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HISPANIC MOTHERS WHO SEND THEIR CHILDREN AWAY TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME: A LOOK AT THEIR OBJECT-RELATIONS, ACCULTURATION AND STRESSORS

by

Carina Kuttenplan

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

HISPANIC MOTHERS WHO SEND THEIR CHILDREN AWAY TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME: A LOOK AT THEIR OBJECT-RELATIONS, ACCULTURATION AND STRESSORS

by

Carina L. Kuttenplan

Advisor: Professor Steven Tuber

The purpose of the present study was to use psychoanalytic and cross-cultural methods of inquiry on a non-clinical population to empirically evaluate those aspects that play a role in the behavior exhibited by many Hispanic mothers who separate from their children at an early age by sending them to their country of origin for long periods of time. Specifically, the goal of this study was to obtain a deeper understanding of the mother's psychology and of the needs addressed by their separating from their young children, who are then raised by relatives, oftentimes the mothers' mothers. It was proposed that mothers who separate from their children at an early age and for extended periods of time would be mostly mothers who have not become *acculturated* (or integrated in the host culture) but rather stayed primarily attached to their motherland traditions, women who experience overwhelming *psychosocial stressors*, combined with poor or limited sources of support, and women who have undeveloped and unintegrated *object-relations*, and who are consequently more conflicted about separating from their mothers and their culture. The variables explored in this study were those of acculturation, stressors and object-relations. The tools used were the Bidimensional

Acculturation Scale for Hispanics, the Hispanic Stress Inventory, and the Object-Representation Inventory: Differentiation-Relatedness Scale of Self and Object Representations.

Results from the study revealed no link between acculturation and separation, indicating that acculturation is not a determinant factor in the decision to separate. On the other hand, this study's results show that mothers' stressors and their internal world, determined by their object-relations, play a crucial role in their decision to separate from their young children for extended periods of time. In particular, the results suggest that Hispanic mothers who separate from their children at an early age, had a long-term history of early neglect and/or abuse, markedly unintegrated and unstable self and object representations, and consequent significantly high levels of stress and anxiety. This result underlines the importance of considering the mothers' object-relations in the study of early and prolonged maternal separation.

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This project is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my mother, Arcelia Kuttenplan, who was the inspiration behind this study.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

It is a common occurrence in the Hispanic community that immigrant mothers send their children away to stay with their own mothers or other close relatives in their countries of origin, for long periods of time. It is usually understood that these mothers separate from their children due to the heightened levels of stress that they experience in the United States, a consequence of financial pressures and of the strains of having to adapt to a new culture and language. Although sending children to stay with relatives in their country of origin is often perceived as acceptable or as "normal" in the Hispanic culture, both because of its wide occurrence and because of the important role that the extended family plays in this population (McGoldrick et al., 1982), research shows that children can be seriously affected by early and prolonged separations (Spitz and Wolf, 1946; Roudinesco and Apell, 1951; Bowlby, 1953, 1954, 1977, 1980, 1988; Ainsworth et al., 1956; Winnicott, 1967; Mahler et al., 1975; Sroufe, 1988; Blatt, 1990). These authors demonstrate that children who were separated at an early age and for extended periods of time from their mothers are more vulnerable to depression, and to cognitive and behavior difficulties. As Diamond and Blatt (1994) indicate, attachment research shows that it is by age 5 or 6 that identifications become consolidated and the early parent-infant attachment becomes replicated both in the child's transactions and in the child's self-representation. Therefore, a mother who separates from her child in his or her first five or six years of life might inhibit the child's capacity to develop meaningful and lasting attachments to the mother and others as well as an integrated and well-defined identity.

The purpose of this study is to achieve a greater understanding of the conscious and unconscious needs that some Hispanic mothers fulfill (or hope to fulfill) when they separate from their children at an early age to send them to their country of origin for extended periods of time. Internal and external factors that may motivate these mothers to separate from their children will be examined. The internally determined aspects that are studied are mothers' object-relations. It is understood that these 'internal' aspects are built throughout development and are mostly of an unconscious nature. The externally determined circumstances to be considered in this study are psychosocial stressors, such as financial pressures and limited educational attainment. These 'external' circumstances are usually of a conscious nature and can be modified in a limited period of time. This study also looks at acculturation, which is considered to be both internally and externally determined.

It is perhaps because of this phenomenon's complex nature and its cultural implications that it is still a relatively unexamined topic in the present literature of psychology and cross-cultural psychology, regardless of theoretical orientation. I intend to explore, both from a socio-cultural and from a psychodynamic perspective, a portion of the Hispanic population that believes that separating from their children is the best alternative and/or the only option to improve the quality of their own lives and often that of their children as well.

This study will compare 2 groups of Hispanic women, born in the Dominican Republic, who have a low socio-economic status. One of the groups will consist of 25 women who sent their young children (from newborns to 6 years of age) to their country of origin for a period of 3 months or longer. The other group will consist of 25 women

from the same background and SES who have not separated from their young children for an extended period of time as a behavior of choice.

This study will compare both groups of mothers in terms of their acculturation, psychosocial stressors, and object-relations to identify any or those particular aspect(s) that differentiate one group of mothers from the other one. In other words, the aims of this research include: I. Clarifying the impact that acculturation or the lack of acculturation has, if any, on this behavior, II. Understanding the impact that psychosocial stressors might have in the immigrant Hispanic mother's decision to separate from her children and III. Understanding whether there is a connection, and the particularities of that possible connection, between the mothers' object-relations (or representation of themselves and others) and their choosing to separate from their young children for extended periods of time.

Specifically, I would like to explore the role that each of these variables play in the behavior exhibited by many Hispanic mothers who send their child or children away to live in their country of origin and usually under their own mothers' care. This research hypothesizes that the mothers who have separated from their children at an early age and for extended periods of time would be mostly women who have not become acculturated or immersed in the host culture but rather stayed attached primarily to their customs and traditions, women who have high and overwhelming psychosocial stressors, combined with poor or limited support, and women who have more undeveloped and unintegrated object-relations, and who are therefore more conflicted about separating from their own mothers and their culture at large. Being under the mother's closest relatives care, usually the mother's mother, the child would receive the concrete physical and emotional attention

that the mother wished to have had in the past and to receive while she is away. In this way, the child would function as a transitional object for the mother. By becoming immersed in his/her mother's culture, the child would allow the mother to stay bonded with her own mother and traditions. Besides, the child's mother herself would feel taken care of in a concrete and tangible way by having her mother's help and support while she is in a foreign land at moments of stress. This bond would also allow the mothers to keep a split image of their own mothers by preserving the "good" aspects of their care now being deposited onto their children.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Hispanic Mothers: Cultural expectations about mothers' and children's role

Gil and Vazquez (1996) describe a profound clash between women's role expectations in the United States and in Latin countries. In the Hispanic culture there is often a split between the expectations carried by a Latino woman's family and community and by the Latino woman's individual needs and desires. According to these authors, a Hispanic woman is expected to be an uncomplaining daughter, wife, and mother. These are described as conditions for Latino women to derive *respect* and *admiration*. Thus, in the Latino culture, women are expected to prioritize becoming a good wife and mother over everything else, including their own needs and wishes for a personal life and profession.

At the same time, women are expected to be 'ladies' and as such they are taught to control feelings of anger and frustration. While Latino men are allowed and expected to carry and display those feelings, women are usually not expected to either express their negative feelings or to experience them. As Gil and Vazquez (1996) state, Hispanic tradition does not encourage daughters to confront or to disagree with their mothers and other authority figures because it tends to be interpreted as disrespectful. Javier (1996) adds that adherence to the cultural code of respect calls for the individual to be submissive and deferential to authority figures. Therefore, many Latinas are not aware of their intense negative feelings and of their fear towards those feelings. Consequently, somatizations are common ways in which these strong feelings find an outlet.

McGoldrick et al. (1982) describe the emphasis that Latin cultures place on the social rules of respect and on the repression of aggression. Common channels of aggression attributed to women are: "Gossip (often about sexual behavior) and psychosomatic complaints (such as headaches, stomach or body aches, and fatigue)" (p.170). Therefore, Latin women often experience feelings of anger and frustration only when these feelings become so overwhelming that there is simply room for overreactions and for making a scene. Nervous attacks (ataques de nervios) are often seen as another culturally learned way of expressing repressed anger or sexual tension, with its secondary gains of exercising control over the family or of receiving support and care from others (Mc Goldrick et al., 1982).

One of the main conflicts that a Latin woman encounters when she comes to the United States and is exposed to new values and expectations from the American culture is that the Old world tradition states, in many different ways, that a Latin woman cannot be independent-minded. Gill and Vazquez (1996) describe: "To many people, the very term 'independent-minded Latina' is a paradox, a contradiction in terms" (p. 4). In other words, in the Hispanic world, neither men nor women expect a woman to become independent or autonomous as she grows up.

In the same way that *machismo* is defined by Victor de la Cancela (1986) as a socially learned and reinforced set of behaviors which men are expected to follow and to fulfill in the Latino society, *marianismo* defines the ideal role of women (Stevens, 1973). This ideal takes its name from the Virgin Mary herself. Gill and Vazquez (1996) define marianismo as based on women dispensing care and pleasure, rather than receiving them, and on their living in the shadows of the men in their lives (fathers, husbands, boyfriends

and sons), their children and families. These authors describe the gender role expectations embodied by *marianismo* as traditions that were handed down as written in stone by mothers, grandmothers, and aunts. Some of these expectations are: 1) not to forsake tradition; 2) not to be single, self-supporting, or independent-minded; 3) not to forget that sex has only a reproductive function and cannot involve pleasure; 4) not to discuss personal problems outside the home; and 5) not to be unhappy with your partner or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal or physical abuse.

Even though Machismo and Marianismo are extreme versions of gender-role definition within the Hispanic culture and large numbers of women are now increasingly working and confronting their husbands or other family members, these behaviors have been transmitted for generations throughout the years and still shape many women's conscious and unconscious images of, and expectations for, themselves. I am referring here to the concept of *ethnic unconscious* (Herron, 1995), which alludes to repressed material that each generation shares with the next and is shared with most people of that ethnic group.

Bernstein (1992) asserts that "...the adoption of traditional gender roles is more common among Hispanics than among Anglo groups." This author adds: "women learn to endorse the traditionally 'feminine' values of passivity, affiliation, and emotionality. By contrast, the male gender role is characterized by instrumentality, strength, aggressiveness, and achievement-orientation, and restricted emotionality" (p. 242). Bernstein's study confirms the cultural sex-role concepts of machismo and marianismo that characterize Hispanic men as having a marked tendency to be strong, authoritative, and dominant, while Hispanic women tend to be gentle, submissive, obedient, and homebound. The

expectations around gender roles define girls as obedient towards their parents. Thus, a well brought up girl is expected to be obedient, humble, and respectful of elders and their authority.

The role of the mother and women in the Hispanic tradition

In most societies, the role of the mother involves teaching her children the cultural values and worldview of her society. In Latin cultures, the climate for traditional gender behavior is often present before birth and most Hispanic families express a preference for male children. A possible explanation for that is that boys are considered the proof of their fathers' virility. Although girls are welcomed too, they are often perceived as the ones who will help the mother take care of the housework and the men in the family (Gil and Vazquez, 1996).

Early on, girls learn that their mothers are under their fathers' authority and dependent on their decisions. The interaction of the girl with her mother teaches her to be obedient, both towards her parents and the men in her life. Since the cultural expectation is that the mother is the primary figure who assumes responsibility for the child's rearing and education, it is clear that mothers play a significant role in the development of their children. Despite her passivity and obedience where men are concerned, the Latin mother has great authority in relation to her children. "It is the woman's responsibility to care for the home and to keep the family together. The husband is not expected to perform household tasks or to help with the child rearing. This arrangement results in wives assuming power behind the scenes, while overtly supporting their husband's authority"

... "The mother has the major responsibility for disciplining the children, but the father is expected to be the real enforcer. However, at times the mother plays the role of mediator between the father and children, forming an alliance with the children that tends to isolate the father from the family" (McGoldrick et al., 1982, pp. 170-172).

Mothers demand strict compliance with what they feel is correct, particularly from their daughters, and they expect them to be obedient, passive, and respectful. It is unthinkable for the children to openly disagree with the mother's wishes and they are often punished for doing so. McGoldrick et al., suggest that Latino cultures tend to emphasize the importance of the family unit or group rather than that of the individual. Latino families "do not see their children as individuals with minds of their own" (p. 172).

Although the typical Latin mother is strict, punishes, and discourages disagreement, she also smothers her children with love and indulgence when they accede to her desires (Mc Ginn et al., 1965). It is a common experience for Latin mothers to claim that they are the only ones who know what is best for their children and for the children to learn that a battle can only be avoided by submitting to the mother's will. Because Latin women are not taught or expected to be independent-minded, Hispanic mothers teach and expect their daughters to accept their domineering and controlling behavior. In different ways, separation and individuation are challenging steps for any young child. Gil and Vazquez (1996) believe that separation is especially daring for little girls in the Hispanic culture. They cite different examples of women who struggle as adults to see themselves as independent and who experience strong guilt about wanting to separate from their overprotective mothers who have dictated how they had to dress and behave until the day they left their homes to be married. In this way, separation-

individuation patterns present some differences to the mainstream approach. In the Latin tradition, it is especially important for the daughter to develop a close relationship with her mother if she wants her support, while confrontation is discouraged and interpreted as disrespectful.

On the other hand, Hispanic mothers' dedication to doing the housework, to rearing the children, and to obeying and tolerating their husbands' authority often leaves them feeling devalued and lonely. Negy and Woods (1992) tell us: "In traditional Hispanic culture, little importance is placed on shared interests and joint activities between husbands and wives" (p. 228). Mothers' loneliness and diminished power in their marital relationship can be seen as another factor that leads them to be overinvolved and overdependent on their children and their lives. This overdependence in turn, can lead children to develop a poor self-image that increases their need for the mother's approval while intensifying the belief that she is generally unhappy and disapproving (Gil and Vazquez, 1996).

Daughters' experience of need for their mothers' support and approval combined with feelings of loyalty and protection towards them and against the oppressive men of the house, leave little room for girls to be in touch with and express any negative feelings towards their maternal figures; in turn, these are feelings which need to be defended against. In a space where mothers connect to their children by being 'needed,' where closeness and dependence are encouraged and where confrontation, anger, and disagreement are discouraged, complicated and conflictive issues around separation have a stronger tendency to be present. Gil and Vazquez (1996) explain that as a result,

women's dealings with their mothers are often colored by undealt and unresolved negative feelings while the positive ones prevail.

Research in infant attachment: Comparison of Anglo-American and Hispanic samples

Research in infant attachment illustrates the impact of culturally influenced values on parents' behaviors in early childhood socialization. In particular, research in infant attachment shows that low income Hispanic mothers of Puerto Rican and Dominican ancestry tend to stay near a great deal, to do many things for, and to have close physical contact with, their infants. "Hispanic families displayed closer mother-child relationships and more open verbal and physical expression of parental affection than Euro-American samples. Traditional values reinforce close physical contact between mother and child and frequent preemptive physical interventions to teach and protect the child; contemporary inner-city living conditions require the continuation and valuing of these maternal behaviors" (Zayas and Solari, 1994, p. 202).

Fracasso et al., (1994) further demonstrate that there is a pattern of attachment classification that is characteristic of cross-cultural and low SES samples. Their findings indicate that maternal behavior associated with infants' security differed from previous research. "Consistent with previous work (Goldsmith & Alansky, 1987; Grossman et al., 1985; Lamb, Thompson, Gardner, & Charnov, 1985), maternal sensitivity was associated with the formation of secure attachment relationships and increased routine holding was associated with insecure relationships. In our study, however, increased use of parental interventions was related to the *secure* attachment classification, Ainsworth et al. (1978) reported a relationship with *insecurity*" (p. 151). In other words, frequent parental

interventions correlate with insecure attachment in Euro-American samples while in Hispanic samples from a low socioeconomic status, frequent use of physical interventions correlate with the secure attachment classification.

At the same time, Harwood's (1992) study compares a group of Anglo mothers of middle and low SES and a group of Puerto Rican mothers of low SES in terms of desired and undesired child behaviors in the Strange Situation. This author explains that Anglo mothers described a desirable toddler as one who during preseparation, separation, and reunion in the Strange situation, respectively shows: "a) balanced distal play with involvement of the mother; b) either played happily the whole time (middle-class Anglo), or followed mother initially but then returned to play (lower-class Anglo); and c) greeted the mother happily on her return, and was either content to continue playing (middle-class Anglo) or came to the mother for physical contact (lower-class Anglo). *The picture is that of a relatively active and independent, yet emotionally connected Group B infant.* In comparison, the Puerto Rican mothers' modal description of desirable Strange Situation behavior included a toddler who: a) sat quietly for a few minutes, then played sitting near the mother; b) played happily and quietly without following; and c) greeted the mother happily and came to her for physical contact. *The picture is that of a responsive Group B infant who maintains relative proximity to the mother while engaged in quiet play*" (pp. 828-829). In terms of mothers' descriptors of undesirable Strange Situation behavior, the Anglo mothers described a clingy, distressed Group B4 or Group C infant, while the Puerto Rican mothers' undesirable picture is one of a highly active, interpersonally unresponsive Group A infant.

Fracasso et al. (1994) tell us: "Minturn and Lambert (1964) suggested that an integral aspect of parenting in Hispanic population is the mother's frequent use of physical interventions. These findings suggest that across different economic conditions, sensitive mothering needs to be defined within the context of cultural values" (p. 151).

Hispanic parents' beliefs and attitudes towards their children's socialization

Zayas and Solari (1994) explain that "minority group parents have culturally determined developmental goals for their children and, therefore, their reactions, perceptions and behaviors will differ from majority group parents. Furthermore, how parents socialize children is influenced by the circumstances in which the parents themselves developed ... different distributions of infant attachment classification are linked to cultural variation in parenting behavior and life experiences. The parent's socialization values, beliefs, goals, and behaviors are determined in large measure by what their culture defines as good parenting and preferred child behaviors for each gender" (pp. 201-202).

These authors assert that while Anglo-American mothers prioritize the presence of self-confidence and independence in the child, Puerto Rican mothers emphasize the importance of the child's demeanor, obedience, and quality of relatedness. In their research, these authors demonstrate that Anglo-American and Puerto Rican mothers attend to different dimensions of children's behavior, based on their cultural background. That is, while " Anglo-American mothers gave greater emphasis to qualities associated with the mainstream American ideal of individualism; such as autonomy, self-control, and activity...Puerto Rican mothers described the children in terms congruent with the Puerto

Rican cultural emphasis on relatedness, such as affection, dignity, respectfulness, responsiveness to the mother and others, and proximity seeking" (p. 202).

Moreover, according to Zayas and Solari: "In low income Hispanic families, parents and the extended family serve as the primary mentors for transmitting important values of the culture. The socialization goal that emerges is to have children accept that family is to be the central focus of their lives. A child rearing practice that incorporates these goals is the insistence on children's conformity to parental and extended family authority, which often extends to conformity to the authority of other adults as well. Aside from reflecting the esteem given to parents and the importance of family relatedness, this socialization practice helps in identity development, which is intimately tied to the family in Hispanic cultures" (p. 201). According to these authors, further research, conducted by one of the authors, confirms that Puerto Rican mothers consider family closeness, respect for adult authority, for family values and for religion as paramount child rearing beliefs. The importance of giving priority to family closeness over self-reliance and autonomy has been also studied and confirmed by Escovar and Lazarus (1982).

Consequently, most Hispanic parents socialize children to behave in ways important to the family, regardless of the norms of the dominant culture. A study about parents' beliefs, by Okagaki and Sternberg (1993), illustrates the differences that can exist between parental and school expectations. While immigrant parents believe that conforming to external standards (obedience, rule following, conformity in the classroom, family closeness and respect for authority) is more important to instill in their children than

the development of autonomy, Anglo-American teachers (and parents) emphasize behaviors such as independence, verbal expressiveness, and self-directed activities.

At the same time, Zayas and Solari's study (1994) shows that Hispanic parents find that noncognitive characteristics, like motivation, social skills and practical school skills, are as important as cognitive skills, if not more so than cognitive skills. In contrast, Anglo-American parents emphasize the importance of cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, verbal and creative ability.

In sum, Anglo-American mothers strongly value and promote their children's self-confidence and independence while Hispanic mothers emphasize their children's demeanor, obedience, and quality of relatedness. These studies of Latino parents' beliefs and attachment styles illustrate the differences that exist between Hispanic parents' attitudes and values and the expectations and values encouraged by the schools and the society at large in the American culture.

Because of the discrepancy between the values that Hispanic parents foster and expect from their children and the values that schools and the host culture at large in America promote in children, Hispanic parents often find themselves threatened by and disempowered with their own children. Thus, the different values emphasized by the dominant American culture threaten non-acculturated Latino mothers' expectations, particularly in terms of their own role as mothers and that of their children.

Although research studies reflect the importance of the family unit and of the close physical connection between mothers and children in the Hispanic tradition, this culture (like every other one) can carry conflictive and maladaptive aspects within itself when the

dependency fostered by mothers has been so extreme that individuation and relatedness have been distorted or dismissed.

It is possible to infer that Latino women who have not been able to separate internally from their mothers and families and therefore could not develop enough autonomy, become seriously threatened and disorganized by the physical separation from their loved ones when they migrate in search of a better life. Both because of their feelings of inadequacy as mothers but especially because of their sense of inadequacy as independent beings in an unfamiliar and removed culture, these women would send their children back to their mothers and communities as a way to preserve their connection with them. The inability of some Hispanic mothers to cope with the stress of living away from their family of origin and to adapt to some degree to the prevailing culture because of their difficulty functioning separately can lead to dangerous and maladaptive outcomes. One of these possible outcomes is the separation of these mothers from their children as a means to cope with the heightened stress that they experience, often accompanied by feelings of depression. This outcome is considered to be dangerous and negative because it is generally not adaptive both for the children who are left behind and exposed to the sudden loss of their primary caretaker and for the mothers themselves who are left lonely and often with conscious or unconscious feelings of guilt.

In Bach's words: "...the longed-for maternal functions make their appearance in the guise of idealized imagoes, making the other far more important than the self. Although this may resemble object-love...it is still a functional use of a part-object, and subjects one to attacks of rage and emptiness when the idealization inevitably fail." This

point will be later examined and discussed in terms of its implications with this study's subjects' acculturation, stress, and object-relations (1994, Introduction, p. xxi).

B. Acculturation

1. Different definitions existent in the literature

"Acculturation was first identified as a cultural level phenomenon by anthropologists (e.g., Redfield et al., 1936) who defined it as culture change resulting from contact between two autonomous and independent cultural groups" (Berry, 1998, p.117). When individuals become in touch with another culture, either by moving to another one (such as by becoming immigrants or refugees) or by becoming colonized by a dominant culture, people change both culturally and psychologically in numerous and various ways. The term acculturation is a term coined by anthropologists and psychologists that literally mean "to move toward a culture" (Berry, p. 117). Berry (1998) explains that nondominant groups often accept (or may be forced to accept) the language, laws, religion, and educational institutions of the dominant group. However, dominant groups are often influenced in return, for example, in adopting modes of dress and eating habits. Acculturation is also an individual phenomenon, requiring individual members of both the larger society and the various acculturating groups to engage in new behaviors, and to work out new forms of relationships in their daily lives. These cultural changes are highly variable from one contact situation to another and the actual outcomes are not easy to predict.

Moyerman and Forman (1992) describe acculturation as "the process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviors of persons from one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different culture" (p. 163). Negy and Woods (1992) explain that acculturation "generally refers to the transfer of culture from one group of people to another group of people. However, usage of the term more commonly refers to a process of change

experienced by members of a minority group toward the adoption of the majority group's culture ... To this end, within the context of the United States where Anglo-Americans constitute the majority or dominant group, those of non-Anglo-American backgrounds are said to have become *acculturated* to the American life-style when they have acquired the language, customs, values, and so on of the Anglo-American culture...This process of change is frequently viewed as a form of adaptation" (p.224).

According to Berry (1980) the minority or weaker group frequently adapts in some degree to the dominant group as a consequence of the stress they experience from maintaining their values and customs. Berry's model implies that acculturation is always a stressful element and that the more dissimilar the two cultures are, the more acculturative stress the minority group will experience in the process. Padilla (1991) defines acculturation as the process through which the values, attitudes, and behaviors of an immigrant group change as a result of contact with the new, dominant culture. Thus, immigrants with low acculturation will demonstrate behaviors and values consistent with their native culture, whereas those highly acculturated will acquire behaviors and values congruous with the dominant culture.

Acculturation or changes in individuals as a consequence of their contact with one or more cultural groups can be the product of violent events such as wars, invasions, the conquests of certain lands, or of more peaceful events such as the federation of states, the creation of common markets, missionary activities, or tourism. However, acculturative changes are most commonly produced by the migration of an individual to a new culture (Marin, 1993).

Negy and Woods tell us "The inquiry to a person's level of acculturation to the American life-style essentially asks 'to what extent is the person like an Anglo-American?' The exact question can conversely be posed as 'to what extent is the person like a Hispanic/ if the individuals of interest are of Hispanic descent. Those attempting to measure acculturation typically have done so from the latter question's standpoint" (1992, p. 227).

2. Definition adopted by this writer

"...acculturation is a long-term, fluid process in which individuals simultaneously move along at least two cultural continua or dimensions and whereby individuals learn and/or modify certain aspects of the new culture and of their culture of origin" (Marin & Gamba, 1996, p. 297). According to Marin (1993), the psychological and social changes that are part of the acculturation process are usually dependent on the characteristics of the individual (e.g. level of initial identification with the values of the culture of origin) as well as on the intensity of the contact between the different cultural groups. Even though contact with the host culture can be considered inescapable for immigrants, the intensity and quality of the contact vary from one individual to another due to their employment and education as well as to their level of exposure to the mass media and to the nation's institutions. Acculturation and psychosocial adjustment are seen as ongoing processes (Flaskerud & Uman, 1996).

3. Different ways to measure acculturation (unidimensional and bidemensional scoring systems)

Traditionally, some of the values and attitudes associated with Hispanics and measured by acculturation scales include loyalty to the family, strictness of child rearing, respect for adult authority, separation of the sex-roles, male superiority, and time orientation (Ramirez, 1969). Other characteristics commonly taken into account by some of the acculturation measures include fluency of language and socio-cultural attitudes and behaviors (Szapocznik et al., 1986) or cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty (Padilla, 1980). Yet other acculturation measures have focused on the person's adherence to Hispanic values such as familism, machismo, and respect (Fracasso et al., 1994).

Negy and Woods (1992), explain that "the primary deficiency with acculturation studies appears to be the lack of agreement among researchers on an appropriate definition of the construct (acculturation) and on a measurement that satisfactorily assesses it. Unfortunately, acculturation's multidimensional nature may preclude ever having one scale capable of adequately and sufficiently capturing it, thus requiring multimeasures and multimethods of assessment" (p. 227).

There are basic differences in the ways in which acculturation has been operationalized. One perspective considers acculturation as a *unidimensional* process that moves individuals away from their original culture toward the host culture. The result of this process would be that acculturating individuals become as similar as possible to those of the host culture. This definition of acculturation would be best described as *assimilation* because individuals are expected to become part of the new group or to fold in with the members of the host culture (Marin, 1993). Most early definitions considered

acculturation as a simple continuum of change with a monocultural unacculturated individual at one end and a monocultural acculturated (assimilated) individual at the other end of the continuum (Organista et al., 1998).

The underlying assumption of all models that associate acculturation with assimilation is that a member of one culture loses his or her original cultural identity as he or she acquires a new identity in a second culture. The assimilation model leads to the hypothesis that a non acculturated individual will suffer more stress, be more anxious, and experience more acute social problems (such as school failure or substance abuse) than someone who is fully assimilated into that culture. However, acquiring a new cultural identity under this model, involves some loss of loyalty to and awareness of one's culture of origin that entails three identified major dangers. The first one is the likelihood of being rejected by members of the culture of origin, the second one is the possibility of being rejected by members of the majority culture, and the third is the likelihood of experiencing excessive stress as one attempts to learn the new behaviors associated with the host culture and to shed those behaviors associated with the culture of origin (La Framboise et al., 1998).

An alternative possibility called *biculturality* by most researchers suggests that individuals undergoing acculturative processes will learn the characteristics of the new culture while retaining some or all of the cultural components of their original group. In this way, bicultural subjects will feel equally comfortable with both cultures, will hold the values and respect the norms of both cultures, and will retain a dual cultural identity (Marin, 1993). This model assumes that it is possible for an individual to know and understand two different cultures and to have a sense of belonging in two cultures without

compromising his or her sense of cultural identity. The alternation or bicultural model posits a bidirectional relationship between the individual's culture of origin and the second culture in which he or she is living rather than the linear and unidirectional relationship of the first model. The alternation model suggests in fact that it is possible to maintain a positive relationship with both cultures without having to choose between them and without assuming a hierarchical relationship between the two cultures.

As suggested by its name, the 'alternation' model supposes that an individual can alter his or her behavior to fit a particular social context similarly to the code-switching theories found in the research on bilingualism.

Rogler et al. (1991) point out that traditionally, acculturation has been studied under a mutually exclusive or bipolar model that contrasts Hispanicism and Americanism: "The assumption is that increments of involvement in the American host society culture necessarily entail corresponding decrements or disengagement from the immigrant's traditional culture" (p. 587). These authors adhere to the alternation approach based on the formulation that the two cultures (the original and the host's society) are not necessarily mutually exclusive or bipolar and that acculturative involvements in each of them could be measured separately.

Individuals who incorporate both cultures and those who have shifted to the English-speaking culture have been found to have significantly more years of education and to have lived in the United States longer when compared to individuals who identify predominantly with their Spanish-speaking culture. This implies that a certain degree of familiarity with the host culture is necessary before an individual moves away from primary identification with the native culture. Being bicultural, however, is not merely a

halfway point between identification with one's native culture and identification with the host culture, but it represents a unique pattern of acculturation (Magana et al., 1996).

These authors have also found that those who are bicultural speak predominantly Spanish within the family but maintain social affiliations with individuals from both cultural groups. On the other hand, individuals whose style of acculturation is what is called shifting (to the English-speaking culture) are most likely to speak English within the family, but to maintain social affiliations primarily with other Hispanic individuals. Consequently, the bicultural individual maintains a strong connection with the Hispanic culture within the privacy of the home and family, speaking primarily Spanish in this setting. Those whose acculturation style involves shifting away from the Hispanic culture and toward non-Hispanic, Euro-American culture have begun to speak primarily English within the home while at the same time socializing predominantly with others of Hispanic descent. This suggests that those with a shifting acculturation style may tend to live primarily in proximity to other Hispanics who have acculturated in a similar manner while bicultural individuals are more likely to venture out into the mainstream of American culture.

Several scales have been developed to examine acculturation as a bidimentional process that allows the assessment of biculturality. For example, Szapocznik et al. (1980) presented a Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire that measures Hispanicism and Americanism with separate measures. However, some of these measures have also shown some shortcomings, such as the production of acculturation scores that are unidimensional in nature. Most published acculturation scales for Hispanics either consider acculturation as a unidimensional process or produce acculturation scores that are unidimensional in

nature. Therefore, most scales erroneously consider the acculturating process as a zero-sum behavior in which individuals move from a Hispanic pole to a non-Hispanic pole, implicitly indicating that as gains are made on one cultural domain equivalent losses take place on the other cultural domain (Marin & Gamba, 1996). These authors believe that other problems with current acculturation scales are that they seldom measure various areas of acculturative change and few utilize psychometric data-reduction techniques to psychometrically derive their acculturation scales. The lack of internal consistency and validity of some measures of acculturation (i.e., Torres-Matrullo's Inventory, 1976) or the use and development of some acculturative measures for one specific Hispanic subgroup (usually Mexican-Americans or Cubans), have limited the generalizability of many instruments and their usefulness in comparative or cross-cultural studies. Many acculturation scales are based only on Mexican-Americans (i.e., measures developed by Burnam, Tellews, Karno, Hough, & Escobar, 1987; Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Deyo, Diehl, Hazuda, & Stern, 1985; Mendoza, 1998; Olmedo, Martinez, & Martinez, 1978; Padilla, 1980). Many other scales are specifically based on Cuban-Americans (i.e., Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez' Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire, 1980; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtinez, and Arnalde, 1978).

Two basic and troublesome assumptions have influenced the development of acculturation scales. One of them is the simplified mutual exclusion or bipolar model of acculturative change that contrasts Hispanicism and Americanism. The second one is that acculturative scales are applicable across diverse Hispanic groups, disregarding the fact that Hispanics display a considerable diversity both in terms of their socioeconomic status and with respect to specific cultural elements historically rooted in their respective

nationalities. A measure that bypasses these problems and studies Central Americans' biculturalism as well as identity, intimacy, ethnic identity, and attributional style is the Birman-Zea Acculturation Scale (Birman & Zea). However, this measure is still unpublished. One other measure that takes these problems into account focuses on Central Americans and measures acculturation as a bidimensional process is the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale. In the present study, I will use the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS) developed by Marin & Gamba (1996). This scale measures bidirectional changes in behavior that are central to the individual in two cultural domains (Hispanic and non-Hispanic). The BAS is based on a bidimensional model of acculturation and allows for the identification of individuals who tend to become bicultural as well as of those who become or remain primarily monocultural. Its items cover topics such as frequency of use of English and Spanish when speaking and thinking in different contexts; linguistic proficiency to speak, read, understand and write in both languages; and language-based media preferences and use patterns (radio, television, and music).

A fourth subscale that included items that looked at participation or preference for culture-specific meals, celebrations, holidays, literature, and music; and ethnicity of friends, neighbors, and dates or spouse showed poor validity coefficients. These items were subsequently dropped from the scale.

According to Magana et al., (1996) Marin's scale is useful in its evaluation of differences in different categories of behavior. Mendoza (1989b) has also discussed the importance of Marin's investement in measuring the degree of acquisition of the customs of an alternate society as well as the degree of retention of native cultural customs. Using the BAS measure, Kestemberg (1998) found that Puerto Rican grandmothers who were

bicultural and Anglo-acculturated reported significantly less grandparenting needs with their grandchildren (less difficulty and less frustration) than grandmothers who identify more with the traditional Hispanic culture.

4. Acculturation and Mental Health

"Acculturation levels have been shown to affect, among other things, Hispanics' mental health status (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980), level of social support (Griffith & Villavicencio, 1985), social deviancy, alcoholism, and drug use (Graves, 1967; Padilla, Padilla, Ramirez, Morales, & Olmedo, 1979), political and social attitudes (Alva, 1985), health behaviors such as the consumption of cigarettes (Marin, Perez-Stable, & Marin, 1989) and the practice of preventive cancer screening (Marks, Solis, Richardson, Collins, Birba, & Hisserich, 1987)" (Marin, 1992, p. 247).

Acculturation may involve rural-to-urban changes, language barriers, unemployment, poor housing, discrimination, and pressure to assimilate. On the other hand, the receiving society may host a subculture of the same ethnic community that protects the immigrant from the stress associated with acculturation (Flaskerud & Uman, 1996). A large number of studies on acculturation have reported an improvement in psychological well-being in relation to increased levels of acculturation (Warheit et al., 1985; Vega et al., 1985; and Flaskerud & Uman, 1996, among others). These studies have associated increased acculturation levels with a rise in self-esteem. Flaskerud & Uman found that education and religious involvement, with its consequent increase in social integration, were also correlated with changes in acculturation and higher self-esteem (1996). These authors highlight the importance of making education, language

and skills training, knowledge. support, and community resources available to immigrants as a way to enhance their psychological well-being.

Several authors, such as Rogler, Cortes, & Magaldy, 1991; Lambert, 1977; Garcia, 1983; Rashid, 1984; and Martinez, 1987; have found that bicultural involvement is the best predictor of esteem, well being, and mental health (La Framboise et. al, 1998). Among others, Suarez, Fowers, Garwood, and Szapocznik (1997) found an inverse relationship between biculturalism and the degree of loneliness and alienation in undergraduate Hispanic American students. Miranda & Umhoefer (1998) found that bicultural Latinos obtained significantly higher scores in social interest and lower scores in depression when compared to both high and low level acculturation groups and Buriel et al. (1998) found that biculturalism is positively related to academic performance in Latino adolescents of immigrant families.

However, researchers' lack of agreement on acculturation spreads to most of its aspects, there is neither one operational definition nor an assessment device for acculturation on which researchers agree. Furthermore, some studies found that Hispanic-Americans who identify more with the traditional Hispanic culture than with the Anglo-American culture are better psychologically adjusted, whereas other studies found that biculturality is more associated with good psychosocial adjustment than the status of being low or high acculturated (Negy and Woods, 1992).

Despite the limitations in its conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement most studies have found that acculturation is an important predictor of behavior in Hispanics (Marin, 1993).

La Framboise et al. (1998) suggest that an individual living within two cultures will suffer from various forms of psychological distress. They believe that the key to psychological well-being may be the ability to develop and maintain competence in both cultures. Furthermore, these authors argue that the ability to develop bicultural competence is affected by one's ability to operate with a certain degree of individuation or internal sense of self as separate from one's environment. Thus, they suggest that it is a substantial degree of personal integration or a strong sense of self what allows a person to cope with the negative consequences of acculturative stress. According to Berry (1998) stress may arise, but it is not inevitable during acculturation.

The concept of acculturative stress alludes to feelings of anxiety, depression, marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion. According to Berry (1998), acculturative stress is always a possible consequence of acculturation, but its probability of occurrence can be much reduced if both participation in the larger society and maintenance of one's heritage culture are welcomed by policy and practice of the larger society. In many ways, the concept of acculturative stress parallels Freud's (1920) description of trauma as an excess of external stimuli that overcomes the protective barrier against overstimulation, which can lead to long-lasting disturbances in ego functioning.

La Framboise et al. (1998) allege that it is the individual who is enmeshed in his or her social context and has a fragile sense of his or her identity as distinct from his or her social organization who will have greater difficulties confronting the psychological stress of immigration and developing bicultural competence.

The process of migration is a potential traumatic experience characterized by a series of partially traumatic events that entail mourning the loss of the old country and the separation from loved ones, together with the need to confront new situations and interpersonal encounters. Consequently, migration often brings about processes of splitting (between the good and the bad land), the emergence of the most primitive anxieties (paranoia and annihilation anxiety), caused by the loss of the ideal object with the helpless ego left to fend for itself, and the struggle to compensate for and rediscover the lost object with progressive distancing from the original maternal object (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). In other words, the traumatic experience of migration is associated with feelings of helplessness and the loss of the protective mother or containing object. The loss of the containing mother carries the threat of ego disintegration and dissolution and a blurring of boundaries in extreme situations. This risk is particularly felt when the subject has suffered major deprivation and separation in infancy, with the resulting feelings of anxiety and helplessness.

Grinberg and Grinberg (1989) suggest that the emigrant's options of "adaptation," "adjustment," or "assimilation" depend on the qualities of the attachments between the newcomer and the receptor group. These attachments are perceived as affected by the types of object relations the individual had before he/she emigrated and by the object relations of the community that receives him or her.

Other intrapsychic factors such as ego strength, resolution of feelings of loss, and the ability to tolerate ambiguities, including gender-role ambiguities also influence migrants' adaptation processes. These factors actively interact with other aspects that pertain to the new country such as language proficiency, ability to find a job, losses or

gains in status or social class, educational level, degree of similarity between the two cultures, and reception by citizens of the host country (Espin, 1987). "Policies or attitudes in the larger society that are discriminatory (not permitting participation, and leading to marginalization or segregation) or assimilationalist (leading to enforced cultural loss) are all predictors of psychological problems" (Berry, 1998, p. 122).

Migration is not only likely to disrupt attachments to supportive networks in the society of origin but oftentimes the migrant is also faced with problems of economic survival and social mobility in an unfamiliar socioeconomic system. These uprooting experiences are accompanied by problems of acculturation into a new cultural system, of acquiring the language, behavioral norms, and values characteristic of the host society (Rogler, Cortes, and Magaldy, 1991). It is because of this reason, that Grinberg & Grinberg attribute great importance to the development of a 'potential space,' in Winnicott's sense. These authors argue that the immigrant needs to develop a transitional place between the mother country/object and the new outside world; a potential space that grants him/her the possibility to experience continuity between the self and his/her surroundings.

Acculturation studies on mental health tend to reveal a positive relationship between low acculturation and mental health indicators such as depressive symptomatology (Canabal & Quiles, 1995). The relationship between these factors has been reported to be even stronger in adult female Hispanic immigrants than in male Hispanic immigrants or in the general United States population (Salgado de Snyder, 1987). Social class status and education have also been found to be inversely related to

depressive symptoms and unmarried or divorced individuals have been found to have a higher risk for depressive symptomatology (Blumenthal, 1975).

The traditional expectations for the role of women in the Latin culture may foster the isolation of some women from the mainstream culture. These Latinas will seldom seek psychotherapy because they may be reluctant to do so, unable to afford it, or likely to encounter opposition from family, friends, or husbands who perceive psychotherapy as an invasion of privacy. Traditional Latinas often consult a psychotherapist after being referred by a medical doctor as a result of repeated somatizations. Somatic complaints might be the result of a masked depression or of other types of emotional disorder. Frequently, the contrast between home and host cultures is stronger for women than for men in terms of what constitutes appropriate gender-role behavior (Espin, 1987).

Gil and Vazquez (1996) observe that in the context of immigration, Latino women might feel extremely vulnerable and terrified of losing the affection and esteem of loved ones as well as parts of their own personal identity. As a result "the home culture may become idealized and its values, characteristics, and customs may become a symbol of the stable parts of personal identity and the strongest defense against any sense of identity loss that might be endangered by acculturation. This attempt to preserve 'old ways' tends to increase intergenerational and gender-role conflicts in the family" (Espin, 1987, p. 493). In these cases we see a backlash reaction, or the opposite of acculturation, where women become more marianistas than ever as a way to recover and stay loyal to the left behind traditions and family members that anchored their sense of self (Gil and Vazquez, 1996).

A regression to marianismo decreases a woman's self-esteem and confidence and blurs her sense of self, leading her to deal with social issues in a particularly rigid and self-

punishing way. On the other hand, to stray away from traditions may bring up feelings of guilt and a great deal of conflict too.

In the process of adjusting to a new culture with new values, attitudes and possibilities for women, Hispanics often experience a great deal of confusion and uncertainty about their role and identity that can turn into feelings of decreased self-esteem, loneliness, and depression. These feelings are tied to the immigrant Latina's realization that what she used to do to gain approval no longer works in the new world (or even works against herself).

From what has already been said, it becomes clear that to be "a part of and to contribute to the family" to which the individual belongs is a crucial aspect of Latin women's self-esteem. Thus, a woman's identity is, in the Hispanic tradition, very much defined in relation to others and as a consequence her self-esteem strongly depends on being recognized and appreciated by others, particularly by her family. Familism and the role of the extended family are very important concepts in the Latin world. Familism is the mandate to put your family's needs before your own.

Historically oriented studies have shown that familism emerged in a preindustrial agrarian society and was supported and fomented by the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, even when its initial socio-historical determinants changed, familism has remained an important element within the belief system of Hispanics living in the United States.

Cortes (1995) describes the concept of familism as "a belief system, (that) refers to feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family, as well as to the notion of the family as an extension of the self" (p. 249). This writer adds that in

moving to another society, migrants bring with them cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors, which they transmit to their offspring in the society of destination.

Rogler and Cooney (1984) found that first generation Hispanic immigrants are more familistic than their offspring. High educational attainment, generational status, and exposure to American culture lead to a move away from familistic and other traditional values. Bernstein (1992) states that in a world where dedication towards the family and self-sacrifice are highly valued, the desire for autonomy and independence is interpreted as selfish and disrespectful. Traditional behaviors, values, and attitudes are challenged when Latino women immigrate to the United States.

More specifically, Latino women's perception of themselves and of their role as women and mothers is challenged by the new choices of how to live, what to eat, what language to speak, how to behave toward relatives and peers, and whether or not to follow certain patterns of behavior which preserve their inherited old world traditions. All these aspects will determine the level of these women's acculturation.

My interest in measuring acculturation focuses on looking at the impact that this variable has in the Hispanic custom of sending children to the mothers' country of origin for extended periods of time. Current research that has attempted to understand the influence of acculturation on parenting behavior in Dominican and Puerto Rican mother-infant dyads has shown that acculturation did not have a significant impact on maternal behavior or infant attachment classifications (Fracasso et al., 1994). These authors speculate that the Puerto Rican and Dominican mothers from their sample may have been too homogeneous a group to reveal significant acculturation differences. Fracasso et al. suggest that even though parenting behaviors are culturally distinct and should therefore

vary with respect to levels of acculturation, no other research has examined the impact of acculturation on parenting behaviors.

I believe that immigrant Latino women, who do not acculturate and cling to the old traditions often become seriously challenged in terms of their expectations about themselves as women and their expectations about their children's behavior towards them as mothers. Their role as mothers is often confronted by their own children, who grow up in a different culture and therefore respond to their mothers with American values that clash with theirs. One could argue that low acculturated Latino women could send their children back to their country of origin with the (conscious or unconscious) wish that the children would become highly exposed to the old traditions and values that support familism and the role of the mother as a recognized and validated figure with undiscussed authority. In this manner, their children would embrace the old traditions and the Latino mothers would not feel challenged in their role as mothers and women who chose to leave their families and their culture. In other words, by sending their children away to their country of origin, Latino mothers might be attempting (consciously or unconsciously) to keep their children from acculturating too.

C. Stressors

Life stressors associated with immigrant Hispanic women from a low socio- economic status

According to Salgado de Snyder (1987), "Stress is generally conceptualized as an altered state of an organism produced by agents in the psychological, social, cultural,

and/or physical environment. It is further assumed that stress produces deleterious effects on the physical and/or mental well-being of the individual" (p. 477).

The stress process model focuses on the study of stress in relation to the immigration experience. Investigators who follow this model have concluded that immigration itself is the primary stressor. That is, the circumstances of immigration, such as the motivation and the degree of participation in the decision may make migration a more or a less stressful experience (Flaskerud & Uman, 1996).

Generally, a combination of economic, familial and political factors contribute to the motivation toward migration. Many Latinas immigrate following their husbands' or partners' wishes for a better life. Others may join their husbands later with their children. In other situations, women come to the U.S. alone, leaving their families behind with the hope to start a new life. Many other women leave their offspring behind, in care of other relatives, hoping to send for their children once they have found employment and have settled in the U.S. Studies on migration from Mexico indicate that females who migrate to the United States are likely to migrate as members of a whole family together, or as dependents of males who have already established permanent residency. Furthermore, individuals who migrate after the age of 14 have been found to experience higher levels of stress than those who migrate prior to age 14 (Salgado de Snyder, 1987). Cuellar and Roberts (1997) found SES and gender associated with ethnicity as more influential than ethnic status and acculturation on depression scores.

There is another group of Latinas that comes from middle to upper social class and enters the country to learn English and study hoping to achieve greater occupational mobility (Willis & Cervantes, 1987). Many immigrant Latin American women who cross

the borders without proper documentation have experienced immigration as highly dangerous from the start. All these factors have a different impact on psychosocial adjustment.

The stress model considers the process of acculturation as the secondary stressor. Whether stress is the consequence of immigration, of acculturation (and its difficulties) or the product of both of these, psychosocial stress tends to originate in external events that require some ego strength, coping mechanisms and adjustment from the individual.

Psychosocial stressors can be very different for Latina immigrants when compared to non-immigrants. Many immigrants struggle with language barriers, liberal social values and standards toward childbearing, the loss of family ties, difficulties securing and maintaining a sufficient level of income, housing problems, unemployment, discrimination, and pressures to assimilate (Willies & Cervantes, 1987).

Unsuccessful coping or adjustment to the experience of numerous psychosocial stressors can result in the development of a variety of psychological symptoms. Salgado de Snyder (1987) states that one of the strongest indicators of stress is depression, which is found in higher rates among females than among males.

Latina immigrants have been identified as suffering from higher rates of depression and generalized distress than those found among non-immigrants. Vega and his colleagues (1984) found Spanish-speaking, low acculturated Mexican-American respondents to score highest on depression when compared with Anglo-American and English speaking Mexican-Americans. Females in each of the three ethnic sub-samples had significantly higher depression scores than their male counterparts, and Spanish-speaking females had the highest depression scores of all groups.

Gil and Vazquez pose that the process of immigration is generally a difficult one. "When you add in other stress factors such as unemployment, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, inability to communicate in English, and a general lack of education and job skills, it is clear that many emigrating Latinas stand a strong chance of finding themselves at risk in their home. Economic constrains, pervasive isolation, role expectations, and the need to maintain the traditional values of marianismo and machismo augment the level of stress in families, and contribute to potential violence" (Gil and Vazquez, 1996, pp. 157-158). These stressors can result in a sense of loss of personal control and confusion.

Latino individuals tend to attribute stressful situations to external factors and to express stress through somatic complaints. Thus, when they are in distress, they usually turn to their families who oftentimes recommend visiting a physician. If the problem is not perceived as physical, then it is usually categorized as spiritual. Examples of spiritual problems are guilt, shame, sin and disrespect for elders or for family values. Spiritists, unlike most treatment modalities based on psychoanalytic theory, take into account the family situation and cultural milieu when evaluating and treating behavior (Mc Goldrick et al., 1982).

Because Latinas learn to be dependent on the group and the community and are rewarded for submissive and respectful behavior, conflict, stress and anxiety are experienced when they confront a society that does not support passivity and expects independent behavior. Willis & Cervantes (1987) believe that it may take many years for a Latina to achieve a guilt free sense of autonomy given pressures to remain loyal to one's family and country. A major focus of treatment for problems related to cultural conflicts could be to help clients achieve greater self-acceptance and a sense of autonomy in light of

traditional cultural values. However, these authors point out that it is most likely that women seeking mental health services have experienced ambivalent familial and interpersonal relationships prior to migration.

In addition to gender and role change, factors such as race, age, and class are the prevalent sources of stress for Latino families. Espin maintains that light-skinned, young, and educated migrants usually encounter a more favorable reception in the United States than dark-skinned, older, and uneducated newcomers (Espin, 1987). Lack of work and undocumented status are other powerful sources of stress together with Latino mothers' preoccupation with the possibility of their children not receiving a good education or developing drug or alcohol addictions (Willis & Cervantes, 1987). Mc Goldrick and her collaborators (1982) add that stress patterns occur at the interface between the family and society. They include problems of social isolation, lack of knowledge about social or community resources or of dissonance between the normative expectations of the home and of the school, peer group, or other institutions.

In Willis & Cervantes' experience the majority of Latinas seen in community-based mental health settings are from lower socio-economic backgrounds and are lacking in many personal resources (1987). Vazquez (1999) maintains that Dominicans tend to immigrate to the United States primarily due to economic reasons, even if sometimes immigration brings about a lowering of occupational status and a significant level of stress as a result of their difficulties adapting to the host culture.

Many professional Dominicans can only obtain nonskilled positions after they immigrate. Dominican males have one of the highest unemployment rates in New York City. The migration experience for Dominicans is the cause of significant stress,

depression, a high divorce rate, and the breakage of the family unit. These factors lead to separation of families, or spouses or children from their families. Both unemployment and the lowering of occupational status can cause significant stressors deepening the possibility of domestic violence, alcoholism and other problems affecting relationships with children and spouses (Vazquez, 1999).

The measure that I will use to look at the effect that life stressors have on the Hispanic custom of sending children to their country of origin for extended periods of time is the Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI), developed by Cervantes, Padilla, and Salgado de Snyder (1990). This measure evaluates the level of stress that subjects experience in the present. Unlike acculturation, which can change at a slow pace, or object-relations, that are relatively stable, the level of stress subjects experience at the time when the measure is given might be higher or lower than it was at the time when the subjects separated from their children. Nonetheless, it is my goal to compare each group in terms of stress to examine whether as a whole the group of mothers who separated from their children experiences (or does not experience) higher stress than the other group at the time of the interview. In this way it will be observed whether higher stress is characteristic, or not, of the group of mothers who had difficulty coping with the daily task of raising their children in a foreign country.

The HSI has 5 subscales that focus on -marital strains, - occupational and economic difficulties, -parental problems, -family/cultural conflicts, and -immigration pressures. It is hypothesized that the women who send their children away to their country of origin depend physically and emotionally on relatives who have become unavailable with the distance (either their own mothers or other relatives), because they

have not developed other sources of support in the U.S. If that were the case, it is a goal of this study to examine whether this group continues to experience higher levels of stress at the time of the interview, when compared to the group of subjects that has not separated from their children.

D. Object-Relations

1. Definition of the concepts of Object-Relations and Self- and Object-Representations

According to Kernberg (1976), the term 'object' in object-relations theory refers to 'human objects,' a term traditionally used in psychoanalysis to imply relations with others. Cashdan (1988) states that the term 'object' as it is used in object relations is different from the way in which it has been used in traditional psychoanalysis. Even though object relations theory is a vestigial by-product of traditional psychoanalysis, an object in object-relations theory does not generally connote psychic energy or biological drivennes, as is the case in traditional analytic circles, but rather the internalization of relationships.

Kernberg (1976) views object-relations theory as a framework that integrates the interpersonal field (subjective-experiential nature of human life) and the intrapsychic one (constructed by structures of self-and object-images). However, in his conceptualization of object-relations theory, Kernberg emphasizes the importance of the intrapsychic representations over interpersonal relations.

In particular, Kernberg (1976) perceives the field of object-relations as concerned with the dyadic intrapsychic representations of self- and object-images, which reflect the original infant-mother relationship and its later development into (dyadic, triangular and

multiple) internal and external interpersonal relationships. Kernberg states that "This...definition of object-relations theory stresses the simultaneous buildup of the 'self' (a composite structure derived from the integration of multiple self-images) and of object-representations (or 'internal objects' derived from the integration of multiple object-images into more comprehensive representations of others)" (1976, p.57).

Kernberg (1976) especially underscores the significance of the dyadic or bipolar nature of the *internalization*, characterized by self-and object-image units within a particular affective context. This conceptualization perceives the self-object-affect 'units' as determinants of the overall structures of the mind (id, ego and superego).

Sadeh et al. (1993) based their understanding of object relations on Kernberg. They tell us that "Each interpersonal experience can be internally represented in three aspects: (a) self-representation, (b) representation of the other (object-representation), and (c) characteristics of the affective state of the relationships with the other." Diamond and Blatt (1994) elaborate on this point, saying that both the fields of object relations and attachment theories recognize that infants "internalize the affectively charged relationship between self and other" instead of a static image or representation of the other (p. 73).

Even though object relations theory is not a unified field because different theorists, with an object relational bent, highlight different aspects and even disagree on others, some general consensus exists in the understanding that object relations theory is concerned with the core of selfhood, inextricably tied to the infant's first and most fundamental object relationship: the relationship with the mother. Object relations theorists agree with Klein's (1946, 1952a, 1952b, 1952c, 1955, 1957) tenet that this relationship, more than any other, forms the foundation for the construction of the child's

inner world; a complex web of fantasied relationships evolving out of the child's relationships with others. In other words, a central claim of object relationists is that it is the early caretaking relationship with the mother, tied up with emotional gratification and deprivation that forms the template for all subsequent relationships. "Optimal development and individuation is predicated upon an optimal early human relationship" (Klein and Tribich, 1981, p. 30).

Object relations theory focuses on all those critical events and processes that shape people's lives in their first year of life. Mahler, Klein, Kohut, Winnicott and Kernberg, among others, believe that events that occur in the preoedipal years lay down the course of human development.

Klein was one of the first to document the processes that constitute the child's inner world or internal object world, characterized by internal representations of the child's significant figures and self in connection to the caregivers. For Klein, object-relations are operative from the beginning of post-natal life. "Concurrently, from birth onwards, a relation to objects, primarily the mother (her breast) is present" (1952, p.51). When this author refers to an object-relation, she alludes to the infant's emotions, fantasies, anxieties, and defenses (unlike Freud, who refers to the object of an instinctual aim). In Klein's words: "The analysis of very young children has taught me that there is no instinctual urge, no anxiety situation, no mental process which does not involve objects, external or internal; in other words, object-relations are at the *centre* of emotional life. Furthermore, love and hatred, phantasies, anxieties, and defences are also operative from the beginning and are *ab initio* indivisibly linked with object-relations" (Klein, 1952, p.53).

For Klein, the basic conflict focuses around loving or preservative feelings and hateful or destructive feelings. She conceived of this conflict in terms of "positions", or stances along which the child organizes experience. "Each *position* represents a developmental stepping stone along a continuum of love and hate, and describes the way that object relations originate and mature" (Cashdan, 1981, p.6).

Steiner (1992) clarifies some of Klein's remarks by saying that in the paranoid-schizoid position, which she saw as characteristic of the first three or four months of normal development, the structure of the ego is characterized by split-off states into good and bad selves in relationship with good and bad objects, and object relationships are likewise split. Because in the paranoid-schizoid position the ego is poorly integrated, there is no memory of a good object when it is absent. Therefore, the loss of the good object is experienced as the replacement of an idealized situation by a persecutory one.

Klein (1946) maintains that it is when persecutory fears and schizoid mechanisms are too strong (due to internal and external reasons) that the ego is not capable of working through the depressive position (second and last stage of development according to Klein). The movement towards the depressive position can be helped in infancy if the child has a supportive environment, if the mother is able to tolerate and contain the infant's projections, intuitively to understand and stand its feelings (Joseph, 1987).

Sandler and Sandler (1978) believe that the question of gratification and wish-fulfillment is extremely important in regard to object relations; both the gratification of instinctual drives (or their obtaining instinctual discharge) and the special forms of gratification through the interaction with the environment that satisfies the infant's needs of nourishment, affirmation and reassurance. Winnicott (1963) refers to the "object-

mother" and the "environment-mother" to differentiate the mother as object or part-object who may satisfy the infant's instinctual urgent needs, and the mother as the person who wards off the unpredictable and provides active care in handling and general management. In another paper, Winnicott (1960) states that "one half of the theory of the parent-infant relationship concerns the infant, and is the theory of the infant's journey from absolute dependence, through relative dependence, to independence, and, in parallel, the infant's journey from the pleasure principle to the reality principle, and from autoerotism to object relationships. The other half of the theory of the parent-infant relationship concerns maternal care, that is to say the qualities and changes in the mother that meet the specific and developing needs of the infant towards whom she orientates" (p.42). In Winnicott's perception, each stage of ego development is matched by a different aspect of infant and child-care on the mother's part: "Integration matches with holding. Personalization matches with handling. Object-relating matches with object-presenting" (1962, p.60). The ego initiates object relating with good-enough mothering from the beginning. That is, "the baby is not subjected to instinctual gratifications except in so far as there is ego-participation. In this respect it is not so much a question of giving the baby satisfaction as of letting the baby find and come to terms with the object" (p. 59-60). In Winnicott's words, the initiation of object-relating cannot take place except by the environmental provision of object- presenting, done in such a way that the baby creates the object. "The pattern is thus: the baby develops a vague expectation that has origin in an unformulated need. The adaptive mother presents an object or a manipulation that meets the baby's needs, and so the baby begins to need just that which the mother presents. In this way the baby comes to feel confident in being able to create objects and to create the actual world"

(1962, p. 62). In other words, it is the mother's job to protect the infant from those complications that cannot be understood or handled by the infant and to provide the simplified bits of the world that the infant comes to know through her. Winnicott (1945) states: "One thing that follows acceptance of external reality is the advantage to be gained by it. We often hear of the very frustrations imposed by external reality, but less often hear of the relief and satisfaction it affords" (p. 153).

In sum, and as described by different object-relations theorists, object-relations originate in the person's earliest relationship with his/her mother or caretaker. Object-relations "refers either to the *actual nature* of people's interaction with others or to the *conception* people develop about these interactions which influences how they react to others. Self- and object-representations refer to the conceptions people develop about themselves and others" (Frank, 1995, p. 659). In other words, object-relations concerns 'human objects' and the relations, both internal and external, fantasized and real that develop from the interactions with the person's early caregivers. In particular, object-relations is concerned with the internalization of self-object-affect units that characterize a person's representations of self and others or the conceptions that an individual develops about himself or herself and others. Internalized object relations influence real life relationships, both in normal development and in pathology. The internalization process, along with the mechanisms of introjection and identification, forms the basic ingredients of what eventually comes to be experienced as the self. Cashdan (1988) argues that: "Early interactions with the mother are internalized as relational configurations that are transformed over time into a sense of being. This internalization process -along with its

aggregate projections and identifications- forms the basic ingredients of what eventually comes to be experienced as the 'self'" (1981, p.24).

When we think about object relationships we deal with concepts such as relationships to part and whole objects, to objects that are only need-satisfying or that possess object-constancy (Sandler and Sandler, 1978). This point will be further developed in the following two sections.

2. Development of self-and object representations or the representational world

The extreme complexity about the thoughts and feelings, behaviors and expectations we all experience about the important people in our lives, begins with the interaction between each individual as a child and his or her biological objects in the earliest weeks and months of life. As Sandler and Sandler (1978) explain, this phenomena has been studied by psychoanalytic child observers such as Spitz, Winnicott, Mahler, Klein, and Bowlby.

In the course of development, perception is an active process by means of which the ego transforms raw sensory data into meaningful percepts. In this way, the child creates, within its representational or perceptual world, images and organizations of his internal and external environment. As we know, the infant constantly confuses aspects that we as observers describe as 'internal' and 'external' reality within its representational world. According to Sandler and Rosenblatt, a representation can be considered to have a more or less enduring existence as an organization or schema, which is constructed out of multiple impressions. "A child experiences many images of his mother -mother feeding, mother talking, mother sitting down, mother standing up, mother preparing food, etc.- and

on the basis of these gradually creates a mother representation which encompasses a whole range of mother images, all of which bear the label 'mother' (Sandler and Rosenblatt, 1962, p. 133). As Piaget has stated, the development of these enduring representations (as distinct from images) becomes well established before about the sixteenth month of life.

Initially, the child's representational world only contains raw representations of pleasure and unpleasure, of need-satisfying experiences and activities. Sandler and Sandler (1978) stretch the concept of 'object' by stating that the first objects of the child are the experiences of pleasure and satisfaction on the one hand, and those of unpleasure and pain on the other. Thus, from very early on the infant has a sensorium affected by stimuli from within (especially from biological needs) and from without, particularly those arising from the actions of the mother. As the sensory and perceptual subjective experiences become associated with the primary affective objects, the formation of representations of objects in the sense of people or parts of people begins along with the infant's own self representation. In Jacobson's words: "During the preoedipal-narcissistic stage, gross primitive introjective and projective mechanisms, in conjunction with pleasure-unpleasure and perceptive experiences, participate in the constitution of self and object images and, hence, of object relations ... The establishment of realistic object and self representations rests increasingly on the maturation of perceptive and self-perceptive functions, i.e., on reality testing, at the expense of projective and introjective mechanisms. However, while becoming more and more subtle and refined, the latter continue to play an essential part in the processes of identification on which infantile ego and superego development rests" (1964/1993, pp.46-47).

Only gradually does the infant learns to distinguish self from not-self, and self from object in his representational world. The capacity to separate self- and object-representations and the capacity to maintain the stability of these representations both as regards the self and the object is not present at birth and marks the development of the child's object relationships (Beres and Joseph, 1970). The gradual establishment of self-boundaries, which are at first body boundaries, is a part of this development. Thus, the development of object relations progresses from the need-satisfying or part-object relationships, to object constancy. Elaborating on Anna Freud's definition of object constancy, Beres and Joseph describe object constancy as the stable cathexis of the mental representation of the external object once the capacity to form mental representations is achieved.

In other words, during the course of his or her early development the infant will create representations of his/her own self and of his/her objects, and will later develop symbolic representations for use in thought and fantasy. "After object constancy has been reached, the constant attachment to and affection for the object represent the fulfillment of very special secondary needs which have developed in the individual (i.e. needs which are satisfied by interacting with the unique object in a particular way). Valuing the relationship with an object soon comes to be represented, of course, as valuing the object; and concern for the relationship soon becomes concern for the object" (Sandler and Sandler, 1978/1986, 274).

The construction of the representational world from the original undifferentiated sensorium of the infant is a function of the ego. This goes hand in hand with ego development, for the building up of representations is essential for ego development, and

is a prerequisite for progressive adaptation. That is, the representational world provides the material for the ego's perceptual structuring of sensory impulses, for imagination and fantasy, for direct and modified action, for language, symbols, and for trial action in thought (Sandler and Rosenblatt, 1962). In a similar way, clinical manifestations evidenced by a sense of identity, body image, effects of merging or projective mechanisms in object relations indicate dynamic vicissitudes of mental representations of self and object.

There are objects with whom we have an anaclitic relationship, towards whom we are ambivalent, who are self-objects, or simply good or bad objects. There are objects with whom we have sadomasochistic relationships; and many others. "There is no doubt about the importance of understanding the ways in which individuals actualize the infantile object relationships present in their unconscious fantasies through many different activities in their daily lives. These activities may show themselves in relation to other people, or may simply be present as so-called 'character traits'. Some character traits appear to be specifically designed to evoke particular responses in others, and this may give us an additional avenue of approach to the understanding of character" (Sandler and Sandler, 1978/86, p.282

Object relations theorists emphasize the importance of parental love and care with sufficient libidinal stimulation and gratification to promote the establishment of stable, enduring libidinal cathexis of both the objects and the self. Through "a live adaptation to the infant's needs" the infant builds up "a continuity of being" which allows the infant to have a personal existence and gradually to develop into an individual infant. Good-enough mothering, however, also entails that the mother can gradually let go of her identification

with the infant as the infant needs to become separate. Winnicott emphasizes the importance of the mother's ability to allow the infant to separate from her by recognizing its creative gesture, the cry, and all the signs the infant gives to express a need. Mothers who do all the right things at the right moment when the infant has begun to become separate keep the infant either in a permanent state of regression and of being merged with her or in a state of total rejection of the mother (Winnicott, 1960).

Jacobson also discusses the constructive influence of frustrating experiences on the discovery of and distinction between the self and the love object, especially once the child's perceptive functions have matured sufficiently to allow the child to associate gratifications and frustrations with the object. The gradually introduced "instinctual and emotional frustrations and prohibitions, combined with parental demands and stimulation of social and cultural pursuits, also make significant contributions to the development of an effective, independently functioning, and self-reliant ego" (Jacobson, 1964/1993, p. 55).

The genesis and development of mental representation is directly concerned with the distinction between internal and external and with the process of internalization. Beres and Joseph (1970) attribute much confusion and controversy to this area of psychoanalytic theory. Schafer (1968) suggests that the concept of *internalization* implies that something initially other and outside the boundary, something with its own essence, has been taken inside, that is, into the self or ego. According to Schafer, internalizations are associated with and based in the mechanisms of introjection (the fulfillment of an id wish to incorporate the object causing a change in the ego organization which obscures the difference between the idea of the object and its external and temporal referents) and

identification (or the modification of the behavior, the subjective self, or both to increase one's resemblance to an object taken as a model) (pp.16, 78).

Based on Hartman and Lowenstein, Roy Schafer (1968) defines *internalization* as "...all those processes by which the subject transforms real or imagined regulatory interactions with his environment, and real or imagined characteristics of his environment, into inner regulations and characteristics" (1968, p.9). Even though identification implies a continuing object relation, in its most developed form -when it becomes a full internalization-it no longer depends heavily on the representation of that relation. Thus, while an identification represents a higher degree of internalization than an introject does, in internalization, object relations are transformed into internal, intrapsychic, depersonified relationships, thus increasing and enriching psychic structure (Loewald, 1973/1980). Internalization as a completed process implies an emancipation from the object. However, Loewald speaks about 'degrees of internalization' (1973/1980) and 'shifting degrees of internalization' or mobility of already introjected objects (1962/1980).

Along these lines, Schafer (1968/1990) describes internalization as a process intimately connected with the development of, the current status of, and the changes that take place in the subject's self-and object-representations (pp. 24-27). Degrees of internalization are also recognized by Schafer in his description of both self and object representations' development and change over time once they are highly organized and integrated.

Self-representation, as defined by Schafer (1968/1990), refers to the "subjective conceptualization" that a subject has about his (her) own person based on the primarily somatic, affective, and diffuse nonverbal and minimally organized phenomena (p. 25).

This author particularly accentuates the experiential nature of the term. Self-representations may concern aspects of the subject's body or personality. It may be organized on any level of abstractness; for example, a self representation may be as specific and concrete as the idea of a minor detail of the subject's body and as abstract as the idea of his general type of personality. Self-representations are always involved in feelings about and attitudes towards one's own person and others.

Self-representations are assumed to fall along a continuum, from the drive organization of thinking to the abstract conceptual organization of thinking; that is, from the primary process to the secondary process. The archaic referents of these self-conceptualizations are detectable in normal self-experience and in pathological conditions. "The representation may be unconscious, preconscious, or conscious, and its content may express dynamic or structural aspects of the id, ego, or superego systems, or more likely some combination or resultant of these aspects. They may range from the highly realistic to the autistic, from the highly organized -differentiated and synthesized- to the amorphous and fluid, from the intensely physical or emotional to the abstractly contemplative, from the self-aggrandizing to the self-abasing, and from the conditional and hypothetical (e.g., the positive ideal to strive toward or the negative ideal to avoid) to the actually experienced" (Schafer, 1968/1990, p. 26). This author adds that self-representations may present varying degrees of internal contradiction, disjointedness, or integration. Even if one encounters representations that have a self-as-a-whole quality, these tend to change over time, at least in some of their detail, depending on the subject's mood, circumstances, role, etc. Self-representations serve as information or guideposts of behavior.

Object-representation is defined in a similar way to self-representation. Thus, object-representation is described as an idea that one subject has about another person, creature or thing, without minimizing the frequently somatic, affective, and diffuse experience of objects that are represented nor the possible primitiveness of the ideational or conceptual process itself. As in the self-representation, the object representation can relate to aspects of another person's body or his (her) personality. Object representations are always involved in feelings about, and attitudes toward, other persons.

Once again, object representations can range on any level of abstractness, may be unconscious, preconscious, or conscious, and its content may designate tendencies of the other person's id, ego, superego systems, or, more likely, some combination or resultant of these. Object-representations, like self-representations, can range from the highly realistic to the autistic, form the highly organized to the amorphous and fluid, from the intensely physical or emotional to the abstractly contemplative, from the extremely idealizing to the extremely depreciatory, and from the conditional and hypothetical (e.g., the positive and negative ideal one holds for that person) to the actually experienced.

The representations of another person may exist in varying degrees of internal contradiction, disjointedness, or integration. Object representations are more or less organized representations of another person and its details and degree of organization vary over time and between levels within one subject. They serve as guideposts of behavior, and the subject needs to maintain some clarity, consistency, and organization of his representations of other persons (object constancy).

3. Review of Mahler's development of the separation-individuation process

The process of development of self and object representations from a state of being undifferentiated to object constancy has been clearly described and illustrated by Margaret Mahler. Diamond et al. (1990) operationalized Mahler's concepts of separation-individuation to develop a methodology for the assessment of changes in self-and object representations or Object Representation Inventory (ORI) that will be used in this study.

Mahler et al. (1975) conceptualize development as a multistaged, maturational process that begins with the phases of *normal autism* (first month of life) and *normal symbiosis* (second and third months), prerequisites to the onset of the normal separation-individuation process.

"The separation-individuation phase is characterized by a steady increase in awareness of the separateness of the self and the 'other' which coincides with the origins of a sense of self, of true object relationship, and of awareness of a reality in the outside world" (Mahler et al., 1975, p. 48).

The process of separation-individuation begins with the subphase of *differentiation* at about 4 or 5 months of age. "In children for whom the symbiotic phase has been optimal and in whom confident expectation has prevailed, curiosity and wonderment, discernible in our setup through the checking-back pattern, are the predominant elements of their inspection of strangers. By contrast, among children whose basic trust has been less than optimal, an abrupt change to acute stranger anxiety may occur, or there may be a prolonged period of mild stranger reaction, which transiently interferes with pleasurable inspective behavior" (Mahler et al., 1975, p. 58).

The *early practicing* period, that takes place roughly between 7 and 10 months is the time of exercise of autonomous functions, especially of moving, exploring quadruped child freedom and opportunity for exploration at some physical distance from the mother combined with some emotional refueling. Around the age of 10 or 12 months to 16 or 18 months, the *practicing subphase proper* develops and the child concentrates on practicing and mastering his own skills and autonomous capacities, independent of other or mother. "Walking gives the toddler an enormous increase in reality discovery and testing of the world at his own control and magic mastery" (p.72).

At 16 or 18 months, the toddler enters the third subphase, called *Rapprochement*. Increased awareness of separation and heightened separation anxiety develop. At first this is mainly manifested as fear of object loss. As the toddler's awareness of separateness grows, stimulated by his maturationally acquired ability to move away physically from his mother and by his cognitive growth, he seems to have an increased need for mother to share every new skill. "It is the mother's love of the toddler and the acceptance of his ambivalence (one can continually observe in the toddler a 'warding-off' pattern directed against impingement upon his recently achieved autonomy) that enable the toddler to cathect his self-representation with neutralized energy" (p.77). At this age, the child experiences an increasingly clear differentiation, a separation, between the intrapsychic representations of the object and the self, which started at the end of the practicing period when the infant begins to feel that he is often relatively helpless, small, and separate. "During this subphase, some mothers cannot accept the child's demandingness; others, by contrast, are unable to face the child's gradual separation-the fact that the child is

becoming increasingly independent of, and separate from, her and can no longer be regarded as a part of her" (p.78).

At this point, the infant "...need(s) to renounce symbiotic omnipotence, and there is also heightened awareness of the body image and pressure in the body, especially at the points of zonal libidinization. Belief in mother's omnipotence seems to be shaken...Fear of loss of the love of the object goes parallel with highly sensitive reactions to approval and disapproval by the parent. There is a greater awareness of bodily feelings and pressures, augmented by awareness of bowel and urinary sensations during the toilet-training period" (p.107). According to Mahler et al., (1975) the persistence and degree of the rapprochement crisis indicate premature internalization of conflicts and developmental disturbances that may stand in the way of the development of infantile neurosis in the classical sense. Conflict is first acted out by coercive behaviors directed toward the mother and designed to force her to function as the child's omnipotent extension, which alternate with signs of desperate clinging. Thus, "in those children with less than optimal development, the ambivalence conflict is discernible during the rapprochement subphase in rapidly alternating clinging and negativistic behaviors...this may be in some cases a reflection of the fact that the child has split the object world more permanently than is optimal into 'good' and 'bad.' By means of this splitting, the 'good' object is defended against the derivatives of the aggressive drive" (p. 108).

The fourth subphase is characterized by *the Consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy.* This subphase's main tasks are: the unification of the good and bad love object into one whole representation, the maintenance of the representation of the absent object or constancy of the object, and the attainment of a

stable sense of entity through self boundaries or the achievement of individuality. The unfolding of cognitive functions such as verbal communication, and reality testing are other developmental tasks characteristic of this stage.

Mahler et al. (1975) further explain that the constancy of the object implies more than the maintenance of the representation of the absent love object. It also implies the unifying of the good and bad objects into one whole representation that fosters the fusion of the aggressive and libidinal drives and tempers the hatred for the object. Essential prior determinants for the development of object constancy are: 1) trust and confidence through the regularly occurring relief of need tension gradually attributed to the need-satisfying whole object (the mother), transferred by means of internalization to the intrapsychic representation of the mother, and 2) the cognitive acquisition of the symbolic inner representation of the permanent object: the mother. Factors such as innate drive endowment and maturation, neutralization of drive energy, frustration and anxiety tolerance and reality testing (drive and ego maturation) have an active role in the establishment of emotional object constancy as well.

In sum, Mahler et al. state that: "It is only after object constancy is well on its way, which according to our conceptualization does not seem to occur before the third year, that the mother during her physical absence can be substituted for, at least in part, by the presence of a reliable internal image (internalized object representation) that remains relatively stable irrespective of the state of instinctual need or inner discomfort. On the basis of this achievement, temporary separation can be lengthened and better tolerated. The establishment of object permanence and of a 'mental image' of the object, in Piaget's

sense is a necessary, but not a sufficient, prerequisite for the establishment of libidinal object constancy" (1976, p.110).

Mahler et al. give examples of important differences in the inner maternal image of those children with developed emotional object constancy and those whose object constancy is less stable. These authors tell us that a girl, whose mother had been optimally emotionally available during the course of the earlier subphases, seemed to have progressed further than the other children in terms of object constancy. This is attributed to the inner image of the mother being positively and unambivalently cathected; indeed this child understood where mother was and could manage quite well during mother's brief absence from about the age of 25 to 26 months. This example of a child who had apparently achieved a high degree of libidinal object constancy is compared with another one, a boy who had suffered early disappointments in his mother. He acted as though he held a conflictual, ambiguous, inner image of mother, to the point of generally tending to avoid her. "It is typical that when there is a great deal of ambivalence in the relationship, mother's leaving stirs up considerable expressed or unexpressed anger and longing; under such conditions, the positive image of the mother cannot be sustained" (1975, pp.113-114).

Elaborating on Mahler's theory, Kernberg et al. (1989) tell us that during the stage of separation-individuation that predates object constancy (roughly the second trough fourth years of life) severely pathological relationships with a parental object (whether constitutionally determined, psychologically motivated, or environmentally stimulated by severe aggression in early psychological experiences) determine a fixation at or a regression to a level of development that is insufficiently integrated.

4. Measurement of self and object relations

Sadeh et al. (1993) state that while the task of describing a parent elicits the individual's *object representation*, the description of the 'relationship' with each parent (rather than the description of the parent) pulls for the individual's *representation* of his or her *object relations*, as a separate and complementary construct. According to these authors, a person's object representation is reflected by the degree of distinction between the self and the other and by the degree of elaboration and richness of the description. On the other hand, a person's object relation is represented by the internal representation of the relationship described; that is, the individual's capacity to deal with object relations.

Stressing the buildup of the intrapsychic representations of self and other, Kernberg (1976), describes the development of normal and pathological internalized object relations as measured by: (1) the depth and stability of internal relations with others, (2) the tolerance of ambivalence toward loved objects, (3) the capacity for tolerating guilt and separation and for the working through of depressive crises, (4) the extent to which the self-concept is integrated and (5) the extent to which behavior patterns correspond to the self-concept.

Diamond and Blatt (1994) describe the overlapping characteristics between object representations and working models of attachment. These authors indicate, "...parental representations of securely attached young adults were both more differentiated and organized at a higher conceptual level than were the parental representations of their insecurely attached counterparts. Furthermore, insecurely attached young adults described their parents as more malevolent and punitive than did the securely attached subjects" (p. 77). This study specifies that the most significant correlate of a mother's attachment-

related behavior towards her infant is the extent to which the mother's internal working model of attachment is "coherent;" that is, the extent to which it integrates positive and negative qualities (as opposed to being polarized between idealization and denigration), and the extent to which generalized evaluations of attachment relationships coincide with specific attachment memories. "The mothers of securely attached infants provided coherent narratives of their attachment experiences and were able to contextualize negative experiences by presenting them in the light of their own parents' limitations, dilemmas, and conflicts about which they showed compassion and understanding. Even though the parents of insecurely attached infants were also able to describe their own negative attachment experiences, they did so in an unintegrated and incoherent manner and their interview transcripts showed marked inconsistencies, contradictions, dysfluencies, and discontinuities" (p. 81). Diamond et al. (1990) further describe mental health as exhibited in the presence of clearer boundaries and separateness in the representations of self and other along with a clear degree of empathic relatedness. These aspects would reflect a strong ego structure and an integrated psychic experience.

The nature of the subjects' self- and object-representations is one of the core areas to be explored in this study in order to evaluate whether clear differences in object relations exist between the two groups of Hispanic mothers that are being compared. The Object Representation Inventory or ORI (Diamond, Kaslow, Coonerty and Blatt, 1995) will be used to measure both groups of mothers' level and quality of self- and object-representations in terms of their development in the process of separation-individuation. Thus, the ORI will look at the quality and level of development of every subject's self- and object-representation along a continuum that ranges from symbiotic (self-other boundary

confusion) to more differentiated and developed levels of separation-individuation (object constancy, identity, intersubjectivity and construction of meaning).

Finally, a semi-structured interview will be administered. This interview focuses on: 1) Collecting demographic, socio-emotional, and historical information about the subjects; 2) Integrating the three major areas of acculturation, stressors, and object-relations: the subjects' early object-relationships and present life situation, including acculturation and stressors, would be explored in connection with their decision for and against separating from their children; and 3) Differentiating sub-groups of subjects (i.e., sub-groups with more primitive and more mature object-relations and defenses) and their clinical implications.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses:

This study seeks to explore the impact that acculturation, stress, and object relations have in a prevalent behavior present in the Hispanic culture by which mothers send their children away to their country of origin for extended periods of time to live with their own mothers (the child's grandmother) or other close relatives from the extended family. The main focus of this project is on the role that mothers' self and object representations, or the mothers' internal world, play in their decision to separate from their children at an early age (during the children's first 6 years of life). The role of acculturation and stressors are also explored to better understand whether any or all of these aspects play an active role in this culturally prevalent behavior.

I propose that mothers who separate from their children for extended periods of time, while the children are in their first 6 years of life, will have lower levels of acculturation or will be less integrated to the new and host culture, will show higher levels of stress with poor or limited emotional support, which become overwhelming, and will present more immature object-relations, which lead them to experience themselves and others in more conflicted and unresolved ways. This premise would be operationalized and tested by the following three hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 1. ACCULTURATION

The group of Hispanic mothers that sends their children away to their country of origin for extended periods of time would remain Hispanic dominant; that is, they would

experience more adherence to their own culture and customs than to the culture where they reside and consequently would present lower levels of acculturation than the group of mothers that does not separate from their children. This group, by contrast, would show higher levels of acculturation reflected by biculturalism or by assimilation to the host culture.

HYPOTHESIS 2. STRESSORS

The group of women that separates from their children for extended periods of time will display more elevated psychosocial levels of stress associated to Hispanic immigrants than the group of mothers that does not separate from their children. Thus, subjects who separate from their children would present higher levels of stress than the subjects who do not separate manifested by Occupational/Economic Stress, Parental Stress, Family/Cultural Conflict, Marital Stress, and Immigration Stress as measured by the Hispanic Stress Inventory.

HYPOTHESIS 3. OBJECT-RELATIONS

The group of mothers that separates from their children early on and for extended periods of time would present more immature and more variable object-relations (or self and object representations) than the group of mothers that does no separate from their children. Thus, the group of subjects that separates would exhibit lower scores (below the level of object constancy; level 5 or below) and a wider range of scores in their descriptions of themselves and others than the group that does not separate, as measured by the ORI. Lower scores would primarily reflect polarized and unintegrated views of self

and others (rapprochement themes) and/or the perception of others as either a mirror for the self or a self-completing object (narcissistic themes).

Sample/Population:

This is a research proposal for a quantitative study of a total of 50 women. I intend to compare a group of 25 low socio-economic status Hispanic mothers, born in the Dominican Republic, who send their young children away to their country of origin for 3 months or longer with another group of 25 women with the same background and SES who had not separated from their children for extended periods of time (longer than 3 months) as an alternative or behavior of choice under periods of stress. The age of the children who were sent away by their mothers and considered in this study will range between the 1st month and 6 years of age. Mothers involved in the study will all have their children back living with them at the time of the interview and their children will not be older than 17 years. The mothers involved in the study, regardless of the group they belong to, will range between 21 and 50 years; they will all be adults.

Selection Criteria: Respondents will be recruited through flyers placed in the City College campus, neighborhood, and major Spanish speaking newspapers, such as El Diario and Hoy, (see Appendix A) as well as by announcements made by instructors of undergraduate psychology classes. The flyers have a telephone number where interested subjects can reach the investigator or leave their telephone number. A follow up phone call will then be made by the principal investigator to briefly describe the study and conduct a telephone screening that determines the potential subject's eligibility and

appropriateness for participating in the study (see Appendix B). If the subject is found appropriate, confidentiality issues, the expected time commitment and payment will be reviewed. If the participant is still interested, an appointment will be scheduled for the first interview.

Materials and Instruments:

Acculturation

1. The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS), (Marin and Gamba, 1996) gives an acculturation score for two major cultural dimensions (Hispanic and non-Hispanic domains). As a result, subjects will either show Hispanic dominance, Anglo acculturation (or Anglo dominance), or biculturalism. The BAS has 12 items (per cultural domain) that measure three language-related areas (language use, linguistic proficiency, patterns of media used). According to the scale's authors, the BAS attempts to address the methodological shortcomings present in previous acculturation scales. This seems evident in its being based on language (the most important indicator of level of acculturation measurement as most Hispanic research literature supports), its measuring biculturality (as supposed to considering acculturation as a unidimensional process), and its high internal consistency and high validity coefficients.

Internal consistency: Alpha coefficients were computed for each of the cultural domains (Hispanic and non-Hispanic). In general, all of the subscales showed very high internal consistency (range of alpha = .97 for Linguistic Proficiency for Non-Hispanic Domain to alpha = .60 for the Celebrations subscale for the Hispanic domain). Among the language-related subscales, the lowest internal consistency was found for the Electronic

Media subscales (alpha = .83 for the non-Hispanic domain and alpha = .81 for the Hispanic domain) . The combined score of the four subscales also showed high internal consistency for the Hispanic domain (alpha = .87) and for the non Hispanic domain (alpha = .94). Nevertheless, the internal consistency scores were somewhat higher for the combined score of the three language-related subscales (alpha = .90 for the Hispanic domain and alpha = .96 for the non-Hispanic domain). In terms of internal consistency, the various subscales seem to function similarly well for Mexican Americans and Central Americans.

According to the BAS' authors, the BAS was developed to be used with all Hispanic subgroups. Items were chosen not to reflect the experiences of one Hispanic subgroup but more generalized experiences of all Hispanics. Its high reliability and validity coefficients among Mexican Americans and Central Americans suggest that this scale may be equally effective with other Hispanic subgroups. However, empirical evidence of this generalizability needs to be established.

Validity: The various subscales and composite scales were validated by correlating them with criteria previously used by researchers developing other acculturation scales (Cuellar, Arnold, and Maldonado, 1995; Cuellar et al., 1980; Marin et al., 1987; Szapocznik et al., 1987). Specifically, the subscales and the two combined overall scores were validated by analyzing the correlation between the respondents' scores in the various scales with seven criteria: a) generation status; b) length of residence in the United States; c) amount of formal education; d) age of arrival in the United States; e) proportion of respondent's life lived in the United States; f) ethnic self-identification; and g) correlation

with the acculturation score obtained through the SASH (Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics, Marin et al., 1987).

When the three language-based subscales are combined into one scale, the validating correlation of the combined scales is higher than that of the Language Use and Electronic Media subscales but lower than that found with the Linguistic Proficiency subscales. The Celebrations subscale shows fairly low correlations with the various validating correlates of acculturation, particularly for the Hispanic domain subscale. When the respondents' scores in the four subscales are combined into one total score, the validation correlation of this overall scale is lower than that for the combined three language-based subscales or than that obtained with the Linguistic Proficiency subscales.

Stressors

1. The Hispanic Stress Inventory or HSI (Cervantes, Padilla, and Salgado de Snyder; 1990) will be used to assess psychosocial stress among Hispanic adults. Factor analytic procedures resulted in two versions of the HSI, one for Hispanic immigrants and a second one for U.S. born Hispanics. Sub-scale scores and total HSI scores for both versions were found to correlate strongly with criterion measures of psychological distress. Further, sub-scales and HSI total scores were found to have high levels of internal consistency. A small sample test-retest proved to lend additional support for the reliability of this scale. The HSI's items are worded in an easily comprehensible fashion and are responded to along two dimensions: a) self-reported experience of the stress event, and b) self-reported appraisal of the particular stress event. Respondents are first required to indicate whether on a dichotomous "yes-no" format they experienced a particular event. Secondly, the

subject is asked to rate the appraised stressfulness of the experienced event (1= Not at all stressful; 2= A little stressful; 3= Somewhat stressful; 4= Very stressful; 5= Extremely stressful.

Validity: In a procedure aimed at establishing the construct validity of the HSI, separated oblique factor analyses were conducted, one for the immigrant sub-sample and a second one for the U.S. born respondents. Factor analysis resulted in a similar factor structure for the immigrant and U.S. born sub-samples. Using eigenvalues >1, a four factor solution resulted for the immigrant sample. While items comprising each factor overlap somewhat for the two samples, many items, which are appropriate for one sample, tended not to emerge for the second sample. As such, it was determined that two separate versions of the HSI were warranted. By retaining items that loaded > .30 on a single factor, two final versions of the HSI that met rather conservative criteria related to construct validity were developed.

A second method of estimating the criterion-related validity of the HSI involved computation of Pearson correlations for the HSI sub-scales (factors) and each of the criterion measured. Most of the HSI sub-scales, for both the immigrant and U.S. versions, were found to correlate positively and significantly at the $p<.01$ level, with each of the measures of psychological symptomatology.

Reliability: Internal consistency for each of the HSI sub-scales was computed using the Alpha coefficient. Each HSI sub-scale for both versions was found to have acceptable levels of internal consistency. These coefficients ranged from .77 to .91. A small sample (N=35) of older immigrant adults were administered the HSI on two separate occasions with a two-week time interval. Test-retest coefficients were then calculated and each sub-

scale was found to have an acceptable level of test-retest reliability. The coefficient ranged from .61 to .86.

Object-Relations

1.Object Representation Inventory (ORI). This is a scale that rates the degree of differentiation-relatedness in representations of self and others and the level of development of the person as reflected by his or her internal world (developed by Diamond et al., 1995).

2. Semi-Structured Interview (developed by the principal investigator and supervised by dissertation committee members).

1. The ORI Self-Other Differentiation Scale, which elicits verbally mediated descriptions of mother, father, self, child and significant other, operationalized Mahler's stages of separation-individuation to tap distinct aspects of the individual's self-and object representations or the interpersonal component of the representational world. Early developmental distortions of the separation-individuation process, involving failure in the differentiation and integration of self-and object representations are assessed by this measure. The ORI is a 10-point scale, which ranges from self/other boundary confusion at the more primitive levels, through various levels of separation-individuation corresponding to early differentiation, practicing, and rapprochement, to higher levels of object constancy, identity, intersubjectivity, and construction of meaning.

Representations of self and others are expressions of the development of increasingly mature interpersonal relatedness and they organize and guide subsequent

interpersonal experience (Blatt, Diamond, Kaslow and Stayner, 1995). Research on mother-infant interaction demonstrates that early caregiving experiences establish prototypes that lead to the emergence and consolidation of a sense of self and patterns of subsequent interpersonal and subjective experience (Ainsworth, 1985; Bretherton, 1985; Bowlby, 1988; Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985). Blatt and colleagues (Blatt & Blass, 1990; Behrends & Blatt, 1985, 1987; Kernberg 1985, 1994) integrate developmental psychoanalytic theory and the cognitive developmental perspective of Piaget and Werner. Blatt and colleagues suggest that representations of self and others develop and become increasingly accurate, articulated, conceptually complex cognitive structures of self and others linked to affective valences. Higher levels of representations evolve from and extend lower levels, thus new representational modes become increasingly effective.

The ORI has been used by Diamond, Kaslow, Coonerty and Blatt (1990) to assess changes in aspects of self-and object representation related to separation and intersubjectivity over the course of long-term treatment while assessing the extent to which such changes parallel a normal developmental course. Four case studies illustrate the value of assessing shifts in object representation that occur in the course of long-term treatment of patients diagnosed as borderline personality disorder. Interrater reliability of .86 was reported on this measure. In an investigation (Stayner, 1992) of the interrater reliability of this scale, five judges rated 90 descriptions of mother, father, therapist, and self given by seven inpatients at various times in the course of their long-term treatment at a small, private, psychiatric hospital. The scale's reliability was established by comparing the five judges' ratings across the 90 descriptions and deriving an intraclass correlation coefficient via a target (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). This coefficient was then adjusted

statistically so that the resulting intraclass correlation coefficient reflected the degree of agreement that can be expected when the scale is used by a random sample of judges with similar training and experience as those in the reliability study. An adjusted intraclass correlation coefficient of .83 was derived.

In addition, independent assessment of degree of therapeutic change correlated significantly with increases in the differentiation-relatedness score for representations of mother, father, therapist and self (Blatt, Stayner, Auerbach, & Behrends, in press). These relationships between level of differentiation-relatedness of representations of self and other and levels of clinical functioning, as well as degree of clinical change, are independent of a wide range of sociodemographic (e.g., intelligence, age) and other clinical variables (e.g., length of hospitalization, age of onset), (Stayner, 1994).

The ORI version used in this study (Appendix G) adds questions that request each subject to describe a significant other (rather than the therapist) and her child.

2. The Semi-Structured Interview (Appendix H) is an open questionnaire that will collect psychosocial and psychological-historical information about each mother in the study.

The use of the semi-structured questionnaire has several purposes:

I) It will examine different characteristics of the subjects. These include:

a) Socio-demographic data (i.e., mothers' age at the time of arrival to the U.S. and years in this country, their educational level, work status, number of children, children's age and gender);

b) Mothers' present and past supportive systems (i.e., whether they are married, live with a partner, have family in the US or only abroad, experienced support upon immigration, feel presently supported, and/or have a clinician or mental health professional's support);

c) Particular characteristics of mothers who belong to each of the two groups (i.e., differentiate those mothers who separated and those who did not separate from their children (including those who consider(ed) separating), the age and gender of the child/children they separated from -or considered separating from- separation's length of time, number of separations);

d) Mothers' conscious understanding of their reason to decide for or against separating from their children (i.e., related to acculturation issues, such as the belief that children are better off when raised in the Hispanic culture; or to stressors, such as the fact that they could not provide appropriate shelter for their children due to financial stressors or insufficient support); and

e) Clinical understanding of the mothers associated to their perception of themselves, their children, and feelings around separation (i.e., capacity for empathy; prevalent defense mechanisms; and experience of self and others which includes: -perception of child as separate, - parallels between the mothers' history (such as abandonment or neglect) and their decision to send their children away, and - parallels between the mothers' perception of themselves and their children, and their perception of their children and their significant others).

II) Will attempt to integrate the domains of Acculturation, Stressors, and Object-Relations by contrasting the two groups of mothers in terms of those three variables. That is, the

semi-structured interview will explore whether the group of mothers that separates shows common socio-demographic characteristics, including common acculturation issues and common stressors (i.e., lack of support upon immigration and currently in the U.S., limited English skills, lack of financial resources, limited interest integrating to the host culture, etc.) in contrast with common aspects within the group that does not separate. At the same time, it will explore mothers' conscious and unconscious understanding of their reasons for and against separating from their children in terms of their object relations.

III) Will attempt to differentiate sub-groups with particular clinical implications. That is, the questionnaire will give way to distinguish sub-groups with more primitive (i.e., narcissistic, borderline, paranoid and schizoid relations) and with more developed or mature object-relations (i.e., neurotic relations). A subdivision of the subjects into sub-groups: a) more primitive and b) more developed or neurotic object-relations would lead to an increased understanding of the underlying dynamics and characteristics of the group of mothers that separates from their children. This understanding would help professionals to become increasingly aware of the interventions that can best help subjects who struggle with the decision to separate from their children or with a history of having done so.

The information obtained by the Semi-Structured Interview will be looked at in a qualitative, clinical way to examine whether there are clusters of subjects with common characteristics in terms of:

1) Demographics

2) Acculturation

3) Stressors (Past and present)

4) Underlying psychological dynamics particular to each group.

The semi-structured interview would either confirm or disconfirm the results obtained for each variable. Thus, if similar dynamics are reflected by both groups in any of the three main areas of the study, the semi-structured interview will potentially differentiate clusters of subjects, providing further information that highlights each group's particularities and differences. That is, this measure will allow to compare each variable's individual results (each variable's measurable results with those from the semi-structured interview's) and each variable's results in relation to the other variables. In sum, this measure will allow each of the variable's results to be confirmed or not and to be compared with each other so that clusters of subjects can be defined within each domain.

Procedure:

Once mothers contact the researcher over the phone, they will be told that this is a research project, conducted by a doctoral student from CCNY, that focuses on parenting and the Hispanic culture with the intention of collecting information that is personal and cannot be right or wrong. After being told that all information is confidential, criteria for participation in the study will be reviewed over the phone and placement into a subject group will take place (either group that separated from children or group that did not separate). Each mother will be given an appointment for a specific date and time and then assigned to a pre-designated classroom at the Psychological Center at The City College, 8th Floor, NAC Building. Each subject will be explained the study's objective, its requirements and procedures (i.e., 2 meetings of 2 hours each, one interview will be tape-

recorded), its confidentiality, the subject's rights to withdraw from the study, their compensation, and right to a third meeting. Subjects will then be given the consent form to be read and signed (see Appendix C). The consent form re-states the purposes of the study, its confidentiality, potential risks and the rights to withdraw from the study at any desired time. After each mother agrees to participate and signs the informed consent agreement, she will keep a copy of the consent form and another copy will be kept in a locked filing cabinet by the principal investigator.

Before the research intended instruments are given, each woman will be asked to complete the Brief Symptom Inventory or BSI (Derogatis & Spencer, 1982, Appendix D). This checklist will allow the investigator to screen each subject for possible psychiatric symptoms such as active psychosis and present suicidal or homicidal ideation. Any item in either of these categories that was endorsed positively will be queried further. Should any participant be found to be actively psychotic, suicidal or homicidal, the interview will be terminated. Subjects who are found to be inappropriate for the study will be escorted by the principal investigator to the intake desk of The Psychological Center where an immediate referral to an area hospital will be made or should there be one, to the subject's psychiatrist, who will be immediately contacted. These subjects would be escorted to the nearest hospital by a family member, if possible, and by police if necessary. In this last case scenario, the Director of The Psychological Center, who is a licensed psychologist, would be contacted and informed of the situation before the subject is referred to the Emergency Room or to her own psychiatrist. The interviewee will still receive a small payment for her time and for any transportation costs.

On the other hand, if the subject is found to be appropriate for the study, she will then be given the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics or BAS (Marin and Gamba, 1996, see Appendix E). Every instrument will be administered in English or in Spanish according to the language preference and proficiency of each participant. The BAS is a short scale of 24 items, divided in three areas (language use, linguistic proficiency and electronic media). This measure comes both in English and Spanish and takes about 15 to 20 minutes to be administered. The BAS provides an acculturation score along two major cultural dimensions: Biculturalism or High adherence to Hispanic cultural values and indicates the person's level of acculturation. Upon completion of this measure, each subject will be administered the Hispanic Stress Inventory or HSI (Cervantes, Salgado de Snyder and Padilla, 1991, see Appendix F) during the same meeting. This scale also comes in both Spanish and English and in two versions, one for immigrants and another one for U.S. born Hispanics. Only the first version will be used in this study. The HSI-immigrant version consists of 73 items and is divided in the following subscales: 1.Marital Status, 2.Occupational/Economic Stress, 3.Parental Stress, 4.Family/Cultural Conflict, and 5.Immigrant Stress. This measure takes 50 to 60 minutes to be administered and evaluates the person's level of emotional distress as well as the nature of the psychosocial stress.

At the end of this first meeting, each participant will be given an opportunity to ask questions and talk about their experience of the interview. At this time, a second appointment will be scheduled.

During the second meeting, the Object Relations Inventory or ORI (Blatt, Diamond, Coonerty and Kaslow, 1995, see Appendix G) will be administered first. This

measure assesses the person's level and quality of object representations by evaluating the extent to which individuals move from symbiotic to more differentiated relationships and their consequent capacity for intersubjective relatedness and empathy. The administration of this measure will involve asking each mother to describe her own mother, father, child (either the one who was sent away or the first born child), herself, and a significant other for up to 5 minutes. Each subject will be reminded at the beginning of the session that the answers will be tape-recorded. This measure will take a maximum of 25 minutes of administration.

Upon completion of the ORI, each mother will be administered an hour-long semi-structured interview (developed by the principal investigator and supervised by the dissertation committee members). This interview focuses on obtaining demographic and social/historic information from the subjects as well as on understanding the possible connection between the subjects' data and their decision for and against separating from their children.

A third, non-mandatory session will be offered to all participants. This time would be used to review all subjects' reactions to the two interviews and to the measures administered as well as to provide any referrals to counseling centers when necessary and requested.

At the end of the first two sessions and upon completion of the scales, questionnaires and inventories, subjects will be paid a total amount of $ 50 for their participation in the study and for any transportation costs.

Data Analysis:

The focal independent variable in this study differentiates the sample of Hispanic mothers into those who have separated from their children and those who have not. The dependent variables include: (1) Acculturation, (2) Psychosocial Stressors, and (3) Object-Relations. These three outcomes are operationalized, by three separate scales, into categorical (acculturation and stressors) and continuous variables (object-relations). In addition, a semi-structured questionnaire developed by this researcher and her doctoral research committee, will be used in order to: a) collect socio-demographic and psychological information from each participant's past and present, that will be contrasted in terms of the two groups of mothers (the ones who separate and those who do not separate from their children); b) integrate the three domains or variables of the study; and c) understand the clinical implications associated to the group of mothers that separates from their children, in contrast to the group that does not separate from their children, so that professionals in the mental health field can better understand and help subjects who either have a history of early separation(s) or struggle with the decision to send their children away at an early age.

These data will be analyzed by means of a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Initially, the mean scores of the two groups of mothers will be evaluated, i.e., statistically compared, on the set of outcomes, taken as a set. Should the anticipated significant difference between the two groups on the set of variables be found, t-tests, i.e., univariate tests, will be conducted to "locate" the source(s) of this multivariate (setwise) difference.

Due to the directional nature of the three hypotheses, 1-tailed significance tests will be used in conducting the t-tests. The three competing or complementary null

hypotheses are: 1) No differences will be found in the level of acculturation of the two groups under study (separation and non-separation group). 2) No differences will be found in the level of psychosocial stress of the two groups. 3) No differences will be found in the object-relations of the two groups of mothers. In other words, there will be no difference in the means (x's) between the two groups on any of these variables.

Even though I anticipate that the main determinant for mothers to decide for or against sending their children away relies on the level of their object-relations (rather than on the level of their acculturation and stress), the three dependent variables are relevant and most probably have some degree of impact in the decision of separating or not from their children. Consequently, the three hypotheses of this study are stated in a neutral way that keeps the door open for an impartial observation of the future results.

CHAPTER IV. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The purpose of the present study is to investigate a prevalent custom evidenced by many immigrant Hispanic mothers who send their children back to their country of origin to live under their mothers' or other close relatives' care for extended periods of time. Specifically, I explore the impact that the mothers' acculturation, stressors and object-relations have in this culturally generalized behavior. My goal is to better understand whether any or all of these variables play an active role in this behavior and therefore to appreciate its clinical implications. This study focuses on mothers who separate from their children at an early age and for extended periods of time; that is, mothers who separated from their children during the first 6 years of age and for a period of three months or longer. The criterion variables in this study are: 1) Acculturation, measured by the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS) (Marin and Gamba, 1996); 2) Stressors, measured by the Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI) (Cervantes, Padilla, Salgado de Snyder, 1990) and 3) Object-Relations, measured by the Object-Representation Inventory (ORI) (Diamond, Blatt, Stayner, and Kaslow (1993, revised 1995).

The following chapter summarizes the quantitative results of this study in terms of a preliminary and major analyses.

Study Criteria and Group Composition

Due to the difficulty in recruiting subjects for the present study, a smaller number of subjects than expected were included. Even though it was originally the goal to include fifty subjects, a total of twenty-four participated in this study. In order to meet criteria for

the present study, subjects ranged between 21 and 50 years old. All participants came from a low socio-economic background. The total of 24 mothers were divided in two groups: those who separated and those who did not separate from their young children for an extended period of time. That is, out of the total of twenty-four mothers (n=24), 11 separated from their children (45.8 percent of the total) and 13 did not separate from their children (54.2 percent of the total). The age of the children, at the time when they lived away from their mothers ranges between newborns and 6 years of age. The age of all the mothers who participated in this study ranges between 21 and 50 years of age. The average age of the mothers at the time when the separation occurred was found to be 28 years old. The time period of separation considered in this study, for the group of mothers who sent their children to live away, is three months or longer. It was found in this study, that the average length of separation between the subjects and their children was 1 year and 3 months.

At the time of the interviews, children from both groups of mothers (separation and non-separation), ranged between the ages of 6 and 17 years old. When this study was conducted, all mothers who separated were already reunited with their children in this country, often sharing the same household. Only those mothers, whose children were young adults at the time of the interviews, lived separately from them. The mothers who did not separate from their children at an early age also had their children living in this country.

Preliminary Analysis – Descriptive Statistics of All Variables

The following is an overview of the variables used in this study. These refer to both groups of mothers, the one that separated and the one that did not separate from their children. Variables measured in this study are of two types, categorical and continuous. Categorical data, rated in categories, refers to the variables of acculturation and stressors. That is, acculturation, measured by the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS), reflects whether subjects display either a Hispanic cultural adherence or a Bicultural one; Stressors, measured by the Hispanics Stress Inventory (HSI), indicate whether subjects present either with average or above average levels of stress. The continuous variable, on the other hand, rated along a continuum, is that of Object-Relation, measured by the Object Representation Inventory (ORI). The ORI results range on a scale from 1 to 10, conveying less developed to more developed object-relations. The ORI scores allude to each mother's description of her mother, father, child, self and significant other.

A summary of the results obtained for each subject from the two groups (separation and non-separation) regarding the three variables under study: Acculturation, Stressors and Object-Relations is given below, in Table 1.

Before proceeding to the data analysis, a brief description of the interpretation of the measures is in order. The BAS and the HSI are simple, objective and structured measures that do not require a blind interpreter and were scored by this investigator. The ORI was interpreted by a doctoral student of clinical psychology who had become reliable to score this measure through extended training from a professional assigned by the author

of this scale and through long-term exposure to this measure under that same professional's supervision.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS OF ALL VARIABLES

No Separation Group

	BAS	*HSI*	*ORI*				
Subject			*M*	*F*	*C*	*S*	*O*
#10	Bicultural	Average	4.75	4.75	6	5.75	5.5
# 9	Bicultural	Average	6	6	6	6	6
# 3	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6	7.5	6.25	6	6
# 4	Bicultural	Average	6	6	6.25	6.5	6
# 25	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	5.75	5.75	6	6	6
# 27	Bicultural	Average	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.75	6.5
# 21	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6.5	6.25	7	6.75	6
# 12	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6	6	6	6.75	6
# 17	Bicultural	Average	6.5	6	6.5	6.25	6
# 6	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6	6	7	6	6.5
# 7	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6.5	6	6.75	6.75	7
# 51	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6.5	6	6	7	6.5
# 14	Bicultural	Above Average	5.75	6	6	6.5	5.75

Separation Group

	BAS	*HSI*	*ORI*				
Subject			*M*	*F*	*C*	*S*	*O*[a]
# 22	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6.25	5.75	6	6	4.5
# 15	Bicultural	Above Average	6.75	6	6.25	7.5	6.25
# 43	Hispanic cultural adherence	Above Average	6	6	6.5	5.5	6
# 18	Bicultural	Average	7.5	6	6.75	7.5	6
# 97	Bicultural	Average	5.75	4.5	5.75	6	6
# 19	Bicultural	Average	7	6	6.75	6.5	7
# 24	Bicultural	Above Average	6.5	6	7.5	7.5	6
# 16	Hispanic cultural adherence	Above Average	6.5	6.7	6.75	7	6
# 50	Hispanic cultural adherence	Above Average	4.5	4.5	6	6	6
# 5	Hispanic cultural adherence	Average	6.25	5	5.5	6	4.5
# 8	Hispanic cultural adherence	Above Average	4.5	4.75	5.75	6	6

Note. Subjects 15, 24 and 27 have been in psychotherapy for two years or longer.

[a]ORI descriptions of M, F, C, S, O signify Mother, Father, Child, Self, and Other.

I will now summarize the results of this study for each area that was explored and will attempt to explain the reasons why each hypothesis was confirmed or disconfirmed.

As shown in Table 2 below, the categorical variables of Acculturation and Stressors (scored by the BAS and HSI) were measured in frequency and percentages. The continuous variable of Object-Relations (scored by the ORI) was measured in means and standard deviations.

First, Table 2 describes information regarding categorical data, particularly indicating the number of cases included in each category with its percentages specified. As indicated in Table 2 below, the acculturation variable reflects that subjects are almost evenly spread in both groups in terms of acculturation.

On the other hand, the stressors variable shows a different type of configuration, with a large number of subjects displaying average levels of stress and a small group of mothers showing above average levels of stress.

The continuous variable, for the most part, shows that the means for all ORI descriptions are around 5.5 and 6.5 while the standard deviation ranges between .1 and .3. This result suggests that scores in this sample tend to cluster tightly around the mean and that this population tends to score in the mid-range of the scale.

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS—ALL VARIABLES

FREQUENCY TABLE

GROUP COMPOSITION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NO SEPARATION	13	54.2	54.2	54.2
SEPARATION	11	45.8	45.8	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

ACCULTURATION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BICULTURAL	11	45.8	45.8	45.8
HISPANIC DOMINANT	13	54.2	54.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

STRESSORS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
AVERAGE	17	70.8	70.8	70.8
ABOVE AVERAGE	7	29.2	29.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

OBJECT-RELATIONS

	ORI MOM	ORI DAD	ORI CHILD	ORI SELF	ORI OTHER
N	24	24	24	24	24
Mean	6.09705	5.81295	6.32255	6.4423	5.98775
Std. Deviation	.714475	.0669215	.48983	.572465	.55855

MAJOR ANALYSES:

A total of three different types of test were run to analyze this study:

A) To compare the two groups, separation and non-separation, on the categorical or qualitative variables, a cross tabulation and chi-square test was done.

B) To compare the two groups in terms of the continuous or quantitative variable, two types of analyses were done; 1) a *between* groups analysis that compares the separation with the non-separation groups and 2) a *within* group analysis comparing the five ORI descriptions for each subject from the two groups. Because the sample size used was ultimately smaller than that expected and conventionally recommended for the use of a Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) which was originally considered, 1) a T-Tests using two-tailed significance tests were used for the *between* groups comparisons and 2) a One Way Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance with F-tests was done for the *within* group analyses. The results of each of these analyses are reported and further explained below in the context of the hypotheses tested for each of the three variables.

HYPOTHESIS 1. ACCULTURATION

The group of Hispanic mothers that separates from their children for extended periods of time would remain Hispanic dominant or show lower levels of acculturation than the group of mothers that does not separate from their children. By contrast, this group that does not separate from their children would show higher levels of acculturation reflected by biculturalism or by higher assimilation to the host culture.

The Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS) was utilized to evaluate acculturation. To examine the relationship between separation and acculturation, a cross tabulation and chi-square test was done. Results of the analysis indicate that no statistically significant difference exists between the group that separated and the one that did not separate on acculturation ($X^2 = .00$, $df = 1$, $p = .97$).

As Table 3 indicates below, there is almost an equal amount of Bicultural and Hispanic Dominant subjects in each group.

TABLE 3. ACCULTURATION -- CROSSTABULATION STUDY

	NO SEPARATION Group	SEPARATION Group	Total
ACCULT BICULTURAL Count	6	5	11
% Within Group	46.2 %	45.5 %	45.8 %
HISPANIC DOMINANT Count	7	6	13
% Within Group	53.8 %	54.5 %	54.2 %
Total Count	13	11	24
% Within Group	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

Note. N =24

This analysis reveals that there is no significant correlation between separation and acculturation. As seen in Table 3 (above), there is no significant difference in the percentage of the separated and the non-separated groups regarding acculturation. In other words, mothers separate from their children regardless of the level of acculturation that they have. Consequently, being more or less integrated in the host culture does not have a direct impact on the behavior of sending children away for extended periods of time.

HYPOTHESIS 2. STRESSORS

The group of mothers that separates from their children for extended periods of time will display more elevated psychosocial levels of stress characteristic of Hispanic immigrants than the group of mothers that does not separate from their children. Thus, subjects who separate from their children will report higher levels of stress than the subjects who do not separate from their children manifested by: Occupational Economic Stress, Parental Stress, Family Cultural Conflict, Marital Stress, and Immigration Stress.

To evaluate hypothesis 2, or whether there is a relationship between separation and stressors, a cross tabulation and chi-square test was performed. The Hispanic Stress Inventory (HSI) was the measure used to evaluate the levels of stress characteristic of each of the two groups of mothers. Results of the analysis indicate a positively significant relationship between separation and stressors ($X^2 = 6.33$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$).

That is, a heightened exposure to stressors is characteristic of the group of mothers who separate from their children while mothers who do not separate from their children show a limited exposure to stressors. Only 7 % (N = 1) of subjects in this study who did not separate had above average levels of stress, while 54 % (N = 6) of subjects who separated from their children had above average levels of stress. In other words, the group of mothers that separates from their children is significantly more likely to experience "above average" levels of stress than the group that does not separate. Thus, mothers' tendency to separate from their children at an early age and for extended periods of time is significantly associated with their exacerbated stressors.

HYPOTHESIS 3. OBJECT- RELATIONS

The group of mothers that separates from their children for extended periods of time would present more immature and more variable object-relations (or self and object representations) than the group of mothers that does not separate. Thus, the group of subjects that separates will exhibit lower scores (below the level of object constancy; level 5 or below) and a wider, more spread range of scores in their descriptions of themselves and others than the group that does not separate. Lower scores would primarily reflect polarized and unintegrated views of self and others (rapprochement themes) and or the perception of others as either a mirror for the self or a self-completing object (narcissistic themes).

To evaluate hypothesis 3, two types of analyses were done. First, a *between-group-analysis* (t-tests) in which the two groups are compared with each other to determine whether *a)* one group presents more developed object-relations than the other one (reflected by higher scores) and whether *b)* subjects within one group display more variable self and object representations than subjects in the other group (reflected by more spread or inconsistency in the scores of one group than in the other one). Second, a *within-group analysis* (one way repeated measures analysis of variance) was done in which all of the mothers' scores on the ORI battery were compared to each other, separately for the separation and non-separation groups. The focus of these analyses is an examination of whether some representations tend to be more mature or integrated than others, and, if so, to identify those representations that are more developed from those that are less mature and more conflictive. For example, mothers from the group that

separated from their children may have a tendency to perceive their own mothers in more idealized and immature ways than they perceive their children, while this may not be the case in the other group.

For the between-group analyses, independent groups t-tests using two-tailed significance tests were performed. The first part of the between group analysis or hypothesis 3(a) that looks at whether one group presents higher object-relations than the other one indicates that the relationship between separation and object-relations' maturity or development is not significant. That is, there are no statistically significant differences in the object-relations' scores of the two groups on any of the ORI subscales (ORI-MOM: $t = -.263$, $df = 22$, $p = .795$; ORI-DAD: $t = 1.792$, $df = 22$, $p = .087$; ORI-CHILD: $t = .043$, $df = 22$, $p = .966$; ORI-SELF: $t = -.461$, $df = 14.85$, $p = .651$; ORI-OTHER: $t = 1.26$, $df = 22$, $p = .221$; ORI RANGE: $t = .19$, $df = 22$, $p = .85$).

These findings fail to support hypothesis 3 (a) suggesting that mothers who separate from their children do not have less developed object-relations, or lower scores, than mothers who do not separate from their children for extended periods of time.

The second part of the between group analysis or hypothesis 3(b), however, which examines the relationship between separation and stability of object-relations, did yield significant results. The average standard deviations of the 5 ORI scores are statistically significantly different between the separated and non-separated groups (separated = .62; non-separated = .33, $t = -4.12$, $df = 22$, $p < .01$). These results indicate that mothers who separated from their children show significantly more scattered and inconsistent object-representations of self and others than non-separated mothers. This finding lends support

to hypothesis 3 (b), which states that mothers who separated from their children have more unstable or variable object-relations reflected by a wider range of scores in their representation of themselves and others.

Last, the within-group analysis examines whether mothers within each group represent some figures in more developed and organized ways than others. To do the within-group analysis, a one way repeated measures analysis of variance was done. First, this analysis was performed with the group of mothers that separated and then with the group that did not separate from their children for extended periods of time.

Table 4 provides the means and standard deviation scores for each of the 5 ORI measures in the separation group. Because the overall F-test indicates that in the separation group at least 1 pair of ORI mean scores are significantly different from one another ($F = 5.10$, $df = (4.40)$, $p < .05$) a pair-wise comparison or a two-tailed significance test (T-test) was done to locate those pairs of means that are statistically significantly different from the other ones.

TABLE 4. WITHIN GROUP ANALYSIS : SEPARATION GROUP

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ORI MOM	6.1364	.93784	11
ORI DAD	5.5682	.75076	11
ORI CHILD	6.3182	.59257	11
ORI SELF	6.5000	.74162	11
ORI OTHER	5.8409	.72692	11

These findings suggest that mothers who separated from their children present significant differences in the way they perceive or represent themselves and others. That

is, the mothers in the group that separated from their children do not have consistent object-relations and tend to perceive themselves and others in inconsistent ways.

The nature of the statistically significant differences between the pairs of ORI measures are illustrated below in Table 5:

TABLE 5. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PAIRS OF ORI MEASURES

	Means	***p***
1. ORI Mom > ORI Dad	(6.14 > 5.57)	.014
2. ORI Child > ORI Dad	(6.32 > 5.57)	.001
3. ORI Self > ORI Dad	(6.50 > 5.57)	.001
4. ORI Child > ORI Other	(6.52 > 5.84)	.041
5. ORI Self > ORI Other	(6.50 > 5.84)	.028

These results indicate that mothers who have separated from their children have a more mature representation of their:

1) Mothers than of their fathers

2) Children than of their fathers

3) Themselves than of their fathers

4) Children than of significant others

5) Themselves than of significant others

This analysis suggests that the group of mothers who separated from their children has a relatively more integrated and coherent image of themselves, their children, and mothers than that of their fathers; they have a relatively more integrated perception of their children and of themselves than that of their significant others. Consequently, mothers who separated from their children have a more ambivalent and conflictive

perception of their fathers and significant others than of themselves, their mothers, and their children.

TABLE 6. WITHIN GROUP ANALYSIS: NO SEPARATION GROUP

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ORI MOM	6.0577	.49111	13
ORI DAD	6.0577	.58767	13
ORI CHILD	6.3269	.38709	13
ORI SELF	6.3846	.40331	13
ORI OTHER	6.1346	.39018	13

As Table 6 shows above, the overall F-test indicates that no pair of ORI mean scores are significantly different from one another ($F = 2.51$, $df = (4, 48)$, $p > .05$) for the group of mothers that did not separate from their children. These results indicate that the mothers who belong to this group tend to have consistent scores for each of their self- and object-representations, reflecting consistent object-relations both individually and among themselves. In other words, mothers who have not separated from their children are inclined to perceive themselves and others in a consistent or stable way.

Finally, the entire analysis was replicated excluding those cases that were controversial because of being in psychotherapy at the time of the interviews or in the recent past, or because they had either separated from their children for a period of 2 months (rather than 3 months) or were considering a future long-term separation. This controversial group consisted of 7 subjects that belonged to both groups. Even though the entire analysis was replicated, and the two groups were compared in terms of their ORI results to observe any differences in the outcome, once the questionable cases were removed, the overall pattern in the full analysis was essentially the same. The implications of all of the above findings will be discussed in the last chapter or Discussion chapter.

CHAPTER V. QUALITATIVE RESULTS

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the demographic and historical data of the sample to offer a general description of the main characteristics of the mothers who participated in this study. This chapter continues and concludes with the analysis of the information obtained from a semi-structured interview conducted with all 24 mothers that participated in the present study.

I will first start by describing some general information regarding important similarities and differences between the two groups. These data includes: all subjects' mean age, the average age of the children who were sent away, the caretaker chosen by subjects to leave their children with, the children fathers' availability (and support of the subjects) in both groups, choice of "significant other" in ORI descriptions for both groups, and mothers' incidence of separation from their own mothers in both groups.

TABLE 7. GENERAL INFORMATION ON BOTH GROUPS OF SUBJECTS

Average Age of Mothers From Both Groups

	Separation Group	Non- Separation Group
Age at separation	28	N/A
Age at interview	39	40

Age of Children at Separation – Separation Group

Average Age	Median Age	Age Range
1.9	1.5	4 months - 6 years

Note. 6 mothers out of 11 sent their children away during their first year of life
7 children out of 15 were sent away during their first year of life

Caretaker Chosen By Mothers Who Separated – Separation Group

Children left with maternal grandmothers	Children left with their fathers
12	3

Note. Total of mothers 11. total of children 15

Number of Fathers Available and
ORI Choice of Partner For Significant Other

	Separation Group	Non-Separation Group
Fathers' availability/support	2	9
ORI choice of partner	0	6
Total	11	13

Incidence of Mothers' Early Separation From Their Own Mothers

	Separation Group	Non-Separation Group
Mothers raised by grandparents	6	6
Mothers raised by a relative in the same household[a]	2	0
Total	11	13

[a]These subjects lived with their mothers as well

In sum, this information reveals that the mean age of the mothers from the separation and non-separation groups *at the time of the interview* seems remarkably similar (40 and 39, respectively). The average age of the mothers who separated *at the time when they sent their children away* was 28 years old (ranging from ages 20 to 40 with the majority of the subjects clustering around 26 years old).

A tendency to leave their children at an early age was found in the separation group. From a total of 11 mothers who separated, 6 sent at least one of their children away during their first year of life. That is, from a total of 15 children sent away, 7 separated from their mothers between the ages of 4 and 11 months. The median age of the children at the time when they first separated from their parents was 1.5 years old. A large number of subjects (6 out of 11) sent their children away on two different occasions before their children turned 6 years old. As already stated in the previous chapter, the average length of separation was 1 year and 3 months with separations ranging between 3 months and 4 years of duration.

Most subjects who separated from their children (a total of 9 out of 11) left them under their mothers' care. The other 2 mothers left their children with the children's fathers. From these 2 subjects, the first one left her daughter with the child's father at 11 months of age and again at 3 years old (for 9 months and for 15 months respectively). The second subject left her 2 children with their father when they were 10 months and 6-years-old (for a period of 3 years). In total, 12 children were left with their maternal grandmothers and 3 children were left under their fathers' care.

In terms of the children's fathers' presence and support, 9 subjects (out of 11) who separated from their children reported that their husbands were not present at the time when they sent their children away and 8 of them are currently divorced or separated. On the other hand, the non-separation group has 4 mothers (out of 13) who are divorced or separated.

Subjects' tendency to derive greater support from their partners in the non-separation group was also evidenced in the choice of "significant other" ORI

descriptions. Mothers in the non-separation group appeared somewhat consistent in their choices; 6 of 13 subjects chose to describe their husbands or current partners. A number of subjects (4) chose to describe their children and the rest chose to describe their mother, father, or a friend. On the other hand, subjects in the separation group described a great variety of people in their lives; 4 out of 11 subjects chose to describe the person who raised them instead of their mothers (grandmothers and aunts). One of the subjects chose her biological mother, two subjects chose a male friend who was not their partner, one person described her daughter, and another one her deceased boyfriend.

Finally, it seems significant to mention that both groups showed a high incidence of early and long-term separation(s) from their own mothers. About half of the separation group (6 subjects out of 11) has a history of abandonment, with 2 more subjects who lived with their mothers but reported that their caretaking primarily came from another relative living in the same household. About half of the non-separation group (6 out of 13) was also raised at least for one period of three months or longer by a caretaker other than their own mothers.

This general descriptive data will be integrated with the rest of the results in the following section and later on in the discussion chapter.

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I will now continue by focusing on the qualitative information obtained from the Semi-Structured Interview with an analysis of its implications. The Semi-Structured Interview was included in this study as a means of obtaining in-depth information and a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of the complex life experiences of each subject. The interview questions elicit information about subjects' past and present

experiences. This information clusters, for the most part, around the three variables examined in this study; that is, aspects that can potentially impact on mothers' acculturation, mothers' stressors (both at the time when they immigrated and presently), and their intra-personal and interpersonal relationships.

Mothers offered a narrative of their personal life experiences, including their meaningful relationships and events that contributed to the early and prolonged separation(s) from their children. A number of important themes surfaced that further highlighted similarities among the subjects within each group and specific differences between the two groups under study.

The major findings obtained from the Semi-Structured Interview will be summarized along three main and interconnected themes:

1) History of trauma
2) Capacity for empathy and concern
3) Prevalent defense mechanisms

HISTORY OF TRAUMA

The most salient and powerful theme that emerged from the interviews with each one of the mothers was the prevalence of trauma in the group of mothers who separated from their children. The intensity of these subjects' early and recurrent experiences of neglect and/or abuse makes the concept of "stress" seem incomplete and almost inadequate in its ability to grasp the nature of these subjects' exposure to long-term painful and overwhelming experiences.

Fairbairn (1941) describes the frustration of a child's desire to be loved and to have his love accepted as the greatest trauma that a child can experience and as the only trauma that really matters from a developmental standpoint. Mothers who separated from their children, in contrast to those who did not separate, consistently expressed histories of trauma reflected by experiences of abandonment and long-term emotional neglect, histories of severe physical abuse and fear towards one or both parents without any alternative available mothering presence. For example, when asked about her relationship with her mother and father during childhood, subject # 97 stated:

> She was very strict, like a sergeant, I never felt any affection from her. My stepfather always ignored me and was also physically abusive with me. That was hard, too. He would buy snickers for his children and nothing for me.

When asked whether she has ever felt little or no support since arriving to this country, this subject said:

> I have a lot of people but I do not rely on any of them emotionally. My mom is very tough; she can just move on, so if I have a problem and I go to her, like I did when my husband walked out on me and my daughter was 2 months old, she says: 'Don't worry, don't think about it, just move on.' She is very strong. She is close to God. She has a direct line with God. She talks to God and she says: 'With faith He will solve your problems;' so, emotionally I cannot feel support.

This subject tried to commit suicide after her husband left her and after she sent her 6-month-old daughter to stay with her mother abroad. This mother has a history of early separation from her own mother who left her under relatives' care between the ages of 3 and 5 years old.

Another mother, subject #19, also from the separation group, described her early relationship with her mother and father by saying:

> I was always scared of my mother. I was not close to her. She hit me all the time, for no apparent reason. Since I was the oldest one I helped her a great deal but she demanded too much of me. She said she preferred my brother...now we are closer but it's not the same. I could not become close to her now. I feel rejection towards her. My father was not physically affectionate but he made clothes for me. Then he became very strict, fanatic with religion.

Later on, this mother said: "My mother maltreated me physically and I always thought she did not love me..." This mother left her son with her mother for a period of 5 months when her child was 9 months and again at 17 months for the same length of time. She spoke later on about her struggle to be a different type of mother than hers and her tendency to surprise herself when she hits her children with a belt at times when she is frustrated.

A third subject with a history of separation from her children (# 43) described her childhood relationship with her parents in the following way:

> I do not remember anything about my mother when I was a child. I always felt ignored by her. She did not even notice that I was at home often times. She did not know if I ate or if I did my homework. She never went to parents' meetings or asked me about my homework. My father lived three houses away from us. He let me lay down by his side and saved me food sometimes.

When describing her relationship with them as an adult, she said:

> With my mother is good but very limited. I cannot talk to her about most things. It is the same with my father. There is a distance with him too. I was scared of both of them but now I feel less scared of my mother.

This mother was left by her parents at age 8 for one year with a relative she did not know. She has no recollection of that year other than from falling and having several stitches on her forehead. This mother sent her daughter to reside with her child's father at 11 months (for a period of 9 months) and again at 3 years old (for 5 months).

A tendency to experience parents as threatening and unavailable was prevalent throughout the separation group. By contrast, subjects who did not separate from their children for extended periods of time had a more benevolent perception of their significant others. They either reported no histories of trauma or they experienced at least one parent, or surrogate parent, as consistently emotionally available and able to provide good-enough mothering early on.

Most subjects from the non-separation group described their mothers as "caring and present" even though oftentimes this same parent was also described as "overprotective, strict, or present but not physically affectionate." In those situations in which a parent was described as "selfish, overinvolved with his/her own family or emotionally distant" at least one other parent was described as "available, or always there for me." For example, subject # 3 described her early relationship with her parents in the following way:

> My father combed my hair but I was scared of him because of the way he talked. Also, he was always very busy. My mother used to play with me; she bought me

cooking toys and took me to the movies. She rocked me sometimes to put me to sleep and was warm.

When describing her relationship with her parents as an adult, this subject stated:

I have more communication with my mother than with my father. I speak with both but I feel more comfortable with her. My mother is warm, affectionate, very dedicated to her home and family. She is very reserved but very preoccupied and caring with all of us. She never separated from us while we were children. My father is less communicative than my mother.

Another subject (# 17) described her childhood relationship with her parents as follows:

My mother cared a great deal about our food, the home, discipline; she was not physically affectionate. However, I felt I could always count on her and I felt loved by her. The house felt empty without her, she was the core of the family. My father was not that affectionate either but he took us to the cinema, to shows, we had a good relationship; he is very funny.

On the other hand as it was previously mentioned, several subjects in the group that did not separate from their children were either exposed to the loss of or to the separation from one or both parents at an early age. In fact, several mothers in this group (6 out of 13) have a history of being left under relatives' care, some due to their mothers' sudden death or to a serious emotional illness. Even though these mothers were exposed to early trauma, like the subjects in the separation group, their narratives reflect the presence of at least one parent, or surrogate other, who has been consistently emotionally available. One of these mothers (subject # 27) was left repeatedly under both her

maternal and paternal grandparents' care due to her mother's psychiatric illness that led to recurrent hospitalizations. This subject described her early relationship with her parents in the following way:

> My mother was always sick in bed. She was like a little girl, demanding and impatient. However, she was always close to me. I was physically close to her and I looked for her all the time. She could not take care of us but she always listened to me without being judgmental and encouraged me to pursue my goals. My father was very affectionate when I was a child. He was the one with the feet on the ground.

Another subject (# 7), whose mother died when she was 9 years old, described her early relationship with her parents by stating:

> I try but I do not have many memories from my childhood. I remember my father protected me very much. They never shouted or hit me. They always spoke with me in good terms but I did feel more attention from my father than from my mother. I guess we were so many children (8) that she always sacrificed herself and did not have much time to give to each of us. But my father always gave me extra attention; he was very giving with me.

Three subjects from the group that did not separate from their children, were left by their mothers under relatives' care before the age of 6. Two of them were raised by their maternal grandmothers and a third one by her father and mother inconsistently. This third subject (# 12) was left by her mother between the ages of 2 and 7. She describes her early relationship with her parents by saying:

> I loved my mother and respected her but there was not a strong bond and affection towards her as I felt with my father. He always had time with us; he sat with us to talk even if he came tired from work. I often sat on his lap. He is very affectionate.

One of the subjects (# 6) raised by her maternal grandmother from birth to 6 years of age and by her mother thereafter, described her grandmother as follows:

> I learned from her about warmth. Very human, welcoming, loving, worried about her family, strong. I am who I am because of what I learned from her. The first 5 years are crucial for a child. Then my mother took me. She is also very strong.

This subject reported never to have felt that close to her biological mother but to have found affection and a role model in her stepfather. She stated: "He taught me to be a professional; he knew a great deal and he read a lot. He helped me and taught me with love. He was like my father. He oriented me and encouraged me."

She broke into tears at this point, stating that her stepfather died before he could meet her first son. This subject's mother was also raised by her own maternal grandmother. She, however, reported that she could never separate from her children.

In sum, a particular characteristic of the non-separation group, that is absent in the separation group, is these subjects' experience of continuity of the emotional availability and reliability of at least one parent or surrogate parent. Both groups have several subjects who were raised by a relative other than their mothers. The difference between those mothers who repeated their experience of emotional and/or physical neglect by sending their children to live with close relatives and those who did not seems to rely on their own early experiences. That is, the group of mothers who separated from their

children consistently shows a history of trauma, particularly long-term experiences of abuse and neglect or emotional deprivation, not present in the group that did not separate even though the latter group is not exempt from early experiences of loss and separation.

This study's results highlight the core role that subjects' object-relations play in early and prolonged separations between mothers and children in the Hispanic culture, an aspect that has not been addressed in the literature regarding this topic.

CAPACITY FOR EMPATHY AND CONCERN

A second core and representative finding that differentiated the two groups of mothers was their relative ability to empathize with their children or their capacity for concern. Most subjects who sent their children away, showed difficulty in empathizing with their children's feelings at the time when the children were left. Subject # 19, for example, who left her daughter between the ages of 6 months and 1 year old with her mother stated, "I don't know. I don't think that she was attached to me. My 8th month old baby [presently] is very attached. Chloe was not that attached so I don't think it was that hard for her. She was not clingy so I assume that she was fine."

Even though most mothers who separated were unable to connect to their children's experience of loss and pain at the time they were left behind, many of them were able to experience their own past feelings of intense sadness and difficulty to deal with the separation from their children. For example, one of the mothers (subject # 43) expressed her difficulty to connect to the way her daughter felt when she was left behind, at 11 months of age (for a period of 9 months) and again at 3 years of age (for 5 months) in the following way:

I imagine she was too young; she knew, but she did not realize what happened. She had a young aunt who almost took my role. I do not think either time was so bad. She knew there were other people who loved her over there.

However, when describing her own reaction to the separations, this same mother expressed:

Oh, God! I cried a lot. I was only 100 pounds after I left her. I came back crying each time. I could not believe it. People say you get used to it but I did not. I could not eat. I could not stand it. I stopped eating.

Another mother (subject # 22) who sent her two daughters at different points when they were 11 months (for 2 years) and 6 months (first, for a period of 6 months, and again at 1 year of age for 3 months) stated:

I think they were happy. My mother told me they called for me when they went to sleep but they enjoyed a great deal that day when I left them. They were better off there than with me. It helped our family relationship to leave them there. It helped the family to be more united. Now they love their family there as much as the family they have here.

When this same mother spoke about her own experience the day she left each of her daughters, she said:

I felt sad because I missed her so much but relaxed that she was with my mother. But I felt sad. I felt the emptiness when I returned home. I would have not left them if it were not with my mother. I called everyday and spent a lot of money. On Sundays I missed them so much that I cried and hugged their clothes.

Some mothers went further and expressed great resentment at their children for bringing up the separation and their feelings of abandonment. For example, subject # 50 who left her son at 18 months for 3 years reported:

> I left him with my mother but my older sister took care of him most of the time. He calls her 'mom' because she cared for him. I think he had to adapt to being without me and I had to adapt to being without him. I did not have anyone to care for him nor money to pay for a baby sitter here. He still complains about my leaving him, why did I leave him alone there; I think he suffered a great deal. I feel OK about the separation. I think I did the right thing. If he does not understand it I cannot do anything else for him. I cannot spend my life explaining myself either. I told him once that I would not see him ever again if each time we meet he accuses me of leaving him behind.

Conversely, a few mothers were able to become in touch with their children's feelings of loss, sadness and pain at the time when they were left. Some of these mothers, however, had difficulty expressing regret or sadness about their decision to leave their children behind and verbalized instead mixed and confusing feelings. For example, subject # 5, who left her 10 month-old, 6 and 9 year old sons for 3 years stated:

> They were sleeping when I left. They did not say good-bye to me. But they were left sad. They missed me very much. They asked me over the telephone 'Mom, when are you coming back?' I think that the oldest one suffered the most.

However, when asked about her present feelings regarding the separation, this mother said:

> I do not feel bad because I have given them love and safety since then and I make sure their father gives it to them too to help them develop. The oldest one does not even wear those big pants that rappers wear anymore. He has matured.

Another subject, # 18, who left her 2 and a1/2-year-old son with her mother for 4 years said:

> I imagine it was hard for him. He asked constantly where I was, why did I leave and why did I not wait for him. My mother told me he looked for me and asked when would I be back.

When this subject was asked about the way she felt during the interview while talking about the separation, she answered: "I feel good because I believe until now that I made the right decision. It was hard but I think it was the right decision." Then she continued:

> Maybe at that time my decision could have been different but now I have a different situation. Maybe I could have stayed and found another job but the situation was not easy. But at the time I could not see any other way out.

Interestingly, most of the mothers who sensed their children's sadness either at the time when they separated or while the separation lasted, could also notice their children's conflictive behaviors upon reunion and were able to recognize their own feelings of guilt.

Subject (# 16) who seemed aware of her child's difficulty at the time of the separation, that lasted 3 years when her daughter was 5 years of age, stated:

> That day [when I left her] was the worse day. Even my parents cried when they saw us saying good-bye. It was the saddest and most confusing day of her life. She went to sleep at night and she did not want to wake up the next day.
>
> When asked about her present feelings regarding the separation, this mother said:
>
> Sad. I remember the very moment I left. I will never overcome it. Maybe when I see that she progresses and that it did not affect her psychologically I will feel better. If I see that she is not affected psychologically I will feel better but I still feel guilty about leaving her because I had her and she was my responsibility...it was terrible for me and I know that sometimes she acts differently because I left her.

Like this mother, subject # 19 also addressed her son's sadness at the three times they separated and their impact on her son's emotional state. This mother said:

> It was very hard for him; he became sick and did not eat. The doctor said that he missed me and that was why he would not eat. He sat by the window, called me and waited for me. Now he fears I will abandon him. He used to wake up with nightmares crying. He would say he thought I had left him again. Even now he needs to know where I go and where I am all the time. I have given them things I should not have because of my guilt.

Despite the fact that some mothers expressed pain, awareness of the separation's negative impact in themselves and sometimes awareness of the impact on their children and awareness of their feelings of guilt, most of them experienced the separations as unavoidable. Like most mothers who separated, subject # 19 felt that separating from her son was her best and only alternative to taking care of her son and of herself at difficult

times. She sent her child away each time her husband maltreated her as well as when she finally separated from her partner. Like this mother, several other ones perceived their need to separate from their children as based on their having marital problems or ending their relationship with their partners. Separating or divorcing often led them to need a new place to live and work to support themselves and their children, making it more difficulty to take care of their own and their children's needs. Other mothers described the separation as based on their need to work for long hours and/or to come to the US illegally, leaving their children behind to become legal residents before they could bring them along.

Because most of the mothers perceived the separation as unavoidable the majority of them had difficulty considering its negative impact on their children. Instead, they focused on their efforts to improve their personal and/or financial situation and/or to become legal citizens. For example, subject # 97 described her reasons to separate from her daughter for 6 months when her child was 6 months old by saying:

> As a mother, I was not together enough to be able to take care of her because I was constantly asking myself 'why me, why did he leave me with a baby?' I did not know how to parent her. My mind was not totally on this child for me to be a good mother because I was trying to survive independently. I had a good husband, we did everything together and I missed him. I was used to doing everything with him and I became very depressed when I had to do it all alone. I do not think that I could be a good mother under those circumstances.

When asked about her current feelings about the separation from her daughter, this mother said: "I think it was for the best. It happened because I did not have a good baby sitter at the time."

Only two mothers (subjects # 8, and 43) expressed feelings of guilt and regret about their decision to separate to the point of wishing to return to the past to prevent the separation. When asked about the impact that the separation from her child has had, subject # 8, who left her 3 and 7-year-old children for 3 years to work on her legal status said:

> They are constantly calling me now. I feel that they live with the fear that I will leave them. My daughter was very young and now she is the most conflicted one. Maybe they feel abandoned. It makes me think that if I could go back in time I would not have done it. I think they suffer more than one does. After my husband died I felt guilty because I felt abandoned and I realized what is experienced when one is abandoned. I feel that he left me.

Later on, this subject described her 2-year-separation from her own parents at age 11 when she was sent to live with her grandmother by saying: "I think the separation from my parents hurt me very badly. It was horrible. If one could go back in time I would not leave [my children] because I suffered so much with my grandmother."

In a similar way, subject # 43 expressed: " If I could I would have not left her. If I went back in time, I would have not done so because maybe she suffered and I suffered too much. It was not worthwhile."

However, when asked about the way they imagined their children felt at the time they were left, both of them evidenced mixed ability to empathize with their children's sense of loss. Subject # 43 stated:

> I imagine she was too young and knew but she did not realize what happened...it was not as bad for her as it was for me. Maybe she cried a few nights but children forget more easily than adults.

Subject # 8 responded by saying:

> At first it was hard for them. When we spoke on the phone they asked me when I would be back. Then they became more used to it. I have a family that loves them and in that sense they did not suffer that much.

These examples highlight the differences between the two groups in terms of mothers' capacity for concern. The mothers in the group that separated were, for the most part, unable to be empathic towards their children's feelings of loss or showed great ambivalence in their ability to address their children's painful experiences around separation. These reactions are probably the result of overwhelming feelings of sadness, pain, and guilt (conscious or unconscious) that are still unresolved to some degree. By contrast, one of the subjects who left her son and has been in therapy for the last two years could not only address her feelings of guilt but also her concern regarding her son and his history of being separated from her. This mother (subject # 24) said:

> I only realized later on how [the separation] was for him. I feel sad and ashamed because both my husband and I were ignorant and unable to put ourselves in his place and have a sense of how he would feel. It was traumatic when he was 2 years old because he was sent away from both of his parents to a new place. We

did not even prepare him or give him an explanation. I imagine that he felt anxious, sad, strange and confused.

When asked about the impact of the separation on her son, she stated:

I took him to therapy because of hyperactivity at around 6 or 7 years old. I thought he had problems because of his separation from his father; [his father] does not live with us anymore. But I noticed during the intake that he could not separate from **me**. I think he feared that **I** would disappear again. I noticed at that point that he was scared to go out to another room and that it was because of my sending him to the Dominican Republic.

More similarly to this last subject's experience are those described by mothers who did not separate from their children. In the non-separation group, mothers' narratives focus on their decision against long-term separations as based on their children's need for their love and attention. When asked about her reasons for deciding not to separate from her child, subject # 7 said:

Because I understand that children really need their mothers. It is my way to give [my son] emotional strength for his future. Children who grow up without love or affection become very insecure and it is when they are young that one can give them the basis... I think being loved is basic. I would not be able to relax if he was not under my care and I think he needs me.

Another subject (# 27) answered the same question by saying:

I have always grown up with a great sense of responsibility. But I would not separate from [my son] because of that great love I feel for him and the wish to

protect him. I think that others will not care for him the way I do and I have always been the one concerned about his needs and what he goes through.

A third subject (# 21) simply stated: " Because she needs me. I do not think that anyone would take care of her as I do."

In their own words, these subjects seemed to be conveying that mothers tend to know best about their children's needs through their ability to identify with their children; in that way, they are the ones who can feel what their children need.

Winnicott (1963) distinguishes the concepts of 'guilt' and 'concern' by telling us that: "concern is used to cover in a positive way a phenomenon that is covered in a negative way by the word guilt" (p. 73). As the examples given above show, mothers from the group that separated tend to have difficulty experiencing empathy while some of the mothers in the same group display a sense of guilt that conveys anxiety and ambivalence. Concern, on the other hand, as present in the group that did not separate, conveys further integration and the sense that the individual cares, feels, and accepts responsibility.

PREVALENT DEFENSE MECHANISMS

A consideration of the defense mechanisms used by the subjects in this study seems appropriate as an attempt to further understand these mothers' internal world and coping mechanisms as well as any apparent differences between the two groups.

For most of the mothers in this study, regardless of group, talking about their significant others in an open and relatively non-defended manner seemed challenging. This is understandable considering that Hispanics tend to attribute great value to 'respect'

and 'familism,' which highlight the importance of loyalty and trust as primarily focused on the family of origin (Escovar and Lazarus, 1982; Mc Goldrick et al., 1982; Zayas and Solari, 1994; Gil and Vazquez, 1996; and Roland, 1996; among others). Not only was the interviewer a stranger but also someone perceived at times as a 'professional' who might as a consequence not know about or understand the hardships of their struggles. This tendency, however, to describe their significant others and themselves in a relatively superficial and concrete manner seemed more prevalent in their responses to the ORI than to the Semi-Structured Interview across the two groups. A significant contrast was found when the information obtained by these two measures was compared. In particular, a marked difference was found in the group of mothers who separated from their children. These mothers often responded to the ORI with positive and idealized descriptions of their significant others that were only inconsistently sustained throughout the Semi-Structured interview, especially when it concerned their early relationships with their parents.

As stated by Freud (1926/1995) early on and by Klein (1946/1975), defensive operations are mechanisms used by the ego to deal with anxiety and intrapsychic conflict. A prevalence of early defensive operations, especially splitting and other related mechanisms, was particularly found in the narratives of those mothers who separated from their children. Sudden and complete reversal of feelings and conceptualizations about a parent or child marked by lack of awareness of the contradiction often reflected these mothers' tendency to rely in the defense mechanisms of splitting, denial and primitive idealization. On the other hand, the group of mothers who did not separate

from their children, showed a stronger tendency to rely on higher-level defensive operations such as repression and its related mechanisms.

An example of a mother's narrative that reflects a reliance on early defenses was given by subject # 19, who described her early relationship with her father by saying: "He was not physically affectionate but he played with me and was affectionate. He only made clothes for me." When describing her early relationship with her mother, this subject said:

> I was always very scared of my mother. I was not close to her. She hit me all the time, for no apparent reason. Since I was the oldest one I helped her a great deal but she demanded too much of me...now we are closer but it's not the same. I could not become close to her now. I feel rejection towards her.

Right after this answer, this mother was asked whether she ever felt rejected and or ignored by her parents and her answer was negative. Half an hour earlier, this same subject offered a very positive and idealized description of her mother in the ORI without any indication of conflict between them.

Another subject from this same group who gave inconsistent narratives about her mother was Subject # 50, who described her early relationship with her mother by saying: "I was sickly and she always took care of me...She played with us and talked to us. She was affectionate. She hugged me and kissed me." When this same mother gave the ORI description of her mother, a very positive image was portrayed again. However, when asked to describe a significant person in her life as part of the ORI a few minutes later she said:

> My grandmother. She loved me very much. She and my mother's sisters were the only people who were affectionate with me in my entire life. My mother was not expressive. My grandmother took care of me and loved me very much. Since my grandmother and my 2 aunts died I feel that nobody cares about me. This subject burst into tears while saying this.

Like these two mothers, most subjects in the separation group gave extremely sad and lonely accounts of their childhoods, and yet when asked if they ever felt ignored or rejected as children, almost all of them denied ever having felt that way. Most of the mothers in this group gave strongly positive or negative descriptions of their parents, and especially positive ones when describing their mothers, even though they were described at one point or another as absent and neglectful or as severely abusive.

For example, subject # 97 who reported that her early relationship with her mother was emotionally distant, not affectionate and described her mother as "a sergeant who abused [her] physically with a belt" responded to the ORI in the following way:

> My mother is my hero. She is the person I worship the ground she walks on. I wish I could be half the woman she is... She taught me that she really believed in how important school was. I just think she is my hero, the person I am most grateful to have in my life.

Subject # 22, described her mother in the ORI by saying: "She is the ideal mother because she is very dedicated, more to us than to herself. She taught us that the family always goes first. We never fight. There is a lot of harmony, a lot of love."

Marked inconsistencies within each of the measures, the ORI and the Semi-Structured Interview, and between the two measures reflect this group's tendency to rely

on early defense mechanisms, such as splitting, idealization and denial. In this way, positive feelings tend to be exaggerated and actively separated from any negative or aggressive ones, which are denied, as are the painful feelings to which frustration gave rise.

Another lower-level or early defense mechanism predominantly used by mothers who separated is that of projection. Subjects who separate often seem to experience themselves as deprived of positive qualities, projected instead onto their children who become the containers of the good parts of their selves. One could speculate that these mothers would send their children to stay with their own mothers because of the belief that their parents might finally *see* and appreciate their positive qualities through their children and consequently they may receive vicariously through their children the affection that they have longed for.

In this way, it is possible that mothers send their children to stay with their mothers as an attempt to repair their relationships with the latter ones. On one hand, the reparation would take place by the mothers' obtaining love and appreciation from their own mothers through their children. On the other hand, early difficulties in their relationship might have triggered destructive impulses and hate felt as dangerous to the loved mother (the mother's mother) that have brought up guilt which needs to be diffused by this "offering" (the child) which is the best part of themselves (the mothers).

Although these feelings might not be always conscious some mothers expressed awareness of their wish to become closer to their mothers through their children. Subject # 22 like subject # 15, among others, not only reported that they sent their children to their mothers because the latter ones had asked them or expressed the wish to keep their

children but also because of their feelings of *pride* regarding their babies, whom they wanted to share with their mothers. When asked about her reasons to send her children to stay with her mother, Subject # 22, who described her mother as distant and physically strict, and who separated from her 11-month-old daughter for 2 years and from her 6-month-old daughter for 7 months stated:

> I sent my first daughter because I worked at a factory until 7 PM and my second daughter because I worked overtime and because my mother wanted to take them with her. My mother and I are the same. [My children's] being with her was as if they were with me. My family was very happy. My mother wanted to have them.

Subject # 15, who sent her son to stay with her mother twice; the first time, when he was 4-months-old and the second time when he was 3 years old said:

> The first time, I sent him so that my mother would get to know him; I was so proud of him! We were all girls and he was the first grandson. I wanted my mother to *see* him. I was astonished about being a mother. My mother hits children and is abusive but when I had my son I felt that she must have loved me as I loved my son. But I had problems with my mother before and after I sent him.

This subject has been in therapy for several years and verbalized a strong need to feel close to her mother and to have her mother's appreciation, by letting her take care of the son she was proud of, when she became a mother herself.

One can speculate that those mothers who are most vulnerable because of an excessive frustration of their early needs and a history of emotional deprivation, are the ones who need to rely on others to take care of their children. By and large, these

mothers tend to present more rigid and immature defenses and consequently less insight. By contrast, mothers in the group that did not separate tend to show higher-level defenses, increased consistency in their descriptions across the measures, with greater integration of positive and negative aspects in their perception of themselves and others, and consequently more capacity for insight. These subjects relied primarily on the defense of repression and related mechanisms such as reaction formation and isolation of affect. Subject # 3, for example, who did not separate from her children stated:

> I do not believe in families separating. I think children will resent if their parents are not with them. I do not think it is good. I worry all the time about them. I even think that I overprotect them, like my mother did with me. As a child, this

mother was recurrently separated from her father who traveled to the US for business purposes since she was 9 years old. She said:

> It was very hard each time he left. I cried a lot. I felt even sick whenever I heard he would leave. He sometimes left without saying good-bye. That is why I would not separate from my children; I never had a clear image of my father. The separations had a strong impact on me. They made me feel weaker and more attached to and needy of my children.

Even though this mother could address her feelings of ambivalence towards her father both in the Semi-Structured Interview and in the ORI and she had insight into the impact that her losses had on her experiences of herself and of her children, she could not recall any past experiences in which she felt rejected or ignored. Like this subject, most mothers who did not separate from their children, showed greater capacity for insight and consistency in their descriptions in the Semi-Structured interview and in the ORI.

For example, subject # 21, whose mother died unexpectedly during surgery when she was 9-years-old, described the importance of her father and older sister in her life since she took the mothering and caretaking role. When asked if she ever felt ignored or rejected in the past, this subject stated:

> I did feel more attention and affection from my father's side than from my mother's. I imagine that we were so many children (8) that my mother could not give all of us much attention and affection. I suppose she did not have much time...and women have to take care of food, clothes, everything...

This subject was consistent in her ability to address her mother's emotional distance, which she associated with depression, during the ORI. The use of higher-level defenses of repression and reaction formation are apparent in this subject who "could not remember" anything about her early relationship with her mother and who became protective of her mother by justifying her distance in the Semi-Structured Interview in the face of her experience of deprivation regarding her mother's attention and affection.

Another mother, subject # 12, who lived separated from her mother between the ages of 2 and 7 years of age, reported that she never had a strong bond with her mother, who she described as inconsistently present, "strict and controlling." This mother was consistent in her reporting experiences in which she felt ignored by her mother by stating: "I sometimes felt ignored by my mother, I did not feel that she paid attention to us." Again, in the ORI, this mother spoke about her experience of being left. She stated:

> I love [my mother] but I would not follow her example. The only example she gave us was that she fought to move forward by herself. She worked since she was 8 years old. She came to this country and left me over there when I was 2 1/2

years old. She did not need to come to this country but she came to support all her siblings and left my brother and me over there.

However, she defended against having any experiences of pain and anger by isolation of all affect adding:

Sometimes I think that it was better [that she left us] because she was not very warm. Maybe it was best that she left me with my father. When she used to visit, forgive me God, but it felt like a punishment. I had to do everything she wanted when she was there...I wonder how it would have been if I had grown up with her because she is very controlling.

Although there were some exceptions, it was generally found that the two groups showed a marked tendency to rely on different levels of defense operations.

The implications of these qualitative findings will be further discussed and integrated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI. DISCUSSION

Winnicott says: "There is no such thing as a baby" (1958/1992, p. 99) suggesting that where there is a baby there is a unit, which includes the baby's mother and her caretaking. This study poses the question inversely; that is, can there be a mother without her baby? In other words, this study focuses on those mothers who cannot, to some extent, be part of that unit because they experience their leaving of their babies or young children as the only way to pursue their own needs and sometimes those of their children as well. In particular, this research investigates the reasons that lead a mother to become unable to remain a unit with her baby or young child by leaving him or her under someone else's care.

In this chapter I will discuss the major quantitative and qualitative findings and their interaction. An analysis of the results obtained for each variable will be reported together with an attempt to explain each result, which either confirms or disconfirms each of the three main hypotheses that are being explored. This chapter concludes with a description of this study's limitations and the need for further research, and last, with this study's implications for clinical practice.

I will now summarize the results of this study for each area that was explored and will attempt to explain the reasons why each hypothesis was confirmed or disconfirmed.

Major Findings

In order to summarize the findings of all three areas of this study, the following issues will be discussed:

1) Acculturation and its relationship with separation
2) Stress and its link with separation
3) Object-relations and their implications for women who separate or do not separate from their children
4) Limitations of the study
5) Implications for future research

ACCULTURATION AND SEPARATION

The first major quantitative finding revealed no link between acculturation and separation. It was hypothesized that the group of subjects who separate from their children for extended periods of time would be less acculturated than the group of mothers that did not send their children to live away from them. This general premise was based on the assumption that, among other reasons, it is when a mother has not been able to adapt and to integrate to the host culture that she would have a stronger need to stay concretely connected to her family and culture through their children, "used" in these instances as a sort of transitional object. That is, sending her child/children to reside with her extended family in her country of origin would be a concrete way for the mother to preserve her attachment to her culture and family through her child.

However, the results of this study show that both groups of mothers (the one that separated and the one that did not) are comprised of an almost equal number of subjects who are acculturated (or bicultural) and non-acculturated (or with stronger Hispanic

cultural adherence). Other research that attempted to clarify the impact of acculturation on parenting behaviors has also found no relationship between different levels of acculturation and parenting behaviors or infant attachment classifications (Fracasso et al., 1994).

How can these results be understood and explained? Possibly, this study's findings are related to acculturation's multidimensional nature, which might preclude ever having one scale that can adequately address, capture and assess acculturation with all of its complexity. Accordingly, one could speculate that the measure used in this study has not been an accurate tool. However, the instrument chosen to assess acculturation, the BAS, focuses on subjects' exposure to both languages; that is, Spanish and English, to television, radio and books in both languages, and particularly addresses subjects' exposure to social networks from both cultures. Consequently, this tool seems to measure subjects' ability to acculturate in a comprehensive way. Furthermore, when the results of the BAS were compared with those obtained from the semi-structured interview, which focused on acculturation, there did not seem to be a noticeable discrepancy between these two measures. Thus, it does not seem that the BAS' inefficiency is the main or sole answer to the results obtained in this study.

Instead, it will be argued that this study's results show that lack of, or poor acculturation is not enough of a reason for mothers to separate from their child or children at an early age and for extended periods of time. At the same time, it could be added that acculturation might be a multilevel or multi-determined phenomenon that tends to be artificially isolated from other psychological aspects. I will attempt to explain these last two statements. When the semi-structured interview information (that

integrates the three main areas undertaken in this study) was combined with the results obtained from the BAS, a richer view of the subjects from both groups was obtained as well as a deeper understanding of some aspects that contribute to subjects' acculturation or difficulties to acculturate. When mothers who are non-acculturated were compared with those acculturated, noticeable patterns were found that contrasted the groups of subjects regardless of the experimental group they belong to. In particular, all subjects who have not acculturated (regardless of group) reported that they have not experienced any support in the host culture throughout the time they have been living away from their land. At the same time, these subjects find that their main source of support and comfort has been left behind in their country of origin.

In this way, this study's results confirm what many authors have found (i.e., Suarez, Garwood, and Szapocznick, 1997), which is an inverse relationship between biculturalism and the degree of loneliness and isolation.

All of the subjects, regardless of group, who displayed stronger Hispanic cultural adherence expressed that they still derive their main source of support from their significant others living abroad. For example, two of the subjects who have not separated from their children and have a stronger Hispanic cultural adherence (not bicultural), responded positively when asked in the semi-structured interview whether they have ever felt little or no support since they have been in this country. One of them stated: "Yes, I've never felt supported in this country; the person I am closest to is my mother and she is in the DR." Another subject said: "Yes, I have always felt unsupported here; my family and friends are in the DR." These two subjects are either married or in a long-term relationship; nonetheless, neither of them experience their main source of emotional

support as coming from their partners. On the other hand, two of the mothers from the group that separated who also have a stronger Hispanic cultural adherence expressed feeling unsupported in this country from the moment they arrived. One of them has been married for more than 20 years but has always lived separately from her husband who still lives in the DR. The other one has been divorced for 5 years but states that she has never felt supported in the US since her mother and family are in the DR. Both of these subjects travel consistently to their country of origin and send their children every year to spend their entire vacation time with their extended family.

This outcome makes one think of Fairbairn (1941/1984) when he describes the development of object-relations as a process in which infantile dependency upon the object gradually gives place to mature dependence. This process, characterized by the gradual identification and differentiation from the original object (or gradual transition from a state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to the mother as someone separate) does not seem to have been completely achieved by those subjects who cannot acculturate. Instead, these mothers displayed too much anxiety over their separation from their parents and land, as if the renunciation to their original object-relationships would be equivalent to giving up all hope of ever obtaining emotional satisfaction and fulfillment of their emotional needs. If one sees the experience of migration as associated with the loss of the containing mother and a threat to the ego (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989), this experience would become particularly risky or difficult for those subjects who have suffered significant deprivation and/or insufficient opportunities to depend safely upon their objects early on in infancy. That is, early deprivation and inability to depend on others would make acculturation a particularly

difficult experience to tolerate and to adapt to when it requires great ego strength and the ability to separate and mourn one's primary objects. In most instances in which the process of acculturation does not take place, mothers appear to have difficulty making the transition from the infantile original object-relationship to a more mature, differentiated and adult chosen object-choice.

In sum, this study's results found not only that poor acculturation is not a powerful enough factor to induce mothers to separate from their children for extended periods of time but also that acculturation cannot be isolated from other psychological aspects that determine who a person becomes, such as his/her attachment to primary objects and stage of psychological development at the time they migrate, which includes the subject's ego strengths or his/her ability to separate, to mourn, and to confront new situations and establish new long-lasting and meaningful relationships. As La Framboise et al. (1998) describe, it is the individual who is enmeshed in his social context and has a fragile sense of identity as distinct from that of his social organization who will have a greater difficulty confronting the psychological stress of immigration and bicultural competence. "Bicultural efficacy is the belief, or confidence, that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups without compromising one's sense of cultural identity. This belief will support an individual through the highly difficult tasks of developing and maintaining effective support groups in both the minority and the majority culture" (La Framboise et al., 1998, p. 140).

To conclude this section, it might be added that the age of the mothers at the time when they emigrated has not been found to have a direct impact on their ability to acculturate. In fact several subjects who have a stronger Hispanic cultural adherence

have come to the U.S. between the ages of 9 and 19 years of age. In the same way, there was no finding supporting a clear and direct relationship between education and acculturation. Most of the subjects in this study who have and have not acculturated share a similar level of education, generally a Bachelor degree either already completed or in the process of being finished. It was found, however, that significantly lower levels of education; that is, unfinished elementary or high school studies or no history of seeking a university degree are only characteristic of the mothers who are not acculturated. So, one may ask, what factors do have an impact and determine a mother's need to separate from her child or children at an early age and for extended periods of time? This takes us to the next section.

STRESSORS AND SEPARATION

As the quantitative results indicated, a positive significant relationship was found between stressors and separation. It was hypothesized that subjects who separate from their children would have more stressors than those who do not separate. Thus, this study's findings reveal that stressors do play a major role and are a major determinant for mothers to separate from their children for extended periods of time. The literature particularly focuses on stressors and on the Hispanic family cohesiveness to explain the prevalent phenomenon of early and long-term mother-child separation in this cultural group. Mc Goldrick et al. (1982) tell us that the custom of transferring children from one nuclear family to another within the extended system, (i.e., to a mother, sister, *compadre* or neighbor) *in times of crisis* is a common practice. According to these authors, elevated stressors are often the reason why mothers send their children to their families in search

of their families' support. At different points and more than once, these authors encourage clinicians not to counter or attempt to alter this type of arrangements unless this behavior is regarded as a problem by the family. The reason for this encouragement is that "the others assume responsibility as if the children were their own..." (p. 172) and at another point they emphasize "their (the mothers) wish to rely on their own network for support" (p. 23). Some of these situations of crisis and of intense need for support are motivated by these women's pervasive isolation, economic constraints and need to maintain the traditional values (Gil and Vazquez, 1996) as well as by the language barrier, liberal social values and standards towards childrearing, the loss of family ties, housing problems, unemployment and discrimination (Willies and Cervantes, 1987).

This study's results support the literature's perception of stress or situations of crises as one of the main sources of extended separation(s) between mothers and their children. However, the fact that most of the mothers who separated from their children expressed serious concerns about their children's behavior upon reunion (i.e., school related problems such as intense aggressive and isolative tendencies and poor attention and concentration, intense insecurity and fears of abandonment, drugs addiction, and early pregnancy, among other problems) makes one reconsider at least two things: a) whether stressors are the only and/or main reason for children (and parents) to become exposed to such major loss and trauma and b) whether this cultural custom does not require clinicians' further understanding and questioning (rather than merely its justification).

Most of the mothers who sent their children to live in their country of origin, primarily described (and consciously experienced) their need to separate from them due

to financial difficulties and their consequent necessity to work. Some of them also expressed having problems with their child/children's father and needing distance and relief from anyone who would make demands on them or felt like an added source of stress (including their partners and children).

The measure used in this study (HSI) captures subjects' stressors during the last three months of their lives or their present levels of stress. In order to grasp the intensity and the type of stressors that had an impact on these mothers at the time when they separated from their children, all subjects were asked to elaborate on this point (stressors and support systems) in the semi-structured interview. Information obtained from this questionnaire confirmed that every mother who has above average levels of stress, as reflected by the HSI, had reported intense and unbearable sources of stress combined with no emotional support in this country at the time when they sent their children to live abroad. From the total of 6 subjects with above average levels of stress, 5 stated that they were either separating from or being left by their partners, or having serious problems in their intimate relationships that led them to establish physical distance and often to find themselves without any shelter. The sixth subject was having difficulties becoming a legal citizen in the US.

The fact that mothers who separated from their children still exhibit more stressors in the present than the ones who did not separate, as reflected by the HSI, seems to indicate that this group of subjects has experienced long-term and somewhat consistently heightened levels of stress. The areas highlighted by the HSI as more stressful and conflictual over the last three months of their lives are the marital and parental ones. Half of the group experiences above average levels of stress as focused in

their marital life and the other half as focused in their experience as mothers. These results are consistent with aspects previously mentioned; first, that subjects in the group of mothers who separated from their children (9 out of 11) have reported serious marital problems and second, that mothers from this group have encountered severe difficulties in their relationship with their children upon reunion.

To end this section, it remains to be asked whether the group of mothers who separated from their children simply have a larger number of and/or more intense stressors with less sources of support than the group of mothers that did not separate, or whether subjects who separate might have fewer resources, such as decreased ego strength and resilience, to cope with and adapt to their stressors, which are naturally raised under difficult experiences such as migration.

This point leads to the finding, discussed in the previous chapter, which links the separation group to a high incidence of a history of trauma. Most possibly, the concept of "stress" captures to some extent these mothers' vulnerability to added sources of anxiety. However, I would argue that the concept of stress is limited or inadequate in this instance due to its insufficient ability to grasp the depth of these mothers' early experiences of emotional deprivation and its consequences. In that sense, stress would be part of a larger presentation consistent with a history of trauma or, borrowing from Khan, "cumulative trauma" that "operates and builds up silently throughout childhood right up to adolescence" (1963/1982, p. 56).

What then is meant by the use of the word 'trauma' in this context? I intend to use the concept of trauma in the way that Winnicott understands it when he tells us that "Trauma implies that the baby has experienced a break in life's continuity" (1067/1990,

p. 97) and that "trauma is a failure relative to dependence" (1965/1994, p. 145). In these two instances, trauma reflects a failure of the mother's availability that not only affects the external provision to the baby or child but also and especially the latter's inner world and ability to keep alive an integrated maternal object representation. As Winnicott explains, trauma tends to have devastating effects on the developing child and future adult. That is, the object's failure to perform its function of continuity, reliability and/or gradual adaptation triggers hateful impulses and phantasies, states of overwhelming anxiety and primitive defenses as a reaction. This in turn, interferes with the subject's synthesis and integration of the ego resulting in its excessive weakening and a feeling that there is nothing to sustain it (Klein, 1946/1975). Thus, one could speculate that as a consequence of their inability to depend on internalized good objects, these mothers have greater difficulty dealing with any additional anxiety, which leaves them more vulnerable to stress.

Finally, I would like to say a few words about the nature of this type of trauma and its repetition. As the literature suggests, recurrent maternal deprivation leads to a precarious hold on the inner representation of the lost object. It is this limitation in the carrying and holding of memory representations that seems to be made real by traumatized mothers when they leave their children as they felt abandoned themselves. Anna Freud (1967/1973) captures the repetition of this type of trauma when she describes children who feel unloved as 'forgetful' and 'unable to establish or retain ownership' of their possessions. She tells us:

> ...they direct to their possessions the whole hostility aroused by frustrations and disappointments imposed on them by their parents...by being chronic losers, they

> live out a double identification, passively with the lost objects which symbolize themselves, actively with the parents whom they experience to be as neglectful, indifferent, and unconcerned towards them as they themselves are toward their possessions (1967/1973, p.312-313).

In a similar way, a real or fantasied lack of connection with their mothers seems to be reenacted by mothers who leave their children under others' care. By enacting this double identification described by Anna Freud, these mothers would identify passively with their children who become the object of others' forgetfulness or abandonment just like they felt themselves with their parents, while they simultaneously identify actively with their parents by repeating with their children the disconnection that existed between them and their parents.

OBJECT-RELATIONS AND SEPARATION

This study suggests that mothers' object-relations and their internal world play a significant role in their proneness to decide for or against separating from their children at an early age and for extended periods of time. What can be said about the connection between object-relations and separation? And, is this connection reflected by these study's results?

Two hypotheses were considered in regards to object-relations and separation; it was hypothesized that (a) mothers who separate from their children for extended periods of time would have less developed object-relations and (b) that they would have more inconsistent or variable object-relations (or representations of self and others) than

mothers who do not send their children away for extended periods of time. I will start by addressing the first part of this hypothesis and its results.

As reported in the previous section, the quantitative results show that (a) there is no significant relationship between the maturity of object-relations and mothers' tendency to separate from their children. Could the level of development of the mothers' self- and object-representations not have a direct impact on their mothering? One possible explanation to these results might be that the measure used in this study has not captured, to some degree, the subtle differences characteristic of this population's psychic development. It is plausible that the population under study has cultural particularities not fully addressed by the ORI.

Interestingly, however, the separation group presents overall lower scores than the non-separation group though they are not statistically significant. For example, the group of (13) mothers who did not separate has only one subject with scores below Level 5 and three subjects with scores ranging between Levels 5 and 6 while the group of (11) mothers who separated has five subjects whose scores are lower than Level 5 and five mothers with scores that range between Levels 5 and 6. These results seem to become balanced, however, due to the fact that both groups have subjects with high scores (of Level 7 or more), which probably obscure the differences between the two groups. It is possible that the differences characteristic of both groups were not captured due to two different factors. The first one is the presence of several "controversial cases" that have artificially elevated the scores of the separation group and lowered the scores of the non-separation group. These subjects are, for example, those who separated from their children but have been in psychotherapy since then, or mothers who have not separated

but consider doing so in the near future. One would imagine that these nuances might have been captured in the scoring by reflecting different levels of object-relations between the two groups when the study was reproduced without the cases that are "controversial." However, as stated in the quantitative results section of chapter four, no differences were found between the two groups when the study was reproduced without these "controversial cases." This is probably the case because of the sample size becoming markedly reduced (n = 17) once the "controversial" cases were removed, making it almost impossible to obtain meaningful and representative findings. The second factor that might have obscured the differences between the two groups' object-relations has to do with this study's finding that ORI descriptions for the separation group were often inconsistent with the ways in which significant others were portrayed during the Semi-Structured-Interview. One could speculate that the ORI scores were often inflated (or inaccurate) for some of the subjects from the separation group who consciously avoided and omitted information that reflected or elicited conflict.

Thus, a second alternative explanation would suggest that not only the scale used, but also the size of the sample might have blurred the differences between the two groups of mothers' levels of psychic development.

A third alternative explanation that deserves to be considered is the possibility that level of development of object-relations is not directly linked to, or the sole determinant of, mothers' tendency to separate from their children for extended periods of time. However, I am inclined to believe that the first and second alternatives that address not only the complexity of measuring subjects' psychic development, especially from a different culture, but also the limitations of dealing with a small sample size represent

more accurate explanations for the non-significant findings concerning the relationship between maturity of object-relations and separation. Nonetheless, the possibility that the developmental level of object-relations might not be significantly different between the two groups needs to be considered as well. This would suggest that a case-by-case study would be required to address the complexities concerning each person's object-relations.

The complexity of measuring object-relations is such that often the same subject displays markedly different levels of development in their representations of self and others. In fact, this brings us to the second part of the hypothesis concerning object-relations, (part b) which suggests that mothers who separate from their children would have more *variable* or *inconsistent* representations of themselves and others. As stated in the quantitative section, a meaningful relationship *was* found between variability of object-relations and separation.

What are the implications of this result? I believe it helps us paint a more complex picture of why these mothers may separate. The variability and inconsistent levels of development of object-relations that characterize the mothers who separated from their children, illustrate this group of subjects' inability to integrate contradictory representations of themselves and others. Kernberg (1986) describes the presence of identifications that are contradictory and dissociated from each other as part of the syndrome he calls, "identity diffusion" based on Erickson's use of the same concept. In particular, Kernberg describes identity diffusion as:

> ...the lack of an integrated self concept and an integrated and stable concept of total objects in relationship with the self...which is a direct consequence of active

splitting of those introjections and identifications of which the synthesis normally would bring a stable ego identity (1986, p. 311-312).

The ego's lack of integrative ability brings strong intrapsychic conflict and confusion and a limited capacity to bring together the positive and negative aspects that characterize their self and object images. This, in turn, leads to a reduced capacity for a realistic evaluation of others. Mothers in the separation group showed marked conflict in their identity and object-relations, reflected by high degrees of struggle both in their personal and interpersonal lives. In particular, they experience the most conflict in relation to their fathers and male figures chosen later on in their lives.

How could this inconsistency of self- and object representations be related to mothers' tendency to separate from their children? One could speculate that living with such unintegrated perception of oneself and others brings significant intrapsychic conflict and anxiety that becomes further exacerbated by the experience of raising a child. That is, mothers who cannot integrate contradictory representations of self and others might re-experience unbearable anxiety when they find themselves in the role of the very parent who has elicited intense conflict. Thus, when contradictory self and object representations are reactivated in their relationship with their children and can no longer be kept safely separate from each other, these mothers might separate from their children as a way to protect themselves from further intrapsychic conflict and anxiety. As previously stated, these mothers may also send their children away in an unconscious attempt to repair their conflicted object-relations. That is, by sending their children to their parents, these mothers would be "offering" their caregivers the best of them that has been projected onto the child. Tied to mothers' unintegrated object-relations and need for

reparation are these mothers' negative self-image, inability to function and experience themselves as adults, and poor adult life choices.

Inconsistent and contradictory experiences of self and others, characteristic of the group of mothers who separated, are typically associated with severe character pathology, such as borderline personality organization. However, only slightly more than half of the separation group gave ORI responses that show specific narcissistic or borderline vulnerability while the rest of the subjects from the same group gave ORI responses that reflect an ambivalent and/or stable representation of self and others. How can one understand this? One factor to be addressed is that a few mothers in the separation group have been in long-term psychotherapy after they left their children, probably experiencing growth in their object-relations since the time when they separated. There are two other factors one could speculate about. The first one being that the ORI scoring may have elicited higher developmental level responses as a consequence of cultural implications that this measure is not sensitive about. And secondly, even though most of the subjects in the separation group have inconsistent and variable object-relations, a few mothers in this group might have more integrated and differentiated responses than others.

The finding that links separation with inconsistent and variable object-relations or poor integrative processes in the group of mothers who separated seems to be directly related to these mothers' intensification of and fixation on primitive defenses discussed in the previous chapter, particularly on splitting processes and related mechanisms. Primitive defensive operations protect the ego from conflict by the active maintaining apart of introjections and identifications of opposite quality, allowing these mothers to

express contradictory feelings and experiences combined with bland denial and lack of concern over the contradiction. As illustrated in the previous chapter, splitting occurs in combination with other defense mechanisms such as primitive idealization, projection and denial which lead to unrealistic, idealized and one-sided experiences of self and others and/or to sudden reversals of feelings and conceptualizations about a person with simple disregard for entire segments of their subjective experience or of the external world.

These mothers' limited capacity for a realistic and integrated evaluation of others is also manifested in their limited ability to deepen their awareness of and interest in them. Thus, mothers who separated also tend to show limited regard for others reflected in their inconsistent capacity to experience guilt, empathy and concern for their children.

In sum, early and prolonged separations between mothers and their children seem to be determined by all of the factors covered in this chapter; that is, a strong history and re-enactment of trauma, the lack of integrated and stable object-relations or representations of self and others with the consequent need for reparation, a marked tendency to rely on primitive defense mechanisms, and a diminished capacity for empathy.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

In this section, I will address some of the aspects that could be improved or altered were the study reproduced in the future. The most salient apparent limitation of this study has been the small size of the sample. As mentioned before, this study consisted of a smaller number of subjects than was originally intended and expected due

to difficulties in obtaining subjects. The small sample size might have limited the accuracy of some of the findings, particularly those concerning the relationship between object-relations' development and separation. Even though the separation group displayed less developed object-relations than the non-separation group, the results were not significant. Findings in this area indicate the need to reproduce the study without cases that were "controversial." However, with the "controversial" cases removed, the sample size became significantly reduced in order to obtain meaningful results. A larger sample might have yielded significant and/or more definite results.

Again, concerning object-relations, the non-significant findings between maturity of object-relations and separation might indicate that this study could have benefited from an added measure of object-relations for a finer assessment of this variable. This is particularly relevant, given that there is little research into the possible limitations of the ORI, with minority populations. It is suggested that a useful addition may be a measure developed by Blatt, Chevron, Quinlan, Schaffer, and Wein (1992): "The assessment of qualitative and structural dimensions of object representation" that can be easily applied to the ORI descriptions. This scale might have provided information that either confirmed or expanded this study's findings in the area of object-relations and the underlying presence or absence of psychopathology.

Possibly, an added measure of acculturation could have further clarified this study's lack of findings concerning the relationship between acculturation and separation.

A few limitations were encountered in terms of methodology in connection with the ORI. First, it would have been useful to involve two scorers in the assessment of the ORI to obtain inter-rater reliability and increased results' reliability. Second, the ORI

was administered as a 5-minute speech for each description, which is only one of a number of ways to administer it. This administration procedure, however, produced longer descriptions than un-timed or written responses do. Given the relative similarity in the levels of maturity of object-relations in both groups, one might consider that the length of the descriptions may have given some participants greater opportunity to reflect on their experiences, thereby producing scores that might have been inflated as a result. It is also worth noting that scorers are usually trained to assess short responses. This may also have confounded some of the ORI scores.

While conducting the semi-structured interview, it became apparent that some mothers had a history of abandonment dating back to their mothers and grandmothers. Looking back, it could have been useful to ask subjects not only whether they had a history of abandonment but also whether they had a parent with a history of abandonment. Such information could have further illustrated whether (non-verbalized) intergenerational family patterns concerning the dynamics of early and prolonged separations are unconsciously transmitted from one generation of mothers to another.

Finally, it is recommended that a reproduction of the study have three groups, rather than two, adding a sample of mothers whose children only return once they reach adolescence or early adulthood, as a third comparison group.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The social/cultural and clinical implications of this study will be summarized in this section. This study focuses on those mothers who cannot always be there to mother their children. The findings show that numerous factors interfere with this core and

irreplaceable role that a mother plays with her child. Particularly, findings focus on the psychological matrix of those mothers who separate from their young children for extended periods of time. Hispanic mothers who separate from their children were found to have a history of trauma that involves early neglect and/or abuse, unstable or markedly inconsistent object-relations, and consequent significantly high levels of stress and anxiety. In turn, findings reveal that these mothers cannot depend on internalized good objects, they tend to rely on primitive defense mechanisms and to show poor or inconsistent capacity for empathy towards their children.

The current literature on the topic of mother-child separation in the Hispanic culture focuses solely on stressors and specific culturally related factors, such as familism. This study underlines the importance of including consideration of the mothers' object-relations as an added crucial variable.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the findings of this study may also have relevance to other cultural groups. For instance, middle and upper class Americans often elect to separate from their children for lengthy periods of time by sending them to boarding school. It would be interesting to investigate whether some of the dynamics uncovered in this study pertain to that group.

In conclusion, this study's major findings confirm the painful consequences that separations bring to mothers and their children as well as the psychological factors that play a role in these subjects' inability to mother their children when exposed to high levels of stress. In particular, a finding with significant clinical implications seems to be the one suggesting the presence of strong intrapsychic conflict and ego weakness in those mothers who send their children away. One of the main goals of this study has been to

obtain a deeper understanding of the mothers' needs that are addressed by the separation. These implications bring some hope and clarity to clinicians who are confronted with these situations in their clinical work. The study illuminates psychological factors that can help clinicians form a richer and deeper understanding when helping mothers and their children who either consider a future separation or have already experienced it without insight into the underlying reasons and implications.

Appendix A

Are you a HispanicMother?

I am looking for mothers born in the "*Dominican Republic*" who have either:

1) Sent their child or children to stay in the Dominican Republic for more than three months while the child/children were in their first 6 years of life

or

2) Have not been separated from their child or children for more than 3 months while the child/children were in their first 6 years of life

2 interviews of 2 hours each will be required
English or Spanish Speaking

*Information is Confidential

*$ 50.00 payment for your participation on both interviews

If interested, please contact Carina at
(718) 519-3556

Research approved by The City College of New York Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Appendix A

Eres una madre Hispana?

Busco madres nacidas en la "Republica Dominicana" que hayan :

1) Enviado a su hijo(a) o hijos a quedarse en la Republica Dominicana por mas de tres meses cuando el nino/nina o ninos tenian cualquier edad entre 1 mes y 6 anos.

o

2) Que no se hayan separado de su hijo/hija o hijos por mas de 3 meses mientras el nino/nina o ninos tenian entre 1mes y 6 anos de edad.

2 entrevistas de 2 horas cada una seran requeridas
Ingles o Espanol

*Toda informacion es confidencial

* $ 50.00 de pago por su participacion en ambas entrevistas

Si esta interesada, por favor llame a Carina al
(718) 519-3556

Investigacion aprobada por la Comision de Revision Institucional para sujetos de City College of New York

Appendix B

Initial Telephone Screening Interview

First Name:_____ Last Name: _____

Date of Birth:_____ (If mother is between 21 and 45 y/o continue. Otherwise, end now)

Phone Number:_____

Address:_____

1. Explain this is a research study

2. Where were you born?

3. How many children do you have?

4. Have you sent any of your children to your country for more than 3 months while they were younger than 6 y/o?

5. How old is the child/children you sent away?
(If child/children are 12 or younger, continue. Otherwise, end now)
or
How old is your oldest child (for mothers who did not send children away)?
(If child /children are 12 or younger, continue. Otherwise, end now)

6. Have you had a severe physical illness at the time the child/children were sent away?
(If this was the case, mother would not qualify for the study)

7. Aim of the study is to better understand parenting aspects characteristic of the Hispanic
culture

8. Explain time commitment. We will meet two times for approximately two hours. There is a third optional session is you want to talk about your experience in those two meetings.

9. Confidentiality

10. Payment for the time

11. Does mother agree to join study? If answer is positive, schedule appointment.

Appendix C

Project Title: A study about Hispanic immigrants who send and do not send their children to their country of origin

INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Project Investigator: Carina Kuttenplan
Chair of Research Project: Professor Steven Tuber, Ph.D.

Subject Name: _____

Subject Identification Number: _____

Telephone #: _____

Times to be reached: _____

Research: I agree to participate in a research study about Hispanic mothers who are immigrants from the Dominican Republic that is being conducted by Carina Kuttenplan, a doctoral candidate at The City College of New York, as part of her dissertation project. I understand that the goal of this study is to develop some understanding of the aspects that lead Hispanic immigrants to decide for and against sending their children to their country of origin. I understand that I must be 21 years or older to be part of this study and that my participation will involve two meetings with Ms. Kuttenplan that will last about 2 hours each. I am going to be asked questions that concern my relationships with significant people in my life and some of my customs. One interview will be tape recorded for future analysis. This information will be transcribed onto paper and all the names and identifying information will be deleted.

Foreseeable risks and benefits: Participation in these interviews may involve some distress from talking about personal and family related information. I understand that I do not have to answer any question that I do not wish to answer and that I can stop the interview and my participation in the study at any time I wish without penalty. While some people find it helpful to talk about their experiences, I might not experience any benefit from participating in this study other than to contribute to professionals' understanding of Hispanic immigrants' characteristics. I will be paid $50.00 at the end of the interviews for my time and for any transportation costs. No negative effects are expected from my participation in this research study. However, if I experienced some upset as a consequence of the interviews, I understand that I can choose to attend a third

session to talk about the interview experience or contact the Principal Investigator for a guidance referral.

Confidentiality: I have been assured that my identity will not be disclosed, and that all the information I provide, including the interview that is tape recorded, will be kept strictly confidential; my name will not be included in any documents, interviews, questionnaires or scales other than this consent form. I will be identified only by a random identification number or code. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed in the scoring and reporting of results either. Nobody outside of this project will have access to my identity or will know or be told of my participation in this study. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study will not prejudice my relationship in any way with any professor, student, the college, or the CUNY system.

Contact person: I have read all the above information and I have been given the opportunity to discuss the research project with Ms. Kuttenplan. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed that if I have further questions I can bring them up during the two meetings or contact Ms. Carina Kuttenplan at (212) 496-9793 at any time. I was also explained that if I have any questions about my rights as a subject in this study I can contact Ms. Ethel Breheny, IACUC/IRB Administrator at the Office of Research Administration, Shepard Hall, Room S-16, City College or call her at (212) 650-7903.

Voluntary participation: I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time with no adverse consequences and to have all information pertaining to me deleted. That entails that I can withdraw from this project at any point after signing this form should I change my mind later. I will be given a copy of this informed consent after I sign it.

Signature of Participant	Printed Name of Participant	Date

Carina Kuttenplan, Principal Investigator	Date

Appendix C

Titulo del Projecto: Estudio sobre immigrantes Hispanos que han y no han enviado a sus hijos a su pais de origen

Informe Sobre Acuerdo de Participacion Voluntaria

Investigadora del Projecto: Carina Kuttenplan
Director del comite de investigacion: Profesor Steven Tuber, Ph.D.

Nombre de la participante: _____

Numero de Identificacion: _____

Numero de Telefono: _____

Horas para contactarla: _____

Investigacion: Estoy de acuerdo en participar en un estudio de investigacion sobre madres Hispanas que son immigrantes de la Republica Dominicana conducido por la Sra. Kuttenplan, una estudiante de doctorado en la universidad de City College de Nueva York, como parte de su projecto de tesis. Entiendo que el objetivo de este estudio es desarrollar un mayor entendimiento sobre los aspectos que inducen a los immigrantes Hispanos a enviar o no a sus ninos a su pais de origen. Entiendo que debo tener 21 anos o mas para participar en este estudio y que mi participacion envolvera dos encuentros con la Sra. Kuttenplan que duraran alrededor de 2 horas cada uno. Se me haran preguntas sobre mi relacion con personas de importancia en mi vida y sobre algunas de mis costumbres. Una entrevista sera grabada para ser analizada mas tarde. Esta informacion sera transcripta en papel y todo nombre e informacion que pueda identificarme sera omitida.

Posibles riesgos y beneficios: La participacion en estas entrevistas puede crear cierto stress como consequencia de hablar de temas relacionados con lo personal y familiar. Entiendo que no necesito responder a ninguna pregunta que no quiera responder y que puedo interrumpir la entrevista y mi participacion en este estudio en cualquier momento que lo desee sin consequencias negativas. Mientras algunas personas sienten que les ayuda hablar sobre sus experiencias, puede ser que yo no experimente ningun beneficio por participar en este estudio ademas de contribuir al entendimiento profesional sobre aspectos de la cultura Hispana. Se me pagaran $50.00 al final de las entrevistas por mi tiempo y costos de transportacion. No se espera ningun efecto negativo como resultado

de participar en este estudio. Sin embargo, si yo me sintiera incomoda como consequencia de las entrevistas, entiendo que puedo asistir a un tercer encuentro para hablar sobre mi experiencia en las entrevistas o tambien llamar a la investigadora principal para una recomendacion sobre servicios de terapia.

Confidencialidad: Se me ha asegurado que mi identidad sera protegida y que el contenido de toda informacion que yo de, incluyendo la entrevista grabada en cassette, sera mantenida estrictamente confidencial; mi nombre y apellido no seran incluidos en ningun documento, cuestionario, entrevista o escala fuera de esta carta que solicita mi consentimiento para participar. Solo sere identificada a traves de un numero o codigo asignado al azar. Entiendo que mi identidad no sera revelada tampoco cuando la informacion sea evaluada ni cuando los resultados sean obtenidos y escritos. Nadie fuera de este proyecto tendra acceso a mi identidad, sabra o sera informado sobre mi participacion en este estudio. Mi decision de participar o no en este proyecto de investigacion no perjudicara de ninguna manera mi relacion con ningun profesor, estudiante, la universidad, or el sistema de CUNY.

Persona para contactar: He leido toda la informacion provista en esta carta de consentimiento y se me ha dado la oportunidad de discutir el proyecto de investigacion con la Sra. Kuttenplan. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y estoy satisfecha con las respuestas que se me han dado. He sido informada que si fuera necesario puedo hacer mas preguntas durante los dos encuentros previstos o que puedo contactar a la Sra. Carina Kuttenplan al telefono (212) 496-9793 en cualquier momento. Tambien se me explico que si tuviera preguntas sobre mis derechos como parte de este estudio, puedo contactar a la Sra. Ethel Breheny, IACUC/IRB Administradora de la Oficina de Investigacion, Sheperd Hall, Cuarto Numero S-16, City College o llamarla al telefono (212) 650-7903.

Participacion voluntaria: Entiendo que tengo el derecho de retirarme de este estudio en cualquier momento que lo desee sin consequencias negativas y que toda la informacion que yo haya dado sera omitida. Esto significa que puedo retirarme de este proyecto cuando yo lo decida aun despues de firmar este acuerdo si cambiara de opinion mas tarde. Se me entregara una copia de esta carta despues de que sea firmada.

Firma de la Participante	Nombre de la Participante	Fecha

Carina Kuttenplan, Investigadora Principal	Fecha

Appendix D

Brief Symptom Inventory

ID Number:_____

Instructions: Below is a list of problems people sometimes have. Please read each one carefully and circle the number to the right that best describe HOW MUCH THAT PROBLEM HAS DISTRESSED OR BOTHERED YOU DURING THE PAST 7 DAYS INCLUDING TODAY. Circle only one number for each problem and do not skip any items. If you change your mind, erase your first mark carefully. Read the example below before beginning, and if you have any questions please ask about them.

Example:_____	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
How much were you distressed by	0	1	3	4	5
1. Body aches					

	NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE BIT	MODERATELY	QUITE A BIT	EXTREMELY	HOW MUCH WERE YOU DISTRESSED BY:
1	0	1	2	3	4	Nervousness or shakiness inside
2	0	1	2	3	4	Faintness or dizziness
3	0	1	2	3	4	The idea that someone else can control your thoughts
4	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling others are to blame for most of your troubles
5	0	1	2	3	4	Trouble remembering things
6	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling easily annoyed or irritated
7	0	1	2	3	4	Pains in heart or chest
8	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling afraid in open spaces or on the streets
9	0	1	2	3	4	Thoughts of ending your life
10	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling that most people cannot be trusted
11	0	1	2	3	4	Poor appetite
12	0	1	2	3	4	Suddenly scared for no reason
13	0	1	2	3	4	Temper outbursts that you could not control
14	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling lonely even when you are with people
15	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling blocked in getting things done
16	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling lonely
17	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling blue
18	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling no interest in things
19	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling fearful
20	0	1	2	3	4	Your feelings being easily hurt
21	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling that people are unfriendly or dislike you
22	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling inferior to others
23	0	1	2	3	4	Nausea or upset stomach
24	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling that you are watched or talked about by others
25	0	1	2	3	4	Trouble falling asleep
26	0	1	2	3	4	Having to check and double-check what you do
27	0	1	2	3	4	Difficulty making decisions
28	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling afraid to travel on buses, subways, or trains
29	0	1	2	3	4	Trouble getting your breath
30	0	1	2	3	4	Hot or cold spells
31	0	1	2	3	4	Having to avoid certain things, places, or activities because they frighten you
32	0	1	2	3	4	Your mind going blank
33	0	1	2	3	4	Numbness or tingling in parts of your body
34	0	1	2	3	4	The idea that you should be punished for your sins
35	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling hopeless about the future
36	0	1	2	3	4	Trouble concentrating
37	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling weak in parts of your body
38	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling tense or keyed up
39	0	1	2	3	4	Thoughts of death or dying
40	0	1	2	3	4	Having urges to beat, injure, or harm someone
41	0	1	2	3	4	Having urges to break or smash things
42	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling very self-conscious with others
43	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling uneasy in crowds, such as shopping or at a movie
44	0	1	2	3	4	Never feeling close to another person
45	0	1	2	3	4	Spells of terror or panic
46	0	1	2	3	4	Getting into frequent arguments
47	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling nervous when you are left alone
48	0	1	2	3	4	Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements
49	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling so restless you couldn't sit still
50	0	1	2	3	4	Feelings of worthlessness
51	0	1	2	3	4	Feeling that people will take advantage of you if you let them
52	0	1	2	3	4	Feelings of guilt
53	0	1	2	3	4	The idea that something is wrong with your mind

Appendix E

Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS)

English Version

(1) Almost never (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Almost always

Language Use Subscale

1. How often do you speak English?
2. How often do you speak English with your friends?
3. How often do you think in English?
4. How often do you speak Spanish?
5. How often do you speak Spanish with your friends?
6. How often do you think in Spanish?

(1)Very poorly (2) Poorly (3) Well (4) Very well

Linguistic Proficiency Subscale

7. How well do you speak English?
8. How well do you read in English?
9. How well do you understand television programs in English?
10. How well do you understand radio programs in English?
11. How well do you write in English?
12. How well do you understand music in English?
13. How well do you speak Spanish?
14. How well do you read in Spanish?
15. How well do you understand television programs in Spanish?
16. How well do you understand radio programs in Spanish?
17. How well do you write in Spanish?
18. How well do you understand music in Spanish?

(1) Almost never (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Almost always

Electronic Media Subscale

19. How often do you watch television programs in English?
20. How often do you listen to radio programs in English?
21. How often do you listen to music in English?
22. How often do you watch television programs in Spanish?
23. How often do you listen to radio programs in Spanish?
24. How often do you listen to music in Spanish?

Appendix E

Bidimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS)

Spanish Version

(1) Casi nunca (2) Algunas veces (3) Frequentemente (4) Casi siempre

Language Use Subscale

1. Con que frecuencia habla usted ingles?
2. Con que frecuencia habla usted en ingles con sus amigos?
3. Con que frecuencia piensa usted en ingles?
4. Con que frecuencia habla usted espanol?
5. Con que frecuencia habla usted en espanol con sus amigos?
6. Con que frecuencia piensa usted en espanol?

(1) Muy mal (2) No muy bien (3) Bien (4) Muy bien

Linguistic Proficiency Subscales

7. Que tan bien habla usted en ingles?
8. Que tan bien lee usted en ingles?
9. Que tan bien entiende usted los programas de television en ingles?
10. Que tan bien entiende usted los programas de radio en ingles?
11. Que tan bien escribe usted en ingles?
12. Que tan bien entiende usted musica en ingles?
13. Que tan bien hable usted espanol?
14. Que tan bien lee usted en espanol?
15. Que tan bien entiende usted los programas de television en espanol?
16. Que tan bien entiende usted los programas de radio en espanol?
17. Que tan bien escribe usted en espanol?
18. Que tan bien entiende usted musica en espanol?

(1) Casi nunca (2) Algunas veces (3) Frecuentemente (4) Casi siempre

Electronic Media Subscales

19. Con que frecuencia ve usted programas de television en ingles?
20. Con que frecuencia escucha usted programas de radio en ingles?
21. Con que frecuencia escucha usted musica en ingles?
22. Con que frecuencia ve usted programas de television en espanol?
23. Con que frecuencia escucha usted programas de radio en espanol?
24. Con que frecuencia escucha usted musica en espanol?

Appendix F

Hispanic Stress Inventory (HIS)
Version I Immigrants (English and Spanish)

Subject #:

Test Information:

LANGUAGE:	ADMINISTRATION
[ ] Spanish	[x] Self
[ ] English	[ ] Examiner

Hispanic Stress Inventory

Instructions:

Please circle on your answer sheet whether the following situations have occurred to you during the last 3 months. Then if it did occur to you, indicate how worried or tense the situation made you feel. If the situation did not happen to you, circle "no" on your answer sheet and skip to the next question. Remember there is no right or wrong answer so try and be as honest as you can.

Example 1: It has been difficult for me to find medical care.

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months?

YES [✓] NO [ ] 1 2 3 (4) 5

Example 2: I have been criticized about my work.

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months?

YES [ ] NO [✓] 1 2 3 4 5

HISPANIC STRESS INVENTORY
VERSION I IMMIGRANTS

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense
1	2	3	4	5

1. I have seen my son/daughter behave delinquently.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

2. I have questioned the idea that "marriage is forever."
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

3. I have felt unaccepted by others due to my Latino culture.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

4. Because I do not know enough English, it has been difficult for me to interact with others.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

5. My children have been influenced by bad friends.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

6. Others have been too worried about the amount and quality of the work I do.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

7. I have not been able to forget the last few months in my home country.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

8. My spouse has been drinking too much alcohol.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

9. I have thought that my children used illegal drugs.
   YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

10. My children have been drinking alcohol.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

11. I have been discriminated against.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

12. My spouse has expected me to be more traditional in our relationship.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

13. My spouse and I have disagreed on how to bring up our children.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

14. My spouse and I have disagreed on the importance of religion within our family.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

15. I have been criticized about my work.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

16. My spouse and I have had disagreements about who should control the household money.
    YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense
1	2	3	4	5

17. I have thought a lot about the fact that my son(daughter) left home to live independently.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

18. Because of American ideas about children it has been difficult for me to decide how strict to be with my children.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

19. Because of my poor English people have treated me badly.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

20. I have felt that being too close to my family interfered with my own goals.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

21. I have thought that my children want their independence before they are ready.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

22. I have felt that members of my family are losing their religion.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

23. My children have not respected my authority the way they should.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

24. Because we have different customs, I have had arguments with other members of my family.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

25. Members of my family have considered divorce as a solution to their marital problems.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

26. Because of the lack of family unity, I have felt lonely and isolated.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

27. Because I am Latino I have been expected to work harder.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

28. It has been difficult for me to understand why my spouse wishes to be more Americanized.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

29. My spouse and I have disagreed on which language is spoken by our children at home.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

30. Due to problems in understanding English, I have had difficulties in school.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense
1	2	3	4	5

31. My spouse has not helped with household chores.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

32. My income has not been sufficient to support my family or myself.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

33. I feared the consequences of deportation.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

34. I have thought that my children were not receiving a good education
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

35. My legal status has been a problem in getting a good job.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

36. There have been cultural conflicts in my marriage.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

37. I have felt that my children's ideas about sexuality are too liberal.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

38. There has been physical violence among members of my family.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

39. I did not get the job I wanted because I did not have the proper skills.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

40. Because I am Latino I have had difficulty finding the type of work I want.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

41. My spouse has expected me to be less traditional in our relationship.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

42. The pressure to achieve economic success have made stop going to church.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

43. My children have talked about leaving home.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

44. My legal status has limited my contact with family or friends.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

45. I have felt that I would never regain the status and respect that I had in my home country.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense
1	2	3	4	5

46. I have felt that family relations are becoming less important for people that I'm close to.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

47. My children have received bad school reports (or bad grades).

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

48. It has been difficult for my spouse and I to combine Latino and American culture.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

49. My boss has thought of me as being too passive.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

50. I have had to watch the quality of my work so others do not think I am lazy.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

51. Because I am Latino it has been hard to get promotions or salary raises.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

52. Because of money problems, I have to work away from my family.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

53. I had serious arguments with family members.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

54. I have been around too much violence.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

55. I have avoided immigration officials.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

56. I have thought that if I went to a social or government agency I would be deported.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

57. My personal goals have been in conflict with family goals.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

58. Both my spouse and I have had to work.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

59. Because I do not know enough English, it has been difficult to deal with day to day situations.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

60. I have not been able to forget about the war related deaths which happened to friends or family members.

YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Has this occurred to you in the past 3 months? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Not at all worried/tense	A little worried/tense	Moderately worried/tense	Very worried/tense	Extremely worried/tense
1	2	3	4	5

61. My spouse and I have had disagreements on the use of contraceptives.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

62. My children have seen too much sex on television or at the movies.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

63. I have noticed that religion is less important to me now than before.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

64. I have felt guilty about leaving family and friends in my home country.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

65. My spouse has not been adapting to American life.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

66. I have been forced to accept low paying jobs.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

67. There have been conflicts among members of my family.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

68. I have been questioned about my legal status.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

69. I have had difficulty finding legal services.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

70. I have felt that I might loose my job to newly arriving immigrants.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

71. I have felt pressured to learn English.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

72. Some members of my family have become too individualistic.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

73. I have felt that my spouse and I have not been able to communicate.
YES [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Hispanic Stress Inventory

Instrucciones:

Porfavor circule en su hoja de respuestas si las siguientes situaciones le han ocurrido a usted en los ultimos 3 meses. Si le ocurrio a usted, indique que tan preocupado o tenso la situacion lo ha hecho sentir. Si la situacion mencionada no le ocurrio a usted, circule "no" en su hoja de respuestas y prosiga a la siguiente pregunta. Recuerde, no hay buena o mala respuesta. Porfavor trate de ser honesto(a) con sus respuestas.

Ejemplo 1: Ha sido dificil encontrar cuidado medico.

Nada preocupado/tenso | Un poco preocupado/tenso | Moderadamente preocupado/tenso | Mucho preocupado/tenso | Demasiado preocupado/tenso

Esto te ha ocurrido a ti en los ultimos 3 meses?

Si (✓) No ( ) 1 2 3 (4) 5

Ejemplo 2: He sido criticado(a) por mi trabajo.

Nada preocupao/tenso | Un poco preocupado/tenso | Moderadamente preocupado/tenso | Mucho preocupado/tenso | Demasiado preocupado/tenso

Esto te ha ocurrido a ti en los ultimos 3 meses?

Si ( ) No (✓) 1 2 3 4 5

HISPANIC STRESS INVENTORY
VERSION I INMIGRANTES

Le ha ocurrido esto en los ultimos 3 meses? SI [ ] NO [ ]

NADA PREOCUPADO/TENSO	UN POCO PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MODERADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MUY PREOCUPADO/TENSO	EXTREMADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO
1	2	3	4	5

1. He visto a mi hijo(a) comportarse como un(a) delincuente.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

2. He puesto en duda la idea de que el matrimonio es para siempre.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

3. No me he sentido aceptado(a) por otros debido a mi cultura latina.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

4. Por no saber suficiente inglés ha sido difícil para mi entreactar con otros.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

5. Mis hijos(as) han sido influenciados(as) por malas amistades.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

6. Otros han estado muy preocupados por la cantidad y la calidad de mi trabajo.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

7. No he podido olvidar los últimos meses en mi país de origen.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

8. Mi esposo(a) ha tomado demasiadas bebidas alcohólicas.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

9. He pensado que mis hijos(as) han usado drogas ilegales.
   SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

10. Mis hijos han tomado bebidas alcohólicas.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

11. Se me ha discriminado.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

12. Mi esposo(a) ha esperado que yo sea más tradicional en nuestra relación.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

13. Mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido desacuerdos acerca de como criar a nuestros hijos.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

14. Mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido desacuerdos acerca de la importancia de la religión en nuestra familia.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

15. He sido criticado por mi trabajo.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

16. Mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido desacuerdos sobre quien debe controlar el dinero de la casa.
    SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Le ha ocurrido esto en los ultimos 3 meses? SI [ ] NO [ ]

NADA PREOCUPADO/TENSO	UN POCO PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MODERADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MUY PREOCUPADO/TENSO	EXTREMADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO
1	2	3	4	5

17. He pensado mucho en mi hijo(a) que se fué de la casa para vivir independientemente.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

18. Debido a las ideas americanas sobre los niños, ha sido difícil para mí decidir qúe tan estricto(a) ser con mis hijos(as).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

19. Debido a mi mal inglés, la gente me ha tratado mal.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

20. He sentido que el estar muy apegado(a) a mi familia interfiere con mis propias metas.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

21. He pensado que mis hijos(as) quieren su independencia antes de estar preparados(as) para ella.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

22. He sentido que miembros de mi familia están perdiendo su religión.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

23. Mis hijos(as) no han respetado mi autoridad en la forma que deberían.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

24. Debido a que tengo costumbres diferentes, he tenido discusiones con otros miembros de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

25. Miembros de mi familia han considerado el divorcio como una solución a sus problemas matrimoniales.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

26. Debido a la falta de unidad familiar, me he sentido aislado(a) y solo(a).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

27. Debido a que soy latino(a) se ha esperado que trabaje más duro.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

28. Ha sido difícil para mí comprender por qúe mi esposo(a) desea hacerse más como un(a) americano(a).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

29. Mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido desacuerdos acerca del idioma que nuestros hijos(as) deben hablar en casa.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Le ha ocurrido esto en los ultimos 3 meses? SI [ ] NO [ ]

NADA PREOCUPADO/TENSO	UN POCO PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MODERADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MUY PREOCUPADO/TENSO	EXTREMADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO
1	2	3	4	5

30. Debido a problemas con el ingles, he tenido dificultades en la escuela.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

31. Mi esposo(a) no ayuda con las tareas del hogar.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

32. Mis ingresos no han sido suficientes para mantener a mi familia o a mi misma.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

33. He tenido miedo a las consecuencias de la deportacion.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

34. He pensado que mis hijos (as) no estaban recibiendo una buena educación.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

35. Mi situación legal en este país ha sido un problema para obtener un buen trabajo.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

36. Ha habido conflictos culturales en mi matrimonio.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

37. He sentido que las ideas de mis hijos(as) acerca de la sexualidad son demasiado liberales.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

38. Ha habido violencia física entre miembros de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

39. No pude obtener el trabajo que quería debido a que no tenía las habilidades apropiadas.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

40. Debido a que soy latino(a) he tenido dificulatad para encontrar el tipo de trabajo que quiero.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

41. Mi esposo ha esperado que yo sea menos tradicional en nuestra relación.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

42. Las presiones para alcanzar el éxito económico han hecho que deje de ir a la iglesia
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

43. Mis hijos(as) han hablado acerca de irse de la casa.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

44. Mi situación legal en este país ha limitado mi contacto con mi familia o amigos.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Le ha ocurrido esto en los ultimos 3 meses? SI [ ] NO [ ]

NADA PREOCUPADO/TENSO	UN POCO PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MODERADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MUY PREOCUPADO/TENSO	EXTREMADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO
1	2	3	4	5

45. He sentido que en este país nunca podre recuperar la posición y el respeto que tenía en mi país de origen.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

46. He sentido que las relaciones familiares se están volviendo menos importantes para la gente que me rodea.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

47. Mis hijos(as) han recibido malas calificaciones en la escuela.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

48. Ha sido difícil para mi esposo(a) y para mi combinar las culturas latina y americana.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

49. Mi jefe(a) ha pensado que soy muy pasivo.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

50. He tenido que ser cuidadoso(a) con la calidad de mi trabajo para que otros no piensen que soy un(a) haragán(a).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

51. Debido a que soy latino(a), ha sido difícil obtener ascensos o aumentos de salario.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

52. Debido a problemas de dinero, he tenido que trabajar lejos de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

53. He tenido pleitos serios con miembros de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

54. He estado rodeado(a) de mucha violencia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

55. He evitado enfrentarme con agentes de inmigración.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

56. He pensando que si fuera a una institución social o del gobierno, sería deportado(a).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

57. Mis metas personales han estado en conflicto con las metas de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Le ha ocurrido esto en los ultimos 3 meses? SI [ ] NO [ ]

NADA PREOCUPADO/TENSO	UN POCO PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MODERADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO	MUY PREOCUPADO/TENSO	EXTREMADAMENTE PREOCUPADO/TENSO
1	2	3	4	5

58. Ambos mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido que trabajar.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

59. Por no saber suficiente inglés ha sido difícil el enfrentar situaciones diarias como ir de compras o tomar el autobus.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

60. No he podido olvidar la muerte de familiares o amigos debido a la guerra.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

61. Mi esposo(a) y yo hemos tenido desacuerdos sobre el uso de métodos anticonceptivos.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

62. Mis hijos(as) han visto demasiado sexo en la televisión o en el cine.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

63. He notado que la religión es ahora menos importante para mi que antes.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

64. Me he sentido culpable por haber dejado a mi familia y a mis amigos(as) en mi país.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

65. Mi esposo(a) no ha ido adoptando a la vida americana.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

66. Me he visto forzado(a) a aceptar trabajos con salarios bajos.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

67. Ha habido pleitos entre miembros de mi familia.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

68. Se me ha preguntado sobre mi situación legal en este país.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

69. He tenido dificultad para encontrar servicios legales.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

70. He sentido que puedo perder mi trabajo por culpa de los(as) inmigrantes recién llegados(as).
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

71. Me he sentido presionado(a) para aprender inglés.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

72. Algunos miembros de mi familia se han hecho muy individualistas.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

73. He sentido que mi esposo(a) y yo no hemos podido comunicar.
SI [ ] NO [ ] 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix G

ORI Questions

Describe : **1) your mother**

2) your father

3) a significant person in your life

4) yourself (what sort of person you are)

5) your child (the one who was sent away/the one that mother *considered* sending away/(first born child if several children were sent away)/first born child if there are many children and none were sent away.

(The order of these questions should be randomized each time it is administered to reduce bias, such as tiredness, willingness and capacity to reflect, etc. throughout the five questions).

Appendix H

Semi-Structured Interview

To Everyone:

1.How old were you when you arrived to this country?

2. How many years have you lived in this country and in your country of origin?

3. What made you come to this country? (Why did your parents/husband/etc. come to this country?

4. What aspects of your heritage would you want to pass to your children?

5. What aspects of this culture (American) would you like them to embrace?

6. Are there any cultural values that your child has embraced and strongly clash with your own?

7. Educational attainment; highest school level achieved

8. Socio-economic level:
Are you currently employed?
Do you receive any type of financial help from the government?

9.a Are you married?/live with your partner?

9.b Do you have close relatives or friends whom you can trust and support you in this country?

10. Are you currently or have you ever been in therapy?

11. How many children do you have?

12. What are their ages and gender?

13. Have you ever considered living apart (that is in a different household residence) from your child/ or from any or all of your children for a period of time of 3 months or longer and then decided against it?

***If answer to question **13** is **YES** *ask the following:* *** *Otherwise go to point 14*
13.a. Who did you consider separating from?

13.b. What was the age of your child at that point?

13.c. Why did you decide against living apart from your child/children after you had considered doing so?

14. Have you ever lived apart (that is in a different household residence) from your child/any or all of your children for a period of time of (a) 2 weeks; (b) 2 months; (a) 3 months or longer ?

*** If answer to question **14** is **No** ***("No separation took place")*** *ask questions **15-16*** AND continue with question ***36-48*** ***

15. Describe your relationship with your first born child? (if no child was sent away)

16. Why did you choose not to separate from your child/any of your children for a long period of time?

****If answer to question 14 is YES ("separation took place)** ask questions 17-35 ****

(If more than one child)
17. Who did you separate from?

18. What is the longest time you have ever left your child/children under someone else's care?

19. Have you lived apart from your child/children more than once?

*** If answer is **YES** ask questions 19.a. and 19.b. ***
19.a. How many times have you separated from your child/children?

19.b. How long did each separation last?

20. What was the age of your child/children at the time(s) of separation?

21. What circumstances led you to live apart from your child/children?

22. Describe your relationship with the child/children you sent away?

23. Who did you leave your child/children with?

24. Why did you choose to leave your child/children with that person or persons?

25. What was your relationship like with that person?

26. What was your child's relationship like with that person/those persons?

27. What was it like for you that day when you separated from your child/children? (defenses, capacity for empathy)

28. What was it like for you the first few weeks after you separated from your child/children?

29. What do you think that day was like for your child/children? (capacity for empathy)

30. What do you think the first few weeks after that were like for your child/ children?

31. Looking back, what do you think was the impact of the separation on your child?

32. What was the impact of the separation from your child on you?

33. What was the impact of the separation from your child on the rest of the family? (grandparents, siblings, etc.)

34. How do you feel now about the separation from your child?

35. Looking back from where you are now in your life, why do you think the separation occurred?

TO EVERYONE:
Family History:

36. (a) Who would you say raised you?
(b) If person other than parents raised her **How would you describe that person?**

37. Can you describe your relationship with your parents as an adult? (current relationship)

38. How are you similar and different from your mother ?

39. How about your father?

40. How do you want to be similar and different from your mother as a parent?

41. How about your father?

42. How are you different as a mother from what you expected you would be?

Parents' Childhood:

43. Could you describe your relationship with your parents as a young child? (around age 6 and earlier)

44. Do you remember any times in which your parents were affectionate, warm, loving to you?

45. (If not brought up spontaneously by mother)
Do you remember any times when you felt ignored by your parents?
(to see defenses such as denial, idealization, etc.)

46. Do you remember any times when you felt rejected by your parents?

47. (a) Were you ever raised by someone other than one or both of your parents for any length of time longer than 3 months before you were 6 years old?

(b) and after age 6?

48. (a) Was any of your siblings raised for any length of time longer than 3 months by someone other than one or both of your parents before he or she was 6 years old?

(b) and after age 6?

If answers to question **47 (a)** or **(b) or** to **48 (a)** or **(b)** are **YES** Ask questions **17p-31p** (parents' version)

17p) Who did you (or your sibling) live apart from for longer than 3 months?

18p) What is the longest time you (or your sibling) were separated from one or both of your parents?

19p) Have you (or sibling) lived apart from one or both of your parents more than once?

19.a. How many times?

19.b. How long did each separation last?

20p) What was your age (his/her age) when your parent(s) separated from you (or him/her)?

21p) What do you think were the circumstances that led your parents (or one of them) to live apart from you (or sibling)?

22p) What was your relationship like with your parent/s when you (or sibling) were sent away?

23p) Who did you (your sibling) stay with while your parent/s lived apart from you (your sibling)?

24p) Why do you think your parent(s) chose that person for you (or your sibling) to stay with?

25p) What was your parent(s) relationship like with that person/those persons?

26p) What was your relationship (your sibling's) like with that person(s) when you (or your sibling) moved there?

27p) What was it like for you (your sibling) that day when your parent/s went away?

28p) What was it like for you (your sibling) on the first weeks after you parent(s) left?

29p) What do you think that day was like for your parent/s?

30p) What do you think the first few weeks after that were like for your parents?

31p) How do you feel now about that separation from your mother/father/parents?

Notes:

(1) Age of children at the time they were sent away ranges between newborns and 6 years of age.
(2) Age of all children (who were sent away and who were not sent away) will range between 6 and 17 years of age at the time of the interview.
(3) Mothers' age will range between 21 and 50 years old.
(4) Mothers who separated are those who left their children in their country of origin for more than 3 months.
(5) Child/children have to be living back with mother for a minimum of one year at the time of the study.
(6) Mothers who sent more than 1 child away will focus on their first born child's separation.
(7) Mothers who did not send any children away will also focus on first born child.

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