
****$p < .001$

Scale as well as for the three subscales did not yield any significant sex differences.

The MANCOVA results comparing OPFs and TPFs yielded a significant sex effect ($F(6,89)=6.75$, $p<.0001$). Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean scores by sex for the overall Social Competence Scale and for the three subscales did not reveal any significant sex differences. The group ($F(6,89)=0.88$, $p<.5$) and Group by Sex interaction effects ($F(6,89)=1.89$, $p<.09$) were not significant. Although these differences did not reach a statistically or clinically significant level, children (both males and females) from TPFs tended to score higher on all four scales than children from OPFs.

The results of the MANCOVA comparing SMFs and SFFs yielded a significant sex effect ($F(6,51)=9.63$, $p<.0001$) There were no overall significant group ($F(6,51)=2.15$, $p<.06$) or Group by Sex interaction ($F(6,51)=0.44$, $p<.85$) effects. In addition, the ANCOVA results (see Table 9) did not yield any significant Group effects for these two groups on the total Social Competence score nor on the three subscales of this measure. One-way ANCOVAs comparing boys and girls living with same-sexed and opposite-sexed single parents were performed. These results did not yield significant group effects for the boys ($F(1,29)=0.27$, $p<.61$) nor for the girls ($F(1,29)=0.40$, $p<.55$). However, even though the group effects were not statistically significant, the

children living with the same-sexed single parent were rated higher (M=48.6) than children living with an opposite-sexed single parent (M=46) by their parents on a measure of social competence.

According to the CECL norms, a T Score of less than 30 on the Social Competence Scales is considered a problem area. As can be seen from Table 7, the percentage of children scoring below a T Score of 30 on the Social Competence Scale was roughly equivalent for SFFs and SMFs, although the percentage of children scoring below a T Score of 30 from TPFs was considerably lower. With respect to sex differences, there were more boys scoring in the "problem" range from SMFs than from SFFs.

Table 10 provides the mean scores and standard deviations by group and sex for the three subscales (i.e., Internalizing, Externalizing, and Behaviour Problems) of the Behaviour Problems Scale.

The MANCOVA results comparing SFFs,SMFs, and TPFs demonstrated a significant sex effect ($F(6,85)=4.75$, $p<.001$). However, the group ($F(12,168)=1.25$, $p<.25$) and Group by Sex interaction effects ($F(12,168)=1.03$, $p<.42$) were not significant. Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean scores by sex for each of the three subscales did not yield any significant differences. An inspection of the ANCOVA results (see Table 11) on the three subscales yielded only

Table 10

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Behaviour Problem Scale of the CBCL by Group and Gender

	SFF						SMF						TPF					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Variables	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Internalizing																		
Raw score	6.88	6.6	9.50	7.1	7.85	6.8	10.38	8.0	9.06	7.2	9.68	7.5	12.33	8.3	13.55	7.5	12.97	7.8
T score	50.06	9.0	53.40	9.5	51.30	9.1	55.06	8.6	52.78	9.5	53.86	9.0	56.83	8.8	58.25	7.1	57.58	7.8
Externalizing																		
Raw score	9.60	8.8	14.80	13.8	11.56	10.9	15.0	9.5	11.94	10.0	13.38	9.8	10.83	8.4	17.35	12.3	14.26	11.0
T score	50.65	10.2	54.70	11.7	52.15	10.7	56.94	9.3	53.72	9.2	55.24	9.3	53.11	8.4	58.00	8.8	55.68	8.9
Behaviour problems[a]																		
Raw score	18.88	14.8	26.10	18.7	21.56	16.4	29.44	18.0	22.44	15.7	25.74	17.0	27.72	18.8	33.80	18.2	30.92	18.5
T score	50.00	9.9	53.90	12.4	51.44	10.8	56.56	9.0	55.26	9.0	54.11	9.0	55.61	9.0	60.10	7.7	57.97	8.6

[a]The higher the score the more behaviour problems identified by the parent.

Table 11

ANCOVA Results for the Behaviour Problem Scale of the CBCL

	SFF, SMF, TPF		OPF, TPF		SFF, SMF	
Variables	DF	F value	DF	F value	DF	F value
Internalizing T score						
Group	2,96	1.78	1,97	3.54	1,59	0.05
Sex	1,97	0.10	1,97	0.09	1,59	0.02
Group by sex	2,96	0.69	1,97	0.11	1,59	0.96
Externalizing T score						
Group	2,96	1.49	1,97	2.94	1,59	0.00
Sex	1,97	0.62	1,97	1.13	1,59	0.11
Group by sex	2,96	1.88	1,97	1.75	1,59	1.48
Behaviour problem T score						
Group	2,96	2.12	1,97	4.00*	1,59	0.16
Sex	1,97	0.69	1,97	1.06	1,59	0.04
Group by sex	2,96	1.33	1,97	1.00	1,59	1.12

*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .005
****p < .001

one significant Group effect across all three comparisons. Post hoc t-tests comparing the mean scores on the Behaviour Problems subscale indicated that children from TPFs scored significantly higher than children from SPFs ($p<.05$).

The MANCOVA and ANCOVA results did not reveal any overall significant group ($F(3,90)=1.32$, $p<.27$), Group by Sex interaction ($F(3,90)=0.88$, $p<.45$), or sex effects ($F(3,90)=0.95$, $p<.41$) for the comparison between the ratings of parents from OPFs versus TPFs.

The comparison between the single mother and single father ratings' of their child(ren)s' behaviour problems did not yield significant group ($F(3,52)=0.32$, $p<.81$), Group by Sex interaction ($F(3,52)=0.54$, $p<.66$), or sex effects ($F(3,52)=0.06$, $p<.97$). One-way ANCOVAs comparing both boys and girls living with same-sexed and opposite-sexed single parents were calculated. The results yielded an overall significant main effect for the boys ($F(3,30)=3.25$, $p<.04$). However, an examination of the individual variables that were considered (i.e., group, income, and parents' years of education) did not yield any siginificant effects for these variables. This may be attributed to the apparently strong relationship between the two covariates and the independent variable which likely reduces the statistical significance of the group effect (i.e., same-sexed versus oppcsite-sexed single parent home). The ANCOVA results for the girls did

not reveal a significant group effect ($F(1,25)=0.77$, $p<.39$). However, even though these differences were not all statistically siginificant, children from opposite-sexed single parent families were rated as manifesting more behaviour problems ($M=55.7$) than children from same-sexed single parent homes ($M=51.7$).

On the CECL Behaviour Problem Scales, a T Score of 70 or above is considered clinically significant. The mean scores for these groups were well within the average range. A review of Table 8 indicates that the percentage of children who could be classified as a "behaviour problem" was highest in the TPF group. The percentage of "behaviour problems" in the SMF group was roughly equivalent to the TPFs, while the rate in the SFF group was considerably lower. Further, the distribution of "behaviour problems" according to sex revealed that overall, a higher percentage of girls were classified as a "behaviour problem" by their parents than boys.

Parent Questionnaire - As previously discussed, the factor analytic procedures utilizing both the single parent and the two-parent forms of the Parent Questionnaire yielded one consistent and significant factor that appears to assess the parents' overall perception of his/her relationship with the child(ren). The parents' ratings (from 1 to 7) on the 8 items were summed. As two of the items were negatively

correlated with this factor, these individual scores were inverted (i.e., a score of 6 was changed to 2). In general, the lower the total score, the more agreement expressed to the statements and the closer the perceived relationship with the child. A one-way MANOVA was performed and did not yield a significant group effect ($F(18,98)=1.18, p<.29$). A review of the mean scores obtained on each of the nine items did not reveal any notable trends. However, the mean scores obtained on the remaining statements of the parents' questionnaire were examined and some interesting group differences were found. For example, single parents agreed with the following statement to a greater degree ($M=1.97$) than parents from TPFs ($M=3.78$): "I make most of the important decisions in the family." In addition, although most parents agreed with the statement, "Living in a OPF can be a positive experience for some children," (i.e., a rating of 1 to 3) a higher percentage of single parents were in agreement (83%) as compared with parents from TPFs (63%). Other substantial differences were apparent between the ratings of single parents and parents from TPFs, however these can be attributed to the minor statement modifications that differentiated the one-parent and two-parent questionnaire forms. There did not appear to be any substantial differences between the responses of the single mothers and single fathers.

Semi-Structured Interview - The parents' responses to the interview were compared to assess whether there were any significant differences between these three groups on attitudes towards parenting, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of OPFs and TPFs, as well as one- and two-parent lifestyles.

With respect to the reported discipline techniques, grounding and/or the removal of priviledges was the number one technique used by this sample regardless of the family arrangement. It is interesting to note that a higher percentage of single mothers reported using this strategy (71% as compared to 64% and 65% in SFFs and TPFs, respectively). A higher percentage of single mothers also reported "yelling" at their children (52% as compared to 24% and 35% in SFFs and TPFs respectively). In contrast, a higher percentage of single fathers and fathers from TPFs reportedly "spanked" their children than single mothers (20%, 19%, 5%, for TPFs, SFFs, and SMFs, respectively). There was also a higher percentage of single fathers and parents from TPFs who indicated that their children did not really require discipline (20%, 19%, 5%, for TPFs, SFFs, and SMFs). Finally, there was a slightly higher percentage of parents from TPFs indicating that they tended to resort to a discussion with their children (25%, 14%, 14%, for TPFs, SMFs, SFFs, respectively).

When asked whether there are set routines in the home, parents from both single-father and TPF arrangements were more likely to respond affirmatively than the single mothers (SFFs=87%, TPFs=90%, SMFs=43%). It is interesting that mothers in TPFs appeared to engage in less social activities than the single parents. Thirty-five percent of the mothers in TPFs reported "going out" less than once per month, while there were no single parents that reported less than one social outing per month. Most single parents indicated that they went out at least once per week (SMs=86%, SFs=81%) while only slightly more than half of the parents from TPFs reported this frequency of social activities (55%).

When asked about the advantages of a OPF versus a TPF from both a child's and an adult's perspective, the responses among the three groups did not appear to differ substantially. Some of the common responses to the question about the advantages of being a child in a OPF included: (1) "getting more attention and developing a closer relationship with the lone parent," (2) the child becoming more independent, responsible, and mature, and (3) the child not seeing the conflict between the parents. It should be mentioned that a number of single parents with opposite-sexed children commented that the child would benefit from a same-sexed parent. An equal percentage of parents from all three groups did feel that the OPF situation was advantageous for the child. From the adult's

perspective, the stated advantages included: (1) undivided individual loyalty from the child, (2) the ability tc do as you please (as one single mother stated, "Nobody to answer to but yourself"), (3) more independence and freedom, (4) no one to argue with, and (5) the experience of personnal growth. Advantages numbers 2,3, and 5 were more common among the single mother group than the other groups.

The responses provided to the question concerning the advantages for both a child and an adult in a TPF did not reveal any essential differences among the three groups. With respect to the stated advantages for the child, some of the common responses were: (1) the child receives more affection, security, and attention, (2) the opportunity for the child to see two role models and experience the sharing and caring between two loving parents, and (3) more financial security. With respect to the advantages of being an adult in a TPF, most parents regardless of their family arrangement, made reference to the advantage of having someone to share the burden and responsibility of parenting. Companionship was also a frequently identified advantage.

Finally, when asked about the most important ingredients in a successful family, many parents from all three groups mentioned the following: communication, love honesty, and consistency.

In summary, 2*2 (Group by Sex) MANCOVA and ANCOVA procedures were performed to compare children from SFFs, SMFs, and TPFs on measures of the child's self-perceptions and the parents' ratings of their child(ren)'s social competence and behaviour problems. The statistical procedures performed yielded the following results relating to the two assumptions under study: (1) The overall scores of children from OPFs did not differ significantly from children in TPFs on a measure of self-perception and on the parents' ratings of their social competence and behaviour problems. However, there were some significant differences between these two groups on some of the subscales of the two instruments; and (2) the results comparing children from SFFs and SMFs did not yield any significant overall group differences on the SPPC nor on the CBCL. However, a trend was found suggesting that children from same-sexed OPFs tended to score higher on a measure of self-esteem and were portrayed more positively on parental ratings than children from opposite-sexed OPFs. It must be considered that most of these differences were not statistically or clinically significant. In summary, these results do not support either of the two assumptions cited above.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the validity of two common assumptions that appear in the literature on the effects of separation/divorce and single parenthood on children. The first assumption is that children reared in a one-parent family (OPF) are adversely affected by this experience and are not as "well brought up" as children raised in a two-parent family (TPF). The second assumption is that in the case of separation and/or divorce, the mother is the more competent parent to raise the children. In an attempt to investigate these assumptions, children from single-mother (SMFs), single-father (SFFs), and two-parent families (TPFs) were compared on measures of the child's self-perceptions (SPPC) and on the parents' ratings of the child's social competence and behaviour problems (CBCL). In addition, a brief semi-structured interview and questionnaire completed by the parents provided additional comparative data.

With respect to the first assumption, the overall results do not support the conclusion that children from OPFs are not as "well brought up" as children from TPFs.

More specifically, the overall scores for these two groups (OPFs versus TPFs) were not significantly different on the child's self-perceptions and on the parents' ratings of their child(ren)'s social competence and behaviour problems.

Although these results are consistent with previous research that has found no significant differences between these two groups of children (e.g., Berg & Kelly, 1979), there are other studies whose findings contradict this (e.g., Parish & Dostal, 1980). Some of the factors that may account for this discrepancy include methodological shortcomings, such as minimal control over confounding variables (i.e., SES factors), selection of dependent measures, etc., as discussed earlier. In addition, the conflicting results obtained from the previous studies may also be the result of the different types of single-parent populations sampled. A review of Table 1 suggests that studies finding differences between children from TPFs and OPFs consisted of single parents from the general population (i.e., elementary schools, etc.) whereas the studies finding no difference between these two groups recruited their subjects through single-parent organizations (i.e., Parents Without Partners, PWP). Therefore, it is possible that the single parent populations in these two sets of studies are not similar.

Although there does not appear to be any related research on this issue, it can be speculated that parents who do become involved in a support group, may be more likely to recognize the need to share feelings/experiences related to being a single person/parent. Although not all single parents are motivated to join single parent groups for this reason, the single parents who volunteer to participate in a study on OPFs are more likely to share these feelings. This assumption is based on the author's experiences with single parents and the observation that most of the single parents who volunteered for the study reported that PWP was beneficial in a number of ways. For example, some of the more frequently stated benefits were: meeting friends who helped them cope through the initial transition after the separation/divorce, having the opportunity to share their problems related to being a single person/parent, etc. Therefore, it is likely that the single parents who become involved with a single parent support group are different from the single parents who do not. This may be the result of the type of person who is motivated to participate in such a group and also his/her experiences in such a group.

As discussed above, the overall scores for children from TPfs and OPFs were not significantly different. However three differences on the individual subscales of the

instruments administered did emerge. First, parents from TPFs tended to rate their child(ren) higher on a measure of social competence than single parents rated their child(ren). This finding can be attributed to the notion that children from TPFs have more time to participate in organizational activities, clubs, sporting events, etc. than their peers in OPFs. Weiss (1979) suggested that children in OPFs have more domestic responsibilities and therefore may not have as much time for social activities as their peers in TPFs.

A second difference that emerged indicated that as as a group, children from OPFs scored significantly higher on Physical Appearance (SPPC) than children from TPFs. Although there is no apparent explanation for this finding, it is possible that these results may be related to the single parents dating patterns and the importance placed on "looking good."

The final difference between these two groups revealed that parents from TPFs rated their children higher on a measure of behaviour problems, thereby suggesting that these children displayed more problem behaviours than their peers in SPFs. As the child's Behaviour Problem score is based on the parents' perceptions of their children's behaviour, it is possible that this difference may be related to the manner in which a parent defines a specific

behaviour problem. For example, parents from TPFs may be more likely to identify a behaviour as a problem whereas the identical behaviour may not be viewed as a problem behaviour by the single father. This possible interpretive difference between parents from SFFs and TPFs may be attributable to a number of factors. First, the single father may be attempting to portray their family situation in a positive way by not rating their child(ren) highly on a behaviour problem scale. Second, certain problem behaviours may be perceived as less of a concern for single fathers as compared with parents from TPFs as the single father may have other issues that are considered more important. Although it must be considered that the group mean scores were within the average range for this scale, these results clearly do not support the assumption that children are adversely affected by being reared in a OPF.

Although these results did not find significant differences between these two groups of children, it must be considered that due to the absence of one parent, the OPF cannot operate in the same manner as the traditional TPF. Weiss (1979) suggested that in most OPFs there is a re-organization of the family roles for each member. According to Weiss, children in OPFs become more of a "junior

partner" than a subordinate. The children (depending on their age) acquire new rights and responsibilities that are not that much different from those of the parent. In effect, the parent-child relationship becomes more of a partnership whereby the parent must depend on the child to perform certain responsibilities. Children who are able to assume the responsibilities are likely to become more independent and mature than their same age peers. However,they usually acquire these skills at the expense of giving up some of the "fun and games" of childhood. Given the partnership that develops between parent and child, it can be predicted that this may also result in a close relationship developing between single parent and child.

Although there are few studies that were specifically designed to investigate the variables associated with successful OPFs, the research by Barry (1979) further supports the importance of the relationship between the parent and child. She found that the following four factors appeared to be important ingredients in the perceived success of the single parents interviewed: (1) good rapport between parent and child; this was typically seen as the most important factor and most single parents described their relationship with their child(ren) as unusually positive, (2) open communication between parent and child, (3) a sense of sharing a

working together, and (4) accepting and supporting one another in a loving manner. In addition, all of these single parents received emotional support from their families and had good friends to rely on. Finally, all of these single parents shared a commitment to succeed and to raise their children in a nurturing environment.

Having discussed the results and possible interpretations with respect to the first assumption under review, the second assumption, namely that mothers are more competent single parents than fathers can be addressed.

When comparing children from SMFs and SFFs, the results of this study do not support the assumption that in the case of separation/divorce, the mother is the more competent parent to rear the children. The data revealed an interesting pattern, namely that children living in a same-sexed OPF scored higher on a measure of self-perception and were rated by their parents: (1) higher on Social Competence (CBCL), and (2) lower on Behaviour Problems (CBCI) than their peers in opposite-sexed OPFs. Although, these differences were not all significant, the same-sex-child-and-parent trend was clear and consistent, especially for boys living in SFFs as compared with boys living in SMFs. For the boys, these differences were significant on Physical Appearance and Behavioural Conduct (SPPC). Further, more boys from OPFs were identified as a behaviour problem by their

mothers (CBCL; 25% to 5%) and by themselves (SEPC; 25% to 0%) than boys from SFFs. These findings are similar to the results of Santrock and Warshak (1979) who also supported the notion of the importance of a same-sexed parent in the child's development. Theoretically, these findings are consistent with psychoanalytic theory which emphasizes the importance of the child's identification with the same-sexed parent and with social learning theory which focuses on the behavioural aspects of the modeling process. Santrock and Warshak related this finding to the possibility that some parents may feel more comfortable and competent interacting with a child of the same-sex. Further, the opposite-sexed child may represent a substitute for the missing spouse. If this is the case, it is possible that the parent-child relationship may become overly coercive and demanding or smothering and too nurturant. Hetherington et al. (1978) reported that as a result of the boys' greater likelihood than girls to engage in aggressive and/or acting out behaviour, they may become entangled in a coercive relationship with their single mothers.

The implications of these results for the legal system are obvious. The traditional belief that in the case of child custody, children should always be placed with their mothers, is not supported by the results of this study. Although the results are not all statistically significant,

there is some support for the idea that older boys (i.e., 6 years and older) should be placed with their fathers and girls with their mothers. However, it should be emphasized that this conclusion may be premature and should be interpreted with caution given the limited number of CPFs interviewed as well as the methodological concerns to be discussed below. A more appropriate interpretation of these findings is that both single mothers and single fathers can be nurturing and competent parents and that the decision as to which parent should receive custody should be based on an assessment of the parent's individual qualities and what s/he can offer the child(ren) rather than being determined by the sex of the child and/or parent.

Finally, with respect to methodological considerations, this study has attempted to refine some of the shortcomings of previous research. For example, one of the most apparent problems in the research on OPFs has been the focus on the negative effects/consequences for children reared in OPFs. Further, much of the research uses the number of parents (one versus two) as the only independent variable to the exclusion of other potentially relevant variables (i.e., socioeconomic status of the family, the parent/child relationship, the psychological adjustment of the single parent, the frequency of contact and the quality of the relationship of the child with the non-custodial parent). Methodological

improvements in this study included: (1) criteria for subject recruitment (e.g., subjects had to have lived in a OPF for more than one year so as to minimize the emoticnal effects of the transition period from a OPF to a TPF), (2) a control group of children from TPFs, (3) an assessment of the frequency of contact and the relationship between the noncustodial parent and the child, (4) and the selection of well-developed dependent measures.

Given the subject sample employed in this study (i.e., volunteers who were recruited through single parent support groups) and the method of recruitment (i.e., the "biased" advertisement letter), a sampling bias is apparent as it is likely that OPFs who were experiencing sizable difficulties were not likely to participate in this study. In addition, the TPFs were probably also affected by a sampling bias as the single parents were not likely to provide the names of TPFs who were known to be experiencing family difficulties. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that both the OPFs and TPFs that participated in this study were functioning adequately. This sampling bias does reduce the generalizability of these findings to other OPFs. However, as one of the purposes of this study was to demonstrate that not all children from OPFs are necessarily adversely affected by the OPF experience,

this sampling bias does not detract from the results of the study.

The issue of generalizability is an important consideration. In this regard, it appears that the results of this study are most appropriate for the lower middle to middle class OPFs. The demographic characteristics of this sample seem to be typical of research that involves the recruitment of single parents through single parent support groups. Although this group of OPFs likely represents a sizable proportion of the OPF population, these results may not be applicable to other single parent groups (e.g., single parents from other cultural and/or socioeconomic backgrounds).

Based on the results of this study, a number of suggestions for future research in this area seem appropriate. First, the importance of controlling for SES factors cannot be overemphasized. Failure to do so seriously restricts the validity of the research findings. As previously mentioned, many studies failed to consider this variable (e.g., Parish & Dostal, 1980). Second, a noticeable trend emerged suggesting that children reared by same-sexed single parents may feel better about themselves and are rated as less of a behaviour problem by their parents than children from opposite-sexed single parent homes. Research specifically addressing this issue may provide more insight

into the validity of this pattern. This type of research may also have important implications for the legal system with respect to custody rulings (i.e., in the case of divorce, which parent should receive custody of the child?). Third, most research on OPFs is cross-sectional by design. Longitudinal research is needed to evaluate both the short- and long- term consequences of divorce and custody arrangements on both the parents and children. Finally, much of the research on OPFs involves volunteers from single parent support groups. Although this is likely the easiest single parent group to recruit, this limits the generalizability of the findings to other single parent groups. Therefore, other methods of recruitment directed at different single parent populations may provide a different perspective of the OPF. Television and radio campaigns or personal contacts in various communities may prove effective in this regard.

In conclusion, the results of this study failed to support both of the common assumptions examined. Although OPFs probably do not operate in the same manner as TPFs, these results suggest that SMFs and SFFS can function effectively. Therefore, these results suggest that the common stereotypes relating to the negative effects of single parenthood on children and the lack of competence of the single father may not be entirely accurate. It seems reasonable to conclude that the success or failure of a

family is not simply related to the number of parents in the home or the sex of the single parent.

An important implication of the second assumption examined is that the traditional belief that child custody should always be awarded to the mother may not be appropriate. The decision as to who should receive custody of the child(ren) should be based on an assessment of the individual parents involved and what they can provide for their child(ren), rather than by the sex of the parent and/or child. However, there is some evidence to suggest that in some cases it may be beneficial for the children to reside with the same-sexed parent.

Finally, society's attitude toward the OPF is an important consideration and likely contributes to some of the problems that single parents experience. Many individuals, including mental health professionals, maintain the common stereotypes about OPFs and single fathers that were not supported by this study. In this regard, it is hoped that with additional research, focusing specifically on the positive characteristics and/or qualities of the OPF, the general public will begin to modify its attitudes toward the single parent and his/her family.

APPENDIX A

SELF-PERCEPTION PROFILE FOR CHILDREN

What I Am Like

Name _____ Age _____ Birthday _____ Group _____
Month Day

Boy or Girl (circle which)

SAMPLE SENTENCE

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
(a)	☐	☐	Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time	**BUT**	Other kids would rather watch T.V.	☐	☐
1.	☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are very *good* at their school work	**BUT**	Other kids *worry* about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	Some kids find it *hard* to make friends	**BUT**	For other kids it's pretty *easy*.	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	Some kids do very *well* at all kinds of sports	**BUT**	Others *don't* feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with the way they look	**BUT**	Other kids are *not* happy with the way they look.	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	Some kids often do *not* like the way they *behave*	**BUT**	Other kids usually *like* the way they behave.	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	Some kids often get *mad* at themselves	**BUT**	Other kids are pretty *pleased* with themselves.	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	Some kids feel like they are *just as smart* as as other kids their age	**BUT**	Other kids aren't so sure and *wonder* if they are as smart.	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	Some kids have *alot* of friends	**BUT**	Other kids *don't* have very many friends.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
9.	☐	☐	Some kids wish they could be alot better at sports	**BUT**	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports.	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with their height and weight	**BUT**	Other kids wish their height or weight were *different.*	☐	☐
11.	☐	☐	Some kids usually do the *right* thing	**BUT**	Other kids often *don't* do the right thing.	☐	☐
12.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* like the way they are leading their life	**BUT**	Other kids *do* like the way they are leading their life.	☐	☐
13.	☐	☐	Some kids are pretty *slow* in finishing their school work	**BUT**	Other kids can do their school work *quickly.*	☐	☐
14.	☐	☐	Some kids are kind of *hard* to like	**BUT**	Other kids are really *easy* to like.	☐	☐
15.	☐	☐	Some kids think they could do *well* at just about any new outdoor activity they haven't tried before	**BUT**	Other kids are afraid they might *not* do well at outdoor things they haven't ever tried.	☐	☐
16.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their body was *different*	**BUT**	Other kids *like* their body the way it is.	☐	☐
17.	☐	☐	Some kids usually *act* the way they know they are *supposed* to	**BUT**	Other kids often *don't* act the way they are supposed to.	☐	☐
18.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with themselves most of the time.	**BUT**	Other kids are often *not* happy with themselves.	☐	☐
19.	☐	☐	Some kids often *forget* what they learn	**BUT**	Other kids can remember things *easily.*	☐	☐
20.	☐	☐	Some kids are always doing things with *alot* of kids	**BUT**	Other kids usually do things *by themselves.*	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
21.	☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are *better* than others their age at sports	**BUT**	Other kids *don't* feel they can play as well.	☐	☐
22.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their physical appearance was *different*	**BUT**	Other kids *like* their physical appearance the way it is.	☐	☐
23.	☐	☐	Some kids usually get in *trouble* because of things they do	**BUT**	Other kids usually *don't* do things that get them in trouble.	☐	☐
24.	☐	☐	Some kids *like* the kind of *person* they are	**BUT**	Other kids often wish they were someone else.	☐	☐
25.	☐	☐	Some kids do *very well* at their classwork	**BUT**	Other kids *don't* do very well at their classwork.	☐	☐
26.	☐	☐	Some kids wish that more kids liked them	**BUT**	Others feel that most kids *do* like them.	☐	☐
27.	☐	☐	In games and sports some kids usually *watch* instead of play	**BUT**	Other kids usually *play* rather than just watch.	☐	☐
28.	☐	☐	Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked *different*	**BUT**	Other kids *like* their face and hair the way they are.	☐	☐
29.	☐	☐	Some kids do things they know they *shouldn't* do	**BUT**	Other kids *hardly ever* do things they know they shouldn't do.	☐	☐
30.	☐	☐	Some kids are very *happy* being the way they are	**BUT**	Other kids wish they were *different.*	☐	☐
31.	☐	☐	Some kids have *trouble* figuring out the answers in school	**BUT**	Other kids almost *always* can figure out the answers.	☐	☐
32.	☐	☐	Some kids are *popular* with others their age	**BUT**	Other kids are *not* very popular.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
33.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* do well at new outdoor games	**BUT**	Other kids are *good* at new games right away.	☐	☐
34.	☐	☐	Some kids think that they are attractive or good looking	**BUT**	Other kids think that they are *not* very attractive or good looking.	☐	☐
35.	☐	☐	Some kids are usually very *kind* to others	**BUT**	Other kids *wish* they would be *kinder* to others.	☐	☐
36.	☐	☐	Some kids *aren't* very happy with the way they do alot of things	**BUT**	Other kids think the way they do things is *fine*.	☐	☐

Susan Harter, Ph.D., University of Denver, 1983.

APPENDIX B

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

AND

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Rotation Method: Varimax

ROTATED FACTOR PATTERN

	FACTOR 1
D	0.55851
F	0.76498
G	0.40406
H	-0.61298
K	0.78472
N	0.73133
P	0.61726
S	-0.38250

VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY THE FACTOR

3.243423

Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of statements concerning your feelings about your home and family. Please read each statement carefully and then rate each statement using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neither agree or disagree	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

1. I enjoy being a single parent. _____
2. I am hardly ever lonely. _____
3. I don't believe in rewarding a child for doing things he/she is supposed to do. _____
4. Our family often does things together. _____
5. My home responsibilities take up all my time. _____
6. My children appreciate me. _____
7. We have regular meal times. _____
8. My relationship with my child(ren) needs improvement. _____
9. I try to avoid arguments. _____
10. I get very impatient with my child(ren). _____
11. Our family gets along very well. _____
12. I make most of the important decisions in the family. _____
13. I think it would be easier if I were married. _____
14. I have a good relationship with my child(ren). _____
15. I sometimes feel trapped as a parent. _____
16. I appreciate my child(ren). _____
17. I would rather be married. _____
18. I have a very quick temper. _____
19. There are many arguments in our family. _____
20. I have a good relationship with my ex-spouse. _____
21. Living in a single-parent home can be a positive experience for some children. _____

APPENDIX C

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE STUDY

University of Windsor

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SINGLE PARENT RESEARCH

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Child-Clinical Psychology and I am currently conducting research for my Doctoral Dissertation. In this regard, I am interested in children reared in single-parent families. The available literature on this topic suggests that some children may benefit from the single parent experience. It has been reported that these children tend to be more mature and responsible than their peers reared in traditional two-parent homes. With this in mind, the purpose of my study is to further explore the similarities and differences between children reared in single-parent (both mother- and father-only) and two-parent families. More specifically, my research will focus on children between the ages of 7 to 16 years. Interviews with both the child (between 20-30 minutes) and the parent (between 30-60 minutes) will be necessary.

As it is extremely difficult to locate single fathers with custody of their children, I encourage single fathers to participate in this study.

I would like to emphasize that the children who participate in this study will not be asked any questions concerning their feelings about living in a single-parent home. In addition, subject anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed.

Finally, as one of the purposes of this study is to explore the assumption that single parenthood does not necessarily affect children adversely, I would appreciate your participation and cooperation. In this regard, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my research with you in more detail. For more information, please feel free to contact me at the following address or call me collect me at this phone number:

3701 Riverside Dr. E. Apt. #PH2
Windsor, Ontario
N8Y 4W5
(519) 944-5966

Reuben Schnayer, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate

(Robert Orr, Ph.D.
Supervisor)

APPENDIX D

FACT SHEET

Fact Sheet

Child:

Name: _____ Age: _____

No. of years: _____ Siblings: _____

_____

Contact and relationship with non-custodial parent:

_____

_____

_____

Family:

Parent/child relationship (i.e., amount of time, types of activities):

_____

_____

_____

Describe discipline at home (i.e., punishment and rewards):

_____

_____

_____

Daily routines (i.e., chores, meals, homework, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

Describe decision process in the home:

_____

_____

Single Parent:

Name: _____ Age: _____ Education level: _____

Occupation: _____ Income: _____

Relationship with ex-spouse: _____

What types of social supports are available: _____

_____

_____

Why did you seek custody: _____

_____

_____

How are you managing as a single parent: _____

How is your social life: _____

What do you think are the good points and bad points about living in a single parent family-
As a child: _____

As a parent: _____

Family History of Divorce: _____

What do you think are the necessary ingredients for a successful single parent home? _____

YEARS OF MARRIAGE: _____

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VITA AUCTORIS

1958	Born in Montreal, Quebec to Simon and Miriam Schnayer.
1964-1975	Educated at the United Talmud Torah (Chomedey branch) and Herzliah High School (St. Laurent branch).
1977	Graduated Vanier College (CEGEP), Montreal, Quebec.
1980	Graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Major in Psychology), McGill University, Montreal, Quebec.
1982	Graduated with a Master of Arts degree (Child-Clinical Psychology), University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.
1982	Married Aviva Tencer.