

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: CHILD SUPPORT CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY DIVORCED

MALE AND FEMALE PARENTS TO THE DIRECT

CONSUMPTION COSTS OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN

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Identification of the contribution made by the divorced male and female parent to the direct consumption costs of dependent children was the central purpose of the research study. Relationships between the parents' contributions to the consumption costs and specified demographic characteristics at the time of divorce, methods of determining support and property settlements received were investigated. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Estimated Urban Family Budgets for the Seattle-Everett, Washington area and Revised Equivalence Scales served as the basis for determining the families' level of living and the consumptions costs of dependent children.

A sample of 242 divorce cases involving minor children from Marion County, Oregon between 1 January 1975 and 31 December 1976 was randomly drawn from the Vital Statistics

Section of the Oregon State Health Division in Portland, Oregon.

In half of these cases the male parent's name was drawn; in the other half the female parent's name was drawn. A mailed questionnaire concerning the family's child support and economic situation was sent to the above sample. Fifteen responses from male parents and 30 responses from female parents were received and served as the data base for this research.

Parents' mean age was somewhat over 30 years with both having some post high school education as the median educational level. The mean number of children per family was 2.16. At the time of divorce the families' median income level was between \$12,000 and \$13,999 with 87 percent of the male parents and 51 percent of the female parents employed full time. Male parents generally experienced increases in their income following divorce while responding females reported decreases in income levels. Most male respondents estimated their share of property to be less than half while 50 percent of responding females estimated their share to be more than half.

In 93 percent of the families, the female parent had custody of all the dependent children with the mean amount of child support awarded per dependent child being \$102.50 per month. In two cases the male parent had custody of all the dependent children and in neither case was child support awarded. In one family

each parent had custody of half the family's children with neither receiving child support. In approximately one-third of the families, the non-custodial parent was reported to be paying some expenses for dependent children in addition to child support. The amount of child support awarded was reported to be determined by courts, mutual agreements of parents, lawyers and former spouses. Over half the parents responded that child support paid or received was adequate but in almost all cases no provision was made for increases in the amount of child support awarded.

A difference was observed between the male and female parent's contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children. The parent's contribution to consumption costs was found to be dependent upon the educational level of the female parent, the employment status of the male parent, and the income level of the family. It was not found to be dependent on the number of dependent children in the family, the age of parents, the educational level of the male parent, nor the employment status of the female parent. Data did suggest that a dependency relation might exist between the parent's contribution and the method of determining child support. No dependency was observed between the property settlement at time of divorce received and the parent's contribution to child support.

Child Support Contributions Made by Divorced Male and
Female Parents to the Direct Consumption Costs
of Dependent Children

by

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CHILD SUPPORT CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY DIVORCED MALE
AND FEMALE PARENTS TO THE DIRECT CONSUMPTION
COSTS OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN

I. INTRODUCTION

Children are presumed by law to be dependent and in need of direct, intimate, and continuous care. Responsibilities for a child, for survival, for physical and mental growth, and for eventual adaption to community standards becomes that of the adults in a family whom the law designates parent (19).

The parents' obligation to support their children finds its basis in a general concept of moral responsibility, in the law of nature, in common law and in the statutes of various states. As a judge in an early court case stated, "this (support obligation) is not only the law of the land but the plain dictate of humanity and justice" (27:9).

The most basic obligation of parents toward their children is that of providing sufficient financial support to enable a child to be housed, fed, clothed, educated and given medical care in a manner that satisfies minimum community standards. Beyond the concensus that these "necessities" are required, there appears little agreement as to the actual level of support demanded. Courts have appeared reluctant to set anything but vague and minimum standards, often

only referring to a "decent standard of living" (27:10). Katz, in a review of the law's response to family breakdown, states that: "No where in American law is there a comprehensive statement that adequately describes the full range of the legal responsibilities of parents to children" (27:5).

To some extent parental duties are spelled out in various parts of state statutes, welfare regulations, case law, etc. Study of these laws and regulations indicates that they are expressions of community expectations about parenthood and generally reflect the prevailing middle class mores (27).

Among decisions rendered in Oregon and found in the Oregon Revised Statutes concerning the rights and relationships of parent and child are the following:

Divorce does not terminate the statutory duty of a father to support his minor children. *State v. Langford*, (1918) 90 OR 251, 176 P 197; *Hess v. Hess* (1925) 115 Or 595, 239 P 124; *Bartlett v. Bartlett*, (1944) 175 Or 215, 152 P2d 402; *Levell v. Levell*, (1948) 183 Or 39, 190 P2d 527.

The duty of support includes whatever is necessary for suitable clothing and maintenance according to the station and situation in life of parent and child. *State v. Langford*, (1918) 90 Or 251, 176 P 197.

The obligation of the parent must be measured with reference to his ability and his financial resources. *Id.*

Stipulated property agreement prior to divorce does not relieve parent from statutory obligation to support child, even though divorce decree makes no provision

for support. Hess v. Hess (1925) 115 Or 595,
239 P 124 (36:615).

The great majority of children are being reared in husband-wife families, but the number and proportion have been sliding downward in recent years. According to January, 1977 U.S. Census data, eighty percent of the 65 million children under eighteen years of age in the United States are living with both parents (49). This is a decline from the 85 percent who were living with both parents in 1970. In viewing this data, consideration must be given to the fact that "both parents" does not necessarily mean that they are the child's natural parents. This same data indicate that 15.8 percent of all children under 18 are living with mother only while slightly over one percent live with father only (49). These figures, of course, do not include those single parents and their children who live with a relative or someone else who is classed as the head of that household; for by definition, a single-parent family consists of one parent and dependent children living in the same household.

The single-parent family, it appears, is an ever-increasing phenomenon in contemporary American society. Currently divorce and separation account for the major increase in families with only one parent. About 60 percent of the over one million divorces in 1975 involved children under 18 years of age (54). Until recently,

the divorce rate had been rising faster among couples with children than couples without children (54).

In a recent address on government policy and the family, the then Senator Mondale indicated that currently one in every six children is living in a single-parent family (32). Carter and Glick conservatively predict that from 20 to 25 percent of the children born in the next few years will sometime in their childhood experience parental divorce (54). Bane suggests that two-fifths of American children born in the next decade are likely to experience a marital disruption (1). These predictions are made in a period of declining birth rates. It should also be noted that current statistics reveal that divorcing couples have fewer children than non-divorcing couples (33).

Need for the Study

Divorce ends the marriage relationship between a husband and wife, but it does not end the relationship between both parents and the children of the marriage. Neither does divorce end the obligation of parents to support their children. Now, however, the parents must divide and re-define the child support obligations of each.

Research on the child support obligations of divorced parents is very limited. Available studies suggest that financial help from the absent parent is minimal and that it diminishes over time. However, a relatively new federal law, the Child Support Provisions, has created the fundamentals of an effective child support enforcement system (3). As the parent locator services of this law are perfected, more and more absent parents will be forced to contribute to the support of their families. Many parents, who have not felt in the past a moral obligation to support their families, will now feel a legal obligation to do so. The Child Support Provisions law has significant implications for the division of child support responsibilities.

Oregon statistics for 1975 show 15,563 minor children and 31,052 parents affected by divorce. This compares with a total of 4,737 children in 1960 and 10,803 children in 1970 (34). Obviously, as statistics and literature indicate, a large and increasing number of dependent children are no longer being supported by intact family units but by single and absent parents.

Research is needed on the nature of child support arrangement, such as how they are decided and what their consequences are. Recommendations concerning a parent's obligations to child support can then be responsive to existing problems and in touch with the complexities and variations of actual cases.

Statement of the Problem

Support for children has long been recognized to include both economic and non-economic costs to the parents. One of the most important types of economic costs is the direct consumption costs of children. These costs for children occur whether parents are living together as husband and wife in one household or whether they are divorced, maintaining separate households. The purpose of this study was to survey parents, divorced in Marion County, Oregon, to identify the amount each divorced parent was currently contributing to the direct consumption costs of rearing his/her dependent children. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs was examined in relation to specific demographic characteristics at the time of divorce, methods of determining child support, and property settlements.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the family's child custody, child support and economic situation.
2. identify each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children.

3. determine if the amount of the male or female parent's contribution to the consumption costs was dependent upon specified variables.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no difference between the divorced male and female parent's contribution to the consumption costs of rearing his/her dependent children.
2. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the following selected family characteristics at the time of divorce:
 - a. number of dependent children
 - b. age of the parents
 - c. total income level of the family
 - d. educational level of the parents
 - e. employment status of the parents.
3. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the method of determining child support.

4. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the property settlement received at the time of divorce.

Operational Definition of Terms

CHILD SUPPORT is the amount contributed by the non-custodial parent and awarded to the custodial parent for the care of their dependent children.

CUSTODIAL PARENT is the parent with whom dependent children reside for the greater part of the year or to whom custody was granted by the court.

DEPENDENCY is the state of being conditional upon or influenced by another factor.

DEPENDENT CHILDREN are children considered dependent by the court and placed in the custodial care of one or the other parent at the time of divorce.

DIRECT CONSUMPTION COSTS OF CHILDREN are the direct out-of-pocket expenses parents incur in raising dependent children which include such things as food, clothing, shelter, education, transportation, recreation, medical and dental expenses. These costs are also referred to as consumption costs of children or child rearing costs.

FAMILY BUDGETS are the Bureau of Labor Statistics' estimated average annual costs for an urban family of four at three different levels of living. The budgets are based on a

hypothetical family consisting of an employed husband, age 38, a wife not employed outside the home, an eight year old girl, and a 13 year old boy.

LEVELS OF LIVING are the three economic categories, termed lower, intermediate and higher for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates average, annual, urban family costs.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT is the parent with whom dependent children do not reside for the greater part of the year or to whom custody was not granted by the court.

RESPONDING PARENT is the male or female parent who responded to the questionnaire and supplied the data for their family.

Limitations of the Study

1. Population was restricted to a single locale, Marion County, Oregon, for a specified period of time, January 1, 1975 to December 31, 1976.
2. The responses are limited by the responding parent's recall or knowledge of their family's situation.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to the single-parent family and to child support. The five general topics discussed are: 1) the single-parent family, 2) economic conditions of the single-parent family, 3) child custody, 4) child support, and 5) child rearing costs.

The Single-Parent Family

The single-parent family is reported to be a rapidly growing household type with female-headed families far outdistancing husband-wife and male-headed households in their rate of increase. Between 1940 and 1975, families headed by women doubled in number, reaching 7.2 million. At the same time, the number of families headed by men grew to 48.5 million, only a 70 percent increase (28).

According to September, 1975 U.S. Census data, 1.4 million households were headed by separated, divorced, widowed or never-married fathers. For the period 1970 to 1976, this represented a 16 percent increase (48).

Single fatherhood is not an entirely new phenomenon. The high maternal mortality rates of earlier times often left a widower with young children. However, at that particular time in history,

considerable aid was obtained from the extended family so it was quite rare that a single father had to perform his parental role alone (37). Today, the single father with young children must manage on his own. Extended families do not readily assume the kinds of responsibilities they assumed without question in the past (31).

It is no longer maternal mortality but the accelerated rate of marital instability which accounts for the larger proportion of fathers becoming single parents (37). Courts now make a genuine decision about which parent should have custody of the minor children. They no longer presume in favor of the mother (31). The new roles of women are also having their effect on single fatherhood. Women are demanding more opportunities in the world outside the home and many are seemingly placing more emphasis on these goals than they are on parenthood (37). The wife-mother desertion or "drop-out" is no longer an unusual event in our society (37). Mendes, in a recent study of single fathers in California, found that in a sample of thirty-two single fathers 50 percent had not actually sought single parenthood but had acceded to circumstances or someone else's wishes (30). The majority of the divorced fathers in a North Carolina study received custody of their children because their former wives did not want or were unable to care for them (37).

In March, 1976, Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 7.3 million families headed by women. This represented for the period

1970 to 1976 an increase of 1.8 million or a 33 percent increase (48).

Ross and Sawhill attributed most of the growth in female-headed families since World War II to increased marital disruptions and to a higher proportion of marital dissolutions which involved children (40). For although the birth rate in the United States had been declining, the number of divorces involving children had been increasing (7). Glick and Norton, demographers who carefully document the trends in marriage, divorce and remarriage, found that the divorce rate per thousand women under 45 years of age in the United States increased by two-thirds between the mid 1950's and 1970 (18). The divorce rate continued to rise since 1970. In 1975 the U.S. divorce rate was 4.8 per 1,000 population (34). Some researchers have suggested that even if the divorce rate stabilized at the 1974 level of 4.6 per 1,000 population (50), which it apparently did not, 40 percent of new marriages would still ultimately end in divorce (23). These changes reinforce the impression that a change of life styles and values relating to marriage and the family has been taking place.

While most women become heads of their own families because of divorce or separation, Ross and Sawhill maintained that most also remarried within a relatively short time (40). So for large numbers of women, female-head-of-household status was

a transitional situation between memberships in other types of households. Glick and Norton seemed to support this position when they estimated that 25 to 29 percent of all women near 30 years of age in 1973 have ended or will end their first marriage in divorce, but about four-fifths of these divorced women have remarried or will do so (18). However, in Glick's most recent analysis of marital instability, he concluded that while the remarriage rate was increasing along with the divorce rate during the decade of the 1960's, it had slowly but steadily declined since 1970. Glick estimated that three-fourths of divorced women eventually remarry, while five-sixths of divorced men remarry (17).

Depicting the single-parent family as temporary or transitional had been felt by some observers to be a disservice. If the family status were characterized as being temporary, the likelihood of their receiving societal support was minimized. Without societal support, remarriage was then viewed as the only viable alternative to a difficult situation; so a cyclic trend came into existence (6).

Cutright, in a study of the components of change in the number of female family heads between 1940 and 1970, offered a somewhat different reasoning than Ross and Sawhill for their growth. The four components of change examined in Cutright's study were: (1) changes in the probability that a mother will form a separate family rather than live as the child or other relative of a family

head; (2) population growth; (3) changes in fertility patterns; and (4) marital status. Considering each component in isolation, this researcher found that the propensity to form separate families was most important. The propensity of married women to be female family heads in 1940 was 45 percent but in 1970 it was 77 percent. The impact of changing marital stability alone accounted for only three percent of the increase (9). Consideration should be given to the fact that the Cutright study did not take into account the accelerated divorce rate that occurred since 1970.

In looking at the living arrangements of separated, widowed and divorced mothers, Sweet found in his study of 2,141 women that 80 percent of the women in disrupted marital situations, who have children under the age of 18 in the same household, opt to or are forced by lack of viable alternatives to live as heads of households (44). In commenting on changing life styles, Jessie Bernard noted that more divorced women in 1974 than in 1970 were heads of female-headed families, more were heads of their own households, and fewer were living in families in which they were non-heads. This appears to suggest either greater independence on the part of the women or a greater reluctance of parents or other relatives to take them in. Divorced women, she concluded, were making it on their own (2).

Both the increase in the divorce rate and the propensity of

single parents, both male and female, to be family heads has been caused by combinations of various factors. Some of the legal factors which appear to have influenced this increase have been: 1) new and proposed changes in laws concerning child custody, 2) the availability of free legal aid which enables persons in many of the poorer families to obtain a divorce, 3) self divorce where neither person is represented by an attorney, and 4) the liberalization of divorce laws (17, 38, 31). As of January, 1974, 23 states had adopted some form of no-fault divorce laws (27, 28). Social factors such as the movements which encourage women and men to discard traditional sex roles, the lack of extended families which readily assume the kinds of responsibilities they did in the past, and the societal and religious acceptance of divorce were thought to contribute to the increase of divorce in our society (37, 37, 17, 33). Also suggested as influencing factors were the rising expectation of happiness in marriage and the increased unwillingness to tolerate an unhappy marriage (7, 17, 33). The broadening educational and work experience of women has increased their economic and social independence (51, 33). Urbanization of our society has also been cited as a contributing factor, since divorce rates are substantially higher in the city than in the country (7).

It should be remembered that components responsible for change in the past will not necessarily assume the same order of

importance in explaining changes in the future. The variables influencing divorce are numerous and tend to interact with one another (33).

The marital status of the population of the United States is constantly changing, but the number of divorced parents and children who will find themselves in a single-parent family household type is substantial. It must be accepted that the most frequently found family condition in the immediate post divorce situation is one in which a child is living in a home with a single mother (7).

Economic Conditions of the Single-Parent Family

More often than not divorce results in two family units, whose real purchasing power is lower than half what it was prior to the dissolution of the marriage, due essentially to the duplication of fixed costs. A drop in the real purchasing power invariably leads to the family's moving to a lower socioeconomic level. The life style of the individual or family unit may never regain its former level (55:75).

The loss of the benefits of economies of scale is not trivial. A Chicago judge even makes a point of warning divorcing couples that they can expect their standard of living to drop 25 percent (43).

Studies using the University of Michigan Panel Research data have provided support for the statement that changes in family composition were a major factor in changing the economic well-being of families. Using total money income as a measure of economic

well-being, Hampton studied 133 couples that had experienced marital dissolution and found that the former husbands were better off than their wives. Over twice as many husbands were in the top three income deciles as wives. Thirty-four percent of the ex-wives but only 15 percent of their former husbands fell into the bottom three deciles of the income distribution (21). Regardless of the income level of the family before separation or divorce, the disruption of the family unit itself was likely to result in the creation of a poor female-headed family. Because children usually remained in the maternal family, Hampton concluded that the economic status of former husbands improved while that of the former wives deteriorated (21). Marital disruptions had economic repercussions which were much stronger for wives.

Also, using the Michigan Panel Study, Hoffman and Holmes confirmed a strong link between marital instability and poverty status. Women who had remained married during the five years of study achieved percentage increases in real family income which were five times as large as those for women who were divorced (24). Changes in economic status were directly related to changes in marital status. Divorced or separated women of any race were more likely to be on welfare than women in more stable families. However, in response to a change in marital status, many more women in this study moved into the labor market than onto welfare (24).

Duncan's study of unmarried heads of households and marriage, using the same data base, showed that marital status change was the most important predictor of change in economic status for women but it was the least important variable for men (10).

American tradition and economy are geared either to the individual-centered or the couple-centered household. It is more usual, in our American society now, to have two wage earners. As of March, 1975, fifty-nine percent of all families, where the husband was in the labor force, were now multiple worker, husband-wife families (22). Therefore, when divorce breaks the household, it thrusts the family members into a condition in which the economic system of our society does not provide adequately. Women, more than men, are financially vulnerable; so the income problems of the female-headed family are severe (4). The inadequate incomes of most female-headed families stem from the loss of a male earner, the mother's continuing responsibility for care of young children and the inability of most women, because of inadequate training and education for the current job markets, to earn enough to support a family (40).

In a socioeconomic analysis of women who head families, McEaddy found that employed, female, family heads were more concentrated in lower-skilled, lower-paid occupations than employed male heads. Educational level of female heads partially accounted

for this with one out of every four not having ever attended high school (28). In studying female heads for 1975, she also found a direct relationship between the educational level of the woman and the average number of children per family. The higher the educational level of a mother heading her own family, the lower the average number of children per family; 1.8 children for those women with four years of college or more, compared with 2.9 for women heads with less than eight years of education (28). Thus the greater the number of children, the smaller the mother's chance of being in the work force with an adequately paying job. Therefore a disproportionate share of all children under 18 in families headed by women live in poor families. If a family headed by a woman has only one or two children, the chances of the family staying above the poverty level are about two out of three. As the number of children increases, the probability of the family income being under the poverty line increases sharply (15).

In 1974 the median income for all female family heads was \$6,400 while the median income of husband-wife families was \$13,000 (28). Of the 7.2 million families headed by females, 2.8 million or 39 percent of the group had a total family income of less than \$5,000. In 1974 for non-farm families headed by women, the poverty cutoff was \$5,014 for a four-person family, \$3,822 for a three-person family and \$3,167 for a two-person family (28).

By these standards, about 2.2 million families headed by women were living in poverty. Some typical traits of these families included having a family head who was unlikely to have graduated from high school, had little or no work experience during the previous year or worked in a low paying occupation. The five million women who had family incomes above the poverty line were not by any means well off. Less than 30 percent of all families headed by women reported 1974 incomes as high as \$10,000 or more, compared with 70 percent of all families headed by men living with their wives (28).

The incidence of poverty is overwhelmingly the most important difference between the families headed by women and men. The number of poor families headed by women continues to rise, while that of men steadily declines. From 1970 to 1974 the number of poor families headed by women had risen by 21 percent while those headed by men had declined by 17 percent (28). Unless women can get into more skilled occupations that pay higher salaries, they will not be able to provide their families with an adequate or comfortable living.

It has been suggested by more than one researcher that many of the deleterious effects of father absence on children could be eliminated if economic stability was provided for the mothers (6, 23). Studies which have adequately controlled for economic status have

found that the differences between children from one and two parent homes on school achievement, social adjustment and delinquent behavior were small or even nonexistent (1).

Unfortunately little documented research is available on the economic conditions of male-headed, single-parent families. Two recent studies on single fatherhood in California and North Carolina indicated that the majority of the single fathers were in professional or managerial positions with social status above the norm (37). The researchers reasoned that for a man to get custody of minor children he would have to demonstrate a degree of resource availability that would be respected by the courts. This reasoning may be subject to question since the majority or at least half of the fathers of both studies had not actively sought custody of their children.

In the North Carolina study the average annual income of the fathers studied exceeded \$18,000. Although the researchers sought lower-income, single-parent fathers, they were unsuccessful in obtaining any. They concluded that their frequency in the population was lower or that they remarried faster (37).

The single-parent fathers were usually employed and rarely received alimony or child support. In the North Carolina study, one-third of the fathers received public assistance in the form of Social Security, G. I. Bill benefits, or food stamps (37). In the

California study, one father was granted public assistance under AFDC, but most continued to work and support their children (30).

In addition to the economic ramifications of an absent parent, the single-parent household, whether it be headed by male or female, is understaffed. It has difficulty in carrying out the routine tasks of living, especially when the children are young. When one parent is not there, the division of labor must be altered. The single parent needs to find time and energy for a job and still be the kind of parent needed to maintain discipline, educate and socialize the young, and to insure the child's positive emotional growth. Most must also find a solution to the problem of caring for their children while they work (5, 29). The amount of help, both financial and emotional, received by single-parent families from their relatives and friends remains largely undocumented.

Child Custody

At the time a divorce is granted, a determination must be made regarding the custody of the children. Visitation and other rights must be established for the parent who does not obtain custody. Although variously defined by court, the term, "custody", always implies possession of authority and responsibility for care and control of the children (54). Most divorcing parents come to an agreement out of court which of them shall hold custody of the

children. Almost always this agreement is approved by the presiding judge (54). In his review of child-custody literature, Weiss found that only between five and ten percent of divorcing parents were unable to reach a custody agreement (54).

Both parents have equal right to the child; nothing in the statutes necessarily favors one over the other. Only social definition makes the mother rather than the father most often responsible for the on-going care of the children (41).

In early English law the father of the family retained custodial rights over his children whether or not he and the mother lived together. Early nineteenth-century courts began to be more concerned about promoting the welfare of the child; so the emphasis, by today's terminology, became the child's best interests (54).

The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws has suggested some guidelines for determining the child's best interests. Among the relevant factors to be considered are: (1) the wishes of the child's parent or parents as to his custody; (2) the wishes of the child as to his custodian; (3) the interaction and interrelationship of the child with his parent or parents, his siblings, and any other person who may significantly affect the child's best interests; (4) the child's adjustment to his home, school, and community; and (5) the mental and physical health of all individuals involved (46). It also admonished that the court should not consider

conduct of a proposed custodian that did not affect his relationship to the child (46). Unfortunately, little guidance was offered as to just how much weight each of these factors should be given. Often a judge has nothing but common sense to guide him in a solution to a custody problem. Many courts do utilize investigations by social workers, psychiatrists and others to help decide with which parent the best interests of the child lie. Not only is this expensive and burdensome, it is difficult to find adequately trained staff to meet the current demand of the domestic court (4).

Without seemingly passing judgement, Kay in her analysis of family courts, noted that in many courts domestic assignments go to junior judges on a six-month rotation. Domestic courts appeared not to have the prestige and importance of other courts of law and were not particularly sought-after assignments (4). Kay's emphasis was that young and inexperienced judges, not well versed in law and the science of human behavior, may not be the best able to cope with the demanding and sensitive problems of disintegrating families (4).

In the past, presumption in favor of the mother has operated and in some states it still does. Rationale for this presumption has been: (1) women's proper place was the home and so the domestic sphere belonged to the domain and functions of womanhood; (2) a child's relationship to the mother, especially if the child was

young, was more important than his relationship to the father; (3) the child was born and nursed by the mother, therefore more properly belonged under the mother's control; and (4) the husband must earn the money and therefore would have little time personally to attend to the children (54). All of these presumptions in favor of the mother have fallen into disfavor. A skeptical society no longer accepts the utterly devoted mother love that once gave support to these presumptions. Increasingly, judges are recognizing that a working mother has no more time for her children than does a working father. In addition, concern has developed that presumption in favor of the mother is sex discrimination and as such is a violation of the 14th Amendment (54).

Several states in recent years have repealed provisions that gave the mother preference in custody disputes or enacted statutes that forbade courts to discriminate against the father. Oregon statutes provide that no preference in custody shall be given to the mother over the father for the sole reason that she is the mother (54). Regardless of the laws on the books, judges have great discretion in custody matters and there probably exists much variation from one court to another (54).

In their book published in 1973, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, Goldstein, Freud, and Solnit attempted to provide judges with a few simple guidelines or principles for resolutions of

custody disputes. The four principles, based on child development theories, were: (1) select that placement which is least detrimental among available alternatives for the child; (2) make a quick decision, even if it must be an arbitrary one; (3) resist rejudgement; and (4) make visitation the option of the custodial parent (19). Obviously because of the extraordinarily complex issues of child custody, no one of their principles is unquestionable.

It appears to be unknown how courts actually operate and by what process they actually come to decisions regarding child custody. Weiss, in a review of literature on deciding the custody of children, emphasized the dire need for research in this area by pointing out five critical issues: (1) What are the different custody and visitation arrangements made by separating and divorcing couples, including couples who establish separation agreements without adjudication and those whose arrangements are dictated by court order? (2) To what extent does statute law determine the nature of custody and visitation agreements and to what extent are the values and prejudgements of judges and lawyers determining? (3) To what considerations do judges give priority, and how do they actually weigh evidence? (4) What events are likely sequelae of various custody and visitation arrangements? and (5) What are the impacts on children's lives and personalities of dual custody and visitation arrangements (54)?

Child Support

In deciding domestic relations cases, courts have long been faced with the problem of setting proper and equitable amounts for the maintenance and support of children. In addition to gauging the parent's ability to pay, the court must also accurately determine the needs of the children. White and Stone suggested that determination of the amount of child support paid was controlled by no fixed standard but was left up to the court's discretion (55). However, elements and factors appropriate for consideration have been recognized by the courts.

The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws recommended that courts consider the following relevant factors in setting the amount of support to be paid by either the mother or the father or both: (1) the financial resources of the child; (2) the financial resources of the custodial parent; (3) the standard of living the child would have enjoyed had the marriage not been dissolved; (4) the physical and emotional condition of the child, his educational needs; and (5) the financial resources and needs of the non-custodial parent (46). Bohannon suggested that in actuality the principle of child support rested on only one factor; the father's ability to pay (4).

Since in the past, mothers have usually been granted custody

of the children, most research in the area of child support has been from the aspect of the father being the non-custodial or absent parent. The loss of the father or male earner within a household should not mean the loss of all his income. Research indicated that private transfers of the absent father's income were smaller than commonly believed and inadequate to meet the task of keeping women and children out of poverty (40). Most studies suggested that financial help from the husbands was minimal and diminished over time.

Using data collected in 1974 by the General Accounting Office, Ross and Sawhill indicated that there was little relationship between a father's ability to pay and either the amount of the payment agreed upon or his compliance with the law. Some low-income men were paying substantial proportions of their income to support their children while many who were affluent had failed to comply at all (40).

In a study on the sources of income for separated and divorced women Hoffman and Holmes, using longitudinal data collected in the Michigan Panel Study, found that an average of about \$825 was received per year in total combined child support and alimony. Only about 40 percent of the 182 divorced or separated women in this study received alimony or child support payments (24).

In reviewing literature on child support, Burlage concluded that child support was not sufficient to provide for the children, in fact, not even for half of their support. Citing a study by the American Bar Association on payments recommended by a Michigan court in 1965, she noted that payments were less than enough to furnish half of the support of the children, and that even the low payments recommended by the court were frequently not adhered to because of the limited earnings by the father or because he remarried and had responsibility for another family. Not only was the amount of child support payments awarded insufficient to meet the children's need, it tended to be unreliable and became even less reliable with time. Conclusion of this research was that even when men comply fully with child support awards, women who work to support their children were contributing by and large more than their proportionate share (6).

House's study of divorced women in Texas found that the fathers were contributing less than twelve percent of their income toward the support of minor children and far less than their share. Since the divorced mothers were earning a figure comparable to fifty-three percent of the annual income of the fathers and receiving an average of \$121 per month for the support of all minor children, House concluded that the divorcee was contributing more than a proportionate share to the support of minor children (26).

The failure to enforce child support obligations places added economic as well as emotional strain on families already torn by the loss of one parent. Increasing numbers of persons are being forced to go on welfare each year because absent parents are not fulfilling their duty to pay child support (3). Aid to Families with Dependent Children has been society's response to the poverty of female-headed families. In 1961, 66.7 percent (2.4 million persons) of the total number of AFDC recipients were eligible because they had an absent parent. In 1967 the figure was 74.2 percent (3.9 million persons); in 1969, 75.4 percent (5.5 million persons); in 1971, 76.2 percent (7.5 million persons) and in 1973, over 80.2 percent (8.7 million) (3).

Congressional action to remedy this problem has been the enactment of legislation that created a new program for effective enforcement of child support. The new law, Child Support Provisions, provides for (1) greater federal assistance to states and localities through creation of a new enforcement unit, (2) operation of a federal Parent Locator Service, and (3) increased supervision of state enforcement programs (3). It has received enthusiastic endorsement and has been called "the most important piece of welfare legislation in recent years" (16).

In its first year in operation this new law has had a profound effect on payments by absent fathers. Within the next five years,

welfare and law enforcement officials expect to locate half of all "runaway" fathers in the United States and collect one billion dollars from them. Critics of the law, citing the time, money and red tape involved, ask if it is worthwhile tracking down and prosecuting an absentee father who in many cases is jobless or badly paid and has meanwhile acquired a second family dependent on his support (16). Michigan state's experience has led welfare head, David Bailey, to comment: "By and large, these men are not indigents. They're in a position to comply right away and compliance is fantastic" (16:100). Other critics see the law as an invasion of delinquent parents' right of privacy. The issue then becomes, which is paramount, the right of privacy of the parent or the right of a child to be supported.

In commenting on the Child Support Provisions, Bernet indicates that the new law cannot completely solve the problems of family desertion and non-support. It can result in the issuance of more support orders and expanded efforts to enforce parental obligations; but it cannot remedy the more basic social problems of unemployment, inflation, racial discrimination and poor living conditions which often underlie desertion and non-support (3). She expounded a more positive approach to the problem of non-support through measures that foster a sense of parental responsibility and prevent or reduce family breakdown. Implementation

of the law, Bernet cautioned, should be guided by concern for the children's best interests and for the welfare of the families involved (3).

Establishing the principle and fact of adults supporting their own children is a desirable goal. Bane, however, felt that the single-parent family was not capable of supporting itself and clearly needed some public income support policy. Single-parent families she concluded needed more income than they were capable of earning or collecting, at least during the difficult periods when children were young or when the father's remarriage preceded that of the mother's (3). Many father's incomes, she felt were simply too low to share. Even with average wages, many did not seem to be well enough off to do without large proportions of their incomes (3).

Bane suggested a guaranteed maintenance allowance as one way of improving the situation of the single-parent family, but not the only way. Her concern was centered on the effect that family poverty had on children. Their physical well-being suffered and they were subjected to the tensions and frustrations that came from not having enough money (3).

The impact of divorce is far-reaching and crosses many disciplines including economics, personal finance, statistics, econometrics, psychology, sociology and the legal profession (55).

Legal practitioners, however, have the obligation of handling dissolution of marriage cases; generally without the aid of the other disciplines. Sherwin charged that much could be done to solve many of the problems of divorce and child support. No money, he said had been appropriated for the proper kind of machinery that would aid a judge in deciding how much of a man's income should be marked for the support of his children or how increases and decreases of the husband's earning power should be administered and handled by the court (41). Judges must devote their own time, which they do not have, to research unfamiliar areas of domestic relations in order to make the best decisions they can under the circumstances. Sherwin felt that most judges did the very best they knew how but often the welfare of the children was improperly served (41).

Currently, in order for the wife to apply to the court for an increase in support payments for the children, she must be able to show that there has been a material change in either the needs of the children or in the husband's earnings since the agreement was signed (41). Many child support orders do not have escalation clauses and therefore do not reflect or take into consideration the changing state of the national economy. In addition to these shortcomings, the institution of divorce involves a new form of financial co-operation between ex-partners who are unable to communicate with each other or to have an adequate understanding of the

problems faced by the other parent (8).

White and Stone studied the alimony and child support rulings of nine judges in Orange County, Florida. They examined the following variables: (1) child support payments; (2) estimated financial needs of wife; (3) estimated financial needs of husband; (4) total assets; (5) total liabilities; (6) number of dependent children; (7) ages of dependent children; (8) net income of husband; (9) net income of wife; (10) duration of marriage (55). The results of their study clearly indicated that each of the nine judges had his own selection of and/or emphasis of variables for consideration in determining equity. They concluded that consistent criteria for the determination of equity was absent from divorce or dissolution of marriage cases (55). Their recommendation was for the development of an econometric model to be used by the state in granting of child support. The model would insure that each divorced parent would receive equitable treatment with respect to child support. White and Stone felt it could alleviate certain welfare problems by more equitably distributing the funds of a family unit (55).

In King County, Washington a child support schedule developed by Florence Hall to determine support for children of dissolved marriages was used from May 1, 1975 to May 1, 1976. This schedule designated the non-custodial parent's contribution to child support to be 24 percent of his/her net monthly income for one child,

35 percent for two children, 42 percent for three children and 48 percent for four children (20). Hall based her schedule on the following assumptions: 1) child support should support children at a level of living related to combined predissolution family income; 2) children should not suffer unduly but should share in the decreased level of living which might possibly result from increased costs of maintaining the family in two households; 3) cost of child support was considered the average cost for all ages of dependent children; 4) net after tax income was approximately the same as total family consumption cost at the low to moderate income levels; and 5) child care cost newly incurred as the result of divorce should be shared by parents over and above the support amount (20). The Bureau of Labor Statistics Annual Urban Family Budgets and the Revised Equivalence Scale were used by Hall as the basis for development of this child support schedule.

Child Rearing Costs

While parents recognize that one consequence of having children is that they cost money, few, however, are likely to have a good idea as to how much children cost and what the economic effects on the family are. Several definitions of the cost of children prevail. One of the most common is the money expended definition. The money expended cost of children includes the

expenses incurred in bearing and raising children and can be further divided into private or parental costs and public costs. The parental costs are the parents' monetary outlays required to maintain an average child. These costs include food, housing, clothing, education, medical care, transportation and other maintenance expenses (13).

Parents' financial obligation for children commonly extends at least until the child has finished high school. Provision for the rearing of a child depends to a great extent on how much parents can afford to spend. Costs vary with standards of what is considered necessary and desirable. Standards in turn are closely related to economic position (38). The amount of income the family has over the years and the total family size are important in determining how much can be spent on each child. People with high incomes spend more on their children than people with low incomes. The difference is due not only to the low income family's direct constraint of lacking financial resources but also to social norms (39).

Estimating the costs of raising children is difficult for it is the rare parent who keeps records of the portion of the family's expenditures that are incurred for the children. Direct child rearing costs are necessarily estimations, based on the judicious use of economic survey data combined with various assumptions.

Most of the recent direct child rearing cost studies have used the 1960-61 Bureau of Labor Consumer Expenditure Survey as the basis for their estimations. In using this data the researchers were making basic assumptions. Adding costs from one point in time associated with each year of a child's life up to age eighteen presents a complete cost picture but only for the year of the survey. If these figures were applied to the actual life span of a child, it was being assumed that tastes and preferences remain constant, normal purchases for a specific age child in 1961 were normal purchases for the same age child in later years, the standard of living of a couple remained constant while their children were growing up and increases in real income were ignored. The data also assumed that prices remained constant relative to each other (39). Although inflation affects all items equally, price increases of some items and not of others would partially invalidate the estimates. It should be remembered that child rearing costs based on Consumer Expenditure Survey data are estimates and should be considered rough approximations of the cost of raising a child.

One of the more widely used child rearing cost studies based on the 1960-61 Consumer Expenditure Survey is that of Jean Pennock's. Using the United States Department of Agriculture food plans of economy, low-cost and moderate-cost to set the economic level in which a child lives, she estimated the cost of a child to age

18 for urban, rural nonfarm and farm families in all four U. S. census regions. Her assumption was that families were living at the same level at which they were eating. Further in her estimates, she assumed that all goods and services were equally available to all families, without cost differentials and that differences in selections made were based only on differences in needs and preferences (38).

It is important to note that Pennock's data for average child rearing costs was based on a family of from two to five children. In 1970 average child rearing cost estimates for a western, rural nonfarm region ranged from \$18,600 at the economy level of living to \$37,880 at the moderate-cost level of living (47). By comparison, in 1961 for the same region and type of residence, the average child rearing costs to age 18 ranged from \$14,549 at the economy level to \$29,374 at the moderate-cost level (47).

Pennock estimated the costs for child rearing in categories of food, clothing, housing, medical care, education, transportation and an all other category which included personal care, reading and recreation. For each of these components, she considered how costs varied with the age of the child and the standard of living in addition to the type of residence and census region. For the South and North Central census regions, she considered the additional component of the number of children in a family in her child cost

estimates. However, only two, three, four, and five-child families were considered. Other than her average cost of a child estimates, the Pennock data did not estimate the cost of a child in a one-child family.

Pennock's data indicated that the cost per year for raising a child generally increased as the child grew even without taking into account the effect of price changes over the child's lifetime. In terms of 1969 dollars, costs in the 18th year were about 30 to 45 percent higher than in the first year (38). The increase was sharpest in clothing and food. It was only in the areas of food and clothing that Pennock had the data available to estimate individual costs for the specific ages of children. In all the other categories of consumption that she considered, the child had been assigned his per capita share of the family expenditure, making no distinction for age. When costs were assigned on a per capita basis and the family expenditures did not vary in proportion to family size; costs per child decreased through the years when family size tended to increase and turned upward again when the child was a teenager and had fewer brothers and/or sisters at home (38).

Using the Pennock and the United States Department of Agriculture data, Reed and McIntosh computed U.S. average child

rearing costs at 1969 prices by low-cost and moderate-cost levels. The undiscounted costs of raising a child to age 18 ranged from \$20,010 at the low-cost to \$32,990 at the moderate-cost level. When these costs were discounted at eight percent, the costs ranged from \$10,836 to \$17,000 (39). Therefore, at the moderate-cost level, having a child meant that the family gave up as much as the equivalent of \$17,000 in present purchasing power or \$33,000 in consumption over a period of 18 years (39). Either way the sum is substantial.

In their analysis, Reed and McIntosh found that differences in cost by type of residence, farm, rural nonfarm or urban, were not great; but there was considerable difference between the low-cost and moderate-cost levels. It costs one-third less to raise a child on the low-cost rather than the moderate-cost budget (39). In comparing costs on a regional basis, no clear regional cost patterns emerged with the possible exception that the West tended to be more expensive and the North Central region had a substantial cost advantage for rural nonfarm residents (39).

In 1973 Thomas J. Espenshade published research on the cost of children in the urban United States. He estimated that for a three-child urban family, the first child would cost from \$36,886 to \$45,690, depending on family income level. The second child would cost from \$17,212 to \$23,283 and the third child from

\$17,412 to \$23,386 (12). These were costs to raise a child to age 18 using the proportion of income spent on food as an index of a family's standard of living. Data from the 1960-61 Consumer Expenditure Survey served as the base for this research. Standards of living were categorized as lower, middle and upper. The significance of these child rearing cost figures conveyed by Espenshade's estimates was that raising three children consumes from 39 to 59 percent of the family income during the period of child rearing (45). Clearly, children consume a substantial proportion of the family income.

Espenshade's methods of estimating the direct money expenditure costs of children took into consideration that costs were dependent on the birth order of children in the family and that living standards were not constant during the time the children were growing up. From the 3,888 consumer units selected for this study, hypothetical families were constructed along each of the three income levels. Child costs in each year were calculated on the basis of the current values of income, family size and age of children. The results were then summed for 18 years. In doing this, Espenshade assumed that the behavior of the hypothetical family at each point in its life cycle paralleled the behavior of families in the cross-sectional sample at the corresponding stage in the life cycle (12).

His estimates for urban families were average costs since

they were averaged over families who differed with respect to the part of the United States in which they lived, the educational attainment of the parents, the ethnic background of the family, the occupation of the household head and so forth. Special circumstances of individual families will affect the validity of the estimates. The components which Espenshade considered in his child rearing estimates were food, housing, clothing, transportation, personal insurance, gifts, net savings and an other category which included personal care, recreation, education and miscellaneous. Since a portion of his estimates was ascribed to anticipatory saving toward the costs of a college education, if parents had no plans to educate their children past high school, the estimates were likely to be high (12).

Major conclusions of Espenshade's study were: 1) expenditures on children to age 18 increased as income increased although the proportional cost of each child declined; 2) the first child in a family was likely to be more expensive than subsequent children; 3) costs increased with age of the child; 4) food, housing and clothing were generally the three most important cost items in any child's budget; 5) the birth order of a child in the family and family's income appeared to be more important than family size in determining expenditures on a child; and 6) a family's standard of living measured in terms of current consumption, declined until the

eldest child reached age 18, then rose again (12).

The child support schedule developed by Florence T. Hall for King County, Washington used a different methodology for arriving at child raising costs. Her focus was primarily on developing an average but adequate support schedule for children of dissolved marriages. Hall used the Bureau of Labor Statistics budget costs for an urban family of four in Seattle at three cost levels in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics Revised Equivalence Scale to show the extra dollar cost at each cost level of one, two, three and four or more children in two-parent families. The equivalence scale was then used alone to develop the extra cost of one, two, three and four children in two-parent families as percentages of total consumption cost at any cost level. Calculations showed the extra cost of one, two, three and four children to be 27 percent, 40 percent, 48 percent and 55 percent of the total family consumption cost respectively (20). It should be recognized that these percentages were applied to the lower and intermediate levels of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' family budgets and were based on the assumption that net after-tax income was approximately the same as total family consumption cost.

The most recent data on estimates of child rearing costs appear to be those released in Espenshade's report, "The Value and Cost of Children." Espenshade used the direct cost estimate

approach of Reed and McIntosh for an average child in a family consisting of husband and wife and no more than five children. Using Consumer Price Index information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, he updated these direct costs. He predicted that a middle-income family with a net after-tax income of between \$16,500 and \$20,000 per year would spend about \$53,605 to raise a child to age 18 or \$64,215 to raise a child and educate him at a state supported four-year university. Low-income families having after-tax incomes of between \$10,500 and \$13,500 needed \$35,261 to raise a child to age 18 or \$44,156 if the child was sent to a four-year public college (14). Espenshade's estimates were based on 1977 prices.

Significantly, Espenshade's cost figures for child rearing were up 60 percent for the middle-income family from 1969 estimates and up 63 percent from the 1969 estimates for the low-income family. The report also indicated that the family's standard of living was the important determinant of child-related costs. To raise children at the moderate level would require approximately 50 percent more than at the low-cost level (14).

It appears that housing is now the leading item in child rearing costs. In the typical middle-income family it is predicted by Espenshade that 32.2 percent of the cost of child raising will

go for housing, 24.3 percent for food, 16.1 percent for transportation, 9.5 percent for clothing, 5.3 percent for medical care, 1.5 percent for education and 11 percent for all other expenses (14).

III. METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study sought to identify divorced parents' contributions to the direct consumption costs of rearing their dependent children. Relationships between the parent's contribution to the consumption costs and specified demographic characteristics at the time of divorce, methods of determining child support, and property settlements were investigated. Also examined were the family's child custody situation and economic condition. This chapter describes: 1) development of the instrument, 2) selection of the sample, 3) collection of the data, and 4) data analysis procedure.

Development of the Instrument

A two-page questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data on the family's child support situation. Data concerning demographic characteristics of the family, economic conditions of the family at the time of divorce and economic conditions of the family at the present time were also collected by the questionnaire.

As the questionnaire was developed the content was reviewed by faculty and graduate students of the Home Management Department. The Statistics Department reviewed the questionnaire for ease of analysis. It was also submitted to the Survey Research

Center for input on format. A sample of five divorced parents from Benton and Yamhill counties pretested the instrument. Based upon the pretest and the recommendations from the Home Management Department, Statistics Department and Survey Research Center, changes were made to arrive at the final form of the questionnaire (Appendix A). Prior to distribution of the questionnaire, approval was sought and received from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

Selection of the Sample

Divorced parents with minor children, who received their divorce in Marion County between 1 January 75 and 31 December 76, were designated as the target population. In Marion County 1,183 divorces were granted in 1975 and a total of 1,190 were granted in 1976 (34, 35). In order to obtain the approximate number of these cases which would involve minor children, the percent of divorce cases involving minor children for the state of Oregon was computed for the years 1975 and 1976 using annual statistical reports. In 1975, minor children were involved in 54.95 percent of the divorce cases and 56.53 percent involved minor children in 1976 (34, 35). These percentages were used to determine the number of names to be drawn from Marion County records for each year to obtain a sample size of at least 100 divorce

cases involving minor children. For 1975 this represented a sample size of 182 cases needed and for 1976, 177 divorce cases.

The sample was drawn from the divorce records of the Vital Statistics Section of the Oregon State Health Division in Portland, Oregon. The filing system of the vital statistics records necessitated a systematic random sampling procedure. Based on the number of cases needed and the number of divorces granted, a formula was used by which a sample was drawn every nth interval.

It was felt that both male and female parents' perceptions of child support situations were needed to eliminate sampling bias in this study. Therefore, after a random start, alternately the name of the male or female parent was selected at each sampling interval. The random selection of 182 divorce cases from Marion County records for 1975 and 177 cases from 1976 resulted in a total of 242 divorce cases meeting the criteria of having dependent children at the time of divorce. In 121 of the cases the name of the male parent was drawn; in the other 121, the female parent's name was drawn. These 242 divorce cases from Marion County represented the sample for this research.

Collection of the Data

A questionnaire, stamped, self-addressed envelope, and letter requesting participation in the study was sent to each

randomly selected parent. The divorced parents were given 15 days to respond to the questionnaire. New addresses were sought for those questionnaires returned to the researcher as undeliverable by the postal service. The Child Support Division of the Marion County Clerk's Office was most helpful in the effort of finding forwarding addresses. When new addresses were located, the questionnaire was mailed again to the subject.

Where possible, telephone numbers were located for those parents who had not responded to the questionnaire within the allotted 15 day period. The researcher contacted these parents by telephone to determine if they had received the questionnaire and whether they would participate in the study. In cases where the questionnaire had not been received or had been misplaced, another one was mailed.

Data Analysis Procedure

The first step in data analysis was to determine the family's level of living at the time of divorce and the consumption costs of the dependent children of the family. To do this the researcher was required to develop tables that reflected levels of living and child rearing costs for families of varying size, age, and composition.

A table was constructed for each of three levels of living,

lower, intermediate and higher. In order to construct these tables, it was necessary to identify the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Urban Family Budget that most nearly reflected estimated expenditures of Marion County, Oregon families. It was decided by the researcher, with the support of the Home Management Department, that the Seattle-Everett, Washington, BLS Urban Family Budgets most nearly reflected estimated family budgets of the above families.

The three levels of the selected BLS Urban Family Budget were then used in conjunction with the BLS Revised Scale of Equivalent Income for Urban Families of Different Size, Age, and Composition (Appendix B) which reflects total family budget and BLS Revised Equivalence Scale for Urban Families of Different Size, Age, and Composition (Appendix C) which reflects family consumption costs. By removing the consumption costs of the husband and wife it is possible to arrive at a child/children consumption cost estimate.

Table 1 (page 51) shows family budgets and consumption costs of children for the lower level of living, Table 2 (page 53) shows family budget and consumption costs of children for the intermediate level of living while Table 3 (page 55) shows family budgets and consumption costs of children for the higher level of living. Using reported data from the questionnaire and Tables

Table 1. Family budgets and consumption costs of children--lower level of living.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children *		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
One Person:	3, 777	3, 879	3, 369			
Two Persons:						
Husband and wife	5, 105	6, 227	6, 125			
One parent and child	4, 084	6, 023	6, 330	421	1, 766	2, 355
Three Persons:						
H, W, child under 6	6, 330	7, 044	--	1, 093	757	--
H, W, child 6-15	6, 330	8, 473	9, 086	1, 093	1, 850	2, 439
H, W, child 16-17	--	9, 392	9, 086	--	2, 607	2, 439
H, W, child 18 or over	--	8, 473	8, 780	--	1, 850	2, 187
One parent, 2 children	6, 942	7, 861	8, 576	2, 692	3, 664	4, 206
Four Persons:						
H, W, 2 children (older under 6)	7, 248	8, 065	--	1, 935	1, 682	--
H, W, 2 children (older 6-15)	7, 759	10, 209	10, 719	2, 355	3, 364	3, 869
H, W, 2 children (older 16-17)	--	11, 638	12, 863	--	4, 458	5, 551
H, W, 2 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	9, 801	11, 230	--	3, 028	4, 290
One parent, 3 children	8, 984	9, 903	--	4, 458	5, 047	--
Five Persons:						
H, W, 3 children (oldest under 6)	8, 678	9, 699	--	3, 196	3, 112	--
H, W, 3 children (oldest 6-15)	9, 596	11, 740	12, 149	3, 953	4, 710	5, 131
H, W, 3 children (oldest 16-17)	--	13, 068	14, 088	--	5, 719	6, 645
H, W, 3 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	12, 047	12, 659	--	4, 962	5, 467
One parent, 4 children	11, 026	11, 945	--	6, 140	6, 813	--

Table 1. Continued.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
Six Persons or more:						
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest under 6)	10,005	--	--	4,374	--	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 6-15)	10,924	13,272	14,191	5,131	6,056	6,813
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 16-17)	--	14,803	--	--	7,233	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 18 or over)	--	15,211	--	--	7,486	--
One parent, 5 children or more	12,659	13,986	--	7,570	8,495	--

BLS Lower Family Budget for the Seattle-Everett, Washington area = \$10,209 (53).

BLS Lower Total Family Consumption for the above area = \$8,411 (53).

* Was derived by the following formula: $(ES - HW) \times CB = \text{Consumption Cost of Children}$

ES - the equivalence scale percentage for size and type of family by the age of the head (page 120-121)

HW - the husband and wife percentage factor in the equivalence scale by the age of the head (page 120-121)

CB - the total family consumption budget (\$8,411).

Table 2. Family budgets and consumption costs of children--intermediate level of living.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children *		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
One Person:	5, 783	5, 939	5, 158			
Two Persons:						
Husband and wife	7, 815	9, 534	9, 378			
One parent and child	6, 252	9, 222	9, 691	618	2, 595	3, 460
Three Persons:						
H, W, child under 6	9, 691	10, 785	--	1, 607	1, 112	--
H, W, child 6-15	9, 691	12, 973	13, 911	1, 607	2, 719	3, 584
H, W, child 16-17	--	14, 380	13, 911	--	3, 831	3, 584
H, W, child 18 or over	--	12, 973	13, 442	--	2, 719	3, 213
One parent, 2 children	10, 628	12, 035	13, 129	3, 955	4, 943	6, 179
Four Persons:						
H, W, 2 children (older under 6)	11, 097	12, 348	--	2, 842	2, 472	--
H, W, 2 children (older 6-15)	11, 879	15, 630	16, 411	3, 460	4, 943	5, 685
H, W, 2 children (older 16-17)	--	17, 818	19, 694	--	6, 550	8, 156
H, W, 2 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	15, 005	17, 193	--	4, 449	6, 179
One parent, 3 children	13, 754	15, 161	--	6, 550	7, 415	--
Five Persons:						
H, W, 3 children (oldest under 6)	13, 286	14, 849	--	4, 696	4, 572	--
H, W, 3 children (oldest 6-15)	14, 692	17, 975	18, 600	6, 055	6, 920	7, 538
H, W, 3 children (oldest 16-17)	--	20, 006	21, 569	--	8, 403	9, 763
H, W, 3 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	18, 443	19, 381	--	7, 291	8, 033
One parent, 4 children	16, 880	18, 287	--	9, 021	10, 010	--

Table 2. Continued.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
Six Persons or more:						
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest under 6)	15,317	--	--	6,426	--	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 6-15)	16,724	20,319	21,726	7,538	8,898	10,010
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 16-17)	--	22,664	--	--	10,628	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 18 or over)	--	23,289	--	--	10,999	--
One parent, 5 children or more	19,381	21,413	--	11,122	12,482	--

BLS Intermediate Family Budget for the Seattle-Everett, Washington area = \$15,630 (53).

BLS Intermediate Total Family Consumption for the above area = \$12,358 (53).

* Was derived by the following formula: $(ES - HW) \times CB = \text{Consumption Cost of Children}$

ES - the equivalence scale percentage for size and type of family by the age of the head (page 120-121)

HW - the husband and wife percentage factor in the equivalence scale by the age of the head (page 120-121)

CB - the total family consumption budget (\$12,358)

Table 3. Family budgets and consumption costs of children--higher level of living.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children *		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
One Person:	8, 216	8, 438	7, 328			
Two Persons:						
Husband and wife	11, 103	13, 546	13, 324			
One parent and child	8, 882	13, 102	13, 768	843	3, 540	4, 719
Three Persons:						
H, W, child under 6	13, 768	15, 322	--	2, 191	1, 517	--
H, W, child 6-15	13, 768	18, 431	19, 763	2, 191	3, 708	4, 888
H, W, child 16-17	--	20, 430	19, 763	--	5, 225	4, 888
H, W, child 18 or over	--	18, 431	19, 097	--	3, 708	4, 382
One parent, 2 children	15, 100	17, 099	18, 653	5, 394	6, 742	8, 427
Four Persons:						
H, W, 2 children (older under 6)	15, 766	17, 543	--	3, 877	3, 371	--
H, W, 2 children (older 6-15)	16, 877	22, 206	23, 316	4, 719	6, 742	7, 753
H, W, 2 children (older 16-17)	--	25, 315	27, 980	--	8, 933	11, 124
H, W, 2 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	21, 318	24, 427	--	6, 068	8, 596
One parent, 3 children	19, 541	21, 540	--	8, 933	10, 113	--
Five Persons:						
H, W, 3 children (oldest under 6)	18, 875	21, 096	--	6, 405	6, 236	--
H, W, 3 children (oldest 6-15)	20, 874	25, 537	26, 425	7, 922	9, 439	10, 282
H, W, 3 children (oldest 16-17)	--	28, 424	30, 644	--	11, 461	13, 315
H, W, 3 children (oldest 18 or over)	--	26, 203	27, 535	--	9, 944	10, 956
One parent, 4 children	23, 982	25, 981	--	12, 304	13, 653	--

Table 3. Continued.

Size and type of family	Family Budget			Consumption Cost of Children		
	Age of Head			Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	Under 35	35-54	55-64
Six Persons or more:						
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest under 6)	21,762	--	--	8,765	--	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 6-15)	23,760	28,868	30,866	10,282	12,136	13,653
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 16-17)	--	32,199	--	--	14,495	--
H, W, 4 children or more (oldest 18 or over)	--	33,087	--	--	15,001	--
One parent, 5 children or more	27,535	30,422	--	15,170	17,024	--

BLS Higher Family Budget for the Seattle-Everett, Washington area = \$22,206 (53).

BLS Higher Total Family Consumption for the above area - \$16,855 (53).

* Was derived by the following formula: $(ES - HW) \times CB = \text{Consumption Cost of Children}$

ES - the equivalence scale percentage for size and type of family by the age of the head (page 120-121)

HW - the husband and wife percentage factor in the equivalence scale by the age of the head (page 120-121)

CB - the total family consumption budget (\$16,855)

1, 2, or 3, the level of living and the consumption costs of children were determined for each family in the study.

Each parent's contribution to the child rearing costs was determined by first identifying the amount of money the non-custodial parent contributed to child support as it was reported by the responding parent. This amount was then calculated as a percent of the child rearing costs for that family. The other parent's contribution was assumed to be the remainder of the child rearing costs. Inherent in the study is the assumption that the sum of the contributions made by both divorced parents will equal 100 percent of the total consumption costs of their dependent children.

Data from returned questionnaires were computer coded to facilitate analysis. Descriptive statistics were computed for all selected demographic characteristics representative of the sample participating in the study.

The intent of the research was to determine if the contributions made by divorced male and female parents to the consumption costs of rearing their dependent children were the same and if they were independent of some specified variables. The t-test and Chi-Square were the statistical tools used. The significance rejection level was set at .05.

Hypothesis 1 stated that the divorced male and female parent's contribution to the consumption costs of rearing his/her

dependent children was the same. In essence this is equivalent to the hypothesis that the mean contribution by the male or female parents is 50 percent of the total consumption costs of children. A two-tailed t-test was used to test this hypothesis. The test statistic

$$t = \frac{\bar{p} - 50}{s. e. (\bar{p})}$$

was compared to the appropriate tabled values of the Student's t distribution. Here \bar{p} is the mean of the percentages, P_i , contributed by all the parents of one sex in each family case and $s. e. (\bar{p})$ is the standard error of \bar{p} found by the formula

$$s. e. (\bar{p}) = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{45} (p_i - \bar{p})^2}{44}} \quad (11)$$

For each remaining hypothesis, a two-way table was formed in order to cross-classify the specified variable by the percentage of contribution of either the male parents or the female parents. The percentages of the parents' contributions were grouped into three classes: 0-33 percent, 34-66 percent and 67-100 percent. The hypothesis of independence was tested using a χ^2 (Chi-Square) test of independence. The test statistic is of the form

$$Q = \sum_{i=1}^3 \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(f_{ij} - F_{ij})^2}{F_{ij}}$$

where f_{ij} is the observed number of cases falling in the i^{th} class of the percent of contribution of the male parent or the percent of contribution of the female parent and the j^{th} class of the selected variable. The selected variable has c classes, and

$$F_{ij} = \frac{(\sum_{j=1}^c f_{ij})(\sum_{i=1}^3 f_{ij})}{45}$$

is the "expected" number of such cases under the hypothesis of independence. The value of Q was then compared to the appropriate tabled value of the Chi-Square distribution (42).

Small values of Chi-Square are interpreted to indicate statistical independence, while large values imply that a systematic relationship of some magnitude exists between the variables. How strongly the variables are related was not determined.

IV. FINDINGS

This exploratory study sought to identify the amounts both divorced parents contribute to the direct consumption costs of rearing dependent children. Also investigated were relationships between the parent's contribution to those consumption costs and specified demographic characteristics at the time of divorce, methods of determining child support and property settlements. In this chapter findings are discussed under topics of: 1) description of the sample, 2) family's economic situation, 3) family's child custody and child support situation, 4) male parent's contribution and female parent's contribution to consumption costs, and 5) other expressed concerns regarding child support.

Description of the Sample

Responses were received from 50 divorced parents representing 21 percent of the 242 families contacted. In five cases the responding parent declined to complete the questionnaire for personal reasons. Data obtained from 45 divorced parents, 19 percent of the original sample, concerning their family's child support situation served as the base of this research study. Of these 45 responses, 15 were from males and 30 were from females.

Ages of the Parents at the Time of Divorce

The male parents in the sample studied ranged in age from 25 to 56 years. The mean age was 34.2 years. The female parents had an age range from 22 to 49 years with a mean age of 32.2. Table 4 shows a summary of the age of both parents at the time of divorce as reported by the responding parent.

Table 4. Age of both parents at the time of divorce.

Age in years	Number		Percent	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
21 to 25	1	8	2	18
26 to 30	18	12	40	27
31 to 35	11	12	24	27
36 to 40	7	7	16	16
41 to 45	4	3	9	6
46 to 50	1	3	2	6
51 and over	3	0	7	0
Total	45	45	100	100

Number of Months Divorced

The number of months that the parents reported having been divorced ranged from three to 29 months. The median was 17 months.

Number of Children

A total of 97 children was born to or legally adopted by the parents in this study. Reported family size ranged from one to five children. The mean number of children per family was 2.16. The largest portion of the sample, 17 families (38%) reported having two children. Fourteen families (31%) had one child, eight (18%) had three children, five (11%) had four children and only one family (2%) had as many as five children.

Education of the Parents

A summary of the education levels completed by the male and female parent, as reported by the responding parent, is presented in Table 5. The minimum level of education reported for the male parent was nine years. Eleven percent (5) had not completed high school. Twenty-four percent (11) had completed 12 years of schooling, 18 percent (8) had some post high school education and 18 percent (8) had completed 16 years of education. Twenty-nine percent (13) of the male parents were reported to have received post graduate education. The median education for the male parent was some post high school education,

The minimum level of education reported for the female parent was seven years, two years lower than that reported for the

male parent. However, the median level of education for the female parent was some post high school education, the same as for the male parent. Six percent (3) of the female parents had not completed high school. Forty percent (18) had completed 12 years of schooling, 27 percent (12) had some post high school education and 11 percent (5) had completed 16 years of education. Only 16 percent (7) of the female parents were reported to have received post graduate level education.

Table 5. Education levels of the 45 male and 45 female parents.

Highest grade completed	Number		Percent	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Less than 8	0	2	0	4
9 - 11	5	1	11	2
12	11	18	24	40
13 - 15	8	12	18	27
16	8	5	18	11
More than 16	13	7	29	16
Total	45	45	100	100

Employment Status of the Parents at the Time of Divorce

The participants were asked to report their own and their former spouse's employment status in four different categories at the time of divorce. The four categories in which employment

status was reported were: 1) working full time for pay, 2) working part time for pay, 3) unemployed but looking for work, and 4) unemployed but not looking for work. Table 6 summarizes the findings.

Table 6. Employment status of the 45 male and 45 female parents at the time of divorce.

Employment Category	Number		Percent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Working full time	39	23	87	51
Working part time	1	6	2	13
Unemployed but looking	2	2	4	5
Unemployed but not looking	3	14	7	31

The majority of both the male and female parents in the study were working full time or part time when they were divorced. Eighty-seven percent (39) of the male parents were working full time but only 51 percent (23) of the female parents were working in a full-time capacity. Seven percent (3) of the male parents were unemployed but not looking for work at the time they were divorced. Thirty-one percent (14) of the female parents were unemployed and not looking for work.

When the families were grouped according to the employment status of the parent participating in the research, 73 percent (33) of the parents were working full time. Eighteen percent (8) of the

parents were unemployed and not looking for work at the time they were divorced. However, when these same parents were asked their present employment status, 82 percent (37) indicated they were working full time now. Two respondents were working part time and going to school. Six were not working for pay although one said she was diligently seeking a new job after she had recently lost hers. All changes in the employment status of the responding parent between the time of divorce and the present time were made by female respondents. All 15 male respondents were working full time at the time of divorce and at the present time. A summary of the present employment status of the participants is provided by Table 7.

Table 7. Present employment status of the 15 male and 30 female participants.

Employment Category	Number		Percent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Working full time	15	22	100	73
Working part time	0	2	0	7
Unemployed	0	6	0	20
Total	15	30	100	100

Family's Economic Situation

For the purpose of this study the family's economic situation included: 1) the family's gross level of income at the time of divorce,

2) responding parent's current gross level of income, 3) responding parent's perception of their economic situation, and 4) responding parent's perception of their share of the property received at the time of divorce.

Income at the Time of Divorce

Parents were requested to report their family's total gross income at the time of divorce using twelve categories of income intervals. The median income category for the families in the sample was \$12,000 to \$13,999. As shown by Table 8 there was a relatively even distribution of family incomes.

Table 8. Total gross annual income of 45 families at the time of divorce.

Income	Number	Percent
Under \$8,000	9	20
\$8,000 - 11,999	9	20
\$12,000 - 15,999	10	22
\$16,000 - 21,999	9	20
\$22,000 - 29,999	8	18
\$30,000 and over	0	0
Total	45	100

Present Income of Responding Parent

The parent participating in the study was also asked to designate his or her present total income level using the same 12 categories of income intervals. Ten of the 15 male parents responding to the questionnaire had experienced an increase in their total gross income since they were divorced, one had experienced a decrease since his divorce, while four others reported no change in income level. The present median income category for the male respondents was \$22,000 to \$24,999. See Table 9.

Table 9. Income level of male respondents now and at the time of divorce.

Income level	Number		Percent	
	Time of Divorce	Present	Time of Divorce	Present
Under \$8,000	2	2	13	13
\$8,000 - 11,999	1	2	7	13
\$12,000 - 15,999	4	1	26	7
\$16,000 - 21,999	7	2	47	13
\$22,000 - 29,999	1	6	7	41
\$30,000 and over	0	2	0	13
Total	15	15	100	100

Nineteen (63%) of the 30 female parents responding to the questionnaire reported that their total gross incomes had decreased

since their divorce. Eight had experienced an increase in income level and three indicated no change in income. The female respondents had a present median income of \$10,000 to \$11,999, half the amount of the responding male parents. Table 10 summarizes the total income level of the females participating in the study at the present time and at the time of their divorce.

Table 10. Income level of female respondents now and at the time of divorce.

Income level	Number		Percent	
	Time of Divorce	Present	Time of Divorce	Present
Under \$8,000	7	11	23	37
\$8,000 - 11,999	8	11	27	37
\$12,000 - 15,999	6	7	20	23
\$16,000 - 21,999	2	1	7	3
\$22,000 - 29,999	7	0	23	0
\$30,000 and over	0	0	0	0
Total	30	30	100	100

Responding Parent's Perception of Economic Situation

Fifteen responding parents (33%) perceived their current economic situation worse than before their divorce. Twenty-one (47%) thought their economic situation had improved and nine parents (20%) perceived no change.

Grouping the above responses of the parents according to sex of respondent showed that six male parents noted an improvement in their economic situation as did 15 female respondents. Eleven female respondents thought their economic situation had declined since their divorce. Six male parents also perceived a worsening of their economic situation. No change was perceived by five male parents and four female parents.

Two female respondents, who had not experienced an increase in income, indicated their economic situation had improved because now they knew where the money went or because their income was now predictable. One responding female parent emphasized her plight by her statement, "Any thought that a middle aged woman can, in all but the most rare of occasions, support her children in the manner to which they were accustomed is such idealistic meandering as to be ludicrous were it not so damn sad."

Responding Parent's Perception of Share of Property Received

Responding parents were asked to estimate the share they received of all the personal and real property owned by them and their former spouses at the time of divorce. The following five categories were used to estimate this amount: 1) none, 2) less than half, 3) half, 4) more than half, and 5) all. Table 11 provides

responding male and female parent's estimated share of the property received.

Table 11. Responding parent's estimated share of property received.

Estimated Share	Number		Percent	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
None	2	0	13	0
Less than half	8	6	53	20
Half	4	9	27	30
More than half	1	14	7	47
All	0	1	0	3
Total	15	30	100	100

The majority of the responding male parents in this study estimated they received less than half of all the property they and their former spouses owned at the time of the divorce. Fifty percent of the female respondents on the other hand estimated their share of the property to be more than half.

Family's Child Custody and Child Support Situation

Examination of the family's child custody and child support situation included: 1) identification of the parent granted custody of dependent children, 2) establishment of information concerning the amount of child support awarded to the custodial parent and

the dependability of this support payment, 3) identification of the method used in determining the amount of child support awarded, 4) perception of the adequacy of the child support paid or received as reported by the responding parent, and lastly 5) respondent's perception of the cooperation between self and former spouse in dealing with child support matters.

Child Custody

In 42 (93%) of the families participating in the study, the female parent had custody of all the dependent children. In two cases (5%) the male parent had custody of all the dependent children and in one family each parent had custody of half the family's dependent children. Although there were 97 children born to or legally adopted by the parents of the study, only 90 of the children were considered dependent and placed in the custodial care of one or the other parent at the time of the divorce.

Ninety-two percent (83) of the dependent children were in the custody of the female parent. The mean number of dependent children in the custody of the female parent was 1.9. Eight percent (7) dependent children were in the custody of the male parent. The mean for the male parent was 2.3 dependent children. Table 12 summarizes the number of dependent children in the custody of

male and female parents. Almost half (42) of the dependent children in custody were six years of age or younger.

Table 12. Number of dependent children in custody of male and female parents.

Number of dependent children in custody	Number of Custodial Parents		Percent	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
None	42	2	93	4
One	0	16	0	36
Two	2	17	5	38
Three	1	7	2	15
Four	0	3	0	7
Total	45	45	100	100

Child Support

In the 42 families in which the female parent was designated the custodial parent of all dependent children, child support was awarded in all cases except one. In this case the responding parent reported child support was not awarded because of the male parent's "inability to pay at the time," but that it was to be reviewed later.

The amount of child support awarded to the female custodial parent ranged from \$50.00 to \$550.00 per month. The mean monthly amount awarded per dependent child was \$102.50. In

71 percent (29) of the cases where it was ordered, the responding parent reported child support was either paid or received on a regular basis. In three cases the female custodial parent received no child support even though it had been awarded. Child support was received or paid on an irregular basis in nine cases.

In only two cases was there reported to be any provision made for an increase in the amount of child support awarded. Thirty-nine of the responding parents reported that the amount of child support did not increase as the child/children got older. One respondent indicated she planned to ask for more and another that she understood she would have to go to court to increase the amount. One respondent stated, "If I am contacted within the next six months by my wife's lawyer for an increase, you can expect a law suit."

Child support was not awarded to the two male custodial parents of this study. One indicated his ex-spouse had said that she would pay what she could, but during the 13 months since their divorce had been granted, he had received no child support from her. The other male parent, who had custody of the dependent children, reported that his former spouse "wanted no responsibility at all." He stated, "I believe husbands should receive support money if in lower income brackets than I am. The liberated woman still must share some obligations towards the family, as must a liberated man if he takes off." In the family in which each parent had

custody of half the dependent children, no child support was awarded to either parent.

The responding parent was also asked if the non-custodial parent paid, in addition to the monthly child support, any other expenses for the dependent children such as medical or dental care, premiums for life insurance, or health insurance premiums. In 16 families the non-custodial parent paid for some medical or dental care. Sixteen non-custodial parents paid for life insurance premiums and 17 paid for health insurance premiums for the children. Although the responding parent was asked to estimate the annual amount of these expenses paid by the non-custodial parent, the majority of the sample were unable or unwilling to do so. Some indicated that they did not know the amount paid. Others indicated that the amount paid was an employee benefit of the non-custodial parent's employment. Other parents reported that all the expenses were paid by the non-custodial parent or that it was divided between the two parents. Only 14 parents responded to these questions with any dollar amount estimates. Several respondents indicated that the non-custodial parent was supposed to pay some of these expenses, but they had a difficult time getting them to do this.

Twenty-five families reported that the non-custodial parent paid for no medical or dental care expenses for the dependent

children. No life insurance premiums were reported being paid in 23 families and no health insurance premiums in 24 families.

Method of Determining the Child Support Awarded

The responding parents were asked to briefly describe in their own words how the amount of child support awarded was decided in their case. The researcher then grouped the responses into the following categories according to who made the decision: 1) court, 2) lawyer or lawyers, 3) mutual agreement of parents, 4) former spouse, and 5) unknown to respondent. A summary of these responses is presented in Table 13. In two cases the responding parent did not answer this question.

Table 13. Method of determining the amount of child support awarded for 45 families.

Method	Number (N = 43)	Percent
Court	15	33
Lawyer or lawyers	5	11
Mutual agreement of parents	14	31
Former spouse	7	16
Unknown to respondent	2	4.5
No Response	2	4.5
Total	45	100

For 15 families the amount of child support was determined by the court. In some of these cases the custodial parent reported asking for more child support, but the amount was reduced by the court. In one case the custodial parent reported that she requested no child support in her divorce petition and that she didn't want any, but the judge ordered the father to pay \$50.00 per month. Since this prior arrangement was mutually agreed to by the couple, they felt the court was infringing on their rights.

Lawyers were specifically designated as determining the amount of child support awarded by five respondents. One custodial parent reported, "My lawyer said I couldn't get more than \$99.00 and that was that." Another said, "I asked for \$225.00 My attorney made me lower it to \$160.00 for no apparent reason."

Fourteen families reported that the amount of child support had been determined by personal agreement between the two divorcing parents. For most, child support was a mutually agreeable arrangement reached prior to the divorce. In two cases the amount was agreed to because the non-custodial parent couldn't afford more at that time. One parent indicated the amount of child support was based on mutual needs which were confirmed over a 12 month period prior to the divorce. Another responding parent, who had reached an agreement with her spouse prior to divorce qualified it by saying, "It was easier to agree than argue

constantly." Special circumstances were reported as affecting the amount of child support agreed to in several cases.

Seven responding parents specifically indicated it was their former spouses who had determined the amount of child support they paid or received. In this group were the two male parents who had custody of all the dependent children in their family. One of their spouses was reported as saying she would pay what she could and the other wanted no responsibility at all. One custodial parent stated, "I asked for \$100.00 per child, he said he would go to Australia and not pay anything if I didn't agree to \$75.00. Another parent reported, "I asked how much she wanted and that's what I gave her."

Two male respondents reported that they did not know how child support was decided in their case. One indicated he was not present at the proceedings and the other parent said, "Have no idea."

Adequacy of Child Support

Twenty-five responding parents felt the amount of child support being paid or received by them was adequate. However, nineteen reported the amount of child support as not adequate. The parents' responses to the question of why they felt as they did regarding adequacy of support were almost as varied as the number

of parents responding. Some responses were: "I am able to live without too much financial stress and so is my former wife and children." "If it was any more, I wouldn't be able to pay it." "I know it is out of the question to ask for more." "Fairly equal division of expenses." "I can manage reasonably well." "It's 10% of my take home pay." "I feel I am contributing more than half of the support." "The support and my income is quite sufficient." "I don't want his money." "It is adequate for me because I couldn't afford to pay any more, but not for the children. It costs more than what I pay to support them."

Responding parents who felt the child support was inadequate included the following among their comments: "You cannot raise teenagers on \$50.00 per month apiece." "Since he claims total deductions, more of the expense should be his." "Rising cost of living and children growing older." "It barely covers child care for one month, to my way of thinking that is hardly one half the monthly cost of supporting/raising a child." "How can you support them on \$67.50 per month each." "Inflation--\$75.00 per child doesn't buy food, clothes, home--extras can only be gotten at a thrift shop--recreation can only be no expense ones." "While the support is generous by some standards, the children's economic standards and mine have dropped dramatically." "Because he doesn't pay it."

When the responses to the adequacy of child support question were grouped according to the sex of the responding parent, all 13 of the male respondents who paid child support felt the amount was adequate. Twelve female respondents felt the amount of child support they received was adequate. Seventeen of the female respondents and the two male respondents who had custody of all the dependent children felt the child support they received was inadequate. The parent who had custody of half the family's dependent children did not respond to this question.

Cooperation of Former Spouses in Child Support Matters

When parents were asked if they perceived cooperation between themselves and their former spouses, 62 percent (28) felt they and their former spouses generally cooperated in matters dealing with child support. Thirty-eight percent (17) felt they did not cooperate. Interpretation of the term "cooperation" was left to the responding parent.

Male Parent's Contribution and Female Parent's Contribution to Consumption Costs

The parents' contributions to consumption costs were examined in relation to: 1) level of living and consumption costs of dependent children at the time of divorce, 2) male and female parent's

contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children, and 3) independence of the male and female parent's contribution to consumption costs and specified variables. The family's level of living, the consumption costs of dependent children and each parent's contribution to the consumption costs were determined by the procedure discussed in Chapter 3.

Level of Living

Using the standards identified in Chapter 3, 19 families in the study (42%) were at the lower economic level. Ten families (22%) were categorized as intermediate level, while 16 families (36%) were found to be in the higher level of living.

Male and Female Parents' Contributions

Both the male and female parents' contributions to the consumption costs of dependent children ranged from no contribution at all to 100 percent of the costs. The mean percent of the male parents' contributions was 59.5 percent of the consumption costs. The mean percentage contributed by female parents was 40.4 percent. Table 14 provides a distribution of the male parents' contributions by the three classes discussed earlier. Table 15 provides similar information for the female parents of the study.

Table 14. The male parents' contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children.

Percentage Amount Contributed	Number	Percent
0 - 33 percent	8	18
34 - 66 percent	17	38
67 - 100 percent	20	44
Total	45	100

For seven of the families in the study, the male parent's contribution was identified to be 100 percent of the consumption costs of the dependent children in the family. In four families the male parent was identified as contributing nothing to the consumption costs of his children.

Table 15. The female parents' contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children.

Percentage Amount Contributed	Number	Percent
0 - 33 percent	20	44
34 - 66 percent	17	38
67 - 100 percent	8	18
Total	45	100

The female parent's contribution in four families was identified to be 100 percent of the consumption costs of the dependent children. In seven families no contribution to the

consumption costs of the children was identified as being contributed by the female parent.

The mean percent of contribution by the male parents and the mean percent of contribution by the female parents was used to test the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1. There is no difference between the divorced male and female parent's contribution to the consumption costs of rearing his/her dependent children.

The child support contributions of both parents were analyzed for differences according to the formula set forth in Chapter 3. The two-tailed t-test statistic revealed an actual significance level of .046. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected; a difference was observed to exist. For the 45 families represented in this study, the divorced male parents were contributing more to the consumption costs of their dependent children than were female parents.

The remaining hypotheses relate to the independence of the male and female parent's contribution and specified variables. Hypothesis 2 tested the relationship of each parent's contribution and selected family characteristics at the time of divorce. Each selected characteristic will be stated separately, discussed and reported in two-way tables.

Hypothesis 2a. Each divorced parent's contribution to the

consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the number of dependent children in the family.

The first variable tested in Hypothesis 2 could not be rejected. Neither the male or female parent's contribution was shown to be dependent on the number of dependent children in the family.

Table 16 cross-classifies this variable with the percent of consumption costs contributed by the male parents in the study and Table 17 cross-classifies this variable by female parent's contribution.

Table 16. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and number of dependent children in the family.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Number of Dependent Children			Total
	One	Two	Three or more	
0 - 33 percent	2	3	3	8
34 - 66 percent	7	7	3	17
67 - 100 percent	7	7	6	20
Total	16	17	12	45

$\chi^2 = 1.4505$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 17. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and number of dependent children in the family.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Number of Dependent Children			Total
	One	Two	Three or more	
0 - 33 percent	7	7	6	20
34 - 66 percent	7	7	3	17
67 - 100 percent	2	3	3	8
Total	16	17	12	45

$\chi^2 = 1.4505$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 2b. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the age of both parents at the time of divorce.

Tables 18 and 19 cross-classify this variable for both parents by the male parent's contribution. Tables 20 and 21 then cross-classify this same variable by the female parent's contribution. Chi Square indicated no dependency between either the male or female parent's contribution to consumption costs and the age of the parents at the time of divorce. This part of hypothesis 2 could not be rejected based on the data collected for this study.

Table 18. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and age of the male parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Age of the Male Parent				Total
	25 or under	26-35	36-45	46 and over	
0 - 33 percent	0	6	1	1	8
34 - 66 percent	0	9	6	2	17
67 - 100 percent	1	14	4	1	20
Total	1	29	11	4	45

$\chi^2 = 3.8962$, 6 d. f., $< \chi^2$ 12.5916 at the .05 level of significance.

Table 19. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and age of the female parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Age of the Female Parent				Total
	25 or under	26-35	36-45	46 and over	
0 - 33 percent	0	5	2	1	8
34 - 66 percent	3	9	3	2	17
67 - 100 percent	5	10	5	0	20
Total	8	24	10	3	45

$\chi^2 = 4.8392$, 6.d. f., $< \chi^2$ 12.5916 at the .05 level of significance.

Table 20. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and age of the male parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Age of Male Parent				Total
	25 or under	26-35	36-45	46 and over	
0 - 33 percent	1	14	4	1	20
34 - 66 percent	0	9	6	2	17
67 - 100 percent	0	6	1	1	8
Total	1	29	11	4	45

$X^2 = 3.8962$, 6 d. f., $< \chi^2 12.5916$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 21. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and age of the female parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Age of Female Parent				Total
	25 or under	26-35	36-45	46 and over	
0 - 33 percent	5	10	5	0	20
34 - 66 percent	3	9	3	2	17
67 - 100 percent	0	5	2	1	8
Total	8	24	10	3	45

$X^2 = 4.8392$, 6 d. f., $< \chi^2 12.5916$ at the 0.5 level of significance.

Hypothesis 2c. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the total income level of the family at the time of divorce.

A relationship, significant at the .01 level, was found to exist between both the male and female parents' contributions and the income level of the family. The parents' contributions to the consumption costs of dependent children were dependent upon the income level of the family. Hypothesis 2c was rejected. Cross-classification of this variable is reflected in Tables 22 and 23.

Table 22. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and income level of the family at the time of divorce.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Income Level of the Family					Total
	Under \$8,000	\$ 8,000- 11,999	\$12,000- 15,999	\$16,000- 21,999	\$22,000- 30,000	
0 - 33 percent	5	1	0	1	1	8
34 - 66 percent	2	4	4	1	6	17
67 - 100 percent	2	4	6	7	1	20
Total	9	9	10	9	8	45

$\chi^2 = 20.5329$, 8 d. f., $> \chi^2_{.01} = 20.0902$ at the .01 level of significance.

Table 23. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and income level of the family at the time of divorce.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Income Level of the Family					Total
	Under \$8,000	\$ 8,000- 11,999	\$12,000- 15,999	\$16,000- 21,999	\$22,000- 30,000	
0 - 23 percent	2	4	6	7	1	20
34 - 66 percent	2	4	4	1	6	17
67 - 100 percent	5	1	0	1	1	8
Total	9	9	10	9	8	45

$\chi^2 = 20.5329$, 8 d.f., $> \chi^2_{.01} = 20.0902$ at the .01 level of significance.

Hypothesis 2d. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the educational level of the parents.

Tabulation of the male parent's contribution and the variable, educational level of parents is provided in Tables 24 and 25. The female parent's contribution is cross-classified with this variable in Tables 26 and 27. No relationship was found between either the male parent's or the female parent's contribution and the educational level of the male parent. However, a relationship was observed between the parents' contributions and the educational level of the female parent. Educational level of the parent, was not rejected for the male parent's educational level but was rejected for the female parent's educational level. A dependence

Table 24. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and educational level of the male parent.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Educational Level of Male Parent			Total
	12 years or less	13-16 years	More than 16 years	
0 - 33 percent	5	2	1	8
34 - 66 percent	6	7	4	17
67 - 100 percent	5	7	8	20
Total	16	16	13	45

$\chi^2 = 4.4316$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 25. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and educational level of the female parent.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Educational Level of Female Parent			Total
	12 years or less	13-16 years	More than 16 years	
0 - 33 percent	7	0	1	8
34 - 66 percent	9	5	3	17
67 - 100 percent	5	12	3	20
Total	21	17	7	45

$\chi^2 = 11.0650$, 4 d. f., $> \chi^2 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance

Table 26. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and educational level of the male parent.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Educational Level of Male Parent			Total
	12 years or less	13-16 years	More than 16 years	
0 - 33 percent	5	7	8	20
34 - 66 percent	6	7	4	17
67 - 100 percent	5	2	1	8
Total	16	16	13	45

$\chi^2 = 4.4316$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 27. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and educational level of the female parent.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Educational Level of Female Parent			Total
	12 years or less	13-16 years	More than 16 years	
0 - 33 percent	5	12	3	20
34 - 66 percent	9	5	3	17
67 - 100 percent	7	0	1	8
Total	21	17	7	45

$\chi^2 = 11.0650$, 4 d. f., $> \chi^2 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance

was observed to exist between both divorced parents' contributions to consumption costs and the educational level of the female parent.

Hypothesis 2e. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the employment status of the parents at the time of divorce.

A dependent relationship at the .01 level was found to exist between the employment status of the male parent and the contributions of both the male and female parent. No dependency was observed between either parent's contribution and the employment status of the female parent. Tables 28 and 29 provide the tabulations for the employment status variable and the male parent's contribution. Similar information is provided in Tables 30 and 31 for the female parent's contribution.

The independence of each parent's contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children was rejected for the employment status of the male parent at the time of divorce but was not rejected for the employment status of the female parent. That is contributions to the consumptions costs of dependent children were dependent upon employment of the male parent at the time of divorce but not dependent upon the female parent's employment. This finding could be anticipated since in this study no female parent paid child support to a custodial male parent and custodial female

Table 28. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and employment status of the male parent. at the time of divorce.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Employment Status of Male Parent				Total
	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Unemployed But Looking	Unemployed But Not Looking	
0 - 33 percent	4	0	1	3	8
34 - 66 percent	16	1	0	0	17
67 - 100 percent	19	0	1	0	20
Total	39	1	2	3	45

$\chi^2 = 18.9697$, 6 d.f., $> \chi^2_{.01} = 16.8119$ at the .01 level of significance.

Table 29. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and employment status of the female parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Employment Status of Female Parent				Total
	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Unemployed But Looking	Unemployed But Not Looking	
0 - 33 percent	5	0	1	2	8
34 - 66 percent	9	2	0	6	17
67 - 100 percent	9	4	1	6	20
Total	23	6	2	14	45

$\chi^2 = 4.2621$, 6 d.f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 12.5916$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 30. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and employment status of the male parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Employment Status of Male Parent				Total
	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Unemployed But Looking	Unemployed But not Looking	
0 - 33 percent	19	0	1	0	20
34 - 66 percent	16	1	0	0	17
67 - 100 percent	4	0	1	3	8
Total	39	1	2	3	45

$\chi^2 = 18.9697$, 6 d.f., $> \chi^2_{.01} = 16.8119$ at the .01 level of significance.

Table 31. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and employment status of the female parent at the time of divorce.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Employment Status of Female Parent				Total
	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Unemployed But Looking	Unemployed But Not Looking	
0 - 33 percent	9	4	1	6	20
34 - 66 percent	9	2	0	6	17
67 - 100 percent	5	0	1	2	8
Total	23	6	2	14	45

$\chi^2 = 4.2621$, 6 d.f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 12.5916$ at the .05 level of significance.

parents made contributions to the consumption costs of children regardless of their status in the labor force.

Hypothesis 3. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the method of determining child support.

Hypothesis 3 could not be rejected at the .05 level of significance. However, if the investigator were to use .10 as a rejection level, this hypothesis could then be rejected. In essence it would mean that the divorced parents' contributions to consumption costs would be dependent upon the method of determining child support. With an increased sample size it is predicted that this hypothesis could be rejected at the set level of .05. Tables 32 and 33 refer to the cross classification of this variable and the contributions made by the male and female parent to the consumption costs of dependent children.

Hypothesis 4. Each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children is independent of the property settlement received at the time of the divorce.

The responding parents' perception of their property settlement was discussed earlier. Cross classification of this variable and the responding male or female parent's contribution to consumption costs are shown in Tables 34 and 35. It should be noted that only the responding parents' contributions were used in

Table 32. Cross tabulation of the male parent's contribution to consumption costs and the method of determining child support.

Percent of male parent's contribution	Method of Determining Child Support				Total
	Court	Lawyers	Parental Agreement	Former Spouse	
0 - 33 percent	4	0	1	3	8
34 - 66 percent	7	2	4	2	15
67 - 100 percent	4	3	9	2	18
Total	15	5	14	7	41

$\chi^2 = 8.2331$, 6 d. f., $< \chi^2$ 12.5916 at the .05 level of significance.

Table 33. Cross tabulation of the female parent's contribution to consumption costs and the method of determining child support.

Percent of female parent's contribution	Method of Determining Child Support				Total
	Court	Lawyers	Parental Agreement	Former Spouse	
0 - 33 percent	4	3	9	2	18
34 - 66 percent	7	2	4	2	15
67 - 100 percent	4	0	1	3	8
Total	15	5	14	7	41

$\chi^2 = 8.2331$, 6 d. f., $< \chi^2$ 12.5916 at the .05 level of significance.

Table 34. Cross tabulation of the responding male parent's contribution to consumption costs and the property settlement received.

Percent of responding male parent's contribution	Property Settlement Received			Total
	Less than Half	Half	More than Half	
0 - 33 percent	1	0	0	1
34 - 66 percent	5	1	0	6
62 - 100 percent	4	3	1	8
Total	10	4	1	15

$\chi^2 = 2.4687$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance.

Table 35. Cross tabulation of the responding female parent's contribution to consumption costs and the property settlement received.

Percent of responding female parent's contribution	Property Settlement Received			Total
	Less than Half	Half	More than Half	
0 - 33 percent	0	2	4	6
34 - 66 percent	2	4	6	12
67 - 100 percent	4	3	5	12
Total	6	9	15	30

$\chi^2 = 3.0000$, 4 d. f., $< \chi^2_{.05} = 9.48773$ at the .05 level of significance

cross-classifying this variable. Hypothesis 4 could not be rejected. No dependence was found to exist between the responding parents' contributions and the property settlements received.

Other Expressed Concerns Regarding Child Support

Over half the responding parents in the study expressed specific concerns that they have regarding child support. Frequently mentioned by parents, both paying and receiving child support, was the frustration they incurred because of the Marion County's system whereby child support payments are paid to and received through the county clerk's office. Cited often were: 1) the inefficiency of that office in transferring payments, 2) the cost of the imposed service, 3) the inaccuracies of records, and 4) the ineffectiveness of the office in securing child support awarded.

Several parents expressed concern about the loss of parental love and emotional support experienced by their children. Other parents indicated feelings about their responsibilities by saying, "Father feels since he pays child support, that's where his obligations and responsibilities begin and end--leaving me with total care of children at all times--I need time for myself." and "The mother takes care of children and father pays support when he wants to, but to the kids he's the hero. To make up what he doesn't pay I sometimes have to work two jobs."

Two responding parents felt child support received should not have to be declared as income when applying for public assistance. One divorced parent made a plea for counseling help for divorcing parents with dependent children. Counseling, she felt, was needed to know and understand some of the future problems to be considered.

Several parents who were paying child support, felt the custodial parent should supply the non-custodial parent with a disclosure detailing how child support was used.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify divorced parents' contributions to the direct consumption costs of rearing their dependent children. Relationships between the male and female parents' contributions to the consumption costs and specified demographic characteristics at the time of divorce, methods of determining child support and property settlements received were investigated. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' Estimated Urban Family Budgets for the Seattle-Everett, Washington area and Revised Equivalence Scales served as the basis for determining the families' level of living and the consumption costs of dependent children for this study.

Forty-five divorced parents responded to a mailed questionnaire concerning their family's child support and economic situation. These data served as the base for this research. Fifteen responses were from male parents and 30 were from female parents. These 45 respondents represented 19 percent of the 242 families randomly selected from Marion County Vital Statistics Records to participate in the study.

The male parent in the families studied ranged in age from 25 to 56 years with a mean age of 34.2 years. The female parents

were slightly younger, ranging in age from 22 to 45 with a mean age of 32.2 years.

Parents in the study had been divorced a median number of 17 months. The range in months divorced extended from three to 29. Reported family size was from one to five children with the mean number of children per family being 2.16.

The median educational category for both the male and female parents was some post high school education. The educational level of the male parents ranged from one who had completed nine years of schooling to 13 having received post graduate level education. Two female parents were reported to have received less than eight years of education while seven had post graduate level education.

Eighty-seven percent of the male parents were working full time at the time of divorce while only fifty-one percent of the female parents were working full time for pay at the time of divorce.

At the time of their divorce, family median income was in the category of \$12,000 to \$13,999 with a relatively even distribution of income levels. Twenty percent of the families reported incomes under \$8,000, 20 percent had incomes between \$8,000 and \$11,999, another 22 percent reported incomes between \$12,000 and \$15,999 and 38 percent reported incomes between \$16,000 and \$30,000.

Ten of the 15 responding male parents had experienced an increase in their income level since their divorce. Their current median income was between \$22,000 and \$24,999. The median income for the 30 responding female parents currently was reported as being between \$10,000 and \$11,999, less than half the amount of the responding male parents. Nineteen of the female parents reported a decrease in their income level since their divorce. However, 47 percent of all the responding parents thought their economic situation had improved since their divorce. Thirty-three percent perceived a worsening of their economic situation and twenty percent perceived no change.

The majority of the responding male parents in the study estimated they received less than half of all they and their former spouses owned at the time of divorce. Fifty percent of the female respondents on the other hand estimated their share of the property received to be more than half.

In 93 percent of the families participating in the study, the female parent had custody of all the dependent children. In two cases the male parent had custody of all the dependent children and in one family each parent had custody of half the family's dependent children. Eighty-three dependent children were in the custody of the female parent, while seven dependent children were in the custody of male parents. Almost half (42) of the dependent

children were six years of age or younger.

Families in which the female parent was designated the custodial parent of all dependent children, child support was awarded in all cases except one. The mean monthly amount of child support awarded per dependent child was \$102.50. No child support was awarded to the two male custodial parents who had custody of all the dependent children. In the vast majority of cases, no provision was made for any increases in the amounts of child support awarded. The non-custodial parent was reported, however, to be paying, in addition to child support, some other expenses for dependent children such as some medical or dental care, health insurance or life insurance premiums in approximately one-third of the families studied.

The amount of child support awarded to the custodial parent was reported to be determined by the court in 15 of the families. In 14 other families the parents mutually agreed to the amount of child support prior to the divorce. Lawyers or former spouses were specifically designated as the determiners of the amount of child support in 12 of the families studied.

Twenty-five parents responded that child support paid or received was adequate, while 19 other parents felt it was not adequate. Families in this study generally categorized themselves as cooperating in matters dealing with child support. Sixty-two

percent of the responding parents felt that they and their former spouses generally cooperated. Thirty-eight percent felt that they did not cooperate.

Both the male and female parents' contributions to the consumption costs of their dependent children were determined first by identifying the amount contributed by the non-custodial parent to child support. This amount was then calculated as a percent of the consumption costs for that family. The remainder of the consumption costs was assumed to be the other parent's contribution.

The range of the male and female parent's contribution to consumption costs was from no contribution to 100 percent of the costs. The mean percent of the male parents' contributions was 59.5 percent of the consumption costs. The female parents' mean percentage contributed was 40.4 percent.

The t-test used to test the difference between the male and female parents contribution resulted in rejection of the first hypothesis. A difference was observed to exist between the male and female parent's contribution to the consumption costs of dependent children with males contributing more than females.

The statistical independence of each parent's contribution and specified variables were appraised by Chi Square. The .05

level of significance was considered adequate support for rejection of the null hypotheses. The independence of either the male or female parent's contribution to consumption costs was not rejected for the following variables: number of dependent children in the family, age of both parents at the time of divorce, educational level of the male parent, employment status of the female parent, method of determining support and property settlement received. No dependent relationship could be detected by the findings of this study between these variables and each divorced parent's contribution to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children. Even though the parent's contribution to consumption costs of his/her dependent children was not dependent upon the method of determining support at the set rejection level, the data did suggest that a dependency relation might exist in that the hypothesis could have been rejected at the .10 level.

The parent's contribution to the consumption costs of children was dependent upon the educational level of the female parent, the employment status of the male parent, and the total income level of the family at the time of divorce.

Conclusions

Findings from this exploratory study suggest that the following conclusions are warranted:

1. The vast majority of dependent children are still being placed in the custodial care of the female parent.

2. Only three-fourths of custodial female parents can expect to receive the actual dollar amount of child support awarded to them by the courts. A Texas study indicated a somewhat higher percentage, 81.5 percent of the custodial female parents received the amount of child support awarded (25).

3. Child support does not increase as the children get older, even though available child rearing cost studies suggested that costs of children increase with the age of the child. Nor does child support automatically increase to reflect rises in the cost of living.

4. There is no systematic method, at least in Marion County, Oregon, for determining the amount of child support awarded.

5. Non-custodial male parents who pay child support feel the amount of child support paid is adequate; while custodial female parents feel the amount of child support received is inadequate.

6. Divorced male parents' annual incomes rise while that of divorced female parents decline. This conclusion is also supported by Hampton's research.

7. The contributions made by divorced parents to the consumption costs of their children is based on the income level of the family and the employment status of the male parent. Bohannon's work supports this conclusion. Bohannon reported that the principle of child support rested on only one factor; the fathers' ability to pay.

8. Female parents perceived that they received 50 percent or more of the property owned by the couple when the marriage was dissolved. The male parents perceived that they received less than half.

9. High mobility of single parents probably was a factor in the relatively low response to the mailed questionnaires sent to collect data for this study. Another factor might be that parents who did not pay child support failed to respond.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest a need for the following extended research and educational programs:

1. Longitudinal studies on child support contributions by divorced parents in various geographical regions to determine if

regional differences exist and to measure changes in child support over extended periods of time.

2. Studies which identify and measure the divorced parent's contribution to the non-economic costs of children to help courts and divorcing parents equitably determine the obligations of each toward his/her children.

3. Replication of this study in rural areas of Oregon and in other counties in Oregon to suggest whether divorced parents' contributions to child support are dependent on locale or county in which the couple was divorced.

4. Further examination of the relationship found to exist in this study between the parents' contributions and the educational level of the female parent.

5. Further research with a larger sample to determine the extent of the relationship between the method of determining child support and the contribution a parent makes to the consumption costs of his/her dependent children.

6. Research to identify and quantify economic and non-economic costs related to child rearing.

7. Dissemination of above information to appropriate individuals to include parents and others who make decisions about child support obligations.

8. Research regarding the effectiveness of the Marion County system of transferring child support payments from the non-custodial parent to the custodial parent.

9. Follow-up study of respondents in this research to ascertain changes in the consumption costs of the children and changes in the parents' contributions to these consumption costs.

10. Development and use of various data collection methods to gather data from divorced parents.

11. Pre-divorce counseling regarding financial settlements related to support of dependent children be available to all divorcing parents.

12. Consideration be given to the exploration of ways to promote cooperation and understanding between divorced parents concerning the support of their dependent children.

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APPENDICES

School of
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331 (503) 754-3551

APPENDIX A

Dear Parent:

Child support appears a concern of all divorced parents, yet very little information is available on how divorced parents manage to support their dependent children. As a graduate student in family economics at Oregon State University, I am in the process of collecting information for a research study on the problems divorced parents experience in regard to child support.

A scientifically selected sample of individuals divorced in Marion County in 1975 or 1976 is being asked to send me information concerning his/her family's child support situation. I hope you will help me with this research by completing the following questionnaire. Your response is a vital part of my research and there is no way I can substitute for the answers you can provide.

Note that your questionnaire is numbered. This serves as a way by which reminders may be sent, if necessary, without further imposing on those who have completed and returned their questionnaire. I assure you that all information you give me will be kept strictly confidential and no participating individual will be identified.

Would you please take a few minutes, complete the questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided before June 1, 1977. No postage is necessary.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please call me at Oregon State University, 754-4992 and I will be glad to answer them.

Thank you for your courtesy and help.

Sincerely,

Josephine Turner
Assistant Professor,
Home Management Department

Donna M. Gregerson
Graduate Student,
Home Management Department

Please include only information about the marriage and children from the family situation which was ended by divorce in 1975 or 1976. Do not include information about a former marriage or family.

1. First, how many months has it been since your divorce was granted?

_____ Months

2. And, what was your age at the time of the divorce in 1975 or 1976?

_____ Age

3. What was your spouse's age at the time of the divorce?

_____ Age

4. How many children were born or adopted by you and your former spouse during the time of this marriage?

_____ Number of Children

- 4a. And what were the ages of these children at the time of your divorce?
(Please list the ages of each child.)

_____ Child 1 _____ Child 2 _____ Child 3 _____ Child 4 _____ Child 5

5. Do you have custody of any of these children at the present time?

_____ Yes (Go on to Q. 5a) _____ No (Skip to Q. 6)

- 5a. And, how many of these children do you now have custody of? _____ Number

- 5b. Circle in Q. 4a the children which you have custody of.

6. Does your former spouse have custody of any of these children?

_____ Yes (Go on to Q. 6a) _____ No. (Skip to Q. 7)

- 6a. And, how many of these children does your former spouse have custody of?

_____ Number

7. Was the parent who was not granted custody of any children ordered by the court to pay child support?

_____ Yes (Go on to Q. 7a and 7b) _____ No. (Skip to Q. 8)

- 7a. How much child support money is this parent ordered to pay per month?

\$ _____ Dollars

- 7b. Does the amount of child support paid by this parent increase as the children get older?

_____ Yes _____ No

8. How many months altogether, since your divorce have you either paid or received the full monthly amount of child support ordered?

_____ Number of months

9. In the table below are expenses sometimes paid by the parent who does not have custody of the children (non-custodial parent). Would you please indicate whether or not any of these expenses are paid by the non-custodial parent in place of or in addition to the fixed monthly amount as part of the child support agreement?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>(IF YES) amount paid yearly</u>
a. Does the non-custodial parent pay for medical or dental care?	_____	_____	\$ _____
b. Premiums for life insurance?	_____	_____	\$ _____
c. Health insurance premiums?	_____	_____	\$ _____
d. Any other payments? (Please specify)			\$ _____
_____			\$ _____
_____			\$ _____

10. Which parent claims the children as dependents for tax purposes, you or your former spouse?

_____ Myself _____ Former Spouse

11. What was your approximate total family income (before anything is taken out) at the time of the divorce. (Please check one)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. ___ Under \$6,000 | e. ___ \$12,000 to \$13,999 | i. ___ \$20,000 to \$21,999 |
| b. ___ \$6,000 to \$7,999 | f. ___ \$14,000 to \$15,999 | j. ___ \$22,000 to \$24,999 |
| c. ___ \$8,000 to \$9,999 | g. ___ \$16,000 to \$17,999 | k. ___ \$25,000 to \$29,999 |
| d. ___ \$10,000 to \$11,999 | h. ___ \$18,000 to \$19,999 | l. ___ \$30,000 or more |

11a. And what is your approximate total family income at the present time? (Please indicate category from above by letter. Do not include any child support payments you receive.)

_____ Category by letter

12. Is your economic situation now, as compared to before your divorce, worse, better, or the same?

_____ Worse _____ Better _____ No change

13. Do you feel the amount of child support being paid by you or received by you is adequate, or not?

_____ Yes, adequate _____ No, inadequate

13a. Why do you feel this way? _____

14. Do you feel you and your former spouse generally cooperate in dealing with child support matters, or not?

_____ Yes, cooperate _____ No, do not cooperate

15. Would you please describe briefly how the amount of child support was decided during your divorce proceedings?

16. Were you working full time or part-time for pay at the time of your divorce?

- Yes, full time (Go on to Q. 16a)
- Yes, Part time (Go on to Q. 16a)
- No, unemployed and looking for work (Skip to Q. 17)
- No, unemployed but not looking for work (Skip to Q. 17)

16a. What type of job was this? _____ Specific Job _____ Type of industry

17. Are you presently working for pay?

- Yes, full time (Go on to Q. 17a)
- Yes, part time (Go on to Q. 17a)
- No, (Skip to Q. 18)

17a. What type of job is this?

_____ Specific Job _____ Type of industry

18. Was your spouse working part time or full time for pay at the time of the divorce?

- Yes, full time (Go on to Q. 18a)
- Yes, part time (Go on to Q. 18a)
- No, unemployed and looking for work (Skip to Q. 19)
- No, unemployed but not looking for work (Skip to Q. 19)

18a. What type of job was this?

_____ Specific Job _____ Type of industry

19. Of all the personal and real property owned by you and your spouse at the time of the divorce, how much would you estimate you received as your share?

- None Less than half Half More than half All

20. Would you please circle the number which represents the highest grade you and your former spouse completed in school?

<u>Yourself</u>	<u>Your former spouse</u>
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Grade School	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Grade School
9 10 11 12 High School	9 10 11 12 High School
13 14 15 16 College	13 14 15 16 College
17 Post Graduate	17 Post Graduate

21. Finally, what is your sex? Male Female

22. Is there anything else you would like to say about problem concerning child support or this questionnaire?

(THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION)

APPENDIX B

Revised Scale of Equivalent Income¹ for Urban Families of Different Size, Age, and Composition (4-person family-husband, age 35-54, wife, 2 children, older 6-15 = 100).

Size and type of family	Age of Head		
	Under 35	35-54	55-64
One person	37	38	33
Two persons:			
Husband and wife	50	61	60
One parent and child	40	59	62
Three persons:			
Husband, wife, child under 6	62	69	--
Husband, wife, child 6-15	62	83	89
Husband, wife, child 16-17	--	92	89
Husband, wife, child 18 or over	--	83	86
One parent, 2 children	68	77	84
Four persons:			
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older under 6)	71	79	--
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 6-15)	76	100	105
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 16-17)	--	114	126
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 18 or over)	--	96	110
One parent, 3 children	88	97	--
Five persons:			
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest under 6)	85	95	--
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 6-15)	94	115	119
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 16-17)	--	128	138
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 18 or over)	--	118	124
One parent, 4 children	108	117	--
Six persons or more:			
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest under 6)	98	--	--
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 6-15)	107	130	139
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 16-17)	--	145	--
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 18 or over)	--	149	--
One parent, 5 children or more	124	137	--

¹The scale values shown here are percentages to be applied to the total cost of a budget (excluding State and local income taxes and disability payments) for the base family (4 persons-- husband, age 35-54, wife, 2 children, older child 6-15 years) to estimate the total income required to provide the same level of living for urban families of different size, age, and composition. In addition to the cost of goods and services for family consumption the total budget costs include gifts and contributions, life insurance, occupational expenses, employee contributions for social security, and Federal income taxes. Estimates of personal taxes paid to State and local governments and of payments for disability insurance may be added to those urban areas where applicable.

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Revised Equivalence Scale for Estimating Equivalent Incomes or Budget Costs by Family Type, Bulletin No. 1570-2 (Washington, D. C. : Government Printing Office, 1968).

APPENDIX C

Revised Equivalence Scale¹ For Urban Families of Different Size, Age and Composition
(4-person family-husband, age 35 to 54, wife, 2 children, older 6 to 15 = 100).

Size and type of family ²	Age of head			
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	65 or over
One person	35	36	32	28
Two persons: average ³	47	59	59	52
Husband and wife	49	60	59	51
One parent and child	40	57	60	58
Three persons: average ³	62	81	86	77
Husband, wife, child under 6	62	69	---	---
Husband, wife, child 6-15	62	82 ⁴	88	81
Husband, wife, child 16-17	---	91 ⁴	88	---
Husband, wife, child 18 or over	---	82	85	77
One parent, 2 children	67	76	82	75
Four persons: average ³	74	99	109	91
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older under 6)	72	80	---	---
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 6-15)	77	100	105	95
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 16-17)	---	113	125	---
Husband, wife, 2 children, (older 18 or over)	---	96	110	89
One parent, 3 children	88	96	---	---
Five persons: average ³	94	118	124	---
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest under 6)	87	97	---	---
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 6-15)	96	116	120	---
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 16-17)	---	128	138	---
Husband, wife, 3 children, (oldest 18 or over)	---	119	124	---
One parent, 4 children	108	117	---	---

Appendix C. Continued.

Size and type of family ²	Age of head			
	Under 35	35-54	55-64	65 or over
Six persons or more: average ³	111	138	143	---
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest under 6)	101	---	---	---
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 6-15)	110	132	140	---
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 16-17)	---	146	---	---
Husband, wife, 4 children or more, (oldest 18 or over)	---	149	---	---
One parent, 5 children, or more	125	137	---	---

¹The scale values shown here are the percentages of the cost of goods and services for family consumption of the base family (4 persons--husband, age 35-54, wife, 2 children, older child 6-15 years) required to provide the same level of living for urban families of different size, age, and composition.

²Husband-wife and one-parent families with their own children (including adopted and stepchildren) present, but with no other persons living with the family.

³Scale values for individual family types weighted by the number of families of each type in the universe. The averages include some types for which values were not shown separately because of the small number of such families in the sample.

⁴Revised.

Source: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Revised Equivalence Scale for Estimating Equivalent Incomes or Budget Costs by Family Type, Bulletin No. 1570-2 (Washington, D. C. : Government Printing Office, 1968).