

An Examination Of
Single Mothers in Child Welfare

BY

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on single mothers involved with the child welfare system. It investigates the characteristics associated with adult single mothers in our culture and in the child welfare system. Certain characteristics associated with single mothers such as poverty, low income, low educational attainment, stress, substance abuse and social isolation have made this group not only more visible but more susceptible to investigation by child welfare agencies. Single mothers are over represented in child neglect statistics. Furthermore, single mothers, historically, have always been over represented in child neglect statistics. The link between the characteristics associated with the poverty of single mothers and the conditions leading to neglect cannot be ignored. Rather than examining social policies, researchers studying the problem and the risks associated with families as a result of poverty have returned the focus to single mothers and their respective dysfunctions. The child welfare system, although aware of the connection between poverty and the neglect of children, has often been punitive towards single mothers. A solution to the problem of single mothers' neglect of their children has continued to elude us, despite a large body of knowledge concerning single mothers and their children. This study addresses characteristics particular to this group, what needs exist and how changes can be or should be effected for this population.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I explore the issue of single mothers in the child welfare system by examining the demographics of single mothers in Canada and in Manitoba. I examine the origins of society's notions of family, and parenthood. I investigate how the functions and roles of parenthood differ for men and women and how motherhood, seen as a career choice for women, has come to be associated with ideal traits in women. One result of this ideal is that women who deviate from the norm are considered dysfunctional.

Single motherhood is a complex issue for child welfare workers. There are a variety of images of single mothers, often unfavourable. For those of us who have worked in the child welfare system, single motherhood can conjure up images of women who are on social assistance, have multiple partners, are poor, and have children who are often on the edge of neglect, if they have not already been neglected.

Certain aspects of these images are supported by factual evidence. In 1991, 82.7% of single parent families in Canada were female led as opposed to 17.3%, which were male led. In Manitoba, the picture is similar. 81.5% of single parent families were female led and 18.5% of single parent families were male led (Statistics Canada, Catalogue Number 93-312, p. 1). Single mothers are poorer than any other group of women in the country. Statistics Canada estimated that, in 1991, 62% of all single mothers had incomes below Statistics Canada's low income cutoffs. In 1991, single mother families had an average annual income of \$21,876 and a 57.1% incidence of low income overall (Statistics Canada publication No. 96-307, p. 42). The unemployment and low incomes of single mothers are reflected by the number of single mothers who rely on government transfer payments for their maintenance. In all provinces, there is no welfare income that matches the poverty level.

In child welfare, the image of single motherhood is negative. Single mothers, over represented in the category of child maltreatment known as neglect, have formed the largest group of service clients in child welfare. Single mothers have been vulnerable to child welfare interventions because of their poverty, which makes them more visible in the community.

These interventions are often punitive and ineffective. The cost, both financially and emotionally, has been enormous to child welfare agencies and to families. A knowledge of economic conditions for single mother families remains at the heart of all our research and yet, we look to interpersonal difficulties as the solution to problems of poverty for single mothers. Rather than examine governmental policies or societal attitudes, we blame the problem of poverty on these mothers.

Society and child welfare officials have viewed the ideal family as a heterosexual couple with children. This model of a nuclear family is so pervasive in our culture that it is encoded in our legislation. Within that norm, there are roles which have been ascribed to both men and women. The nuclear view of the family has defined women as the nurturer of children due to their instinct and biology. This has eliminated men from the nurturing role and has limited the capacity of women to deviate from that role. The idea that there is a 'naturalness' to motherhood has influenced how society believes mothers should behave. The nuclear family is the standard by which we measure family functioning such as reproduction, economic functions and protective functions. Single mother families viewed as opposing societal norms become more visible within our culture. The results of this have damaged the lives of single mothers by unfair scrutiny with respect to every facet of their lives.

In this thesis, I will explore the phenomenon of the single mother in society and in child welfare. First, the demographic characteristics of single mothers will be reviewed and analyzed. Next, I will examine the nature of the family, followed by a comparison and contrast of the

functions of the family from the perspective of the single mother family and the nuclear family. The next section will consider how child welfare interventions have been utilized in working with single mothers. Finally, I form conclusions regarding what needs to be changed to be effective with single mothers in child welfare and what the implications of this are for social workers.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGLE MOTHERS

This section reports the following demographic characteristics of single mothers: (1) growth of single parent families; (2) births by age group of women; (3) route to single motherhood; (4) socioeconomic status; (5) housing; (6) education; (7) child care and (8) social isolation factors. This information exposes the reality of single mothers lives and supports the argument that society undervalues this family type.

In 1991, there were a total of 953,640 single parent families in Canada. Of these, 165,245, or 17.3%, were headed by a male parent and 788,395, or 82.7%, were headed by a female parent (Canadian census data, 1991). This thesis focuses on single mothers primarily aged 18 - 49 years of age, however, will give an overview of general demographic information for all single mothers. Of these groups, the attributes vary.

In Manitoba, the picture is similar to the national one. Of 37,350 single parent families, 30,445 or 81.5% were female led and 6,905 or 18.5% were male led. Manitoba is not unique in its distribution of single parents. The growing number of female led single parent families is reflected nationally, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentage growth in the number of single parent families, 1986 - 1991 with gender breakdown, and as a percentage of all families with children

<u>Province</u>	<u>Percentage growth</u>	<u>1991</u>	
		<u>Female head</u>	<u>Male head</u>
Newfoundland	13.2%	12.9%	3.0%
Prince Edward Island	8.3%	15.4%	3.1%
Nova Scotia	9.3%	17.1%	3.3%
New Brunswick	8.8%	16.3%	3.4%
Quebec	6.4%	17.7%	3.9%
Ontario	17.9%	16.0%	3.9%
Manitoba	10.5%	16.8%	3.5%
Saskatchewan	4.1%	15.3%	3.3%
Alberta	13.9%	15.6%	3.4%
British Columbia	11.1%	16.7%	3.6%

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522E. pp. 13-18.

From this table, it is easy to see that single mother families are greater in number than single father families in every province. Single mother families range from a low of 12.9% of all families in Newfoundland to a high of 17.9% of all families in Ontario. In Manitoba, 16.8% of all single parent families are headed by women while 3.5% are headed by men. A comparison of age distribution of single mothers compared with single fathers is portrayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Age distribution of Canadian single parents, 1981 and 1991, comparing female and male single parents

<u>Age</u>	Female single parents		Male single parents	
	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>
15 - 24	7.7%	6.4%	2.0%	1.4%
25 - 44	47.4%	54.3%	38.1%	44.3%
45 - 64	32.8%	27.4%	45.3%	40.6%
65 and over	12.2%	11.9%	14.6%	13.7%

Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992). Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 17.

We can see from this table that the majority of single female parents in Canada are between the ages of 25 - 44. In 1991, they comprised 54.3% of all single mothers. The same is true for single fathers who, in the age grouping of 25-44, represent 44.3% of all single fathers.

The 1993 Statistics Canada Centre for Health Information publication, Births, 1991, reveals that 391,792 or 97.3% out of a total of 402,528 live births are attributable to women aged 18 - 49 years. This is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Live Canadian births in 1991, divided into age grouping of mother from 18
- 49 only and as a percentage of all live births

<u>Age</u>	<u>Births</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Births</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
18	6,916	1.7 %	19	9,200	2.3 %
20	11,767	2.9 %	21	13,592	3.4 %
22	15,538	3.9 %	23	18,228	4.5 %
24	21,598	5.4 %	25	25,686	6.4 %
26	29,545	7.3 %	27	31,882	7.9 %
28	32,287	8.0 %	29	30,624	7.6 %
30	29,063	7.2 %	31	25,395	6.3 %
32	21,393	5.3 %	33	17,554	4.4 %
34	14,155	3.5 %	35	11,212	2.8 %
36	8,641	2.1 %	37	6,033	1.5 %
38	4,282	1.1 %	39	2,939	.73 %
40	1,858	.46 %	41	1,139	.28 %
42	604	.15 %	43	359	.09 %
44	184	.05 %	45	78	.02 %
46	41	.01 %	47	12	.003%
48	7	.002%	49	0	0 %

Note: As only a proportion of live births in Canada are represented, percentages will not amount to 100%.

Statistics Canada: 1991 census data. Catalogue Number 84-210.

Of all live births, nationally, only 2,407, or 0.6%, have no assigned age category, and only two of these are found in the province of Manitoba. It is interesting to note that the birth rate increases for women aged 24 years compared to those of 23 years of age by almost one percent, 5.4% to 4.5%, respectively. From age 24, the birth rate for women increased until a high of 8.0% is reached for women aged 28. The birth rate begins to decrease again after that age until by age 33, women having children represent 4.4% of all births. From this, we can see that women aged 24 - 32 years of age are responsible for the majority of live births with a grand total of 61.4% of all live births, nationally.

In Manitoba, the statistics reveal a pattern similar to the national one except in the area of births to women under 15 to age 17 where the live births are 3.9% of the total number of births, which is nearly double the national rate. Of a total live birth figure of 17,282, for the age group of women, 18 - 49, there were a total of 16,601 births, representing 96.1% of all live births. For those women aged 50 years and over, there were no live births. For the women aged 15 years and up to 18 years, the total number of live births was 679, or 3.9%, of all live births, provincially. This is represented in Table 4.

Table 4

Live births by age groups, 1991, comparing Manitoba and Canadian statistics

<u>Age</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Manitoba</u>	<u>%</u>
under 15 - 17	8,239	2.1	679	3.9
18 - 24	96,839	24.1	5,001	26.9
25 - 29	150,024	37.3	6,131	35.5
30 - 34	107,560	26.7	4,096	23.7
35 - 39	33,107	8.2	1,200	6.9
40 - 44	4,124	1.0	166	1.0
45 - 49	138	.03	7	.04
50 and over	0	0	0	0
Age not stated	2,407	.6	2	.01
Total live births	402,528		17,282	

Note: Manitoba births represent 4.3% of all live Canadian births.

Statistics Canada Publication, Canadian Centre for Health

Information: Births, 1991. Catalogue Number 84-210.

In Manitoba, the majority of live births are to women aged 18 - 34 with the largest group of mothers in the age group of 25 - 29. In the group of mothers aged 18 - 24, there were 28.9% of all live births. For the age group 25 - 29, there were 35.5% of all live births and the age group of 30 - 34 represented 23.7% of the province's

live births. A total of 88.1% of all live births are attributable to the age group 18 - 34.

Single motherhood is defined by many characteristics. Women arrive at single motherhood through a series of occurrences that can be likened to life transitions, in that they require a restructuring of one's life and one's identity within that life role, for the most part.

There are four categories {or routes} that define a woman's entrance to single motherhood. All include having a baby or caring for dependent children. They are, as follows:

1. teenage pregnancy;
2. women who have never been married, "unmarried mothers";
3. marital dissolution, through separation or divorce, and
4. widowhood.

Single female parenthood as a result of never marrying, divorce, separation and widowhood is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5

Marital history of female single parents in Canada, 1981 and 1991,
presented in percentages

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>
single never married*	11.0	19.5
separated	29.3	24.6
divorced	26.4	32.5
widowed	33.3	23.4
percentage totals	100.0	100.0

* Numbers in this category also include teen pregnancies.

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada, (1992).

Catalogue Number 93-310, p. 17

Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy continues to be a phenomenon widely researched, both for traits associated with the likelihood of teenage pregnancy and in terms of recidivism. Those women aged up to 18 years, in Manitoba, are included as part of the protection mandate for child welfare agencies. As

such they receive services different from those delivered to women who are over 18 years of age and become involved with the child welfare system. Women over the age of 18 who are involved with child welfare authorities would, in all likelihood, be protection cases. This simply reflects the fact that child welfare's mandate dictates that involvement begins with a protective stance. It may change from that original case opening.

Statistics indicate teenage pregnancies are not a large proportion of all births, nationally. Out of a national total of 402,528 live births recorded by Statistics Canada, in 1991, only 8,239 or 2.1% of these were teenage pregnancies, that is women under the age of 15 and up to age 18 (Statistics Canada, Live Births, 1991).

In Manitoba, the figure for that same age group was 679 live births from a total of 17,282 live births, representing 3.9% of the total number of live births which is a higher rate than the national one. This was presented in Table 4. It is an interesting trend to note, as these women, if not involved with the child welfare system at the time of pregnancy, certainly have the potential to become clients of the child welfare system in the future. As we shall see in a later section, there are problems associated with women who are single mothers which may make them more susceptible to scrutiny by child welfare authorities.

Widowhood

Statistics Canada's report, Lone-parent families in Canada indicates that, in 1950, widowhood was a primary cause of single parent families. Lindsay (1992) states

In 1991, 21% of male and 23% of female lone parents were widowed. The share of lone parents produced by widowhood, however, has fallen sharply in the last several decades. In the 1950s and 1960, for example, more than 60% of all lone parents were widows (p. 12).

Women in Canada: A Statistical Report indicates that, in 1971, in the age group of women 45- 64 years, 11.6% were widows as compared with

the age groups of 15 - 24 and 25 - 44 years of age, which were 0.2% and 1.4%, respectively. By 1986, those same age groups relating to widows had changed to the following percentages: 15 - 24 years: 0.0%; 25 - 44 years: 0.2% and 45 - 64 years: 2.1% (p. 5).

These statistics are represented in Table 6.

Table 6

Canadian statistics for years 1961, 1971, 1986 and 1991, on widowhood resulting in single mother families, as a percentage of all single mothers

<u>Age</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1991</u>
15 - 24	2.2%	0.2%	0.0%	.1%
25 - 44	4.4%	1.4%	0.2%	2.2%
45 - 64	43.0%	11.6%	2.1%	16.8%

Note: Statistics Canada: Age, Sex and Marital Status, 1991.

Catalogue Number 93-310, p. 32

Separated/divorced and never married

Single female parent families are increasing, as evidenced in Table 7, which compares Canadian family composition for the years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991.

Table 7

Comparison of Canadian family composition for years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991

<u>Year</u>	<u>Married Couples</u>	<u>Common-law</u>	<u>Single parent families</u>	
			<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
1961	94.0%	1.0%	4.3%	1.0%
1971	90.5%	1.5%	5.0%	2.1%
1981	83.1%	5.6%	9.3%	2.0%
1991	77.2%	9.8%	10.7%	2.3%

Note: Statistics Canada. Families in Canada, 1991. Catalogue Number

96-307, p. 18

What is evident from this table is how the majority of Canadians are

still in couples, be it marriages or common-law unions. As well, what is evident is the increase in the number of single mother families, with the largest increase occurring between 1971, when as a family group, single mothers comprised 5.0% of the population of all families and 1981, when they comprised 9.3% of all family types. Since 1981, the increase in single female parents has not been as dramatic as it was in earlier years, going from 9.3% to 10.7% in 1991.

Table 8 compares Manitoba's family composition for the years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991.

Table 8

Comparison of family composition, in Manitoba, for the years 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991

<u>Year</u>	<u>Married Couples</u>	<u>Common-law</u>	<u>Single parent families</u>	
			<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
1961	94.9%	n/a	4.2%	0.9%
1971	93.7%	1.9%	3.2%	1.2%
1981	82.9%	6.0%	9.1%	2.0%
1991	72.3%	7.4%	16.8%	3.5%

Note: 1961 statistics source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics:

Households and Family Status. Catalogue Number 93-521. All other data from Statistics Canada: Age, Sex and Marital Status, 1991. Catalogue Number 93-310, p. 35.

What is evident is how closely Manitoba follows the national trend. Most Manitobans are together as couples in either marriages or common-law unions, for a total of 79.7% of all family types. The most noticeable change has been the increase in single mother families - from 3.2% of all family types in 1971 to 9.1% of all family types in 1981 and almost doubling in 1991 to 16.8%.

Lone-parent families in Canada (1992) states "the primary path to lone parenthood is marriage dissolution, although single never-married people raising children on their own make up a rapidly growing share of all lone parents" (p. 10).

In 1987, almost 87,000 divorces were granted in Canada, almost three times the number in the early 1970s. In 1991, the divorce rate was 2.8 per 1,000, or 42%, of the Canadian population compared with 1.4 per 1,000, or 14%, of the population in 1971. In the case of divorce, mothers were more likely than fathers to be awarded custody of the children. Of the 47,631 children affected by the 27,637 divorces involving custody in Canada in 1991, 73.3% were awarded to mothers; 12.2% to fathers and 14.3% to joint custody (Lindsay, 1992, pp. 11 - 12). While there has been an increase in all single parent family statistics, it is primarily in the 25 - 44 age category that the largest increase is evident, both in the female led and male led categories. As a total of lone parents, however, females largely surpass males. 82.7% of the single parent population is female led as compared to 17.3% male led families.

Increasingly, single mothers are getting older and while most of them are separated or divorced, there is also an increase in the number of women who have never been married, having children. While single motherhood itself is not a new phenomenon, the percentages of older women having children on their own has increased. Table 9 demonstrates the national age distribution of single never-married mothers comparing the years 1981 and 1991.

Table 9

Canadian age distribution of single never-married mothers, for the years 1981 and 1991

<u>Age</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>
15 - 24	38.0%	25.6%
25 - 44	54.7%	67.0%
45 +	7.3%	7.4%

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada. (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 12.

As evidenced by the above table, single mothers aged 25 - 44 years were a larger group in 1991 than they were in 1981. In

1981, women aged 25 - 44 years accounted for 54.7% of all single never-married mothers. In 1991, women in this same age group accounted for 67% of all single never-married mothers.

Socioeconomic status

Income

Another element common to all single mothers is low socioeconomic status. Single father families and two parent families will be used as comparison points for single mother families. Statistics Canada publication Basic Facts on Families in Canada: Past and Present (1993) reports "female lone-parent families had the highest incidence of low income of all families during the period from 1981 to 1991. About 62% of female lone parent families had low incomes in 1991" (p. 8).

Single mothers are more likely, in this country, to have a lower socioeconomic status compared with single fathers and two parent families. In terms of poverty, single mothers and their children comprise the largest group of poor in Canada. In a 1994 publication, Families in Canada, Statistics Canada reported that the per capita income in 1990 for single mothers was \$8,315. The incidence of low incomes for these families was 57.1% as compared to 23.6% for single fathers, whose per capita income for 1990 was \$14,146. These comparisons are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

Economic Family Income, Canada, 1990

Family Type	Number of families	Average family income (\$)	Per capita income (\$)	Low income families	Percent low income
Lone parent families, male head, no additional persons in home	65,475	34,384	14,290	16,410	25.5
Lone parent families, male head, additional persons in home	22,035	50,174	13,718	3,840	17.8

Family type	Number of families	Average family income (\$)	Per capita income (\$)	Low income families	Percent low income
Total male lone parent families	87,510	38,285	14,146	20,250	23.6
Lone parent families, female head, no additional persons in home	403,785	19,460	7,905	243,900	61.0
Lone parent families, female head, additional persons in home	82,345	33,721	9,263	30,135	37.6
Total female lone parent families	486,130	21,876	8,135	274,125	57.1
Total lone parent families	573,635	24,379	9,052	294,375	52.0
Husband and wife only	1,627,215	52,309	18,077	972,855	13.2
Husband, wife, no children, additional persons in home	784,670	73,806	21,106	43,235	5.5
Total husband, wife, no children	2,411,890	59,302	24,510	191,150	8.0
Husband, wife, children, no additional persons in home	2,404,525	54,919	14,434	259,320	10.9
Husband, wife, children, additional persons	563,210	69,780	14,688	42,835	7.7
Total husband, wife families with children	2,967,735	57,739	14,482	302,155	10.3
Total husband, wife families	5,379,625	58,440	18,979	493,330	9.2

Note: Statistics Canada: Families in Canada (1994). Catalogue Number

Statistics Canada's Families in Canada (1994) notes

The total income of an economic family is a good measure of the purchasing power available to the family, while per capita income takes into account the number of persons the family income has to support. Incidence of low income indicates the proportion of families below the low income cut-offs and therefore more likely to be in difficult financial circumstances (p. 41).

What we note from the above table is the poverty affecting single mother families. In total, male lone parent families had an average family income of \$38,285; a per capita income of \$14,146, and a 23.6% incidence of low income. The total of female lone parent families had an average family income of \$21,876; a per capita family income of \$8,135 and a 57.1% incidence of low income. The total of husband and wife families with children had an average family income of \$57,739; a per capita income of \$14,482 and a 10.3% incidence of low income. Clearly, single mother families, as a total group, regardless of whether they have additional persons in the home, are poorer than both single father families and two parent families with children.

The poverty rate increases when the rates for female lone parent families with children but with no additional persons residing in the home are contrasted with comparable family composition of single fathers and two parent families. Lone parent families, female head, with no additional persons had an average family income of \$19,460; a per capita income of \$7,905 and 61% incidence of low income. Lone parent families, male head, with no additional persons had an average family income of \$34,284; a per capita income of \$14,290 and an incidence of low income of 25.5% per annum. Two parent families with no additional persons had an average family income of \$54,919; a per capita income of \$14,434 and an incidence of low income of 10.9%.

In Families in Canada (1994), Statistics Canada states "this {the lower incomes of female lone parent families} is of particular concern,

since female lone parents head 82% of all lone parent families in Canada. The higher incidence of low income is but one illustration of the difficult situation facing female lone parent families in Canada" (p. 43).

Transfer Payments

Oderkirk and Lochhead (1992) report

The incidence of low income is much higher among lone mothers than lone fathers, regardless of the ages of their children. During the late 1980s, 56% of lone mothers with children under age 18, and 20% of lone fathers with children that age, were living with incomes below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Offs {LICOS}. Also, among lone parents whose children were all aged 18 and over, 20% of mothers and 10% of fathers had family incomes below the LICOs. Most lone mothers {67%} and lone fathers {60%} with low family incomes reported government transfer payments as their major income source. What is even more striking is that a large number of lone-parent families headed by women have total incomes far below the LICOs. More than 11% of all lone mothers {an average of 67,950 families during the late 1980s} had incomes \$10,000 or more below the LICOs. In contrast, 4% of lone-parent families headed by men had incomes \$1,000 - \$9,999 below the LICOs, compared with 10% of those headed by men. Lone-parent families headed by men are not only more likely than those headed by women to have family income above the LICOs, but are also much more likely to have incomes exceeding the LICOs by a relatively wide margin. For example, 68% of male-headed lone-parent families had income \$10,000 or more above the LICOs, compared with 34% of female-headed lone-parent families (pp. 18 - 19).

The most common form of income among single mothers are transfer payments in the form of social assistance. By having to rely on transfer payments as a source of income, single mothers are disadvantaged relative to single fathers. Of these single mothers, 84% had family incomes \$1,000 or more below the low income cut-offs set by Statistics Canada. By

comparison, 52% of single fathers had family incomes \$1,000 or more below the low income cut-offs. 25% of the mothers, compared with 11% of fathers, had family incomes \$10,000 or more below the low income cut-offs. 38% of single mothers and 21% of single fathers had family incomes between \$5,000 and \$9,999 below the low income cut-offs.

Table 11 provides information on 1993 welfare incomes for each province as well as the adequacy of assistance benefits for a single parent, with one child. It demonstrates the adequacy of welfare incomes as a measure of the poverty gap. If they rely solely on welfare income, single mothers are far below the poverty line.

Table 11

Provincial welfare incomes per annum for single parent, with one child and adequacy of assistance benefits as measured by the poverty line, 1993

<u>Province</u>	<u>Welfare Income</u>	<u>Poverty Line</u>	<u>Poverty Gap</u>	<u>Adequacy</u>
Newfoundland	\$12,986	\$18,398	-5,412	71%
Prince Edward Island	\$12,773	\$17,973	-5,200	71%
Nova Scotia	\$12,080	\$18,398	-6,318	66%
New Brunswick	\$10,150	\$18,398	-8,248	55%
Quebec	\$12,607	\$20,945	-8,338	60%
Ontario *	\$16,790	\$20,945	-4,155	80%
Manitoba	\$11,386	\$20,945	-9,559	54%
Saskatchewan	\$12,093	\$18,398	-6,305	66%
Alberta	\$11,281	\$20,945	-9,664	54%
British Columbia	\$13,345	\$20,945	-7,600	64%

Note: No available figures for Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

\$500.00 per annum is added for each additional child in the family. Welfare Incomes 1993: A Report by the National Council of Welfare.

- * As of October 1, 1995, Ontario's rate will cover only 59% of the poverty line, due to 21% reductions announced by Ontario's newly elected government in July 1995 (as reported by CBC Radio July, 1995).
-

What is shown in the table is the inadequacy of benefits for all provinces. Manitoba compares only with Alberta for the inadequacy of its benefits. Welfare incomes in Manitoba raise a single mother's income to only 54% of the poverty line.

Appendix A lists Ottawa's eligibility requirements for social assistance, as a basis for cost sharing guidelines with provinces.

Employment and Labor Force Participation

In terms of employment, the Statistics Canada report Lone-parent families in Canada (1992) states that "single mothers were less likely than other groups to be employed on a full-time basis outside the home, if employed at all. The highest rate of unemployment belongs to single mothers. In 1991, just 52% of these women with children less than age 16 worked outside the home, compared with 71% of male lone parents" (p. 21).

Further, Lone-parent families in Canada (1992) reports Unemployment rates are very high among lone parents. In 1991, 16.8% of women heading lone parent families were unemployed, well over the rate (9.6%) for women in two-parent families with children. That year, an average of 47,000 female lone parents were unemployed each month ... In addition, a very high proportion of female lone parents are not currently in the labor force. In 1991, 166,000 of these women, 37% of the total, were neither employed nor actively seeking

work. This compared with ... 15% of male lone parents (p. 22). Table 12 depicts the percentage of single parents, comparing mothers to fathers, who were employed for the years 1981 to 1991.

Table 12

Percentage of single parents employed, 1981 - 1991, comparing women and men

<u>Year</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
1981	54.2%	82.7%
1982	50.8%	78.0%
1983	48.7%	76.5%
1984	50.7%	73.2%
1985	51.7%	77.3%
1986	51.8%	77.8%
1987	53.0%	82.5%
1988	54.1%	78.1%
1989	55.1%	76.1%
1990	55.1%	75.0%
1991	52.2%	71.3%

Note: Statistics Canada, Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 27

From this table, we can see that, on average, from the years 1981 to 1991, single mothers have consistently been unemployed, with almost half being employed in any given year compared to single fathers who are employed three-quarters of the time in any given year. In general, single mothers are employed only half of the time.

Statistics Canada report Families in Canada (1994) states
 Among lone parent families, 60.1% of female lone parents and 76.6% of male lone parents were in the labor force in 1991. Although there was a small increase for females from 1981 to 1991, the rates for male lone parents have remained virtually unchanged since 1981. The participation rate for female lone parents whose children were

all under the age of 6 declined from 58.6% in 1986 to 54.8% in 1991 (p. 39).

This is reflected in Table 13 which illustrates labor force participation rates for lone parents in Canada for the years 1981, 1986 and 1991.

Table 13

Labor force participation rates for female lone parents, Canada, 1981, 1986 and 1991

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	All children less than 6 years	Some children less than 6 years	All children 6 years and over	<u>Number of children at home</u>		
					1	2	3
1981	53.8	54.9	46.6	54.2	52.8	58.1	49.5
1986	57.7	58.6	51.5	58.1	56.2	62.3	53.3
1991	60.1	54.8	52.0	62.1	57.8	65.7	56.3

Note: Statistics Canada: Families in Canada (1994). Catalogue Number 96-307, p. 35

This table illustrates that, for single mothers, whose children were under the age of 6, the labor force participation rate declined from 58.6% in 1986 to 54.8% in 1991. The increase for those who had children both younger and older than 6 was slight.

There is some indication that single mothers are not in the labor force by reason of personal and family responsibilities. This will be discussed further. Another factor in the labor force participation rate of single mothers seems to be the fact that most of them, when employed, are employed on a part-time basis.

Part-time workers

Female single parents are more likely than other parents to work part-time. They are most often employed on a part-time basis because full-time work is not available. According to Statistics Canada's report Lone-parents in Canada (1992), most would prefer to work full-time if that

employment was available. In 1991, 50% of female single parents worked part-time simply because there was no full-time work available. Table 14 demonstrates the reason why single mothers, by age of youngest child, worked part-time for the year 1991.

Table 14

Reason single mothers work part-time by age of youngest child, 1991

<u>Reason</u>	Youngest child less than 6	Youngest child 6 - 15	Total with children less than 6
Personal/family	27.4%	14.7%	20.0%
Own illness/ disability	0.6%	1.9%	1.3%
Going to school	9.4%	3.8%	1.6%
Did not want full-time	21.1%	23.3%	22.4%
Could only find part-time	40.9%	55.9%	49.6%
Other reasons	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%
% employed part- time	25.5%	16.6%	19.4%

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 31

What is shown in this table is the number of single mothers who want to work but can only find part-time employment. This is consistent with mothers with children in all age groups. Table 15 compares the work patterns of single mothers and single fathers for the years 1985 and 1990.

Table 15Work patterns of single mothers and single fathers in Canada for the years 1985 and 1990

Work pattern	Females		Males	
	1985	1990	1985	1990
worked full time	42.1	47.7	70.5	72.2
1 - 13 weeks	3.1	3.0	3.3	2.5
14 - 26 weeks	3.9	4.7	5.5	5.9
27 - 39 weeks	3.0	3.4	4.5	5.0
40 - 48 weeks	4.9	5.7	9.1	9.4
49 - 52 weeks	27.1	31.0	48.2	49.5
Worked part time	14.4	13.3	6.4	5.1
Did not work for pay	14.4	13.3	6.4	5.1

Note: Statistics Canada: Family Income in Canada. Catalogue

Number 96-318E, p. 38

What is readily apparent from this table is that single mothers are more likely to not work outside the home, however, this number has decreased in the five year period shown. Almost half of single mothers in the country were employed on a full-time basis. Single fathers overall enjoy a higher rate of employment.

Reasons for unemployment

Statistics Canada (1994) Families in Canada states

Lone parents in the labor force must cope with both work demands and family obligations including care-giving and household maintenance. Work demands can impinge on family roles, the quality of family relationships with the well-being of family members. Conversely, family roles can interfere with work performance and/or commitment to one's job. Women are more than twice as likely as men to be absent from work because of personal or family responsibilities. The presence of young children in the family is a factor contributing to work absenteeism among women. In an average week in 1991, 5.9% of

female lone parents lost time from work due to personal or family responsibilities (p. 36).

Table 16 illustrates those single parents who became unemployed in 1991 and reasons for leaving their last job. It also illustrates those single parents who were not in the labor force at all in 1991 and reasons for leaving their last job.

Table 16

Comparison of female and male single parents, 1991 by reason for unemployment in last fiscal year and by reason for having left last place of employment (non-participation)

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>		<u>Non-participation</u>	
	<u>females</u>	<u>males</u>	<u>females</u>	<u>males</u>
Personal/family responsibilities	13.7	6.6	20.7	10.7
Own illness/disability	6.7	3.4	6.2	13.8
Going to school	2.0	1.7	5.4	5.1
Lost job or laid off	47.7	76.4	19.2	28.8
Other reasons	17.6	6.6	n/a	n/a
Not worked in last 5 years	10.8	5.4	27.1	31.6
Never worked	1.5	0	11.8	0.2
% unemployed	16.8	15.7		
% non-participation			37.3	15.3

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, pp. 28 - 29.

What can be seen from this information is that single mothers are, more often than single fathers, persons who had not been in the labor market at all. 1.5% of unemployed female single parents have never worked, compared with no cases (0%) of male single parents who had never worked. 11.8% of single mothers had never worked and were non-participants as compared with 0.2% of single fathers. Single mothers had also left employment or not been employed as a result of personal/family

responsibilities - 13.7% of women as compared to 6.6% of men were unemployed because of personal/family responsibilities. 20.7% of women and 10.7% of men were non-participants in the labor force as a result of personal/family responsibilities. Single mothers were twice as likely as single fathers to have left their last job as a result of personal/family responsibilities.

Housing

Single mothers, because of low income, also have the lowest standard of accommodation in the country. Single parents are generally less likely than other families to own their own homes. In 1986, single mothers who maintained their own households constituted 20% of owner-households. They also comprised 43% of all tenant-occupied homes. In 1991, only about one in three single mothers or 30% owned their own home. This is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Housing characteristics, 1991 for single mothers in Canada

Tenure:

<u>Owned</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
with mortgage	18.4%
without mortgage	11.1%
total owned	29.5%
<u>Rented</u>	70.5%
rooms per household	1.95

Note: Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 45.

This table demonstrates clearly that the majority of single mothers, 70.5%, rent their accommodations compared with only 29.5% who own their house. The 29.5% of home owners include those who are with and without a mortgage.

In addition, Klodawsky & Mackenzie (1987) indicate that Coupled with the fact that most housing production has been geared to either two-parent families with children, or childless, employed adults, single mothers have great difficulty finding affordable, appropriate housing and usually pay proportionately more for their housing than do other Canadian families (p. 14).

Table 18 shows a distribution of family expenditures for 1990. The comparison made in this table is between single mothers and two-parent families with children.

Table 18

Distribution of family expenditures, 1990 (for 17 Canadian census metropolitan areas)

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Single mothers</u>	<u>Two-parent family</u>
Food	16.8%	12.8%
Shelter	20.3%	16.0%
Household furnishing & operation	8.5%	7.2%
Clothing	7.0%	5.7%
Transportation	11.5%	11.8%
Health & personal care	4.9%	3.6%
Recreation, reading & education	7.4%	6.6%
Tobacco and alcohol	3.1%	2.5%
Security*	3.5%	4.9%
Other	4.5%	5.0%
Taxes	12.5%	23.9%

Note: *Includes life insurance premiums, pension contributions and unemployment insurance payments. Statistics Canada:

Lone-parent families in Canada (1992). Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 45.

It is clear to see from this table that single mothers spend more of their income on shelter - 20.3% as compared with two parent families, who spend 16%. Single mothers spend more on food, 16.8% of their income compared to two parent families, who spend 12.8% of their income on food.

Single mothers spend more of their income on household furnishings and operation, clothing, health and personal care, tobacco and alcohol. Two parent families spend more on taxes because of home ownership (Lone-parent families in Canada; 1992; p. 45).

There are other factors which co-exist with income, transfer payments and housing for single mothers. These factors appear to contribute to keeping single mothers in a lower socioeconomic status than other groups in the country. They are education, employment, and child care. These factors are all inter-related.

Education

Generally, Canadian single mothers have less formal education, including high school education, than any other group of adult women as indicated in the 1991 Canadian census data. This is portrayed in Table 19.

Table 19

Education of Canadian and Manitoba female single parents by grade attained, 1991

<u>Grade attained elementary-secondary education only</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>Manitoba</u>
Less than grade 9 (12)	13.4%	13.9%
Grades 9 to 12 (13)	11.9%	11.0%
Graduation	8.9%	8.4%
No graduation	10.7%	10.6%
<u>Non-university education only</u>		
No certificate or diploma	12.5%	12.2%
With certificate or diploma	10.2%	10.0%
<u>University education</u>		
Without degree	10.9%	12.9%
With certificate or diploma	10.6%	10.4%
With bachelor's degree or higher	7.3%	7.3%
Information missing	3.6%	3.3%

Note: Statistics Canada: Social and Economic Characteristics,

1991. Catalogue Number 93-320, pp. 106-107, 120-121

From this table, we can see that the highest percentage of single mothers have less than a grade 9 education both nationally and provincially. Although the statistics indicate that 11% of single mothers in Manitoba completed up to grade 12, only 8.4% of this group graduated from high school. It is comparable for Canada, with 11.9% of single mothers completing up to grade 13 and only 8.9% of single mothers graduated from high school. What this must mean is that women are finishing all but one or two credits for a complete grade 12 or finish up to grade 11 and go no further.

In Manitoba, it appears that single mothers are trying to upgrade their level of education as 12.9% of them are involved in university education. The same trend follows with respect to community college and trade school although, again, 12.2% of mothers have no certificate or diploma.

This reflects the Canadian picture as well. 10.9% of Canadian single mothers are without a university degree but, nonetheless involved in the pursuit of higher education. 12.5% of Canadian single mothers are involved in community college and trade schools although, again, without a certificate or diploma.

A Statistics Canada report The Labor Force Survey, 1991 states Lone parents generally have lower levels of formal educational training than comparable spouses in two-parent families, a factor which may partially explain some of the differences in the labor force characteristics of these groups ... Lone parents are less likely than other parents to have completed high school. In 1991, 36% of female and 31% of male lone parents had not graduated from high school. Lone parents are also more likely than other parents not to have gone to high school at all. In 1991, 9% of women and 10% of men parenting alone had not gone beyond Grade 8 (p. 25).

Educational attainment has been shown to be positively correlated with higher socioeconomic status. Single mothers with low educational

attainment have lower incomes. Pool and Moore (1986) state "persons who are better educated generally have more resources available to them when they enter the labor market. The more privileged the point of entry, the greater the chances of success as measured by financial rewards and job satisfaction gained from this participation. Conception and childbearing and/or marriage at young ages may minimise (sic) not only educational achievement, but also the capacity to enter and continue in the labor force in a reasonably rewarding way" (p. 33).

Child care and its effect on labor market activity

The availability and accessibility of day care is a concern for single mothers. The 1990 results of the National Child Care Study (1988) showed that in the fall of 1988, 2.6 million children under 13 years of age were in need of some form of child care in order to accommodate the work or study schedules of their parents yet, "the number of day care spaces reserved for pre-schoolers (ages 3 - 5), represented 58% of the total allocated in day care centres, which is sufficient to care for only 23% and 24% of children in this age group" (p. ii).

When in the labor market, single mothers generally lose more work place time as a result of child care needs or personal illness. Statistics Canada's publication Families in Canada (1994) states

An estimated 2.7 million children needed child care while their parents worked. Just over 40% of these children were under 6 years of age, while the remainder were 6 to 12. 57.5% of children under the age of 13 were in at least one non-parental child care arrangement in a given week. The balance were cared for by their parents only. Most of the children were in informal child-care arrangements, such as care by relatives or unlicensed day-care providers (p. 37).

Statistics Canada publication Lone-parents in Canada (1992) states "in 1990, 82% of female lone parents regularly receiving care used services outside their homes, while 33% had in home care {totals exceed 100% because respondents could report using more than one type of care}. During an average week in 1991, approximately 9% of both female lone parents and women in two-parent families with children were absent from work either because they were ill or because of personal or family responsibilities. The comparable figures were only 6% for male lone parents" (pp. 25 - 6).

Social isolation

Statistics Canada report Lone-parent families in Canada (1992) indicates

In 1986, female lone parents who were not employed outside the home spent a total of only about six hours per day in social contact with people such as friends, co-workers, or family members other than their children. This figure was several hours per day below those for most other groups of women. While these female lone parents did spend relatively large amounts of time with their children - about six hours per day on average - they also spent a lot of time alone. In 1986, female lone parents who kept house averaged just over five hours per day by themselves, excluding time spent alone on personal care activities such as sleeping. Employed female lone parents spent about three hours more a day in social interaction with people other than their children than female lone parents who worked at home. The amount of time these women spent in contact with others, however, was still generally below that of women with spouses, especially those who were employed. Female lone parents with jobs outside the home also spent about four hours per day alone (p. 43).

Table 20 illustrates time single mothers spent with social contacts for the year 1986.

Table 20

Time single mothers spent with social contacts, compared with time married women spent with social contact, 1986, represented in hours per day

	<u>With people other than children</u>	<u>With children of household*</u>	<u>Total with social contacts *</u>	<u>Alone</u>	<u>Personal Care</u>
<u>Single mothers</u>					
Employed	9.4	3.4	10.6	3.9	8.9
Working at home	6.2	6.0	9.6	5.1	9.0
<u>Married mothers</u>					
Employed	11.4	4.1	11.2	3.6	8.8
Working at home	8.8	6.3	10.3	4.3	9.1

Note: Figures averaged over a seven-day week. *Time spent with children and others is double counted.

Statistics Canada: Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Catalogue Number 89-522, p. 46

Single mothers, as a group, spend less time with other adults than do married mothers. This increases their social isolation and adds to levels of stress, as they then spend less time with other adults and more with children. In addition, time spent with children and others is double counted, therefore, the time spent in social contacts is actually less than shown in the table.

The correlation between stress and single mothering has been documented by Hao (1994). In addition, it has been found that single mothers who are under stress have a greater tendency to react to this by becoming depressed. There appears to be some correlation between single mothering, and maternal depression. This has been documented by Polansky (1985) who stated that, "a variety of indirect evidences - such as using their children as buffers against loneliness and clinging to unrewarding

and abusive relationships with men - implied that loneliness was widespread as a problem among the women, {which led to depression}" (p. 2).

Summary and analysis

Statistics Canada information tells us that, for the year ending 1991, the majority of live Canadian births occurred to women between the ages of 24 - 32 years: 61.5% of all Canadian live births are attributable to this age group. Most single mothers are in the 25 - 44 year age group.

The overwhelming majority of single parent families are female led. This is supported both nationally and provincially. In 1991, widows comprised 23.4% of all single mothers. Separated and divorced women made up 57.1% of all single mother families; 19.5% were never married.

Single mother families are poorer than other family groups in the country. Statistics Canada estimated that in 1991, 57.1% of all single mothers had low incomes as compared with 23.6% for male single parent families. The average income of male single parent families was \$38,285 compared with \$21,787 for single mother families. It is obvious that there is a gender issue involved in this financial inequality. The most financially stable group of all families was the two parent family, whose average income was \$57,739 with an incidence of low income at 10.3%. It is evident that socioeconomic status is weighed in favour of the nuclear family.

The low incomes of single mothers are also reflected in the number of single mothers who rely on government transfer payments such as social assistance for their income. In all provinces, there is no welfare income that matches the poverty level. This is aptly demonstrated in Manitoba, where the provincial poverty line is \$20,945 and the welfare income for a single parent with one child is \$11,386. The difference is \$9,559 below the poverty line, reflecting the cultural belief that poverty is a personal deficiency and not a responsibility of society. Clearly, welfare

income ensures that a single mother family will live in poverty.

Of all groups studied in census data for 1991, single mothers had the lowest level of formal education. The highest percentage of single mothers have less than a grade 9 education both nationally and provincially with 13.4% and 13.9% respectively. Increasing one's years of formal education is one method of improving socioeconomic status. Pool and Moore (1986) state that "persons with better education generally have more resources available to them when they enter the labor market. The more privileged the point of entry, the greater the chances of success as measured by the financial rewards and job satisfaction gained from this participation" (p. 33). Single mothers, clearly, have less financial solvency as a function of low educational levels. Because of their low educational levels, single mothers have fewer marketable job skills compared with women in other groups, who have more education. Fewer marketable skills ensure that these women remain in low paying jobs requiring less skills and will be unable to compete in an increasingly skilled labor market. Incomes below the poverty line and level of education are positively correlated. Clearly, single mothers are not in a position to compete in the marketplace as a result of low educational levels and fewer marketable skills.

Single mothers are less likely than other groups to be employed full time. This is not because of a resistance to employment but rather a lack of available full time work. As a group, single mothers form the highest cohort of the unemployed. In 1991, 52.2% of all single mothers were employed, as compared with 71.3% of all single fathers who were employed. When single mothers are unemployed or have made a decision to leave the labor force, they most often cite personal/family responsibilities as the reasons for their non-participation.

Unemployed single mothers represent 37.3% of the unemployed population, as compared with 15.3% of single fathers who were unemployed. 1.5% of unemployed female single parents had never worked, compared with

0% of male single parents who had never worked. 11.8% of single mothers had never worked or were non-participants in the labor force as compared with 0.2% of single fathers.

Single mothers, as mentioned earlier, had also left employment or had not been employed as a result of personal/family responsibilities - 13.7% of women as compared to 6.6% of men were unemployed because of personal/family responsibilities. Non-participation in the labor force as a result of personal/family responsibilities accounted for 20.7% of women and 10.7% of men. This indicates that single mothers are twice as likely as single fathers to have left their last source of employment as a result of personal or family responsibilities. Personal and family responsibilities also result in single mothers being absent from the work place 9% of the time in a year while single fathers are absent from their work place 6% of the time for the same reason.

Day care availability provides another problem for all family groups in the country. Statistics Canada (1994) states that an estimated 2.7 million children needed child care while their parents worked. Day care spaces are available for only approximately 24% of all pre-school children, aged 3 - 5 years, needing day care. Clearly, day care spaces are not available for all children, not just those in single mother families.

In total, employed single mothers spend the least amount of time with social contacts, compared with other family types. As a group, single mothers spend less time with social contacts, which results in social isolation. Social isolation can create a climate of vulnerability which serves to reinforce society's characterization of a single mother family as deviant. Lack of social or peer support makes these women vulnerable to depression as their level of stress increases. Polansky (1985) has indicated in his research that these women, because of their levels of loneliness and depression, would be more apt to use their children as social buffers or to cling to relationships with abusive men.

The lack of peer support or the existence of an abusive relationship reinforces the mother's feelings of inadequacy, trapping her in a lifestyle from which she may be unable to extricate herself. As her sense of self-reliance diminishes, she begins to depend on these relationships for reinforcement. Her lack of sufficient income, education and work may make her more vulnerable to the cyclical nature of these manipulative, abusive relationships and she would be less and less in a position to provide care for her children. It is at this time when she may be found to be more at risk of maltreating or neglecting her children. The reality of their situation makes these women vulnerable to the scrutiny and interventions of the child welfare system. These interventions are not always inappropriate, as there are times when children are being neglected as a result of these family situations. However, it would be fair to say that single mothers are more apt to be investigated for neglect by child welfare workers than are other family groups. This has been documented by Swift (1991, 1995), Gordon (1992) and Campbell (1991).

It is clear that poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, poor housing, lack of child care and social isolation are all important factors characterizing the lives of single mothers. These factors add to single mothers' stigmatization within society, by making them visible and deviant from the norm. Poverty is a deciding factor in social class and hence status. The poverty of single mothers ensures that their class status, a function fulfilled by the family, will be low. When a group has been relegated to a low status within society, the conditions are ripe for that group to feel alienated from the general population of the culture. The combination of poverty and social isolation for single mothers is partly responsible for the circumstances leading to neglect of their children or failure to protect them from maltreatment.

THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

An analysis of the nature of the family

In order to understand single mother families in society, it is necessary to explore the nature of the family and its functions. The differentiation of functions can lead single mothers to be seen as deviant from the norm in society. The fulfillment of functions in nuclear families will be contrasted with those in single mother families. In exploring the functions of the family, I will also examine the roles of men and women within a family. Finally I will focus on motherhood itself and its meaning for women.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the notion of a nuclear family as we conceptualize it today by father, mother and children, was unknown. The industrial revolution and the emergence of capitalism changed the nature and functions of the family by moving the cottage and home based industries to factories and magnifying the role of wage earning employment outside the home. In this way, domestic and industrial spheres became separate and parental roles became differentiated by changing economic roles (Fox & Luxton, 1993).

In every social system there is a relationship between the way people produce the goods and services necessary to their survival, property and the manner in which the human population is produced. The type of work people do to sustain life creates conditions for certain patterns of child bearing and rearing. In a similar way, certain practices of child bearing and rearing both require and make possible other types of work (Margolis, 1993).

The biological functions of women and men began to be identified with various roles and allowed for the division of labor by gender. Women, by virtue of their ability to lactate and nourish children, were seen by social scientists and others, as the natural care givers of

children and their domain was defined as being within the home (Margolis, 1993).

Fox & Luxton (1993) state

aside from the relationship between the organization of production and reproduction, the nature of wealth and the requirements of production have also been related systematically to the form, composition, and structure of households. Thus, the subsequent separations of place of residence and site of production of good and services for the market, on the other - occurring as capitalism developed - generated a major transformation in households and families. Among other things, the separation destroyed the ease with which parents had previously been able to coordinate child care and their other work. From the nineteenth century, middle-class European households increasingly became centers exclusively for raising children and doing domestic labor (Davidoff & Hall, 1987) (p. 27).

When one begins an examination into the family, it is important to look at the context in which the definition of family is explored. Discussions of the family always reflect the ideology of the culture in which one lives. North American culture implies that the definition of family enjoyed and encoded into our laws and lives, for the most part, is one to which we all ascribe. It is assumed that the experience of the family is the same for everyone and that, individuals strive for the ideal family as defined by the dominant ideology. It is also assumed that the notion of family as we experience it now, has always been with us rather than a social construct, designed to reflect the various needs, in different historical periods, of societal groups.

Fox & Luxton (1993) state

Perhaps the most important of these issues is that because almost everyone is a member of a family and lives for significant periods of time in a family, people tend to assume that they know very well what "family" means. At the same time, getting married, having

children in the context of marriage, and living as a nuclear family are so widely accepted in Canadian society as the way people should live that these patterns often seem natural. The pattern of marriage and nuclear families is so taken for granted, it is difficult to question. The fact that the majority of women and men marry and live as couples, for example, reinforces for many people the idea that families should be based on heterosexual monogamous couples. Moreover, it is commonly assumed that other family patterns cause problems, especially for children (p. 20).

Our belief in a generic understanding of family is important because it embodies a set of cultural assumptions. The concept of family informs legislation, policies and practices that govern our lives. It shapes decisions we make as individuals about how to live our lives. It limits or expands our imaginations as we think about the future. Under the guise of "family values", policies are promoted.

Kitchen (1990) states "Today, many still see the family only in terms of a couple and their children (Quebec, Minister of Social Affairs, 1984: 16). This heterosexual, nuclear unit biologically and legally defined is seen as consistent with its universal function, the raising of children. The function has been translated into a normative imperative that elevated the couple and their children as the only natural and legitimate family form. It is the only family model that is validated and sanctioned by both the state and the church and given unreserved social support" (p. 313).

As variant family forms increase, the definition of family as heterosexual and nuclear is seen as narrow. More groups are disagreeing with the standard definition of family presented in our culture. Yet, Eichler (1986) states

we are presently witnessing the parallel march of two opposing social forces: a movement that tries to impose one family form on the entire society and another movement that is currently

revolutionizing our reproductive processes. However, these two movements have so far not collided in a serious manner. This seems incomprehensible until we realize that both movements do share some similar ideas about the structure of the family. While utterly altering the relationship between parents and their children and between the couple as a procreative unit, the new reproductive technologies and arrangements nevertheless are oriented towards a monolithic vision of the family in terms of its structure and composition (p. 423).

Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako (1993) state "the real importance of The Family {emphasis theirs} in contemporary social life and belief has blinded us to its dynamics. Confusing ideal with reality, we fail to appreciate the deep significance of what are, cross-culturally, various ideologies of intimate relationships, and at the same time we fail to reckon with the complex human bonds and experiences all too comfortably sheltered by a faith in the 'natural' source of a 'nurture' we think is found in the home" (p. 9).

What is family? When we use the term family, to what are we referring? What has it come to mean to our understanding of the functioning of people within society? There are various definitions.

Historically, in order to qualify as the foundational family relationship, a heterosexual union had to be legally privileged through marriage. Fineman (1995) states

I want to elaborate on some of the core assumptions inherent in our current social and cultural narratives about the family as an institution. These assumptions have tremendous significance in the political and legal definition of the family and, hence, for the fate of mothers. The legal story is that the family has a "natural" form based on the sexual affiliation of a man and woman. The assumption that there is a sexual-natural family is complexly and intricately implicated in discourses other than law, of course. The

natural family populates professional and religious texts and defines what is to be considered both ideal and sacred. The shared assumption is that the appropriate family is founded on the heterosexual couple - a reproductive, biological pairing that is designated as divinely ordained in religion, crucial in social policy, and a normative imperative in ideology (p. 145).

Statistics Canada, in 1991 census data, defines the family as "constituted by a husband and a wife, with or without never-married children (including adopted children and step children) regardless of their age, or by either parent with one or more never-married children living in the same dwelling. Persons living in common-law unions are considered to be married and to form a husband-wife family" (Postcensal data, 1991, p. 10). This is distinguished from an "economic family" which is "a group of two or more persons who are related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption, and who live in the same dwelling" (Postcensal data, 1991, p. 10). Legal definitions of the family incorporate notions of who is and is not part of a family unit for the purposes of inheritance, legitimacy of births and for making decisions regarding distribution of goods within a given unit.

Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako (1993), quoting the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1948), state that Malinowski felt the family was a universal human institution, and his theories convinced social scientists that this was, indeed, the case. Malinowski separated questions of sexual behavior from questions of the family's universal existence. He argued that because of the conjugal relationship, the family has to be universal as it fulfilled the universal human need of sexuality. Sexual promiscuity was irrelevant, he felt, for deciding whether families existed. He described three aspects of the family that he believed flowed from the family's universal function of raising and nurturing children. These aspects are: (1) the family has to have clear boundaries. The family, as a social unit responsible for the care of children, has to be able to

distinguish between members of its social unit and those who are outsiders; (2) families need a central location to be together so that the daily tasks associated with the rearing of children can be accomplished, and (3) the family is a group where strong affectionate ties are present, one being love between parents and children and another, love between spouses (Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako, 1993, p. 12)

Later anthropologists have argued that the basic social unit is not the nuclear family including father but consists of a mother and her children. They state that whether or not a mate becomes attached to the mother on some more or less permanent basis is a variable matter (Fox & Luxton, 1993). Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako (1993) point out that modern anthropologists "may have removed father from The Family, {emphasis theirs} but they did not modify the basic social science concept of The Family in which the function of child rearing is mapped onto a bounded set of people who share a space and who 'love' one another" (p. 10).

A definition of family that has been widely used was offered in 1949 by the anthropologist, George Murdock. Murdock stated that "the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults" (as quoted in Fox & Luxton, 1993, p. 21).

Historical sociologist Martine Segalen felt that a family consisting of mother, father and children was often unknown to our ancestors. She felt that a definition of family was difficult as "all domestic groups are in transition, are processes not permanencies, and to seek to understand them by means of censuses fix their image as a particular kind of household, whereas in fact their organization at any one time may be only temporary" (p. 27). Segalen studied other family forms such as collectives and found that family forms vary as economic and reproductive necessities dictate.

Another important anthropologist who shaped our attitudes to the family was Claude Lévi-Strauss. In 1956, Lévi-Strauss published a work that described family formation and the role of the universal taboo against incest. In discussing the taboo, Lévi-Strauss likened it to the sexual division of labor, a device to "make the sexes mutually dependent on social and economic grounds, thus establishing clearly that marriage is better than celibacy" (Fineman, 1995, p. 146).

Male and female are thus complements of one another; their relationship is symbiotic in nature due to their differentiated role specializations in society and these complementary roles constitute a whole. Generally, men are the hunters and women are the nurturers. Lévi-Strauss felt that the institution of marriage was an aspect of economic exchange. Simply put, women because of their lactating function with respect to children, were relegated to the position of caregiver of children. The presence of children led to a sexual division of labor and an interdependency between the genders. In exchange for care of the children and sexual functions, the man provided economic support for the woman and her offspring.

Anthropological research has included studies of many groups other than North American ones and the importance of kinship groups and variable family forms cannot be overlooked. They have proved to be interesting studies, from which North American culture has looked at other societies and compared them, favourably or unfavourably with our own culture. Anthropologists see the nuclear family built monogamy as a natural form and common in societies where people must move to earn a living.

Anthropologists have studied and reported on various family forms such as clans and village societies which are dissimilar to the family form predominant in our culture. Although different studies of family forms have been advanced by anthropologists, North American culture still demarcates the nuclear, heterosexual family as the norm and ideal (Hutter, 1981).

Evolutionary theorists from the nineteenth century did not believe the family to be universal but they believed that women were defined by their nurturant, connective and reproductive roles that do not change over time. Men were viewed as the agents of all social processes. In this way, evolutionary theorists were concerned more with the roles that are engendered within a family as opposed to the definition of family itself. They also felt that the family was a unit bounded biologically and legally, associated with property; self-sufficient; with affective ties between members and distinct by inclusion only in the home and as such, was something that emerged in complex state governed social forms (Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako, 1993, p. 13).

Collier, Rosaldo & Yanagisako (1993) state that "the structural functionalists see the family as a way of organizing and thinking about human relationships in a world in which the domestic is perceived to be in opposition to a politics shaped outside the home, and individuals find themselves dependent on a set of relatively noncontingent ties in order to survive the dictates of an impersonal market and external political order" (p. 14). From this, they feel that the family has come to be romanticized as a haven from the cruelties of society and the marketplace.

Theorists such as Herbert Spence, J.J. Bachofen, Henry Sumner Maine and Lewis Henry Morgan, were all nineteenth-century evolutionary theorists, known as Social Darwinists. Social Darwinists dealt with the historical development and the origins of the family. Underlying their theories were implications about the roles of women and men within families which had some repercussions for people in the nineteenth century. Hutter (1981) feels that the position of the evolutionary theorists on the evolution of the family has not changed in the last century.

Their basic argument was that since biological evolution could be followed through a series of stages, the same would hold true for cultures. They then subscribed to the belief in 'unilinear' evolution,

which Hutter (1981) defines as "the idea that all civilizations passed through the same stages of development in the same order" (p. 18). "Their primary concern was with the explanation, from an evolutionary perspective, of marriage and family systems. Therefore, they believed that the nuclear family could be seen as having evolved from a polygamous, family group in primitive man to the nuclear, monogamous family of modern man" (Hutter, 1981, p. 19).

Within this discipline, there was dissension as to whether society evolved from matriarchal or patriarchal civilizations. Bachofen argued that matriarchal societies were a stage in the evolution of the race while Sumner Maine argued that a matriarchal society had never existed. Hutter (1981) states "the argument among evolutionists on the existence of a matriarchal stage of development went beyond academic historical interest. Ultimately, it centered on the nature of women's roles in nineteenth-century Western European and American societies. The different positions espoused by evolutionists reflected different beliefs on sex-role relationships and the differentiation of labor. These different theories had social and political implications for contemporary society" (p. 19).

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels shared and borrowed some of the evolutionary ideas of the Social Darwinists. However, they developed their own theory of the historical development of the family. They believed that structural differences among societies were present because they had existed at different stages of the human civilization. They placed primary emphasis on economics as a causal factor in the structural differences.

Friedrich Engels, in particular, was instrumental in developing further theory on the origin of the family. He believed that, overall, there had been a matriarchal society that had espoused group marriage. Moving to pair marriage through the Renaissance period in history, patriarchy became dominant, based on reproduction, production and the division of labor (Hutter, 1981). Society itself, evolved from the first stage, known as savagery, where people were nomads who adapted to nature.

The second stage of evolution, known as barbarism involved people becoming tillers of the soil. There was an increasing productivity on the part of nature through human intervention, most notably with the cultivation of land and the domestication of animals. It was in this stage that patriarchy became the dominant ideology because of men's control of economic resources and the pair marriage. The third stage, known as civilization evolved from two groups: the aristocracy, which was present in ancient feudal times and the lower class, who were themselves commodities, known as serfs and slaves.

From this, the industrial revolution introduced another class, that of the bourgeoisie. Society was then structured into the following groups: the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the capitalists of the industrial revolution and the proletariat, who were the wage laborers. The underclass was clearly identified as resulting from the industrial revolution and an increase in wealth and power for certain groups.

They argued that, in pre-industrial society, whole families had a role to play in the economics of the family. The industrial revolution separated work from home. As a consequence, small businesses were lost and men became wage earners. As men became dependent on their employers, women and children became dependent on men who earned the wage. Thus women's economic importance was lost. This led to an increased division in labor and to the subservience of women to men. Family became a private role for women, where before, their participation in the economics of the family had made women public figures. Engels clearly delineated the implications of private family for women by stating

... her being confined to domestic work, now assured supremacy in the house for the man; the woman's housework lost its significance compared with the man's work in obtaining a livelihood; the latter was everything, the former an insignificant contribution ... the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so long as women are excluded from socially productive

work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree (p. 52).

Marx and Engels felt that it was necessary to overthrow the capitalist-based industrial system in order to establish equality between groups. They believed that the decline in the importance of kinship and community involvements and the changes in the makeup of the nuclear family were more important areas of study than that of the evolutionary transformations of the family. Engels, more so than Marx, tied family history to economic history in a linear, causal relation when he wrote Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State in 1884.

Poster (1978, as quoted in Hutter, 1981) states that "Marx, like Fourier before him, denounced bourgeois marriage as a form of prostitution. The important conclusion reached by Marx and Engels {in this passage} was that the family is epiphenomenal compared to the mode of production. In general their writings relegated the family to the backwaters of the superstructure" (p. 43). The insightful analysis of Marx and Engels has been influential in understanding later twentieth-century family dynamics.

Another evolutionist branch of sociology had as a spokesperson a French engineer and social reformer known as Le Play. Le Play placed great stress on the familial form and felt that the major outlines of any society are set by its underlying type of family. Three dominant family forms were delineated by Le Play. The first was the patriarchal or extended family, which is authoritarian and based on tradition and lineage. He felt it was common among pastoral people where the father had extensive authority over all his unmarried sons and daughters and was the sole owner of the family property. Hutter (1981) states that "the patriarchal authority of the family occurs where there is a minimal of extended political and social authority. Such a family system is seen as

incompatible with political and modern systems" (p. 29).

The second family is the unstable family which, it was theorized, prevailed among working populations who lived under the factory system of the West. This family was seen to be naturally disorganized and was the prime causal variable in social disorganization. It was strongly individualistic, mobile and secular. The unstable family showed little attachment to family lineage and had no roots in property and was unstable from generation to generation. Le Play associated it with the pauperization of working class populations under the new manufacturing regime in the West.

The third family was seen as the stem family and it was a happy compromise between the other two types of families. It was free of authoritarianism but it was still rooted in traditional values. It was seen as stable and committed to perpetuating the family lineage. It formed itself under the influence of individually owned property. Le Play then did an analysis of the family which was intertwined with an analysis of the community in which the family finds itself. Hutter (1981, quoting Nisbet, 1966) compares the works of Marx and Le Play. He states

Both Le Play and Marx were sensitive to the institutional component in history, but beyond this generic likeness there is only stark contrast. For Marx the key institution is social class. For Le Play it is kinship: the structure of society varies with the type of family that underlies it. Marx detested private property, Le Play declared it the indispensable basis of social order and freedom. Marx treated religion as something superfluous to an understanding of human behavior and, in its effect, an opiate. For Le Play religion is as essential to men's mental and moral life as the family is to his social organization. For Marx, the whole rural scheme of things is tantamount to idiocy as far as its impact on human thought is concerned. Le Play, for all his conscious acceptance of industry, plainly reveres rural society, seeing in it

the haven of security that urban life, by its very nature, must destroy. Marx was socialist; Le Play put socialism, along with mass democracy, secularism, and equalitarianism, among the major evils of his time - all of them unmistakable signs of social degeneration (p. 31).

Hutter (1981) states

In a later work Smelser (1973) explains structural differentiation as the manner in which, after industrialization, family functions lose some of their former importance in matters of training and economic production and schools and economic organization begin to fill these functions. As the family ceases to be an economic unit of production, family members may leave the household to seek employment in the outside labor market. With the decline of the family's function in the economic sphere, the family loses its economic training functions, which further leads to a decline in general paternal authority. The family's activities become more concentrated on emotional gratification and socialization, with the mother developing more intense relationships with children because of the absence of the father in the job market (p. 46).

Fox & Luxton (1993) feel that "many sociologists today conclude that there is no such thing as the family. It is a short step from the conclusion that "the family" does not exist to the argument that "the family" is essentially only a symbol system or ideology (Barrett and McIntosh 1982, Gittins 1985). In short, for some writers, "the family" is a set of ideas, and in this society we are all subject to a hegemonic {or dominant} ideology about families. Specifically, "familism", which sees the nuclear family as universal and necessary, constitutes an ideology that characterizes western capitalist societies (Barrett and McIntosh 1982)" (p. 22).

Many feminist theorists do not believe that the family is necessarily a nuclear one in design and a lot of their work is reflective

of thinking about single mothers as a different family form. McDaniel (1989) says

Most research on families has been done with traditional families, or with the assumption that non-traditional families are deviant, or in the process of becoming traditional. A single parent family is often seen as either just emerged from being a "regular family", or is in the process of becoming "regular" again in the future (p. 17).

McDaniel says that the family, as a social institution has four inter-related purposes. They are: service to the economic system, socialization of children, social control and reproduction. She sees the family as public as opposed to private and thus, the family has responsibilities not only to the individual but to society. She identifies the functions of the family and the roles which women perform within those functions. The functions of the family are socialization, reproduction, readiness for the labor force and sexual functions.

Popay, Rimmer & Rossiter (1983) feel that the concept of family evokes a constellation of social, moral and religious values concerned with the structure and quality of family life and its relationship to outside institutions and individuals. Assumptions about 'normal' family life, about what is good and bad, based on these values, implicitly and explicitly underlie behavior and policy in many different fields. The implicit assumption is that the nuclear, heterosexual family is the 'normal' one and this is stated explicitly in family policies. One parent families represent an obvious and visible challenge to many of these values and formal and informal attitudes towards such families, reflecting this, are often ambiguous and sometimes actually unsympathetic (p. 18).

Schorr (as quoted in Popay, Rimmer & Rossiter, 1983) states that "the problems of one parent families derive directly from the problems of women ... if women had equal access to work and reasonable social definition of their roles at home and on the job, lone parents would have much less difficulty. The implication of this analysis is that there must

be continued progress toward the aim of providing equal choice to men and women in the domestic world and the worlds of employment" (p. 86).

Kate Millett {as referred to in Renvoize, 1985} saw the family in a different manner, believing that in a patriarchal society the chief function of the family is to socialize the young so that they fit in with prevailing mores according to patriarchal needs, and that schools, other children and the media would complete the socialization process.

Patriarchy obviously insists upon legitimacy and since the family relies on the father for its social status and finances, his position is extremely powerful. Although from a biological point of view, she continues, there is no reason why "the two central functions of the family {socialization and reproduction} need be inseparable from or even take place within it, revolutionary or utopian efforts to remove these functions from the family have been so frustrated, so beset by difficulties, that most experiments so far have involved a gradual return to tradition" (p. 146).

Much theory and discussion center on the nuclear family and by its pervasiveness, it is assumed we all know what constitutes a family. Women and men parent for a variety of reasons. Most adults who parent begin this role in a nuclear family. If circumstances alter, the nuclear family becomes a single parent family, most often, a single mother family. As such, single mother families are not a new development. Several theories have been proffered on the waxing and waning of single mother families in history. In our society those families who are not nuclear are sometimes labelled dysfunctional or deviant.

In the early 1970s, the new science of sociobiology offered an expansion of Darwin's view on sex differences in reproductive and parenting behavior. The original explanation by biologist Robert Trivers was not particularly concerned with humans but rather with birds. Trivers referred to all species in which one sex {usually but not universally the female} makes a much greater investment in reproduction than the other.

Trivers was mainly concerned with nature's purposes of survival and reproduction.

Burns & Scott (1994) state "as Trivers explained, sociobiology, and more generally, evolutionary biology puts the ultimate "why" of behavior at the level of genes carried by the individual. The evolutionary process is such that the genes "want" to reproduce themselves in a new generation, and the instincts and behaviors - courting, mating, parenting - that will best achieve this result get built into individuals through natural selection. Trivers proposed that in those species in which one sex invests a great deal of time and energy in bearing and rearing the young, the reproductive strategies of the males and females will differ" (p. 143).

One of the main ideas in Trivers' work was what is known as 'maximizing inclusive fitness'. When mammals maximize inclusive fitness, females select mates who will be able to produce and rear healthy offspring to adulthood. Because the only physical commitment of the male would be to provide sperm, it would be in his best interests to maintain a sexually promiscuous lifestyle, in the hopes that some of his offspring would be reared to adulthood by the mother.

Intense competition then arises between males and aggressive tendencies are displayed in the hopes of staving off the advances of other males for the females. A successful male would have several sources of potential offspring by being the most aggressive, the most promiscuous and the most physically strong. This is an extension of Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest, which Trivers labelled 'differential parenting investment' as evidenced by 'maximizing inclusive fitness'. Trivers' research concerned the behavior of birds and he was not overly concerned with human behavior. Others have extended the concept of differential parenting investment to humans.

Hinde (1984) proposed

that in the human environment of evolutionary adeptness, relatively long-lasting bonds between a man and one or two women

would have emerged as the species pattern, with the bonds strengthened by the evolution of a non-estrus pattern of sexuality, such that mating became possible at all times. The bond was advantageous to females {read: gene-derived female instincts} because it brought a protector and helpmeet to the task of infant rearing. It was also advantageous to men {read: gene-derived male instincts}, as human infants required much tending, and if the task was left to the mother alone many infants would succumb, reducing the man's reproductive success" (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 144).

Hinde then argued that philandering would be to men's advantage as it would increase the chances of his reproductive success and would not detract from his caring functions for the offspring of his mate. Philandering for the female would be dangerous, as sexual promiscuity on the part of women would make them unattractive to men. With promiscuous mothers, it would be impossible to claim the children as his own whereas men would be attracted to women who they perceived as faithful, fertile and receptive. Women, in turn, would have a partner and a protector.

Burns & Scott (1994) state

Human sociobiology holds that these functionally evolved characteristics have not changed much over the intervening millennia. Their expression varies across cultures, but the same evolutionally defined themes manifest in such diverse practices as polygamy and haremage, chaperonage, claustration, chastity belts, and infibulation, and male contempt for "unvirtuous" women and even for the victims of rape. Hinde argued that they manifest also in the attitudes of contemporary tertiary students. He cited a range of surveys that have found that these young people, who could be expected to be most freed from "traditional" attitudes, could more accurately be described as having modernized them. Virginity might no longer be required of women, but both males and females surveyed

considered that women's sexual activities should occur within a loving relationship, whereas promiscuity was acceptable and even admirable in men. The men's ideal was for an attractive woman who was easy to get for him, but hard to get for all other men (Hinde, 1984) (p. 145).

This argument put forth but Hinde would justify, in evolutionary terms, why women who would parent without the benefit of a man would deserve to be treated shabbily. No man would want to be with a woman whose reputation for fidelity had been tainted.

As expected, feminists take strong issue with Hinde's theory on the grounds that it is a pseudoscientific justifying of the sexual double standard and that it presents women in an impotent position, needing to cling to a man in order to survive and acquire prestige. Another serious accusation is that this theory has disregarded all the historical, economic, religious and social forces that shape human behavior. Not all women are "faithful and fertile" and not all men are promiscuous creatures who choose to not care for any offspring but their own. Burns & Scott (1994) state "there is often a lurking biological metaphor behind the justification of many gender arrangements - in the last resort, they are justified as "being natural" (p. 143).

The primatologists, a small group of scientists, developed their theory of parenting behavior in regards to primate groups. They espoused that if survival of the fittest was at the heart of reproductive behavior, we should be able to see this in the species closest to man - monkeys. The groups they studied indicated that the females in the groups were coy and did little other than mothering functions, while the males were locked in fierce competition with one another for the sexual attentions of the females.

Hrdy (1986) surmised that the original behaviors described by other primatologists were not the dynamics that were occurring within the groups. Hrdy found that, in a system where females and offspring were

particularly vulnerable, the females attempted to form alliances with males who could provide some security for them and their offspring. Natural selection would favour those who took measures to safeguard themselves and their offspring against fierce males who were a threat to all the females and the children. She called this the 'manipulation hypothesis' by which females manipulated male behavior to safeguard themselves and their children. Now, the evolutionary model of parental behavior shifted from male dominated to sexual politics.

Burns & Scott (1994) state

Hrdy's picture continues to be one in which male and female nature are very different, for evolutionary reasons. However, the theoretical "universal female" has been restored from victimhood to agency. This is a critical achievement, as it underscore the message that what is "natural" in gender relations is adaptability, rather than any fixed set of behaviors (p. 148).

The sexual division of labor, a sociobiological theory, is restricted to the study of human beings. Some writers in this area such as Lancaster & Lancaster (1987) describe the sexual division of labor as one of the major strategies responsible for the reproductive success of mankind. Burns & Scott (1994) state

As they see it, the human reproduction pattern, with its very extended juvenile period was, in evolutionary terms, a gamble. But it was a gamble that paid off, and one of the very important reasons for this was the evolution of "the most unusual behavioral pattern' of continuing to feed the young after weaning. To do this, early humans evolved a system whereby the males specialized in hunting and the females in gathering. This allowed for a varied diet for children and adults, and also instigated reciprocal food sharing, and subsequently, other forms of sharing and exchange (p. 148-9).

Although having different roles, a mutual caring for children allowed homo sapiens to achieve a reproduction rate of up to five times that of other species and thus, humans eventually took over the world. Reproduction occurred both monogamously and polygamously and parenting was a shared and social enterprise, thus groups of people would care for the young within the community. Sociobiological theories attempt to define biological naturalness in human reproductive behavior but, some of the theories ask for a level of credulity that is difficult to achieve. Some theories fail to account for what we do know about the socialization and acculturation of people as part of the preparation for parenting roles.

In a further postulation, Lancaster & Lancaster (1987) argued that to understand human social life we need to understand the crucial difference between life in low and high density populations. In low density populations, the material resources necessary for life and reproduction are free. Anyone who reaches adulthood can obtain the necessities of life. Because of migration, there is little in the way of material wealth for children to inherit and therefore, children who are born out of wedlock are not considered illegitimate or disinherited.

Groups are small and adult fatalities are common, so, generally, any adult who is fit is a valuable asset to the group, and will replace a same sex relative when it is necessary. Marriage is universal and virginity for women is not highly prized so women are allowed a certain degree of sexual freedom. Status and role differences between members of the group remain low, and the child who loses a parent will quickly be re-absorbed by the group and cared for in a communal fashion.

According to Lancaster & Lancaster (1987) the low density patterns can be maintained in village life as among migratory groups, as long as the land available is greater than the capacity of the population to make use of it. As long as this remains the case, prosperity and power accrue to those families who are most fertile.

Burns & Scott (1994) state

The critical change in family life comes when the available land has all been claimed, and wealth and power are measured primarily in terms of the family estate, rather than by the number of family members. Keeping the family estate intact, and if possible increasing it, now becomes an overriding concern. Because it is the women who bear babies who may or may not be wanted by the family, control of female sexuality becomes crucial. Bridal virginity and wifely fidelity become central to the honour of the family, and a variety of maintenance strategies are developed. Marriage may be postponed until some kind of resource base is available, and some people never marry, either because they are not permitted to, or because they are so poor that even two parents will be unable to provide for children (p. 151).

In high density societies, family alliances forged through marriage are important, and sharp status differences emerge. In high density cultures, legitimate and illegitimate children are sharply differentiated one from the other. Illegitimate children lack inheritance rights and the mother of an illegitimate child loses her market value. Quoting Lancaster & Lancaster, Burns & Scott (1994) state

Whatever the particular cultural or historical set up, the women as well as the men will attempt to use it to their own disadvantage. If families are nuclear in form, and only men have access to economic resources, then women will try to get husbands able and willing to support them. In a different kinship arrangement, they will seek to embed themselves within an extended group of relatives. Where virginity is socially demanded, women will generally be just as active as men in discriminating against "dishonoured" women and illegitimate children, and if at all possible, they will make use of the ideology of female purity to their own advantage. Thus, the way in which female "nature" is expressed will vary quite a bit with

circumstances. What is common is the use of strategies that compensate for the fact that their reproductive makeup renders them generally less physically powerful and aggressive than men (p. 152).

Lancaster & Lancaster envisioned a further stage in human reproduction strategies that emerged when industry replace agriculture as a means of support for the population. When this occurred, property inheritance lost its importance and what became prominent were education and the skills needed for good employment. They posit that "a whole new "parental investment calculus" has to be evolved, and this is being worked out in industrial countries today" (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 152).

The distinction between low and high density populations spotlights the importance of the family estate as a factor that discourages family forms other than the nuclear ones. Burns & Scott (1994) state "the density hypothesis implies that once the family estate loses importance in favour of personally earned income, unhusbanded mothers became less of a threat to their lineages, and their incidence should therefore increase - as they have. The density hypothesis also sees values - in this case the values of virginity, purity, and honour - as derived from material causes. It thus predicts that these values will snuff out rather quickly once the material cause disappears. This certainly fits with the remarkably swift devaluation of sexual purity in Western cultures after the 1950s" (p. 153).

Malthus in his 1798 publication Essay on Population postulated that the ability of humans to reproduce themselves geometrically {i.e. many children for each two parents, many children from each of these children} meant that any increase in wealth would easily be negated by the encouragement it gave to earlier marriage and reproduction. Under these conditions, he felt, populations would expand until they were naturally controlled by "checks of misery" such as war, famine, and disease. He also saw that, in Europe, other population checks were in existence. There was

a check provided by "vice" such as contraception and infanticide and a "preventive check" which was provided by late marriage and selective nonmarriage. He saw the latter as a desirable check to human population control.

Basing his views on his native England, where there was a socially accepted bias against early marriage, and large families, he wondered why other countries, who were much poorer than England, could not be introduced to the same norms. He concluded that England had four social factors which encouraged delaying or abandoning marriage. Burns & Scott (1994) state "the first and most important factor was an acquisitive ethic that encouraged and rewarded the pursuit of gain. The second was a stratified but open social structure that motivated people to attempt to climb to higher levels, and to avoid falling below their present one. The third was the institution of private property, protected by a strong government and strong laws, that enabled people to keep their gains. The fourth was a relatively high standard of living, which gave people a taste for comforts and disinclined them to sacrifice these in favour of a hasty marriage. In a word, the Englishman saw the possibility of a good life only if he were prudent" (p. 154).

Macfarlane (1986) a neo Malthusian theorist, {as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994} gave consideration that some other aspect of English attitudes to marriage and children were also crucial. The first was the doctrine that mutual consent of husband and wife is the heart of marriage, and the wishes of other family members less important. The second feature was Christianity's downgrading of marriage to second best to celibacy, which undercut any belief that marriage should be universal, and consequently made for a relatively low identification of personal worth with success in fathering or bearing children. The third was the belief that husband-wife loyalties overrode obligations to kin, and the marriages should therefore be companionable, and between partners similar in age. The fourth was

a belief in married love. Macfarlane pointed out that celebrations of marital love are found in much Anglo-Saxon and Celtic poetry. A fifth feature was the legal position of children, who had protected rights to their own property and earnings, including against their parents. A final feature was the dilution of parent-child loyalties that resulted from the English habit of sending children away early to live with another family as servant, apprentice, page or maid, depending on sex and social class (p. 155-6).

Macfarlane took these factors as well as Malthus' ideas and saw a special concept of family that included independence, self-help, individual responsibility and made children a luxury item who in turn did little for their parents. The fact that this was exhibited most in England was considered an historical accident by Macfarlane. Neo Malthusian theory afford some valuable insights into family structure and the values that influence family forms. It introduces the notions of romantic love and mutual agreement as the basis for marriage and subsequently, for parenthood. This is an important concept and one that is firmly ingrained in our society. However, it is a theory that is basically historical and limited in its applicability to the present.

Guttentag & Secord's (1983) hypothesis about sex ratios and their effect on female-male relationships is an interesting one. They argued that when men exceed women in the population, a condition they called "high masculinity ratio", women become valued as a scarce resource. Men make efforts to secure and keep a wife within a monogamous, long term relationship. These ideas become the norm of the culture and the philandering of either partner is not socially acceptable because then a woman would have no reason to align herself with a man.

When women exceed men in the population, a condition they called "low masculinity ratio", the reverse occurs. Because women are no longer in high demand, men's options are limitless and many might decide to not make commitments to long term, monogamous relationships. This places a lot

of power within the male domain. Women might be in a position where they must subscribe to the roles that men set out for them. Guttentag & Secord (1983) felt that, if power structures within society are placed in such a fashion that women have access to power elements such as voting rights or access to gainful employment, they will begin to feel that they are not interested in playing the roles allotted to them by men.

Burns & Scott (1994) state

in a large international survey, South and Trent (1987) found significant relationships between the sex ratio and rates of female marriage, fertility, divorce, illegitimacy, and literacy. In a later study using data from 111 countries, South (1988) included measures of national socioeconomic development and women's labor force participation in his analysis. He found that the most powerful influence of all was national development level, which brought later marriage, lower fertility, and greater literacy for women. However, when developmental level was controlled for, the sex ratio hypothesis was to some extent supported in that countries with a relative undersupply of women were more likely to be literate, and more likely to marry young and to have large families. These effects were less marked when women were gainfully employed. Divorce is common when the status of women is low, because men initiate it; but it is also common when the status of women is high, because then many women initiate it. This, of course, suggests that divorce and mother-headed families will continue high in Western countries, regardless of changes in the sex ration (p. 160).

Bulatao (1979) explored childbearing motives in a cross-national study carried out in nine countries. The measures used appraised a variety of merits and demerits to having and rearing children, and how this affected childbearing decisions. "Researchers found that, as fertility transition theory would predict, families were smaller in countries and social groups where parents had come to see children as costly. There did

not seem to be a linear relationship between the values and disvalues of children and decisions about family size. The researchers proposed that perhaps there may be two fertility transitions, first from high to moderate fertility, and later from moderate to low fertility, caused by different economics obtaining at different stages of modernization" (Bulatao, 1979, as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 162).

Caldwell (1982) criticized Bulatao's theory and suggested that high fertility does not necessarily make families poorer but can enrich them. He suggested that the important factor was the direction of the flow of resources. When the flow of goods and services is from the child to the parent, then the value of children is augmented and larger families produce greater wealth. Where the ownership is not individual but community owned, the more children in a communal group, the more that group will have power and wealth. The economically rational choice becomes to bear large numbers of children and to encourage one's kin to do the same. When the situation is reversed and the flow of goods and services is from parent to child, it would be economically advantageous for the family to restrict the number of births. The economically rational choice becomes to limit the size of one's family.

Caldwell felt that what would tip the balance in favour of one position as opposed to the other was mass education of children. "Children become costly - they need fees, books, and equipment - and their psychological position also changes. Children attending school take on a new status. They know things their parents may not, their futures look brighter, aspirations rise, plans need to be made. They become more equal, and it no longer seems so reasonable that they should live more frugally than their parents, eat cheaper food, and not expect the same consumption rights as their elders, fathers in particular. As aspirations for children rise, the parents begin to think in terms of spending money on all sorts of enhancing experiences. The result is that children become a cost and are perceived as a cost" (Caldwell, 1987, as quoted in Burns & Scott,

1994, p. 163).

In Caldwell's view, more education would lead to higher demand for more specialized skills in industry and in effect, technology would provide the means of effectively limiting family size. Caldwell commented that from the viewpoint of economic rationality there are only two types of societies - those where rationality dictates unlimited reproduction and those where it leads to childlessness.

Gilligan (1982) states

This line of thinking suggests that the fertility transition may be somewhat different for men and women. Fathering in particular is likely to lose appeal, because it is very costly, has lost much of its prestige, patriarchal, and religious value, and is easily avoided. The emotional value remains, but as affectional values are generally found to be important for women, this may be insufficient to keep fathers involved (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 164).

Zelizer (1985) took a somewhat different approach to the value of children hypothesis. She traced the evolution of the economically viable child to one that is a priceless emotional asset through the rise of child labor laws; studies of changing parental attitudes to the accidental death of children, child life insurance, and the selling of babies for adoption (as referred to in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 166).

Zelizer demonstrated how seeing children as economic assets came to be seen as something profane and suggested that the separation of value and monetary worth was a deliberate attempt to keep market operation out of the domestic sphere and resulted in what she refers to as the "sacralization of children" (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 163). She attributes this new role of children to the rise of the family. Childhood was re-discovered as the family became of emotional importance, and as its instrumental value declined. Degler (1980), an anthropologist, felt that the idea of children as precious also served women's interests because it inflated the status of the domestic realm, to that of equal to

but different from their husband's world of work (p. 165).

The value of children hypotheses and the neo Malthusian theory see children as costly to the family. The neo Malthusian theory sees children as luxury items in the family system while the value of children hypotheses see the value of children as being a recent phenomenon.

Burns & Scott (1994) state

The two approaches thus appear quite complementary. Both suggest that the modern Western father is expected to invest a great deal in his children, for mainly affectional rewards. If the affectional rewards he receives from the other dwindle, or lose value, those available from the children may appear hardly worth the outlay. Cost-benefit analysis would therefore predict that both out-of-wedlock fathering, with its lesser commitment than marriage, and separation/divorce, would become increasingly attractive options for men. Zelizer's approach makes fathering appear particularly onerous, if potentially more emotionally enriching. Thus, the value-of-children theory suggests that by somewhat reversing the position of father and children, modern Western societies have tended to cast men as tributaries to their children, a role that many are willing to forego (p. 166).

A critical analysis of the family and the roles inherent in it have been central to feminist writings. Feminist scholars have pointed out that the gender roles within family tend to favour men and overlook women or place women in a subservient role to men. It has made explicit the fact that what has been described by many people as the traditional family is just one of many variants that human societies have developed.

The essentials of feminist critique of family and parenthood can be summarized as follows: (1) western marriage and family life involve an assumption of male authority and supremacy; (2) family life involves a set of cultural assumptions and a sexual division of labor under which housework and child care are relegated to the wife/mother, classed as non

work and accordingly devalued and unwaged; (3) the family work done free by women makes it possible for men to pursue careers and interests unencumbered by the need to provide care for their children; (4) because of this organization of work around men's life cycles, the processes of reproduction and the existence of children are not recognized in work force arrangements; (5) it continues to be the case that when the wife/mother is in the paid work force, she will continue to perform her normal unpaid labor at home, whereas the husband will make a modest contribution to help her out; (6) there is an early assumption by many girls growing up within families that for them, too, the family rather than the work force will be the major life commitment; (7) taken together with other social conditions, these arrangements give men much more power than women; (8) if a marriage is dissolved, a woman will reap the benefits of her domestic role through poverty, and (9) even if she is poor, she may be better off (adapted from Burns & Scott, 1994; pp. 170-3).

One feminist theorist, Lerner, believes that the key to understanding this patriarchal system comes from looking at history. Accordingly, she studied such authors as Lévi-Strauss, Engels and others. Lerner felt that the first step in a patriarchal system came about as a result of women being viewed as part of the property of a man and thus able to be traded or sold as commodities on the open market. The manner in which women were used as commodities was specified by social class stratification within a given society (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 167).

Lerner felt that women were accomplices in the system of patriarchy, historically, through several methods: gender socialization; educational deprivation; definition of women as respectable or not and by hindering the development of women's solidarity and group cohesiveness. Lerner felt that most significant of all has been the male dominance over cultural tradition where only the works and writings of men are important and women are relegated to non status. Lerner felt that a vast cultural revolution

was necessary for the pattern to be altered.

Duck (1986) described the differences in reproductive behavior as beginning from the well documented fact that from preschool onward, women spend more time on personal relationships than men do. From this point of view, women would spend more time attempting to ameliorate relationship problems than men would and this would include efforts with children. Parenthood, then, becomes an unequal partnership no matter who is included in the group because of women's and men's different affectionate patterns with others and the importance they attach to them (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1984, p. 168).

Other feminist authors feel that the industrial revolution with its unforming of the family led to the further stigmatization of women in families. The insistence of a gendered division of labor forced women into a domestic role they were powerless to control. The writings of such authors as Rousseau, Freud and Bowlby pathologized one half of the parental functions until mothering came to be seen as something both sacred and distasteful, yet necessary, to society. Consequently, no self-respecting man would consent to this work and women were left with it (Lott, 1981). Simone de Beauvoir (1953) stated that because only women can bear children, men, who are excluded from this creativity, create everything else and deny women access to their world and thereby, the sexes are separated (p. 287).

Levine (1983) states that the ideology of romantic love within marriage as a prerequisite to parenthood, a powerful and political superstructure, maintains an unequal distribution of power between the sexes. Romantic love, whether of men or of children, creates a false consciousness which masks the reality of women's lives. She feels that the necessary conditions for diverting girls and women away from their own vital self importance, individually and collectively, is created by the romanticization of family life (p. 30).

Feminist theorists have been critiqued for their lack of interest in the motivation of men in family formation and dissolution. Nonetheless, they provide an excellent analysis of some of the dynamics of families for women and look at these through an historical lens. Many explanations of changes in the roles of women and men within families have highlighted the importance of increased work force participation. The economic independence of women is often seen as the central cause of the move away from the traditional family roles, and the increase in divorce, out-of-wedlock births, and mother-headed families (Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 182).

Burns & Scott have coined a new phrase to describe parenting behavior and why the function of parenting within a nuclear family is decreasing. They have combined those theories which do not fit under the umbrella of any particular ideology. They call this theory 'decomplementary theory' because "it emphasizes how the interests of women and men have lost much of their complementary nature" (p. 170).

An interesting feature is the fact that this type of explanation has been advanced by writers from across the political spectrum, often with little or no reference to one another. "Historical and cross-cultural writings have shown us that the interests of men and women often diverge, and that different societies stitch them together in various ways, generally not universally to the benefit of men" (p. 182-3). Decomplementary theory is really a collection of theories that espouse almost the same ideas but have not been labelled under a rubric as yet. The theorists come from different fields but have not identified strongly with the theories advanced by their scientific branch.

Decomplementary theories have certain elements in them that correspond to one another. They feel in essence that marriage, and thus parenthood, has become deregulated by the attractive possibilities of other lifestyles as being able to meet an individual's need for fulfillment and happiness. They feel that the crucial shift from parenthood to individual fulfillment can be found in the change of society

from an industrial to a postindustrial finance and marketing economy. They feel that where once, parenthood was seen as the best security for adult women and men, it has now come to be associated with high costs to both sexes.

Harris (1980) states "the traditional family required the cooperation of both sexes, but postindustrial relationships do not. As women nevertheless, do often have children, their chances of being left to rear them alone, and in poverty, are high, especially among working-class women, whose menfolk's economic position has declined. The men are likely to find family commitments too burdensome, and the women are likely to find the men and their requirements a burden" (as quoted in Burns & Scott, 1994, p. 185). Bernard (1981) argued that male and female roles are always in flux. She has quoted historical and cross cultural studies which demonstrate that women have often been the main providers while men have been the nurturers and that the roles reverse as the needs of the community or group dictate.

Burns & Scott (1994) state that male roles have become feminized and female roles masculinized. Thus, decomplementarity creates the context for more individual, rather than family constrained choices. This, in its turn, brings more rationalist evaluations of relationships and more termination of unsatisfactory ones. It also predicts that relationship dissolutions will be highest when the state provides adequate support for women and children, because the benefit to be gained from "keeping the family together" will be reduced (pp. 188-9).

They also state that "the decomplementary approach differs from many feminist writings by emphasizing that these categories are likely to be attractive to men as well as to women" (p. 189).

Summary and analysis

It can be argued that, although other family forms exist and are sometimes acknowledged, the nuclear family as determined by man, woman and child is still a relatively new family form in our society. Because it is so prevalent, it is seen as a normal form for all families. Because of the division of the family into a nuclear form, it has come to be seen as natural that the nature of the family would be distinguished by the roles that people play within this grouping.

The biological functions of women and men further identified, at the onset of the industrial revolution, provided the basis for a sexual division of labor. Women were seen as nurturers and gatherers because of their ability to lactate and bear children. Men were seen as economic heads of households. This changed the nature of the family to one which separated the domestic and industrial spheres and allocated gender-based roles to family members.

Fox & Luxton (1993) have demonstrated that because the majority of men and women live in couples, this reinforces the idea that families should be based on heterosexual monogamous couples. They aver, moreover, "that it is commonly assumed that other family patterns cause problems, especially for children" (p. 20). Eichler states that although there is a movement toward a broader definition of family through imposing one family form on another and through new reproductive technologies, nevertheless, these social forces are "oriented towards a monolithic version of the family in terms of its structure and composition" (p. 423).

Fineman (1995) states that the definition of the nuclear family is encoded in our legislation. She states "the shared assumption is that the appropriate family is founded on the heterosexual couple - a reproductive, biological pairing that is designated as divinely ordained in religion, crucial in social policy, and a normative imperative in ideology" (p. 145). Much of the research conducted on families has been done with the nuclear family or with the assumption that non-nuclear families are

deviant or in the process of reverting to a nuclear form. McDaniel (1989) states "a single parent family is often seen as either just emerged from being a "regular family", or is in the process of becoming "regular" again in the future" (p. 17).

North American culture implies that the definition of family encoded into our laws and lives is one to which we all subscribe. It is assumed that knowledge of the family is the same for everyone and that, individuals strive for the ideal family as defined by the dominant ideology. It is also assumed that the notion of family as we experience it, now, has always been with us rather than being seen as a social construct, capable of changing to suit the needs of dominant groups. Our belief in a generic understanding of the family is important because it embodies a set of cultural assumptions. The concept of family informs legislation, policies and practices that govern our lives. It also shapes the decisions we make as individuals about how to live our lives. Under the guise of "family values", policies are promoted.

There is a relationship between family structure and social structure. That the nature of the family is best defined in our culture by the nuclear or traditional family is not an accident. It reflects the division that was necessary when the industrial revolution privatized the functions of the family. Social structures are capable of exerting enormous pressures on persons to conform within accepted norms and mores as defined by the larger society. Such norms are touted as being productive for society, sometimes even seen as 'morally good' or 'morally bad'. For instance, the belief in our society that the heterosexual monogamous relationship is the best one in which to raise children is so firmly entrenched that we have encoded it into our legislation (Fineman, 1995). Other family forms may be recognized but, it is often asserted that they are harmful for the development of children or that they are at elevated risk for antisocial developments.

Merton (1968) states that

among the several elements of social and cultural structures, two are of immediate importance. The first consists of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of the society. The goals are more or less integrated ... and roughly ordered in some hierarchy of value, involving various degrees of sentiment and significance, the prevailing goals comprise a frame of aspirational reference. They are the things "worth striving for". A second element of the cultural structure defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals. Every social group invariably couples its cultural objectives with regulations, rooted in the mores and institutions, of allowable procedures for moving toward these objectives (p. 187).

Merton further states "the sacrifices occasionally entailed by conformity to institutional norms must be compensated by socialized rewards. The distribution of statuses through competition must be so organized that positive incentives for adherence to status obligations are provided for every position within the distributive order" (p. 188).

Through the socialization process women come to understand that marriage and childbearing are normal processes for women. They are goals to which women should aspire, they are goals worth attaining for women. They define women as a separate category of people and assign status to them. The idealization of motherhood has further allowed it to be seen as an enviable status for all women however, it is within the context of a nuclear family that motherhood is seen to be at its best. That the idealization of motherhood conforms to the historical period when the reverberations of the industrial revolution were being felt is not an accident. It is indicative of how social structure comes to be built.

When the industrial revolution privatized the family and created a further sexual division of labor, through economic argument, theorists were beginning to speak to women about their functions as mothers. Prior

to this, motherhood and the notion of it as a sacred trust had waxed and waned however, its distillation to the ideal we recognize today, gained momentum again with the industrial revolution and social scientists working in tandem.

The placement of motherhood as an ideal has, over the centuries, come to be seen as a norm in our society. The nuclear family has been touted as such an ideal that it has become a norm for our culture. This has been further 'normalized' through certain characteristics assigned to family members based on gender. Single mother families are not able to reach the goals of ideal family composition and motherhood as defined within a traditional family setting. Not only are they lacking the element of a male provider, which is a role that has been legitimized by society within the family, they are also women who are unable to devote themselves to the functions of the family and motherhood, as they have been defined. This would result in their being seen as deviant within society.

Durkheim (as quoted in Degler, 1991, p. 83) asserted that deviancy has its place within society and that the label of deviant serves the function of defining for society what is normative behavior. In this way, single mothers provide a necessary function within society. Because of their deviancy, they allow us to look at what we consider 'normal' and allow us to define what is 'not normal'. Single mothers are not always able to fulfill the functions required of the family.

Historically and currently, our society has agreed that the nature of the family is best constructed by a heterosexual couple with children based on biological and economic arguments. Consequently, this traditional view of the nature of the family has prejudiced our views on variant family forms, the most notable of which are single mother families. One of the limitations of the traditional view state is that it circumscribes the roles of both women and men within the family. Women are forced to be in an inferior position, dependent on men for financial support and social status and whose prescribed work as a mother is undervalued and unpaid.

Single mothers reflect the deviant status accorded to variant family forms by the traditional view of the family since they are not economically dependent on men, lack financial support and social status.

An analysis of the functions of the family

This section will analyze the functions of the family using the framework of social structure and anomie (Merton, 1968). Roles within nuclear families and single mother families will be compared and contrasted. This analysis demonstrates that the differences in the roles and functions of these two family forms are magnified due to poverty and social status.

For sociological purposes, the family is defined as a kinship grouping which provides for the rearing of children and for meeting certain human needs. Sociologists distinguish between the conjugal family which is comprised of the husband, wife, their children and occasionally, an extra relative and the consanguine family which is founded upon the blood relationship of a number of kin persons. The consanguine family is also called the joint or extended family (Horton & Hunt, 1972, p. 200).

Sociologists, generally, see the family as the principal institution through which societies organize and regulate certain functions. The first function is the regulation and satisfaction of sexual desire. The second function of the family is the reproductive function, where a set of norms is provided for including children as part of a family. The third function of the family is the socialization function where children are taught about the norms of their culture. The fourth function of the family is an affectional function where, in many societies, the family is heavily relied on for most of the affectionate ties human beings need. The fifth function is the status function, where age, birth order and social class are ascribed to children. "In any society with a class system, the class status of a child's family largely determines the opportunities and rewards open to him, {the child} and the expectations through which others

may inspire or discourage him. But each child *starts out* {emphasis theirs} with the class status of his family, and this initial placement probably has greater effect upon achievement and reward than any other single factor" (Horton & Hunt, 1972, p. 208).

The sixth function of the family is a protective function. The family is expected to offer some degree of physical, economic and psychological protection to its members. In our society, this is an important function, as it is often hypothesized that few people outside of one's family care what happens to family members. The last and seventh function of the family is an economic function. The family is the basic economic unit. It is the basic unit for working and sharing although this has been changing as the structure of the family changes.

Horton & Hunt (1972), in analyzing the functions of the family feel these functions have changed in recent decades. They state that "the sexual regulation function probably shows no great change; the reproduction function is little changed; the socialization function claims increased attention by society's members; the affectional and companionship functions have gained {they suggest that this has increased as a result of less dependency on kin and extended groups}; the status definition function continues; the protective functions have declined, as many of the traditional family protective functions have been shifted to other institutions, and the economic functions have changed most greatly because the family is mainly a unit of economic consumption, united by companionship, affection, and recreation" (pp. 212-5).

They state that the functions of the family remain the same in all family forms but that the increasing potential for variant family forms needs to be considered in matters of policy and culture. In general, though, sociologists have studied the nuclear family form as the basic unit of society, and this might have been to its detriment. Walsh (1982) states that "the tendency of the family to shelter its members from other social institutions {besides the education and welfare systems} has

weakened its ability to affect the structure of or to influence the program and legislation that public agencies have directed at the family. Alternative forms of family organization were misinterpreted as "family disorganization" because of a lack of understanding of diversity and because they did not conform to the official stereotype" (p. 461-2).

How we have come to judge normalcy within a cultural context is influenced by the manner in which certain groups are stereotyped and characterized according to social mores and norms. According to Niemann & Secord (1995) "the idea is that it takes much less effort to judge an entire category of persons than to judge each individual member. The degree of stereotyping depends on the ease of fitting attributes to an available category (Fiske & Pavelchak, 1986; Fiske and Neuberr, 1990)" (p. 1).

Cole (1982) states "cultural relativism means that an act can only be understood within the context in which it occurs. What may be meaningful, acceptable, or necessary in a specific cultural situation may not be so in another. The derivation of the word "normal" includes the concept of social norms - informal rules or behavioral standards which have been accepted by a social group. The "normal" person then acts in accordance with the group proscriptions for normal behavior" (pp. 9-10).

When we examine the functions of the family, we can compare and contrast the roles that family members play in nuclear and single mother families. The first function, regulation and satisfaction of sexual desire is a function that can be fulfilled within a nuclear family. The conjugal relationship includes a sexual function for the adults and the incest taboo is ingrained in our society. Although the incest taboo and the sexual satisfaction functions sometimes go awry in nuclear families, the functions are present.

In a single mother family, the incest taboo is present however the sexual satisfaction element is missing because there is no other adult present. In order for that function to be fulfilled for the adult woman,

we must include another element. The inclusion of that other element places the incest taboo in a precarious position, as there is no longer a biological bond between adults and children, without the presence of the mother. Therefore, the risk to children increases and has been documented in studies done in Hamilton and London (Gelles & Lancaster, 1987).

The second function, the reproductive one, is not met at all in single mother families, where the purpose of reproduction would have been arrested by the lack of a nuclear family form. This is not to say that it does not occur at all. Births in single mother families occur and this leads them to a further deviant status within society, as the reproductive function cannot have been fulfilled without the sexual element. The sexual function is sanctioned. It is a socially approved relationship. In a single mother home, there is no complementary adult and therefore, the sexual function is thwarted. For a single mother to have her sexual needs met, she must go outside the family and this violates a norm - the norm of a socially approved sexual relationship. Her 'promiscuity' then is a further badge in her deviant status.

The third function, the socialization function, is one of the most important. Merton (1968) states "it is the family, of course, which is a major transmission belt for the diffusion of cultural standards to the oncoming generation. It is ... a mechanism for disciplining the child in terms of the cultural goals and mores characteristic of this narrow range of groups {cultural groups}. The child is exposed to social prototypes in the witnessed daily behavior and casual conversations of parents. Not infrequently, *children detect and incorporate cultural uniformities even when these remain implicit and have not been reduced to rules*" {italics Merton's} (p. 212).

The role of socialization of children within the family cannot be over stressed. The difference between a nuclear family and a single parent family would, of course, be the lack of one adult, who would provide the child with modeling behavior on a daily basis. The problem than can be

encountered in a single mother family is, that while attempting to fulfill certain functions for herself, the single mother will also be fulfilling a socialization function for the child. The socialization functions are as well transmitted in a single mother family as in a nuclear family.

Socialization functions transmit the value of having a partner in our society and to what lengths an adult will go to attain that goal. It indirectly tells the child the value of being independent. Dichotomously, people are expected to be financially independent in our society while at the same time, being emotionally dependent on others. The purpose of this double message has been to keep the economic and domestic spheres, separate one from the other.

In this way, it is reinforced that certain gender specifications make good sense. Mothers are more attentive to the emotional functions of the family and fathers, to the economic functions of the family. These are roles which complement one another and are not only natural, they are normal. The child gets a clear message that the nuclear family is one which is supposed to meet our needs for love and affection. The story ends: "and they lived happily ever after". Sometimes, the goals are incompatible although this is most often attributed to a personal deficiency rather than an ideology which has been created surrounding the functions a family and its members can fulfill. The role of socialization for women and men allows these traditions to endure.

The affectional tie of the family, the fourth function, I have alluded to in the socialization role. A family is expected to meet our primary needs for affiliation and acceptance. While some families excel at this, others are not able to meet these needs at all. A nuclear family does not perform this function better than a single mother family. However, in a nuclear family, sometimes the other member of the conjugal dyad can have their affiliation and acceptance needs met by their partners and thus, can give more to the children. When a mother is alone, she needs a strong ego {sense of self} to be able to meet all her children's needs

for affection and affiliation. By extension, hers would go unmet to a degree.

The protective function of the family can be filled by both family forms although I will argue further that the family is not always a psychological and physical haven, especially for children. The family is expected to love and nurture, yet physically discipline its members. With physical discipline of children within families, sanctioned by society, the peer group may take on a protective function for family members. In addition, social institutions have been put in place to fulfill a protective function for family members, as evidenced by the Child and Family Services agencies.

Further the family is often not able to provide the protective function that has been attributed to it in an economic sense. This can be changed through economic trends and marriage patterns and dissolutions. When nuclear families dissolve and become single mother families, some of the protective functions are no longer met for the woman and her children. Psychologically, there is no one there for the mother and sometimes the change in her status, can impede the mother's ability to meet her children's needs for psychological succour.

The fifth function, the status function, refers to two levels of societal operation. On the one hand, there is age and birth order of the child and these would remain the same no matter which family grouping we look at. Children are as old as they are and born in the order which they were born. This can't be changed. The social class function is an important one to look at, for as Horton & Hunt (1972) assert "each child starts out with the class status of his family, and this initial placement probably has greater effect upon achievement and reward than any other single factor" (p. 208). McDaniel (1989) has also stressed the importance of social class in the life chances of children. The social class function is closely linked to the economic function of the family.

In general, single mother families are poorer than other family groups. Nuclear families are the most economically solvent of all families in the country. In addition to social status, the economic function of the family would be disrupted in a single mother family as it would not be in a nuclear family.

It is at this juncture, especially, that the difference between single mother families and nuclear families can be discerned. This comes to be judged at the level of the child's chances in life. The social status of a child, at birth, determines that child's life chances more than other factors. The myth in this country that we can all rise to the status of kings is well documented by Merton (1968). He surmises that it is the discrepancy between prescribed goals and their attainment which is the root cause of anomie.

Merton states

Anomie has been defined as the sociological concept of anomie ... presupposes that the salient environment of individuals can be usefully thought of as involving the cultural structure, on the one hand, and the social structure, on the other. Anomie is then conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them. In this conception, cultural values may help to produce behavior which is at odds with the mandates of the values themselves (p. 216).

He states "when poverty and associated disadvantages in competing for the culture values approved for all members of the society are linked with a cultural emphasis on pecuniary success as a dominant goal, high rates of criminal behavior are the normal outcome. It is when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain common success-goals for the population at large while the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these

goals for a considerable part of the same population, that deviant behavior ensues on a large scale" {italics Merton's} (pp. 200-1).

Merton (1968) saw how important money is in North American culture as a symbol of prestige. He states

Contemporary American culture appears to approximate the polar type in which great emphasis upon certain success-goals occurs without equivalent emphasis upon institutional means ... In some large measure, money has been consecrated as a value in itself, over and above its expenditure for articles of consumption or its use for the enhancement of power. "Money" is peculiarly well adapted to become a symbol of prestige ... The measure of "monetary success" is conveniently indefinite and relative ... In this flux of shifting standards, there is no stable resting point, or rather, it is the point which manages always to be "just ahead" (p. 190).

Merton analyzes a document known as "Nation's Business, volume 27, Number 8, page 7" and looks at the sociological implications of some of the statements found within it. He states

these men are living testimony that the social structure is such as to permit these aspirations to be achieved, *if one is worthy.* {italics Merton's}. And correlatively, failure to reach these goals testifies only to one's own personal shortcomings. Aggression provoked by failure should therefore be directed inward and not outward, against oneself and not against a social structure which provides free and equal access to opportunity (p. 191).

Merton further states

The cultural manifesto is clear: one must not quit, must not cease striving, must not lessen his goals, for "not failure, but low aim, is crime". Thus the culture enjoins the acceptance of three cultural axioms: first, all should strive for the same lofty goals since these are open to all; second, present seeming failure is but a way-station to ultimate success; and third, genuine failure consists

only in the lessening or withdrawal of ambition ... American culture continues to be characterized by a heavy emphasis on wealth as a basic symbol of success, without a corresponding emphasis upon the legitimate avenue on which to match this goal (p. 183).

Single mother families have the same aspirations as nuclear families however the means to achieve them are severely limited. Although we know that single parent families are increasing and that divorce and separation are commonplace, we still see single mothers as deviant from the norm of a nuclear family. Is the heart of the matter that they are simply unable, by poverty and social class, to meet societal expectations and thereby are labelled as deviant, accept that status, and lower their expectations? Or is it that it is easier for the culture to blame single mothers for their poverty, while restricting access to the means necessary to pursue pecuniary success? Subsequent failures to meet the cultural standard are then blamed on personal deficiency. Merton (1968) states that individuals when faced with these contradictory messages and without means to achieve them, must find adaptive behaviors. They can do this in the following ways: through conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism or rebellion.

When using conformity as an adaptive mechanism, single mothers would attempt to meet the goals and standards of our culture through socially approved methods. Since so many single mothers do try to emulate the nuclear family in many ways, we can see that conformity is a popular method of adaptation. We can generalize this statement and state that, since so many adults live within heterosexual monogamous relationships, society in general is shaped by conformity to norms and mores.

The second form of adaptation is innovation. Merton states "this response occurs when the individual has assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means for its attainment" (p. 195). This particular conundrum is structured by the pursuit and accumulation of wealth, which is seen as an attainable goal by all members of the culture. Merton

suggests that to find a higher rate of crime and deviancy in the lower echelons of society serves a purpose as these groups are already disenfranchised because of their ability to reap the benefits of the reward - financial success - that we attribute to all people irrespective of social class. Single mothers are among the poorest family groups in the country, as Hao (1994) asserts "no matter how poverty is measured" (p. 5). We can see how the survival stance of adaptation would be most crucial for them.

Merton states

Several researchers have shown that specialized areas of vice and crime constitute a "normal" response to a situation where the cultural emphasis upon pecuniary success has been absorbed, but where there is little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful ... It is the *combination* of the cultural emphasis and the social structure which produces intense pressure for deviation ... Despite our persistent open-class-ideology, advance toward the success-goal is relatively rare and notably difficult for those armed with little formal education and few economic resources (pp. 199-200).

He suggests that when these two goals, which are incompatible, frustrate certain groups they inherit the label of deviant. The groups unable to meet the societal standards will try their best to adapt to the situation, through legitimate or illegitimate means. Failure to achieve pecuniary success will be attributed to mystical entities such as luck.

Merton's analysis of this is correct when we examine our present day culture. How many people wish for luck in winning the lottery or spend most of their income on gambling in order to achieve the wealth that it is said is open to every person in our culture, regardless of social standing? Our societal standards set a priority on people being financially self-sufficient and our accumulation of the rewards of wealth

are seen as normative behavior. Everyone still wants to 'keep up with the Jones'. In many ways we worship wealth and the pursuit of it.

When people become wealthy, we attribute this to luck rather than to efforts aimed at increasing one's wealth. While we extol the virtues of hard work to achieve one's goals, it is also not seen as quite legitimate that people should follow this route. Rather luck becomes the deciding factor. Single mothers then have 'bad luck' in terms of their poverty. Rather than seeing poverty as a result of existing social structures and their incompatible goals, single mothers are studied for deviancy and the propensity of their children for delinquent behaviors such as crime and teenage pregnancy. After all, the family as a major socialization agent for children, would have defined these behaviors as acceptable by the family's involvement in them. All this when we are well aware that little formal education and few economic resources are determinant factors in someone's 'luck' quotient.

So ingrained is the belief that anyone can rise to the position of king in our society that people are not aware that the discrepancy is already determined largely by social class and the economic functions that one's family of origin fulfilled. Rather, people are taught to believe that there is little relation between worth and consequences. Difficulties in achieving the pinnacle of success that is so important in our culture are turned inward to a study of the deficiencies of these groups rather than a study of the social structure and prevalent ideology.

What of those who cannot fulfill the goals of society and yet subscribe to the institutional norms? They develop a behavioral adaptation which Merton labels 'ritualism'. He suggests that one method for "allaying these anxieties {incompatibility of goals and means to achieve them}) is to lower one's level of aspiration - permanently. Fear produces inaction, or more accurately, routinized action" (p. 204). In this mode of adaptation, people find solace in the safe and routine behavior of every day. They are often characterized by their inability to

take any risks or their fear of situations which vary from the norms they cherish. A standard form of this would be found in the family where members are routinely advised to 'not expect anything and that way, you won't be disappointed'.

Single mother families would find great comfort in this form of adaptation. It would be safer to submit to inquiries by various agencies in order to retain an economic position in society. It is safer to submit to a study into deviant characteristics and family structure than to refuse to participate in a study. Refusal will be seen as a form of deviancy in and of itself. In particular, because women have been situated in domestic roles, historically, and because of their socialization to be caregivers, women are more likely to set their standards lower and attempt to adapt to a situation. Niemann and Secord (1995) state "the almost universal situating of women in domestic roles, excluding them from business, government, the legal system, the political system, and in general from positions of power, status, and influence has generated and sustained a stereotype of the traditional woman as "unassertive, nurturant, and domestic; devious, manipulative, emotional, and irrational" (p. 9).

In a fourth form of adaptation, known as 'retreatism', Merton states in this category fall some of the adaptive activities of psychotics, autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts. They have relinquished culturally prescribed goals and their behavior does not accord with institutional norms ... this mode of adaptation is most likely to occur when *both* the culture goals and the institutional practices have been thoroughly assimilated by the individual and imbued with affect and high value, but accessible institutional avenues are not productive of success (p. 207).

This type of adaptation is most easily condemned by conventional representatives of the culture because these people are seen as a non-

productive liability. The parallel here with the condemnation of single mothers on social assistance cannot be ignored. Single mothers, assuming a full time homemaker role, are seen as having made a decision to not participate in the labor force. Although motherhood is praised as a career choice for women, unless this is conducted within the confines of a nuclear family, it is not seen as valuable. It is of limited value in our culture, at any rate, although caring for children should be seen as extremely valuable. We are after all caring for those who will eventually care for us in our old age. Women are acculturating citizens for society.

Single mothers who are unable to participate in the labor force because of a lack of educational and marketable skills, are often seen as non-productive members of our culture. There then abounds political promises made to ensure that 'welfare mothers' are put back to work and programs such as workfares are touted as being a sound method of effecting change. The popularity of the recently elected Ontario provincial government attests to society's belief that welfare recipients are non-productive. One of the platforms of this government, while campaigning, was to institute 'workfare' for single mothers on social assistance.

It also reflects the strong belief that we hold, as a culture, on the nature of the self-reliant family. Rarely, from these pundits, is there an analysis of the economic conditions in society and the means by which to achieve economic ends. These discussions are amazingly short-sighted in their approach to society's ills although they reflect an historical tradition in our culture. Poverty is the result of one's personal failings and is not reflective of the social structure, as everyone knows that anyone can rise to another social class through a combination of hard work {but never breaking a sweat} and luck.

The final adaptive pattern available to people in conflict with the dominant ideology and social structure is labelled by Merton as 'rebellion'. Merton states "in our society, organized movements for rebellion apparently aim to introduce a social structure in which the

cultural standards of success would be sharply modified and provision would be made for a closer correspondence between merit, effort and reward" (p. 209). He further qualifies this by stating "it is typically members of a rising class rather than the most depressed strata who organize the resentful and the rebellious into a revolutionary group" (p. 211).

We can see that rebellion has been used in the past in order to have society's members believe that change was occurring for the poor. The 'wars on poverty' that were discussed and analyzed so thoroughly in the 1960s, 1970s and still espoused under different titles these days, are an excellent example of how rebellion efforts have been used. That there has been no 'winning' of these wars on poverty, can only be attributed to the fact that poverty must be a reflection of poor people's own unwillingness to alter their lives.

Rebellion is not an adaptive pattern that would be largely used by single mothers. However, single mothers may go from one adaptive form to another, as needs dictate and their circumstances change. The important factor to remember is the importance of the family in transmitting to its members the values of the culture and the means by which to achieve them. Within the family, men and women are socialized differently and these patterns come to be reflected in the roles of fatherhood and motherhood.

The roles and functions within nuclear families and single mother families are substantially different due to single mothers being unable to fulfill the proscription by society for self-reliance. Self-reliance ensures status and privilege. Single mother families are unfairly expected to fulfill the same criteria for success as the nuclear family however, are unable to do so because of low educational attainment, poverty and social isolation.

Summary on the nature and functions of the family

Single parent families and nuclear families differ in both nature and function. It is possible to trace how the nature of the family was

changed by the industrial revolution and how the nuclear family, represented traditionally by a man and a woman in a socially approved sexual relation, with children, came to be understood as the norm for our society.

This traditional family has been so pervasive that it has formed the basis for our legislation with respect to the family and a direct result of this has been the division of labor within both the private and public spheres of society, based on gender. In fact, it has privatized the family to such an extent that it has become the main nurturer and transmitter of culture to children. The family in our culture is an important social construct, narrowly defined and not seen as a force which changes according to political, social and economic needs.

The privatization of the family has forced social agencies to proceed cautiously when intervening with the traditional or nuclear family. The protective function of a family is one which buffers the family member from psychological and economic hardships. Because of the dichotomous function of the family, to be both a haven for its members and a source of physical discipline for its members, the protective function is sometimes not fulfilled within the family. This becomes an oxymoron - 'you have to be cruel, sometimes, to be kind'. Societal institutions have come to fulfill some of the protective functions of the family because of these conflicting roles within the family - nurturance and discipline. This is evidenced by institutions such as child protection agencies. Single mother families are unable to meet all the functions of the family particularly the economic and protective functions. Since single mothers are lacking in this protective ability, they are more vulnerable to child welfare interventions.

The economic function of the family is one which the single mother would most be unable to fulfill. The myth created in society is that anyone can rise from their social position and better themselves. Rather than being angered at an economic system which keeps them poor and unable

to meet set standards, single mothers are encouraged to internalize these difficulties and admonished to try harder. Poverty is considered to be a personal deficiency.

There are adaptive patterns which people can adopt in order to attempt to live within these cultural standards, according to Merton. They can conform, innovate, ritualize, retreat or rebel. The most common adaptations are conformity, innovation and ritualism. In conformity, people attempt to meet the standards regardless of whether the conditions for meeting the standards are present or not. Because of the pervasiveness of conformity, society is able to maintain its equilibrium. If conformity were not the norm, society would truly be disorganized.

In innovation, people attempt to meet the standards given to society although they lack the means to do so. The resulting confusion over the wish to attain the standards and the possibility of attainment can create deviant behavior. When legitimate means to reach the goals are limited, frustrated people then are blamed for their own delinquency from the societal norm. In ritualism, people, realizing that they cannot meet the goals as outlined will lower, permanently, their standards. In this way, they will also limit family members by admonishing them when they think above their station in life.

The role of the family in transmitting social structures must be emphasized. The family is of paramount importance in shaping the attitudes and conformity of its members to the prevalent ideologies and thus the continuation of cultural norms. It is considered the first and most powerful transmitter of culture. The social structure and family structure are intimately connected.

The labelling of single mother groups as deviant has allowed the dominant cultural norms to remain intact while pathologizing single mothers. This leaves the original economic structure of the culture intact. Deviant groups are critical in providing a standard against which normative groups are measured. The nature and functions of single parent

families and nuclear families clearly demonstrate that a relationship exists between social structure and family structure.

FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

Introduction

In order to fully comprehend family and social structure, parenting and, in particular, the roles of fathers and mothers must be examined. The role of the father is generally considered to be a peripheral role, secondary to that of the mother with a strong focus on economic provision. The emotional contribution of the father to the family's functioning is unknown and often considered ambiguous. The emotional work of the father in the family has not been researched. Based on the research, it is difficult to come up with a conclusive image of an ideal father. In contrast to the view of fatherhood, an image of motherhood has been clearly defined and idealized by selfless devotion to children. Motherhood is considered the epitome of being a woman and consequently, provides social status. This section explores psychological and sociological attitudes toward parenting and their impact on the roles of fathers and mothers.

Certain components combine to form the basis of parenthood. Levine (1974, 1988) proposed that across "cultural groups, there are common, general goals that parents share for their children. These basic goals are: (a) ensuring the child's health and survival; (b) teaching the child skills that will later provide economic security for the child, and (c) developing within the child traits that are consistent with "locally defined virtue" (as quoted in Okagaki & Johnson Divecha, 1993, p. 36).

Hoffman's (1988) theory suggests that general cultural values {i.e., the way a cultural group views children} will influence parents' attitudes toward and goals for their children. Hess (1980) and his colleagues hypothesized that these differences in general cultural values would be reflected in parental beliefs and children's behaviors. The research on cultural values and parental beliefs indicates that cultural context does influence the way parents think about children, their parenting goals and

values but, the studies were limited to maternal beliefs as opposed to a study on paternal beliefs.

Lamb & Goldberg (1982) felt that parental behavior, along with sexual behavior, surely rank as the two most important social activities in any species (p. 55). Accordingly, they argue that

the belief that women are innately more nurturant and better suited for childrearing than men are is supported by two kinds of evidence. First, women typically assume primary responsibility for child care; ergo, this is how men and women are "meant" to behave. Second, maternal behavior within most nonhuman species is presumed to be mediated by "female" hormones - estrogen, progesterone, and prolactin - and the same hormones are thought to dictate maternal behavior in humans. Both of these arguments are questionable. There is no reason to presume that social practices are innately determined simply because they are widespread, and there is little reason to believe a priori that homologous mechanisms exist in species as different from one another as *rattus* {the most-studied genus} and *homo sapiens*. There is, in any event, no scientific basis for the belief that behavior patterns are inviolable just because biological predispositions exist (p. 56).

Frodi, Lamb, Leavitt & Donovan (1978) and Frodi & Lamb, (1978) conducted studies on the physiological responses to infants on the part of mothers and fathers. Both studies reported no sex differences in responsiveness to infants although on self-reports, mothers reported more extreme emotions. One would wonder if this came as a response to feeling that they must self-report more interest in infants whether or not this is true. Berman, Abplanalp, Cooper, Mansfield & Shields (1975) found that men and women reported more attraction to babies when in same sex groups than in mixed sex groups and that public disclosure of ratings led women to express greater attraction, and men less attraction, toward infants (as reported in Lamb & Goldberg, 1982, p. 65).

Lamb & Goldberg (1982) state that the absence of innate differences in responsiveness to infants suggests that mothers and fathers are equivalently capable of assuming formatively significant roles in their infants' social development. Of course we know that in most species, men leave women to assume primary child care responsibilities. It appears, furthermore, that this pattern is unlikely to change much in the foreseeable future. Despite the publicity accorded to role-reversing families, their numbers are few and their circumstances unique. Closer inspection, furthermore, reveals that they usually involved reversed roles in the rearing of school-aged children. Infant care, even in these families, typically remains the province of mothers. The "modified traditional pattern" - to use Komarovsky's term - probably represents as great a deviation from traditional practices as we can expect to occur in the foreseeable future. Most of the male college students interviewed by Komarovsky (1976, 1979) endorsed such a pattern, which involves women pausing in the career trajectory in order to bear and rear children before returning to work (p. 66).

Fatherhood

Fatherhood has been viewed in a variety of ways. Freud saw fathers as playing an important part in the sex-role socializations of their children, especially of their sons. Wellson (1992) states "in a parallel way fathers play a more important role in boys' early years of development than in girls'. Indeed, from the very start men are provided with a rich and unique experience denied to women. As infants their first object-relationship is with the opposite sex. This early situation might enable them later on in life to develop a sense of familiarity and ease in their relationships with women. Certainly this does not mean that boys automatically have an easier life; it all depends on the quality of that early relationship with mother" (p. 45). Freud did not elucidate on how

fathers could care for their infants or their responsibility for the socialization of children other than through sex-role identification - the behavior of the adult child always reverted to the type of maternal care that had been provided. What of paternal care? What would happen with the fathers who were unable to teach their sons, specifically, the rites of male passage? This was not addressed.

Even with daughters, fathers are seen in a different light. Welldon (1992) says "the way a father responds to a daughter's difficulties with her incipient sexuality is important. If he is dismissive and inattentive, the adolescent girl will feel undermined and disparaged; if he is critical and denigrating, she will feel devastated. Such feelings can find expression in the typical adolescent rebelliousness, including a compulsive and indiscriminate 'sexual' search, in which the girls' aim is to win recognition of herself and her body. This behavior has a wide range of mental representations. The girl feels rejected first by mother and then by father" (p. 47).

Fathers are portrayed as either stern, rejecting or an impartial sort of judge who had limited influence in relation to all the roles mother fulfills in the family. This, in itself, limited early the psychological experience of fatherhood. Were fathers never worried about their role with their children, wishing to bond with their children, feel a shift in their hearts when a child was in pain or have an emotional investment in the welfare of their children? On these matters, Freud is deafeningly silent. And it is no wonder as his basic premise is on the biological functions of the species as it is reflected in the sexual drive and its functions.

The neo-Freudians such as Karen Horney, disagreed with the emphasis that Freud placed on sex and modified a number of the concepts and formulations originally put forth by Freud. They posit that if sex is not central, then neither are the stages of psychosexual development. They stressed a developmental sequence but de-emphasized the sexual aspects.

Most neo-Freudians challenge the universality of the Oedipus complex, preferring to limit it to parent-child relations in very specific kinds of families, for example, the family dominated by an authoritarian, or "Victorian" father.

Vondra & Belsky (1993) demonstrate that data linking psychological factors with parenting encompass both the normal and clinical range. There is a lack of consistency across studies, however, about specific aspects of personality or even specific psychological disorders associated with individual differences in parenting. It is at the broader level of psychological maturity, integration, and adjustment, which begin to resemble such clinical concepts as the *self* (Kohut, 1971, 1977) and *self-differentiation* (Bower, 1978), that results converge in finding predictable individual differences. Among fathers, personality integration, emotional stability, and the absence of anxiety or depression characterize those individuals who are more likely to demonstrate physical and emotional involvement in child care (Heath, 1976). Archival data, furthermore, indicate that irritability/explosiveness and hostility are associated with arbitrary discipline of children by fathers (Elder, Liker & Cross, 1984) (pp. 3-6).

They demonstrate that most of the research conducted on parenting has excluded men and their behaviors. It is possible to see how fathers became peripheral to the functioning of the family when we examine the family through an historical lens, provided by the industrial revolution. Prior to this, when the cottage industry was the base of economic production, fathers and mothers worked together to raise children, as part of the economic production of the family. The industrial revolution changed that and emphasized the division of labor according to gender.

Margolis (1993) states that "not until the nineteenth century, for example, did a child's development and well-being come to be viewed as the major, if not the sole responsibility of his or her mother, who was then

urged to devote herself full-time to her parental duties. In contrast, during the eighteenth century child rearing was neither a discrete nor an exclusively female task. There was little emphasis on motherhood *per se* and both parents were simply advised to "raise up" their children together" (p. 121).

Margolis goes on to state that "during colonial times when men, women, and children all worked together in or near the household, there were no firm distinctions in parental responsibilities. A distinct maternal role would have been incompatible with the realities of life during colonial times. It was the duty of both parents to rear their children, and fathers were thought to be especially important to a proper religious education. But when a man's work began to take him away from the home for most of the day - an arrangement that began with the onset of industrialization nearly 200 years ago - child-rearing responsibilities fell heavily on the mother" (p. 121).

Badinter (1980) also reflects on the diminishment of the father's role beginning in the eighteenth century. She states that first, women were placed into the home and the role of motherhood was acclaimed as an honorable one. Next, the father was placed away from the home and the state began to function in his role as head of the family. She states

Since the mother and the state had usurped, each in their own way, the essentials of the father's role, one may wonder what part remained to be played by the father. His qualities as a father were measured more by his ability to support his family than by any other criterion. This image of the good father as provider of the family's comfort has survived until the present. The more he kills himself at the job, taking care to bring his paycheck home, the more value is recognized. The children and the home are for him only an indirect concern. Once he hands over what is needed to make the little factory run, he can peacefully put on his slippers and wait for dinner to be served. For decades this father was left alone in

peace, sure of having met his obligations. And how could he not have been satisfied, since all that was asked of him was to be a good worker and return home like a good boy every evening? At most he was expected to raise his voice at his child's show of temper or to congratulate the studious pupil (p. 258).

Margaret Mead in a 1928 publication concluded that it was the socialization of human development that shaped its form, rather than any biologically determined universals. She argued that people could not be studied in a vacuum and that the context of community needed to be included in any theory on human behavior for either men or women. It is the culture, than, which sets the social norm, she argued. In this way, men within this culture have been socialized to be passive in their roles as fathers within families - passive in terms of not interfering in the mothering functions or attempting to be part of them.

Sociologists have examined gender roles in terms of their functions as well as their structure in society. Socialization of children consists of introducing them to these rules or norms of behavior, the social expectations by which they can make sense of how others act toward them and how they should, in turn, behave. The extent to which women and men conform, even partially, to the stereotypes of gender-appropriate behavior depends in part upon their successful socialization, the degree to which they have internalized the cultural pressures to conform.

Rubin (1975) states "gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality. Kinship systems rest upon marriage. They therefore transform males and females into "men" and "women", each an incomplete half which can only find wholeness when united with the other. Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression: in men, of whatever is the local version of "feminine" traits; in women, of the local definitions of "masculine" traits. The division of the sexes has the effect of repressing

some of the personality characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women" (p. 177).

Morgan (1990) in "Issues in critical sociological theory: Men in families" states that

family theory has pointed in two rather contradictory directions regarding men in families. One kind of tradition saw a built-in marginality of men, especially fathers, within the family. Fatherhood, it was argued, was doubly a social institution. In the first place, it was a social institution in more or less exactly the same ways as other family roles were social institutions, that is, a patterned structure of rights, duties, and expectations defining the activities of incumbents. In the second place, it was a social institution in that there was an instability or uncertainty in the actual nature of biological fatherhood and hence, the identity of "genitor" was as much a social convention as the identity of "pater." However, a traditional nexus of values that linked themes of paternity, poverty, family identity, and gender identity became weakened with the development of an industrial and urban society, especially with the separation of work {as paid employment} and home. Hence, in a variety of cumulating ways, fatherhood could be seen as an increasingly marginal identity within the family (pp. 67-8).

Losh-Hesselbart (1987) notes the scarcity of research dealing with the male role, especially in relation to the family. The functionalist tradition, she feels, especially that part of it identified by Parsons, appeared to give more positive recognition to the role of men in the family. Morgan (1990) agrees and states "the analysis {in reference to Parsons}, in terms of expressive and instrumental roles and the focus on the systematic involvement of both parents in the socialization process saw the position of fathers in families as different but equally central. Perhaps one of the paradoxes of the critique of functionalism, in the

1970s and 1980s, especially that part of the critique that came from the feminist movement, is that it "feminized" the family, necessarily focusing attention on the problems of mothers and wives within the household but, again, indirectly marginalizing the positions of men" (p. 66). Nevertheless, Parsons felt that the 'emotional' function of the woman in marriage and the 'instrumental' function of men in marriage made their roles complementary to one another.

Morgan further feels that in developing a discussion on some of the theoretical issues involved in the study of men in families, there are three major considerations. He states

There is a need to be aware of the whole range of statuses and positions that men may have in families. Much of the discussion tends to focus on fathers and fatherhood. However, even the identity of "father" may contain a variety of themes and issues. But there are a variety of other identities that men may have in families such as husbands, grandfathers, brothers, sons and uncles. We also need to be aware of the range of meanings and understandings attached to the word *family*. There may indeed, as Bernades has forcefully argued, be real dangers in the continual use of the word *family* (Bernades, 1985, 1987, 1988), dangers of confusing ideology with reality; of reification; and of unduly prioritizing an institution at the expense of other issues and considerations. At the very least we need to be clear about the distinctions between *household* and *family* and the more complex differentiations between family and kinship. It is important not to confine the analysis to the "family", however this term might be conceived. One of the difficulties of the recent collections on men in families (e.g., Lewis & Salt, 1986) and on fatherhood is the rather artificial focus on domestic relations. It is as if, in the desire to break away from stereotypes of the "male breadwinner", they have played down considerations of work, employment, and the public sphere to give a

somewhat skewed model of men in families (p. 70).

Morgan states that there has been an exclusion of men as agents of change within the family from the discussions of sociological thought. While women in families have been studied in relation to motherhood, history, economics, religion, and other environmental factors, men have not been studied as rigorously.

Badinter (1980) would concur with Morgan, as she states

In all fairness it must be admitted that the man was stripped of his fatherhood. In granting him {and him alone} an economic role only, society was gradually removing him, literally and figuratively, from his child. Physically absent the whole day, tired out in the evenings, the father did not have any great opportunity to develop a relationship with the child. All the evidence would indicate, however, that this privation in a society run by men was greeted with more than a little complacency on their part; they seemed to have been willing victims. What father would have wanted, after all, to change places with the mother? What man would have dared to question the family division of labor and the acquired distinction between paternal and maternal roles? Perhaps, in the end, during the tens of generations that succeeded one another, a few fathers secretly suffered from the arrangement (p. 258).

Recent research has focused on how men feel about their roles as fathers and this is a beginning into some thought on fathers. Morgan agrees that most of the research directed at changing men's roles in families has been pursued by the feminists or as a rebuttal of feminist theorists. But, he also states that there is, in some recent writings on men in families a romanticization, of sorts, of the roles of fathers rather than a determination of flesh and blood men.

Morgan states "perhaps part of the problem is that we seem to have very little systematic knowledge of what men do in families and households. We know, or we think we know, about their functions in

relation to households, and we seem to know an increasing amount about how men feel about some aspects of family life, especially about being married and being a father. But while we know much about the details of mothering and housework as it is identified with women, the picture still tends to become a little blurred when it comes to men. What, for example, is the nature of men's "emotional work" within the family setting? Is it the same as women's emotional work or does it have its own special features? For the time being, we may have to rely upon imaginative autobiographical accounts (Harrison, 1985)" (pp. 74-5).

Morgan analyzes current sociological thought on men in families and comes to the conclusion that "over a wide spectrum there would seem to be much to gain from relatively little change and for those who might welcome or desire change, the practical realities might be costly. It would be wrong to be overoptimistic about shifts in the gender order. As we have seen, the family and domestic life have been more resistant to changes in gender relations than many areas of employment and the public sphere. The evidence of domestic violence should warn us against an easy optimism, although even here it could be argued that some men, at least, are coming to question their involvement in violence and that the whole issue of domestic violence has been put on the agenda as a result of feminist pressure. However, it would still seem important that sociological theory should begin to explore, more systematically, those sources of change and renegotiation within the gender role" (p. 103).

It would be worth pursuing in research whether men are well served by being excluded from maternal pleasures. Most research about fathers in psychological and sociological thought, other than seeing the role of father as 'dominant' or peripheral to the maternal function, have not looked at men as primary nurturers of children nor what characteristics are helpful or harmful to men in that role. A mother is studied as it relates to her role of wife, mother and her role in child development and care. A father is studied as it relates to his role as husband and father

but at the exclusion of his role in child development and care. And yet, both are parents of children and have a function in children's lives. Some men are beginning to feel this exclusion and pursuing research on paternal characteristics that lead to health or pathology in children. Their participation is not only long overdue, it is highly welcomed.

Fathers are considered to be primarily economic providers peripheral to the role of the mother in the family. Due to his role as provider of the family's economic standard, men gain status as the head of the household and consequently, societal respect. It is obvious that the father is not expected to play a nurturing role within the family and will remain peripheral to the emotional work done by the mother. This is in sharp contrast to the role of the mother.

Motherhood

Motherhood has been touted as the greatest profession to which a woman can aspire. It is a societal assumption that when a girl grows up, she will become a mother. It is expected that a woman's definition of self is derived from her role as mother. In order to understand this view of motherhood, societal attitudes, political and economic theories, and the notion of romantic love must be examined.

In her 1980 Book, The Myth of Motherhood, Badinter looks at the historical development of the notion of motherhood. She states that, the notion of motherhood as an ideal state for women, is an invention she traces to Western Europe in the late seventeenth century. It had been prevalent in other times in other places but, was not formally a large part of life for women in Western Europe until the latter half of the seventeenth century.

It was romanticized, touted as selfless and driven into women's heads with propaganda until by the late nineteenth century, the picture of a woman's devotion to her children, at the expense of herself, was seen as 'natural' for women. This idealization of motherhood also allowed society to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' women, based on the fulfillment

of a biological imperative. Women who refused the prevailing ideology were seen as deviant from the norm.

In the early half of the seventeenth century, children were seen as economic assets for parents, and in particular, for mothers, who, denied their own source of income, in the event of death of the father and provider, would need to be cared for by her eldest son. Therefore, the position, in the family, of the eldest son was carefully guarded and he was treated much better than his siblings, who were often not even kept in the bosom of the family. The practice was to send the other children to wet nurses in the country where they would be raised until such time as the biological parents felt that the child was prepared to return to the family. Needless to say, some children were never returned and many children died.

Badinter (1980) states "these mothers cannot be glossed over in the history of motherhood. They are not its most glorious representatives, but they serve to reveal a harsh picture that cannot be ignored. This is certainly not the only picture, but it is one that must be accorded equal weight with the others. But all of this is not sufficient to explain this type of behavior {mother's differential behavior in regards to children}. We must not forget the warnings of the theologians of the sixteenth century, who reproached mothers for their blameworthy affection for their children. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, the entire intelligentsia would reproach them for the opposite reason and criticize their harshness" (p. 67).

She claims that childhood, as a status on its own, was not important in early history and that, not until the role of mother as exclusive servant to the child's needs was touted, did the notion of childhood come to the forefront. All of this had a further expression in the industrial revolution and subsequent child labor laws. Badinter posits "oddly enough, it was at the very time when this new appreciation of childhood emerged that women stepped away from the duties of motherhood. The facts are

contradictory only if we try to restrict the definition of woman to her role as mother" (p. 72).

Badinter states that "to understand the rejection of motherhood, {in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries} we must remember that at this period the mother's work received no attention and was not valued by society. At best, it was considered normal; at worst, vulgar. Women gained no credit for being mothers, and that was their main function. They understood that to have the right to some esteem, they had to choose a path other than motherhood" (p. 73).

Badinter, of course, is speaking only of those women who had the economic means to choose such a path. Women who were poor had no choice in terms of motherhood. They would have been ridiculed for aspiring to the same dreams as their affluent sisters. Many poor women harbored them, nonetheless, which is in keeping with our earlier analysis from the perspective of Merton.

Even this choice {of choosing a path other than motherhood} was amazingly difficult, as women were often not educated or their education was so lacking in essentials as to make it worthless. The goal was "always the same: to turn the girls into religious wives, good seamstresses, and efficient mistresses of their homes" (Badinter, 1980, p. 82). Badinter further states that, when looking at the history of motherhood, the twentieth century is shocked by the lack of caring for children by mothers. She states "closer to the truth, there was no doubt, a complicity between father and mother, husband and wife, to adopt the forms of behavior that prevailed. Simply stated, we are less shocked by the male's behavior because no one has ever, even up to the present date, claimed that a father's love constitutes a universal law of nature. It became necessary, at the end of the eighteenth century, to enlist many arguments to urge mothers back to their "instinctive" activities - appealing to their sense of duty, making them feel guilty, and even threatening them in order to convince them to resume their so-called natural and spontaneous

functions of mother and nurse" (p. 114)

Badinter (1980) says

It was in the last third of the eighteenth century that a radical change in thinking took place. The image of the mother, of her role, and of her significance changed radically, although actual behavior lagged behind. After 1760 publications abounded advising mothers to take care of their children personally and "ordering" them to breast-feed. They created an atmosphere of obligation in which women were told to be mothers first and foremost, engendering a myth that is still tenaciously supported two hundred years later: maternal instinct, or the spontaneous love of all mothers for their children. At the end of the eighteenth century the idea of mother love resurged with the force and appeal of a brand-new concept. What was new, by comparison with the two preceding centuries, was the elevation of the idea of mother love to a natural and social good, favorable to the species and to society. Equally new was the association of the two words "love" and "mother", which indicated the increased significance not only of the feeling itself but also of the woman considered as mother. The ideological spotlight, shifting in a barely detectable manner from authority to love, shone increasingly on the mother, to the detriment of the father, who gradually retired to the sidelines. The most important thing was no longer the second period of childhood {after weaning} but the very first stage of life - habitually a time of parental neglect, characterized by the highest mortality rate. To effect this rescue, mothers had to be convinced to harness themselves to formerly neglected duties (pp. 117-8).

Feminine nature became defined as synonymous with all the characteristics of an ideal mother, as further promoted by Rousseau and then, in a strikingly similar argument, by Freud. Badinter (1980) states "although a hundred and fifty years separated them in time {Rousseau and

Freud}, they both emphasized the sense of devotion and sacrifice that characterized, in their view, the 'normal' woman. Trapped in this definition by authoritative sources, how could women escape from what was agreed to be their nature? Either they could stick to the prescribed model as closely as possible, or they could try to stand apart from it, in which case there was hell to pay. Accused of selfishness, of spitefulness, of being unbalanced, the woman who challenged the dominant ideology could only try to learn to accept, to one degree or another, her "abnormality." And abnormality, like any difference from the norm, is hard to live with. So women submitted silently, some pacified and calm, others frustrated and unhappy" (pp. 206-7).

Margolis (1993) states that "the cult of motherhood is usually associated with the middle and late nineteenth century, but we can see its roots in the prescriptive literature of the very late eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. It is significant that these years also witnessed the beginnings of the industrial revolution. Both the gradual redefinition of women's role and the redefinition of childhood were linked to larger societal changes affecting middle-class life" (pp. 124-5).

Bates et al., (1983) state "in the eighteenth century, art began to portray the "happy mother" in scenes of domestic bliss. This theme coincided with the beginnings of modern bourgeois culture, with its emphasis on the warm and happy home in contrast to the harsh workplace" (p. 316).

A French philosopher and social reformer in the eighteenth century, Rousseau had much to say about the role of women as mothers in society. Rousseau asserted "the true mother, far from being a woman of the world is as much a recluse in her home as the nun in her cloister. She will do this because she will want to, not out of moral obligation (Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 697, as quoted in Badinter, 1980, p. 213).

"One hundred and fifty years before Freud, Rousseau defined the

masochistic component as specifically female. Indeed, motherhood, as it was conceived in the nineteenth century, in close harmony with Rousseau, was understood as a holy office, a happy experience that necessarily brought with it pain and suffering, a literal sacrifice of oneself on the altar of devotion. If this aspect of motherhood was emphasized, with a certain self-satisfaction, the aim was always to show that women's nature was perfectly adapted to the role of mother" (Badinter, 1980, pp. 213-5).

So, along with other educated men of the time, Rousseau's ideas became the norm for women: a woman can never be a mother and anything else at the same time. Motherhood is a full time profession.

Badinter (1980) states

This profound change in thinking had two consequences. It allowed a large number of women to experience their motherhood as a source of joy and pride and to find fulfillment in a universally honored and acknowledged activity. Not only did women have a set role, but each and every woman was irreplaceable. In this way, motherhood allowed women to exteriorize an essential aspect of their personality and beyond that to enjoy a respect that mothers had previously never known. On the other hand, such definitive and authoritarian statements on the maternal condition created in the minds of other women a kind of uncommon anxiety. The ideological pressure was such that they felt obligated to be mothers regardless of their true feelings. Experiencing motherhood under a cloud of guilt and frustration, they perhaps did their best to imitate the good mother but, not finding it in their own satisfaction, may have ruined their lives and those of their children. Herein may lie the most common origin of the mutual unhappiness and later, neuroses of many children and their mothers. But nineteenth-century thinkers, too much the victims of their assumptions, did not concern themselves with these considerations. Twentieth-century thinkers have hardly been more perceptive (p. 221).

Some twentieth-century thinkers who have been influential in the assessment of the function of mothering will be examined now. We will begin with Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic perspective assumes that we are all born with an instinctual drive, known as the id. We acquire an ego which acts as a rational control mechanism and a superego, which is our conscience as we grow and develop as human beings.

As we grow, we learn the things in life that we can and cannot do; the why and the when of these life experiences. All of this learning is subjective. We interpret personally the rewards and punishments of our life experiences, and this guides us to behave in certain ways in similar situations. Because we begin our learning at birth, it is our early childhood experience that determines much of the context of our conscious thoughts throughout our lives. Because much of our learning occurs in an unconscious way, elements are inferred from behavior and memories. Freud believed that neurotic patients manifest problems that we all have but in a much more pronounced fashion. Freud also had much to say about motherhood and mothers in general although he refused to give advice on the raising of children.

Badinter (1980) states

whether it was intentional or not, psychoanalysis has for many years intimated that an emotionally unhappy child is the son or daughter of a bad mother, although the term 'bad' in this context does not carry a moral connotation. Indeed, for a mother to be the "good mother" of psychoanalytic studies, her own childhood would have to have been characterized by a satisfactory sexual and psychological development with a mother who was herself relatively stable. But if that woman was raised by a disturbed mother, chances are good that her own feminine and maternal roles will be fraught with difficulty. Psychoanalysis has therefore not only increased the significance accorded to the mother but has also "medicalized" the problem of the

bad mother, without, however, having succeeded in quashing the moralizing attitude inherited from the preceding century. It has not been able to convince people of the distinction between psychic sickness and moral evil (p. 261).

What were the necessary conditions for a girl to develop into a stable woman and hence into a good mother? According to Freud, there are two major periods during which the girl is transformed into a woman. The successful completion of these stages would allow the girl to develop into a normal woman, and a good mother. The first stage is common to both girls and boys and it falls under the theme of bisexuality. Badinter states "beginning with the anatomical evidence that certain parts of the male sexual apparatus were also found in the female, and vice versa, Freud came to the conclusion that a dual sexuality {bisexuality} existed. He also described the existence of a psychic bisexuality to explain the fact that a certain feminine component {passivity} was found in the male and a masculine component {activity} in the female" (p. 263).

In advancing through the psychosexual stages, a girls' progress is more fraught with difficulties than that of a boy. In the pre-oedipal stages, she feels the conflicting emotions of affection for and hostility toward her mother, who can never give her what she needs. The father is not much of a player at this stage. The girl identifies with her mother at this stage and discovers her 'castration.' After the discovery of castration, in the second stage of change, the normal little girl will undergo a threefold psychological and sexual change. She will be hostile to the mother; she will abandon the clitoris, in favor of the penis and in the hopes that her father will give her a penis, she will attach closely to him. The girls' distancing from her mother and attachment to her father provide an important step in her development toward adulthood. By realigning her attachment, she is not passive and ready to change her love object from mother to father to men. In the adult stage of development, the longing for a penis is replaced with the desire to have a child.

Badinter (1980) states

In 1931, Freud drew the following conclusion, with tragic consequences for women: "The fact that women must be regarded as having little sense of justice is no doubt related to the predominance of envy in their psychological makeup...We also regard women as having fewer social interests than men and a reduced capacity for sublimating their instinct...I cannot help mentioning an impression constantly received through analytic practice. A woman of the age {of about thirty} often frightens us by her psychic rigidity and unchangeability...There are no paths open to further development; it is as though...the difficult development to femininity has exhausted the possibilities of the person concerned." One could not express more clearly the curse placed on the female sex: The woman exhausts herself in realizing her femininity...so that there is no energy left for future creativity (p. 268).

Where Freud left off, his disciple, Helene Deutsch continued. Deutsch defined a normal woman by three essential characteristics: passivity, masochism and narcissism. Passivity is related to the female sexual instincts. Masochism is repressed aggressiveness, that is turned to one's own ego and will be transformed into a need to be loved. The element of narcissism has a twofold function. One, it serves as compensation for the humiliation of genital inferiority and two, it limits those masochistic tendencies that may threaten a woman's ego. Deutsch found that the first condition for successful mothering lies in the mother's capacity to adapt to the needs of the infant with delicacy and sensitivity, and at the exclusion of any other interest.

Badinter (1980) states "we know that Freud on several occasions refused to give advice to parents, arguing that all forms of child-rearing met with failure. In the postwar period a number of his disciples forgot the warning and moved from the descriptive to the normative. Psychoanalysts have acquired fame and fortune by sketching the portrait of

the good mother and by giving advice to women through the mass media or in books written specially for them {for example, Drs. Spock, Dolto [on the France inter-radio network] and Winnicott [over the BBC]}. The success of these first polarizations of psychoanalytic theory was and is sufficient proof of the confusion felt by mothers and their belief in an ideal - contradictions of the idea that maternal behavior is instinctive. The mother's every move was subject to corrective prescriptions" (p. 274).

Dinnerstein (1977), a psychoanalytic feminist, saw heterosexual relationships as shaped in infancy. Not only did she feel that women were biologically suited to motherhood but, she felt that women monopolized childrearing and this critical factor led men to hold images of their mothers as powerful, domineering but also infantile. Being introduced to men at a later age the boy constructs a masculine identity for himself and in adulthood, feels the need to control the threatening fantasy figure of his mother from childhood. Therefore, in his adult relationships he will seek to dominate women and exclude them from the areas of life outside the family. The woman agrees to this because her own identity formation has led her to become the mother who nurtures, applauds and holds the devotion of the man.

Chodorow (1978) also saw women as monopolizing childrearing. She wondered why women continued to do the mothering when contraception was so readily available and men can mother as well as women. Her answer was that, as children, mothers treat girls and boys differently. Boys are encouraged to see themselves as independent and encouraged to seek outside experiences. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to be seen to be at one with the mother and their period of close attachment will be prolonged. As a result "growing girls come to define and experience themselves as continuous with others; their experience of self contains more flexible and permeable ego boundaries. Boys come to define themselves as more separate and distinct, with a greater sense of rigid ego boundaries and differentiation. The basic feminine sense of self is

connected to the world, the basic masculine sense of self as separate" (p. 169). A woman's sense of definition comes from relationships and therefore, motherhood allows her to recapture the intense experience from childhood. This would continue from one generation to the next.

In a critique of the psychoanalytic discourses, Fineman (1995) states "the psychoanalytic discourses all are based on a family that is self-contained, nuclear in form. The psychic drama takes place in this triangular unit and each player has his or her role. The drama is drawn in terms of the child's experience. Mother as obstacle is taken for granted, and it is the search of the child for identification with father that is the center of the story. As that which is left behind, Mother is constituted as a derivative form of masculinity, in the psychoanalytic paradigm - she does not see, she is seen; she does not write, she is written" (p. 15).

After years of consistently attempting to apply Freud's theories to her patients, Karen Horney publicly articulated her points of disagreement with Freud. Horney rejects Freud's insistence on the centrality of the sexual drive in determining personality. She states "when we relinquish this one-sided emphasis on genesis, we recognize that the connection between later peculiarities and earlier experiences is more complicated than Freud assumes; there is no such thing as an isolated repetition of isolated experiences; but the entirety of infantile experiences combines to form a certain character structure..." (p. 324).

For Horney, the character structure which determines human personality is not the inevitable outcome of instinctual impulses, modified to the environment but the activity of the ego in response to all experiences. Horney (1937) states "in reviewing these trends, it is obvious that they are characteristics of neurotic men as well as neurotic women. Tendencies toward dictatorial power, toward egocentric ambition, toward envying and berating others are never-failing elements in present-day neuroses through the role they assume in a neurotic structure varies.

Furthermore, observation of neurotic women shows that all the trends in question appear toward other women or toward children as well as toward men. It appears dogmatic to assume that their expression in relation to others is merely a radiation from their relation to men" (p. 328).

In Horney's opinion, one had to look not only for biological reasons for differences but also to cultural ones. The question then becomes whether there are cultural factors which are instrumental in developing fundamental attitudes towards life. Horney states "But since he has a primarily biological orientation Freud does not, and on the basis of his premises cannot, see the whole significance of these factors {cultural factors}. He cannot see to what extent they mold wishes and attitudes, nor can he evaluate the complexity of interrelations between cultural conditions and feminine psychology. There are no biological reasons but there are significant cultural factors which lead women to over evaluate love and thus to dread losing it" (p. 335). Horney's theory of the overevaluation of love, which she observed in both neurotic and normal women of her time might have been a consequence of women's economic and social dependency, which limited their direct access to security and prestige. In this way, Horney surmised that women would need to feel esteem through the construct of love.

Horney's theory makes sense when we look at the socialization of women for the roles of motherhood and marriage. It is the norm in our society that women and men come together in marriage for reasons of love first and foremost. That the love in marriage is sometimes enhanced by economic considerations is not vocalized. The norm for women is: someday my prince will come and love will conquer all. In this way, women aspire to social status through marriage and are led to believe that their prestige can be affected by the choice of a marriage partner. A more realistic analysis would show that social class limits the choices of partners and hence, one's love interests. Nonetheless, the ideal is still held to be true for women.

In a 1951 publication for the World Health Organization entitled Maternal Care and Mental Health John Bowlby states

the quality of the parental care which a child receives in his earliest years is of vital importance for his future mental health. What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother {or permanent mother-substitute}. A state of affairs in which the child does not have this relationship is termed 'maternal deprivation.' Thus, a child is deprived even though living at home if his mother {or permanent substitute-mother} is unable to give him the loving care that small children need. Again, a child is deprived if for any reason he is removed from his mother's care. This deprivation will bring in its train acute anxiety, excessive need for love, powerful feelings of revenge, and, arising from these last, guilt and depression ...deprived children are often sick and many are born of unstable or defective parents. Family relationships while they last leave much to be desired and the home is commonly broken, because of destitution, neglect, or death. Many of the children are illegitimate and unwanted (pp. 11-12).

Bowlby created a standard for motherhood which lingers in the lives of women today. The standard is: what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and the young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother {or mother-substitute}, in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment (Bowlby, 1951, p. 67).

Bowlby qualified this statement further by asserting: "such enjoyment and close identification of feeling is only possible for either party if the relationship is continuous. Much emphasis has already been laid on the necessity of continuity for the growth of the child's personality. It should be remembered that continuity is necessary for the

growth of a mother. Just as the baby needs to feel that he belongs to his mother, the mother needs to feel that she belongs to the child and it is only when she has the satisfaction of this feeling that it is easy for her to devote herself to him. The provision of constant attention day and night seven days a week and 365 in the year, is possible only for a woman who derives profound satisfaction from seeing her child grow from babyhood, through the many phases of childhood, to become an independent man or woman, and knows that it is her care which has made this possible" (p. 68).

The implicit threat is that a woman who does not "derive profound satisfaction" from being a slave to her child will be risking the mental health of that child, dooming him to a form of 'maternal deprivation' and a life fraught with its consequences. It also assumes that a woman has no other function than to care for her child.

Sluckin, Herbert & Sluckin (1983) in quoting Bowlby state John Bowlby whose views have been so influential in the areas of attachment theory and maternal deprivation, emphasizes that the baby's signals of {*intra alia*} distress, elicit the mother's comforting response. The crying and maternal response are thought to have a biological function; they serve as constituents of a system of behavior binding child and mother closely together. Bowlby stresses the way in which the behavior that attaches mother and child resembles that of intra-human primates; he points to the survival value of systems that ensure close proximity and contact between infant and mother during the long period of immaturity of all the apes, and indeed, humans. Bowlby sees the young baby's crying as one of the five *in-built* signals, (crying, smiling, sucking, following and clinging) which, given the appropriate reaction of the mother, ensure physical closeness. His notion of the sensitive mother assumes a neat fit between the needs of the baby and the performance of the mother. Not only is the baby's behavior

'built-in', but the mother is seen as genetically programmed to respond to the signals. She is 'biologically attuned' as a member of her species to them. This maternal sensitivity is thought to be critical for the development of stable and happy relationships (p. 32).

Bowlby's theory has been used as justification for the condemning of women who seem incapable of meeting this 'ideal.' No human being can possibly fulfill all the expectations as set out by Bowlby's theories. Yet, the concepts of maternal bonding and maternal attachment are so strong in our culture, that social workers in child welfare look for it in maternal interactions with children. Social workers and public health nurses watch mothers' interactions with their infants in neo-natal assessments to determine whether the bond is present.

What is this elusive bond, without which a child will be maternally deprived? Sluckin, Herbert & Sluckin (1983) state

the cultural stereotype of motherhood is something natural and instinctive. The concept of maternal bonding has the somewhat mystical overtones of maternal instinct and blood bond. One might argue that this is also apparent in what looks like an attempt to extend the symbiotic relationship of mother and offspring inherent in intra-uterine life, by prescribing a physical and psychological closeness between them for a substantial period of time after severing the umbilical cord. Perhaps an archetype relationship like that between mother and child, and the kind of "bonding contract" between them is capable of lasting a lifetime, requires an explanatory theory {or metaphor} that matches it in dramatic impact. Add to these specifications the scientific respectability of the claim that maternal bonding is an imprinting-like phenomenon, and we have a concept that is well-nigh irresistible (p. 22).

Sluckin, Herbert & Sluckin (1983) state that what we consider outward signs of maternal bonding such as facial gestures, touching and

responding to infants are not attributable only to mothers but also to strangers. They state "our assumptions about what constitutes the outward and visible signs of 'good maternal attachment' is likely to bias what we see and select from a mass of observations. The problem of specification of maternal bonding is like the proverbial elephant: difficult to define, but we like to think that we know one when we see one" (p. 27).

Ross (1995) critiques a book called Mother-Infant Bonding and she states "Diana Eyer's well-known *Mother-Infant Bonding* is a critique of a concept that has had remarkable influence on neonatal care in the United States and of the concept of attachment on which it is based. Both, Eyer's shows, are posited on several wrong assumptions: the rigid pairing of mother and baby into a closed dyad; an image of babies as "putty in our hands" rather than as complex and wildly different beings; a refusal to acknowledge the significance of siblings, friends, teachers, communities, and material circumstances to a child's emotional life. Both concepts - bonding and attachment - are based on little credible evidence, Eyer's shows, but have been slow to die" (p. 408).

When we examine the economic conditions of his day and the historical defining of certain roles according to gender, it is no surprise that Bowlby's theories on maternal-infant bonding and attachment came after the Second World War when the factories needed to have women return to the home in order for jobs to go to men. Once again, economics played a role in the idealization of motherhood.

Bowlby's theories might be less criticized if they were not so gender biased in nature, confining women to the home and placing the blame for any mental health disorders on the mother's shoulders. It does not delve into the child's relationships with other family members or the role of the extended family in a child's development. It does not look at the role of community in the determination of a child's mental health. It completely denies that women might feel ambivalent about their role as mothers. In fact, it completely denies that the mother has a purpose in

life, other than to care for her child. This reduces the mother to the level of non human and fails to account for the socialization factors which led her to motherhood. A woman will do what she does for love.

One of the messages touted to girls as they mature is the idea of romantic love. It is believed that women and men will go to great lengths for love. Love is a prevalent theme in our culture. We believe it forms the basis of successful marriages and long-term relationships. Men and women love one another. Mothers love their children more than anyone else can. We have built a culture on the notion of romantic love. From Anglo-Saxon tradition comes the notion that men and women come together and produce children, from a basis of mutual love, as evidenced earlier by Macfarlane. It forms part of our socialization process. And the literature is replete with examples of how women are socialized to aspire to motherhood and marriage and how they have, as their basis, love. Levine (1989) spoke of the importance of the notion of romantic love for women. Love is seen as a panacea for all ills.

This particular theme is obvious in the socialization of females for their subsequent adult roles. Phoenix, Wollett & Lloyd (1991) state "feminist, sociological and social psychological theories tend to be more concerned with social constructions of motherhood, the functions motherhood serves for society and its impact on women's social position. They argue that the desire to be a mother is not so much a part of women's 'natural' biological inheritance but is learned, along with the skills of motherhood, as women grow up. Women learn that being a mother is a normal and proper part of being adult for women and that, it is so for those in heterosexual relationships, even though becoming a mother may trigger developmental crises" (p. 41).

Pregnancy is seen as a rite of passage for women. It is a symbol of a woman's status, whether or not it is expressed precisely in these terms. When women have a child, they automatically join the sisterhood of 'mothers' and this brings them into a new realm, where the status is

inclusive: if all else fails, we are still mothers. Lott (1981) states "ideas such as these {women wanting to bear children as a biological function} mesh extraordinarily well with the teachings of most religions, with the dominant views that flourished in our most recent historical past, with what our parents and friends have taught us, with what we read and what we observe. So, we continue to want to have babies, primarily because we are convinced, almost as much now as previously, that pregnancy more than marriage certifies that one is a guaranteed genuine woman " (p. 208).

Jessie Bernard (1974) said "none of these motives, however, are simply "natural" to women. We have learned them all. We must acquire these goals and continue to be reinforced for pursuing them. Our society has done a first-rate job of providing the appropriate institutional pressures and the necessary conditions for learning that a woman *should* want to have a child. We socialize girls so effectively as children that we hardly need to apply outside pressures when they grow up" (p. 209, as quoted in Lott, 1981). Millett (1985) also argued that socialization of girls for motherhood was fundamental in our culture.

So first rate is the job of socialization of women for motherhood that in a 1980 study of junior high girls, Gustavus Philliber stated

These data leave little doubt that much socialization for parenthood occurs well before the onset of childbearing. By the time a young woman is at risk of pregnancy, she apparently has notions about the value of children, preferences for appropriate family size, and preferences for sex of offspring. In fact, societal values on some of these dimensions are apparently so strong that even when mothers of young people hold contrary ideas, the societal values appear to dominate (p. 42).

As we know, socialization is the process by which a human being, beginning at infancy, acquires the habits, beliefs and accumulated knowledge of his society through education and training for adult status.

We acquire a sense of self through the attainment of status, role and identity. The strongest transmitter of cultural traditions is the family. Motherhood has a distinct place in the family. It is seen as the heart of the family that is based on love. Motherhood allows women to turn to the baby as a source of identity. This translates into instant adulthood, and instant role - that of mother - and an instant identity. These two constructs - the romanticization of love and the idealization of motherhood - are important to the lives of women. They define normal or expected behavior.

Merton (1968) saw two immediate elements of social and cultural structures as important for humans. He states

the first consists of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of the society. The goals are more or less integrated and roughly ordered in some hierarchy of value. The prevailing goals comprise a frame of aspirational references. They are the things "worth striving for". A second element of cultural structure defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals. Every social group invariably couples its cultural objectives with regulations, rooted in the mores and institutions, of allowable procedures for moving towards these objectives. These regulatory norms are not necessarily identical with technical or efficiency norms (p. 187).

It is when a goal is unattainable, although specified as being attainable for everyone in the cultural group, that disorganization occurs. I had looked at this notion in an earlier debate when I looked at the sociological functions of a family. When a woman defines herself by her ability to have a child, it is easy to see that love and marriage are necessary elements of this attainable goal. For women who despair of finding romantic love which will result in heterosexual marriage - a norm

in our society and seen as attainable by everyone - a child can still define her status.

For women whose notion of romantic love and marriage has failed and resulted in dissolution of marriage, there remains the baby. It is at this level that single mothers become subject to anomie, as they become deviant from the norm of the nuclear family, by virtue of having lost an attainable goal - an uprooted people in a culture where women are socialized to see motherhood as a career choice. Implicit in that career choice for women is the notion of motherhood as something worth striving for. Our society has a definition of adult status as being within a socially approved sexual relationship hence, marriage is good. Murdock helped give us this definition.

Merton feels that value and definition of one's role to society, in the form of esteem, and the inability to attain a goal seen as reachable for all people in the culture, results in anxiety and confusion, which are isolating factors. Unable to live up to cultural aspirations, this results in deviancy and anomie. Single mothers then will try to achieve this attainable goal - viable relationships with a man - and might lower their expectations in order to meet it, an accommodation known as ritualism.

Single mothers can be seen as products of social anomie. Because of their poverty, and their apparent rejection of the norm of a nuclear family, they also become more visible within society. The associated risks to them and their children, as a result of their poverty and striving for the goal of an adult relationship, makes them more visible to child welfare agencies.

Summary and analysis

In summary, motherhood is seen as an ideal towards which women must strive. It is expected that women will display a selfless devotion to children because of their biological makeup and instinctual behavior. Motherhood is seen as a career goal. While women might have interests other than motherhood, it is the norm that a woman will want to be a

mother. At some point in her life she will place her self-interests aside in order to fulfill this imperative.

Historically, mothers became responsible for the moral, physical and emotional development of their children. Psychoanalysis stated that an emotionally unhappy child is the son or daughter of a bad mother, but without the moral connotation of bad. For mothers to raise relatively happy children, the mothers themselves would have had to be raised by mothers who themselves, had completed successful psychological and sexual developments with their own mothers. Freud saw women developing through two stages where, in the final stage, a girl would transfer her affection from her mother to her father to a man. The girl's wish for a penis would be translated into her wish for a child. Helene Deutsch completed the work that Freud left undone. Deutsch found that the first condition for successful mothering lies in the mother's capacity to adapt to the needs of the infant with delicacy and sensitivity, and at the exclusion of any other interest.

Karen Horney was a psychoanalyst who disagreed with Freud's concept of the sexual drive as central in determining personality. Horney's theory of the overevaluation of love, which she observed in both neurotic and normal women of her time was an important concept in her theories. She postulated that women overevaluate love and dread losing it.

The theories of maternal deprivation and attachment advanced by John Bowlby have defined what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and the young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother {or mother-substitute}, in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. Although Bowlby's statements might have been meant to be seen as ideal statements, it is a limiting theory. It assumed firstly that a woman had no other function than that of a mother. Secondly, it did not take into account any other factors in the child's environment that might account for influences on the child. Although all children should be loved and cared for as unconditionally as

possible, Bowlby's statement have been used as justification for the condemning of women who do not meet this ideal. Bowlby's ideas are strongly ingrained in our images of motherhood. We state that a child is 'maternally deprived'. This is associated with pathology. We state that a child experiences 'father absence.' This is not associated with pathology. Yet, Sluckin, Herbert & Sluckin state that "the problem of specification of maternal bonding is like the proverbial elephant: difficult to define, but we like to think that we know one when we see one" (p. 27).

Bowlby's theories might have been more beneficial for childrearing had they not been so gender biased in nature, confining women to the home and placing the blame for any mental health disorders of the child on the mother's shoulders. It did not closely examine the socialization factors for both the mother and the child. It ignored the fact that women might feel ambivalent about their status as mothers and denied that a women might have another purpose in life besides the care of children. There is no conclusive evidence that bonding is gender specific behavior.

Love is a prevalent theme in our culture. This particular theme is obvious in the socialization of females for their subsequent adult roles. The literature is replete with examples of how women are socialized to 'hold out for love.' The socialization of women to expect and crave love is so powerful that it fills the media which is another socializing factor in our culture. What women do, they do for love.

Pregnancy is seen as a rite of passage for women. It is a symbol of a woman's status, whether or not it is expressed precisely in these terms. What is sometimes not as clearly seen is that pregnancy also brings another role with it - that of the mother. One cannot be pregnant forever and eventually, must care for the child that has been the outcome of the pregnancy. Lott (1981) states that "we continue to want to have babies, primarily because we are convinced, almost as much now as previously, that pregnancy more than marriage certifies that one is a guaranteed genuine woman " (p. 208).

Motherhood allows women to turn to the baby as a source of identity. This translates into instant adulthood, and instant role - that of mother - and an instant femininity. But with the role of motherhood also come the ideals and it is at this point that women again are vulnerable to anomie within the social structure. Merton feels that value and definition of one's role to society, in the form of esteem, and the inability to attain a goal seen as attainable for all people in the culture, results in anxiety and confusion, which are isolating factors. This disorganization results in social anomie.

Single mother families would fall under the rubric of Merton's theory. Unable to reach a goal seen as attainable for everyone such as economic solvency or an approved adult relationship, they would lower their expectations or this would create conflict which would result in deviant status. When we look at single mothers in society and in child welfare, we cannot do so without an examination of how poverty leads to their status as disorganized. Because of their poverty, single mother families have been visible in society and have been labelled deviant for their not being nuclear in form.

Researchers can find no difference in the physiological responses to infants between men and women. Parenting is characterized by goals to which all parents aspire for their children. Societal expectations of motherhood and fatherhood greatly differ. Men are not expected to perform the emotional work of the family while women are expected to be the caregivers. Notions of motherhood seem to be characterized by similar ideas throughout the past three centuries, turning women's biology against them to justify certain behaviors touted as natural.

Feminine nature has become synonymous with caregiving and nurturing behaviors while men were expected to play a greater role in the political and economic institutions. A woman was limited to the sole role of motherhood: motherhood was a full-time profession.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SINGLE MOTHERS

The role of motherhood for single mothers is influenced by the family's environment. Numerous studies have been conducted regarding single mothers in a variety of contexts. Certain common features pertinent to single mothers have been identified: poverty, low educational levels, unemployment, race, age, housing, substance abuse, isolation, individual personality flaws, stress and associated risks to children. These features partially support previous demographic findings. All of these factors combine to form an image of how single mothers function in their roles as mothers. Based on the identified traits, single mothers do not meet the standard of the idealized mother and are viewed as being poor mothers.

This literature review will elucidate the history of single mothers as a social phenomenon; the relationship of single mothers with helping agencies; the traits which have been documented in association with single motherhood and the perception of single mothers held by child welfare professionals.

Literature review

History regarding single mothers as a social phenomenon

Single mothers are not a new phenomenon in society. Dependent on the historical period and the state of the economy, they have been seen as a variant family form or a deviant family form. Scheman, as quoted in Renvoize (1985) states "women having children without either marriage or some other stable connection with a man who is going to be the father is not a new phenomenon" (p. 3). At the turn of the century, single motherhood was largely reflected by immigrant and poor women (Swift, 1995). Lindsay (1992) states that, in the Canada of the post-war years, there were many single mothers, as evidenced by the fact that in the 1950s

and 1960s, more than 60% of all lone parents were widows. For the most part, these widows were re-absorbed into their families of origin.

In the early 1960s and well into the 1970s and 1980s, teenage pregnancies became the predominant form of single motherhood according to Connelly & Straus (1992). They state that much research has been conducted on the phenomenon of teenage parenthood and the subsequent increase in child maltreatment. The increase in crime statistics as reflected by the maltreatment of children at the hands of teen mothers has fueled the concern over the continued accretion of teenage pregnancies (Polakow, 1993; Schlesinger, 1979).

Mulroy (1988) states that single mother families are not new family forms, nor are they confined to a specific geographic location. Mulroy believes that one response to the recent concern about single mothers arises from the fact that, in recent years, families in general have captured the interest of scholars, legislators, and policy makers, much the same as individuals were the focus of attention earlier in the twentieth century. She also states "other elements related to the current focus on single-parent families may be found in the distinguishing features of these families and how these features have been viewed by society" (p. 75).

Hardey & Crow (1991) state

there is no doubt that lone parents have been subject to a long history of stigmatization (sic) going back several centuries, for their 'deviance' from the two-parent norm (Macintyre, 1977; Page, 1984). In particular, critical attention has focused on women who have children without being married, who have borne a number of negative labels. Bowlby and his followers, for example, warned of the 'delinquency' of the 'problem family' and identified the mother of an illegitimate child as 'pathologically disturbed' (Riley, 1983) (p. 4).

History with helping agencies

Historically, single mothers have been identified by several factors. They have been mainly described by helping agencies, in proportion to the amount of difficulty they have represented to these agencies. Single mothers also have been identified as "multi-problem" or "multi-service" families, outlining the fact that they are often involved with several different agencies, all attempting to meet specific, identified needs (Geismar & LaSorte, 1964; Kaplan, 1986; Wood & Geismar, 1989).

Generally, the trouble that single mothers present to these agencies has taken numerous forms, ranging from repeated requests for service without follow-through even though need might be great; to an aggressively demanding attitude but little readiness to review the family situation with the agency, or extreme apathy toward any services or course of action suggested by the agency to solve or ameliorate serious family problems. This has been documented by Geismar & LaSorte (1964).

Kaplan (1986) states that multi-problem families, characterized by a weak or nonexistent parental subsystem, are disorganized or under organized. They are characterized by problems which may be economic, educational or vocational. They are often isolated and alienated, possessing few, if any, positive support networks. The income of many of these families is near or below the poverty level. She states that repeated appeals for help without following through, apathy toward services offered, or a demeaning attitude with little desire to discuss family problems have alienated social service agencies.

Wood & Geismar (1989) indicated that "there is some good evidence of a strong correlation between social class and family malfunctioning, making the truly multi-problem family, a relatively rare phenomenon among middle-class and upper-class populations" (p. 23). They further state that

single mother families usually form a part of the social class known as the "underclass." The underclass refers to people who are not only poor but who are also characterized by extensive social pathology, such as drug abuse, homicide, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and so forth...underclass status is generated from census data whenever a census tract has an unusually high percentage of unemployed or under employed families headed by a woman or receiving welfare" (p. 43). From the earlier analysis using Merton's paradigm of social structure and anomie, it is relatively simple to see how single mothers have come to be seen as an 'underclass' within society. This should be kept in mind when looking at the characteristics that have come to be associated with single mother families.

Poverty

Poverty and single motherhood seem to be synonymous as evidenced by various studies. Pett & Vaughan-Cole (1986) found that single mothers are more at risk for manifesting social and emotional dysfunction as a result of their lower incomes. The need for reliance on welfare adversely affects these women by robbing them of their self-confidence and promoting negative self-concepts. Kitchen (1992) states that "women whose responsibility for the care of children limits their employment opportunities and earning potential often end up on social assistance. Women raising children on social assistance are among the poorest of the poor in the country" (p. 14).

Hao (1994) states that single mother families are the poorest of all major demographic groups, regardless of how poverty is measured. McLanahan (1988) found that mother-only families are concentrated at the lower end of income distribution. Besharov (1992) states "there is good reason to be concerned about the condition of female-headed families. Almost half of all female-headed families with children under 18 have incomes below the poverty line. This is almost five times the poverty rate of two-parent families with children" (p. 13).

The rate of poverty for different single mother groups has been examined by Welch (1984); Besharov (1992) and Bianci (1995). Although all single mother groups were economically disadvantaged, single never married mothers were disproportionately so compared with other single mother groups. Low educational attainment was cited as one of the reasons for this poverty.

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Mandell (1992) states that women in this country are more likely than men to have less education. In 1987, the overall illiteracy rate was 12% in Canada. Only 25% of functionally illiterate women were in the paid labor force as of 1986, compared with 50% of women as a whole in the same year. Illiteracy is related to educational attainment which is related to earning capacity.

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Women with less than grade eight education earn on average only 59 percent of what men, with comparable educational levels, earn. In addition, Mandell found that children of the poor are at a disadvantage in the school system. "Lower-class children are often labelled early in their educational careers as potential failures. Poor children {many from single mother families} are disproportionately placed in basic-level or remedial programmes" (p. 27).

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Aboriginal women in the childrearing age group of 15 to 49, are less likely than other Canadians to have a higher education. 55% of Aboriginal single mothers are under the age of 25 but older than 18 (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994, p. 136).

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Unemployment

Hao (1994) states that single mother families have low earning capacities due to both their low human capital in terms of education and work experience, and labor market discrimination against them resulting from lower expectations of female productivity, female work discontinuity,

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and their lack of on-the-job training. Jones (1984) states that single mothers feel the strain of divergent roles and opt to remain out of the labor force due to child care responsibilities. Education, child care responsibilities and past labor market activity influence a single mother's choices on whether or not to enter the labor force, maintain Evans (1983), Gunderson, Muszynski & Keck (1990).

The unemployment picture for Aboriginal single mothers seems bleaker. The Canadian Institute of Child Health (1994) indicates that the rate of unemployment among Aboriginal peoples, of whom 30% of the population living off reserve are single mothers, is 2.5 times that of the Canadian population (p. 145).

Race

Hill (1986) indicates that, in American research conducted, black women are over represented in single mother families. In his study, 45.6% of black families were female-led. Hill notes that black single mother families have been blamed for the disintegration of the family, because of their prevalence.

McKenry & Fine (1993) in a comparison study of adjustment for black and white women following divorce found that black single mothers valued their children more and felt more in control of their lives than did white single mothers. In addition, they found that black children were perceived as being better adjusted by their mothers and it was surmised that this was a reflection of the amount of kin support found in the black community for single mothers.

Coontz (1992) states "the rising proportion of single-mother families among blacks results from both the declining birth rate of married black women and a drop in marriage and remarriage rates. Both these phenomena should be connected more to the deteriorating economic and social position of lower-income black men, denied job prospects by hyper-segregation and deindustrialization, than to any element of "black"

culture" (p. 251).

In Canada, in the Aboriginal population living off reserve, 30% are single mother families. The number of single mothers in the Aboriginal population are partly a reflection of the forced removal of their children in the 'assimilation sweep' of the 1970s (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994, p. 146). Statistics Canada reports do not indicate that race is a large factor in determining single mother status as all ethnic groups are represented in single mother families. In fact, immigrant women are less likely to be single mothers, at this time, in Canada's history. This is documented in Lone-parent families in Canada (1992).

Age

It has been noted that single mothers are older than they once were, resulting from many women entering single motherhood as a product of divorce and separation. Many single mothers have been studied in order to determine if age and inadequate parenting of children are compatible. Moore (1989) found that "age at lone parenting has social, economic, and developmental consequences. As an indicator of life-cycle stages, it provides a clue to economic resources within the family, types of parental responsibilities, tasks that need to be completed, and internal stresses. It is also related to duration because the probability of marriage/remarriage decreases with age " (p. 347).

Butler, Radia & Magnatta (1994) from their study on maternal compliance to court-ordered assessment in cases of child maltreatment found that the noncompliant group tended to be younger and more likely to expose their children to situations of physical neglect. Dickinson & Cudaback (1992), in a study on adolescent mothers found that younger age is positively correlated with certain behaviors on the part of the mother. There is a lack of parenting knowledge and an increase in depression for adolescent mothers.

Contrasting this, Connelly & Straus (1992) found that the

relationships between mother's age and child abuse is often mentioned but seldom adequately investigated. Their findings suggest that low-education, younger mothers and low-income mothers are not more likely to abuse their children, evidenced by measurement of the mother's age at the time of the abuse. A significant relationship was not found "when mother's age was measured as age at time of abuse. This suggests that the problem lies in difficulties in coping with the birth and infancy at a young age due to immaturity, lack of education and low income at that point" (p. 716). They suggest that certain factors such as income level and support network are a better measure of how a young single mother can cope with her child.

Housing

Norton & Glick (1986) in their research on single mothers indicated that home ownership is rare among one parent families but common among two parent families {one-third versus three-fourths in their study}. In addition, they found that two of every three renter households maintained by one parent families lived in subsidized housing. By comparing female and male single parent families, they indicated that the housing standards of single mother families were lower than that of single father families.

Klodawsky & Mackenzie (1987) indicate that

Coupled with the fact that most housing production has been geared to either two-parent families with children, or childless, employed adults, single mothers have great difficulty finding affordable, appropriate housing and usually pay proportionately more for their housing than do other Canadian families (p. 14).

Substance Abuse

Gordon (1995) and Swift (1995) demonstrate that, historically, single mothers lives have included substance abuse, from alcoholism to drug use. Hancock & Pelton (1989) state that sometimes this behavior on the part of single mothers has been seen as a reaction to helping agencies

but, it is information that has been documented in case files, as part of the proof of a mother's unworthy character. Comments such as "mother smokes and drinks" have formed a link to substance abuse problems (p. 23).

Butler, Radia & Magnatta (1994) found that in cases of severe child maltreatment, mothers who comply with the demands of court-ordered assessment are different from those who do not when one considers substance abuse as a variable. In a sample of 82 single mothers, 37% of the mothers were in the noncompliant group. These mothers showed a marked degree of substance abuse. Greater alcohol and drug abuse in the noncompliant group of mothers concurs with previous findings of lowered compliance to court-ordered treatment in situations of child maltreatment. Helfer (1968) found that substance abuse is a factor that needs to be considered when looking at child neglect. It was an element that was present in most instances of neglect studied (p. 302).

Social isolation

Collins (1991) states that there is a commonly shared sense of isolation in childrearing without a partner. Lone parents graphically describe the unremitting pressure of an unshared burden, the absence of emotional support, of even minimal help with the physical work, and the lack of another presence in the home. For many lone parents, the solution to their loneliness is to share it with someone in marriage. Collins states that this view is widespread in society, by our belief that the nuclear family is the proper setting in which to bring up children (p. 159).

LeGall & Martin (1987) in their research in France, concluded that women, in particular, because of their home making role in marriage, are among the most socially isolated group once they become single parents. They stress "La plupart des femmes ayant tenu le rôle de mère au foyer dans le cadre d'un mariage de type traditionnel sont, au moins, dans un premier temps, confrontées à une forme de solitude proche de

l'isolement. {Most women, having been mothers and homemakers within a traditional marriage setting are, at least at first, confronted with a form of solitude that is closest to total isolation}" (p. 100). When asked by researchers to summarize the situations of neglectful, single mothers, caseworkers in a study conducted by Gladow & Ray (1986) indicated that the amount of loneliness experienced by these women was overwhelming.

Individual personality flaws

There are many studies that related deficiencies in mothering to individual personality difficulties. These theories state that single mothers have difficulty in mothering appropriately because of unmet needs; psychopathology or as a result of a lack of appropriate role modelling for parenting when they were children. Hope & Young (1976) found in their work that there is an implication in most research that single mothers are usually deviant, and that this implication is consistent with public attitudes.

Hanson (1986) studied healthy single parent families. In this research, female and male single parents were compared. The study measured the variables socioeconomic status, social support, communication, religiousness, problem solving, and the physical and mental health of single parents and their children. This research indicated that while single mothers reported poorer physical health, children were in better physical health as a result of living with single mothers. The factor which seemed to be important to maintaining good mental health was communication with the father of the children and a social support network.

Gladow & Ray (1986) found that for low-income single mothers, those who obtained support exclusively from relatives were not as well adjusted as those whose support came from friends or from both friends and relatives. They found that mental health was positively correlated with kinship networks. Sands & Nuccio (1989) report that mother-headed families

are misrepresented in society. Although most of their problems are related to their economic status, such women are considered pathological, dysfunctional and incomplete.

Stress

Hao (1994) found that single mothers lives are so stressful that it affects their mental health and parenting behavior which impedes the cognitive and socio-emotional development of their children. McKenry & Fine (1993) cite other authors who state that "research has indicated both short- and long-term emotional impairment as a result of divorce. Such emotional distress may interfere with the capacity to effectively cope and adapt as a single parent (e.g. Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Hetherington et al., 1976; Hetherington et al., 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein, 1986). Hetherington and colleagues (1978) have referred to single parents as living a "chaotic" lifestyle because of stress associated with the transition to a single-parent lifestyle after divorce. Wallerstein (1986) refers to some single parents as experiencing a "diminished capacity to parent" five to ten years post-divorce" (p. 99). In their study, they spoke primarily of single mothers.

Friedemann & Andrews (1990) state that "the role of a single parent has inherent characteristics of a life-style that produces high stress levels (Richards, 1989). A lower socioeconomic status may necessitate frequent change of residence, low-quality housing that lacks safety, and a struggle to procure food, clothing, recreation, education (Sprenkle & Cyrus, 1983). These stressors distinguish single-parent families from others" (pp. 289-90). In 1978, Brown & Harris identified two risk factors which predispose women to clinical depression: assuming a full-time homemaker role and having children under age 14 (as cited in Killien & Brown, 1987, p. 182). This is magnified for single mothers who have no or little social support networks.

Associated risks to children in single mother families

It has been suggested that children in single mother families are at risk for the intergenerational transmission of family structure. McLanahan (1988) summarizes three hypotheses of the intergenerational effects of family structure. These three hypotheses are: economic deprivation, the socialization process and family stress.

Due to the economic deprivation in mother-led families, daughters are especially at risk. Daughters in these families are more likely to attempt to gain early adult status by leaving school and marrying before the age of 20, increasing both their risk of divorce and single parenthood. As a result of economic deprivation, mothers can less afford to provide their daughters with educational opportunities seen as productive for further growth and personality development, such as vacations and summer camps. Therefore, daughters are less likely to complete high school and are more likely to make an early transition to motherhood, as there are no rewards for remaining a child.

The socialization process hypothesis has two aspects to it: the absence of the male role model, and the presence of the single-mother model. An absence of the male role model leads to confusion in psychosexual development and personality development of the children, which relates to later family instability of the children themselves. The single-mother only model means that the children are growing up with the idea that women are independent and capable of managing a family alone. "This may mean less stigma attached to female family head, illegitimate births, and welfare dependence, which contribute to the children's later out-of-wedlock births, marriage dissolution, and welfare dependence" (p. 14). The hypothesis of family stress indicates that children who experienced their parents' marital dissolution and the subsequent disruption may be pushed out of their roles as children prematurely,

forced by the necessity of having adult roles fulfilled within the family. Hao (1994) also found that the long-term negative consequences for children of single mothers include low academic achievement, dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy, delinquent behavior and welfare dependency.

Coontz (1992), on the other hand, suggests "some of the ill effects of residence in single-parent families may result from self-fulfilling prophecies. One review of literature on single-parent families found that the only situations in which children of one-parent families suffered losses of self-esteem were those in which the families were stigmatized. Another study concluded that "the negative effects of achievement of living in a one-parent family are almost entirely mediated by other variables, particularly by income" but also by effective time use on the part of mother and child" (p. 223). Coontz acknowledges that single parenting is difficult but suggests that children are resilient and will adapt, providing that measures are taken to alleviate problems as they occur.

History with child welfare agencies

Kagan & Sclosberg (1989) found that single mothers typically exhibit certain behaviors in regards to child welfare authorities. These behaviors include being untrusting, suspicious, denying, impulsive, impatient, needy, often overwhelmed, easily frustrated, sometimes lacking in knowledge, lacking in basic skills, unreliable, inconsistent, and often angry and prone to periodic outbursts or tantrums involving violence, substance abuse, and injury (p. 4).

Swift (1995), on the other hand, feels that often child welfare workers are 'building a case' against single mothers to justify interventions into their lives and the lives of their children. Other authors believe that the process by which agencies and single mothers have interfaced has not always been biased against the mother. They feel that the mother has been able, in many instances, to manipulate the situation

within agencies to her own purpose. Gordon (1995) feels that sometimes, helping agencies, characterized by women social workers wanting to genuinely assist and effect change, have been taken advantage of by single mothers. She suggests that sometimes the relationship between helping agencies and single mothers has been mutually beneficial.

Summary and analysis

Single mothers are not a new phenomenon in society. Authors have documented that women having children without a connection to a man who is the father is not a new phenomenon. At the start of the century, many single mothers were immigrant and poor women. By the post-war years, many single mothers were widows who were largely re-absorbed into their families of origin and therefore, were not very visible within society.

Teenage pregnancy although not necessarily a new phenomenon, became seen as central to single motherhood from the early 1960s until the 1980s. The increase in teenage births in these years, along with the amount of teenage mothers making a decision to parent their children, made single motherhood more visible. Teenage motherhood was identified as increasing the risk of child maltreatment.

Lately, attention has again focused on single mothers. One explanation for the recent interest is that families themselves are the subject of much exploration by legislators, policy makers and social agencies. The rhetoric of the sanctity of the family and the disruption of family have made all family forms, which are not nuclear in nature, the subject of scrutiny. It is possible to trace the fact that single mother families, as a variant family form have been stigmatized for centuries, because of their obvious deviance from the two-parent family form. There are several characteristics that combine for single mothers and keep them within a 'catch-22' situation. Beginning with poverty, and low educational levels, the following characteristics: age, unemployment, housing, isolation, stress and associated risks to children, form a link in a

cyclical chain.

There is a correlation between early pregnancy, low educational levels and subsequent poverty for women. Low educational levels, few marketable skills and poverty are positively correlated. Socialized to see motherhood as an ideal, as evidenced earlier, a young woman might feel that not wanting to parent is unnatural. Socialized to care for others, to feel that pregnancy and motherhood are enviable statuses for a woman and a passport to adulthood, all unite to hasten the beginning of a path to single motherhood.

Helping agencies and even parents, who might initially be supportive of a young mother might be less supportive when this woman exits adolescence or begins to have other children without the benefit of a male partner. An initially supportive putative father eventually wants to continue his education and pursue career goals. There is no attraction to being in a family where poverty is endemic and parenthood burdensome. Some putative fathers deny paternity and therefore, deny responsibility for their children. A young mother, without supports and with few marketable skills will have limited options available to her. Social assistance will become a primary source of income and mothers raising children on social assistance are among the poorest of the poor (Kitchen, 1992). Maternity at a young age will keep the woman out of school where she could attain not only higher academic achievement but labor market skills. A paucity of these two elements will keep her out of the labor force. Single mothers are one of the largest group of unemployed persons in the country.

Polansky et al. (1992) have found that single mothers are so lonely that they will sometimes have their children act as social buffers or they will cling to unproductive and abusive relationships with men. Because they are fulfilling all parental roles, maintaining all household functions and perhaps even working outside the home, single mothers have less time to spend with peers or with their children in what has been termed 'quality time' activities. As such, they experience more social

isolation than other women.

If unable to spend as much time 'mothering' their children as is seen to be necessary for the healthy development of children, this adds to the burden of guilt these women carry. If unable to have her own needs met, the single mother feels more guilty and internalizes this. In our society when members are unable to meet perceived goals, they internalize the source of their distress. A link has been found between maternal depression, assuming a full-time homemaker role and having children under the age of 14. For single mothers, the associated risks of parenting alone can magnify the possibility of depression.

Age at the onset of single mothering appears to have social, economic, and developmental consequences for the family. Conflicting opinions are evidenced when discussing parenting ability and the age of single mothers. One study cited found that age of the mother and maltreatment of children were positively linked, indicating that younger mothers were less able to cope with children's behavior. Others have found that there is no correlation between mother's age and child maltreatment. Earlier studies on teenage pregnancy however, had indicated that the risk of maltreatment to children increased if the mother was a teenager.

As a result of the characteristics such as poverty, low educational attainment, poor housing, the risks to children within these families increase. McLanahan (1988) found that children, especially daughters, in single mother families, were at risk for intergenerational transmission of family structure through such factors as economic deprivation, the socialization process and family stress.

When speaking of an intergenerational transmission of lifestyle, such as McLanahan did, a qualifying statement must be made. It is not a deleterious condition for young women to see single mother families as self-reliant. Our society prizes self-reliant families. Perhaps this indicates a sign of health as opposed to pathology.

What is more worrisome and a condition that we need to address, is

that young women might see motherhood as not only a lifestyle choice but would see the resulting poverty as part and parcel of that lifestyle. This then creates a further generation living in poverty, with all its associated risks. It automatically assumes that the condition Merton described as 'ritualism' becomes ingrained in the minds of these young women. There would therefore be no need to attempt to do anything other than what is deemed 'normal.' To do anything else is not only unsafe but, an attempt to rise above one's lot in life.

It is simple to see how all these factors are linked in a cycle, one to the other. Low educational levels usually attained by younger women leads to poverty through few marketable skills which leads to reliance on social assistance. Poverty has its own attributes, which are present in the lives of single mothers - poorer housing, unsafe neighborhoods, less ability to provide the amenities to enhance opportunities for one's self and one's children.

Research on single mothers has indicated that they may have difficulty in mothering appropriately because of unmet needs, psychopathology or as a result of a lack of appropriate role modelling for parenting when they were children. Since motherhood itself is often associated with pathology, it should not be surprising to find that this is a characteristic of single mother families in the literature. What would need to be distinguished is in what way the pathology referred to is different from the ones associated with motherhood. Are we speaking of a pathology apart from difficulties performing the mothering role? Difficulty in performing a role is not pathological; it simply indicates difficulty with the role. What needs to be determined is the source of the difficulty.

A review of the literature has shown that single mothers are characterized by poverty, low educational attainment, unemployment, substance abuse, poor housing, isolation, stress as well as a negative history with helping agencies. It is worth noting that poverty, coupled

with a lack of social support systems, looms largely in the lives of single mothers. This places single mothers in a position where they are at increased risk of neglecting their children. Due to these highly visible characteristics and their deviations from the nuclear family, they are considered to be unable to meet their family functions and roles and more likely to become involved with child welfare agencies.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SINGLE MOTHERS IN CHILD WELFARE

This section explores case characteristics and single mothers' involvement with the child welfare system. Single mothers are over represented in child welfare statistics. Due to the relationship between poverty and neglect, they are more apt to be found neglectful of their children. Neglectful behavior must also be defined and its impact on single mothers assessed.

The report, Basic Issues Concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child Welfare Work, (1995) (herein referred to as the Risk Report) provides the results of research in regards to child maltreatment from child welfare agencies in Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and Ottawa-Hull. The report is concerned with the risk of and conditions of maltreatment for children. It seeks to aid child welfare workers in distinguishing factors which would contribute to child maltreatment and increase risk. Single, female biological caregivers were one of the family types identified by this research.

This report indicates that "families headed by a single, biological parent (Family Type 2) are the largest category receiving service (n = 604) with a slightly smaller number of families headed by two biological parents (n = 575) ... Single female parents are most commonly involved with neglect, and, to a lesser degree, the physical abuse of children" (p. 16)

This report defines neglect, physical and sexual abuse in this manner.

Neglect: "the main definition of neglect for the research includes the definition used for emotional abuse found in the Province of Manitoba *Child and Family Services Act* (1985). "Emotional Abuse" means acts or omissions on the part of the parent or person in whose care a child is, which acts or omissions include but are not restricted to:

(a) any unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care,

control, affection or stimulation for a child;

(b) making inappropriate demands upon a child;

(c) exposing a child to frequent family violence tending to produce permanent or long-term emotional disability, including:

- i) non-organic failure to thrive;
- ii) developmental retardation;
- iii) serious anxiety, depression or withdrawal;
- iv) serious behavioral disturbances" (p. 2).

Physical abuse: "Physical Abuse" means an act or omission by the parent, guardian or person in whose care a child is, but is not necessarily restricted to physical beating and failure to provide reasonable protection for the child from physical harm" (p. 3).

Sexual abuse: "Sexual Abuse" is defined in the following manner: "Sexual Abuse" means any exploitation of a child, whether consensual or not, for the sexual gratification of a parent of (sic) person in whose care a child is and includes, but is not necessarily restricted to: sexual molestation, sexual assault, and the exploitation of the child for purposes of pornography or prostitution" (p. 3).

The general intake data from this report demonstrates that Family Type 2, female single biological caregiver, represented a total of 405 or 67% of cases of neglect, compared with 142 or 24% of physical abuse and 37 or 5% of sexual abuse (p. 17).

Table 21 shows this comparison.

Table 21

Comparison of single female biological parent cases and general intake data

<u>Single female biological parent</u>			<u>General intake data</u>		
<u>Case Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Case Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of total</u>
neglect	405	67%	neglect	770	49%
physical abuse	142	24%	physical abuse	543	35%
sexual abuse	37	6%	sexual abuse	205	13%
other	20	3%	other	55	3%
total	604	100%	total	1,573	100%

Note: Basic Issues Concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child Welfare Work, Health Canada: Family violence prevention division; project no. 4887-07-91-226, p. 17

Table 22 demonstrates case distributions of abuse and neglect types by family composition.

Table 22

Case distributions of abuse and neglect types by family composition

<u>Family Type</u>	<u>neglect</u>	<u>physical abuse</u>	<u>sexual abuse</u>
F.T. 1 (total cases: 575)	230 (40%)	255 (44%)	73 (13%)
F.T. 2 (total cases: 604)	405 (67%)	142 (24%)	37 (6%)
F.T. 3 (total cases: 268)	89 (33%)	95 (36%)	73 (27%)
F.T. 4 (total cases: 126)	46 (37%)	51 (40%)	22 (17%)

Note: F.T. 1: refers to those families in which both caregivers are the biological parents of the child(ren).

F.T. 2: refers to those families in which the caregiver is a single biological female parent of the child(ren).

F.T. 3: refers to those families in which there are two caregivers, male and female, one of the caregivers is a biological parent of the child(ren), and the other is not a biological parent of the child(ren).

F.T. 4: refers to those families in which one or more extended family member(s) or substitute parent(s) provide care to the child(ren). This category includes all those family types that do not fall into Family Type 1 through 3.

Table excludes categories known as "other".

Basic issues concerning the Assessment of risk in Child welfare work.
Health Canada: Family Violence Prevention Division: project number 4887-07-91-226, pp. 17-22.

This table informs us that single mother families are, in comparison to other families, more likely to be involved with child welfare for matters of neglect. In fact, neglect is the most common reason for child welfare involvement and single mother family types are responsible for almost three-quarters of all neglect cases.

Table 23 compares chronic maltreatment data for all family types by neglect or abuse type. Chronic maltreatment refers to cases where there have been three or more documented instances of abuse and/or neglect.

Table 23

Chronic maltreatment data for all family types by neglect or abuse type

<u>Family type</u>	<u>neglect</u>	<u>physical abuse</u>	<u>sexual abuse</u>
F.T. 1	268	0	0
F.T. 2	571	0	0
F.T. 3	332	54	31
F.T. 4	1	33	3

Note: Basic Issues concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child Welfare Work. Health Canada: Family violence prevention division: project number 4887-07-91-226, p. 22

This table demonstrates that, not only are single mothers more likely to be involved with child welfare for reasons of neglect but, that in chronic cases, 571 of the cases involved three or more prior instances of neglect. It is a much higher rate than those of other families. Based on the chronic maltreatment data, single biological mothers were represented 87% of the time in occurrence of prior incidents as perpetrators of neglect.

When looking at single mothers, the Risk Report indicates that there were disproportionately more single female caregivers in this sample when compared with the general population. The report states "this disproportionate distribution supports the belief that poverty is characteristic of families with child abuse and neglect problems as single female caregivers are highly visible in low socioeconomic statistics. The combination of poverty and single parenting is stressful emotionally and physically, and can result in the maltreatment of children" (p. 22).

Further the report concludes "single women who are caring for their children alone will most probably encounter the child welfare system through problems concerning neglect or, to a much lesser degree, physical abuse ... neglect violates a lower priority of norm and is assumed to be less damaging to the child ... Alcohol abuse is an important characteristic of many persons within the child welfare client group and occurs with astonishing frequency. It is of peculiar importance with respect to neglect, being highly associated with both the occurrence and severity of instances of neglect" (p. 44).

Family Violence in Canada (1994) indicates that violence against children is a growing problem nationally. The definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse and physical neglect offered by Family Violence in Canada are more narrowly defined than in the Risk Report. They are:

physical abuse: physical harm inflicted by a person having charge of the child, or caused by that person's failure to care and provide for, or supervise and protect the child adequately;

sexual abuse: sexual molestation, or sexual exploitation by a person having charge of the child, or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows, or should know of the possibility of molestation or exploitation and fails to protect the child, and

physical neglect: the failure to protect the child from physical harm, caused by a failure to care and provide for, supervise and protect the child adequately" (p. 68).

These definitions are more limiting than the Risk Report definitions. They fall within the parameters of the Risk Report definitions and consequently are comparable. Family Violence in Canada (1994) acknowledges in their report that the definitions for physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect vary from province to province and not all provinces or hospitals within those provinces, have the same guidelines for assessment of whether a child is in need of protection.

Although neglect is a high category for single mothers based on the Risk Report information, Canadian statistics do not reflect cases of neglect as prominently as those cases which reflect criminal charges. No criminal charges are laid for neglect as it is not perceived to be as serious as other forms of child maltreatment. Several cases of child neglect need to be documented prior to a case being made against a parent for neglect.

Appendix B shows Canadian provinces with a breakdown of child abuse cases for the year ending March 31, 1992. This appendix reflects the

varying reasons for opening protection cases and the various interpretations given to child maltreatment within the country. It is astonishing to note how often child neglect, with its various categories is cited as reasons for intrusion into the family.

Family Violence in Canada (1994) states, in regards to their report that "final decision on whether injury was intentionally inflicted was determined by each hospital independently. All hospitals however, excluded cases of neglect involving emotional abuse that did not also involve physical or sexual abuse or neglect as defined" (p. 68). Given the fact that the data is representative of only three selected pediatric hospitals in Canada, the information presented is comparable to the picture of neglect as seen in the report, Basic Issues Concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child Welfare Work (1995).

Family Violence in Canada (1994) stipulates that the greatest number of victims of child maltreatment fell between the ages of 3 and 10 years. Of child maltreatment victims, sexual abuse victims were older on average than victims of physical abuse or neglect. 75% were between 3 and 10 years of age compared with 42% of children who were physically abused and 25% of children who were neglected. This is comparable to the Risk Report (1995) where the younger the child, the more vulnerable they seem to all forms of maltreatment, except in the case of sexual abuse. Younger children are particularly vulnerable to neglect and older children are susceptible to sexual abuse. Table 24 compares this information for Manitoba and Canada.

Table 24

Type of abuse by age of victim comparing Manitoba and Canada, 1994

Type of maltreatment	Age of child	<u>Total cases by number and percentage</u>			
		Manitoba	% *	Canada	%
Neglect	1 to 2 years	232	30.0%	8	29.6%
	3 to 5 years	195	25.3%	3	11.1%
	6 to 10 years	197	25.5%	4	14.8%
	11 to 14 years	94	12.2%	4	14.8%
	15 to 17 years	52	6.7%	0	0
Physical abuse	1 to 2 years	79	14.5%	62	22.3%
	3 to 5 years	75	13.8%	51	18.3%
	6 to 10 years	169	31.2%	67	24.1%
	11 to 14 years	135	24.9%	37	13.3%
	15 to 17 years	84	15.5%	12	4.3%
Sexual abuse	1 to 2 years	7	3.4%	46	8.0%
	3 to 5 years	30	14.7%	231	39.9%
	6 to 10 years	64	31.3%	201	34.7%
	11 to 14 years	70	34.3%	74	12.8%
	15 to 17 years	33	16.1%	23	3.9%

Note: *Figures do not add up to 100 because of the elimination of certain age groups such as 'under the age of one' which were present in Canadian statistics but not in Manitoba statistics.

Basic Issues Concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child

Welfare Work, (1995). Health Canada: Family Violence

Prevention Division. Project Number 4887-07-91-226, p. 20.

Family Violence in Canada. (1994). pp. 71-2

The information presented in the above table demonstrates the number of pre-school and primary school age children who are victims of neglect. This seems to be true for both Manitoba and Canada. In the category of physical abuse, children up to the age of 10 years appear to be more susceptible to physical abuse both in Manitoba and Canada.

In terms of sexual abuse, a marked increase occurs both in Manitoba

and in Canada at the ages of 3 to 5 years and declines at ages 15 to 17. This information seems to reflect similar patterns however, a cautionary note needs to be made. In the Risk Report statistics, we are looking at a total data set as a cross-sectional reflection of child welfare investigations. In the Family Violence statistics, the picture provided is only a partial one based on selected pediatric hospitals and omits some data in regards to abuse categories labelled 'combined'. In addition, the Family Violence statistics include a category of less than 1 year which is not reflected in the Manitoba Risk Report statistics.

Table 25 demonstrates, in cases of child maltreatment, the type of abuse by gender of perpetrators for Canada.

Table 25

Type of maltreatment by gender of perpetrators in Canada, 1994

Type of abuse	Total cases	<u>Gender of perpetrator **</u>		
		Female	Male	Unknown
Total cases	1048 (100%)	183 (18%)	787 (75%)	78 (7%)
Sexual abuse	622 (100%)	29 (5%)	564 (91%)	29 (4%)
Physical abuse	300 (100%)	94 (31%)	162 (54%)	44 (15%)
Neglect	35 (100%)	21 (58%)	13 (36%)	2 (6%)
Combined	90 (100%)	39 (43%)	48 (53%)	3 (4%)

Note: ** 78 cases where gender of perpetrator was unknown.

Family Violence in Canada (1994). p. 90

What we see from this table is a similar situation to that documented in the Risk Report. Men are over represented as perpetrators in the total number of child abuse cases, except in the category of neglect where women are responsible for 58% of all the cases. The Risk Report demonstrates how single mothers, in particular, are responsible for the majority of cases involving neglect of children.

Another report examines child welfare across the country. Child Welfare in Canada (1994) reports that, for 1991/92, Manitoba had a total of 2,140 reports of child maltreatment. Of these, 5.8% were classified as

non-organic failure to thrive and emotional abuse, which are included in the definition of neglect. Of these cases of maltreatment, 16.3% were attributed to the mother of the child. Table 26 compares all cases of child maltreatment that would be included under the definition of neglect as outlined in the Risk Report for the year ending March 31, 1992.

Table 26

Child maltreatment cases opened because of neglect by province and gender of perpetrator, if identified

<u>Province</u>	<u>Neglect as % of cases</u>	<u>Perpetrator</u>
Newfoundland	emotional: 9.5%	unknown
Prince Edward Island	no information listed	no information listed
Nova Scotia	abuse & neglect: 69.4%	mother: 6.5%
New Brunswick	neglect: 37.6% 2.6% of cases are children in care as result of neglect	unknown
Quebec	total neglect: 7,835 cases 48.3% of all cases opened 56.4% resulted in court order	unknown
Ontario	emotional: 2.6%	unknown
Manitoba	non-organic failure to thrive: 0.5% emotional: 5.3%	mother: 16.3%
Saskatchewan	physical neglect: 2.2% emotional: 1.0% domestic violence: .9%	unknown
Alberta	neglect: 22.4%	unknown
British Columbia	emotional: 4.4% neglect: 8.9%	unknown
Yukon	neglect: 35.5%	unknown
Northwest Territories	neglect: 63.2% in care because of neglect: 30.9% parental alcohol abuse: 3.9% unable to supervise: 12.9% financial/inadequate housing: 3.5% parent's emotional illness: 6.7%	unknown

Note: Child Welfare in Canada: The Role of Provincial and Territorial Authorities in cases of Child Abuse: Federal-provincial working group of Child and Family Services Information. Entire report.

Clearly, neglect is variously defined throughout Canada. Equally clear is the fact that neglect constitutes a great deal of the child

welfare work that is conducted in every province. Neglect is not clearly defined and seems to include many categories.

Specific to Manitoba, the annual report of Manitoba Family Services for 1990/91 demonstrates that children aged 4 to 10 years of age were the most vulnerable in all cases of child maltreatment. Female children were more vulnerable than male children to all forms of maltreatment (p. 65). This is somewhat different from the information in the Risk Report and Family Violence in Canada where it is apparent that younger children, usually pre-schoolers, are at risk for neglect while girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and boys to physical abuse.

In the 1990/91 Manitoba Family Services annual report, of the reasons for abuse investigations, non-organic failure to thrive, seen as a form of neglect, accounted for .45% of all cases. Physical abuse accounted for 39.2% of all cases and sexual abuse for 51.2% of all cases. Not clearly delineated, is the category known as other, into which fell 3.6% of cases.

In the 1993/94 annual report of Manitoba Family Services, the age and gender of children based on maltreatment type are noted, with the same trend evident as in the 1990/91 annual report, in terms of risk of maltreatment and gender. There is no mention in this annual report of cases of neglect. Only sexual and physical abuse cases are listed.

Summary and analysis

The report Basic Issues Concerning the Assessment of Risk in Child Welfare Work (1995), referred to as the Risk Report in this thesis, provides the results of research in regards to child maltreatment from child welfare agencies in Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and Ottawa-Hull.

The Risk Report indicates that families headed by a single, female biological parent are the largest group receiving service and that they are most commonly involved with neglect. The definitions used for categories of child maltreatment, i.e., neglect, physical abuse and sexual

abuse, in the report are those which are found in the Child and Family Services Act of Manitoba (1985).

What is apparent from the research conducted is that single female biological family types are over represented in all cases of neglect of children. Of a total of 604 cases involving single mothers, there are 405 or 67% of these which involved neglect. Relative to other family types, single mother families were responsible for the majority of cases of neglect of children. Single mothers families largely surpassed all other family types in this category.

In the category labelled chronic neglect, single mother families were responsible for the most cases, 571 or 87% of all chronic neglect cases. Chronic neglect is defined as cases where there have been three or more documented instances of abuse and/or neglect. In the chronic data, single mothers were responsible only for the neglect of children and not at all for the physical and sexual abuse of children.

The Risk Report states that there appears to be a correlation between poverty, alcohol abuse and neglect of children, especially for single mothers. The Risk Report (1995) states that alcohol abuse occurs with astonishing frequency and is of particular importance with respect to neglect, being highly associated with both the occurrence and severity of instances of neglect (p. 44). This information is correlated with earlier information from other research which indicates that one of the traits of single mother families is their involvement with substance abuse.

As comparison, a report entitled Family Violence in Canada (1994) indicates that violence against children is a growing problem nationally. Although presenting material from three selected pediatric hospitals, Family Violence in Canada presents a similar concern for the neglect of children. The picture of neglect for children demonstrates that mothers are responsible for the majority of neglect cases - 58% of all cases of neglect. This is an astonishing percentage when one considers how under represented women are in other categories of child maltreatment such as

physical and sexual abuse.

Child Welfare in Canada (1994) also examines cases of child maltreatment across the country. It reflects the large number of child welfare case openings as a result of neglect issues. Child welfare statistics show that the majority of child welfare investigations are opened under the auspices of neglect. Child neglect is a complex issue with a variety of definitions. Different provinces have defined neglect in various ways and this leads to confusion with the substantiation of a case. Society's and child welfare's confusion over the meaning of neglect creates an environment where those who are deviant from the nuclear family norm become most susceptible to the title of neglect. Single mother families are especially vulnerable to being labelled as neglectful due to their high level of poverty, social isolation and deviance from the nuclear family.

THE QUESTION OF NEGLECT IN CHILD WELFARE

As demonstrated in the previous section, single mothers are over represented in neglect statistics. A review of the neglect literature shows that single mothers, highly visible due to poverty, are most often victims of societal prejudice and labelled as deviant from the nuclear family. They then are most vulnerable to charges of neglect. Single mothers found guilty of neglect by child welfare reflects clearly our society's belief in an ideal of motherhood. And how women who parent alone are suspect as parents.

Literature review

Campbell (1991) (as quoted in Callahan and Lumb, 1995), in a study on child welfare, in British Columbia, indicated that "female single parents coming into contact with child welfare services are poorer, have less education, and are more likely to be on social assistance than their two-parent counterparts. Further, children in single-parent homes are more likely to come into care for reasons of neglect or failure-to-protect than for abuse" (p. 801).

Neglect represents a large measure of what social workers in child welfare are pre-occupied with. All information gathered from provincial and national reports tells us that single mothers form the majority of neglect cases. What constitutes neglect in child welfare cases? How is it distinguished from other forms of child maltreatment?

Interestingly, of all forms of child maltreatment, child neglect is most closely related to the social and legal institutions developed to address it. It was concern for neglected children which lead to the development and implementation of the first child welfare laws and child welfare agencies. Neglect appears to remain an elusive category of child maltreatment. Not as easy to investigate and immediately document as are physical and sexual abuse, it is difficult to act on unless instances of

it are repeated. Neglect, as a form of maltreatment, has serious consequences for parents and children. It has been positively correlated with poverty and is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment and yet, it remains in the background of child welfare concerns.

The report Focus on Child Neglect (1992) posits that "neglect is a less visible and less dramatic form of child maltreatment; neglect is closely linked to the much more daunting problem of child poverty; and neglect is a poorly defined concept, and one that has been criticized as a negative parent-blaming label" (p. v).

Stokes (1985) states that some of the problem with the definition of neglect has come from legal statisticians who have lumped child abuse and neglect together. However, "their principal purpose theoretically is to serve as guidelines for judicial action, and to establish a threshold for action, thereby implying what is acceptable and unacceptable parenting. Overall, they identify the perpetrators and stipulate when interventions will take place. From the perspective of medical and social service officials, the words "abuse" and "neglect" are just diagnostic terms that identify a condition and help prescribe a treatment" (p. 54).

Rose & Meezan (1993) inform us that "neglect was originally conceptualized as an omission on the part of the parent that led to a lack of adequate care for the child. Implied in the definition was the lack of deliberate intent on the part of a parent or caretaker to harm the child. A parent may not have intended such omissions to result in harm to the child and may even have assumed that these omissions were beneficial or would not affect the child's development" (p. 280). They argue that the ambiguity of the definition of neglect has ultimately bewildered our search for a comprehensive understanding and further, our professional understanding of what constitutes neglect.

They further argue, that, although different definitions of neglect have been put forward since the monumental study of neglect conducted by Leontine Young in 1967, the definitions of neglect are varied and contain

many different parts. In this way, the paucity of meanings attached to neglect invite varying definitions from child welfare workers who ultimately make judgements.

They indicate that families who have severely neglected their children in the past are one of the most difficult populations to work with through the current service models. They suggest that, unless programs are designed with a specific definition of neglect in mind, that "many families will continue to find it difficult to function at their optimal level, and marginal families will, in greater numbers, be unable to meet minimal societal expectations for the care of their children" (p. 288).

Swift (1995) argues that the category of neglect further marginalizes those groups at the edge of society, such as single mothers who, by definition, are already stigmatized in the legislation and administration of child welfare agencies. She states that although poverty is positively correlated with neglect, the issue of neglect invariably resolves itself into one of personal problems...there are two historic formulations of neglect. One, upon which legislation was originally based, posits parents as members of the unworthy poor. The second is a social formation posing parents as confronting structural problems beyond their control. These remain the basic explanations of neglect in contemporary discourse...In its theoretical base, the profession has always linked explanations of poverty to ideas of 'a weakness of will and poverty of the spirit'. (Loch, 1906, quoted in Jones, 1979). Studies conclude that although poverty and social deprivation are important factors in neglect, the personality features of mothers are primarily causal factors (pp. 88-9).

Gil (1970); Polansky et al, (1972 & 1992) and Jones and McNeely (1980) have all emphasized the mother's personal traits as primary causes of neglect of her children, while Swift (1995) and Gordon (1992) document

poverty as a major factor, making the mother an unwilling accomplice in the neglect of her children.

Most of the literature and research surrounding the case of neglect very clearly harbors a gender bias. In a 1980 study, Scott states "mothers of abused children, rather than abusers were selected for this study, since it is hypothesized that the mother plays a significant role in abuse, whether she injures the child herself or fails to protect him from another abuser...{other researchers} have suggested that the pattern of mothering in adult life probably has its roots in early infancy, and have attributed the cause of child abuse to a derailment of the mothering function" (p. 131). In this statement, the mother is seen as neglectful by her failure to protect her child from the harm inflicted by the abuser of the child. Yet the child has clearly suffered maltreatment at the hands of an abuser other than the mother. The logical question becomes: why was the abuser not studied? Is it perhaps that our ideal of motherhood cannot allow that a woman might be powerless to protect her child or that it is seen as 'unnatural' for a mother to allow her child to be hurt? When we speak of failure-to-protect, are we really looking at an ideal of what we believe constitutes mother love?

Gordon (1992) states "because men spend, on the whole, so much less time with children than do women, what is remarkable is not that women are violent toward children but that men are responsible for nearly half of the child abuse. But women are always implicated because even when men are the culprits, women are usually the primary caretakers who have been, by definition, unable to protect the children" (p. 289).

Swift (1995) states

the issue of child neglect highlights the dual role that single mothers have always faced as breadwinners and caregivers, a dilemma mediated but certainly not resolved by the induction of Mothers' Pensions. Files demonstrate how mothers tried to cope, and how these efforts could be thwarted by child welfare authorities. Women who

took jobs were unable to supervise their children, while those in overcrowded housing were subject to constant scrutiny by their neighbours...those who sought relationships outside of marriage were considered immoral by child welfare authorities (p. 79).

The scrutiny of single mothers in child welfare seems to continue to this day. Margolin (1992) conducted a study on why single mother's boyfriends were over represented in child welfare statistics. She concluded that the man in the single mother's life, common-law or otherwise, if not the biological father of her children, has no status within the family. This contributes to a growing discomfort, as he has no functional role to play. In addition, he will see himself as the authority figure, as it is an ascribed role for men, regardless of their status within the family.

Margolin further states that these men are not considered legitimate family members and therefore, neighbours are more apt to report them to child welfare authorities for alleged offenses against children. In turn, child welfare workers are more apt to check these complaints swiftly and may require less substantiation of a child abuse complaint.

However, Gelles and Lancaster (1987) in a study from Hamilton, Ontario found that "children living with single mothers experience a risk of abuse that is substantially elevated over that in two natural-parent households. In our Hamilton study, among 13 abused children living with single mothers a male was the identified perpetrator in 11 cases. Only two of these were putative natural fathers of the victims. Thus the threat to children with single mothers seems to be: men other than their fathers" (pp. 223-4). They found that risk to children diminished with age, but they could not attribute this to reporting biases or to socioeconomic status. The important factor seemed to be the fact that the male was not the father of the child.

Swift (1995) states that a number of conditions could bring a family to the attention of child welfare authorities but that neglect was

confined almost solely to the female domain of home and child care. Callahan (1993) states that "caring for children is not viewed as highly skilled or important work but as something that women ought to be able to do naturally. Thus, the crucial aspects of child welfare work - helping parents, particularly mothers, with child care - is similarly devalued" (p. 78).

Callahan goes on to state that "there is a final irony regarding the invisibility of work: workers have the mandate to investigate mothers for their inability to "parent", work that is also largely invisible. Parents, usually mothers, are judged largely on the invisible aspects of their work: the children's health, clothing, behavior, etc. The quality of the transactions between mothers and children are largely invisible and can be similarly devalued. Workers are expected to record evidence of "poor parenting". Successful efforts are not necessarily identified or recorded" (p. 80).

Armitage (1993) concludes that

child welfare has always been associated with relative disadvantage and with middle-class views on the right way to live and raise children. The origins of child welfare relied heavily on the distinction between the "deserving poor", who raised their children in an honest and thrifty poverty and who knew their place in society, and the "undeserving poor", who prostituted, drank, committed criminal offences, and raised their children for a similarly "dissolute" lifestyle. The concept of saving the children and changing the children, both for their good and for the protection of society, was present in the thinking of at least some early child welfare policymakers and practitioners (p. 39).

Abramovitz (1988) states

nineteenth-century thinkers also linked poverty to their perception of a family's ability to carry out its reproductive and maintenance functions. Families whose poverty prevented them from realizing the

family ethic frequently were judged to be unfit parents. Charity workers held that children of the poor, "are not always cursed by poverty principally but by the ungoverned appetites, bad habits, and vices of their parents." The presence of the children of working parents hustling in the streets became evidence that poverty and crime derived from improper family life rather than the unsavoury living and working conditions of industrial capitalism. The solution was to tear families apart. The Boston Charity Aid Society sought to remove as many children as possible from such conditions by placing them in families where "the habits of industry and good order" would be encouraged. (p. 145).

The Risk Report (1995) states

there are disproportionately more single female caregivers represented in this sample when compared with the general population. This disproportionate distribution supports the belief that poverty is characteristic of families with child abuse and neglect problems as single female caregivers are highly visible in low socioeconomic statistics. The combination of poverty and single parenting is stressful emotionally and physically, and can result in the maltreatment of children (p. 22).

Swift (1995) argues that child welfare's ignoring of and consigning poverty to individual pathology has not allowed a worthwhile analysis of how neglect and poverty are linked. She states that child welfare workers are well aware of the link between poverty and neglect. By choosing to blame poor mothers for their inability to meet a societal standard, effective interventions have been impeded. Swift argues that middle class parents will not be judged to be neglectful by workers but that poor single mothers will.

Summary and analysis

Child welfare literature demonstrates that single mothers are most often involved with child welfare authorities as a result of neglect.

Since neglect makes up a large portion of child welfare cases it is crucial that child welfare workers have a clear understanding of what constitutes neglect. Unfortunately its definition is shrouded in elusive concepts and conflicting positions. There are several reasons for neglect's nebulous status. One is that neglect is difficult to document unless instances of it are repeated or it becomes prominent in a parent's interaction with the child in a public sphere. Usually, in child welfare, neglect is not acted upon unless it has been repeated. Single mother families are vulnerable to being labelled as neglectful due to their low socioeconomic status. This is evidenced by the number of child neglect cases or those categorized as failure to protect on the part of the mothers which feature poverty as the distinguishing characteristic.

Mothers are in a "catch-22" position in situations of neglect. This implicates them as either maltreating or failing to protect children from maltreatment. This is a clear reflection of the notions of mother as the repository for all the child's ills illustrated earlier. There is a definite link between poverty and neglect. Because single mothers are poor, they are more likely to be found guilty of neglectful behaviors. This reflects the belief that poverty is a personal problem.

The concept of neglect has caused considerable debate in child welfare research. Neglect and poverty cannot be seen as separate from one another. It has been clearly demonstrated that single motherhood often results in poverty and that poverty is an integral part of neglect. Some children are neglected by single mothers. However, single motherhood and neglect are not synonymous and child welfare needs to look at societal structures, sexism and prejudice to develop a critical consciousness.

CHILD WELFARE INTERVENTIONS WITH SINGLE MOTHERS

Single mothers are considered to be deviant from the traditional family norm. They are also over represented in child welfare statistics. It is important to examine the child welfare interventions with these families to assess whether they are meeting the needs of these families. Child welfare as a representative of society maintains the view of the nuclear family as the norm and provides interventions which reflect this view. Interventions that have been attempted with single mothers will be reviewed, (a) by looking at the ideological foundations upon which the interventions rest; (b) by exploring the history of single mothers and interventions within child welfare, and (c) by examining the specific interventions used and their effectiveness.

Foundations

Prior to examining interventions, it is important to look at the foundations on which those interventions rest. It is first important to understand that policies designed with a specific intervention in mind, hold a doctrine as to what the family means within society. Under the rubric of intervention programs in child welfare, lie two assumptions about families. The first is that the nuclear family, as evidenced by the heterosexual roles of breadwinner/homemaker with children is the standard against which we judge all family interactions. This has legal, anthropological and sociological precedents, which I will present in an overview at this time.

In a legal sense, Fineman (1995) states that there are core assumptions inherent in our current social and cultural norms about the family as an institution, and these assumptions have tremendous impact on how families are viewed. Historically, Fineman asserts, for a family to qualify as a foundational relationship, a heterosexual union had to be legally privileged through marriage.

Current child welfare legislation points to the family as a basic social unit. Manitoba's Child and Family Services Act (1985) states "the family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved. The family is the basic source of care, nurturance and acculturation of children and parents have the primary responsibility to ensure the well-being of their children" (S-M 1). The Child and Family Services Act (1985) defines family in such a way that the individual practice of social workers may encompass more than the legal definition, to include extended family. Other precedents remain, however.

The anthropological precedent was set by, among others, George Murdock (1948) who offered a definition of family that exerted great influence on our society. Murdock contended that since extended and polygamous families are built around affiliations between nuclear groups, the nuclear family is a universal social grouping characterized by a socially sanctioned sexual function and children.

Swift (1995) states "this nuclear family as an ideal of adult life and childrearing, as Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh (1982) forcefully show, has become all-encompassing. The family is romanticized by the media and structured into all forms of social organization" (p. 252). If the nuclear family is the standard by which we make judgements, than all other forms of family will lack an element by their need for nuclear formation.

Within the family lies a difficulty in role fulfillment. The family is one of the few groups to which society gives a legal mandate to use physical force against its members. It is also expected to provide a sanctuary for love, security and the nurturance of its members, based on a 'minimal standard of care' by which parenting behavior is found acceptable or unacceptable. The 'minimal standard of care' measures the physical as well as the emotional maintenance of a child. It would include such items as cleanliness, freedom from physical disease; dental care; feelings of affection towards the child, etc. Where the use of physical force is seen as acceptable, the minimal standard of care also insists

that physical punishment not exceed levels seen as acceptable. The conflicting roles a family is expected to fulfill can make these groups volatile especially when the standards of a parent are in conflict with those of society.

The second underlying assumption about families, is that when we are speaking of the 'normal functioning of a family,' we are judging the performance of the mother within that function, as we are unable to gauge the emotional work that men do within families. This has been both explicit and implicit. The role of caregiver has been ascribed to women through the last two centuries and been supported by theories of maternal attachment such as Bowlby's. It has come to be understood that women are naturally better suited to the care of children through a biological, instinctual process. Therefore, we are always assessing how a woman does her job of mothering, based on the ideals provided by various social scientists over the centuries.

Although research reported indicates 'family functioning', the bulk of the intervention focuses on maternal behavior. Imber-Black (1986) states " the frequently unexamined philosophical underpinnings of the various agencies that currently provide human services reflect double-binding attitudes that simultaneously hold the nuclear family - and women's traditional place in it - sacred and blame women either for becoming "overinvolved" or for departing from this arrangement via work, divorce, or new family forms. Only women are the suggested consumers of the offering of larger helping systems. This tendency to reframe problems as belonging to the woman often unwittingly allies larger systems with forces in the family that are also defining the problem this way" (pp. 26-7).

Webb-Watson (1988) says "women more frequently are the focus of treatment and as such are often offered multiple services. Family therapists who refer or accept referrals of women as part of a multiple system treatment process highlight the assumptions that women are most

often the ones who need to be changed as well as the ones who are less competent to handle their problems" (p. 149).

Upon these two presumptions rest the four main ideas from which interventions are built: intrapsychic difficulty/personal deficiency theory; social learning theory; the social interaction theory, and the ecological perspective. Recently, behind some intervention attempts are feminist theories, which will be examined as well.

Intrapsychic difficulty/personal deficiency theory

The intrapsychic difficulty or personal deficiency theory in social work clearly has its identification with the medical model. In this theory, it is believed that an individual parents to the level of which they are capable, based on their family of origin experiences. Any failure to parent to societal standards is seen as a personal deficiency on the part of the parent.

Jones and McNeely (1980) felt that child neglect and maltreatment may be due more to a deficiency in mothers' nurturing knowledge than to purposeful behaviors aimed at harming the child. They contend that inadequacies of parenting knowledge stem from a "generation-to-generation" lifestyle in which "children who are deprived of a normal home life grow up into parents unable to provide a normal home life for their children. The importance of breaking such a cycle is irrefutable and underscores intervention procedure" (p. 566). They further state that punitive interventions, designed to shame and threaten mothers were used to force mothers to provide a more adequate level of physical care for their children. Implicit in these interventions was the message that abuse and neglect of children were due to maternal deprivation.

The personal deficiency theory has three primary assumptions: (1) the abusive parent has an intrapsychic difficulty; (2) this difficulty becomes apparent in the parent/child relationship, and (3) the cause of the difficulty is related to the parent's own abuse as a child. Programs

designed on the basis of this theory will attempt to change the parent. There have sometimes been added components of attempts to change future directions for the child. In most cases, the further focus rests on the mother as opposed to the father. Even if the father is clearly the abuser of the children, the mother will be examined for her inability to protect them - her failure to protect.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the mother's personal difficulties in fulfilling her role. Polansky, DeSaix and Sharlin (1972) described four types of neglectful mothers: (a) apathetic-futile mothers; (b) impulse-ridden mothers; (c) reactive depressed mothers and (d) psychotic mothers. They suggest that there is a cycle of neglect which derives from the mother's own infantilism, generated by her own parents. In a related study in 1992 study, Polansky, Gaudin and Kilpatrick, found that neglectful mothers were lacking in relatedness, impulse control, confidence and verbal accessibility.

Butler, Radia and Magnatta (1994) studied maternal compliance to court-ordered assessment in cases of child maltreatment. The primary focus of their study were mothers who were disputing custody under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act. Of the 82 cases they studied, 60 of these were single mothers applying for custody after the apprehension of their children. They blamed some of the resistance to court-ordered mental health assessments as stemming from antisocial tendencies on the part of mothers as well as the amount of family violence that was present in these women's lives, which is suggestive of high levels of stress. The amount of violence perpetrated against these women was not further investigated as a cause of some of their resistance and how this affected their coping abilities, their mental health status or their ability to have their children returned to them.

...these women were at risk for abuse but had not actually abused their children. Nonetheless, there appears to be emerging evidence that parental antisocial behavior is related to problems in spousal

relationships and parenting that have serious impact on family functioning and child adjustment. (Capaldi & Patterson, 1991; Lahey, Hartdagen, Frick, Mcburnette, Connor, & Hynd, 1988) (p. 209).

The intrapsychic theory is often criticized for what it lacks, that is, an analysis of conditions of violence for women, and an ignorance of women's socioeconomic status within the family. Behind the androgynous title - parent - is the illusion that we are studying 'family functioning' when what we are studying is 'maternal functioning'.

Because of its widespread use and underpinnings within our social work practices, many feminist authors take issue with this theory. Traditionally, argues Swift (1995) all students of neglect agree that poverty seems to be a consistent theme in the lives of neglectful mothers. Rather than seeing this as a social-environmental condition, she states that it is seen as evidence of psychological inadequacies on the part of the mother, which then justifies intervention into her life.

Jones (1980) states that a set of theories which attributes the problems of a working-class residuum to their character and upbringing clearly sustains the individualized and educative approach of social casework. This is not the case when those problems are attributed to the social structure and relations of capitalism. "Social work education despite its liberal facade is not in any other business than trying to produce a group of people who will be strong, self-disciplined and trustworthy, to be 'guardians of the social trust'" (p. 83).

Conversely, Wharf (1985) feels that poverty on its own is not a sufficient explanation for the maltreatment of children. However, he states that "psychological explanations also lack clarity. Parents who were themselves neglected as children and have low feelings of self-esteem, a limited capacity to share and care, and a slight tolerance for stress are most likely to neglect and abuse their children. But terms such as "self-esteem" and a "low tolerance for stress" are vague and imprecise and invite differing judgements from professionals" (p. 203).

The other criticism of this theory is that it does not explain resiliency of children and adults. It does not take into account those parents who might have psychological impairments and still are not neglectful or abusive towards their children. It does not look at children who suffer abuse and do not go on to abuse. Nonetheless, intrapsychic difficulties remain at the heart of many attempted interventions.

Social learning theory

The social learning theory was formulated by Bandura in 1973. Tzeng, Jackson & Karlson (1991) state "Bandura (1973) asserts that learning principles are sufficient to explain the development and maintenance of human behavior. In addition to classical and operant conditioning, the social context and observational learning are considered crucial to understanding behavior. Other people, starting with one's own parents, serve as important models that provide valuable learning experiences. The most influential models are the family, the subculture, and mass media" (p. 94).

Social learning theory rests on two assumptions. The first is that children exposed to aggression and violence as a form of conflict resolution, within families, will internalize these patterns of interaction and repeat them in subsequent conflictual situations as adults. "Children who witness interparental violence may be at risk for developing dysfunctional coping and interpersonal problems strategies that may directly affect their interpersonal relationships and academic performances" (Kratcoski, 1982, as quoted in Tzeng, Jackson & Karlson, 1991).

The second assumption incorporates cultural and societal norms. This assumption states that the cultural norms and values of our society approve of violence toward children and adults and are prevalent, as indicated by our general acceptance of violence coupled with marital and childrearing techniques. A common conductor of violence is available

through the media. "In regard to the impact of televised violence, the evidence from both correlational and experimental studies indicates that it leads to a modest increase in aggressive behavior and desensitization to violence" (Myers, 1983; Eron, 1987, as quoted in Tzeng, Jackson & Karlson, 1991, p. 198).

It is generally unspoken but, there appears to be an understanding that there is an acceptable level of violence in society and that to go beyond that, constitutes having gone too far, or becoming unacceptable. Because of the cultural sanctioning of physical punishment within the family, mentioned earlier, this lays the groundwork for some parents to go beyond the accepted level of violence in our society. We sanction physical punishment for the larger good of our children. Biblical interpretation has been lent to this so that the sanction appears to come from God - to spare the rod will spoil the child.

Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1980) found that "on occasion when we have publicly defined spanking and slapping children as violent acts, we have received numerous letters and telephone calls from people belonging to fundamentalist religious organizations. Our callers and letter writers criticized us for terming spankings "violent". They supported their arguments with biblical quotations which said that parents have the God-given right to punish their children physically. Members of fundamentalist religious groups brought their beliefs {before the South Carolina legislature} and said that the Bible gave parents the right to "bend the will of their children" (p. 137).

Any interventions based on the social learning model will seek to re-educate at-risk parents and children about the concepts of socialization. It is believed that parents can be taught new, better stress-coping skills and communication methods to enhance their parenting abilities. Internalized messages can be altered to provide messages that are more in keeping with societal norms and values.

The criticism of this theory is that it does not account for

individual genetic or biological influences that would also shape decision making processes and behavior. It fails to account for the child's developmental stages and characteristics in determining the extent to which the child's personality is shocked by witnessing aggressive acts. Thereby it fails to explain resiliency and those who do not maltreat, no matter their childhood experiences. Tzeng, Jackson & Karlson (1991) feel that this theory should be expanded to address many issues on emotional {psychological} abuse, including its definitions, etiology, prevention, and evaluation (p. 98).

The social interaction theory

The social interaction theory has three components to it, analyzed from a social psychological perspective: parental factors, child related factors in the family and social factors. Violence is seen as a response to a particularly stressful situation and some families, by virtue of their situation in the social structure, suffer greater stress than other families and hence, violence becomes an integral part of their coping patterns.

Coupled with family stress theory, it is hypothesized that there are three main sources of stress: (1) lack of parental resources, evidenced by lack of educational and occupational opportunities, and a depressed level of socioeconomic status; (2) situational problems in the family, evidenced by marital difficulties and lack of support for spouses, among other things, and (3) the child's own difficulties, which predispose the child to parental maltreatment.

In this theory, environmental stressors such as poverty, social class, values of the community and structural stress factors are seen as some of the causes of child maltreatment. All of these elements, sometimes with the added component of parental intrapsychic difficulty can lead to child maltreatment. The social interaction model emphasizes the interactions of the members of the family and the importance of different

interaction patterns in the development of abusive and neglectful behavior. Any intervention programs designed from this theory would stress that both social and individual factors need change. It would then be posited that, when factors for the individual, the family and other stressors are changed or modified, this would allow for better family functioning.

The difficulty with this theory is that it ignores those families living under extremely stressful conditions, who do not maltreat their children. This theory also explains child maltreatment mainly in terms of abuse and not neglect. Neglect is merely included under the rubric of abuse when it has been suggested that neglect has different attributes from abuse and therefore, should be evaluated separately. In addition, the conditions of poverty and social class are not ones that be changed solely through replacing or modifying behaviors. It requires upheaval of the existing system of wealth and income distribution within society. Our awareness of single mothers as among the least educated, the poorest and the most socially isolated groups, defies us to change all these conditions in order to intervene within a social interaction framework.

As Swift (1995) contends, "this is a world organized by social, economic, and political forces of which we are usually aware, which are sometimes invoked by the relevant literature, but which are not ordinarily brought into debates and discussions of child neglect" (p. 246).

Ecological perspective

The ecological perspective in social work practice has adopted so many theoretical concepts that it is difficult to establish precise boundaries for it. The theory stresses that everything in one's environment is interconnected and that the link to solving one problem is to look at the systems that are impinging on it and to modify that agent within the family functioning. In other words, both intra and inter systems must be evaluated within the context of family functioning.

The ecological perspective combines looking at the functioning of the family while assessing the family's relationship to outside forces. Combining many different theories from many disciplines, the ecological perspective came to the fore in the 1970s. Table 27 demonstrates selected theoretical foundations of the ecological perspective.

Table 27

Select theoretical foundations of the ecological perspective

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Theorists</u>	<u>Theory</u>	<u>Major Theme</u>	<u>Concepts</u>
1859	Darwin	evolutionary	evolving match between adapting organism and environment	survival of the fittest
1917	Richmond	social diagnosis	improving socio-economic conditions through personal adjustment	social treatment
1930	Coyle	social goals model of group work	interacting processes of groups	task roles reciprocal relations
1932	Murphy	Gestalt	perceiving figure ground configuration	analysis of total experience
1934	Mead	role theory	studying social functioning as a transactional process	pattern of behavior and social positions
1956	Selye	stress theory	coping with stress	adaptive mechanisms
1957	Perlman	symbolic interaction	establishing meaning	self, generalized other
1959 1961	Maslow Rogers	humanistic psychology	providing growth inducing life experiences	caring therapeutic relationships
1963	Bandler	ego psychology	promoting the ego's effectiveness personal competence	integrity of ego and functions, competent
1968	Bowlby	attachment theory	forming relationships through active transactions	attachment relatedness
1972	Bertalanffy	general systems theory	examining systems change	synergy, open systems, reciprocal causality
1972	Chestang	empowerment	affecting one's life space beneficially	reciprocal power
1980	Germain	life model	intervening in the life space	common practice base time, space, ecological maps of life experiences

Note: Greene, R.R. & Ephross, P.H. (1991). Human behavior theory and social work practice. pp. 226-67.

The ecological perspective has some roots in and often is seen as, a form of general systems theory. Two of the principles of systems theory are complementarity and circularity. Complementarity is a concept that is applied to the observed inequality in power arrangements within the family. It is theorized that couples started off as equal partners and that only a shift is necessary for them to return to that state. While partners shift from one power level to another, their roles will complement one another. It is theorized that children, because they are not part of the couple, will have a different power source within the family, which will shift along with the changes in the parental power base. Circularity is the other construct and its idea is that people are involved in recursive patterns of behavior, which are reactively instigated and mutually reinforced. The idea is then that people in a family instigate certain behaviors on the part of others and that this behavior is then reinforced by the reactions observed to it.

Also encoded in this theory is the belief that interventions must come at the level of the family and of society therefore prevention programs come to the forefront. The thrust behind such programs would be that changes need to occur to the understanding of power within the family. A further change would be to the reference group in the community which condones the maltreatment of family members.

Hay and Jones (1994) espouse an ecological model for the prevention of child maltreatment, that is adapted from child developmental theory. It asserts that the causes of maltreatment can stem from several levels as evidenced by Garbarino (1977) and Belsky (1980), among others. "Its aim is to alter community and societal risk factors e.g. poverty and unemployment; fragmented social services, thereby reducing their potential to foster maltreatment of children" (p. 381-2).

A specific criticism of this theory, from the feminists, is that it does not look closely at the reality of power relationships that exist within families and by its perceived stance of neutrality, ignores the

larger issues such as poverty and unemployment. While realizing that its aims are commendable, it is unclear as to how these factors can be altered.

Feminist theory

Some feminist theorists state that their goal is change, not adjustment. They are looking for social change, family change and individual change, with the intent to transform the social relations which define women's and men's existences. They believe that no interventions can be applied unless the power bases in society are closely examined and redefined. Once the system of inequality has been recognized and a woman empowered, change can take place.

Kissman (1991) believes "the principles of feminist interventions are particularly appropriate when applied to work with one-parent families because most of these families are headed by women and the changing status of women within the society is closely linked to the welfare of these families" (p. 23). Kissman also believes that feminist-based social work can view the single parent family as a viable system that can be strengthened through realignment, greater utilization of external support systems, and other empowering strategies. She feels that "a feminist-influenced social worker may reorder the priorities of intervention, redefine the boundaries of "functional" family norms, and diffuse the interface between individual and environmental problem areas" (p. 25). Kissman advocates feminist interventions to broaden the assessment of the single mother's life by embedding it within a social context, an analysis lacking from other interventions, she states.

Mulroy (1988) believes that any intervention with women needs to address matters from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on the expertise of academics, practitioners in fields of law, social work, urban planning, housing, economics, and public policy. She feels that, any intervention which does not include an analysis of the structure of the single mother family will lack an important element. Mulroy states "the

essential question regarding single-parent family structure is, How do family members interact with each other and with outsiders to meet the basic needs of the family and its members? It is important to note that in any transition to a one-parent household the pattern of interaction among family members will change. There is at least one less person in the system and this translates into new routines, new schedules, all of which need to be considered when deciding to help" (p. 80).

Killien & Brown (1987) found that when single mothers become stressed, they do not always alleviate the source of their stress. They found that many mothers become stressed as a result of caring for their families and since they do not alleviate their stress, it leads to depression. They advocate the need for better support networks for women, where a mutual sharing of ideas and self-affirming themes can be conveyed.

Goodrich, Rampage, Ellman & Halstead (1988) state "our thesis is that {interventions designed to help the family} have accepted prevailing *gender roles*, ignoring the oppression of women, and accepted a traditional *family model*, ignoring the oppression of women. This failure to notice has resulted in *theory, practice, and training* that are oppressive to women" (p. 13). Interventions designed with feminist theories in mind would seek to teach women empowering strategies through looking at their structural roles within families; their oppression within society and how these factors can be altered to effect change in women's lives.

Criticisms of the feminist theories state that by the repeated use of the word empowerment, the term is in danger of losing all meaning. It is not possible to lend power to another person, they must acquire their own power. Another criticism is that, while accepting that women have historically been maltreated and blamed for their maltreatment within society, feminist theories fail to explain resiliency and the fact that some mothers do mistreat their children.

Summary and analysis

Under the rubric of intervention in child welfare lie two important assumptions about the family. The first is that the nuclear family is the standard against which all family interactions are judged. The second is that when assessment of the family is made, the role of the mother will be set against an ideal of motherhood. These assumptions about family have precedents in legal, anthropological and sociological research. This legal notion has been encoded in the Child and Family Services Act of Manitoba (1985) which states that the family is the basic unit of society and its well-being should be supported and preserved. It is generally assumed that there is a common, shared knowledge of what constitutes family.

Within the family lies a role difficulty, demonstrated by the fact that families are considered to be havens in which the affection and care of its members is perpetuated and yet, it has been given one of the few legal sanctions to use physical force against its members. Due to our privatization of the family, it is assumed that all families will be able to understand what is the 'minimal standard of care' for children. Families are judged according to the 'minimal standard of care' concept which describes how children are to be cared for physically and emotionally. Specifically, it is in this way that women are judged as to their maternal functions. Theories, outlined earlier, such as those of Rousseau and Bowlby suppose that women, by their biological reproductive function have an instinctual desire to care for children. There is again an assumed general knowledge of what elements are included in good mothering.

Swift (1995) argues that all students of neglect agree that poverty seems to be a consistent theme in the lives of neglectful mothers. Rather than seeing this as a social-environmental condition, she states that it has been seen as confirmation of a psychological inadequacy on the part of the mother. Environmental stressors such as poverty, social class, values of the community and structural factors are seen as some of the causes of

child maltreatment. This emphasizes the interactions of the members of the family and the importance of different interaction patterns in the development of abusive and neglectful behaviors.

Conditions of poverty and social class cannot be changed through replacing or modifying behaviors. In Swift's (1995) words "this is a world organized by social, economic, and political forces of which we are usually aware, which are sometimes invoked by the relevant literature, but which are not ordinarily brought into debates and discussions of child neglect" (p. 246). By disregarding issues such as poverty and unemployment it is unclear how these conditions can be changed. Is it true that child welfare has recognized the relationship between poverty and neglect and has ignored it in favour of the dominant ideology, which posits that personal deficiencies are at the heart of all social problems? I would have to say yes, as social workers act as agents of social control.

There are documented cases where poverty has not been a sufficient explanation for the neglect of children by single mothers. It would appear that rather than document specifically those cases and what is different about them, child welfare has painted all single mothers with the same brush. At the heart of our interventions are certain principles in child welfare about families, mothers, fathers and what those roles mean. The interventions of child welfare are based on an ideological foundation which prioritizes the nuclear family. Since single mother families are not nuclear, any intervention based on this premise will be ineffective. If at the heart of our interventions, we are not looking at the causes of poverty and the reality of this in the lives of single mothers, our interventions will, by definition, be ineffective.

HISTORY OF HELPING WITH SINGLE MOTHERS IN CHILD WELFARE

In order to assess interventions provided to single mother families, it is important to look at the history of child welfare involvement with single mothers. Historically, single mothers were considered immoral or in need of direction. Swift (1995) looks at the development of current practices from a historical perspective and states that single mothers, historically, were seen as a deviant group within society as a result of their obvious poverty, thereby singled out for interventions. Rather than deal with the problems caused by poverty, political, social and economic forces united to make poverty appear as a function of individual pathology and therefore, align it with deviancy.

In his writings, sociologist Emile Durkheim stated that an important social function is served by the deviant and that denouncing the deviant is necessary to define the boundaries of normative behavior. Deviant behavior can be viewed as a social construct, and thus, a breach of social rules. Society itself has always seen single mothers as a deviant group.

Armitage (1975) states

the objectives of child welfare programming are primarily to correct a series of specific problems, including child abuse, child neglect, child behavior problems, and unmarried motherhood...This residual, problem oriented group of services can in no way be identified with any comprehensive view of the welfare of children. The implicit position taken is that the welfare of children will be looked after by the family...The consumer is left with the appearances of substantial response to his problem but not the substance. His failure to change is then attributed to his pathological state (pp. 102-51).

Volunteer "visitors" to the homes of the poor were being used as early as 1818 by the New York Society for Prevention of Pauperism. The Charity Organization movement is generally credited with being a precursor

of modern social work. It was prevalent in the last half of the nineteenth century, when the country began to be populated with groups of immigrants. These groups were seen as deviant from the North American norm and friendly visitor functions were designed to have these families incorporate the ideals of North American family life. Ledbetter Hancock & Pelton (1989) state that, from this early tradition "the concept that it is not only all right but necessary for poor people to permit a stranger into the home to ask questions, make judgments, and give advice has become firmly entrenched" (p. 25).

Single mothers were also a group that began to be visited for moral purposes. Mothers were distinguished as being 'worthy' as in the case of widows or 'unworthy' as in the case of mothers of illegitimate children or mothers who were prostitutes. Ledbetter Hancock & Pelton (1989) indicate "the emphasis on the economic aspects and the need for appropriate housing indicate that poor families were probably those who were visited primarily. Moral help or criticism was considered a possibility" (p. 22)

Ewan Macintyre (1993) in an historical examination of child welfare in Canada says that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, orphanages and training schools were established to remove children from poor houses and workhouses. This was done first by religious and charitable groups, then by municipal governments as a result of provincial legislation spurred on by middle and upper-class people who formed the child saving movement.

"These individuals wished to protect society from social unrest, to avoid present and future expenditures on public welfare, and to rescue city children and youth of the uneducated, lower class living in undesirable circumstances. They "blamed the parents of the children for the problem, but at the same time they ideologically reinforced the moral and social value of the family" (Albert, 1985: 330)" (p. 16). A study of J.J. Kelso gives a clear idea of the underpinnings of child welfare in Canada.

Cole (1995) states that the role played by social workers in child welfare is that of a "benign detective", in that there are two conflicting roles within the function of child welfare. On the one hand, social workers are encouraged to empower others and help them take charge of their lives. On the other hand, they "investigate" mothers for dysfunction as parents, acting as agents of social control. The dichotomy between these two roles has been analyzed. Cole (1995) quoting from Hepworth & Larson (1992) says "social workers persist in formulating assessments that focus almost exclusively on the pathology and dysfunction of clients - despite the time honored social platitude that social workers work with strengths and not weaknesses" (p. 171).

The legislation and structure of child welfare agencies, to a certain extent precludes any effective use of interventions with single mothers. There are certain attitudes, policies and programs in the field which discourage engagement with parents, and seek to have workers document only deficiencies. This has been recorded by both Swift (1995) and Cole (1995). One of the prevailing attitudes that preclude working with client families are the historical stigmatization of single mothers by social workers in child welfare agencies, who have seen single mothers as incompetent (Levine, 1992).

Historically, Polakow (1993) states: (quoting Gordon):

Their very lifestyle was suspect. Single motherhood and child neglect were mutually and simultaneously constructed as social problems, and many of the defining indices of child neglect, such as a lack of supervision, were essential to the survival of female-headed households. {States Gordon}: Such mothers could not conform to norms of domesticity. Their children were often dirty, infected with lice and worms, and so were they, because they lived in squalor in overcrowded, seeping tenements... Caseworkers frequently concluded that parenting and breadwinning by one person also led to child neglect, therefore it was argued that "single mothers were morally

bad, bad for children, bad for society"...Children from single-mother families were frequently removed by child caseworkers...caseworkers would remove her children if they were classified as neglected or abused (p. 52).

These concepts are still prevalent today in our policies. As Heywood (1946) states "the concept of care is still nineteenth century, based on removal of children...which has failed" (p. 130). Swift (1991) states that social workers in child welfare have upheld the dominant position in society and been punitive towards single mothers. She urges social workers to see the problem from the perspective of the single mother. She states

We see the children increasingly upset and perhaps difficult to manage as they move back and forth, from home to foster care...to maintain the support services the mother receives through her status as a child welfare client, she has to submit to ongoing scrutiny and criticism when her children are in her care. In fact, the support staff who help her will also act as scrutineers and may testify in court against her. The mother may often be required to make "contracts" with the worker imposing conditions on her lifestyle and relationships...she may be asked to sever ties with them {relatives}, which means cutting herself off from the very family we are taught to revere, and she will then be even more reliant on the agency to supply needed support for her child caring responsibilities (p. 258).

Swift states that child welfare workers, the majority being women, should be in a better position to understand other women within the system rather than reinforcing the status quo. This double standard between women or the 'policing of women by other women' makes the work of child welfare that much more difficult by marginalizing and disempowering both groups of women.

Swift (1995) further states that

in family foster care, the original poverty-stricken mother is

replaced by a working class woman who is supervised by a middle-class woman. The pay has always been low, on the theory that those who love can never be sufficiently compensated and those who do it for money appear to be insufficiently caring (Neysmith, 1991). Although the protection mandate of child welfare excludes mothers, it is mothers who have always been defined, thought of, and spoken about as the clients of the system. Perhaps our focus on mothers as clients helps to create a misleading kind of visibility for them. The concept of the client is inescapably tied to the power relations of the present welfare state in which the client is inevitably a supplicant (pp. 493-5).

Swift feels then, that in an effort to document cases of neglect against a mother, and single mothers in particular, workers have not always been inclined to help these clients who they see as unworthy and difficult to deal with. Conversely, other evidence states that single mothers when neglectful are difficult to deal with and that there have been repeated instances of child neglect as a direct result of maternal behavior.

Some of these cases where children were not protected from harm include "injuries from accidents when a child is left unsupervised, the ingestion of noxious substances when left in a child's reach; severe frostbite when a child is left outside without adequate clothing; or other incidents in which parental ignorance or minor thoughtlessness may be seen as the cause. Lack of feeding may be a major or minor contributing factor in 'failure to thrive'. Failure to secure essential medical care is another form of maltreatment" (Walters, Parry, Caplan & Bates, 1986, p. 450).

In a 1986 study Watters et al., found that "of the children who sustained injuries as a result of neglect, the parents' explanation of how they occurred often did not fit the nature of the injury. Parents had less education...a higher incidence of stress related to lack of housing and

frequent moves. The mothers of neglected children had more frequent histories of emotional and behavioral problems and of physical illnesses than the mothers of abused children. They had been involved with local child welfare agencies on several occasions" (p. 452).

Further, they found that children who were neglected but not abused "suffered a variety of health and emotional problems, as well as some severe injuries. The mothers of these children were younger than other mothers and displayed a higher rate of unemployment, a lower level of education, and higher incidence of stresses related to lack of housing and frequent moves. Watters et al. (1986) found that "children of very young parents {often single mothers} were more likely to be neglected than children of older parents" (p. 458).

The true incidence of child neglect is unknown as it is categorized by various labels from lack of supervision to inadequate medical care. This is where the conundrum of a definition of neglect comes in. Neglect has come to mean parenting work which remains invisible, it has come to be understood to mean cleanliness of a child and a home but, it also indicates cases where children lack medical and dental care; where children are left dirty to the point of a health concern; where children are left without supervision or small children are left to watch over younger children.

It is true that workers need to build a case by which a progression of neglect is demonstrated in order to ensure that it is not simply an isolated incident. However, the risks to children demonstrated from the latter cases as opposed to a bit of dirt and a messy house cannot be under emphasized. We know that an astonishing amount of child welfare cases in this country are opened every year under conditions which have come to mean neglect.

Helper (1968) states

Neglected children most commonly exhibit delayed development and growth in addition to varying degrees of malnutrition. Neglected

children have frequent illnesses, both major and minor, in any of the physical systems. They have chronic, smoldering illnesses, many of which are not life threatening or blatantly serious. If one reviews the medical records of neglected children which list each incident, multiple visits with similar or repeated problems are common. As every visit or failure to show up for an appointment is tallied, as the children's heights and weights are graphed and tabulated, the litany of neglect sounds loud and clear (pp.303-4).

What is being assessed in the above statement on neglect? Is poverty included in the litany of neglect? No examination of neglect can be realistically done unless poverty is included as a factor.

Gordon (1992) states

Poor women had less privacy and therefore less impunity in their deviance from the new childraising norms but their poverty often led them to ask for help from relief agencies therefore calling themselves to the attention of the child-saving networks. Yet poor women did not by any means figure only on the victim side, for they were also often enthusiastic about defending children's "rights" and correcting cruel or neglectful parents. They were quick to learn the right terms in which to manipulate social workers to side with them against patriarchal controls of other family members. Yet at other times they called upon traditional relations when community and kinfolk could help them retain control or defend children. Poor women often denounced the "intervention" of outside social control agencies like the SPCCs but only when it suited them, and at other times they eagerly used and asked such agencies for help (pp. 296-7).

It would appear than, that when poor women are involved with child welfare they, too, uphold the dominant ideology of society.

Summary and analysis

When we look historically at the role of the helping professions in the lives of single mothers, the punitive aspects of the helping professions come to the forefront. Historically, single mothers have been seen as deviant and therefore, intrusion into their lives has been warranted. This is magnified by their poverty and by their deviant status

Many of our notions of single mothers as deserving or undeserving of assistance, based on their entry into single motherhood status, reflect the ideological position of the New Poor Laws of 1834, and the division of the poor into 'worthy' and 'unworthy'. Some of the prevailing attitudes that preclude working with client families are the historical stigmatization of single mothers by social workers in child welfare agencies, who have seen single mothers as incompetent (Levine, 1992).

Historically, Polakow (1993) quoting Gordon states that "children from single-mother families were frequently removed by child protectors. Caseworkers frequently concluded that parenting and breadwinning by one person also led to child neglect, therefore it was argued that "single mothers were morally bad, bad for children, bad for society" (p. 50).

Swift feels then, that in an effort to document cases of neglect against a mother, and single mothers in particular, workers have not always been inclined to help these clients who they see as unworthy and difficult to deal with. Conversely, other evidence gathered states that single mothers are often neglectful and difficult to work with and that there have been repeated instances of child neglect as a direct result of maternal behavior. Again, single mothers' lives are characterized by isolation, loneliness and maternal depression. Zuravin (1989) suggests that embeddedness in the community by way of social support networks buffers against maternal depression and isolation.

The true incidence of child neglect is unknown as it is categorized

by various labels from lack of supervision to inadequate medical care. This lack of a clear definition of neglect has placed child welfare workers at a disadvantage when judging instances of neglect. It is true that workers need to build a case by which a progression of neglect is demonstrated to rule out those cases which are isolated incidents. This further increases the risk to children who are truly neglected and opens the lives of the single mothers to intense scrutiny.

When it comes to neglect of children, single mothers and their history of helping within child welfare agencies, what is the answer? Is it an absence on the part of the parent or an absence on the part of the child or an absence on the part of the child welfare agency? Interventions stress the incompetence of the single mother.

What we do know is that a surprising amount of child welfare cases are opened in this country every year under conditions which have come to be synonymous with neglect. The Risk Report (1995) has aptly demonstrated the link between neglect and the single, female biological caregiver. That single mothers should be found guilty of neglect in our society should not be surprising to child welfare workers, at all, when we look at the precedents set for the family in our culture. The nuclear family is seen as the norm. Motherhood, within the nuclear family, is a sacred position for women, who are there to see to the emotional needs of the family.

Motherhood is seen as an ideal for women, defined by certain feelings that a woman is to have in regards to her children and to her role. When a mother does not feel these emotions she is supposed to have, she is subject to being neglectful. We know, as mothers and fathers, that we do not love our children every minute of every day and that sometimes, because, after all, we are dealing with human beings, we do not even like our children nor their behaviors. Turow (1993) states "...it was Rousseau who began in Western culture the worship of the child, innocent and perfect in nature. Anyone who has raised a human from scratch knows this is a lie" (p. 86).

Mothers are made to feel guilty for the feelings that sometimes lead women to ambivalence when it comes to our children. Who has decided that the nature of love is that it finds perfection in all the actions of another? Mothers are judged as not caring for their children when we remove women from the context of having any role other than that of mother. We often state of single mothers, and mothers in general, that she is unable to put her own needs aside in order to meet the needs of her child. Why does she have to, if her child is cared for within a 'minimal standard of care'? More specifically, if the mother is wealthy and leaves her child in a boarding school for ten months of the year, do we say that she is neglectful? Or do we say that she has made appropriate arrangements for the care of her child?

Child welfare workers have been socialized in the same manner as everyone else and cannot be expected to not respond in unpredictable fashions to the problems of neglect. What needs to be examined is whether the interventions that have been espoused are meant to deal with the problem of neglect or the problem of women who deviate from the ideal of a nuclear family.

CHILD WELFARE INTERVENTIONS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Child welfare interventions with single mothers have not been effective. The majority have focused on removing the child from the mother's care. This supports the notion of an intrapsychic difficulty on the part of the mother as opposed to societal prejudice against single mothers. Programs within child welfare agencies are posited on certain premises. They all espouse the weakness of the child welfare client. Lovell (1988) indicates that child welfare interventions, since the 1930s, have proved ineffective in dealing with the problems of child maltreatment for all groups.

Swift (1991) states that "the responses established through the original legislation and by the first child welfare workers represent the same three elements of service that Kadushin (1967: 23) outlined as the basis of child welfare: (1) protection, to help parents "enact their roles in a more socially acceptable manner" and the "apprehension" or removal of children from homes found to be unsuitable; (2) supplementary services, the "second line of defense", and (3) substitute services, both temporary and permanent" (p. 239). There are many different interventions that have been attempted with single mothers, in a child welfare context. They have, at times, overlapped with other helping agency's interventions.

In the definition of "multi-problem families" are included those families who are involved with more than one helping agency. They are sometimes defined as "multi-service" families. Single mothers make up the bulk of "multi-problem" or "multi-service" cases in agencies, as documented by Imber-Black (1986). Once poverty is factored into any account of parenting, necessitating the reliance on social assistance, the door has been opened for other social service agencies to interfere in the lives of these women. Poverty has been linked to various disorders within society and associated risks to children. In 1991, 1,211,900 children in Canada were living in poverty, with Manitoba leading the provinces by an

overwhelming amount - 27% or one in four children, under the age of 18, in Manitoba, live in poverty (Canadian Institute of Child Health Report, 1994, p. 115). The poverty rates cited in this report did not include on-reserve Aboriginal children, which would further inflate the given statistics. Of these children, 89%, under age 7, live in 'single mother - never married' households and 81% of children under age 7 lived in 'single mother households.' 78% of children aged 7 - 17 lived in 'single mother - never married' households and 75% lived in 'single mother households' (p. 115). The distinction is that single mother households are those households resulting from separation and divorce. Other studies have documented the links between poverty and psychological disorders; juvenile delinquency and poor mental health (Polakow, 1993; Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986).

Polakow (1993) states "strangely absent for poor children is the democratic expectation that all young children are entitled to a decent life and to an equal educational opportunity. Rather, because their parents are poor, they too are punished. The construct of poverty as a private affair continues to mask the causes of poverty, which lie in inequalities of access and opportunity. Their poverty is viewed not as state-constructed but as their due, a condition into which they are born or fall, and most importantly, which they perpetuate" (p. 47).

Callahan & Lumb (1995) note that, in his 1991 study of child welfare in British Columbia, Campbell found "that female single parents coming into contact with child welfare services are poorer, have less education, and are more likely to be on social assistance than their two-parent counterparts. Further, children, in single-parent homes are more likely to come into care for reasons of neglect or failure-to-protect than for abuse" (p. 801).

As has been documented, neglect is often relegated to reflections of the state of the house or the cleanliness of the children, as parenting ability is largely invisible work. For a single mother whose care of her

children has been found lacking, without poverty being examined as a function of the status of neglect, there is an incomplete conclusion. There is also the shame and hostility towards the agency which means that this needs to be resolved in order to meet the "best interests of the child." This is a cornerstone of our child welfare legislation - that we will provide service in the best interests of the child. Swift (1995) states that the best interests of the child reflect the origins of custody disputes rather than child welfare legislation. Yet, it is also understood that we will provide a 'helping' function to the mothers in order to meet the best interests of the child. This, in effect, states Swift (1995) means that mothers, not children, are the true clients of the child welfare system. I concur.

We often neglect the best interests of the mother, feeling that women who complain or feel ambivalent about motherhood, and its associated difficulties, are selfish or immature. We are also influenced by our socialization beliefs - that there is an ideal of motherhood. Often, the very workers dealing with these clients, women, and most often, mothers themselves, must be feeling the pressures of conflicting ideals. Child welfare agencies are organized in such a way that these conflicts are not reviewed.

Callahan & Lumb (1995) state that

neither mothers nor workers are in a position to recognize this off-loading from state to family, from organization to workers. Instead, working individually and privately, case by case, according to a plethora of rites and regulations ignored at their peril, they accept the responsibility for protection. How could a mother not protect her child from the hazards of poverty or the violence of herself or others? How could a good worker not recognize the symptoms of neglect and abuse? Moreover, they are pitted against each other by a mandate that requires one, usually overworked and underpaid, to examine the other, also overworked and underpaid.

Workers' vision is narrowed by information systems that capture the failures of mothers to care for their children (Campbell 1992) and neither their successes nor the contextual variables that make their parenting a formidable challenge. Research that focuses on detecting potential neglecting and abusing parents and not on marshalling public support for their situation, and media stories that highlight the failures of workers to move swiftly and professionally to protect children from their incompetent parents (Franklin & Parton, 1991; Fry, 1991) widen the gap between workers and clients and smudge the responsibility of the community and government (p. 817).

As Swift (1991, 1995) points out often workers are looking to build a case against a mother rather than looking for solutions to the problems engendered by her marginalized status in society. The belief that women must deny their own self-interests in order to be good mothers is judged harshly by another woman. It is as though by reflecting on another woman's deviance, we can escape our own. These judgments might not be as harsh if our practice of pathologizing mothers was not as ingrained in social work and society as it is.

Levine (1992) found that there appear to be five common features of single mothers involved with child welfare agencies. They are: (1) social isolation; (2) dependence on social agencies; (3) low self-esteem and powerlessness; (4) limited access to resources and (5) stigmatization. In fact, Levin states "the correlation between low self-esteem, depression, drug use, and child neglect cannot be ignored in working with these families" (p. 461).

As we have seen, the friendly visitor movement evolved into that of investigator into the lives of poor families. There can be no denying that certain groups have been targeted for interventions by governments and the groups mandated by government. Among them have been single mothers. Child welfare workers have accepted the government's mandate to regulate the lives of these people and the ultimate responsibility has been judged to

be that of personal deficiency, rather than a problem with government policy.

The work of child welfare agencies is, because of the legal mandate, largely involuntary. Cole (1995) states that traditional child welfare services have the following components: "intervention after crises occur and needs intensify; offering only specific services or treatment; program and funding source dictate services; focus on individuals; emphasize family deficits; have strict eligibility requirements; have rigid office hours; often have waiting lists and the services are office-based" (p. 165).

On the involuntary level, several forms of intervention have been used with single mothers, the most powerful of which is apprehension of children for reasons of neglect or failure to protect or, historically, from homes found to be unsuitable. This, despite the fact, that little or no formal training for parenting is done on a societal level and often, women have inadequate or no support for the daily work of parenting.

Horowitz (1995) states

Much of the early literature concerning single parenting was rooted in the assumption that children of single parents were automatically at risk for some form of deviance ranging from weakened gender or "sex role" identity, to poor self-esteem, to social deviancy. Causal inferences were made from statistical correlations between family structure and children's traits and behaviors, while there may have been such associations, the role of intervening factors such as poverty were too frequently overlooked (pp. 45-6).

The element of poverty, a recurrent theme, cannot be eliminated from any study of single mothers. The role of kin support or social networks is often ignored once the role of poverty is ignored, as the support system will invariably be peopled from situations similar to the single mother's. Ideally, we would want to move the single mother out of this system and into the dominant one- one which will remove her from some of the visibly

harmful influences on her parenting ability. What is being ignored is that this mother will continue to live in the same neighborhood once her involvement with child welfare ends - or for the duration of her involvement. What needs to be changed here? The mother, the condition of poverty or the neighborhood in which she lives?

An attempt can be made to engender some form of kin support or social network, a support system that is often not studied within a child welfare context. Only recently have self-help networks for mothers become the vogue. These seem to have conditions to them, though. A study by Levine (1992) noted that often workers discourage non-group issue related talk between single mothers in parenting and support groups as this is seen as "survivor horror stories", rather than network building or a support function. Groups have an agenda and mothers are expected to follow them, as opposed to leading the group with their own agenda. Whose needs the group is meeting was questioned.

Howard & Johnson (1985) cite a 1981 study by McLanahan, Wedmeyer & Adelberg where three adaptive patterns in social network development of single mothers were identified. The first of these is the family of origin network, where the single mother relies on her own family for support and friendship. Sometimes the buffer of grandparents offering assistance does not bring or delays the attention of child welfare agencies. In addition to assistance with child care responsibilities, and financial aid, grandparents may act as a potential source of conflict for the adult daughter who returns, as a mother, to live with her parents. Limited research has been conducted in regards to role transformations that occur between mothers and grandparents when an adult daughter and her children begin to live with her parents.

This particular support system, with its familial loyalties, might prove stressful for single mothers. Sometimes the perceived and real costs of the support, on an emotional level, would be too costly for a single mother to bear realistically. The potential for family fireworks are high

in this scenario. Despite this, Morrison, Page, Sehl and Smith (1986) note that a significant number of low-income single mothers returned to their parents' homes in order to cope with financial strain (p. 38).

The second network is called the extended network and occurs when new friendship ties become important to the mother. This network would include single parent support groups and other single mothers as part of a woman's reference groups. Malo (1994) states that friends were the most efficient helpers and were the main persons from whom single mothers expected cognitive and emotional support. The third network is called a conjugal network. It is characterized by relationships with men who may or may not live with the single mother. This network becomes the one where most single mothers come into contact with child welfare.

Margolin's study (1992) found that because the men in the conjugal network are seen as illegitimate family members, child welfare authorities are more apt to receive reports in regards to these men. In addition, they represent a large reason for the charge of failure to protect that faces many single mothers in the child welfare system. Lancaster and Gelles found that the factor of these children not being related to these men, increased their risk of abuse. We know that mothers are found guilty of "failure to protect" or neglect under child welfare legislation, in most instances. Campbell's 1991 study of child welfare in British Columbia confirms this as does the 1994 compilation of child welfare data for the country.

What has not been studied is the need for single mothers not only to form relationships as other adult women do but, to leave their poverty status by forming relationships with men who might provide some financial security. The termination of a marriage, for whatever reasons, signals to the woman her failure to maintain a secure relationship with another adult and since women have been socialized to get married, have children and "live happily ever after", these factors might precipitate relationships with men who might not have desirable influences on either the mother or

the children. For the mother, stressed from the responsibility of parenting on her own and isolated, the possibility of a relationship with a man where she might be able to share some responsibility for parenting and have some of her needs met, might seem attractive. The reality is that when one lives in a depressed neighborhood, the choices for partners are limited.

For many single mothers, their limited education, precludes them meeting men in higher income brackets, with more education and desirable social skills. For some single mothers, the very real possibility of violence in these new relationships precludes approaching anyone for assistance. She will come to the attention of the child welfare system when the violence escalates to a point where she has "failed to protect her child(ren) from extensive family violence."

Since we are aware from other research that single mothers are at an increased risk for stress, and because we know that to be self-reliant in our culture is a virtue, it should not be surprising that single mothers are often reluctant to ask for the services they need. Malo (1990) states "this may signal a lack of personal resources to seek help or to face the costs associated with it, but may also indicate the capacity to obtain needed support without having to ask for it...the behaviors judged as helpful or harmful from the subject's point of view may not be fundamentally different. The perception depends on the relationship of the mother with the potential helper, the expectations she has, the costs associated with the request, or the attitudes behind the offered help" (pp. 76-7). Should we see this reluctance as not being able to assess a situation where help is truly needed? Or a natural response to our society's dictum that self-reliance is the best for all and that those who are not self-reliant are somehow deficient?

With this, we have the crux of the problem with child welfare interventions - the attitudes behind the offered help, what the costs of these are to the woman and the expectations she has of the service she is

being offered. We know that the perceived costs of a service is what impedes all people from approaching certain agencies for assistance. Parenting is largely invisible work and one for which we receive no training. It is implied that women have knowledge of child care that is inbred. How is a mother to state to child welfare workers, who are judging her parenting, that she is uncertain of mothering? If she is poor, asking for help is more difficult not only because of our ethic of self-reliance, but because she becomes a supplicant.

Single mothers are among the least economically viable groups in the country. Poverty and neglect of children are positively correlated. As stated earlier, this has been seen as a form of pathology rather than an economic condition. One of the primary methods of intervention with single mothers has been to apprehend their children and place them in foster care. The onus then is placed on the mother to prove her worthiness to parent her child. Another form of intervention that has been used is the use of temporary foster care. Temporary foster care can be executed in one of two ways: involuntarily or voluntarily.

In the case of involuntary foster care, after apprehension of the child and through a court order, mothers are offered various prescriptions, which if fulfilled, will result in their children being returned to them. These prescriptions invariably involve changes to the way mothers parent and offerings of courses such as S.T.E.P. {Systematic Training for Effective Parenting} or other parenting courses. The remedies often involve changes in the mother's lifestyle. However, the remedies can be further evidence of failure if the element of community is not altered.

Once a single mother has become involved with the child welfare system, a file will be generated in her name. It is the practice of most child welfare agencies to open the file under the name of the mother, as it is assumed that she will have a constant relationship with the child. As Swift (1995) and Callahan (1991) have noted these practices further set the system up to continue to investigate the mother and her failings. They

further note that files can be subpoenaed to court for any further litigation purposes, and that this often becomes evidence in custody and access disputes. In a temporary foster care situation, a single mother may be asked to pay for the care of her child while in the foster care system. In some cases, it becomes part of the court order and litigation can be the result of non-payment. In cases where the mother cannot afford to pay for her child's care, the agency will apply for her family allowance. The social assistance office will be alerted to the child's placement in agency care.

In this way, cases against single mothers are built. These measures are all punitive and have taken an exacting toll on single mothers and the child welfare system. Swift (1995) states that workers actively look for ways to build cases against single mothers. She further states "as Hepworth shows (1980), this high number of apprehension and placement in care, in turn became a problem, as many of these children remained in foster care for years. Punitive measures proved to be expensive, both in terms of agencies' annual budgets and its emotional costs for families, workers, and the children themselves" (p. 112).

Once single mothers are involved with the child welfare system, they are often offered support programs such as mutual aid programs; volunteer measures or therapy based on the model of the nuclear family. Single mothers are encouraged to meet on a regular basis with their workers in order to discuss problems and receive counselling. Sometimes, mothers are referred for counselling outside of the child welfare system and into the mental health system. These outside helping agencies must report to the child welfare authority.

A further conundrum arises from the fact that most of the proffered therapies are oriented toward people who, it is assumed wish to be there to solve problems. If a single mother is judged to have intrapsychic difficulties, but the real problem, for her, is that her children have been removed from her care, how much change is going to be effected? How

is she to realistically work on her parenting skills when her children are not in her care? How is her parenting being judged? How is she to demonstrate to both the child welfare system and the legal system, that she is in a position to look after her children, if she loses her subsidized housing as a result of their removal? Or refuses parenting classes because 'everyone knows how to take care of kids'? At this point, it would be helpful if the definition of neglect were clear. Child welfare agencies would then reflect what is expected and needed for change. Swift (1995) expounds further on these questions when she looks at the gender bias inherent in child welfare work.

The child welfare system has introduced certain programs designed to provide one-on-one assistance to mothers. One of these has been what is known as "teaching homemakers." Teaching homemakers are, preferably, "mature women who have raised children successfully" (Hartmanns, 1985, p. 50). They are volunteers who are in a position to assist other mothers with child raising tasks and household management. A further intervention has been that of "lay therapists", volunteer women who, again, "have successfully parented and have no psychological difficulties" (Hartmanns, 1985, p. 54). The role of the lay therapists is to act as confidante to the mother and to provide friendship to the mother, whether or not her children are in the care of the agency. Although the clients often report that these services are beneficial, they are only beneficial for the time that they are ongoing and what is never explicitly stated to the mother is that these involvements form the basis of records that can be ultimately used as a case against her at a later date.

One of society's ideological foundations is that poverty is a result of personal pathology. While condemning their reliance on social assistance, and expecting them to be ideal mothers, we also expect that the single mothers we work with will be available for these interventions on the workers' schedule, which means from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and not on weekends or holidays.

These 'catch-22' situations invariably fail as they are not designed with the reality of the situation in mind. Swift (1995) states "on the surface we see a picture of child neglect characterized by repeated episodes of 'poor care' that is, care authorized as unacceptable by personnel mandated to act by sets of sanctioned social processes...Workers act to effect its 'fit'; in so doing mothers are continually produced as faulty or damaged individuals requiring ongoing supervision and authority. At the same time, this view of mothers justifies our continued failure to solve the problem: Damaged individuals reproduce themselves in their children; it is a rising tide that our helping efforts can barely stem" (p. 172).

Halpern (1984) states "the inability of the research {conducted to date} to demonstrate consistently the benefits of these programs may stem from poorly defined and widely varying program goals, interventions, and service parameters that make comparisons between programs virtually impossible. Also, the research is characterized by widely varying outcome measures that may be of questionable validity and reliability" (p. 11).

Cameron & Rothery (1984) cite studies conducted in Hamilton and London, Ontario with mothers of children at risk of entering foster care that claimed success in terms of mother's self-esteem but not in terms of reducing placements of children in care or in closing more cases. Unfortunately, the effects of the raising of self-esteem were not long lasting. Although clients stated that the program and its measures were helpful, no significant changes were reported in parenting behaviors for those mothers who were involved in the program.

Measures designed to be punitive and measures to change the nature of mothers have not worked to prevent child neglect nor have they ended the numbers of mothers raising children on their own. Measures deemed supportive to mothers seem to make no appreciable difference to parenting behaviors of mothers. Measures mothers found supportive have not ended the cases of neglect of children nor reduced caseloads. What implications does

this hold for social workers involved with single mothers in the child welfare field?

Summary and analysis

The interventions proposed to deal with neglect suffer from the lack of conceptual definition which forms the basis for the operational definition. Without a solid operational definition, well planned interventions are obscured. As a result, interventions will remain ineffective and prejudiced against single mothers.

Swift (1991) finds that the responses established through the original legislation and by the first child welfare workers represent the original elements, as outlined by Kadushin in 1967. "They are: (1) protection, to help parents "enact their roles in a more socially acceptable manner"; and the apprehension of the children from homes found to be unsuitable; (2) supplementary services and (3) substitute services" (p. 239).

Many different interventions have been attempted with single mothers in a child welfare context. These have, at times, overlapped with the solutions offered by other agencies, often earning single mothers the title of "multi-problem" or "multi-service" family. It seems that once poverty has been factored into any account of family functioning, the door has been opened for various agencies to intrude in the lives of the poor.

For a single mother, found guilty of neglect, with no accounting for poverty, there is a sense of shame and hostility toward the agency which needs to be resolved in order to meet the best interests of the child - a cornerstone of the child welfare mandate. Often the best interests of the mother are neglected. Workers feel that women who complain or feel ambivalent about their roles as mothers are selfish and immature for, as we have seen, it is premise that 'mothering' is instinctual behavior for women.

Callahan & Lumb (1995) state that women who work in child welfare,

being mothers themselves, for the most part, should strive to break down the barriers that pit woman against woman, in an effort to prove who is the most capable to judge motherhood. Swift states that workers are often looking to build a case against a mother rather than trying to find her strengths, further pathologizing the mother and allowing her to be further marginalized by her status. These harsh judgments by workers might not be as damning if the practice of pathologizing mothers was not as ingrained in society as it is.

Since women have been socialized to feel that marriage and motherhood are career choices, and to feel incomplete without a partner, there is some irony in the fact that pursuing that norm would result in a single mother's being charged with failure to protect her children from the man with which she has a relationship. The element of poverty cannot be eliminated from any study of neglect and yet, is often ignored. As a direct result of their poverty, it would make sense that women would join themselves with men who could raise the standard of living in the household. Since men have been socialized to be dominant and the head of the family, these men would feel that the disciplining of the children is their right.

What seems important to consider about interventions with single mothers is governed by the perception on the part of the mother about the relationship with the potential helper, the expectations she has, the costs associated with the request or the attitudes behind the offered help, as expressed by Malo (1994) (pp. 76-7). In this statement, we have the crux of the problem with the interventions that have been designed.

The work of child welfare agencies is largely involuntary and several forms of intervention have been used with single mothers. By far the most powerful has been the removal of children from the mother's care for neglect or failure to protect. This removal of children has occurred, despite the fact that no formal training for parenting is done on a societal level and often, women have inadequate or no support for the

daily work of parenting. The onus is then on the mother to prove that she is capable of parenting her children, to both the child welfare agency and the legal system. Included in this proof is a prescription for what she must do to regain custody of her children. These prescriptions invariably include how the mother will improve her parenting skills and her lifestyle. The question of how the mother is to parent her children when they are not with her does not enter the equation.

A great deal of literature has been written concerning single mother families. We know of their difficulties. We know of the associated risks of these poor households to children. We know of their poverty. We know that we have ignored that poverty, often, in favor of looking to pathological reasons for poverty rather than the inequality of social structures.

We know that cases of neglect continue to plague child welfare agencies yearly and that the number never seems to decrease. We know that single mothers are over represented in cases of child neglect. We know that agencies have sometimes been unfair to single mothers. We know that there are children who are seriously affected every year by neglect. We know that these will continue and that our efforts to stem the tide have been ineffective. These cases are not going to go away.

Truly, there are children who are seriously damaged as a result of neglect. However, the definition of neglect is so shrouded in the ideals of the family and of motherhood, that we are in danger of losing it as a worthwhile category of maltreatment in child welfare. What are we measuring and how is it that women, in particular single mothers, have been found guilty of this offense against children?

Neglect will invariably be the basis for child welfare interventions in the lives of single mothers. Neglect will invariably be found in much of the conducted child welfare investigations. Much of the funding for child welfare remains designated for the areas of physical and sexual abuse. It is my belief that the relationship between single mothers,

neglect and the child welfare system will continue to be documented as vigorously at the turn of the next century, as it was at the turn of this century. The implications of ignoring the circumstances of poverty and resulting neglect in the lives of single mothers holds important implications for social workers.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored the single mother in the child welfare system by examining the demographics of single mothers in Canada and in Manitoba. What became apparent when these demographics were presented is that single mother families are among the poorest groups in the country. They have less formal education, including high school than other groups of women. They are generally single mothers as the result of divorce or separation.

They tend to be employed part-time when they are employed at all. Most rely on government transfer payments for the bulk of their income, which makes their poverty more visible. They generally live in poorer neighborhoods. They are socially isolated as a group and sometimes experience difficulties with substance abuse or psychopathology.

Due to their poverty and their deviance from the societal norm of the nuclear family, single mother families are very visible in our society. The nuclear family is the norm for our culture and this has been defined legally, anthropologically, sociologically and historically. The nuclear family, as characterized by mother, father and children is encoded in our laws and forms the basis of our child welfare legislation. The family itself has several functions and single mothers are unable to meet these functions because of their poverty, low educational attainment, stress, and social isolation. By their poverty, single mothers, highly visible in the community, also are unable to achieve success as defined in our society. A myth perpetuated in our society is that anyone can rise to a position of power and influence and this can best be achieved through pecuniary success. That single mothers are unable, because of their poverty, to meet this myth renders them deviant members of our society, and subject to anomie.

Girls are socialized to accept the norm of the nuclear family form as an ideal when they grow up and to see motherhood as a natural function

of their biological processes. Women are taught how enviable a status motherhood is and women are ascribed status by their role as mothers. Motherhood itself has certain characteristics which are ideal and by which mothers are judged. The definition of a good mother has been created by various theorists over the centuries and the waxing and waning of it can be traced historically. The current ideal makes it difficult for anyone to be a mother and to measure up to what is expected of women, as mothers.

Our notions of ideal motherhood colour our perceptions as child welfare workers, where the societal norm is strongly reinforced. Child welfare is aware of the link between poverty and neglect. Ignoring it has rendered our interventions with single mothers ineffective, as we search for interpersonal difficulties.

There is a positive correlation between single mothers and the neglect of children. This has been ongoing since at least the turn of the century, as documented by various authors, most notably Gordon and Swift. Yet, we seem unable to stem the tide and change conditions for these women and children.

There is a need for child welfare to re-examine its position on neglect and the failure to protect categories of child maltreatment to reflect the poverty that is endemic to neglect. Ignoring this has placed single mothers in a precarious position in society, where they are too often found guilty of neglect of their children.

If we want to change society we can begin by changing
the kind of people we are.

While the creation of new attitudes is not in itself a revolution
perhaps it helps create the preconditions.

(Babcox, 1970)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Recommendation # 1:

The definition of neglect needs to be re-investigated and re-defined. Generally, the categories are too broad and all-encompassing. From the amount of case openings that occur in child welfare agencies in one year as a result of neglect issues, it would seem that neglect is a 'grab bag' for child welfare workers.

Part of the problem, as has been alluded to earlier, is the fact that neglect has been lumped together with abuse in legal definitions, as if they were interchangeable categories. One does not necessarily lead to the other.

If we expect a 'minimal standard of care' for a child, we must be clear on what that 'minimal standard of care' will comprise. We must be able to specify, when speaking of neglect, what is the behavior which needs to change, in which way and in what time frame, so there can be no misunderstanding as to intent on the part of the worker or the mother.

Recommendation # 2:

The category of 'failure-to-protect' needs to be realigned in regards to situations of family/spousal violence. Currently, if a woman refuses or is unable to leave a situation which is dangerous for both her and her children, the decision in regards to the safety of her children is simply narrowed. The woman is then offered the choice of having her children apprehended or leaving the situation with her children.

I maintain that women who are in violent relationships, might not be

in a position to protect themselves, let alone their children. If there is a child welfare investigation, unless it is evident that the mother has been an accomplice to the violence against her children, she should be excluded from the investigative procedures. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to look at re-framing legislation in order to clearly operationalize situations of failure to protect. The existing legislation assumes guilt and refusal to act to protect children.

I am not advocating allowing women to be irresponsible for their behavior or saying that all violence is perpetrated by males but, simply recommending that we see the situation within the social context in which the behavior occurred. There are circumstances where single mothers do fail to protect their children and these cases need intervention. We must be clear on what these cases are.

Recommendation # 3:

Child welfare workers need to deal with the men who are present in the lives of single mothers. I refer to both the putative fathers of these children as well as the men who are present in relationships at a later stage of the mother's life. We know from research conducted that single mothers' boyfriends are over represented in child abuse statistics and that the threat of maltreatment to children increases as a result of the man's non-biological relationship with the child. We have the evidence to deal with these issues. Often, child welfare's response has been to charge the mother with 'failure-to-protect' which obscures the fact that the man is responsible for the maltreatment of the child. This has been documented by Callahan & Lumb (1995).

Until we begin to deal with these men, we will misunderstand their role in the lives of single mothers. We will continue to see the woman as acting upon 'impulse' when forming an alliance with a man rather than seeing the social structure that has been set into place. That social structure stresses conformity. When a single mother forms a relationship

with a man, she is fulfilling a role that is touted for all women in society. Legislation needs to address the role of these men.

In reflecting on this, I believe that perhaps some of our reluctance to deal with these men might stem from the very real threat that these men pose to our own sense of safety, particularly for those of us who are women child welfare workers. The threat that this man's violence might explode unto us is a realistic one.

Realistically, volatile situations means that we feel less in control of the situation. This surely places us on a par with the woman in that situation and in the unique position of being able to understand immediately her fears.

Recommendation # 4:

Child welfare workers need to change their personal and professional attitudes toward single mother clients. We need to develop a critical consciousness when dealing with these women.

The policies of governments are not going to change. Recent government policies, both federally and provincially, are placing the onus for self-reliance even more squarely on every person's shoulders and the repercussions of this will be widespread. Poverty will continue to be seen as an enemy against which we need to wage war. The lives of single mothers will continue to be reflections of poverty, with its associated risks.

We know of the poverty, the lack of education, the poor housing, the social isolation, the difficulties these women sometimes manifest by substance abuse and psychopathology. They are reflected in our child neglect case openings, case notes and court files on single mothers. We know these women can be difficult to deal with.

We need to be careful to not separate the household problems from their social base and view them as a dynamic between the mother and her children. Women child welfare workers need to honestly appraise their own situations as mothers and allow for the ambivalence that we all feel in regards to our status as mothers. We need to acknowledge our beliefs in

love, marriage and motherhood as related to our socialization and the larger social structure.

Swift (1995) states "we must constantly remind ourselves in looking at this work organization that if the object of this work were really to 'rescue' children, we could do so. We are a rich country; the resources are there. Baths and clothing could be given, housing provided, education ensured, treatment programs funded. It is not workers, after all, who object to help being provided; ordinarily workers act to provide what little help there is. However, in the contradictory fashion that characterizes child welfare, workers themselves are presented in the prevailing debates as central to the problem. This fact itself becomes a further mechanism of social reproduction, one which obscures highly complex and deeply rooted relations of class, gender, and race at work beneath the surface" (p. 179). This forms the base of our 'critical consciousness' - to view the situation in all its facets. We might still find the mother neglectful, but can also see the woman.

Recommendation #5:

We need to have effective interventions. When designing interventions, we need to look realistically at what the costs of poverty and neglect are for single mothers and their children. The services need to reflect usefulness to single mothers rather than 'reform' of the single mother. Perhaps single mothers should be polled as to what they feel would be most effective. Also included in interventions should be a component on how to deal with the men in the lives of these women.

As part of our involvement with single mothers in child welfare, we often list five or six conditions that need to change within a proscribed time frame. Knowing how slow change is for most of us, is it a wonder that often single mothers are not able to complete the tasks or feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks that need to be accomplished? To simply say that it's obvious a mother is not interested in her children or she would change 'condition x' is not being realistic and risks being high-

handed. We know women define themselves through their status as mothers. We know the importance of status for someone trying to realize the goals of the mainstream. Should we wonder then, when confronted with the removal of her children, that a single mother, neglectful or not, will say 'what will I do without my kids?'

Recommendation #6:

Money needs to be allocated from the base budgets of agencies, targeted specifically for programs to deal with neglect. Programs should be run from the perspective of community. We cannot effect change without community development. When under financial constraints, as agencies currently are, the first programs that are laid aside are those which deal with neglect - the parenting programs, the mutual aid programs, the homemaking programs.

For many women, and I would even venture to say, for almost all women, our self-esteem and status are caught up in our roles as mothers so, we need to look realistically at this aspect of women's lives because the reality of child welfare is not "if all else fails, I'm still a mother".

It is my belief that these women are difficult to deal with because we ignore the basic issues in their lives and subscribe to the notion of an ideal mother, under which all mothers are failures. We forget that, in this equation of ideal and failure, we, as mothers, are included.

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APPENDIX AEligibility and welfare incomes, 1993Eligibility

Eligibility for welfare is based on some general rules, on a determination of fixed and liquid assets, and on a shortfall in household income as measured by a "needs test".

Applicants must qualify for assistance on the basis of rules which vary widely throughout the country. For example, applicants must be of a certain age (usually between 18 and 65). Full-time students of post-secondary (sic) educational institutions may qualify for assistance in some provinces only if they meet specified conditions. Single parents must try to secure any court-ordered maintenance support to which they are entitled. Individuals who are disabled require medication certification of their conditions. Strikers are not eligible in most jurisdictions. Immigrants must try to obtain financial assistance from their sponsors.

Applicants also must meet requirements concerning their fixed and liquid assets. The value of their non-exempt assets, as explained below, cannot exceed certain levels. Otherwise, applicants are considered to be self-reliant or potentially self-reliant because they can convert their fixed assets into liquid assets.

Rules vary regarding the treatment of fixed assets. In most provinces, a principal residence and personal effects such as furniture and clothing are considered exempt. Most provinces exempt the value of a car, although some jurisdictions take into consideration such factors such as the need for a private vehicle and the availability of public transportation. Property and equipment required for employment are generally considered exempt.

The limits on liquid assets (cash, bonds and securities that are readily convertible to cash, and the cash value of life insurance in some

provinces) are shown in Table 1 that follows (not included in this appendix). The amounts vary by household size and employability.

Provinces and territories set their own maximum allowable liquid assets. If they want to qualify for cost-sharing, however, the amounts cannot exceed the maximums set by Ottawa.

The federal maximum of liquid assets are:

- ★ \$2,500 for a single person and \$3,000 when an individual is aged or disabled.
- ★ \$5,000 for a person with one dependent (spouse or child) and \$5,500 when the applicant or spouse is aged or disabled.
- ★ an extra \$500 for the second and each additional dependent

Note: Welfare Incomes, 1993: A Report by the National Welfare Council of Canada.

APPENDIX BInvestigations of child maltreatment by type of case and ProvinceYears: April, 1991 - March, 1992**Newfoundland**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	953	21.0%
Sexual	1,407	31.0%
Emotional	431	9.5%
Other (includes neglect)	1,747	38.5%

Prince Edward Island

There is no information for Prince Edward Island as to type of investigations undertaken. The listing is by legal status and age group of children in care. Prince Edward Island has no child abuse registry.

<u>Legal status</u>	<u>0 - 11 years</u>	<u>12 years and older</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Apprehended	26	6	32	15.5%
Temporary ward	3	7	10	4.9%
Permanent wards	15	64	79	38.3%
Voluntary care arrangements	24	38	62	30.1%
Wards of another province	1	n/a	1	30.1%
Adoption placements	6	3	9	4.4%
Follow-up to child in care	3	6	9	4.4%
Unknown	2	2	4	1.9%
Total	80	126	206	
Percentage	38.8%	61.2%	100.0%	100.0%

Nova Scotia

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Children provided protection in their own homes	7,066	100.0%
Abuse and neglect	1,563	69.4%
Family support (short term for crisis intervention with high risk families)	690	30.6%

New Brunswick

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	1,521	20.0%
Sexual	1,478	19.4%
Spousal abuse in family	476	6.2%
Neglect	2,865	37.6%
Child beyond control	1,280	16.8%

Quebec

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Abandonment	1,490	9.3%
Neglect	7,835	48.3%
Physical	1,112	6.8%
Sexual	1,421	8.8%
Behavioral problems	4,350	6.8%

Ontario

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	9,449	50.1%
Sexual	8,216	43.5%
Emotional	497	2.6%
Other	705	3.8%

Saskatchewan

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	310	10.2%
Sexual	289	9.5%
Emotional	32	1.0%
Physical neglect	691	22.7%
Parent/child conflict	379	12.4%
Parenting ability	614	20.2%
Domestic violence	28	0.9%
Non-ward care of child	9	0.3%
Investigations	689	22.7%
Child under 12	4	0.1%

Alberta

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Abuse (not differentiated)	8,860	34.3%
Neglect	5,776	22.4%
Parent/guardianship problem	5,143	19.9%
Child problem	1,176	6.6%
Handicapped child	346	1.3%
Other	745	2.9%

British Columbia

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	683	23.8%
Sexual	537	18.7%
Emotional	125	4.4%
Neglect	941	32.8%
Other (multiple)	482	16.8%

* British Columbia figures exclude calls made to help line so percentages do not add up to 100.

Yukon

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Neglect	115	35.5%
Physical	51	15.7%
Sexual	45	13.9%
Emotional	11	3.4%
Relationship breakdown	20	6.2%
Other (anything not listed)	28	8.6%
Investigation ongoing		
Neglect	36	11.1%
Physical	8	2.4%
Sexual	9	2.8%
Emotional	1	0.4%

Northwest Territories

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Physical	15	19.7%
Sexual	13	17.1%
Parental neglect	48	63.2%

Note: Child Welfare in Canada: The Role of Provincial and Territorial Authorities in cases of Child Abuse. (1994). Federal-Provincial Working Group on Child and Family Services Information.