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An exploratory study of divorced fathers' perceptions of relationships with their absent children

Dorothy Vignolo Isaak
University of the Pacific

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF DIVORCED FATHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR ABSENT CHILDREN

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Dorothy Vignolo Isaak
July 1987
This dissertation, written and submitted by

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Henry Williams

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Fred Mutschel

Dated May 12, 1987
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF DIVORCED FATHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR ABSENT CHILDREN

Abstract of Dissertation

Purpose: This study investigated how divorced fathers perceived their relationships to their children and met their parenting roles. It also sought information on new parenting techniques generated by these fathers. The study compared fathers' perceptions of their parenting roles to ideal father role behaviors. Other areas investigated were the process of divorce and factors impacting on fathers' roles after divorce.

Procedures: The approach was an exploratory one. Subjects in the study were six divorced fathers in San Joaquin County. Twelve fathering role categories were identified from the literature review. An interview schedule was developed from these categories, from variables related to the process of divorce, and factors impacting on fathers' role after divorce. Individual responses were collected and analyzed from tape recorded interviews. Data were analyzed through comparison of responses with the twelve ideal father role categories, variables related to the divorce process and factors impacting on fathers' roles.

Findings: The findings indicated consistency with descriptions in the research literature. These fathers went through the divorce process with little variation from other divorced fathers. They experienced most problems in the last stages of the divorce process. They were able to perform their roles in the twelve identified categories. Variables which impacted on fathers and were most often mentioned developed into the following themes: (1) parent roles were static, (2) their parents had provided inadequate models, (3) in particular there was a lack of adequate fathering role models available in both intact and divorced families, (4) fathers' educations were insufficient in areas of family life, (5) fathers reacted to certain events surrounding divorce, and this compounded their role strain, (6) the legal system was biased in favor of mothers in divorce decisions, (7) due to limited visitation fathers experienced a loss of role power. These fathers developed new parenting variations. The predominant one they used either caused alleviation or maintenance of their role strain and affected the level of satisfaction they experienced within the father-child relationship. A number of questions related to legal, educational, clinical, and role modeling factors were generated.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In the United States the intact nuclear family is commonly believed to be the optimal unit for rearing children. Until the twentieth century, the most common deviation from nuclear families was the one parent family caused by death of a spouse. Currently, death as the common cause of one parent families has been replaced by separation and divorce (Norton & Glick, 1976). When divorce results in a one parent family structure, the family is generally headed by the mother since in 90% of divorce cases custody is awarded to her (LeMasters, 1974). Those divorced fathers who are not awarded physical custody of their children are not only separated from their spouse but also from their offspring. Mackey stated that when divorce occurs and children are involved, "they are routinely placed with the mother/wife and, as a consequence, their contact with the father is reduced as is his contact with them..." (1985, p. 89). The fact that fathers who divorce are rarely awarded custody of their children is generally expected today despite the fact that as long as a decade ago a gradual transition began to take place concerning the importance of men's roles in the healthy psychosexual development of their children. Previous to this time their role had been viewed as holding little fundamental importance in their offsprings' development. (Mackey, 1985).
Historically there was no question that fathers were not only the heads of their families, but their position as head of the family also included married children and their descendants. Wives were completely under the control of their husbands. Fathers held the power of life or death over all members of the household and could sell or enslave them. Not only family goods but family members were considered as his property. Only the pater-familias was sui juris i.e., had full legal rights or capacity (Seagle, 1930). This patriarchal family was considered the general type in the Indo-European races in the West, and this type of family was considered a law unto itself.

Roman law also favored the father's rights in regard to the family and gave the father practically unlimited authority over all children of the family group. If normal care of the child was not possible within his own family, solutions in early societies varied from killing the child to providing him with better care and education than he would have received in the nuclear family (Deardorf, 1930). Fathers in the past had total control over the relationships with their children.

Social changes such as women's suffrage, technological advances, wars, and economic factors gradually brought about a change in the role of women in regard to control of the family and particularly the children. The suffrage movement gathered momentum after 1910, and some of the most radical suffragists looked hopefully to abandonment of traditional
role expectations for women. Man's role was predominantly in the world of work and woman's domain was in the home. Despite the passage of the suffrage amendment in 1920, the suffragist expectations were not fulfilled. The progressive movement was not a cohesive one. It had competing interest groups and produced a hodgepodge of reform measures with varying effects. Progressivism produced an atmosphere conducive to expansion of women's roles, but even though they were somewhat freed from duties in the home, the expectation that they would continue to fulfill their roles as housewives did not diminish.

During the progressive era, around 1920, women's traditional role was challenged. Charlotte Perkins, a leading feminist philosopher, attacked the idea that mothering was an intuitive skill inherent in women. Rather it was something to be learned. She argued that increasing organization of women's work outside the home would eventually free the wife to pursue a career, while workers trained in cleaning, cooking, and the care of children handled her home duties. Society, including men, at this time rejected the idea that men could fill the nurturing role as well as women (Jenkins, W. 1979).

The belief that mothers were the best parents for children was evident during the progressive era and was reflected in various ways. Reformers attempted to keep mothers at home through state pensions for fatherless homes and through legislation meant to protect mothers from
deleterious effects of factory work. Prevailing social norms were reflected by one anti-feminist of the progressive era, Keys, a suffragist, who stated that "each young soul needs to be enveloped in its own mother's womb to grow in and the baby the mother's breast to be nourished by..." (Jenkins, W. 1979, p. 149). Women's roles were expanding, allowing them more opportunities outside, but the emotional functions of women in the home were not considered replaceable. Rather, women needed training for what Keys stated were the "inherently womanly vocations" (Jenkins, W. 1979, p. 150).

The belief that mothers were the best parent was still prevalent after World War II. Women who had gone to work during the war were seen as patriotic, but when the war was over, they were expected to return to their traditional role. A sociologist, Willard Waller, (cited in Chafe, 1972, p. 174) charged that during the war women had gotten "out of hand...children were neglected, and survival of the home was endangered." He asserted that the only solution was "restoration and strengthening of the patriarchal family...Women must bear and rear children, husbands must support them" (cited in Chafe, 1972 p. 174). With the perpetuation of this myth, custody of children whose parents divorced was then, and most often is still today, awarded to mothers. However, men have now begun to fight for their custody rights and are sometimes gaining custody of their children when divorce occurs.

Though mothers are awarded custody in most divorce
cases, courts are now occasionally awarding children to fathers in consideration of the child's best interest (Robbins, 1974). Today over a half million men are rearing their children in a one-parent family structure. One out of nine men are rearing their children with a step-mother or second wife in the home. Still, divorced fathers constitute a minority as heads of one parent families (Mendes, 1976b). Mackey (1985) reported that of those children not living with both parents due to divorce, less than 8% were living with their father only (or 1.5% of the total number of the children). One reason for this is that traditional views of fathers as breadwinners and mothers as caretakers are still held. Mendes (1976a) states that though some fathers may have sought custody of their children, enjoyment of the parental role diminished for some single fathers when they had to perform that role alone. The traditional view of the family structure consisting of father, mother, and children still seems to hold a powerful influence on fathers. "...a man may want to be a father but may not want to perform this role without the assistance of a coparent" (Mendes, 1976a, p. 311).

A few parents who decide to divorce are beginning to agree, ahead of divorce, to co-custody of the children. This arrangement allows children to maintain the relationship with both parents who continue to share in the major care and responsibilities of rearing their offspring (Galper, 1978). While co-custody has allowed fathers to have a more equal
relationship with their children, still the majority of fathers who divorce do not gain legal, physical custody of them, and as a result, the relationship with their child is limited by visitation parameters agreed upon by the parents or granted them by the courts.

Roman and Haddad (1978) note the importance of a continuing relationship between the father and child after divorce - not only for the child but for fathers and mothers as well. Their research on the effects of divorce on families over a two year period has shown a correlation between mother's low self-esteem, depression and anxiety, and her children's aggression and poor compliance. The mother's sense of self affected the way her children behaved. However, if divorced parents had minimal conflict and agreed upon child rearing, then "the frequency of father contact with the child was associated with more positive mother-child interaction and with a more positive adjustment of the child" (Roman & Haddad, 1978, p. 57).

Fathers are often motivated to continue relationships with their children after divorce, not only for the benefit of their children, but for their own needs as well. These needs are often based on deep attachment to the child. They include feelings of guilt and attempts to assuage it, feelings of duty, and attempts of the father to maintain continuity in his life (Heatherington, Cox & Cox, 1976).

Galper (1978) found that divorced fathers feel cut off from their children and greatly fear being shut out of their
children's lives. Mothers may insist on rigidly following visitation parameters set by the court so that they can control the father's visitation time unreasonably. Divorced fathers may honestly wish to maintain strong relationships with their absent children, but with failure of marriage fathers may find themselves separated and cut off from them (LeMasters, 1974).

Since five out of six divorced fathers remarry, often to a woman who has children of her own, remarried fathers may find that they have a new set of parenting problems. Committed to both their own offspring and those of their spouse, they may find it difficult to balance their time between the children. Fathers may then experience a number of parenting relationships specifically unique to divorce (LeMasters, 1974). The present study examined perceptions of the father-child relationships as held by divorced fathers who did not receive physical custody of their children.

Roman and Haddad (1978) noted that sociological changes such as the women's movement, which encouraged fathers to take a more active role in parenting, have affected father-child relationships. More fathers are concerned with their role in meeting the individualistic needs of their children. That is, fathers are more available to children and inclined to fight for their rights of custody or visitation; they have begun to practice their nurturing skills with their children more than they did in the past.

Traditional views of fathers were summarized by a
series of propositions which Parke, Ross, and Swain (1976) tested. The propositions basically stated that fathers were not interested or involved with newborn infants, were less nurturant than mothers, preferred non-caretaking roles, and were less competent than mothers to care for newborns. In fact, in a number of studies by Parke and Swain (1976), it was found that fathers were equally as nurturant as mothers, and when in a triadic context consisting of mother, father and child, fathers were more nurturant than mothers.

Fathers were also found to be as sensitive to infant's cues as mothers, to "read" or "interpret" the infant's behavior so that they could regulate their own behavior to achieve some interaction goal. For example, fathers could interpret hunger cries as accurately as mothers (Parke & Swain, 1976).

While fathers in the past may have been unapproachable authoritarian figures, the Parke and Swain study has shown that today's fathers are capable of being as sensitive and nurturant as mothers. Yet divorced fathers seldom get custody of their children and receive little attention in research. Fathers have not been studied even though their roles in the family are important in relationship to other members of the family unit. When divorce occurs, the responses of each member to crisis are not exclusive of one another but rather affect all other members of the family unit.

Rarely do studies consistently acknowledge that all
members of a family are affected by a divorce. The tendency is to focus on any one member of a family (though the absent father is least studied) in isolation. The family is not perceived as a unit in which the responses of each of its members to a divorce or remarriage are interdependent. What deeply affects one member is bound to influence the others who, in turn, will themselves react (Roman & Haddad, 1978, p.51).

Introduction to the Problem

Few data have been compiled about fathers and their relationship with their children subsequent to divorce. Tasch (1952) interviewed fathers to obtain information concerning the role of urban American fathers in the family. Data were gathered through an interview in which the fathers were asked to report their activities, problems, attitudes, and opinions regarding their concept of the father role as revealed by the reports fathers gave of their activities. It had been twenty-five years since Tasch's study before Greif (1977) did an exploratory study of the father-child relationship subsequent to divorce, on a limited sample of professional fathers. In between these times, fathers' perceptions of how divorce affected them and their relationship to their children were, to my knowledge, ignored. Until Greif's study, the father and his absent child's relationship to him was described from the perspective of other family members, usually the mother and
sometimes the child. This present study examined divorced fathers who were without physical custody, whether or not remarried. It sought data through the father's perspective.

Statement of the Problem

Role changes in intact families have undergone many changes in the last few decades (Jenkins, W. 1979; Mackey, 1985; Robbins, 1974). These changes have resulted in some confusion in both men and women concerning enactment of their new role expectations (Klemer, 1970). The confusion about what is expected behavior in their roles is compounded when role stress in marriage results in divorce. Specifically, since fathers seldom get custody of children of divorce, these men have additional role strain when they attempt to fill their parenting role while seeing their children under the limits of visitation. Even though more fathers are seeking custody today than in the past (Mackey, 1985), the fact remains that most often they will face fathering their children on a part time basis when divorce occurs. In addition, no new role norms have been established for divorced fathers so that they have additional pressures in trying to adequately fill their parenting role. They must also attempt to fill the role expectations of fathers while adjusting to their new, single person identity.

This research sought information on divorced fathers' perceptions of their relationships to their absent children. It examined how divorced fathers parented their children
under the limitations of visitation without custody. The study also sought to determine whether or not these fathers attempted to fill their parenting roles in 12 categories ideally expected of fathers in intact nuclear families. These categories were developed through reviewing the literature pertaining to this research and listing those behaviors consistently mentioned as those ideally performed by fathers in intact families. Since no role norms have been established for parenting after divorce, it was assumed that fathers would attempt to continue to parent in a similar way to fathers in intact families.

Further, this research sought to identify any new variations or techniques divorced fathers developed as they tried to parent absent children. Finally, the study sought to identify factors which these men consistently mentioned as those impacting on their parenting efforts. These factors were then used in developing general themes which affected these divorced fathers parenting efforts and their relationships to their offspring.

Methodology and Procedures

In-depth individual interviews were held with subjects in the study and were carried out according to the following procedures. A semi-structured screening interview was used in an initial telephone contact with potential fathers to serve in the sample. During the telephone screening interview the father was assured of confidentiality and
informed of the purpose of the study. Appointments were subsequently made with those fathers who qualified to serve in the sample. During the first meeting with fathers an interview schedule was used. A telephone interview was arranged as a follow up to the personal interview. This was an optional follow up call used in the event that the researcher found a need for clarification of facts which the father had reported in the initial interview.

Originally, an attempt was made to draw the sample from public records of dissolution of marriage in San Joaquin County. The search of the public records concentrated on the year 1975. Every fourth name was drawn for potential sample subjects. Those fathers who met the sample criteria (see p. 16 of this chapter for sample criteria) were asked to serve. The time and place of interview was set primarily to the father's work and leisure convenience.

During the first interview a branching technique was used. First, demographic background information pertinent to the study was collected and tape-recorded. General information served to desensitize fathers around a potentially emotion-laden research area. General categories which had been identified in the literature review as those which commonly form the ideal father role were explored. These were checked off a list as they naturally arose during the interview. Flexibility within the session was the mode in order to enhance the probability of more personal in-depth categories being considered and brought up by the subject.
The interviews lasted from 3 to 4 hours. During the final part of the interview, questions which arose during the session were followed and clarified. Fathers were also given an opportunity to express their feelings concerning the interview experience, and to ask questions and offer information which they felt may have been neglected in the course of the interview. After the interview, information gathered from the tapes was transcribed verbatim and reviewed. This process yielded an abundance of data (over 600 pages of transcribed material) concerning how these fathers perceived their relationship to their absent offspring, how they attempted to fill their parenting role, how they developed parenting variations and techniques which allowed them to best parent their absent child, and how they attempted to meet the role of "ideal" fathers in intact families. This procedure served as an exploratory vehicle which resulted in a conceptualization of the fathers - a model which can then be tested in future research.

**Significance of the Study**

The study has clear implications for marriage, child, and family counselors, educators, divorce lawyers, and research. These practitioners may need to know that in treating divorced families, all members, not just the parent who has physical custody, can benefit from help. Increased understanding about divorced fathers will facilitate the success of this type of counseling. Educators also need to
realize the implications of divorce on father-child relationships in order to help children in learning situations. Courts may benefit from the results of added information pertaining to fathers' roles and their perceptions of their relationships subsequent to separation from their offspring. The belief that mothers are, by nature, the best parents for most children which is blatantly assumed in the literature, and substantiated by the number of women who are awarded custody by the courts, may be re-examined in light of the data provided by this study.

Limitations

The major limitation in this research is that it is not generalizable. It describes how a small sample of six fathers perceived themselves in their parenting relationships once they had been divorced and were not awarded custody. This study is an exploratory qualitative study designed to generate hypotheses for future study. In addition it employed a theory-guided sample in which a particular type of person was explored - a divorced father. Therefore, there was little attempt to randomize the sample. This limited sample may serve as a comparative base for further studies.

Sample Criteria

1. This study sought data only from fathers and their children who resided in San Joaquin County. An attempt was made to note the approximate distance between the father's
and child's residence. Originally the distance was limited to approximately ten miles, because it was believed this would optimize the opportunity for continued interaction between fathers and absent children. This was later changed when one father reported that he was able to fully exercise his visitation rights even though he lived 65 miles away from his children.

2. Fathers who had remarried were interviewed only if they did not have custody of their own children and were remarried.

3. Only fathers with children not yet eighteen were included in the sample.

4. The first six respondents contacted in the initial telephone interviews who satisfied the qualifying criteria required for divorced fathers, were included in the sample. The sample included four divorced/unmarried and two divorced/remarried fathers.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

**One-Parent Family:** A one parent family consists of only one-parent in the home and at least one dependent child.

**Remarried Fathers:** A man divorced and legally remarried, to a different wife, without legal custody of his own natural children from his previous marriage.

**Nuclear Unit:** A married couple with their dependent
children.

Child Absence: A concept which pertains to reorganization of the family structure and which is a consequence of the divorce of the parents. The divorce has resulted in legal separation of the father and his children due to the mother's legal physical custody of the children.

Father: The natural father of those children who are absent from him since he was not awarded physical custody.

Custody: Legal physical custody of children awarded by the court at the time of divorce or dissolution of marriage.

Visitation: A legal right of the father to see his absent children for court designated periods of time. The father-child interaction time allowed varies according to each specific divorce case.

**Summary**

This chapter has introduced the problem of how divorced fathers who did not gain physical custody of their children may have perceived their ongoing relationship to their absent children and how they may attempt to parent them. There are increasing numbers of one parent families resulting from divorce, and in 90 to 95 percent of these, the mother is awarded physical custody of the children. Consequently, fathers who divorce today often lose not only their wife and home, but their children as well.

In the past, men held unquestioned authority in the family, but the trend has been for fathers who divorce to
lose much of their role power and control in the family, specifically control of the children. Women's roles have expanded to more activities outside the home, while they have not lost their power within the family and over the children. Society has maintained the idea that mother's emotional, expressive, and nurturing role functions with children in the family cannot be as effectively filled by fathers. The myth that mothers are by nature the best parents for the children is still prevalent today despite research which clearly contradicts this notion. Courts ignore research data showing that fathers are as capable as mothers in child-rearing roles even while more fathers currently seek physical custody of their children when the crisis of divorce occurs. Research data on divorce is seldom collected from the father's perspective, and little data on the divorced father's relationship to his absent children exist.

Data from the father's perspective are needed to better understand the problems and feelings of divorced fathers, to determine what differences exist in their roles as compared to those of fathers in intact nuclear families, to question the belief that mothers are inherently better parents, and to aid educators, judges, and counselors in their decisions when working with the growing number of one parent families. The importance of the father's role to other family members after divorce needs to be recognized.

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the dissertation, stated the nature and scope of the problem,
noted the methodology and procedures by which the data was collected and analyzed, defined important terms used in the report, listed the limitations described in the sample criteria, and noted the significance of the study.

Additional chapters will complete the remainder of this study. These are as follows: (1) Chapter 2: Review of the Literature related to the study; (2) Chapter 3: Description of the Design and Procedures of the Study; (3) Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of the Data; (4) Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations for further study.
CHAPTER 2
A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review was to organize and define categories which make up the ideal father role. The review also suggests some areas for inquiry into the relationship between divorced fathers and their children. The factors which comprise the categories have been identified as significant in the future parental-child relationship after divorce. The literature review related to this study will be presented in the following areas:

1. Role Theory
2. Historical Perspectives/Trends
3. Ideal Father Role
4. The Process of Divorce Stages
5. Impact of Divorce on Father Role

Role Theory

In reviewing the literature concerned with fathers and their relationships to their children subsequent to divorce, the connection of this research topic to role theory becomes apparent. As alluded to in Chapter One, society has expectations of how fathers will relate to their children, and role theory is an organized way of looking at relationships and the expectations society holds for those relationships. "There is no such thing as 'the' role theory ...role theory is a way of looking at what goes on between people" (Swensen, 1973, p.373).
Role theory is based upon the fact that there are certain kinds of transactions prescribed for certain kinds of relationships. For example, the parent-child relationship is expected to provide for the needs of the child. It is this regularity of socially prescribed observable behaviors that provides a rationale for the application of role theory to the study of the interaction between individuals (Swensen, 1973). Some such interactions are those of fathers and their children, ex-wives, or other members of their community. It was appropriate to consider role theory in the current research because it is connected through many of its basic points to the study of divorced fathers and their relationships.

The following basic areas within role theory were commonly mentioned in the literature review and deal with variables related to understanding the current research, its findings and its connection to role theory. These basic hypothetical structures concerning roles will serve to clarify what is meant by roles, how roles are learned and enacted, and how roles change as one's circumstances of life effects role change, for example, when a man is no longer married but is still in the role of parent.

Role Concept

Most authors agreed that the concept of role originated in the theater (Brown, 1965; Corey, 1984; Harre & Lamb, 1983; Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Swensen, 1973). Swensen (1973) described the way in which social interaction borrows from
the theatrical implications of role. For example, in any social interaction there are parts being played and also prescribed words and actions. Corey (1984) pointed out that interpersonal relationships follow certain social conventions similar to the script for a play. He further explained that while certain behaviors are required of a role, each individual actor has scope to portray a part in his own individualistic way. In the same way, different individuals performing the same role may perform in their own unique way and still fulfill the expected behaviors for the role.

Role Definition

Even though role developed from the stage, it developed in different ways so that it is now, to some extent, ambiguous. Both definitions of role and the language used in role theory are ambiguous (Bloombaum, 1984).

While the terminology in the area of role theory is nonstandardized, role playing most often refers to enactment, what individuals say or do insofar as such behaviors are expected and evaluated by others (Bloombaum, 1984). Wolman (1973) defined "role" as a pattern of behavior that is characteristic or expected of an individual occupying a particular position "such as the position of father" within a social system "such as the family system". Harre and Lamb (1983) added that role may be a way to refer to some regular pattern in the way people of a certain category behave. We might, for example, speak of "father's role". Corey (1984) defined role as some kind of expected behavior associated
with a given position or status in society and, in addition, that roles are prescribed ways to divide the labor of society and to interact with others.

Finally, Biddle (1979) in attempting to clarify the meaning of role, stated that in common usage, role is either a part or character performed by an actor in a drama, or a function taken or assumed by any person. He further clarified role as a behavioral repertoire characteristic of a person in a position (such as father), a set of standards, descriptions, norms or concepts held for the behaviors of a person or social position, or, less often, a position itself.

The variables contained in the above definitions are those which were used in the current research, so that generally, such phrases as "role of the father", "divorced father's role", or "ideal role", refer to those characteristic behaviors or functions which are expected of men who occupy the position of father. This is a psychological-sociological, eclectic approach since the behavior of each father in the current research was analyzed while the behavior occurred in the context, or role set, of an interrelationship within a family system/group.

Role Enactment

Role enactment is the actual behavior performed by an individual. It is the behavior which is observed and which leads to judgements of one's behavior, its appropriateness and adequacy for the role being played (Sarbin & Allen, 1986). Biddle and Thomas, 1966, partitioned role enactment
into three dimensions: (1) the number of roles a given person may play, such as father, son, and husband, (2) the level of involvement of a person in a given role, which may range from zero, (no involvement) such as when a divorced father no longer visits children post-divorce, to a deep involvement, such as when a father continues to be engrossed in his parenting role post-divorce, and (3) the amount of time spent in a role. The variability of time spent in a particular role is primarily related to achieved roles—those roles people have come into through their own behavior. Those roles which are ascribed are full-time roles such as sex, nationality, or age. Role enactment is largely learned behavior so it is learned similarly to the ways in which other behaviors are learned.

Role Learning

There are a number of ways in which roles are learned. Many authors agreed that role learning takes place under the same conditions and in the same way as any learned behavior. These include such processes as learning through identification and imitation, as well as learning under conditions in which a person is: (1) motivated (wants something), (2) perceives cues (sees something), (3) responds (does something), and (4) is rewarded (gets something) (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Corey, 1984; Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Role learning, therefore, takes place through a cognitive and behavioral gestalt.
Positions. Roles are also learned through partitioning behaviors into positions which are collectively recognized as a category of persons who perform characteristic behaviors. For example, the position of father is a distinct category of persons who perform parenting behaviors. These categories are usually familiar in the minds of most people who then, for example, associate certain role behaviors of parenting to the position of father. People thus learn what roles are expected of a position and what skills are necessary to fulfill the role (Hartley, 1966). Merton (1966), added that part of the motivation to enter a position, the anticipatory aspect, is acquiring the values and practicing the behavior expected in the role.

Identification/Imitation. Richmond and Hersher (1966) pointed out that role learning takes place in the process of identification and imitation. They explained that in the unconscious mental mechanism of identification an individual is prompted to try to pattern himself after another. When this occurs on a conscious level; it is called imitation. For example, a child may, at a very early age, identify unconsciously with his father through bonding, and at a later age imitate his father quite obviously when attempting to walk like him. Richmond and Hersher further pointed out that much of children's role learning is not only through reward and punishment but through such adoptions of specific roles in society, for example, identifying with and imitation of certain people in whom one places certain values. The
children pattern their behavior according to the role with which they identify themselves. Wolman (1973) reported that it is a pattern of behavior characteristic or expected in the social system which actually distinguishes a person in a particular role.

**Socialization.** Corey (1984) described role learning through socialization. Since the stability of society is important, people are trained, and their behavior is shaped through the process of socialization. That is, valued behaviors are rewarded while nonvalued (deviant) behaviors are punished. Socialization takes place primarily in the family and, later, in other institutions such as schools. Since role learning occurs in various places and through various experiences, as individuals mature they learn more role skills and they have the potential to increase the number of roles they might perform (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Corey, 1984; Swensen, 1973).

**Cognitive Skills.** The cognitive abilities of each person are also related to their role learning abilities. For example, the ability to recognize cues in the environment, to be able to know what is going on and what is expected of a certain role position, and the ability to detect one's position, are all cognitive skills which are basic to role learning and performance. These skills are also referred to as social intelligence or perceptiveness (Swenson, 1973).
Motor Skills. Practicing the expected behaviors of a role is another way in which role learning takes place (Corey, 1984; Swenson, 1973). For example, a youngster who babysits, performing such tasks as changing diapers or bathing small children, is learning parenting role behaviors. Through practice, which occurs naturally to children, the child develops the level of expectations for his particular age and then changes performance for his role with gradually increasing role demands (Biddle & Thomas, 1966).

Role Expectations

Role expectations are the rights, obligations, duties and privileges that go with a role—what people are supposed to do when they play a certain role. They are the forms of behavior associated with a given position/status (Corey, 1984; Schonflug, 1972). For example, we expect medical doctors to give patients sound medical advice.

Schonflug (1972) distinguished between prescribed and predicted expectations. Prescribed expectations of role behaviors reflect the norms and aims of the group and describe how certain persons will behave in specific roles in certain situations. Predicted expectations of behaviors refer to the probability of how a person will act in certain ways under certain conditions in the future.

Dimensions of Expectations. Swensen (1973) addressed the point that role expectations vary along the dimensions of generality (the broadness of a role) and specificity (how
precise expectations of behavior are for a role). Generally defined roles, such as those of spouses, allow for individuals to perform role obligations in an individual's own unique style. This is one reason why people in the same role position may behave differently from one another in performance of that role. Those roles which are precisely defined require a high level of conformity among performers of the role.

Changing Role Expectations. The expectations for a role may change according to the person or group with whom one interacts, the place in which one performs the behavior, and the context of the interaction. For example, it is expected that a father at a football game may shout in support of a team while he may be considered rude if he performs in a similar way at his office.

Role Norms/Values

The generalized pattern of society's commonly held expectations for certain role performance in a system, such as the family unit, are called norms (Parsons, 1967). Values are normative patterns. These values or norms serve to regulate the behavior of individuals in roles.

Social Norms. Deusinger (1972) described social norms as those which society regards as having positive worth. They are to be striven for because they represent a value, obligation, or an ideal. Norms describe what individuals know, or think they know, about the behavior of other
individuals in the population. For instance, it is a norm in United States society that fathers should work, earn money, and provide for their families.

Role Sanctions

The sanctions of one's behavior in a role deals with the way society applies punishments when people deviate from the generally expected role norms and rewards people who conform to established and valued role norms. Role sanctions are the consequences of behavior, the responses which occur to any given behavior. It is through sanctions which parents apply that children learn what is accepted and expected behavior in their various roles.

Fathers are considered increasingly deviant as they move away from the norm. If a father behaves in an "unfatherly" way towards his children, he will likely be the target of disapproval by his friends, neighbors, and community members. He must, generally, conform to expectations of the father role. If he deviates from his prescribed role expectations to a great extent he may even be punished. This is possible because the community can bring pressure through the legal system.

If a father is divorced, he may face the legal sanctions brought about by the role power his ex-wife holds because she has physical custody of their children. For example, by virtue of the fact that he may have been ordered by the court to perform in certain ways, his ex-spouse may choose to hold him to those orders with little flexibility in
consideration of human circumstances which may temporarily prevent him from fulfilling court orders.

Though society will punish persons who deviate from prescribed role expectations, the range of acceptable behavior for any given position may be broad. This broad range, in certain roles, such as that of fathers, allows for individual personality differences. How one perceives adequate enactment of a role can differ from others who hold similar positions, yet each person may be considered as performing his role adequately and legitimately (Corey, 1984). This is another reason why people with the same defined roles may perform them differently. For example, the literature review reveals components which make up the "ideal" father role, but in reality, a father may successfully fill his role of parent yet not necessarily perform all the characteristic, ideal father-role functions. As long as his fathering behavior falls within the broad range of acceptable performance, he will likely be viewed as adequately performing his father role and its expectations.

Role Confusion, Complexity, Conflict

It is because many roles may be played at the same time, or in a sequence, that confusion and conflict about role performance sometimes occurs. Not only does an individual play many roles but a person occupying a role interacts with others in complementary roles to his own. For example, a husband's role performance is affected by his wife's performance of her role. The context in which a role
is played, therefore, impacts on individual role performance (Harre & Lamb, 1983). Merton (1966) referred to the context in which roles are played as the role set and explained that it is the interaction of people in complementary role positions in role sets which often leads to conflict between the persons enacting roles. For example, when the conflict cannot be resolved, the relationship may be ended, such as when parents divorce.

Corey (1984) addressed the confusion which sometimes surrounds role playing in regard to the issue of sincerity. He elaborated that when people really believe in their roles and are committed to playing them with integrity, they are acting sincerely. "Phonies" are those who play a role in which they do not believe and to which they are not committed or who play a role that arouses expectations in others that they have no expectations of meeting.

**Role Conflict**

Role conflict exists when an individual in a particular role is torn by conflicting demands or troubled by tasks which he/she does not want to do or does not think are part of the role specification (Harre & Lamb, 1983). Role conflict occurs when a person occupies two positions with differing and incompatible expectations. The two positions, together, can demand more than one is able to give or make conflicting demands on one's loyalties. The more rigorously the role is defined, the more it is enforced and the more one may experience dissonance when he deviates from the role
(Swenson, 1973). For example, a divorced father may experience role conflict when expected to maintain his obligations as a father even though he does not have his children living with him and, at the same, time meet the expectations of his group of single persons who have the rights and privileges of a single lifestyle. The contradictory and competing role expectations may cause him to experience role conflict when he attempts to conform to individual role expectations of the two positions--father and single person.

Role Power

Role power is the ability one has to exert influence over another person's or group's behavior (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). Sarbin and Allen (1968) pointed out that one aspect of resolving role conflict/strain is by determining where the power lies in a situation. That is, a person may resolve role conflict in the direction of the person in the role set who holds the most power to reward or punish conformity or nonconformity to role expectations. For example, a divorced, noncustodial father may conform to his ex-wife's wishes concerning certain parenting behaviors out of fear that she will exercise her power of physical custody and, for instance, withhold or limit his visitation privileges. Many authors (Biddle, 1979; Harre & Lamb, 1983; Sarbin & Allen, 1968) discussed other ways in which role conflict could be resolved. Their suggestions for resolving role conflict included merging roles, compromise, ending the relationship,
changing one's beliefs about the particular role expectations, or acceptance of the situation, which is causing role conflict, as unchangeable.

Role Ambiguity

Another consistently mentioned term in the literature on role theory was role ambiguity. Role ambiguity exists when an individual has inadequate information about his/her role, the objectives associated with the role, what colleagues expect of the role, its scope, responsibilities or role performance (Harre & Lamb, 1983). That is, role ambiguity occurs when shared expectations set for a role are incomplete or insufficient to tell the role player what is desired or how to do it (Biddle, 1979). For example, if a divorced father has inadequate communication with his ex-wife, he may have little clarity about what responsibilities she expects him to continue to hold and perform in regard to rearing the children. Hanson (1985) pointed out that in order to adequately perform a role one needs a clear idea of what is expected of the role and the social boundaries surrounding it.

Role Change

The basic concept of role change in role theory is also applicable to the current study. Although relationships occur with a regularity of behaviors prescribed and enacted for them, role change occurs throughout life and, with these changes, a person's identity changes because, according to
role theory, identity is built out of people's interactions with society and those in complementary role positions. People learn who they are from the way others act toward them. They learn what to do when they have taken a role position because of the norms associated with their role (Sarbin & Allen, 1968).

There are different opinions among social scientists concerning how and why roles change. Social scientists have a tendency to focus on different phenomena that may cause, be associated with, or result from the performance of roles. Gordon (1966) presented the following views of the anthropologist, psychologist, and sociologist in regard to roles and role change.

**Anthropologist**

Anthropologists tend to treat role as a culturally derived explanation of behavior in roles. In their opinion outside influences determine our roles. They basically see roles as normative. Individuals are socially assigned to roles which have certain rights, duties, and attitudes attached to them. If a father performed at least a minimum of these duties and held certain attitudes about the role, he would be considered as performing the role. A role may be performed in a unique, individualistic way which serves to reduce "ideal" role patterns of social life to individual terms. The "ideal" is the norm of the group. The anthropologist is primarily concerned with the description of societies on a large, macrocultural level. The description
may not be what really happens in society but is an approximation of what reality is within the culture.

Anthropologists take the position that roles change primarily as a result of changing norms of society. Role apparently refers to the behaviors necessary to maintain status, the ideal behaviors associated with a role, and what the actual behavior is which results from occupying a status i.e., what fathers actually do. Anthropologists are primarily concerned with the idea that people "fit" into society's norms. One adjusts behavior to the perceived reactions or responses of the group, that is, "I will adapt my behavior to the norms of the group".

**Psychologist**

Psychologists, according to Gordon (1966), represent a group of social scientists who are concerned primarily with the behavior of individuals. They argue that role and status are not variables for study since they are given or external concepts. The central concepts for analysis by psychologist are role-taking, the generalized other, and role playing. It is an interactional process which results in role change, and every role has a complementary role. For fathers that might be a spouse, child, or significant other.

As children we learn to build the responses of others into our own response systems, and we are able to take on the roles of others. The opinions and attitudes of others affect the way in which we perform a role and the way in which we make individual adjustments to our roles. Our roles are
conditioned and socialized by the way we perceive others "through intuition." The psychologist's objective is to explain human behavior through analysis of individuals. We change our behavior in order to be considered acceptable.

Reward and punishment play a primary part, from this perspective, in how roles are played and how they change. The behaviors of those interacting are organized into roles. Individuals, from the psychological perspective, respond to their own "selves" in a system through which they evaluate their own responses and those they perceive others will make. People then make adjustments to their behavior based on these evaluations. It is in this way that behavior changes.

Further, Gordon explains, role transitions denote the changes that occur in roles. When these transitions are situational, as in divorce, they are often unwanted and result in role loss, or role insufficiency. For example, if a father feels forced to assume a new role for which he is unprepared or unwilling to accept, he may refuse to change. Since in divorce situations, fathers generally find little to identify as positive, they may be unwilling to change and their parenting may require role supplementation in order to clarify the role. Hansen (1985) contends that the availability of new information and knowledge may then bring fathers to awareness of desired behavior patterns for the new role.
Sociologists

The third view of role is that of sociologists. According to Gordon (1966) their area of concentration in the explanation of human behavior is, for the most part, larger than the psychological focus (the individual) but less encompassing than the entire social system, as the anthropologists. Their unit of analysis is based on the interaction of two or more persons. Their core concern is considered by some sociologist to be the reciprocal relationship but there appears to be little agreement about whether it is essential to the understanding of social phenomena to also understand on the psychological, personal level.

Gordon (1966) further explained that the emergence of functionalism as a major way in which to understand human roles focused on those factors related to exactly what maintains the reciprocal relationship i.e., the functions, changes, and maintenance of the relationship. The reciprocal-functional orientation appears to be the most accepted position among sociologists. In their opinion role and status are the cues which predetermine behavior. The actual behavior or performance of an individual in a given position, i.e., "father", is distinct from how he is "supposed" to perform (the "ideal"), and is called his "role". The way in which the role is performed is influenced by factors other than the stipulations of the role itself.

There is need for humans to strive for consistency or
adjustments between the various roles of a position. Since the sociologist perceives all roles with a "paired", reciprocal role, it then appears to follow that roles of men change in relation to the changing roles of others. This is analogous to the way in which one part of a mobile moves and changes position when touched, and all other parts of the mobile also move and change position, thereby maintaining a balance of positions.

While there are differences among various scientists' opinions as to how and why roles change, the evolution of an adult role sometimes involves a more active part in "accommodating, enjoying, or suffering from, sometimes even changing, the social systems in which he participates" (Biddle, 1979, p. 312). Biddle further explained that in simple societies, people may learn all about their roles in childhood, but in modern urban societies the number of roles and positions is too numberous for this to occur, so that adulthood becomes a life-long process of discovery of new roles. Some role changes occur through the processes of: (1) recruitment i.e. who will be accepted to fill a role position considering "requirements", (2) adjustment, i.e. how one reacts to the realities of a role position versus what one had imagined the performance of the role to be, (3) choice, to leave a position if one is dissatisfied or cannot tolerate the demands of a position (Biddle, 1979). The second and third processes may contribute to the changes men make in their roles as adult, married fathers.
The implications of these variables of role theory applied to the divorced father's life situation raises questions as to how he will be affected by the way society views him when he is divorced and wants to maintain his role of parent, and what effects his ex-spouse's behavior toward him will have in view of the fact that she has primary control over the children, and that he needs to continue to interact with her. He must be able to adjust to the new role position of single father, attempting to fill that role and its expectations, even though no role norms have been established for it.

The application of role theory to particular kinds of social interaction is not new. After reviewing a number of theories concerning marriage relationships, Tharp (1963) concluded that the best theoretical approach to marriage and the most promising role theory approach is that of Parsons and Bales. The roles which Parsons and Bales (1955) defined are in the process of change but, generally, are considered accurate and characteristic. As more research has been done, marriage roles have become less specific, yet the literature review suggests that their basic idea, i.e., that fathers are primarily expected to take the instrumental role and mothers primarily the expressive role, are those to which most authors refer when looking at marital and parental role behaviors. The roles of husbands and wives are, generally, believed to fall into these instrumental and expressive areas, respectively. Though men and women are expected to
perform these roles primarily, they are not limited to the instrumental or expressive role categories. Further, Swensen (1973) stated that roles are not static; they do change and have changed in the past.

In summary one may note that role theory is an organized way of looking at relationships and, therefore, its application is appropriate in the current research which examined (1) the relationships of divorced fathers, (2) their ways of adjusting to their parenting role changes and, (3) how divorce affected their relationship to their children and community members. The origin of the concept of roles, how roles are learned, and why different people play the same role in various ways was discussed. Three perspectives of how roles develop and change, anthropological, psychological, and sociological were presented. The three perspectives were used in an attempt to clarify the meaning of "role" and role change. Role theory can be connected to the study of parent-child interaction through many of its basic concepts such as role enactment, conflict, ambiguity, sanctions, and change. As divorced fathers perform their parenting roles, they may be considered increasingly deviant as their performance moves away from societal expectations, and their behavior becomes increasingly unacceptable.

Role change occurs throughout life and this changes a person's identity since identity is developed from people's interactions with society. People learn who they are through interactions with others in complementary role positions.
They learn what to do in specific roles because of norms associated with the particular role and through the way they evaluate themselves in interactions with others and then make adjustments to their roles. Social roles are learned primarily in the family but in other institutions of society, as well.

When divorce occurs, fathers are faced with adjusting to a new role, single father, for which few role norms have been established. Since the range of acceptable behavior for any given role is broad, fathers may not fill all the expectations society holds for their role yet still be considered adequate in its performance.

The basic ideas of Parsons and Bales, that fathers are primarily expected to take the instrumental role and mothers primarily the expressive role are those to which most authors referred when looking at marriage and family relationships. No clear definition of the fathering role exists since roles have changed in the past and continue to change. With these changes, some trends seem to be emerging. The next section of the literature review looks at how fathers' roles have changed over the years, and what kinds of trends seem to be emerging.

**Historical Perspectives and Trends**

It is not only divorce which changes men's roles but general occurrences in society as well. In order to understand the developing role to which fathers must adjust,
and how this ultimately affects their relationship to their offspring, it is useful to examine the relationships within the context of social history. It is in this way that a relationship is best understood (Klemer, 1970).

Father Role Dominance

In the medieval and post-medieval family, fathers were not only the head of the clan (the immediate family and extended family), but they were also heads of the business enterprise as well. The household was the center of economic activity. Those under father's authority were not only his wife and children, but workers and servants as well (Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981). The ideal of marriage at this time was to stay married and have many children. A wife and children provided helping hands and were a definite asset to the father's business. Fathers at this time could be described as men who dispensed wisdom in a deep voice, would become indignant if someone sat in "his" chair, and conjured up images of awe, respect, and fear equal to the authoritarian clergyman (Victor & Winkler, 1977). Clearly, men held positions of dominance in their role in the family.

Loss of Role Dominance. A major change occurred in the father's role with the Industrial Revolution. Men lost a great deal of their authority because they were no longer in the position of head of the work force. They went out of the home to the factory where they were under the authority of someone else. The removal of the father from the home to his
work brought obscurity of his work role to his children. His authority and role power was no longer clear (Hamilton, 1977).

Change in Values

With the father's diminished authority, the ideal of marriage also changed. The value of marriage had been to stay married and have children. The primacy of procreation and child care was evident in the fact that some societies did not consider marital partners a family unit until a child was expected or born. It was during the 1930's that the ideal of marriage began to focus on the happiness of the marriage partners and their individualistic needs (Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981).

Women's Role Change

Another factor affecting the father's role was the change in women's roles. As women began to work outside the home, having earning power which only men had held before, men began to experience role change which resulted in a power loss. For example, women were not dependent on men for their total existence as they were in the past (Klemer, 1970). In 1910, the women's suffrage movement gathered momentum. Radical suffragists wanted to abandon traditional role expectations that a woman's place was in the home, but by 1920, the traditional roles for women had not been abandoned though women's determination to stay married had changed because of their ability to have earning power.
War and Role Change

World War II played a part in the gradual change of men's roles. In 1944, women went to work in the shipyards, got babysitters, and earned wages which gave them more independence than they had in the past. When the war was over, some returned to their traditional roles of housewife and caretaker, but many did not. Men began to take a more active part in child-rearing activities since mothers were contributing to "bringing home the bacon." Still, the primary caretaker was considered to be the mother, and by the late 1940's the decline of authority of husbands and some fathers over family functions was a role change listed by some in a group of well known family experts of the time, who were asked to list the most significant changes in family life during their professional lifetimes. Only one change, the increasing divorce rate, was listed by all (Klemer, 1970, Rotundo, 1985).

The difference between men's and women's roles which had been prevalent during the post Civil War period was changed. At that time mothers were to raise children as only a mother could, "with love and affection," and fathers were the authoritarian breadwinners who were able to go outside the home to make a living. Mothers' main tasks included disciplining and instilling obedience in the child. The home was her only kingdom. Society for the most part believed this. In part this view gained credibility due to the beliefs of the medical profession. Doctors insisted that
women's unique biological characteristics limited them to certain special activities. Their refinement and sensibilities were rooted in female maladies which made it impossible for them to actively participate outside the home (Rothman, 1978). Since characteristics of aggressiveness in males and more nurturance in females was found in all cultures, it was assumed that sex differences were biologically based. This view soon began to change with scientific advances.

**Scientific Advances**

With the discovery of effective birth control, women were no longer unpredictably pregnant and could, therefore, spend a smaller amount of their lifetimes in the role of mothering activities. The biological necessity of nursing a child, which had made differences between mothers' and fathers' roles so apparent, narrowed with the advent of bottle feeding. Fathers were able to participate more than before in the role of child care. Mothers' and fathers' roles began to converge and sex-based differences began to diminish (Hoffman, 1978) as a trend toward sameness of the sexes began (Ginott, 1965).

**Societal Values**

The American educational system served to further diminish the authority and power fathers' roles once held in the family. The American educational system educates children in a manner which emphasizes how American patriots
threw off the yoke of authority so that rejecting authority became a specifically American act. The role sanctions of society were added to the motives of individuals to reject the authority personified in fathers. The historical view of men as breadwinners and women as nurturers is less accurate today. The historical allocation of these separate roles through social and economic arrangements does not mean that fathers are not capable of performing the nurturing roles and mothers the breadwinners roles.

Television/Media

By 1950-1960, the role of fathers was undergoing more changes with the result that they were losing more status and authority in the family. Television and the media contributed to this gradual loss of role dominance and the change in role expectations for fathers.

Fathers became the "boob who pays the bills." Even though he was viewed as a loveable boob, he was, for the main part, ignored by experts, forgotten by sociologists, researchers, and journalists who were all too busy taking care of mothers (Green, 1976). The media broke men's roles down into three categories: (1) business-financial, (2) sports, and (3) sexual. During this time fathers were viewed as one who impregnates the wife, reads Playboy magazine and watches ballgames on television. If wives decided on natural childbirth, husbands could participate. Still, fathers' role was limited to a minor "walk on." His role was secondary to the mother's within the family, while mothers were viewed as
experts. One television commercial for a household product used "Even a husband can do it," as its slogan (Benson, 1985, Victor & Winkler, 1977).

Change in Role Expectations

The fathers' "pal" movement began in the late 1950's. He began to go to P.T.A. meetings and take part in sports activities such as Little League baseball. The friendly pal-father held backyard barbecues at a time when sociability seemed like a prerequisite for success on the job (Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981). This was a completely different role than that of fathers in the post Victorian days when men were expected to be distant and to repress spontaneous expression. In the 1950's, the expectations of society were that couples would marry young and rear children. Individual needs of parents were secondary to needs of children. By the late 1960's, these societal expectations had made almost a complete cycle.

Women's Consciousness. During the 1960's, women's consciousness raising groups began to affect the roles of men and women. Suddenly the rules of the fatherhood game began to change drastically from a hands-off philosophy to a hands-on philosophy concerning children. Marriage was postponed to a later age and, instead of children being the primary concern to the exclusion of parents, concern for individual growth became popular. This was the "do your own thing" period. At the same time, there was widespread
concern for the family so that a combination of these two factors, awareness of the importance of individual needs and family concern, took place. Families would have the best of both (Norton, 1979).

**Individual Needs/Happiness**

The trend toward fulfillment of individual needs and growth and the ideal of happiness in marriage led many people to change their attitudes about marriage. Since it was no longer absolutely necessary for people to spend their entire lives working to make a marginal existence, happiness became a more realistic goal, and with divorce as an easy alternative, modern couples' toleration level began to decline dramatically (Klemer, 1970). If one was not happy in marriage, it would be easy to get a divorce.

**Fathers Defend Rights**

Within the span of one generation the image of the ideal roles of father had undergone a 180 degree turn. Fathers had changed from the "bumbling fool" of the 1950's and 1960's, who was not to interfere with the sacred rites of the female madonna, to the male madonna (Green 1976). In the 1970's, a further change took place in men's roles. When divorce occurred, men began to fight back for fathers' rights and against ingrained attitudes of men's lack of fitness in the childrearing role (Victor & Winkler, 1977).
Blurring of Roles

The change in women's roles caused a blurring of maternal and paternal roles (Kramer & Prall, 1978). Society began to put more emphasis on the nurturing role of fathering and less on the breadwinning role (Hoffman, 1978). The strong division of roles of the past was no longer distinct and fathers became more familiar with roles in home management and child care than ever before. Currently, father's roles are clearly being redefined to include the expressive function. In the last decade, men have been expected to be more active in the child-rearing role and the awareness of the value of a father's parental influence within the family and with his children has increased (Greif, 1978).

Trends

Custody Awards

Courts have begun to award custody to fathers more frequently than they did in the past (Schlesinger & Todres, 1976). However, parents are not solely influenced by the current trends. They are still influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of their parents--their own role models. This affects not only their performance of parenting roles, but also the way in which they react to the concept of marriage roles, the expectations they hold within the marriage, and the way in which they handle the process of a divorce. This leads to confused role expectations and role strain (Hoffman, 1978).
Learned Roles Perpetuated

If marriage partners come from a background where their reference group encouraged the belief that men's and women's roles are inherently different, then it follows that they will believe their roles in marriage will be different. If husbands and wives believe their roles are the same, then they will feel free to interchange parenting roles. A third view recognizes that men's and women's roles are different but complementary so that the parenting roles of marriage partners can complement one another (Martinson, 1960).

Role Sharing and Tradition

Some evidence has been found that as women share the breadwinning role, fewer men work at extra "moonlighting" jobs, and are under less pressure to perform the economic provider role. In spite of the trend toward sameness of sexes and sharing roles, Kramer and Prall (1978) argued that most people still share images of the ideal traditional family consisting of two parents, one private residence, outsiders helping occasionally, and children who are obedient, grateful, and leave home upon maturity (Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981). Most boys are still socialized toward occupational roles and girls toward domestic roles. While many mothers work outside the home, fathers are still expected to be the primary breadwinner. If he decides to be a househusband he may be stigmatized simply because he has deviated from expected role norms (Benson, 1968).
Role Leadership Confusion

This has led to some confused expectations on the part of both husbands and wives concerning family leadership. Two kinds of conditioning (intellectual and emotional) have caused confusion in role expectations in the area of family leadership. Currently, most average American women are intellectually conditioned to expect husbands to be democratic, to treat them fairly and equally, and to consult them in important matters. Emotional conditioning of some of these same women is inconsistent with this. They grew up in homes where they were conditioned to expect to marry a strong courageous leader who would tell them what to do and make them like it. Today, many women do not expect husbands to be an assigned boss, but rather earn the right to be boss by demonstrating his superior leadership ability. The equal distribution of role power seems to confuse them. Klemer (1970) found that the confusion about what husbands' and fathers' role expectations are in the intact family makes it difficult for marriage partners to stay in agreement with each other. This may lead to resolving disagreements through divorce. When a divorce occurs fathers are even more confused about their role expectations and, therefore, experience role strain.

In summary, it may be recalled that it is not only divorce, but general occurrences in society which also contribute to the changes occurring in men's roles. Men lost some of their authority in the family when they were no
longer head of the work force. This came as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Diminished authority changed the ideal of marriage so that the focus on procreation and having many children changed to focusing on individual needs of the couple.

The change in women's roles and scientific advances further changed men's roles. Women went into the work force and no longer solely depended on men. The discovery of effective birth control and bottle feeding of infants narrowed the differences between men's and women's roles. Fathers were able to participate more in the care of their children and sex based differences narrowed. A trend toward sameness of sexes began to emerge.

The media of television was the impetus for more change in men's roles during the 1950's. The media limited fathers' roles to business, financial, sports, and sexual ones. Their roles were portrayed as secondary to mothers who were usually considered the experts. Father's became more social during the "pal" movement of the late 1950's and were no longer viewed as silent authoritarians as they had been in Victorian days.

By the 1960's, women's social awareness and consciousness raising groups changed roles further with the effect that individual growth and the pursuit of happiness in marriage was considered a popular idea. Divorce became an easy alternative if the partners were not "happy". Some wives left children with husbands when divorce occurred.
By 1970, men began to fight for their rights when fitness for childrearing was a question in custody issues. The trend for courts to occasionally grant fathers custody began about this time. Still, most people share traditional views of fathers as breadwinners and mothers as the more nurturing of the parents.

Confusion about what is expected of men and women in their particular roles has occurred as their roles continue to blur and change. Confusion arises because of conditioning for distinct and separate role expectations which men and women learned in their families of origin. When divorce occurs, fathers are even more confused about their new role expectations because role norms for divorced members of society have not been clearly established. The following section describes the ideal father role according to the literature review.

The Ideal Father Role

To understand what happens to fathers after divorce and how the divorce process affects their parenting and relationship with their children, it is pertinent to examine what is normally expected of the ideal father in an intact marriage and family. Parsons' characterization of the husband and father as the instrumental leader provides a useful way to organize much of the material in this section. This is a sociological view of the family and is the view most often cited in the literature (Billingsley, 1968; Lynn, 1974; Parson & Bales, 1955). The father role is divided
into two categories, the instrumental role and the expressive role. These categories are described in other parts of this chapter.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly how the father affects his family. Stevens and Mathews (1978) argued that there is no single universal definition of a good father. Rather, according to Benson (1968), fathers have a global impact on the family system rather than directly affecting the child. Stevens stated that to be an ideal parent

...implies being sensitive and responsive to the emotional and intellectual needs of others, taking pleasure in interacting with infants and children, setting examples of acceptable and desirable behavior, expressing warm and affectionate feelings, setting limits while being consistent and firm in making demands on children, and taking an active but non-directive role in allowing children freedom to explore the environment (Stevens & Mathews, 1978, p. 120).

While this is one definition of the ideal parent, it must be recognized that different traits and role functions may be required of fathers who attempt to meet ideal and expected standards of parenting behaviors. Even while the literature reveals a number of variables which may form a broad picture of the ideal parent, it is not an easy role for men or women to fill.
Conceptions of traditional masculinity and characteristics of the ideal parent make it difficult for men in today's society to accept and successfully fill the role of father. Several factors impinge on the success of fathers in their role: (1) overidealization of the image of father, (2) few modern-day successful father models, and (3) conflict between the ideal parent role and traditional masculine roles. Stevens and Mathews (1978) argued that more rigidly sex-typed individuals of either sex may have more difficulty adjusting successfully to their parental role.

Further complicating the issue of describing the ideal father role is the fact that the role is in a constant state of flux. Rosenthal and Keshet (1981) argued that roles may change with changing expectations of society or the age and gender of children. The father's ideal behavior will also be subject to change as our society expects different adult futures for children.

Men, in reaction to changing societal views, have had to change their roles and are now expected to take a more active part in nurturing and expressive behavior. Being more nurturant is a behavior change for which society has given fathers little preparation or encouragement and one which our society has seldom developed in the past.

As previously mentioned, most cultures differentiate between the roles of fathers and mothers, dividing tasks along dimensions which are described as expressive and instrumental. Males are primarily assigned the instrumental
role while women are primarily given the expressive role. The American culture is more liberal than others in its division of the functions expected of these two primary roles. It is the fact that there are differences between the roles which is pertinent, not the fact that men or women occupy them.

In reviewing the literature, it became apparent that some behaviors were commonly cited and often expected to be part of a father's role. Other behaviors were rarely cited yet play a part in the total picture of what fathers are expected to do. These behaviors, which were collected throughout the literature review may be viewed as those ideally performed by fathers. In the current research they have been labeled the "ideal father role".

The ideal father role includes the instrumental behaviors (role functions) of: (1) provider, (2) socializer, (3) disciplinarian, (4) moral developer, (5) cognitive developer, (6) model, (7) object of identification, and (8) protector.

The ideal father role also includes expressive roles of: (1) model of expressiveness, (2) crisis manager, (3) emotional supporter, and (4) erotic role model. The expressive roles will be described following the instrumental father role behaviors.

Instrumental Father Role

Parsons and Bales (1955) described the instrumental role of fathers as the representative role within the family
and society. It is the father's effort to relate the family to society. Lynn (1974) described instrumental role behaviors as those in which the father stressed delay of immediate gratification in the interest of greater future rewards and represents, for children, the rules and principles of society. In his function as instrumental leader, father gives pleasure to his children, i.e., providing them with material objects which are not basic necessities of life but which may make life more enjoyable. His instrumental leadership is focused on achievement of tasks.

Characteristics of the instrumental role include self confidence, mastery, consistency, and firm disciplinarian techniques. Billingsley (1968) further clarified the concept of the instrumental role, stating that it serves to maintain the basic physical and social integrity of the family. The instrumental role categories serve to meet the demands of the fathering role. Table 1 presents the function of the ideal instrumental father roles. The following behavioral categories emerge from the literature review.

**Provider**

In order to maintain the physical and social integrity of the family, the role most often cited for fathers was the occupational one (Benson, 1985). The instrumentalism of his role revolves around the procurement of basic resources (Benson, 1968; Lamb & Lamb, 1976; Maxwell, 1976; Parsons & Bales, 1955). Through his work the father provides food,
### TABLE 1

Functions of Ideal Instrumental Father Role

| **#1 PROVIDER** | 1. Works to provide money, food, shelter, clothing, health care, "nice things."  
2. Shares meals with family. |
| **#2 SOCIALIZER** | 1. Teaches children commitment to social order; that rules are inevitable.  
2. Cooperates with others in community.  
3. Controls deviance through rewarding valued behaviors and punishing nonconformity and undesirable behaviors.  
4. Symbolizes legitimate control and authority of society.  
5. Mediates between family and society; confronts outside world effectively.  
6. Facilitates development of child's conscience. |
| **#3 MORAL DEVELOPER** | 1. Practices self control, tolerates child's hostility to his authority.  
2. Labels behavior good and bad.  
3. Takes blame when due.  
4. Models "right" behavior.  
5. Demonstrates generosity and honesty.  
6. Teaches pro social aggression.  
7. Delays immediate gratification for later goals.  
8. Teaches resistance to temptation.  
| **#4 COGNITIVE DEVELOPER** | 1. Listens to expressed needs.  
2. Allows child to see two sides of argument.  
3. Attends school functions.  
5. Takes nonauthoritarian expressive approach toward child. |
| **#5 MODEL** | 1. Establishes trust during bonding.  
2. Responds contingently and appropriately to child's signals/needs.  
4. Determines how and when to discipline.  
5. Teaches "what fathers do".  
6. Behaves consistently with philosophy taught to child. |
| **#6 DISCIPLINARIAN** | 1. Establishes guidelines for behavior.  
2. Demonstrates consistency in enforcement of rules.  
3. Communicates expectations of performance specifically versus broadly.  
4. Allows child's input into family decisions. |
| **#7 OBJECT OF IDENTIFICATION** | 1. Establishes relationship based on love, respect, affection.  
2. Is present during triangulation process (mother-father-child) around 18 months of age.  
3. Is dominant member in family system.  
4. Develops positive habits, characteristics, for child to observe and imitate.  
5. Differentiates treatment of boys and girls. |
| **#8 PROTECTOR** | 1. Protects child from inner and outer world fears.  
2. Prohibits tendencies toward incestuous behaviors.  
3. Prevents overprotectiveness of mothers.  
4. Guards child from neighborhood bullies.  
5. Promotes wellness behaviors, guarding against mental illness and pathology through modeling behaviors consistent with physical and mental health.  
6. Teaches and explains use of modern gadgets to alleviate fears of operating them. |

**NOTE:** The theoretical constructs and their functions are those frequently mentioned in literature review. Together they may be considered as part of the ideal father role. Fathers may fail to perform some functions while performing adequately as fathers.
shelter, clothing, health care, and general economic security. When he is successful in his money-making endeavors he is further able to provide the family with material objects which are not basic needs but bring pleasure to the family. Parsons and Bales (1955) argued that "he gives gifts, dispenses money, and, due to his position of power, dispenses pardons." The importance of the primary role of the father as provider is emphasized by Parson and Bales who argued that there is simply something wrong with an American adult male who does not have a job.

To work at a job earning an income is expected of fathers. His work has always been the key social role linking him and his family with the larger community. The father's work role affects the status of the family among its peers, the material well-being of the family, and reflects the degree of social significance of his work. Ultimately, his work role affects the social class of the family, which, affects child-rearing attitudes, the child's achievement motivation, self-esteem, and a large number of other areas involving fathering role behaviors and father-child relationships (Marshall, 1977).

A unique fathering trait of the human male which is related to his role of provider is his sharing of food with his family, which is a fundamental facet of the breadwinner's role. Fathers sit down to dinner with their families. Sharing meals with his family is one way in which a father maintains family unity. He also maintains the unity of the
family through taking part in other activities, such as building collections, attending sports activities, or viewing movies. The importance of this is that those factors which begin to disrupt family unity are often those which lead to divorce. For example, fathers are divorced and do not have custody of their children, the opportunity to share meals with their children is limited to the times when children are able to visit.

Kohn (1977) related the provider role to education and occupation. A father's educational background often determines his occupational (work) role which is related to his income production and this, in turn, affects his ability to provide for his family. Ultimately, a man's occupation and education also may affect his class designation (with occupation and education prominent indexes of class in American society), values, and child-rearing ideas. Kohn argued that class relationships have to be interpreted with consideration for the conditions of life that continuously change with a person's present class position, specifically with occupational position.

Kohn argued that class relationships have to be interpreted with consideration for the conditions of life that continuously change with a person's present class position, specifically with education and occupational position.

Some of the activities which are necessary to run a home are directly concerned with income production so that a father usually has the tasks of keeping up his car,
maintaining his clothes for his job, entertaining colleagues, and keeping up with facts in literature concerned with his particular industry (Weiss, 1979).

Socializer

In the community, ideal fathers cooperate with other people in the routine tasks of survival. They learn the "rules of the game" and then socialize their children through their own behavior so that their children will know how to get along with others in the most beneficial and harmonious ways. They know that there are certain general rules which govern social interaction and they promote a desire in their children to live by and follow these rules. Fathers make children clearly aware that in order to survive in the world as it is (versus how one might wish it could be) one must hold a certain commitment to social order. The indoctrination of children to the fact that rules are inevitable and that they must learn to live by them is a universal family and father role function which serves as a way of survival. It also indirectly serves as the control of deviance, since and activity which results in breaking rules usually costs the individual, whereas the alternative non-rule-breaking activity most often holds rewards for the individual (Deutsch & Kraus, 1965). The ideal father symbolizes the legitimate control and authority of society. He also mediates between the family and society and confronts the outside world effectively as family spokesman. If someone outside the family calls on the telephone with a
complaint, fathers deal with the situation assertively, effectively and sometimes act big and bad. This gives them levrage so that they exercise "anticipatory social control." They are the chief representatives of the non-family world.

Moral Developer

Lynn (1974) stated that morality generally refers to a person's ability to make judgements against some articulated standard. Fathers teach standards, ideals, and values and are expected to model "right" behaviors which will hopefully make their children learn "right" behavior by example.

Through exercising their authority fathers establish the kinds of values and morals they hold. Done with love and understanding, children will more likely internalize fathers' values and morals. Fathers play an important role in facilitating the development of their children's conscience which then serves as a source of their own moral control. While a father's basic moral developer function is to facilitate a conscience in his children, the moral development of children involves more than simply making them aware of rules, standards, and values.

Another part of the moral developer role involves modeling behaviors which help to develop the child's conscience so that children develop a potential for guilt and feelings of remorse for having transgressed the learned standards and values. They learn how to control their actions so that they behave in socially accepted ways because it gives them positive feelings. Fathers also take the
blame, when it is due, for transgressing rules, so that children perceive them as behaving consistently with the modes of behavior with which they wish their offspring to follow.

Control of Aggression. Another part of the moral developer role fathers are expected to perform is teaching their children prosocial aggression through control of their own aggressive behavior. Fathers ideally refrain from using anti-social methods of aggression or vicarious aggression such as enjoying another person's discomfort. They also disapprove of mischief in the child's behavioral repertoire such as acting out in school.

Respect/Esteem in Morality. Fathers ideally teach children to resist temptation and instill values in them which demonstrate control over indirect physical aggression such as damage or destruction of the property of others. Lynn (1974) found that fathers, as instrumental leaders, furnished their children with objective external standards and hypothesized that aggression may be associated with a lack of esteem for a father. Fathers, ideally, command respect and esteem from their children so that their offspring do not feel disappointment in them, become frustrated, and react aggressively.

Labels Behavior. In their performance of moral developer, fathers label behavior as "good" or "bad". This means that the child has potential for developing a learned
internal system, a cognitive map, to which he/she can refer and which labels "good" or "bad" behaviors. The labels are those which fathers have placed on behaviors and which the children have learned, internalized, and refer to when ultimately making decisions on what course of action they ought to take. Ideally, fathers are around to label behaviors as they naturally occur.

**Generosity and Honesty.** In the process of performing the moral developer role fathers influence their children's morality through being generous and essentially honest people who develop interpersonal trust with their children. They encourage children to delay immediate gratification and to put off goals in favor of larger, later pay-offs.

**Temptation.** If fathers provide a role set in which they are basically honest and treat their offspring lovingly and rationally, they may increase the probability of children learning to resist temptation. MacKinnon (1938) did a study on resistance to temptation. His results indicated that children of fathers who used, or threatened to use physical punishment were more likely to cheat as college students than children of fathers who had gained compliance by telling children they would fall short of father's love. Children who were threatened with punishment failed to resist temptation.

**Morality and Father-child Relationship.** The success of fulfilling his moral developer role is related to fathers'
continued good relationship with their children. This is apparently a crucial factor in preventing amoral, or delinquent, behavior (Biller & Meredith, 1975; Lang, Papenfuhs, & Walters, 1975). Lynn (1974) and Nash (1954) found that a severe break in the relationships between fathers and their sons was a factor often reported by delinquent boys.

Another part of fathers' moral developer role is teaching children to value the importance of outside significant others even though fathers do not depend on outsiders'. Fathers counteract the effects of those mothers who are inclined to overindulge or overprotect their children. Even though father's roles generate a greater degree of criticism than mother's roles, fathers apparently value their role in moral development and willingly tolerate the hostility of children who may resent their authority. They put up with the hostility so that their children will become "good" citizens and, therefore, enjoy the rewards through their own well-being.

In summary, the literature review leads to the conclusion that fathers' influence is prominent in their children's moral development in a number of ways. These include the tendency to express or inhibit aggression and the ability to resist temptation. A father's basic moral function is to develop a conscience in his children. Through exercising his authority and through modeling behaviors which he has defined as good or bad to his children, children
develop an internalized map of what is right or wrong behavior. They also develop the potential for guilt and remorse when they transgress learned and internalized values and standards.

The success of fulfilling his moral developer role is dependent, in part, on the role set which the father establishes. Success is positively related to the way in which fathers teach their moral values and standards. Their love and understanding facilitates resistance to temptation to behave in delinquent, amoral ways. The control of his own aggression and modeling of generous and honest personality traits in a role set in which he establishes trust in the father-child relationship, are also factors which influence respect and esteem children hold for fathers. Having earned their respect, children are then motivated towards pleasing him through behaving in ways which are morally and socially acceptable.

Cognitive Developer

When fathers are parenting in an intact nuclear family they ideally foster the motivation and cognitive abilities of their children who see two different sides of an argument in observing parents interact. Presenting their view of an issue versus that of the mother's increases their children's analytic skills.

Fathers encourage motivation by listening to their children's expressed needs, and they develop an ability to sense their children's needs so that they may recognize what
their children require without its expression.

Ideal fathers may contribute to the development of the cognitive abilities of their children through attending school conferences and activities such as special Christmas events. They help their children with their homework, developing the interests of their children by reinforcing them not only for developing interests, but also for finishing tasks. For example, activities such as science fair projects allow fathers to help develop cognitive abilities while also providing an opportunity to work intimately with children on a long-term goal.

Acceptance of Friends/Mastering Tasks. Being accepting of his children's friends, training his children to master tasks and problems independently, setting standards of excellence, and rewarding children for achievements are also essential ways in which fathers foster high achievement and the development of intellectual capacity (Lynn, 1974).

Intellectual Activities. Fathers serve as models for achievement to their children. Reading books, doing intellectual activities, and working in an academic capacity, such as teaching, influenced their children to achieve. The father's setting standards seemed to be of greater importance in the child's level of aspiration and achievement than did his actually being involved in academic activity.

Nonauthoritarian Approach. Lynn (1974) found that if a father takes a nonauthoritarian approach with his children,
cognitive development and achievement are enhanced. Other factors which Lynn found to facilitate cognitive development were: (1) providing children with opportunities to study, (2) rationale for doing so, and (3) providing materials with which to study. These factors were conducive to cognitive development without actually monitoring or directing children in specific tasks.

Creativity. One aspect of cognitive development is creativity. How does a father influence the creativity of a child? His personality traits and educational accomplishments have an effect on his child's creativity. Lynn (1974) found that fathers of highly creative children were described as being persons who were expressive, noncontrolling, and well-educated, often being in a professional or managerial occupation. Creative college level children described their fathers as having personality traits which included being moderately affectionate, non-rejecting, and highly encouraging of intellectual independence. The role set established by parents may foster creativity (Mellecker & Wells, 1976). They found that parents who disagreed about domestic values and who experienced more role tension had children who scored higher on tests of creativity. Lynn (1974) found that homes of creative children tended to provide a role set which included more cultural activities including hobbies of a literary nature and availability of musical instruments.
Model

The role of father as a model for his children was consistently mentioned throughout the literature (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1976; Stoller, 1978). Through performance of their modeling role fathers ideally modeled such behaviors as how and when to discipline, how fathers play and work, and what they valued. They modeled their unique fatherly philosophy of life. In order for fathers to serve as appropriate models, it is essential that they accept their sexual roles and those of others. Ginott (1965) argued that although Americans desire sexual equality, we cannot forget that some biological functions are not capable of change and have both sociological and psychological consequences.

Biological Contribution. The reproductive role of the father was consistently mentioned by authors in the literature review (Ginott, 1965; Hoffman, 1978; Lynn, 1974; Vaughn & Brazelton, 1976). The function of fathers is not limited to their ability to produce sperm but requires many other fathering behaviors. All societies expected more than impregnation by fathers and perceived their biological contribution as beginning and ending before the birth of the child. All other fathering activities were considered as socially determined.

Through establishing their trust during bonding, fathers expedite the explosion of the myth that fathers are only a biological necessity. When in the early evolution of the family mothers had to nurse the newborn, they formed that
bond out of gratification they received from nursing. However fathers had no biological basis for bonding. They may have had to protect mothers and infants from harm and therefore remained with the family. Their needs for sexual gratification also kept them within the boundaries of the family (Lynn, 1974; Parke & Swain, 1976).

**Bonding.** Serving as a model requires a bond of affection between fathers and their children. Ideally, the affectionate bond is established during infancy (Parke & Swain, 1976). When fathers take part in early child care, feeding, bathing, changing diapers, and providing care during the night, these behaviors establish the father as someone who is there, trusted, and dependable. By taking an active nurturing role some of the natural bonds between mothers and children are transformed to fathers, especially when they see children at vulnerable and needful times.

Fathers insure that bonding occurs to a greater degree by spending time alone with their children. Because fathers have been conditioned by society to believe that mothers are the better child-care givers, the opportunity to be alone with their children increases the chance that they will not defer to their wife's judgement as a superior in the performance of the role of establishing themselves as models through the process of bonding. Bonding then serves as a background for modeling. (Erikson, 1963; Parke & Swain, 1976; Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981). The idea that fathers are not as responsive to infant needs was challenged by some authors
(Stevens & Mathews, 1978). They found that not only were fathers as responsive as mothers but, often, children preferred them over mothers.

Establishing Trust

The importance of a father's role in the process of bonding which encourages children to perceive fathers as models was described as the first stage of child development in which the child learns basic trust or mistrust (Erikson, 1963; Feldman, 1973, 1975; Shaffer & Emerson, 1964). If fathers are there and consistent in meeting the child's needs, the child will be confident, learning to trust the father, and this encourages the child to perceive him as someone to model.

It was the quality of the interaction between parents and children which seemed to be the most important in forming bonding attachments.

Specifically, parents who respond contingently and appropriately to the infant's signals or initiatives and who initiate interaction that is appropriate to the baby's current state, needs, and abilities are most likely to facilitate the development of secure parent-infant attachments. (Stevens & Mathews, 1978, p. 101.)

Fathers' Expressiveness. The traditional view of fathers is more apt to change as fathers share the responsibility of the child care-taking roles with their
newborns. They will be recognized as playing important and continuing roles in the development of their children. Tasch (1952) found that fathers considered themselves as active participants in a child's daily care and considered goodcompanionship with their children to be a major source of satisfaction. Men have begun to realize the negative implications of a self-imposed stereotype of a money-making machine lacking knowledge about their babies, other than that needed to create them.

Ideally, fathers are in a complementary role position to mothers and take pride in contributing their own ways of being human. One of their concerns when they are divorced and do not have custody is precisely that their children will not learn a man's (his) way of doing things. They model "what fathers do." Vaughn and Brazelton (1976) found that children needed to observe and imitate positive characteristics in the context of an ongoing father-child relationship. Fathers also model male expressiveness so that their children learned how males tell jokes, make small talk, turn light conversation into serious talk, and how males express love and affection towards women. Stoller (1978) indicated that children learned attitudes of male-female relationships through observation of their parents behavior.

**Self-Acceptance.** The importance of father's self-acceptance is tied to modeling and the quality of his relationship with his children. Prescribing certain rules and behaviors, he must be willing to live in a way which is
consistent with what he believes in. If his behavior is not consistent with what he prescribes for his children, he must be willing to face the likelihood that his children, with age and their ability to judge behavior independently, will discover that he is simply putting up a facade rather than being what he has asked them to be. Simply put, children, for the most part, do as their fathers do, not as they say. When they find that father has been hypocritical, the child-parent relationship is affected in a severe and negative manner. Erikson states:

One of the deepest conflicts in life is the hate for a parent who served as a model and executor of the superego, but who (in some form) was found trying to get away with the very transgressions which the child can no longer tolerate in himself (Erikson, 1963, p. 257).

Availability, Sensitivity, Responsiveness. The basic trust and respect of the child for the parent, and the parent for the child, is the sine qua non of a healthy relationship between the father and his offspring. In addition to self-acceptance, the probability that he will be the best model for them is further facilitated, when he provides a role set in which he is available, sensitive, and responsive to the children (Keshet, 1977; Vaughn & Brazelton, 1976). Fathers pass on their attitudes about ethnic groups, political views, and their views of women, in regard to how they respect and accept their roles.
Establishing Meaningful Atmosphere. It is, in these ways, that fathers, in the process of modeling, establish an atmosphere within the family system that there is meaning and significance in life, and that life is worth living. Kagan (1978) supported this view, noting that those fathers whose children had pathological problems were less warm, supporting, or expressive in their intra-familial relationships, did not orient towards personal growth and independence, and were not involved in extra-familial activities as were fathers whose children had normal profiles.

Marital Accommodation. As models, fathers also pass on their formulas for marital accommodation (Benson, 1968; Maxwell, 1976; Vaughn & Brazelton, 1976). Their children thus have an opportunity to view first-hand how males and females relate in their relationships. In demonstrating their appreciation of the female role through performing their roles with kindness and expressiveness, fathers teach their children how to love in an intimate way. The value of this is that having a loving, intimate relationship with another person promotes the mental and emotional well-being of fathers while it increases the chances of the children's opportunity to live their lives in the same rewarding life style. For fathers who want children to be happy and content with their lives, good mental health is the sine qua non of the accomplishment of that goal.
Cultural Demands. One author held a different view concerning the importance of parents as the exclusive influence on children's optimal adjustment. He did not perceive a father's modeling as a way in which children's mental well-being could be negatively or positively affected. He argued that "children do not require any specific actions from adults in order to develop optimally" (Kagan, 1976, p. 165). Further, he stated that no parental behaviors can be counted on to fill the psychological needs of children; what needs to be learned about children's needs are what kinds of community demands will be made on them. One such demand in American culture and many others is that young adults are required to be heterosexually successful i.e., to be loved and able to love and take pleasure from their sexual experience.

Personal Style. Other ways in which fathers model for their children are through transmitting their personal style to their offspring. These include health habits, such as getting enough sleep and exercise, avoiding abuse of alcohol and other drugs, maintaining sound eating habits, and developing a network of friends for mutual support.

Novelty Stimulus. Ideal fathers serve as a novelty model to their children augmenting the routine of the mother. Fathers considered performance of their care-taking and companionship roles with their children very highly. They valued the time they could spend with their children and used
it in unique ways compared to mothers.

Active play was more characteristic of fathers roles than of mothers. Fathers provided infants with physically active, idiosyncratic types of play which were unpredictable, and they held their children during this interaction while mothers held the children during care-taking activities. Peterson (1976) reported that infants found fathers intrinsically more interesting since fathers generally spent less time with them. Stevens and Mathews (1978) explained that these brief interactions could then be more psychologically potent compared to more extended interactions with mothers. In research on infants as young as eight months of age, children preferred the affiliative interaction of fathers over that of playing with their mothers (Stevens & Mathews, 1978; Tasch, 1952).

Benson (1968) and Peterson (1976) reported that one way in which fathers serve as novelty stimulus models to their children is that, while involved in interactions with their children, fathers sometimes act as mischievous children themselves. Fathers may allow children to break rules, allowing them to get by with what they all know they ought not do. Fathers act as if they do not know they are doing this. This pretense often aggravates mothers, but it is in this way that fathers teach children to question the validity of rules.

Another important novelty role fathers are expected to perform is that of encouraging the child's independence.
They do this through prodding the child away from mother, diminishing their close-knit relationship, and serving as an impetus for the child's individualization and autonomy. They prepare children to leave mother's "womb", forming a bridge toward a larger environment. They represent a source of stimulation outside the infant-mother dyad. This is a unique father-child interaction.

Peterson (1976) and Stevens and Mathews (1978) found that it is not only that fathers provide novelty experiences with their children as second parents, but that they do this as equal parents rather that as subordinates to mothers. It is the man's job to make his own domestic contribution of his own individualistic view of life while complementing his wife in terms of the unique qualities of the couple. By meeting some of the mother's needs, fathers also indirectly contribute to the quality of relationships between mothers and children. Assessing it positively, the mother's capacity to perform her care-taking and expressive roles are enhanced.

Disciplinarian

Many authors agreed that acting as disciplinarian to his children is one of the father's primary role responsibilities. The values, standards, and labeling of good and bad behavior which he has communicated in his roles as socializer, moral developer, and societal representative are enforced in his role as disciplinarian. The disciplinarian function is primarily a way of gaining children's compliance and cooperation through punishment and
reward.

One way in which fathers contribute to their children's mental and emotional well-being is through establishing guidelines for behavior as part of their disciplinarian role. They are expected to be consistent in enforcing the rules they establish so that their children know what is expected of them and exactly what constitutes an infraction of rules or breach of discipline. When making rules for children to live by, fathers are expected to take into consideration what the children's strengths and capabilities are so that rules are challenging but not too difficult for them to understand and follow. It is important, therefore, that fathers spend enough time with their children so that they are able to make reasonable judgements about the child's ability to do what is asked.

Marshall (1977) noted that how fathers communicated with their children in regard to their behavior and discipline was important in successfully performing their role as disciplinarian. Ideally, fathers are specific about what they mean when they tell children what kinds of behaviors are expected. Fathers ought to avoid giving vague orders which are open to various interpretations since this may lead to arguments between parents and children, possibly undermining their relationship. Communication is not a one-way "command" by parents. Fathers are receptive to children's views of the rules and also encourage their children to express themselves in family plans, including the
questioning of parental decisions. This encourages children to behave out of respect and understanding, rather than fear. As part of the disciplinarian role, fathers are expected to understand that children at times resent the authority and power fathers hold. They are expected to absorb the hostility generated by their disciplinarian role.

The method of punishment used by fathers affects: (1) whether or not they will successfully fill their role as disciplinarians, (2) whether or not they will gain compliance of children in following rules already communicated to them in the fathers performance of their roles of moral developer and socializer, and (3) the children's self esteem. Hamilton (1977) found that children whose fathers were relatively strict, enforcing rules more consistently, whose punishment was not corporal but who used restraint, denial, or isolation, who favored reward for successes, instead of giving more to punishment for failures, and who allowed their children to make some of the family decisions, had higher levels of self-esteem. These fathers used reasoning with their children rather than force and autocratic means of obtaining their children's compliance and cooperation.

Physical Restraint. Fathers sometimes play a very coercive role in disciplining their children. When a child is too big for a mother to handle, Benson (1968) stated that the father's role includes physically restraining and even terrorizing the child at times. This is another part of his expected role as disciplinarian.
Object of Identification

Biller (1976), Ginott (1965), Peterson (1976) and Stevens and Mathews (1978) reported that the quality of the parent-child relationship which is established during infancy and bonding also plays an important part in the process of identification. Appropriate sex role identification is facilitated when relationships between parents and children are based on a bonding relationship founded on love, respect, and affection. These qualities in the role set were more important than masculinity, punitiveness, and limit setting in the development of appropriate sex role identification. When both parents are available as role models who set limits, are involved in children's lives, and are competent and affectionate, children are likely to have generally adequate psychologic functioning and are less likely to suffer from developmental deficits or psychopathology, such as problems of identification.

Most studies associated the presence or absence of fathers with their availability as an identification figure. In identification, for example, a son is said to identify with his father, to emulate his behavior, and to internalize, or introject. He makes part of himself his father's moral values which form the basis of his suprego. "The parental prescriptions and proscriptions that formerly came to him as 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' now speak to him in his own voice saying 'I must' and 'I must not'" (Stone & Church, 1973, p. 177).
Identification is related to what one can say about him/herself. It is the means by which one situates himself in social relations and answers the questions, "Who am I?" and "Who are you?" Identification is the symbolic way in which one or more human beings are identified. For example, the position of musician identifies a person as one of a group of individuals who play a musical instrument. Identification is also a process of self-awareness and personal labeling. Identification is primarily about one's self, whereas in modeling, the other, who is to be imitated, is the primary focus with whom the role taking person can identify (Biddle, 1979). Modeling/imitation is how you act or role play in the characteristic ways of another person.

Gender Identification. Ideally, fathers serve to foster appropriate gender identification in a number of ways. Abelin (1978) reported that a crucial age for this to occur seemed to be when children were about eighteen months old. At that time, the father's role is that he is one part of a triangle in the early triangulation process. In both boys and girls, sexual core identification must result from an identification in the mother-father-child triangle where children relate sometimes to mother and sometimes to father. Children identify with the rival father's wish for mother, and a symbolic mental image of self develops. Fathers also have a role in breaking the symbiotic relationship between child and mother. The father's role in triangulation is important in the shift of the child's object relations from...
Dominance of Father Role in Identification. Abelin (1978) also states that a dominant father role helps children in forming appropriate identification. This was seldom possible if the father was divorced and was the non-custodial parent. Maternal dominance prevented the child from perceiving the father as a model who was capable of actively loving and "possessing" mother. This interfered with early triangulation.

Any factors interfering with early triangulation in boys (around 18 months) interfere with masculine core gender identity, masculine interests, autonomy, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and certain cognitive abilities, and the boy is left with an implicitly feminine core identification with the active mother and a feminine cognitive profile (Abelin, 1978, p. 149). It was not enough to have a father substitute at this time because there was not enough continuity available for normal triangulation to occur. The importance of the father's presence, in order to prevent a prolonged symbiotic relationship with mothers, was that boys and girls later had problems in sexual identification. With boys described as "markedly feminine" and girls described as "markedly masculine" mothers had persisted in prolonged symbiosis with the boys and had too little a period of symbiosis with girls. These mothers also held dominant positions in the family while fathers were not generally available as objects of
identification. Fathers had been almost entirely absent from the home and were passive and distant men (Abelin, 1978; Stoller, 1978).

Father Availability and Identification. The need for children to be able to observe and imitate their father's positive characteristics in an ongoing relationship also makes it pertinent for fathers to be available so that they can teach their offspring to fit sex role expectations. They do this by shaping their children's behavior, reinforcing boys for masculine behavior and girls for feminine behavior, and punishing inappropriate sex role responses. (Hamilton, 1977; Lynn, 1974; Stevens & Mathews, 1978; Vaughn & Brazelton, 1976). When fathers were consistently competent, in authority, and respected by others, their children were more likely to identify with them.

Sex Role Learning. Fathers, more than mothers, differentiate to a greater degree between their children according to their sex, treating daughters more gently, and sons more aggressively, and setting clear boundaries for what girls and boys do. Fathers seem to be more concerned than mothers in regard to their children's sex role development and its appropriate expression. They rewarded and punished their children for appropriate or inappropriate role responses. This concern, coupled with their differential response to sons and daughters, had the greatest impact on sex role learning. Clearly distinguishable boundaries helped
to facilitate children's identification (Hamilton, 1977; Hoffman, 1978). Recent research studies indicate that a trend may be developing in which fathers, in response to changing social norms, are beginning to respond to boys and girls with less differentiation (Hanson, 1985).

In summary, fathers have an important role in facilitating identification in their children. Ideally they foster children's identification through being in an ongoing relationship based on love, warmth, and respect in which they are involved and active. Fathers who model positive characteristics, i.e., competence, are more likely to be perceived as objects of identification by their children.

**Protector**

As protector, fathers are available to children to protect them from their inner and outer world fears (Ginott, 1965; Lamb & Lamb, 1976; Lynn, 1974).

**Fears.** Fathers need to be present in order to help their children work out their fears. Three main fears require the father's strength and presence. First, fathers help children survive the hazards of modern gadgets in the home, such as learning to use electrical appliances without injuring themselves. Second, they protect children from outer world fears, such as helping them when they are threatened by neighborhood bullies, or when younger, helping them learn how to cross a street safely. The third fear fathers are expected to help with is tied to the
separation/individuation process. Children need to be protected by fathers when mothers attempt to overprotect them. Fathers must, by their sheer presence and attitude of silent strength, make children feel that father is in command of situations which rise to frustrate and frighten children. Fathers convey a reassuring message that they will not allow their children to carry out fearful wishes and fantasies concerning parents and siblings. These fantasies are often angry ones in which children get rid of their rivals. Father's role is to help the children know that their terrible thoughts are not the same as reality. They are sympathetic in their perception of the children's fear, frustration, and fury.

Incestuous Wishes/Fantasies. Another protective role which the father ideally performs in the family is protecting children from acting on incestuous wishes and destructive fantasies. One way in which a father protects his son is through his incorporation of the father's prohibition against incest. In this way, the child is protected against a renewal of the Oedipal conflict (Lynn, 1974). Fathers do not allow their children to abuse their mothers physically or verbally, and make it clear that the parents' bedroom is off-limits. That is, children cannot have free access to the parents' bedroom at any time of the day or night. Fathers are aware that a seductive parent who undresses in front of children, a mother who continues to bathe her son beyond school age, or parents who allow older children to sleep in
the same bed or indulge in mutual excessive fondling, are stimulating the sexual fantasies of children (Ginott, 1965).

**Overprotective Mothers.** Through defending children against overprotective mothers, fathers help their children to gain independence. While mothers love children unconditionally and may be inclined to "baby" them far beyond infancy, fathers provide a love that shelters children but also frees them. Allowing them this freedom to explore and grow also promotes their readiness to confront the world.

Ginott (1965) made this clear, stating: "While mother's love conveys to the infant that he is lovable, father's confidence tells the child that he is competent" (p. 203). Ideally, it is a father's role to allow children to experiment with independence. He performs this role through his willingness to witness and encourage children's new ventures to grow up without undue guilt. Because fathers, generally, have a less inhibited upbringing, they are better able to perform this role than mothers.

**Mental Illness/Pathology.** Many authors agreed that fathers, in their role of protector, are expected to guard their children from mental illness and pathology (Benson, 1968; Gould, 1978; Kagan, 1976; Lamb, 1978; Marshall, 1977; Maxwell, 1976). Fathers, apparently more than mothers, teach children the value of friendships with significant other people in the community. In a recent wellness program, "Friends Can Be Good Medicine," sponsored by the National
Mental Health Institute (1981), the value of friendships was the main idea of a nationwide effort to promote mental health. Fifty percent of the health problems of individuals were found to be related to a lack of friendship and its support systems.

Crises. Some of the father's role as protector is to avoid crises in the family. Part of this can be accomplished when fathers plan ahead. They may have emergency funds put aside which include those for their offsprings' educational needs, insurance coverage for unexpected loss of wages, medical benefits, wills, and budgeting in preparation for their old age. By taking care of these role responsibilities, they prevent crises from becoming unmanageable. Preparing for such crises, fathers are able to maintain their image of strength and their children have a general feeling of security and protection. Parsons and Bales (1955) indicated that when a crisis did occur, it was father who modeled adaptive behaviors. By modeling control and remaining calm when crisis occurred, his children felt safe in the face of danger. His offspring felt safe because children check cues of parents, defining the seriousness of situations through this process. If fathers acted as if they were unable to control a situation, children felt threatened. When fathers are no longer a part of the nuclear family, the possibility of fulfilling their role of protector may be virtually impossible (Ginott, 1965; Lynn, 1974).

In summary, ideally fathers are available to act as
protectors for their children. Fathers' presence is necessary in order to help their children work out fears. Three main fears require his strength and presence, i.e., fears of modern gadgets in the home, outer-world fears such as neighborhood bullies, attempts by some mothers to overprotect their children. Other fears from which fathers protect children are fearful wishes, fantasies, and thoughts. Fathers also protect children from mental illness and pathology through encouraging their children to value friendships in the community and by avoiding crises in the family. They do this through the provision of protection through planning for emergency situations. Fathers make children feel secure and protected by their display of control and adaptive behavior when crises occur.

The behaviors which fathers are expected to perform in the instrumental role have been described. The following behaviors are those which are expected of fathers in performance of their expressive roles. These were also extracted from the literature review and constitute another group of behaviors (role functions) which were, in this research, classified under "the ideal father role".

Expressive Father Roles

The role qualities associated with the expressive function of fathers are warmth, affection, and involvement (Benson, 1968; Berne, 1964; Stevens & Mathews, 1978). These qualities, discussed in relationship to various instrumental father functions, have been shown to affect the father's
ability to successfully make use of punishment and reward in relation to his offspring. The role of crisis management has been discussed in the instrumental section but also can work as an expressive function. Fathers, through their management of tension in the family, provide an expressive function. The expressive role focus is to keep the family running smoothly. A unique expressive quality was satisfaction with the immediate relationship between fathers and their children, which was negatively affected if the family was in a general state of crisis at most times.

Supportive expressive behaviors have their genesis in infancy and appear to have a life-long effect upon children's adaption to life-long situations (Benson, 1968; Erikson, 1963; Parsons, 1955). For example, from the time of infancy, the father's role has been shown to affect the child's ability to form trust and independence. These are qualities which are then used in forming intimate relationships and which enhance the ability to love during the person's adult life.

Past Expressive Role Expectations. In the past, a man was regarded as a good father if he had many children, particularly sons. The father's primary function according to this view was biological. Little attention was given to the expressive role of fathers. The literature supports the contention that fathers receive little attention for development of their expressive roles. This was obvious when reviewing material written on maternal deprivation, since its
thrust suggested that the only way children could suffer from parental deprivation was through being deprived of a mother.

More recently, paternal and maternal deprivation have been recognized as not necessarily equivalent (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1976; Rotundo, 1985). The contemporary expressive needs of fathers have become more pressing at the very time when mothers have become more independent. Part of this is a result of new styles of parenting which blurs the distinctions between fatherhood and motherhood (Rotundo, 1985). Table 2 follows and presents the expressive role functions of fathers.

**Expressiveness Model**

One way in which fathers perform their expressive role function is to fulfill their children's needs for contact comfort. The need for physical contact is filled by fathers who ideally hold their children, cuddle them, and kiss them, thereby demonstrating their love and affection. Eric Berne (1964) stressed the need for humans to experience contact comfort and labeled performance of this role function as "strokes". While he asserted that mothers were the child's first strokers, fathers may also provide strokes for children. More often this is in the form of providing for satisfaction of the child's recognition hunger. Harlow and Harlow's (1962) experiment with monkeys showed that children as well as animals exhibited a failure to thrive and developed abnormal behaviors without physical contact.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Functions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expressiveness Role</strong></td>
<td>1. Has satisfaction with immediate relationship between father and child.</td>
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<td>2. Gives child love and attention; hugs child, kisses child.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Demonstrates concern for child's welfare.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crisis Manager</strong></td>
<td>1. Keeps feelings of anxiety and insecurity in check within family unit.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Provides for child's needs for recognition.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Displays expressiveness in family.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Supporter</strong></td>
<td>1. Increases child's self esteem through spending time with family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Is sympathetic judge of child's problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Acts as child's confidant.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Applauds child's major/minor successes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Shows support for child's mother, i.e. respect, valuing her opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erotic Role Model</strong></td>
<td>1. Prevents assumption of parental role by children through being available to mother as love object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Assists children to become independent and form intimate relationships as adults through modeling a loving heterosexual relationship.</td>
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Other ways in which fathers are expected to perform their expressive function are through giving their children attention and demonstrating concern for children's welfare. For example, if the child complains about physical or emotional pain, a father will attend to the needs of the child and through his behavior will demonstrate that he cares about the child's well being.

**Crises Manager**

Benson (1968) reported that one way in which fathers keep feelings of anxiety and insecurity in check is through their role in management of family crises. In addition to those behaviors previously mentioned in the role of protector in handling crises, this role function may also contribute to feelings among family members that life is worthwhile. Fathers expressive needs must be recognized and they, in turn, need to display expressiveness in the family.

**Emotional Supporter**

Another expressive role which fathers perform is providing emotional support for children (Benson, 1968; Hock, E., McHenry, Hock, M., Triolo, & Stewart, 1980; Stevens & Mathews, 1978). Fathers show love and respect for their offspring in a way which is different from mothers. Whereas mother's love is unconditional, father's love is more apt to be contingent upon the performance of certain tasks and skills. In this way, fathers promote the individuation/separation process and the child has an
increased sense of self-esteem because he has successfully executed a task. Father's role is to be present, spending time with the family, organizing and reorganizing activities when organization breaks down within the family subsystem. Fathers ideally listen to their children when they have trouble with friends and are sympathetic judges. Doing so, they become additional attachment figures to their children other than mothers. This, obviously, strengthens the father-child relationship.

Fathers also provide emotional support by being available to comfort their children when problems arise, allowing them to realize that they too have experienced similar situations in life which were difficult and embarrassing. Fathers play the role of confidants, intimately discussing experiences with their children. A routine sense of attachment that we come to take for granted occurs.

Making personal sacrifices and suffering inconveniences to assure that each of their children's needs are met are common ways in which fathers demonstrate underlying expressive concerns and emotional support for their children. A father's role is to gradually assist children in meeting their needs of security and attachment through his awareness of his offspring's needs and the way in which he responds to them. The quality of interaction between parent and child is the single most important contribution to the development of attachment. Fathers gradually fill this need through recognition versus stimulation which the mother has first
provided. Fathers demonstrate their love and its basis in the child's accomplishments through applauding children's minor successes as well as their major triumphs.

**Father's Support of Mother.** A large number of authors agreed that an important expressive father role was their support of mothers (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1976; Stevens & Mathews, 1978). Ideally, fathers promoted mother's emotional security and stability, thereby facilitating her effectiveness in mothering. In conjunction with this role function, fathers counteracted some of the excesses of motherly love. They controlled the dependency of children on mothers through supporting her. This served to prevent husband-wife conflicts from being transformed into a kind of seduction of children by mothers who might be disappointed in their marital relationships.

Fathers ideally demonstrate respect of mothers, listen to their opinions and ideas, value their competencies, are considerate of their feelings, and do not allow children to abuse her either verbally or physically. They maintain the unity of the family, and present a picture of solidarity. Children tend to follow and respect the authority of fathers most when they operate within a set of guidelines that both he and his wife follow. In both divorced and intact families, effectiveness of father's performance in dealing with children was related to support from the spouse in childrearing and agreement with the spouse in disciplining the child (Benson, 1968; Biller, 1976; Ginott, 1965; Stevens
Erotic Role Model

Another expressive role which fathers perform is in serving as erotic role models for their children. Through his erotic relationship with the mother and his availability to her as a love object, fathers prevent the assumption of the parental role by children or its encouragement by the parent. The erotic relationship with his wife is a primary symbolic focus of their solidarity, and parents therefore present a united picture (Parsons & Bales, 1955).

Autonomy/Independence and Intimacy. Gould (1978) reported that one of our childhood assumptions is that we do not own our own bodies. This false assumption needs to be challenged in order for adult persons to be able to finally give in to the urge to have sexual intercourse. We act against authority and in favor of intimacy when we decide to take full title of our bodies and remove it from the diapering and feeding parents. Fathers play an important role, therefore, in preparing their children for intimacy. They do this by promoting emotional confidence in their children which is required before intimacy can be achieved, and they attend to the erotic needs of the mother, supporting her, so that they can enjoy sexual intimacy. Children know it and have little problem enjoying their own intimacy.

Intimacy Conditions. Preparing his children for intimacy is part of a father's erotic role performance.
(Gould, 1978). The modeling of intimate behavior with mothers was also tied to father's attitudes about discipline and the acceptance of ourselves as separate and unique individuals. Gould (1978) suggests that the probability that children will grow up to be free from "holding back" in their intimate relationships, is increased by a number of needs fathers ought to provide in rearing their offspring. These needs include the following fathering behaviors: (1) that fathers' provide for individuation/separation needs of the children, (2) that they demonstrate their love for mothers, and (3) that they discipline children in such a way as to allow them the right to question authority.

Childhood to Adult Consciousness. One can conclude that father's role in assisting his children to become independent and form intimate relationships is not only tied to the way he relates to mother but, ultimately, the way he performs his erotic role affects the way his children will be able to assume adult roles which includes sexually intimate and satisfying relationships.

Gould further reported that many early marriages are claims to independence or acts of defiance. The marriage partners feel they must have a partner to help them escape the influence of parents. When both partners marry for this reason, the marriage relationship is often doomed to bitterness and frustration. Instead of freedom and safety, the couple gets dependence with disappointment. The father's role in relationship to mother's role, and the reciprocal
ways in which they react to each other's roles, has far reaching implications to the complete cycle of life of his offspring, the way fathers and mothers react to one another reaches into the intimacy of their children's sex lives and their ability to satisfactorily achieve the transformation from childhood to adult consciousness.

Preparing Children for Adult Consciousness. Gould (1978) explains that adults sometimes manifest their childhood consciousness in forms of fear, anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy and inferiority while not understanding any valid reason for feeling this way. It is part of the fathers' erotic role, ideally, to support children, fostering independence and emotional security. They model a loving heterosexual relationship with their spouse so that their children will be best prepared to overcome childhood consciousness and achieve a state of adult consciousness. Without this preparation, the likelihood of disturbed marital relationships is increased. A cycle of learning may be passed on by fathers to their offspring (Gould, 1978).

In summary, expressive role qualities are associated with warmth, affection, and involvement. The focus of the expressive role is on keeping the family running smoothly through supportive behaviors. A unique quality of the expressive role is immediate satisfaction with the father-child relationship.

Supportive and expressive relationships have their
genesis in infancy and affect the lives of children into adulthood. Children learn appropriate expressive behaviors conducive to forming healthy and intimate relationships in their own adult lives by learning how to be expressive through observation of fathers who model expressive behaviors. Fathers insure children's chances of achieving fulfilling adult relationships through performance of their role with the expression of love and respect for family members, providing empathetic support in times of crises, spending time with the family, and making personal sacrifices to assure that their children's needs are met. When fathers fail to provide for the expressive needs of children, their children sometimes manifest these needs in adulthood in such forms as anxiety, depression and inferiority with little understanding of the reason for their feelings.

Process of Divorce

For purposes of this study, the process of family systems change described by Ahrons (1980) will be used. Ahrons' theory made clear, in a concise way, how family systems changed from nuclear to binuclear units and the implications of these changes. Generally, other authors agreed that there were certain steps that commonly occurred in the process of divorce which varied in intensity and order (Bohannan, 1970).
Role Change in Divorce

Continued Parent-Child Relationship. The process of divorce is a gradual one which finally results in family change and individual role changes. As the family transforms from a nuclear to binuclear unit, family members change due to gradually changing family rules under which the nuclear unit has been operating. The conceptualization of divorce as a process of family systems being changed does not necessarily mean that the parent-child relationship is over. It does mean that the crisis of relationship between the parents has resulted in divorce, an event upon which they had not planned.

Role Change/Stress in Divorce. A major source of stress for family members who undergo divorce is due to role changes which occur and adjustment to these changes. Stress is severe because no clear role expectations for divorced partners exist. They do not know what to expect or what others expect of them in their new roles. The crisis of the divorce, itself, is likely to be particularly stressful to the father since one of his role expectations as head of the family is to keep family problems from developing into major crises. He is also expected to solve problems in the event they do occur so in this respect he has failed. The more clarity spouses have concerning their marriage roles, the less threatening will be the crisis and stress of divorce.
Stress in Divorced Families. The family is described throughout the literature in terms conducive to creating more stress on the binuclear family members (Ahrons, 1980; Benson, 1968; Klemer 1970). Such terms as "broken home" and "ex-spouse" hold negative connotations and contribute to the highly stressful state which the family is in. Nuclear families who divorce contribute to their own stressful transitions when they label themselves as "deviant". Those who hold religious beliefs which prohibit divorce may also experience more stress. Normalization of divorce would likely reduce the stress of divorce. Family members would benefit from a clearly stated redefinition of the family members' roles and expectations.

Tasks in Process of Divorce

The way fathers' roles change and when the role changes begin are important factors to be considered to best understand the way fathers' relationships with their children are affected after divorce. Fathers do not experience role change suddenly when divorce occurs. Rather, such role change is experienced gradually before the final and legal separation occurs. The final legal divorce, which often results in fathers' loss of physical custody and which leads to his role change in parenting his absent children, is part of the divorce process.

Ahrons (1980) describes two systemic separation stages in the divorce process. Specifically, these two stages are: (1) systemic reorganization (part of fathers' role change
involves their attempt to establish independent relationships with their children) and (2) family redefinition (fathers attempt to establish new ways to continue effective parenting while single).

During the process of divorce, the way in which his role changes is through a process of five different transitions which Ahrons (1980) labels as follows (1) individual cognition; (2) family metacognition; (3) systemic separation; (4) systemic reorganization and (5) family redefinition. During these transitions certain tasks generally occur and must be accomplished before the family finally becomes a binuclear unit. Table 3 shows this process.

These tasks or experiences, which the family undergoes, encompass a complex interaction of overlapping experiences which gradually change the social role of the individuals. Bohannan (1970) has labeled these tasks as the "stations of divorce." They are: (1) emotional, (2) legal, (3) economic, (4) coparental, (5) community, and (6) psychic according to Bohannan, these six areas are those which all divorcing partners must complete. The individuals may experience these in different orders and with varied intensity.

**Individual Cognition**

**Recognition of a Problem.** During the first transition of the family, the spouses recognize a personal distress but most often deny it. They recognize that a problem exists but look for areas outside the personal relationship for its
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<th>Table 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Cognition</td>
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<td>Recognition of a problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blaming one another</td>
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<td>Arguments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempts to cope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inability to accept change or tolerate mate</td>
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<td>Emotional withdrawal</td>
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| Metacognition                                |
| Recognition problem exists in family system  |
| Potential solutions tried                    |
| Separation and reconciliations               |
| Attempts to recapture old rules/rituals      |
| Failure for solutions to achieve harmony     |

| Systemic separation                          |
| Reorganization of family                     |
| Sharing with extended family                 |
| Sharing with community                       |
| Dividing property                            |
| Legal divorce                                |

| Systemic reorganization                      |
| Clarification of new boundaries              |
| Continued interdependence of ex-mates        |
| Establishing independent relationships with children |

| Family redefinition                         |
| Defining new family to community            |
| Establishing new ways to continue effective parenting |
| Maintaining child centered relationships     |
| Redefining self-concepts; autonomy          |
cause since this is less threatening to them. For example, they may claim a need for a child, a bigger home, or more extra-marital interests. They believe that if these needs are fulfilled, it will "fix" the marriage. One spouse often manifests clinical depression at this time.

Blaming. As realization occurs that the problem with the marriage is based in their personal relationship, blaming occurs. Each spouse looks for fault in the other. When these are communicated, labeling of the culprit takes place. This leads to arguments and the partners no longer reinforce each other's self-esteem with love. Once the interpersonal relationship is labeled as the source of the marital problem, the couple is prompted to look for a solution.

Attempts to Cope. The roles of the partners and what they have defined as their own specific and learned ways of handling a problem enter into the family change process at this point. They may choose to delay divorce "until a less disruptive time," i.e., when the children are older. This is generally not an adequate reason to delay divorce since the disruption caused by marital unhappiness and resulting arguments is often more damaging to the children than the fact of divorce (Ahrons, 1980; Jellinik & Slovick, 1981; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977). Other coping devices commonly used are changing life styles or putting energy into projects outside the family.
Emotional Withdrawal. While keeping up a facade of a smoothly running family the partners have, in actuality, accomplished the first station in the process of divorce. They are attempting to resolve the emotional withdrawal of investment from the marriage relationship. The emotional withdrawal task usually occurs in one individual and may be a benefit. However, it is usually beneficial to only one partner while the other becomes a scapegoat.

Arguments. Bohannan (1970) argued that the events which lead to arguments and eventually to divorce are as varied as those which lead to marriage. In divorce, however, the partners concentrate on weak points, while in marriage they focused on positive traits of their partner's personality. Other family members begin to react to the new way the individual is filling his or her role and their vulnerability to stress begins at this time. How long the emotional divorce lasts and how much stress it causes is dependent on such factors as the type of coping behaviors used and the length of this stage. This first stage may result in only minor changes in role patterns and with family equilibrium relatively maintained. The approach taken in this stage affects the way in which parents accomplish necessary role changes in later stages.

Metacognition

Family System as Source of Problems. During the metacognition transition the family takes stock. Information is openly exchanged concerning the realization that the
marriage is the source of the problems and may fail because of them. During this period of transition, assimilation of the problem occurs, and potential solutions are tried. With internalization of these factors, the partners will often have feelings of ambivalence i.e., of love and hate, which happens because the couple holds emotional bonds even when the quality of their emotional lives has been poor. Provided the family has been able to cope well enough to survive this transition physical separation will occur at a later time.

Brown (cited in Ahrons, 1980) found that based on the mutuality of the decision to separate or divorce, the spouses who are leaving will be more likely to experience guilt while those left behind are more apt to have feelings of anger and depression. Since in most instances fathers leave, they most often experience guilt and, subsequently, enter their new parenting roles as single fathers with feelings of guilt.

Attempts to Recapture Old Rules; Rituals. This transition period is marked by family disequilibrium because while old roles have disappeared, new roles have not been developed. Attempting to bring the family back to a comfortable homeostatic level, family members try to recapture old rules and rituals only to find that they fail to provide unity or comfort. It takes more than all family members being present for a Thanksgiving dinner to undo the problems of the marriage when they have reached these proportions.
Separations and Reconciliations. In order to successfully accomplish the third transition period of the process of divorce with as little crisis as possible, the work of previous transitions must be accomplished. When partners prematurely separate (i.e., not having gone through the metacognition stages), more crises are likely to result. For example, the couple may engage in a long transition of separation and reconciliation and go through several periods of separating and reuniting. The couple may also experience feelings of guilt and ambivalence over the children's reactions.

In spite of having successfully gone through the first transition, families will encounter stress during attempts at reconciliation. Mothers who head households face a dilemma of trying to reorganize the family. They may choose to reorganize and fill roles enacted by the physically absent father or maintain his psychological presence in the family system by not reorganizing roles. If the mother decides to reassign roles, his return is met with resistance. If he is treated as psychologically present, the family will continue to be disorganized. There is no simple, painless solution to this dilemma.

Systemic Separation

Reorganizing the Family. During this transitional time the partners begin to reach out to their extended families, community, and friends as they begin to make decisions to divide what was shared during the marriage. The tasks of the
economic and legal divorce also begin at this time. An economic settlement must be made to divide the assets of the couple. The legal divorce establishes the right to remarry.

An additional source of role stress occurs at this time resulting from the adversarial system upon which the legal system operates. This usually results in escalation of the power struggle between the partners and adds to stress in the already disorganized family system.

Sharing with Family and Friends. Changes also occur surrounding the divorcee's experiences with friends and community at this time. Friends perceive divorced persons differently than when they were married. In part, this happens because the divorcee projects himself in a new way when he is no longer part of a couple. The change in friends and community is often experienced as one of disapproval (Bohannan, 1970).

Systemic Reorganization

Clarification of New Boundaries. The implications to the parent-child relationship become pronounced at this fourth level of transition. While stress occurred during earlier transitions due to the absence of rules and boundaries determining the family system, the clarification of boundaries now generates distress. In particular, the rules concerning how and when each parent will relate to the children is critical for the child's understanding of divorce and eventual stabilization of the parent-child relationship.
Continued Interdependence of Ex-mates. Successful reorganization of the family system requires that parents clarify their new roles, boundaries, and subsystems, and continue in some interdependence in order to successfully sustain each parent-child relationship. Problems with visitation, often brought about by bitter mothers, can hinder fathers' opportunity to maintain a continued relationship with his children. Yet, to successfully pass this transition, each parent must establish an independent relationship with his children. Again, lack of role models and absence of societal norms for a continued relationship between divorced parents add to the role strain and complications of this transition. The partners face psychological dissonance since exclusion of the "problem-maker" occurs at this time.

The clinical literature describes a healthy adjustment to divorce as being associated with the end of relationships between former spouses. Yet, as long as the couple has produced children, they will have to continue in their relationship even after divorce occurs. Caldwell (1976) argued that confusion exists about divorce and remarriage. The law denies the ties between one parent, usually the noncustodial father, and the child. The more the father is closed out of the system, the more dysfunction and stress the family system experiences. Fathers, who do not have custody of their children and who have little contact with them after the divorce, experience more depression, are more
dissatisfied with their relationship with their children, and experience more stress because of their role loss (Ahrons, 1980; Rosenthal & Keshet, 1981; Mendes, 1976a).

Reorganization of a nuclear family through divorce creates new households with single parents only when one parent no longer has contact with the family and no longer performs parental functions. Ahrons (1980) suggested that frequent creation of interrelated paternal and maternal households creates two nuclei which form one family system. She labeled this the binuclear family system.

Family Redefinition

Defining the New Family. With the conclusion of the reorganizational transition, family redefinition occurs. The importance of the quality of the continued relationship between the parents after divorce is stressed during this transition. Parents who are cooperative and mutually supportive will aid in reducing the crisis potential associated with the divorce. How the divorced family defines itself to friends, family, and community is critical to its struggles with identity, boundaries, and individuation. The redefinition of relationships within the family are dependent upon the relationship between the parents.

Establishing New Ways of Effective Parenting. The trend toward equality of men and women's roles in marriage, the increased number of women in the work force, and increased parental involvement with their offspring serve to
clarify the issue of whether the parents can continue to share parenting roles when they decide to divorce. The primary question becomes how parents can continue to be effective parents when they are no longer husband and wife.

Maintaining Child-Centered Relationships. The redefinition of the family system from nuclear to binuclear allows both parents to continue parental roles after divorce. The parents' ability to maintain a child-centered relationship at this transition time is a major variable in the redefinitional process. Some parents continue to be friends while, for most, the relationship is less intimate and more instrumental.

Ahrons (1980) clearly supported Lynn's (1974) findings that divorce affects all members of the family. The tendency is to focus on one family member when examining the effects of divorce. That focus is seldom on the father, though his role has consistently been shown to be both unique and important to the nuclear family, the lives of his children, and his former spouse. Fathers may be happy to be divorced from their children's mother while hating to be separated from their children. There is a need for fathers to continue the parental role as well as to understand the dimensions of the role subsequent to divorce (Greif, 1977; LeMasters, 1974).

Redefining Self Concepts. During the last transition one of the most difficult aspects of divorce must occur.
This is the "psychic" divorce wherein each partner must turn himself or herself into an autonomous social individual. The ability to see themselves as individuals versus part of a couple is hindered if the couple has been married for a long period of time or if they entered marriage from a position of dependency on their parents. It is especially difficult for fathers without custody of their offspring to adjust to being autonomous persons while continuing in their parenting role. For example, our culture generally neither encourages fathers to learn care-taking skills required of the parenting role or to learn skills in running a household. However, it is not only the lack of these skills which presents problems for these fathers when the final, legal divorce has occurred. The section following the summary will review some categories which impact on the divorced father's relationship to his absent children at that transition in his role as father.

In summary, specific steps commonly occur in the process of divorce. These steps gradually change family rules and with the rule changes, the nuclear family changes from a nuclear to a binuclear unit. This effects individuals, their roles, and the ways in which they adjust to their new roles.

The steps in the process of divorce which all families go through are: (1) individual cognition, (2) family meta-cognition, (3) systemic separation, (4) systemic reorganization and (5) family redefinition. These steps include the tasks of divorce and are labeled "stations of
divorce". They include: (1) emotional, (2) legal, (3) economic, (4) coparental, (5) community and (6) psychic tasks. The process of divorce is a gradual one which finally results in family change. In order to best understand the way fathers' relationships are affected when divorce has occurred, one must examine the ways in which their roles gradually change and the impact this has on their future parenting as divorced fathers.

**Impact of Divorce on Father's Role**

**Background Factors**

Most authors agreed that the background experiences of men carry over into their role as father and, later, if it occurs, into his adjustment to the role of divorced father (Daniel, 1977; Domenic, 1980; Keshet, 1977; Klemer, 1970; Levinson, 1978). If a man had never been on his own before marriage, the move from his nuclear family and the task of finding new housing was stressful to him when divorce took place. Finding a new place to live was a significant factor in concretizing the marital separation. A review of the literature makes it apparent that even though marital partners today expect, in theory, to be sharing the instrumental and expressive roles, in actuality they may still be bound to a great extent to traditional role expectations.

**Autonomy/Crisis.** If his family of origin was limited so that he lacked autonomy or if he had an unresolved early
life crisis, these factors may come back to burden him. This situation can make his current ability to adjust to the changing role of divorced parent more difficult than if he had some experience in making independent decisions while living alone. When divorce occurs, men often become aware of their dependency needs, realizing that even though they had denied it in the past, they relied upon their wives to provide them with physical comforts, food, and affectional needs (Dryfus, 1979). Extrapolating from Gould's discussion, one can conclude that to some degree these fathers did not adequately achieve the individuation/separation process.

**Concepts of Role Performance.** The way a man is brought up to understand the father's role and the value he holds for family life affects his way of handling marriage relationships and parenting. Much of this is behavior learned through observation of parent modeling. Within the marriage process partners often try to re-enact certain relational systems or situations which they obtained in their earlier family groups (Klemer, 1970). Fathers often stay in a marriage that is personally very unrewarding, sacrificing their own feelings because of a sense of family and attachment to their children. In men who viewed themselves as family men, this role perception was central to their self image (Keshet, 1977; Levinson, 1978).

**Socialization and Educational Factors**

A man's background is not the only factor which affects
his future parenting role and his adjustment to it when he is divorced. Cultural and societal factors also have an impact on his ability to make the role transition without role strain and successfully be a parent, even though he is divorced from his children's mother. The lack of socialization and education of men in our culture in terms of making a home and caring for children is a factor that has an impact on fathers' role change and in turn, on their relationships to their offspring after divorce (Daniel, 1977; Gasser, 1976; Keshet, 1977; Wallerstein, 1979).

The problem of finding new living quarters is complicated by the fact that fathers are under the emotional stress of losing their home and objects within it. If they had invested a great amount of effort in building or maintaining the home, they felt the loss of it to a great degree.

Role Skills. Men generally do not have the domestic skills which women have generally been reinforced to learn. They are unable to change a house to a "home," with all the creature comforts (Benson, 1976; Bernstein, 1977; Dryfus, 1979; Seagull & Seagull, 1977). They seldom have skills in planning meals, cooking, ironing, mending, or caring for children. Society has "guaranteed" the lack of these skills by assigning men the breadwinner's role rather than that of caring for children. Men seldom are aware of their need to supply themselves with a home, and only after the comforts of the nuclear family are no longer available to them do they
recognize their need for care (Benson, 1968; Dryfus, 1979).

Men generally participated in child care activities while living with their wives yet, at least, thirty percent of fathers had no responsibility for bathing, feeding, or dressing children in intact homes. An activity most often performed by fathers in relation to helping in the home was grocery shopping (Gasser & Taylor, 1976).

Subordination of Father's Parenting Role. Fathers have taken a back seat to mothers by being excluded from delivery rooms, the experience of labor in the birth process, and childbirth itself. They seldom diaper, wipe up vomit, insert rectal thermometers, or perform other tasks of infant and child-care role for the newborn or toddler. The American culture teaches that it is the mother who knows what to do. Seagull and Seagull (1977) argued that not only did father believe he was the unimportant parent, subordinate in this part of his role function, but the behaviors which result from this belief tended to lead to poor bonding. Until divorce, the house and care of children was often seen as the wife's domain. Daley (1979) found that fathers felt responsible, but not in charge, in the house and so asked their wives for instructions regarding what they could do to help.

Educational Neglect of Father's Role. The way men are socialized so that they later experience problems in role adjustment and thus more problems in their parenting
relationships when they are divorced is evident in educational practices (Benson, 1968; Bernstein, 1977; Victor & Winkler, 1977). Fathers have been neglected in terms of gaining knowledge about the developmental stages of childhood, and society does not reinforce those who have shown an interest in these areas. Benson stated that "boys are unadvised about their approaching parental duties except when they are facetiously counseled to avoid them" (Benson, 1968, p. 5). Victor and Winkler (1977) concur, adding that "American men are shortchanged and disadvantaged in their preparation when it comes to being encouraged to learn their parental roles" (p. 70).

The enormity of the problem of inadequate parenting role education for boys has some evidence in the fact that one attorney provided a check list highlighting areas to be investigated by fathers seeking custody or facing a custody contest. He suggested that fathers role play with the attorney so that they would be prepared for trial. He provided fathers with hypothetical questions concerning minor and major crises such as bedwetting, runaways, misuse of drugs, or truancy. He attempted to educate them so that they could better convince courts that they were capable of serving as proper role models (Bernstein, 1977).

Class and Intimacy. Some authors examined levels of intimacy between divorced fathers and their children. They found that as socioeconomic class and education increased, father-child intimacy decreased. Fathers in lower
socioeconomic classes also were less likely to have a close relationship with their children since they perceived intimacy with children as the mother's role. In spite of these findings, the gradual shift toward societal acceptance of greater nurturance between fathers and children was generally recognized by most authors. Greater nurturance was most likely to occur among middle and upper class men (Daniel, 1977; Kramer & Prall, 1978; Parke, Ross & Swain, 1976).

Loss. As mentioned earlier, the importance of fathers forming a bonding relationship with their children is of great concern not only in infancy, but continuing throughout the life of the child. Even without reinforcement for establishing bonds, some fathers still manage to form an early bond with their children. Fathers found that when divorce occurred, the courts usually severed those bonds abruptly. They experienced this loss at the same time they had lost their home, their wife, and inanimate objects to which they had become attached and which were a part of their dream in building a home and establishing a family. Men missed their possessions to which they had formed attachments and formed attachments to them because they had representational value, symbolizing a lifetime of homebuilding or broken dreams (Dryfus, 1979).

Life's Dream. Many authors found that one loss fathers experienced when going through divorce was that of losing
their fantasy or life's dream (Daniel, 1977; Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978). Men who had fantasized their life's dream so that they followed a life script ordered in a sequence such as marriage, career, children, home, better home, etc., found that when the sequence of the dream was disrupted they became confused and experienced uncertainty and feelings of helplessness which then led to role conflicts and strain. Such a disruption occurred when a man went through a divorce.

Dependency on Mates. In the aftermath of divorce partners found they had been projecting their needs on their mate so that the spouse might "do our work for us." They were dependent on their partner. Not recognizing their own needs and values lead to resentment in the marital relationship. When fathers discovered that they had lived in the "reality" of their partner's life and abandoned their own dreams, they tended to face their own inadequacies. If they failed to do this, they were likely to rebuild a dream in a new relationship, perpetuating their own failure by making the same mistakes.

Dependency and Self Concepts. When men moved from their family of origin to marriage without resolving dependency and autonomy needs, they often perpetuated struggles with parents by continuing it in their marriage relationships. They had moved but had changed little. They had not looked into themselves as a part of the problem in divorce or as a part of the solution (Levinson, 1978; O'Neill
& O'Neill, 1976). As a result of their failure to be introspective and critical of themselves, or to become independent, fathers did not know themselves. They were unable to follow their dreams, and these circumstances had an impact on their father-child relationships. Specifically, fathers who had failed to meet these criteria were not confident, self-assured male models to their offspring since they viewed themselves as inadequate.

Divorced Parenting Role Problems. Daley, 1979; Hamilton, 1977, reported that the confusion resulting from a father's sudden loss of home, family, and dreams made establishing a new kind of role and relationship with his children difficult. Because men had not been taught to show their feelings or be nurturant parents, the difficulty was compounded. Divorced fathers had difficulty handling children when they came to visit. Fathers were not accustomed to dealing with their children for long periods of time since they had generally been the parent whose work took them away from the family during marriage. They found it difficult and frustrating to handle such problems as sibling rivalry. Not knowing what to do, while feeling responsible for handling crises, fathers sometimes felt like punishing their children when they teased and tormented one another (Daley, 1979; Hamilton, 1977).

Environmental Factors

Many authors discussed various environmental factors...
which were problems to divorced fathers who attempt to be adequate parents (Levinson, 1978; Vaughn & Brazelton, 1976; Weiss, 1979). Since most fathers have small homes and limited living space, the problems they faced in handling children during sibling rivalry and power struggles were often magnified. Courts did not consider the fact that fathers without custody who had visitation privileges needed to have living arrangements which could accommodate their children. Without room enough for privacy, non-custodial parents had limited opportunity for removing themselves from the presence of their children so that they were not able to compose themselves when they felt their level of frustration getting beyond their control. Weis (1979) labeled this type of situation "emotional overload."

Unresolved Problems. The relationship between parent and children may suffer because, out of frustration, fathers may shout at children to get away from them and leave them alone. The result of these inevitable conflicts is hurt feelings and unresolved problems. There is little time for hurt feelings and misunderstandings to dissipate due to the limits on the visiting time. Fathers are not able to allow the passage of time to aid in gaining realistic perspectives to the damaged egos as is frequently done in an intact nuclear family.

Unclear Role Expectations. The fact that divorced fathers were unclear about their new role expectations,
whether or not they should continue to discipline their children, and to what extent they were now responsible for establishing behavioral and moral rules, may have resulted in their feeling inadequate in their roles as parents. They may feel impotent in their loss of role power which negatively affects their self-concept. Fathers also may fear losing the love of their children, and consequently these factors contribute to their difficulty in establishing a positive parenting relationship with their offspring. They attempt to "buy" children's affection.

Values Differences

Fathers felt cheated knowing that it was the mother's values which would be those primarily taught to their children. Their values would, at best, be secondary in the child's learning. Fathers felt cheated because it was often value differences which contributed to the poor relationship with the ex-spouse and which led to divorce. When his children came to visit, fathers faced behavior traits in them which clearly indicated the ex-spouse's philosophy of life. Children often resented fathers' different sets of rules when they were under their care. Victor and Winkler (1977) indicated that fathers had best adjust and accept their ex-spouse's value system in order to promote a conflict-free parental relationship with their children.

Communication Factors. Communication factors have an impact on the fathering role when divorce occurs. Men are
not socialized to be the primary source of communication with children. Hamilton (1979) found that circumstances leading to a lack of skills in sensitive communicating within interpersonal situations included the issue of fathers being looked upon as psychological failures in the sense that they really aren't quite as masculine when they were loving, gentle, and expressive. Being uninvolved, they missed the gratifying experiences of child development.

Widespread paternal inadequacy is built upon such factors and in time leads to interpersonally insensitive men. Their inadequacy, in turn, leads to a limited ability to interact with young people, manifesting itself in the form of communication problems. As a consequence, divorced fathers experienced the common problem of "generation gap" in dealing with youngsters, particularly adolescents.

Explaining Divorce to Children. Fathers, when leaving their family home, were most often faced with explaining to children why they were leaving. They found this sensitive communication task difficult because they often felt anxious, depressed, and confused about why they were leaving. If they had initiated the divorce they felt guilty and thus found the task more trying. Having been brought up to hide their emotions rather than express them, they had to face and answer questions of their children who demanded responses and were often disappointed in the ones they received.

Post Divorce Role Expectations. For the main part, society's expectations of men's roles and obligations post-divorce do not change much from those expected of married parents. They are still expected to be the primary source of income and support for the family (Aberg, Small, & Watson, 1977). The impact on his ability to parent his children was indicated by Sarbin and Turner, (1968) in their discussion of role expectations. They pointed out that in order to perform a role adequately one must be able to acquire knowledge of its particular role expectations, without which enactments of the role are "judged to be inept, invalid, improper, anti-social or illegal" (p. 547). Fathers often must muddle through the new role, learning as they proceed.

Stigma, Bias, Discrimination. Fathers experienced the effects of stigma in a number of ways when they were divorced (Klein, 1973; Kohn, 1977; Victor & Winkler, 1977). This is evident in the custody decisions which seldom grant fathers physical custody. While mothers hardly ever have to prove their parenting competencies and are viewed as victims when they occasionally lose custody, fathers seeking custody are sometimes labeled homosexuals who are suspected of trying to get out of working and supporting their children. This is an example of how society applies its sanctions when one deviates from the norms established for a particular role position, in this case that fathers are exclusively breadwinners and mothers caretakers.
Sanctions for Seeking Custody. Attorneys for divorcing fathers warned them that they would have to show proof that they were "super fathers"; that they ought not become involved in custody battles because they might jeopardize their careers. Fathers frequently felt there was no chance against the legal system and gave up the custody battle. Fathers also worried about the negative effects custody battles might have on their children: fearing they might do more harm than good.

Custody

Little consideration of each individual case is given when the issue of child custody comes before the courts even though, as mentioned earlier, research findings indicated there was no difference in adjustment between children in the custody of mothers or fathers. The focus of custody ought to be on the "better" or "best" parent and ought to come up for review periodically since custodial parents who were fit at the time of the original custody decision may be unfit at a later time (Jenkins, W. 1979).

Once a parent (usually a mother) has been awarded physical custody, attempting to reverse the decision is seldom successful. Bohannan (1970) reported that the only way fathers were granted custody was to prove that the environment provided by mothers for their children was detrimental to their children's physical or emotional well-being. A father who attempted to regain custody was seldom successful unless he could show seriously delinquent
behavior on the mother's part. His case could not be based on facts indicating she was a poor wife during the marriage, since these facts could not be used as a basis for denying her the right to custody. In addition, some fathers did not want to deprecate the mother, they simply wanted to have physical custody of their children.

Coping with Custody Decisions. The way in which a divorced father was able to adjust and cope with the custody decision was dependent upon a number of variables which affected the way he related to his children and to himself (Benson, 1968; Bohannan, 1970; Daniel, 1977, and Kelley & Kelley, 1976). If the decision was handed down within the court, fathers did not believe it to be a permanent custodial situation, felt that part-time fathering was only temporary, and continued to try to get custody. They also felt that they would have been the better parent, and that their children would suffer in the care of the ex-spouse. When couples settled custody issues between themselves and outside of court, fathers accepted their roles as non-custodial single parents as a permanent custodial role status. They also perceived both themselves and their ex-spouses as adequate parenting figures.

Custodial Parent's Adequacy. There was some indication that when fathers worried about the level of care the ex-spouse was able to provide their children, the worry may have been based in fact. There may be a connection between
unsatisfactory adjustment after divorce and the breakdown of parental functioning as caretaking adults. Some mothers were found to experience severe depression after divorce which impaired their capacity to maintain adequacy levels previously held in parenting (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b).

**Discrimination Factors**

One area in which fathers without custody have gained some legal rights is in their right to have knowledge of their children's progress in education. The "Regulations to the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974" made it clear that both natural parents have the right to review their children's personal school record. Before that law was passed, only mothers had the right. Fathers are also free to challenge any part of the record they feel is inaccurate or unfair. The only way a non-custodial parent can be denied access to his child's records is through a court order denying him that privilege (Bohannan, 1970; Kohn, 1977).

Fathers were often the victims of social stigma even though the majority of states in the United States have adopted no fault divorce laws (Dryfus, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Weiss, 1979). Mothers are often still viewed as wronged while fathers are often labeled negatively. The negative labels have an impact on their self-esteem which always suffers when divorce occurs. The effects of labeling the family as "broken" or "fatherless" also had an impact on the divorced father's relationship with his children since
the divorced person and his children are treated in terms of the label which is chosen.

Divorce seems to be a difficult life change for all family members requiring a great amount of emotional adjustment. Fathers without custody have additional problems of adjusting to their life change and the way it offsets their parenting role without the comfort of having their children with them (Bernard, 1970; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977).

Guilt. Mellecker and Wells (1976) found that fathers felt guilty when they saw the hostility of their ex-wife reflected in children. The guilt was based on the thought that they had somehow fallen short of performing their fathering role as they believed they should and felt they had not met their responsibility. Divorced fathers felt they had let their children down since they were responsible for solving problems of living, loving and survival of the intact family. They seemed to have a need to meet minimum requirements of their role position. When mothers neglected their responsibilities to their children the public often made excuses for them but, when fathers took children from mothers, no matter what the justification, the public said fathers were performing an unnatural act and breaking the law.

Neglect of Father's Changing Needs. The fact that most states threatened custodial mothers with jail sentences if
they refused fathers their court ordered visitation rights had little effect in reality since no such threats have ever been carried out. Some cases of custody reversal have occurred on the grounds that children were denied the sight and knowledge of their fathers. However, such custody decisions are exceptions rather than the rule (Victor & Winkler, 1977).

Child Support and Law-breaking Label. The Connecticut State Supreme Court of Errors ruled that the requirement for a man to pay child support was completely unrelated to his court-ordered right to see his children. If he fails to pay support he is labeled a law-breaker and can be sentenced to a jail term. Being late with payments puts him into default so that he is labeled "law-breaking". Victor and Winkler (1977) reported that it is not unheard of for men to spend time in prison for nonpayment of support. Being unemployed or on disability carries little weight in terms of excusing him from his legally ordered alimony or support payments. People in the society of the United States generally feel there is something wrong with a man if he does not work and support his family. This continues to be one of the primary roles he is expected to fill.

Maintaining Law-abiding Status. In the past fathers sometimes felt they could avoid responsibility. They performed their roles in a very peripheral way and did little more than what the court ordered or the ex-spouse allowed.
They simply did not "make waves." Victor and Winkler (1977) stated that "no matter what conflicting theories are, in order to be considered 'law-abiding' a divorced father must 'Roll over, play dead, pay up'" (p. 79). This is not easy for fathers to do since the sexual revolution and liberation of women.

**Child Snatchers.** Another label which has had an impact on non-custodial fathers is affixed when they retrieve their children without legally changing the original court ordered custodial decision. They are then labeled "child snatchers", since a parent taking his own child cannot be accused of kidnapping. An extension of this charge can occur when a child runs away from the custodial mother to the non-custodial father's home. If he allows the child to stay, he is open to charges of illegal possession of the child. If he does not accept the child or turns the child away, he feels guilty for not providing for the happiness and safety of his own child. He tends to be caught in a position of role conflict and dissonance.

**Friends and Family.** Many authors indicated that at the time of divorce, both partners experienced a division of loyalties among their friends (Dryfus, 1979; Schlesinger, 1978; Weiss, 1979). Fathers commonly relied upon their wives to make social arrangements so they found it difficult to take over this role function once they were divorced. Both the routine and role of a father changed, as did his place of
living. Few of his married friends were retained and he, consequently, lost this support group. At the same time, he often found that his parents did not support him either. Parents seldom perceive fathers as capable of adequately filling the role of rearing children without the wife's availability. They often encouraged their sons to remarry, pushing them into the same type of situation in which they had failed (Dryfus, 1979; Weiss, 1979).

Financial Factors and Discrimination. The law generally requires that men be two years older than women in order to meet the minimal legal age to marry, with or without the consent of parents. The justification for this law is that the state has an interest in fathers being adequate providers for their families. It is, therefore, necessary for them to have educational training to insure the probability of them being able to provide for families. Two years allows more time for education and training toward that goal. This law is still in effect even though by 1977 fifty percent of wives were working. This is one reason for the trend toward a gradual reduction in amounts of alimony ordered by California courts (Brown, Emerson, Falk, & Freedman, 1971).

Divorced fathers were commonly concerned with additional financial needs due to maintaining two households. Since they were frequently lonely, they often spent more hours on the job. In this way, they attempted to alleviate some of their loneliness while becoming better able to
fulfill their provider role. This set of circumstances had an unforeseen impact on their opportunity to spend sufficient time with their offspring to develop intimate relationships with them (Daniel, 1977; Kramer & Prall, 1978; Parke, Ross & Swain, 1976).

**Santa Claus Syndrome.** In spite of the financial stress at this time, most authors agreed that it was common for fathers to spend more money than they could comfortably afford on their children when they came to visit. This practice was sometimes called the "Santa Claus Syndrome." This occurred partially because of factors previously discussed (lack of skills in cooking, organizing activities to keep their children busy and entertained, guilt over the breakup of the family, and not seeing the children on a daily basis). He also had difficulty in communicating his feelings. Being cut off from his father's identity provided the following reaction from a newly divorced father in Victor and Winkler's (1977) study:

> There were a thousand things he wanted to tell Jimmy, but he felt like a mute come to confession. He wanted to tell him he was frightened about a future that began when he left home: a future of furnished rooms and living on the cheap to support two households...that he was worried that Jimmy would grow up and gradually become estranged... (Victor & Winkler, 1977, p. 69)

As a result fathers often took children out for meals and activities. In this way, they attempted to fill their time...
with them and to avoid facing their lack of cooking skills. The ex-spouse, hearing details of how children spent time with their fathers, perceived their life and financial circumstances as one of luxuries which the mothers could not afford.

**Effect of Family Climate on Father's Role.** The Santa Claus syndrome not only adds to the financial problems of noncustodial fathers, but contributes to a climate wherein fathers have a difficult time establishing a worthwhile relationship with their offspring. Victor and Winkler (1977) reported that whether or not they have small living quarters, fathers need to give their children the feeling that it is a home where they are participating members rather than distinguished guests. This is not likely to happen when fathers always take children away from their homes when the children come to visit.

**Father's Role and Visiting Parameters.** Many authors reported that the limits of the visiting parameters further hinder the establishment of a meaningful relationship between fathers and children (Jenkins, G. 1976a; Victor & Winkler, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). Arriving and leaving at specific times and enjoying planned activities during time spent with their fathers leads to an impression of artificiality, almost as if they had attended a party. This does not allow the development of intimacy or the new father-child relationship to flourish. It is the sense of a
stable home in the nuclear family which fathers need to capture in their new relationships with their children when they come to visit.

**Ex-Spouse Factors**

The importance of the quality of the relationship between the non-custodial father and his ex-spouse was consistently stated in the literature (Benson, 1968; Bohannan & Erickson 1978; Daniel, 1977; Victor & Winkler, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980a). The need for a positive relationship was stressed. If quarreling persisted after the divorce, it was detrimental to the mental health of all family members. In some families, particularly the disturbed ones, parents acted independently of each other or competed with each other in dealing with children, each striving to hold role dominance and power. Some mothers with low self-esteem attempted to convince children that their fathers did not care for them. In such cases, mothers punished fathers by openly destroying the father-child relationship. An ex-spouse may not stop at destroying the father's relationship with his child, but may also work at destroying his second marriage.

*Deprecation of Fathers.* If fathers had strong ties to their children, the ex-spouse could use this knowledge against them. Precisely at a time when he was attempting to redefine his father-child relationship and establish himself as their leader, her deprecation of the father may have
undermined his efforts. Daniel (1977) found that mother's attitude toward the father subsequent to divorce and the amount of anger the child felt toward him were highly correlated with the degree of intimacy possible in the father-child relationship after divorce.

**Ex-wife Behaviors and Father Role.** The fact that his ex-wife prevented optimal adjustment of his relationship to his children was not the only consequence of her negative behaviors and attitudes. Throughout her constant contacts with him, she was also able to attempt to keep the old relationship going. Ex-wives were able to perpetuate problems which they had with fathers before the divorce. This occurred since fathers would react to their ex-wives behavior due to feeling a certain amount of familiarity with behaviors to which he responded in the past. If he did not respond to her, she may have felt rejected, angry, and, therefore, harassed him by calling him at work on the pretense that she needed to discuss a matter concerning their children. In reality, she hurt him by interfering with his job and preventing him from performing his provider role. Repeated court action also serves her purpose of punishing him.

**Parental Hostility, Children's Psychopathology, and Father's Role.** Since parents who divorce generally have concern for their children's well-being, their post-divorce relationship ought to be a prime issue with which they come
to terms. Gardner (1976) found that the most important cause of psychopathology in children of divorce was the continuing hostility of the parents following divorce and that the chance of a positive father-child relationship was then practically zero. He suggested alleviation of the problem by advising mothers not to discuss their anger with children, fathers to stop questioning children about what their mother told them, and for both parents to allow children to observe and form their own opinions.

Visitation

Another area which was heavily affected by the mother's attitude was visitation. Most authors agreed that the ex-wife's attitude was an important factor in the father's ability to develop a visiting schedule which was beneficial to the father-child relationship (Daniel, 1977; Greif, 1977; Rosen, 1979; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977). Previous sections of this chapter have shown that the following factors had an impact on the father-child relationships: mother's unresolved anger over the divorce, her need to continue a relationship with her ex-spouse, and her motives for preventing her ex-husband from developing positive healthy relationships with his children, and new women in his life. Additionally, the former spouse has the power to make the father's attempts to see his children an unpleasant and frustrating event. Fathers feared the role power their wives held over visitation.
Custodial Power and Visitation. Part of the role power held by the custodial parent is due to the way courts structure visiting. With conditions and restrictions strictly defined by court orders, the development of maximum opportunity for establishing a strong father-child relationship was minimized. In particular, mothers can use the court's restrictions to hamper the father's efforts to take advantage of his visitation rights. If they decide to follow the orders of the court to the letter of the law, a father might find that when he arrives five minutes later than the assigned time, the mother will not allow him to see or visit his children. She can penalize him for getting them home a few minutes after the court-ordered time limit. The fact that it is illegal to do this does not apparently serve to deter her from such behavior since courts do not follow through with legal actions against her (Dominic, 1980).

Visitation Roulette. Victor and Winkler (1977) assigned the term "visitation roulette" to such games which divorced people play. Forms of visitation roulette which adversely complicate his relationship to his children and his ability to perform his parenting role functions, occur when the ex-wife decides to move out of the town or state, not calling to inform the father when the child was ill or hospitalized, and failing to inform him of pertinent facts about the child, such as important school activities in which the child has a role and in which parents make up the audience. In defense of these behaviors, the ex-spouse may
remind fathers of the court orders which allow for specific times of visitation and to which she can legally hold the father. These factors accumulate to result in a great amount of role strain for divorced men.

**Visitation in Relation to Father's Love.** When divorced fathers fail to visit their children, or see them infrequently, it is not always an indication that they do not care for, love, or miss them (Greif, 1977; Heatherington, 1976; Keshet, 1977). Fathers expressed a desire to visit their children and frequently had much contact with their children immediately following divorce, but the frequency tapered off as time of separation increased. This was often due to the fact that fathers found that leaving their children after each visit was emotionally too painful and, therefore, reduced their visiting frequency.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1979) reported that the majority of children were not satisfied with the frequency of visits allowed by courts, and feared fathers did not love them if they failed to visit them. They found that more than half of children actively missed their fathers. The desire to continue to visit and relate to their children after divorce was not altogether out of concern for their children, but may have served the father's interests as well.

**Father's Needs for Involved Parenting.** It is important for fathers to maintain involved parenting with their offspring for their own healthy adult development (Gould,
Most men felt fatherhood was extremely important to them. They worried about children not having a male model and that children would not learn about their father's background, that they would identify with a step-father and would, gradually, forget them. Having children who emulate him may be the only way a man feels he will have left his mark on the world, a sort of immortality.

Most authors believed the father-child relationship would be best able to flourish if visitation flexibility was the mode (Friedman, 1982; Rosen, 1979; Schlesinger & Todres, 1976; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). Currently, a reasonable visitation order generally allows a father to spend time with his children on alternating weekends, national and religious holidays, and one evening a week for dinner. These are common visitation rights. In view of these facts, it seems inconsistent that fathers do not visit more. A number of factors may clarify just why they do not.

Compression of Experiences. One contributing factor is, as mentioned earlier, the fact that fathers' new homes may not be conducive to stress free visiting. In addition, fathers must face the problem of compressing, into the short visiting time they are allowed, the various experiences which have taken place over a longer period of time. The discontinuous pattern of visiting does not allow the natural flow of conversation to take place, so problems can not be solved as they arise.
Rapid Change of Children. The rapid change of children, which occurred simply out of developmental growth, further widens the gap between them. Since fathers do not have daily contact with children, they find it difficult to develop a close relationship. Having been out of contact with children during the time preceding their visit, he has a great deal of catching up to do. This is hardly possible when visiting time factors keep fathers under pressure. Fathers who are not fortunate enough to live within a distance convenient to visiting have a magnification of this problem (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b).

Psychological Factors

Psychological factors contributed to visiting problems too. The role loss of their position as father tends to make visiting painful to fathers (Schlesinger, 1978; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). Most authors agreed that a great amount of this was due to their feelings of guilt over the breakup of the marriage. According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b), the role of the father in the decision to divorce has an impact on his relationship to his children which affects him psychologically. The longer the father had been married, the more intense was his guilt. Older children were angrier at fathers than younger children. It was not the longer marriage which produced interference with the quality of the father-child relationship but the degree of the father's guilt.

The quality of the marital relationship before the
divorce also affected the contact quality of some divorced fathers and children because fathers experienced less guilt if there was a high degree of conflict during the marriage. Fathers could achieve a moderate amount of intimacy, in the absence of these variables, if they exercised their rights of visitation (Daniel, 1977).

Intimacy. Daniel further reported that of those fathers who had high degrees of intimacy with their offspring, only twenty percent visited less than twice a month. Other factors which Daniel found to facilitate high father-child intimacy were shorter marriages, fewer children, limited anger of mothers toward fathers, the father's ability to give, and limited amount of guilt about the separation. The degree of intimacy was also affected by whether or not one parent initiated the divorce, totally or partially independent of the other. There were higher intimacy scores if either parent had initiated the divorce independently of the other parent rather than coming to a mutual agreement to divorce.

Emotional Drain. The guilt they experience because of the breakup of the family, the feelings of rejection they perceive from children and ex-wives, and fear that other role models are taking over their parenting role made it more difficult to continue to visit. With the absence of these factors, fathers still had to go through the grief of farewells each time they visited, so their pain was not
allowed to heal. These factors contributed to states of depression and could make visiting so emotionally draining that some men failed to visit at all. The man's pride in producing children who would carry his name, his way of living, his values and beliefs, was tied into the threat he felt: that his children are no longer his but rather the mother's, and if she remarries, the stepfather's.

Flexibility and Normalization. Flexibility and normalization of visiting arrangements would help reduce some problems of visitation. Some authors argued that it was a myth that once a couple were divorced they would no longer be bothered with the relationship of the ex-spouse (Kelley & Kelley, 1976). The literature obviously supports this belief. Benson (1968); Dominic (1980); Goode (1984); Wallerstein and Kelly (1979), reported that father-child relationships would have a much higher chance of optimal growth if visitation practices were more flexible and normal. Thus, both parents could be available to children when they are needed and they could alleviate some of their fears.

Fears of Abandonment. Custodial parents need to recognize that children fear that their fathers may abandon them and, therefore, need to achieve more flexible visitation. Courts also need to encourage parents to make visitation agreements independently and outside their jurisdiction so that the visitation roulette games are not encouraged. Children might be better able to enjoy the
benefits of both parents.

Negative Parental Interaction. As it now stands, children sometimes fear going with their fathers because they think they might not be returned to their mothers, and fathers fear that mothers have more time with children and can brainwash them into believing that fathers really do not care about them. Much of this negative interaction could be avoided if parents recognized that after divorce they will have to continue cooperating on matters regarding their parenting roles if they are concerned for their children's best interests. If normalization of the father-child relationships is to occur in visiting, rather than relationships which maintain a quality of "Christmas every day," extending of visitation time for fathers and their offspring must occur.

Health Factors

Many authors agreed that fathers who were attempting to adjust to their new roles as divorced non-custodial parents were having many problems with their health (Hamilton, 1977; Schlesinger & Todres, 1976; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). In the year following divorce, divorced fathers had twelve times the incidence of disease that married fathers had. This, obviously, had an impact on their efforts to develop continuous, meaningful, and satisfying relationships with their children. Two-thirds of the patients who reported to physicians came to see them about personal and emotional
problems rather than strictly needing medical care.

Lack of Support and Empathy. Divorced fathers were frequently fired from their jobs because they could not relate well to associates. They complained of difficulty in sleeping and eating as well as having problems with peer relationships. They also felt they couldn't depend on friends to support them since friends acted as if they were put on the spot not knowing how to react to them. Their friends had difficulty in deciding to whom they should remain loyal, the male or his ex-wife. The fact that his new role identifies a divorced father as a single person also made friends feel ill at ease in his company since as a single person he posed a certain threat compared to when they had originally developed the relationship and he was married. Friends, as well as relatives, felt unsure about what kinds of behaviors were appropriate both for the divorced man's role and themselves. As a result both friends and relatives frequently diminished contact at a time when the divorced father needed it most. Some divorced fathers developed high blood pressure or asthma. Their physical health was complicated by their emotional problems which were brought about by the roles changes they had been experiencing as a result of divorce (Schlesinger & Todres, 1976).

Emotional Health.

As discussed earlier, fathers' emotional health was in danger for several reasons: financial factors which worried
them, loneliness because they no longer had a family to which they could come home, and the impact of rejection, stigma, and discrimination post-divorce. Additionally, fathers were generally found to feel depressed at being left alone and worried over what was happening to their children in their absence. For example, fathers were concerned about small children and how they would get along when they entered school (Hock, McKenry, Hock, Triolo & Stewart, 1980). Most fathers felt anxious about school entry and sadness about being separated from their children. The degree of anxiety they felt was positively related to the anxiety of their wives. Fathers expressed sadness at loss of control over their young children. They also worried about older children's well-being when they came home from school because working mothers might allow them to stay alone and unsupervised.

Divorced fathers felt sad about not being with their children on special occasions. Fathers experienced a variety of emotional reactions to their divorce which had an impact on their health and parenting. They felt angry, depressed, and guilty and became disorganized in their behavior. They reflected on the injustice of the legal system, thought of the treatment they received, the power the ex-spouse held over them, and how she could effectively control their opportunity to see their children.

Irrational Behavior. The negative outcomes they perceived due to their divorce commonly resulted in the
father acting in irrational ways. (Goode, 1984; Keshet, 1977). The acting out included breaking down doors, making nuisance calls, and vandalizing the ex-wife's car, spying on or physically abusing the ex-wife, and deciding to "child snatch" their children. All men feared the loss of their parenting role. They felt that they would not be able to provide for the needs of their children and, consequently, would no longer be good parents. The frustrations felt by these men had an impact on them so they acted in these various unreasonable ways. Some fathers had gone so far as to move to a foreign country, taking the children with them.

Child Absence Syndrome. The anti-productive behavior was not only common, but according to some professionals seems to be increasing. A New York Researcher, Goode (1984), speaking at a recent American Psychiatric Association annual meeting in Los Angeles coined the term "involuntary child absence syndrome" when describing the psychological stress experienced by divorcing fathers. He argued that the syndrome is increasing in incidence, provides an explanation for the extreme behavior of kidnapping their own children, and may be an explanation of rates of suicide and homicide among divorced men.

The central unifying theme of this syndrome is the profound fear in a parent of a diminished relationship with a child...in its most serious form these fathers present themselves for consultation in the mist of an overwhelming terror...they feel deeply attached to
their children even if in marriage they tended to be more traditional fathers and left the majority of child rearing functions to their wives (pp. 25-26).

The goal of treatment for men who fall into the syndrome is to give them access to their children so that all family members benefit from an ongoing, unthreatened relationship with their children.

**Dating/Sexual Life**

Fathers who felt most angry at wives entered into dating, social, and sexual activities quickly. If they had experienced little emotional responsiveness with their ex-partner, they looked forward to a more fulfilling sexual life. Other fathers dated sporadically while some waited as long as six months before dating. Some fathers felt unsure of themselves and did not know how they would handle new role demands of dating while they were trying to perform their parenting roles.

Attempting to re-establish themselves on the social scene, some divorced fathers found that a number of problems occurred because they were divorced parents. Rockwell (1976) reported that they had trouble in deciding when and how to form new relationships. They were, if they had been faithful to their wives during marriage, out of practice in asking for a date. They also found that while they were married, the expectations related to dating roles had changed. This was particularly true of men who had been married before the sexual revolution and divorced after it.
Change in Sexual Role Expectations. Rallings (1976) found that sex became a source of frustration. It lacked the predictability of marriage, was often a one-night stand, or could be one-sided in terms of emotional commitment. There were also varying amounts of affection and love, so single fathers had to, move than other segment of society face these problems. In addition, they had to adjust to new expectations in dating and forming relationships, so that their level of stress surrounding these sexual role factors was apparently increased.

Impact on Father's Social and Parenting Role. Fathers who had successfully established themselves in a dating routine found that when their children came to visit, it sometimes interfered with the relationship with their female friends. Children's behavior regressed when their fathers had a continuing relationship with a woman.

The ex-spouse, who felt threatened by the ex-husband's role with a steady girlfriend, also had a negative effect on the father's relationship with children. She reacted to their moods and a cycle of reactions was established from father to child to mother to child to father, etc. Some wives refused to allow children to visit fathers if they came to pick up the children with a girlfriend in the car. Children rejected girlfriends out of jealousy over the attention fathers paid to them (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979).

Factors which impacted on fathers who were in the process of re-establishing themselves as single parents were
pointed out by many authors (Benson, 1968; Keshet, 1977). Even though fathers looked forward to dating and did so openly, they often found that restrictions were imposed on their sex lives because of how they perceived their parental role. They were lonely and often sought out women with whom they could interact both socially and sexually. The loneliness that fathers experienced after divorce tended to mingle with their sexual tension so that each became more compelling because of its association with the other. Sexual tension made them more aware of their loneliness and loneliness made them more aware of their sexual tension.

Because of fear that their children would not want to visit them and that children would reject their female friends, fathers often restricted their social and sexual lives to those times when children were not visiting. Some men were hesitant about introducing new lovers into their households until they felt there was some possibility of a permanent relationship developing.

**Single Parent Sexual Activity and Morality.** Fathers did not know how to handle the situation of having lovers around at bedtime when children were visiting and were also concerned about how their ex-spouse was handling her sex life when children were present and she had a man stay overnight. They feared children's morality and views of sexual intimacy would be negatively affected if mothers modeled a promiscuous sex life. While fathers were surprised at the lack of interest some younger children had concerning their father's
sexual life, Stevens and Mathews (1978) found that adolescents held their parents to strict moral standards. They also found that fathers worried about the discrepancies between the sexual rules they held for themselves and the rules they wanted children to adopt.

Financial Impact on Father's Role Change. Financial factors also limited noncustodial fathers in developing new relationships. They seldom could afford babysitters so when they chose to date on a weekend when children visited, financial problems hindered going out. The divorced father who wished to reduce his loneliness, isolation, and dependency found that these needs were frustrated due to parenting factors.

Establishing Equilibrium. About eighteen months after divorce, fathers have generally re-established their psychological equilibrium and no longer act in antisocial ways or have severe mood swings. They discontinue to be "more than mildly depressed, and feeling less sense of freedom than the stereotypical expectations in our society for divorced males" (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b, p. 154).

Adjustment Following Divorce. In regard to psychological and physical health, the passage of time appeared to find the majority of adults functioning well and moving toward healthier psychological status. Those people whose psychological health was best immediately following divorce seemed to do better. Five years after separation,
thirty-one percent were still disorganized. This was related to a life-long state of chronic disorganization. About five years later their lives were unchanged. The positive side of this was that nearly five years after divorce, one-half of the men were in good shape psychologically with a reduction in, or lack of, disabling neurotic health symptoms (depression, alcoholism, and other somatic disturbances). While fathers went through this difficult period of role change, they still had to try to establish themselves in as normal a parenting relationship as possible with their offspring.

Step-Parenting

The majority of divorced fathers do remarry (Hunt & Hunt, 1976; Jenkins, G. 1976a; Keshet, 1977). Eighty percent of single parents remarry within one year of their divorce, and those who remarry often bring a ready-made family with them (Jenkins, G. 1976a). Though there seems to be a high rate of remarriage, the myth that second marriages are best is not always true. Second marriages end in divorce fifty-six percent of the time, as opposed to thirty-seven percent of first marriages.

Rarely do fathers remarry and establish new family relationships without experiencing the power and impact of the ex-spouse and their children on their roles in the current marriage. Any problems in the father's life subsequently will have some effect on his relationship with his absent children, however children, contrary to the
findings reviewed earlier, did not suffer more problems due to divorce than if they remained in a family which was unhappy. It was the parents who were potentially changed in some way by the divorce.

New Marriage Success. With cooperation of the ex-spouse, the success of the new marriage was more likely than if the ex-spouse or father had not resolved the problems in the process of divorce. Fathers who remarry may do so without the completion of the emotional or psychological divorce in the divorce process even though they are legally divorced. Fathers, not having successfully passed this process, felt like emotional bigamists. Belgum (1976) found that because the other person had not been "buried," adjustment to remarriage had been poor. Because divorce frequently had no clear cut resolution, in contrast to the death of a spouse, the non-custodial parent goes through separation and loss continuously. Even though he no longer was in the role of father and husband of the nuclear family, he missed the familiar pattern. This caused problems in the new marriage. The father found that old ties still bound him in such ways that his new spouse felt threatened. He feared that if he kept contact with his children to a minimum his ex-wife might use it against him in regard to visitation. For ex-spouse and father to reach an improvement in their relationship and feel contented, both need to form new attachments.

For as long as a year or more after one partner
remarries the ex-spouse will feel the loss as if they were still attached to the former mate (Hunt & Hunt, 1976; Weiss, 1979). It took at least two to four years to re-establish the self in a new and stable personality. In the meantime, divorced people may attempt to rebuild their damaged egos through using sex indiscriminately. Such activities were labeled those of the "abusers".

**Divorce as Growth Opportunity.** Those fathers who had generally resolved the problems within the process of divorce, who perceived the divorce as an opportunity for growth and a new chance, generally found remarriage satisfying and more appropriate to their development in life (Kopf, 1976; O'Neill & O'Neill, 1975). It was the action and attitude of the single parent and the ability to recognize the potential for growth that was a significant part of any solution. In the case of divorced fathers, remarriage can serve as a vehicle for solving problems of loneliness, social acceptance, and fulfilling the need for an adult relationship. If he choose to avoid committed relationships or remarriage, he had to face the empty nest and learn to adjust to it. Avoiding relationships was an indication of poor psychological adjustment, and in extreme cases indicated that the individual might continue in a disorganized and unhappy life situation after the divorce (Victor & Winkler, 1977; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b).
Benefits of Re-entering the Mainstream. The literature review revealed that some of the personal problems of a divorced father, such as problems of loneliness, are alleviated by remarriage (Kelley & Kelley, 1976; Rockwell, 1976). Remarriage often provided a supportive community again. This was likely to happen sooner if fathers had high status, were wealthy and self-confident men who found the community might be ready to accept and reward them for socializing. It did not happen so much for lower income, insecure men. With remarriage fathers were able to re-enter the mainstream of society which is couple oriented. There is a myth or stigma attached to men if they are not married, that is, that they are suffering from some kind of emotional illness, are impotent or sexually deviant. Remarriage erased some of the stigma.

Being legitimately married, fathers no longer had ambivalent feelings about a sexual life with a lover when their children visited. In addition, they had a mate who could provide a female role model for the children. Most single parents had to teach sexuality to children without the support of the missing parent. New mates helped reduce the role strain of a divorced father in this regard.

If the man's new spouse was employed, she would also be able to provide some financial assistance and help him provide care, discipline, and entertainment for his children. These positive aspects of remarriage contributed to its attractiveness to a single father. They also can contribute
to a man's erroneous belief that remarriage will solve most of his problems.

**Stepparenting Complications**

The role expectations of stepfathers are less clear than those of natural fathers. While stepparents continue to have many of the same problems of natural parents, in addition, because they were previously married and have ex-wives and children, their new parental roles are complicated by role conflict and dissonance. They have an additional set of unique problems. Rosenbaum and Rosenbaum (1977) suggested that in order to reduce the stress of adjustment to a second marriage couples ought to have at least six months' courtship before remarriage, allowing time for fathers to develop a good relationship with their fiancee's children, establishing new living quarters on neutral territory instead of starting out in a home shared by previous partners and deciding how, when, and who will discipline the children. A period of waiting before remarriage was also advisable for men who had not psychologically recuperated from the impact of their divorce. Stability of personality generally occurred in men around 18 months after divorce (Rallings, 1976; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980a).

**Sharing Attention.** When a man remarried, even if his new wife's children approved of him before marriage, problems often arose after the marriage. Stepchildren had generally
had the undivided attention of their mother for as much as a year or two before the establishment of a new relationship and subsequent remarriage. They found it difficult to share their mother's attention with the stepfather. He found it difficult to freely give his attention to his stepchildren because he felt guilty not having his natural children with him. He generally did not love his stepchildren as he loved his own because of intense parent-child bonding which had occurred with his natural children but had no opportunity to occur with step-children.

**Sharing Affection.** Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum (1977) reported that fathers sometimes denied stepchildren affection because of guilt for having left their own children. Concurrently, stepchildren compared their stepfather's way of doing tasks with the way their "real" father did them. Stepchildren had an idealized perception of their natural father, so the stepfather invariably fell short of this imagined perfection and then felt inferior if he took the children's attitudes seriously.

**Instant Love Myth.** There is a myth of "instant love" expected of stepfathers for their stepchildren. Ultimately, fathers and stepchildren were disappointed when they realized the other's imperfections. When fathers felt rejection and jealousy it could easily manifest itself as depression or disguise itself as psychosomatic illness. The ex-spouse was often jealous of the new spouse and could cause difficulties
over details of visitation rights. The father's children seldom felt they got their fair share of his attention, and, in fact, they did not.

**Natural and Stepchildren Rivalry.** Fathers were in a no-win situation with conflicting role demands of his natural children and stepchildren who may both criticize him and complain to him. His children may comment about not having enough money to enjoy themselves, so he feels the guilt of being an inadequate provider or providing more for his stepchildren. This may be instigated by ex-wives who are jealous of the attention and possessions he gives to his new wife's children. If the ex-wife was not remarried she may have been envious of his new life, happiness, and spouse.

**Old and New Spouse Rivalry.** When a single father remarried, he hoped to have the support of his wife when he felt depressed, rejected, and inadequate (Cater, 1976; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977). While she supported him in ways previously discussed, she could also be resentful and jealous. If the previous marital partners got along well, reminisced about the past, or shared stories about children, the new spouse sometimes felt left out. She felt jealous of the old relationship and love of his children. She also often resented spending her income supporting his former spouse and children.

**Unplanned Custody.** An additional possibility was that her husband could, without trying, suddenly have unplanned,
physical custody of his children if his ex-spouse died. The resulting blend of families would further complicate the father's role and add to the jealousy of his new wife. The current wife may be jealous simply because of the presence of his natural children. They are constant reminders of the fact that her husband was once in love with, or at least had sexual intercourse with, someone before her. The stress connected to these role changes and adjustments are bound to effect fathers' perceptions of their relationships to their natural children.

Incest Taboo in Stepfamily. Within the nuclear family sexual prohibitions are clearly defined by cultural guidelines and serve to insure the de-eroticizing of behavior between father and children. These guidelines have not been generalized to the stepparent role, so the incest taboo is not operating as effectively in stepfamilies as in nuclear families. When divorce occurs, the natural children of fathers are sometimes inadvertently placed in situations which contribute to a greater eroticizing of relationships between parent and child. The visitation pattern sometimes takes on the dimensions of dating. The increased sexual activities of parents who ask children's advice, and the questioning of children by both parents regarding the other parent's relationships tend to increase the eroticizing of the parent-child relationship. Stepfathers, therefore, had "double trouble" keeping behavior within the bounds of parent-child relationships.
Vagueness of Rules and Laws. Part of the lack of explicit rules of sexual conduct stemmed from vagueness in the definition of stepparents and the vagueness of the law. Stepfathers have to learn to avoid occasions leading to seductive behavior on the part of their stepchildren. It was not uncommon for a stepchild to attempt to divide parents by setting up conflicts between them. Children would, for instance, accuse the stepfather of molesting or raping them. Children who had resolved the Oedipal Complex at five to seven years of age must resolve it again at adolescence with their stepfather. Stepfathers have to decide which behaviors exhibited by the often sexually active stepchild are friendly and which are seductive. These problems of interpretation are difficult for fathers in nuclear families and have added implications and difficulties for him in his attempts to perform his role as stepfather. As mentioned earlier, fathers who have an understanding of developmental stages of normal children are better able to cope with these situations. Still, their ability to read body language and cues of seductive behavior were likely to be another communication skill about which they were poorly informed. At best, under the stress of adjustment to his new role and relating to his new wife and stepchildren, his role and relationship to his natural children tends to be more complicated than when he was first married or after he was divorced.
Stepchildren's Lack of Gratitude. Many authors note that the implications and consequences of remarriage of a noncustodial father to his relationship with his absent children are intricately woven throughout his past relationships and the way in which he handles his current relationships (Cater, 1976; Friedman, 1982; Rosenbaum & Rosenbaum, 1977). Natural parents resented the lack of appreciation from their offspring, but stepparents suffered even more the lack of gratitude their stepchildren showed. They needed to work hard to create at least a semblance of a loving relationship. This was particularly difficult because the stepchildren were not consistent in their expression of feelings for stepfathers.

Acceptance of Role Changes. Many authors addressed the problems noncustodial fathers had when they remarried and attempted to integrate their absent children into their new role (Cater, 1976; Domenic, 1980; Seagull & Seagull, 1977). Fathers wanted their natural children to accept their new spouse and their new home. When this did not happen fathers sometimes resented the children or had to find ways to work it out with their spouse. They were faced again with communicating with their children about marital inclinations. Fathers had to explain that they planned to remarry, and children who had recently become accustomed to spending time alone with their fathers had to adjust to another change which might affect their role with their father. If they resented this change, fathers had another problem to solve.
with their children. They had to make it clear that loving their stepmother was not as important as simply being civil and kind.

Since children often feel they are not being loyal to their real mother if they show affection to a stepmother, stepparents ought to avoid making an issue of children's love for their new stepmother. The recycled family is not a nuclear family and should not attempt to masquerade as one.

Jenkins, G. (1976a) pointed out that a number of interrelationship difficulties occur due to the rising number of divorces and large number of remarriages. Parents and their children from first marriages have problems as well as stepparents and stepchildren. Absent children and stepchildren also experience relationship problems therefore, Jenkins, G. (1976a) stresses that preparation for becoming a stepparent is as important as it is for becoming a parent.

Summary

Divorced fathers perceptions of their parenting roles and relationships to their offspring when they no longer had physical custody was the focus of this research. In order to understand how roles change, and how married couples act and react to one another, role theory was the one used in this research, since it is an organized way of looking at relationships and the expectations society holds for them.

Because roles are not static, but do change over time, the historical perspectives about changing roles was
included. This clarified how the behavior of people changes over time, and what kinds of societal events have effected changes in fathering role norms i.e., wars and scientific knowledge.

A broad range of variables impacts on divorced fathers' roles and their ability to adjust to their single parent status when divorce occurs. The range covers several time periods: (1) the time before fathers were married, (2) the time when a male was married and when the nuclear family was intact and going through the process of divorce, (3) the time when the final legal divorce occurred (which is part of the divorce process), (4) the single period following divorce, and (5) the time when he may have remarried. A number of factors were identified which commonly impact on fathers' efforts to parent while single. Factors impacting on fathers' and their children's relationships included the following list:

(1) Background and family factors
(2) Socialization factors
(3) Education factors
(4) Societal Expectations factors
(5) Custody factors
(6) Visitation factors
(7) Values differences factors
(8) Environmental factors
(9) Ex-spouse factors
(10) Financial factors
(11) Psychological factors
(12) Physical factors
(13) Emotional factors
(14) Stepparenting factors

These factors and their effect on fathering after divorce are described in detail within the text under
"Factors Impacting on Fathering Roles". The literature review made it clear that there was actually no simple, easy way for any member of a nuclear family to go through the difficult family changes which occur when a marriage ends in divorce. The way roles change throughout life, and what factors impact on one's ability to adapt to changing roles were reviewed. The ways in which different social scientists perceived the concept of role were identified, and are factors which helped to clarify how the divorced father came through the process of divorce and ultimately attempted to adjust to a new role. Three views of role change presented were anthropological, psychological, and sociological. None were mutually exclusive. All of the views attempted in one way or another to understand this aspect of human behavior. Some of the basic points in role theory which are connected to the study of divorced fathers, for example, role enactment, change, expectations, and norms were presented with examples of how they might operate in connection with the changing roles of divorced fathers.

It was generally beneficial to all family members, in order to promote positive adjustment to new roles, if parents were able to make an effort to cooperate. This was particularly true if children were to continue to enjoy both parents in meaningful, healthy relationships in their lives.

Changing roles of men and women seemed to add to the role strain and confusion surrounding divorce. The complications of human individual differences made adjustment
to this family system change a complicated and usually
difficult task. The differences between parents which could
not be resolved during the marriage needed to be resolved
after divorce in order to promote the best possible
parent-child relationships and healthy psycho-sexual
development of children. This, in turn, was ultimately
conducive to better adjustment to the divorce for the parents
as well, tending to facilitate their potential for growth in new relationships.

Fathers may not have been aware of all the "ideal" role
expectations of parenting even prior to divorce. After
divorce they not only found themselves attempting to perform
these roles alone but generally had additional role problems
with which they had to cope. All of this had to be
accomplished while no new role norms had been established for
divorced fathers.

The theoretical construct of "ideal father role" was
developed from the literature review and was then used as a
basis for designing part of the interview schedule.
Components of the ideal role and descriptions of their
characteristic behaviors are included in the text in the
section "Ideal Father Role." Specific categories were
divided into instrumental and expressive dimensions. Each
category included descriptions of behaviors generally
characteristic of those for that role and included variables
in the role set which effected the particular role
performance. Table 1 and 2 appear in the text under the
instrumental and expressive ideal role functions and provide concise descriptions of the role functions of these fathering dimensions.

The period of divorce which actually took place before the legal, final divorce was the time when a man's role began to change in relationship to his spouse. It was a gradual transitional period of the changing perceptions each marital partner held of the other. These are clearly presented in Table 3. These stages in the process of role change continue into the period following the divorce in which fathers attempted to clarify new boundaries and establish themselves in new ways to continued effective parenting.

Additionally, fathers who divorced undoubtedly face new parenting problems. These problems impacted on the way in which a father was able to establish himself in the new and independent role he assumed in the parenting relationship with his absent children after the divorce was final. These categories were also used to design the interview schedule used in the current research. Fourteen categories were identified in the literature as those most commonly impacting on fathers' roles after divorce. These were described within the chapter and appear under "Impact of Divorce on Father Role."

With the abundance of information covered in the literature review the purpose of the current research then was to interview some divorced fathers and analyze their responses in terms of the factors covered in the literature.
A number of areas of inquiry were considered in analysis of their responses. One area was the subjects perceptions of their role change and how they went through the process of divorce. Another area of inquiry considered the ways in which they might attempt to fit their new parenting role into that established as the norm for fathers in intact families. A third area investigated was whether or not they were able to accomplish those tasks of fatherhood considered as "ideal". A final area of inquiry considered in analysis of responses was whether or not they developed new parenting techniques to make adjustments to their changed parenting role.

The following chapters deal with how the six fathers in this research perceived their changing roles subsequent to divorce and how they went through the process of divorce. Subsequent chapters also deal with whether or not they fit these men in the study fit the ideal father role model established from the literature review and the kinds of parenting variations they developed to parent absent children. Those factors fathers consistently mentioned as impacting on their efforts to maintain their parenting roles will also be identified in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 3

THE SAMPLE, INTERVIEW SCHEDULE, AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The purposes of this study were to examine how men perceived their relationships to their children after divorce when they did not have legal physical custody, to examine how they were able to meet the role expectations of parenting in twelve categories ideally expected of fathers in intact families, what new variations in parenting they developed, and what factors they consistently reported as those which impacted on their efforts to parent in the absence of custody. In this chapter are described the procedures used to collect the information to accomplish the goals of the research. Also described are the sample, the schedule developed to obtain data, the method of administering the questions in the personal interviews, and the procedures used to analyze the collected data.

The Sample

The sample was originally drawn from the San Joaquin County Clerk's office in the Court House located in Stockton, California. Research subjects were to be divorced fathers residing in San Joaquin County. The sample requirements were the following: 1) the father had not received legal physical custody of his child/children, 2) the children were not yet 18 years of age, 3) the father had visitation rights, 4) and the father lived close enough to the children to be able to
exercise his visitation rights.

Approximately 100 files were selected from the dissolution of marriage shelves at the County Court House. From this source, twenty files appeared to contain records of marriage dissolution in which the fathers might fit the sample criteria. After searching the telephone directory and finding only six of these individuals listed, a search of the City Directory located in the Stockton Public Library was made. With added information from this source, one father was located who fit the requirements for the sample.

It appears that fathers who divorce, and who in most cases move out of their family home, do not immediately establish a permanent residence. Rather, they may move from one residence to another. A part of this may be due to changes in employment. Some fathers may even move out of town so that their telephone numbers may change. These combined factors may then make information, which had been recorded in the dissolution of marriage files, obsolete within a short time following their divorce.

Due to the small number (one) of fathers meeting sample qualifications, the remaining fathers were drawn from other sources in the community. This included individuals who fit the research criteria and who responded to a research notice placed in a local paper (see Appendix 1), and through word of mouth. The advertisement in the local newspaper produced (approximately 100) responses, not only from divorced fathers, but from other interested persons as well. These
included ex-wives, women cohabiting with divorced fathers, and grandmothers.

An attempt was made to limit the number of miles (10) between the father's and child's home hoping to maximize the probability that the father would exercise his visitation rights. This number was later revised since many fathers explained that longer traveling distances had little effect on visitation. They did continue to see their children even though they lived more than ten miles from them. The range was then set to include distances up to 65 miles between the father's and child's residences. The average distance was 18 miles.

The research advertisement in the newspaper yielded 18 potential subjects. Due to extensive interviews, ranging in time from three to four hours, and the large amount of data generated in each interview (a total of 600 pages of verbatim transcribed material), the researcher limited the study to six fathers.

Working from the compiled list of fathers' names which had been made from the research advertisement and from word of mouth referrals, potential subjects were called on the telephone (see Appendix 2) in the same order in which they appeared on the list. Some who were reached no longer fit the sample criteria. For example, they had gained custody of their children or were no longer able to visit their children since the ex-wife and children had moved out of state.

An unexpected response came from most fathers when
originally approached. It was related to the fact that the researcher was female and doing research concerning divorced fathers. The following are examples of these reactions to the female researcher: "Before I say a word to you I want to know if you are some kind of 'women's liber' or something, 'cause if you are I'm not telling you a damned thing," and "If you are doing this for the ex-wife's benefit, I won't even give you the time of day, but if it's for a man's point of view, I'd love to help you out because fathers really get the shit end of the stick." With assurance that the researcher was interested in hearing what fathers had to say concerning their divorce and how they felt about their relationships to their absent children, fathers became fully cooperative and eager to take part in the study.

Some men, after being told they did not meet sample qualifications, attempted to hedge on the information they had already given, altering it in an attempt to be included. The amount and rich quality of the information provided by the men who were interviewed, their willingness to be open and accurate, and the extent to which they cooperated, reflected their apparent need to express their point of view about fathering their absent children, the pain they felt surrounding the divorce, and its effect on their lives and the lives of their children, and the extent to which it had, or would have, an effect on a second marriage. The expressed need to have an empathetic woman who was not emotionally involved in their experiences, who would not be judgmental
but rather listen to them was reflected in such responses as, "You know, since you are a woman doing this research, nobody will be able to say it's a bunch of bull-shit... like they could if it was a man," and, "I wish more women would listen to what a man has to say about divorce and how he feels about support and his kids, like you do, but people always think the father is the bad guy."

As a result, fathers were eager to disclose more about their lives. Each expressed the desire to return for more questioning and displayed a willingness to join a discussion group in which divorced fathers could meet for mutual support.

The selection of the sample was achieved by a method which is not random. It is not generalizable. It reflects only the views of the six divorced fathers in the present study and somewhat resembles a number of case studies in its detailed analysis. However, it is considered appropriate in the exploratory theory which guided the research techniques used in this study. The researcher sought to generate hypotheses rather than prove or disprove existing hypotheses. Weiss has referred to this as a wholistic strategy and stated that:

The "wholistic approach" is essentially exploratory, hypothesis generating, therefore preliminary to the more definitive, hypothesis testing analytical approach...It serves as a description limited to a particular setting...It does not require a great many
examples of one particular type of organization. What is needed is a density of information and detailed work on a small number of cases selected on the basis of some particular purpose (1966, p. 199).

An attempt was made to obtain fathers who had been divorced for one to five years. This decision was based on research findings that they would be better able to respond to questions surrounding the divorce, their children, and the relationships once the initial stress was over and the period of adjustment had been long enough to allow their lives to stabilize beyond the trial and error period (Hamilton, 1977; Schlesinger & Todres, 1976; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1979). It might also allow them to answer from a perspective unclouded by the natural bias arising from the immediacy of their divorce (Hunt & Hunt, 1976; Weiss, 1979).

Once fathers agreed to participate in the research, they were given a choice of locations where they could meet with the researcher, and appointments were then set. Some interviews took place during the day and some in early evening. The interviews took place at various community locations, one at the San Joaquin County Library conference room, one at the local Y.M.C.A., two at the curriculum library at the University of the Pacific, and the remaining two in a small office at the University of the Pacific. Interview meetings were scheduled for one to three hours but were allowed to continue if fathers felt a need for more time or if clarification of questions was required. They lasted
an average of three and one-half hours.

Table 4 presents demographical descriptions of the six subjects. The age of men in the sample ranged from 28 to 57 with an average age of 37. The age at which they had been emancipated from their parents' home ranged from 16 to 25. The average age of emancipation was 19. The age at which they had first married ranged from 18 to 35. Their first wives had ranged in age from 17 to 27 at the time of marriage, with an average of 20.5 years.

Fathers' educations ranged from high school to college graduation. Some had finished high school and entered the military service. Four had served in the service at some time in their lives. One had planned to continue his education beyond high school but had to change his plans when his father died and his mother became seriously ill. He then remained at home to work and help his mother and younger siblings. He was currently completing college requirements.

Their annual incomes ranged from $11,000 to $40,000, with most in the $11,000 to $20,000 bracket. Only one, who was self-employed, was in the $31,000 to $40,000 bracket.

There were five Caucasians and one Black in the sample. Some added "Polish," "Mixed Breed - Spanish," or "German" to their self descriptions. Others simply added "American." These fathers had a total of seven children, four girls and three boys who ranged in age from six to 15 years. One father had two children; the other fathers had one child each.
### TABLE 4
**FATHER'S DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Interview</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age married</strong></td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
<td>His Wife's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of marriage</strong></td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>4 1/2 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current marital status</strong></td>
<td>remarried</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>remarried</td>
<td>divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education level</strong></td>
<td>high school; some college course work</td>
<td>high school; some college course work</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>college - B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td>claims adjuster; unemployed</td>
<td>welder</td>
<td>polisher</td>
<td>self-employed shop</td>
<td>maintenance man</td>
<td>police officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximate yearly income</strong></td>
<td>$11,000-$20,000</td>
<td>$21,000-$30,000</td>
<td>$21,000-$30,000</td>
<td>$11,000-$20,000</td>
<td>$11,000-$20,000</td>
<td>$31,000-$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic description</strong></td>
<td>caucasian</td>
<td>caucasian</td>
<td>caucasian</td>
<td>black</td>
<td>caucasian</td>
<td>caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of absent children</strong></td>
<td>1 female, 8 yrs.</td>
<td>1 male, 12 yrs.</td>
<td>1 male, 8 yrs.</td>
<td>2 females, 10 &amp; 15</td>
<td>1 male, 6 yrs.</td>
<td>1 female, 6 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximate distance between father and child's residence</strong></td>
<td>5 miles</td>
<td>25 miles</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
<td>2 miles</td>
<td>65 miles</td>
<td>6 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father's reported central feeling concerning absent children as outcome of divorce</strong></td>
<td>&quot;loved her; glad I had her in spite of divorce&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;child doesn't have a fair chance&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;no child of divorce is as well off as child in intact family&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;they don't get proper mothering - I love them&quot;</td>
<td>regret for not being able to spend more time with child</td>
<td>&quot;I'm a failure as a father, my child rejects me, pressures me; I am helpless to change our relationship&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How did father see life turning out when he first married?</strong></td>
<td>&quot;as something new to try - I had a bad attitude&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;ideal - like T.V.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;ideally - like T.V.; set for life&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;ideally, I'm embarrassed to say, like T.V.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;that it might fail, I was unsure about marriage&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What was his life's dream? (at time of marriage)</strong></td>
<td>&quot;to just roll along&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;to have a son and wife; family to share with&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;marriage is forever, I'll make mine better husband and father&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;to be a good provider, make my own apartment&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;to have a career through the service that I enjoyed&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;to be educated and have my own apartment&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the six divorced fathers in the sample, four were still single and two were remarried but had no natural children with their second wives. Two were currently living with women who had children from previous marriages.

The parents of the respondents in the sample generally had marriages of long duration. The range was four to 40 years, with an average of 21 years. One had ended in divorce after four years. Table 5 presents descriptive data on the father's family background.

The Interview Schedule

Data regarding fathers' perceptions of the ideal father role and the process and impact of divorce were collected through tape-recorded interviews in which the investigator used a set of questions generated from the literature related to the study. Fathers gave individual responses. A consent form (Appendix 3) was read and signed immediately prior to the opening of the interview.

The interview schedule (see Appendix 4) was developed by the researcher for use in the study. It was designed to serve as a structured guide for gathering data pertinent to the study. The questions evolved from the researcher's original concept over a period of two years as a result of numerous readings in the literature concerning the problem and countless informal interviews and discussions with community members who had empirical experience with divorce, its processes, and with the legal dissolution of marriage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Father's Descriptions of Family Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality best recalled about his family</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: Parents had unstable relationship: each had history of mental problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: They were &quot;not close.&quot; It was not really a family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: They were &quot;not close&quot; and father drank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: They were close parents' relationship was &quot;good&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5: We were &quot;not close knit,&quot; kids were on their own at early age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6: Not enough touching; parents were very cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of his parents' marriage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: 40 years never divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: 40 years never divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: 25-30 years never divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: 15-20 years never divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5: 3-4 years ending in divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6: 24 years never divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes father would have made in his parents' child-rearing methods?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: Given dad more courage and dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: Had family do more activities together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: Parents should have been more open—both parents should not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: Parents should have taught him more about a man's role in marriage, particularly about female sexual expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5: Should have shown more emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6: Parents should not work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents' approval/disapproval of his marriage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1: Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: Disapproval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4: Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5: Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6: Approval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A list of father role behaviors most frequently mentioned in the literature as those performed by fathers in intact families was compiled and used to form an "ideal" father role. These behaviors were grouped into the following twelve categories:

1. Provider (I)
2. Socializer (I)
3. Protector (I)
4. Moral Developer (I)
5. Model (I)
6. Cognitive Developer (I)
7. Disciplinarian (I)
8. Object of Identification (I)
9. Expressive Role Model (E)
10. Crisis Manager (E)
11. Provider of Emotional Support (E)
12. Erotic Role Model (E)

These were categorized into the instrumental (I) and expressive (E) role functions as generally defined in the literature and originally defined by Parsons and Bales (1955).

A list of the most frequent steps in the process of divorce and the effects on the father-child relationship was compiled. This list generated further questions pertinent to the study. The common pattern used, namely that of the evolution of a nuclear family to a binuclear family, was the one described by Ahrons (1980).

Finally, a list of problem areas most frequently faced by divorced fathers was gathered from information in the literature. This list also generated more questions for use in designing the interview schedule.

During the early evolution of the interview schedule the researcher included some preliminary items which were directly and indirectly concerned with the current research.
This was done to obtain clues for the generation of new theories, to make specific research questions less obvious, to desensitize fathers, and to maximize free and honest responses as the interview progressed. This data was essentially of a demographic nature. It also included some of the father's family background. (See Appendix 4)

The closing portion of the interview was designed to give fathers an opportunity to express any concerns about the interview schedule, its effectiveness or noneffectiveness, and to solicit feedback concerning what they felt might have been missed or should have been covered more thoroughly.

The last part of the interview was designed as a "Projection-Synthesis Memo" (see Appendix 4) with an opportunity for subject and researcher to achieve some sense of closure. The responses were recorded immediately following the informal interview, and following the respondent's departure. The researcher then added her final observations and impressions in the space provided in the Projection-Synthesis Memo. These concerned the data just collected, the demeanor of the respondent, and any other factors which might be considered in subsequent research.

These various sections of the interview schedule were integrated to form the final version, titled "Interview Schedule: Divorced Fathers' Perceptions of their Relationship to Their Absent Children" (Appendix 4).
Analysis of Interviews

Upon completion of the meeting, the analysis was started. Each interview was transcribed verbatim. Forty separate behaviors which could be identified from the literature and commonly cited as "ideal" father behaviors served to focus analysis of the interview material. Each of the forty behaviors was placed on an individual 5" by 8" card. One set of these cards was prepared for each interview. Each card contained space for data taken from the verbatim transcripts and included the following headings: 1) What does the respondent do? (in terms of the specific behavior), and 2) What is his logic? (How does he handle the situation in terms of parenting, i.e., his "rationale.")

Father's behaviors were coded as a "yes" or a "no," with "yes" assigned if the researcher determined that they met the criteria for that particular behavior and "no" if they did not. The researcher based her decision of whether or not they met the criteria for that particular behavior on information they reported. This was compared with information from the literature to determine whether or not the father displayed behavior consistent with that "ideal" role. (See Appendix 5 for information about the researcher's decisions as to whether a father did or did not fill a particular ideal father role.) The responses and the researcher's assigned "yes" or "no" were then charted to serve as a visual aid to identify any patterns or trends which might emerge (Appendix 6).
The remainder of the questions from the original interview schedule were used in searching for the possible existence of other trends and to develop hypotheses for further research, conclusions and implications from the data; i.e., did fathers proceed through the steps of divorce as most had according to the literature review, and were there any new variations or techniques of parenting as a single father which were brought out.

Each of the respondent's cards were compiled into a packet with an introductory card. It provided immediate information as to the respondent's demographics and father's self-descriptive data, i.e., what was his life's dream? why did he take part in the interview (motivation)? what was his central feeling concerning the divorce in regard to his absent child and his subsequent relationship with them? His perception of the ideal father was also noted. Finally, the length of the interview was recorded.

An attempt was made, based on information from the packets and the remainder of the interview, to examine the extent to which the respondents matched the ideal father role behaviors, whether there were barriers to resolution and possible variations and techniques of parenting which they might have developed while attempting to fill their roles as divorced fathers and which might have separated or distinguished them from ideal fathers in intact nuclear families in terms of their parenting relationships with their offspring.
Summary

The third chapter of this study has reviewed the following: 1) the purpose of the research; 2) the method of drawing the sample and a description of the sample; 3) the development of the interview schedule; 4) the method of administering the interview; and 5) procedures for analysis of the data. Chapter 4 will present the findings from the analysis of the data drawn from this research.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The major purposes of this research were to investigate how divorced fathers perceived their relationships to their children when they did not have legal physical custody, how they were able to meet role expectations of parenting in twelve categories ideally expected of fathers in intact families, what variations of parenting they developed, and what factors they consistently mentioned as impacting on their efforts to parent in the absence of custody. An analysis was made of their responses to forty questions concerning ideal father role behaviors identified from the review of the literature (Appendix 5). This chapter will describe five sets of findings from the interview data. They are: (1) The process of divorce and how this affected the implementation of the father's role. At the time of the interview, fathers in this sample were in the final stages of divorce, systemic reorganization, and family redefinition. These were stages in the divorce process which Ahrons (1980) identified as those which fathers commonly go through when divorce occurs. (2) The second set of findings will describe the ideal role functions. Examples of fathering types will also be pointed out in this section. (3) The third set of findings deals with the variations in parenting which these fathers used as they attempted to adapt their fathering role.
to their single parent status. These variations of parenting were identified through analysis of the verbatim interviews. Two broadly divergent styles of parenting will be detailed more fully in the chapter, and will be labeled Type I and Type II. These parenting types seemed to evolve from how fathers perceived themselves and their children as a result of the divorce. (4) The fourth set of findings will describe certain factors which impacted on fathering role functions. These factors were identified in the literature as those typically impacting on the roles of fathers who are divorced and parenting absent children. (5) The fifth set of findings will describe some general themes based on certain factors which were consistently brought up by fathers in the interview data.

It must be emphasized that results of the study are not generalizable. It is undetermined how they may reflect the views of other divorced men. For example, these results may be biased simply because a certain type of father may be inclined to answer a research advertisement. Those males who were willing to share information with a researcher about a personal part of their lives (divorce) may also be fathers who are particular personality types. For example, these fathers wanted to perform their parenting roles as adequately as possible even though they did not have custody. They may have been unique in regard to the degree to which they were concerned for their children's welfare and the father-child relationship. These concerns may not be characteristic of
all other divorced fathers.

The conclusions of this study are not based on quantitative data. It is a qualitative study in which conclusions are based on the responses these fathers gave to questions in the personal interviews. In addition, conclusions are based on the subjective opinion and professional judgement of the researcher who held long, detailed, and in depth interviews with these fathers. Analysis of responses and conclusions were then based on a gestalt of these factors (fathers' responses to questions, researcher's subjective opinion, and researcher's professional judgement).

Process of Divorce

Introduction

The process of divorce section was included in this research since certain stages included in the divorce process are specifically related to the current research. For example, one stage deals with the fact that fathers need to develop new and independent relationships with their children subsequent to the legal, final divorce. The divorce process also includes descriptions of the gradual role change which occurs even before the legal divorce stage. The first two stages of the divorce process are connected to the current research since they establish the role set from which fathers entered the third stage, which includes the final divorce.

Examining the process of divorce stages also served to
establish how fathers in this sample compared to other fathers who had gone through the role change brought about by their divorce. As fathers were interviewed, their responses to questions which were related to stages in the divorce process led the researcher to the conclusion that these fathers all went through the gradual process of divorce described by Ahrons (1980) with little variation from how other divorced fathers had gone through the common stages. In this respect, the men in this sample were 'normal' for divorced fathers.

At the time of the interview all were in the two final stages of the divorce process: systemic reorganization and family redefinition. These stages are directly related to primary issues in the current research. Specifically, as it was pointed out earlier, it is during these final stages that fathers attempt to establish independent relationships with their children. Additionally, they attempt to establish new ways to continue effective parenting. It is also during these stages of the divorce process that fathers must establish continued interdependence with their ex-mates. The degree to which divorced fathers are able to accomplish the tasks in the various stages of the divorce process is related to their ability to adjust to the on-going role change which occurs during and subsequent to the legal, final divorce stage. The adequacy of their accomplishment of tasks in the divorce process is also related to their ability to successfully establish themselves in independent
relationships with their absent children. (This issue was previously expanded upon in the section, "Impact of Divorce on Father's Role", Chapter 2). These fathers were not a representative group of all divorced fathers. They all had some common factors in their parenting. The common factors emerged from their responses to questions concerning the stages of the divorce process as they were collected in the interview.

The following section describes the stages of divorce and how these fathers went through them. All fathers do not go through the stages in exactly the same sequence, but an attempt has been made to identify common steps in the divorce process as presented in table 2. These common steps will help to organize the responses to interview questions.

**Stages of Divorce Process**

**Individual Cognition**

**Recognition of a Problem.** Some fathers recognized that there was a problem in the marriage when they noticed a difference in the behavior patterns of their partners while others were informed of extra-marital affairs. They noticed that wives cleaned the house at different times of the day and observed that there was an increase in activity by the wife, i.e.:

She never wanted to stay home...party all the time, and she'd do the dishes before she went to work in the morning, which she never had before. Later, I found
out it was so the house would look real nice when she brought her boss home at noon for lunch.

Blaming. These fathers reported that they too had had extra-marital affairs. The difference was that when wives found out, they acted very quickly to get a divorce, while fathers did not. The latter were confronted with divorce papers before they had time to "even think about it."

Fathers in this study whose wives had affairs, or who suspected their wives were having an affair reported that they did not confront or blame their mates immediately, hoping to improve the marriage and stay in it.

Attempts to Cope. One way in which these fathers attempted to cope with their marital problems was to suffer and wait it out. When this approach did not prove to be a solution, and they finally brought problems into the open, confronting the wives with their suspicions, arguments always occurred. It was at this time that fathers generally began to question the expectations they had held about marriage. Before they were married, they reported that they believed their marriage would be perfect, that they would seldom have arguments, and that their love would last forever. As problems in the relationship continued, their role of husband changed as they found they could not tolerate certain behaviors in their wives. They reported that they were hurt and shocked when they realized wives were having an affair. Their role changed because they began to withdraw emotional
investment into the husband-wife relationship even though they had entered marriage thinking that their loving relationship would never change. At the time they were divorced, these men felt that it had been affairs, whether theirs or their partner's, which had broken up the marriage.

**Metacognition**

**Recognition Problem Exists in Family System.** With the passage of time they generally began to identify other factors which they could not tolerate and which led to divorce. Blaming focused on problems within the relationship. Only one father was actually able to re-evaluate the circumstances surrounding the divorce and identify the relationship as the source of problems rather than blaming an affair which had taken place. For the most part, they did not recognize that it was their perceptions of how they should perform their role as husbands, and how they expected their wives to perform their roles, which were discrepant and which, consequently, resulted in relationship problems in the marriage.

Most rationalized that reasons other than the relationship were the causes of divorce. These other reasons included blaming other family members for interfering in the marriage, i.e., "My mother was always butting into our business, so when we split, she said she knew all along my wife was no good." "Looking back, I think she fell for her boss...who gave her the attention I didn't."

One reason which these fathers identified as a problem
in the family system, and which resulted in divorce, was lack of attention to their wives needs. Since these fathers did not hold the same role expectations for themselves post-marriage that they had held before marriage, after they were married they changed the way in which they performed their role by reducing the amount of attention they gave their wives.

All these fathers had entered into marriage with an idealistic, romantic view of what a marriage relationship would be like. They expected a monogamous marriage, or at the minimum, the pretense of one. They avoided confronting wives who they suspected of affairs in hopes that they could salvage their marriages i.e., "I kinda knew something (an affair) was going on, but I never said anything about it to her... hoped it would blow over... later I had to confront her because it was so blatant... everyone in town knew about it." It seemed these men were concerned with conforming to the role norms of society and were attempting to avoid the sanctions which nonconformity might incur. They apparently had needs to maintain the marriage relationship and the gratification they received from it. They were not willing to take an active role in which they would try to protect their interests in the intact family. They avoided confronting their wives until they could no longer tolerate situations which they felt were detrimental to the marriage. Their responses led to the conclusion that they were passive, waiting to see what impact the problematic situations would
bring. Only when their problems were no longer private, were they willing to take action and confront their wives.

Potential Solutions. A number of solutions were tried to save the marriages. These included going to court-appointed marriage counselors or forgiving the spouse. Some of the fathers tried to temporarily separate and then come back together. None of these attempted solutions worked.

Failure to Achieve Harmony. Two fathers tried to get relief from the on-going stress and worry about their failing marriages. They "went to Lake Tahoe to gamble" or "went to Reno... to get away from the same old routine." They hoped to get fresh perspectives on their problems in this way, i.e., "I thought I'd relax and think it over... that when I came back she'd get over it (being angry)." With failure of the solutions which they tried, divorce ultimately did occur.

Systemic Separation

Divorce and Dividing Property. The division of property was a part of the divorce process which fathers felt had been unfair to them. They stated that they perceived the legal system as "all for women," and the actuality of the legal divorce and the loss of their homes as a shattering of their life's dreams. Their feelings are indicated in the following response:

Just one time I'd like to have a real family... where we'd do things together, share, and it would be like on
T.V.... she sold the house 'cause she had too many feelings connected to it, but I had feelings too, and I could have lived in it. We built that house and it was part of my dream... that, and to retire at forty.

Responses such as these were common and led to the conclusion that all these fathers had idealistic, romantic views of marriage and family life. Another response was: "I really got the shaft. Even when I was on disability for a back injury, the courts thought I should be able to keep up with the same support payment." These fathers perceived such problems as obstacles which made performance of their parenting role more difficult than when they had been married. They reported that society seemed to expect no less of their performance of their fathering role even though they had more obstacles to overcome once divorced. They felt cheated and misunderstood, yet they reported that they too expected more of themselves as parents as a result of the divorce.

Systemic Reorganization

Attempts to Recapture Old Rituals. Men in this sample tried to maintain what they could of the relationship they had with their children before divorce. These fathers attempted to keep some of the positive memories they had of relationships within the marriage. They tried to recapture family rules and rituals, i.e., going to their children's birthday parties or attending holiday dinners to which they had been invited. They were unable to accomplish this goal,
not due to friction between themselves and their ex-wives, but between themselves and members of the wife's family.

Continued Inter-dependence of Ex-mates. "She and I were okay, but her dad and brother had a few (drinks) and started telling me what an S.O.B. I had been... It just wasn't worth the hassle, so I never tried it again."

Autonomy and Redefining Self-Concepts. Some fathers eventually were able to achieve emotional detachment from their partners. One was able to visit his ex-wife, her husband and his child and reported that they were all able to "get along". An exception to this did occur in a case where neither partner had remarried. The father was cohabiting with a woman but, he was not happy in the relationship: "... (I am) only staying on with her 'cause she's footing half the rent, and I can't afford to move out yet." To his knowledge, his ex-wife had never dated since the divorce, and he was still considering remarriage to her. He felt she was likely to accept, stating:

Things change, people change. I probably changed, and I know she changed... (she) regrets she acted so quickly, but if I'd go over there and say, 'Let's go to the Lake and get married,' she'd probably say yes.

Emotional Withdrawal. Fathers had incorporated a great part of their romantic, idealistic perceptions of marriage into their life's dream and described their dream as follows:
I thought it was for good, that we'd get a home, have kids, and live happily ever after [laughing in an embarrassed way]. ...(It) sounds silly, but I thought it was going to be just like families on T.V.

When their marriages failed, they said they felt cheated, guilty, depressed and angry. One father, who still felt bitter, refused to send his support check to the District Attorney's office as directed by the courts. Rather, he confided that he still sends the check to his ex-wife who then must forward it to the District Attorney's office and wait two weeks before she can collect her money. He explained, "In this way I can inconvenience her." This particular father reported that he believed it was a father's role to be dominant in the family and that this was particularly so in regard to financial issues and decisions. He apparently was attempting to maintain a dominant financial role function even after divorce. By holding up support payments he reported that he was, to a certain degree, continuing to enact some of the expectations he perceived as part of his fathering role. In this respect, his expectations continued to be the same as they had been previous to the divorce.

Maintaining Child-Centered Relationships. All but two fathers had developed independent, child-centered relationships and were establishing new ways to continue effective parenting. Those who did not were being treated as though they were still psychologically present. Ex-wives
would wait for ex-husbands to do the punishing of children, i.e., "I told her, you have to take care of it (discipline) when it happens." Fathers would be held in a dominant position by a dependent ex-wife. For example:

I can never get an agreement with her. She just waits for me to take care of everything, so even though I don't have custody, I have all the responsibility... As they are getting older, it's easing up.

As the result of such interactions and the context in which a father's role was performed, most of these fathers roles changed as they began to have role conflict and confusion. They explained that since, in many cases, their wives had sought the divorce, it should be her role responsibility to deal with the problems they perceived children having as a result of the divorce. This conclusion was reached due to questions fathers asked regarding problems in childrearing such as: "She wanted it [the divorce], so why make me pay for it now?" or "She thought she would have it easy, but now when it's rough, why call me?"

These fathers apparently felt that if mothers were to have custody and dominance over major childrearing decisions and if fathers were to be treated as visitors, then the expectations of a father's performance of various fathering roles should be reduced in direct proportion to their reduction of dominance over and lack of custody of the children.
Family Redefinition.

Defining New Families to Community. Two barriers these fathers experienced in coming to terms with the reality and finality of the divorce related to redefining themselves and redefining their families to the community. There was role stress about how to describe their new divorced status. One father seemed to try to solve his dissonance by responding: "Hell, we are just 'divorced.'... Nowadays there's probably more kids whose parents are divorced than kids in families who haven't been divorced."

Later responses seemed inconsistent with answers reported earlier in the interview. They indicated that their underlying feelings about divorce were painful and detrimental to them and their children. The following composite response is an example:

I worry that she might move away and take the kids with her, so I couldn't see them... That's one reason I try hard not to 'piss her off.'... I think that would be a triple shame added to the burden (of divorce)... Kids made fun of her and said, 'You act like you are from a divorced family.'

These types of comments led to the conclusion that fathers in this study may not have been a representative group of divorced fathers. They were all concerned about the welfare of their absent children, wanted to maintain their parenting role relationship with them, and wanted to continue to be effective parents.
Establishing New Ways to Continue Effective Parenting.

All fathers expressed the fear of the custodial parent moving to another state, making it difficult for them to maintain independent and continuing relationships with their children. They resented the role power their ex-wives had over the children and her ability to manipulate the relationship between fathers and children. They all described themselves as the ultimate decision maker while they were married. They had been satisfied to share with women in both minor and major decisions, but reserved the right to be the "boss" when compromises could not be reached.

I wanted to save some money, but she wanted to put it all in the bank... We needed a new television set, she just wanted to have it repaired, so I finally (after much debate) just went out and bought a new one and brought it home.

After divorce it was common for these fathers to expect to continue to perform the dominant role which they had held in the intact family. As a result of divorce, when ex-wives had custody and more opportunity to influence children than fathers had, fathers in this sample reacted to this role change with role conflict and confusion.

Redefining Self-Concepts and Autonomy. Some of these fathers reported that they resented some of the women's roles and were dissatisfied with their own. Even though most fathers in the sample held some positive attitudes about their ex-wives and continued to demonstrate a degree of
respect for them, when asked how they would prefer to come back if they were reincarnated, the answer was, for some of these fathers, "As a woman." Reasons for this varied and included perceptions that women's roles were easier and held more rewards, i.e., "Well, I've never tried it (life) as a woman, so I'll say I'd come back a female if that choice was made available to me." Another said:

Well, I'm really burned out on marriage. My wife didn't have anything when I met her and she got plenty... Men have to be responsible, and I find women are out to get what they can from you... If you don't want to deal with loneliness then you have to give them what they want, so they win!

The ideas of being autonomous and re-defining themselves in their new single role identity, once the legal divorce had been finalized, was also a difficult part of the divorce process for fathers for other reasons. They described the difficulties they had experienced in getting material objects together following the separation i.e., "I didn't have a stove, refrigerator or anything, and I'd never had to worry about that before." One father did not have this problem since he had been in the military service and "just moved into the barracks." Apparently these men did not perceive furnishing a home as part of their role. When faced with this role expectation post-divorce, it became an obstacle which increased the stress of adapting to their role change brought about by the divorce and as a result they
experienced role conflict.

Problems in Redefining Self-Concepts and Establishing Autonomy. Having been part of a married couple, some men in the sample had difficulty in forming new, single images of themselves. Once they were divorced it was often difficult to perceive themselves as autonomous. One reported that he continued in interdependence with his ex-mate with some difficulty. While continuing to be psychologically present in his ex-wife's and child's family unit, he continued to parent as if he were still a part of the intact family. He did this rather than establishing new ways to continue effective parenting—one of the steps in family redefinition. For example, he went to his ex-wife's home whenever she called to report the child was misbehaving. He then punished the child and left. This father and his ex-spouse seemed to attempt to maintain what they perceived as their separate role expectations. For example, that a father is expected to fulfill the role of disciplinarian and that this role is not one a mother is generally expected to fill.

None of these men had actually given up their dream of a stable, long-term marriage and early retirement. What did seem to change was that they were expecting more of themselves in their roles as divorced, noncustodial fathers than when they were originally married. Responses leading to this conclusion included father's reports about the importance of having more formal education, i.e., "I won't try to get custody until I finish my college degree," to
owning a home of their own: "I told my son as soon as I get caught up with back support and taxes and get a home of my own, I'm going to have him with me more."

Redefining Selves; Establishing Autonomy. Through finishing formal education, or becoming financially more secure than they had been immediately following the divorce, they attempted to redefine themselves and establish their autonomy. They reported that they did this to insure their chances of successfully maintaining their relationships with their children and continuing to be effective parents.

Concern for Children. There were no fathers in the sample who felt that divorce had not hurt the family. Rather, they felt that although it seemed to be the only alternative for the parents, children were innocent bystanders who had been cheated. They all felt they had to accept something less than perfect for the father-child relationship as a result of the divorce. They continued to hope for a family which would resemble the intact family they had in marriage and reported that they did not give up their dream of such a family. Whether remarried or single, they continued to strive for their idealized view of marriage which they attempted to restructure to include their absent children in as many ways as possible. This included hopes of either increasing the amount of time children would spend with them or possibly gaining physical custody of their children in the future.
In summary, it can be noted that the psycho/social process of divorce is a gradual one in which fathers' role change begins to take place long before the legal, final divorce. All fathers in the sample went through the stages within the divorce process which Ahrons (1980) described. They went through the stages in the divorce process with little variation from how other divorced fathers had gone through these common stages. In this respect they were normal for divorced fathers. Few fathers were able to identify the husband-wife relationship as the source of problems which led to the divorce but placed blame on other factors. All fathers were in the final stage of the process and were attempting to develop new ways to parent their children.

These fathers were not a representative group of fathers but all had some common factors in their parenting. The six fathers in this sample were concerned about the welfare of their absent children. They wanted to maintain their relationships with them and continue to be effective parents. All had idealistic, romantic views of marriage and family life. None felt divorce was better than staying in the marriage as far as children were concerned. They all felt they had to accept something less than perfect for the father-child relationship as a result of the divorce. All looked to a time when visitation time would be increased or they would gain custody or co-custody. The next section describes how these fathers tried to meet the role
The Ideal Father Role Functions

The following section identifies the ideal role functions and how fathers fulfilled functions through variations in their parenting. Parenting types do not distinguish between fulfilling a role or not. Rather, types distinguish how fathers used various characteristic behaviors in their attempts to fill certain role functions.

Functions are characteristic behaviors commonly cited to be those of specific role categories i.e., socializer, moral developer, provider. Fathers either met these role functions or they did not, so this, in an ideal sense, was a measure of their adequacy as fathers. For example, to further clarify the distinction between type and function, one can look at the "provider" role category. The role function would be: to work at a job in which the father earns money. How the father got the job, the "type" of process he went through to get the job, does not necessarily determine whether or not he will do adequate work to insure he fills the job description, the function. There may be some correlation between these two factors (type and function) but the current small sample research can not establish this with any certainty. The fact of correlation between type and function might be established in a
quantitative research project of larger scope.

The following section describes how these fathers attempted to parent their absent children and the varied techniques they developed in attempting to perform the demands of their parenting roles in the twelve ideal father role categories which had been compiled from the literature review. The forty questions concerning ideal father role behaviors were grouped into twelve areas as follows:

Instrumental Items (I)
1. Provider 1,3,10
2. Socializer 2
3. Protector 23,25,33,36,37,40
4. Moral Developer 5,8,9,18
5. Cognitive Developer 15,16,30,35
6. Disciplinarian 6,7,34,39
7. Model 4,11,12,22,28,31,32,38
8. Object of Identification 13,20,21

Expressive Behavior Items (E)
9. Expressive 17,19,29
10. Crisis Manager 14
11. Emotional Support 24,27
12. Erotic Role Model 26

These instrumental and expressive roles were identified in the literature. The research continually stated that certain behaviors were consistent with specific roles. They are not the researcher's distinctions or descriptions but were gleaned from the literature review for this study.

In order for the current research to establish how divorced fathers perceived and performed their parenting roles it was necessary to establish what behaviors are ordinarily expected of fathers in intact families. These behaviors, once identified and compiled from the review of the literature, were then labeled as ideal father role
behaviors. They were described as ideal since fathers are not expected to perform and fulfill all the roles in order to be considered adequate fathers.

Since the two types of parenting variations evolved from the response patterns concerning the ideal father roles, as the instrumental and expressive role functions are discussed, some specific examples of each parenting technique will be pointed out through discussion and analysis of responses. The various examples also serve to demonstrate how the parenting techniques were used and how they seemed to evolve from the father's perception of the divorce and his philosophy of childrearing.

The following section will also designate various characteristics of each parenting type in order to clarify exactly how fathers used the two parenting variations within their efforts to perform the ideal roles. The characteristics of the parenting types will also be expanded upon in a subsequent section of this chapter.

In this section the responses to the instrumental and expressive functions will be described. The descriptions are composites of responses concerning the basic analytic constructs used to analyze the interviews, i.e., Provider. Occasional specific responses and quotes are also used in order to clarify meaning or make a particular point.

These fathers tried to meet the role expectations of parenting in the twelve categories identified in the literature review as those ideally expected of fathers in
intact families. They were generally able to meet many of the twelve ideal role functions but had more trouble with some roles than with others.

In the instrumental categories they had most problems in serving as models, being objects of identification, and in enacting the disciplinarian role. As these specific roles appear in the following section, they will be analyzed and discussed. This will help to clarify the fact that the problems fathers had were usually related to inadequate time to spend with children, and other factors such as poor cooperation between parents concerning childrearing issues.

Fathers generally had more trouble performing the role functions in the expressive role categories than in the instrumental role categories. They were determined to maintain relationships with their absent children and continue to perform their roles adequately.

In the expressive roles they had most problems in the management of crisis situations, being providers of emotional support, and demonstrating expressiveness. Many of the problems surrounding expressive roles were related to the father's perception that he had lost role power he had held previous to the final divorce, financial factors, father's perception of the reality of the divorce, its effect on the child and father-child relationship, role ambiguity, and role confusion.

The categories in which they experienced most trouble in the expressive area will be pointed out as they occur in