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## Issues in Counseling Hispanics

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*Loyola University Chicago*

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ISSUES IN COUNSELING HISPANICS

by

Ralph A. Yaniz

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

December

1987

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## VITA

The author, Ralph A. Yaniz, was born on January 30, 1959, in Chicago, Illinois. He is the oldest of seven children of Rafael and Maria (Perez) Yaniz.

He has lived in the Chicago area all his life and was there married to Patricia S. Healey in 1983. He is the father of three children--Ralph James, born November 30, 1984 and Francesca Rose and Marcella Amanda, identical twins born October 29, 1986.

His elementary education was completed at Mary, Seat of Wisdom, a Catholic elementary school in Park Ridge, Illinois. His secondary education was completed at Notre Dame High School for Boys in Niles, Illinois.

In 1977, he entered Loyola University of Chicago, receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in June, 1981.

Professionally, he has been engaged in the counseling field, both in the mental health and substance abuse areas, and he is presently an Illinois Certified Substance Abuse Counselor. Through this experience, he has been active in counseling Hispanics from different cultures and backgrounds.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The term "Hispanic" is used to indicate all people of Spanish origin and descent. The United States Bureau of the Census (1984) reports that in 1980 there were 12,900,000 Hispanics in the United States. This number is probably underestimated due to the large number of illegal aliens who are unregistered and uncounted. Analyzing this group for which we have statistics, we find that Mexicans make up about 7.7 million of this group while Puerto Ricans make up 1.5 million and Cubans 0.6 million. There are another 3.1 million Hispanics from other countries in Central and South America.

The census data further indicates that a greater percentage of Hispanics live in urban areas compared to blacks or the total population. Furthermore, different Hispanic groups are centered in different areas around the country. Mexicans populate the southwest area of the United States, residing almost exclusively in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. Most Puerto Ricans live in Connecticut, New Jersey or New York; and most immigrants from Cuba reside

in Florida.

Disproportionately large numbers of Hispanics are members of the lower socioeconomic groups. The census report (1984) indicates that 3.3 million Hispanics, more than a quarter of the entire population, were categorized as living in poverty.

Employment and unemployment patterns of Hispanics are quite different from those of non-Hispanic populations. Hispanics are over represented in jobs which are menial and low paying: for example, 63% are either blue collar workers or serve in the farming or service fields. In terms of unemployment, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1984) reports that unemployment for Hispanics was about 14% (the national level was at 10%). These differences provide additional stress for the Hispanic.

When looking at education, the numbers are not much more encouraging for Hispanics. The median years of education for Hispanics, according to the U.S. Census report (1984), is 11.0 years. This compares with 12.2 and 12.6 years for blacks and whites respectively. Those having fewer than five years of schooling were about 15.8% for Hispanics while blacks and whites had 9.2% and 2.6% respectively. Finally, the percentage of

those graduating from high school was 45% for Hispanics, 51% for blacks and 70% for whites. These statistics show that Hispanics have less education than the general population or than blacks.

The preceding factors are definite sources of stress to the Hispanics in this country. The "average" Hispanic can be seen as a poor urban dweller who is employed in a physically demanding blue collar job and is undereducated. The Report to the President's Commission on Mental Health of Hispanic-Americans (1978) depicts a clear picture of the status of the Hispanic American family in the United States. Summarizing, the report states that the Hispanic-American family exists in more stress producing situations; high morbidity and mortality rates, substandard schools, unequal pay scales, rampant unemployment, dilapidated housing, high dropout rates, poor nutrition, low educational attainment, repetition of grades in school, high incidence of poverty, and a shortage of relevant, accessible health and mental health care services in their communities.

Padilla, Ruiz, and Alvarez (1975) state that while Hispanic-Americans receive comparatively less mental health care than the general population, they may

actually need more because of "high stress" indicators. These indicators, which are correlated with personality disintegration and subsequent need for treatment intervention include (a) poor communication skills in English; (b) the poverty cycle of poor education, income, social status, housing, and political influence; (c) difficulty in acculturating to a society which appears prejudicial, hostile, and rejecting; and (d) the survival of traits from a rural culture which are less effective in an urban culture.

The issue of underutilization of mental health services is central to the purpose of this thesis. The Hispanic client, as characterized by the preceding descriptions, is in definite need of greater than average mental health services. The question then is, why are services underutilized?

Alvarez et. al. (1974) states that the most logical explanation for underutilization of mental health services by Hispanics is the irrelevance of these current services to their particular needs. They state that the community mental health worker must be aware of the cultural values and norms which play an important part in shaping the personality of the Hispanic, such as: (1) the concepts of "la familia, el respeto, el

honor" (family, respect, honor); (2) the support offered by the Hispanic family during periods of stress which serves as a positive coping mechanism; (3) feelings of "envidia, celos, sustos, mal de ojo" (envy, jealousy, shock, evil eye) which can be understood only within the context of the Hispanic world; (4) the use of the Spanish language and the fact that different groups of Hispanics have different vocabularies and dialects; (5) sex roles which differ for the Hispanic and must be understood in the proper cultural context; (6) the differences in cognitive style--field independent versus field dependent modes of learning, which are culturally based, and which affect school behavior of children; and (7) the cultural frames of reference which undergrid the Hispanic's behavior. The result of inadequacies in understanding these cultural needs is actually greater stress for the Hispanic client. Alvarez et. al. (1974) relate:

Bi-cultural Latino mental health workers have become alarmingly convinced that traditional Anglo mental-health services produce socio-cultural and psychic disequilibrium (stress) for Latino consumers. This is so because the overwhelming majority of Latinos who seek mental health services live within Latino value systems and within the socio-cultural "barrio" systems.

It is in relation to this Latino monocltural majority that traditional anglo mental health systems must be adapted. The

bi-cultural Latino, usually professional or paraprofessional, who is able (however precariously) to walk the psychic tightrope of bi-culturalism must be given great institutional support with which to serve the Latino community.

Thus, the attempts to use the traditional Anglo therapies and service delivery modes cause additional emotional stress in the Latino client and ensures a disproportionate rate of dropout and non-use by Latinos. (p.10)

Morales (1978) seems to agree with this idea and states that the traditional mental health services were designed by and for the middle class. There is little evidence that these services meet the mental health needs of the Hispanic in general.

Padilla, Ruiz, and Alvarez (1975) conclude that mental health facilities should be made conducive to the behavioral styles and needs of Mexican-Americans. One major recommendation they make is having more Spanish speaking staff to work with the Hispanic clients. This sentiment is agreed to by Keefe (1978), who states that the limited number of Spanish speaking personnel available in the past at mental health clinics is one of the reasons for underutilization of services by Mexican-Americans.

Newton (1978) concurs with the proposition that underutilization of mental health services by Hispanics is due to language obstacles and/or culturally

insensitive delivery systems.

Thus, we can see the dilemma taking shape. On the one hand, Hispanics are burdened with poor education, jobs, living conditions, and social status. These problems and stressors result in an assumed need for greater mental health service utilization. Statistics show, however, that the contrary is actually the case--Hispanics are underutilizing mental health services at an alarming rate. The bulk of the research seems to indicate that most mental health services are not geared toward Hispanic clients and are delivered by practitioners who are insensitive or ignorant of the cultural issues and norms of the Hispanic client.

The purpose of this thesis is to review the pertinent literature on the basic issues that are relevant to the goal of providing therapy to the Hispanic client. The reader should come away with a deeper understanding of some of the cultural norms that are dissimilar to that of the mainstream American culture. This will allow the mental health professional to provide more adequate services to Hispanics.

A word of caution must be made about the use of the information that will be presented in the following pages. Padilla (1981) discusses it best when he

presents the importance of three points of view when dealing with the ethnohistory and culture of the Hispanic. First, he states that Hispanics are often thought of as belonging to a single cultural group due to the fact that they share similarities in language, values, and tradition. Second, the Hispanic population is actually very heterogeneous and should be thought of as a combination of distinct subcultures. Each of these cultures possess specific traits that are common to it. Third, information on ethnohistory and culture is important for non-Hispanic mental health workers to be able to differentiate between members of different Hispanic subcultures.

In this thesis, the author will attempt to identify patterns of similarity and differences between the major Hispanic subgroups. This will give the reader a solid foundation with which to understand the Hispanic client. It is recommended, however, that each client be handled individually and that a complete history be taken to determine relevant cultural patterns. Assuming that all Hispanics are alike and will show all the cultural traits to be discussed here will only lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications.

In chapter II, the Hispanic family will be



discussed in terms of the male/female sex roles and patterns of interaction and in terms of the extreme family loyalty and closeness which is characteristic of this institution. Chapter III will examine the cultural aspects of language, education, and religion and how they affect the Hispanic-American. Finally, chapter IV will give the conclusions and implications of what was discussed in the thesis and outline recommendations and areas of suggested future research.

## CHAPTER II

### The Hispanic Family

#### Sex Roles--Male/Female Relationships

In the traditional Hispanic family, there are certain assumptions about the way males and females interact with one another and behave in public. Many of these assumptions are still present to some degree in today's Hispanic-American families, and an understanding of these is necessary for the counselor or therapist who is involved with an individual or family of Hispanic origin. In this section, the author will review some of the relevant literature which describes the traditional Hispanic male/female patterns of interaction. Their implications for the counselor or therapist will be discussed in chapter IV.

#### Sex roles in the Mexican-American family.

McGinn (1966) and Penalosa (1968) present a clear description of the traditional Mexican family in relation to male/female roles as they existed in Mexico. McGinn (1966) states that in the relationship, the man has a strong need to assert his masculine nature. The culture's definition of manliness is in sexual terms. Demonstrating manliness implies expressing sexual

proWess. The female has been usually trained, by her parents and the way she was raised, to accept her status as inferior to that of the male. She looks toward motherhood as a way to gain status. Due to the strong authoritarian behavior of the father, the children are given little opportunity to form independent judgements and will eventually end up imitating the parents.

Penalosa (1968) suggests that Mexican family roles are primarily determined by the submission of the female to the male. The husband-wife relationship emphasizes his manliness or machismo and his role as an authoritarian leader. The husband has greater demands and responsibilities both at work and at home, and this often takes a toll on the man's physical and mental health.

Madsen (1973) and Grabler, Moore, and Guzman (1970) state that "machismo" ranks second in importance in Mexican culture only to devotion to the family. Mexican-American men are subjected to a continual drive to live up to the demands of "machismo," which entails demonstrating that men are stronger, smarter, and vastly superior to women in all areas of life. The man must command respect for himself and his family.

Madsen (1973) also describes the man's

counterpart as the quiet and submissive Mexican-American woman: "Where he is strong, she is weak. Where he is aggressive, she is submissive. While he is condescending toward her, she is respectful toward him."

Rudoff (1971) and Heller (1966) in their research on Mexican-American males, state that the Mexican American subculture maintains a large delineation in sex roles. Beginning with adolescence and throughout the life of the male, he is socialized to be a "macho." This manliness is measured primarily by sexual prowess and physical strength and courage.

Mirande (1985) and Mirande and Enriquez (1979) also relate specific data about the male/female roles in the traditional Mexican family, both in Mexico and in the United States. They emphasize, however, that many researchers have adopted a simple psychoanalytic model which sees machismo as a malady and Mexican cultural traits as symptomatic of illness. Instead, an important feature of the Mexican culture is its emphasis on respect. This respect comes from two sources: a long standing deference to elders and a predisposition to see the male as superior. The husband-father is accorded the most respect due to his being the ultimate authority in the family. Along with this respect he is granted

special privileges. He is allowed more freedom than the woman and derives much of his sense of self worth outside the home (job, friends, etc.). As the ultimate authority in the family, he is responsible for the behavior of the other family members. Critical to the concept of machismo is the using of this authority over the family in a just and fair manner. If the authority is misused, he will lose respect within the family and the community.

These researchers describe the wife-mother role as being in sharp contrast to the male role. She is expected to have almost total devotion to the family. She should be warm and nurturing and care for all the basic needs of her husband and children. Despite this lowly status, the importance of the mother in the family is greater than that of the father. Because of frequent absence from the home, the father is unable to set the rules on children's behavior. The mother is left to do most of the domestic tasks and rearing of children.

Rendon (1972) and Zinn (1975) concur with the more positive view of machismo. They describe machismo as being as much a symbolic principle of the Mexican revolt as it is a guideline for the conduct of family life, male-female relationships, and personal

self-esteem.

Padilla, Ruiz, and Alvarez (1975) and Sotomayor (1972) each assert that counselors must be aware of these male/female roles in order to better understand the Hispanic client. Padilla, Ruiz, and Alvarez (1975) describe sex roles of Hispanics as being much more rigidly defined. Males are described as dominant and authoritarian while putting high value on the virtues of courage and fearlessness (machismo), respect and adherence to cultural norms and values (respecto), extended family relations and preference for personal contact and individualized attention in dealing with social institutions (personalismo). The female is described as submissive, nurturant, and loving. Sotomayor (1972) agrees with the statements made by Mirande (1985) and Mirande and Enriquez (1979) that despite the second class role given to the mother in the Hispanic family, she actually has a significant position in the family and the respect due her is symbolically given by the children's use of her family name in conjunction with the father's.

#### Sex roles in the Puerto Rican family.

Fitzpatrick (1971) describes the traditional Puerto Rican family in terms of male/female roles. The

man is expected to play the role of the superior authority. He feels free to make decisions without consulting the wife, and he expects to be obeyed when he gives an order. The woman has a definite subordinate role. She will rarely make important decisions, such as seeking medical care for the children, without first getting permission from the husband. Fitzpatrick also points out that the superior position of the man is also reflected in the double standard of morality around sexual behavior. A clear distinction is made between the "good" woman, who will be protected as a virgin until marriage, and then be protected as a wife and mother, and the "bad" woman, who is available for a man's enjoyment. Puerto Rican males are concerned about their women and feel a strong sense of obligation to protect them. In contrast to this, a great deal of freedom is granted to the males. It is expected, and sometimes even encouraged, that a male have sexual experiences with women before marriage. After marriage he may even feel free to engage in extramarital activities.

Cordasco and Bucchioni (1973), in their sociological sourcebook on the Puerto Rican people, describe these sex roles in a very similar light. Men

are supposed to have complete authority over their wives and children. They make the decisions when needed, and the other family members must submit to these decisions. Differences are described between the lower class, where the dominance of the male is greater, and the middle class, where the difference is not so great, but regardless of which is compared, the male exercises more authority in the home than American husbands. Women are seen as the anchors of their families and carry a large share of the responsibility for the orderly running of society. Most of the power is exercised over the children. There is an extremely strong feeling that a woman should not abandon her children. Fathers may leave but mothers may not.

Sex roles in the Cuban American family.

Boswell and Curtis (1983) discuss these male/female sex roles in the traditional Cuban family. They point out a sharp distinction between the role of men and women, with the double standard being applied in work, play, and sex. The wife is supposed to stay at home and attend to the running of the household and the care of the children. A pattern of male dominance prevails. Most of the major family decisions are made by the husband. The tradition of machismo forces men



to demonstrate virility through physical strength, courage, and business success. It is common, and considered proper, for males to have extramarital affairs. Daughters and wives are to be protected against temptation. A strict tradition of chaperoning is followed for respectable, unmarried women.

Richmond (1976) and Rogg (1974) maintain that these roles continued through the changes that took place in Cuba with modernization, and later with the families that came to the United States. Richmond (1976) indicates that despite the changes that took place in Cuba with industrialization and urbanization, the pattern in the family remained paternalistic. Male dominance and authority remained strong and a double standard was accepted in behavior at home and in public. Rogg (1974) describes the role of the Cuban-American female as the sole caretaker. She must care for her home and children and maintain the morale of the husband. The man is the one responsible for establishing the family in the new country.

#### Changing sex roles for Hispanic-Americans.

It is evident that male/female roles are fairly consistent across the major Hispanic groups represented in the United States. There is a definite division in

what is expected from males and females. The United States, like most countries, exhibits some differences in sex roles, but these differences are more pronounced in Hispanic groups.

The male/female roles have undergone some changes as Hispanic groups have mixed with the mainstream American culture, but many of these changes have been small and the traditional roles have remained remarkably strong. Aguirre (1976) in a study of Cuban women who work in Cuban bureaucracies, concludes that although there are more women working, little change has actually occurred. The jobs these women hold are lower paying and more menial. The author concludes that this "shows how enduring cultural practices affect women's achievement of high occupational status." This point is more dramatically brought out by Ferree (1979) in a study in which Cuban women now working in the United States were found to still be doing most of the work at home. Thus, they were actually doing more work. The men did not make themselves responsible for more of the housework just because the women were working.

The studies that have found some changes in traditional roles have dealt with decision making in the home. As was previously illustrated, in the traditional

Hispanic family the male is the decision maker. Hawkes and Taylor (1975) studied 76 Mexican-American families from a California state operated migrant family labor camp and found that an egalitarian power structure was the most common mode of decision making and action taking.

Two other studies, Richmond (1975) and Zinn (1980), look at Hispanic women's power in terms of contributing to the family decision making. Richmond (1975) found that a belief system which supports egalitarian interaction and the balance of resources of the couple are the important factors stimulating egalitarian family behavior for the Cuban exile. The greatest degree of egalitarian interaction occurs when the husbands resources are moderate, when the wife is contributing economically, and the couple has high exposure to egalitarian norms. Zinn (1980), in a study of employment and education in Mexican-American women, found that as a woman acquire extra domestic resources, she achieved greater equality in conjugal decision making without sacrificing ethnicity in other realms of family life.

More recent research on the sex roles of Hispanics and the characteristics expected by these

roles continues to exhibit a greater division between the sexes than is found in the mainstream American culture. A study conducted by Davis and Chavez (1985) looked at 22 Hispanic househusbands and focused on their assumption of roles which emphasized household maintenance and emotional family support in direct contrast to the norms and traditions of the Hispanic culture. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews revealed that most subjects viewed their role reversals as brought about by external economic circumstances and as temporary. Subjects also frequently reported stress and related physical problems as an effect of the role reversal.

Hartzler and Franco (1985) compared 25 Mexican American and 25 Anglo American couples on task division and perception of equity of the task division in the home. The subjects were university students and their spouses. The greatest difference was between husbands and wives, with wives responsible for the greater share of the household tasks regardless of whether they worked or were students. Findings from the equity scale show a significant difference between ethnic groups, with Anglo American males reporting that they should do more in the home to make the task division fairer. Female Mexican

Americans reported that their husbands should do more to make the task division equitable.

A study by Moore (1983) looked at the low scores exhibited by Hispanic females on behavior conformity norms in the academic area. The author states that the results of this study suggest that teachers reward assertiveness, leadership and action when considering success in the educational and economic institutions. The Hispanic female, due to the Hispanic culture's view of these characteristics as not appropriate for the woman, is not able to measure up to the teacher expectations.

#### Family Loyalty and Closeness.

Another aspect of the Hispanic family that counselors must be aware of when involved in counseling or psychotherapy with Hispanics is the closeness and loyalty associated with the family unit. Many times this sense of family closeness extends to others outside the immediate family, such as in the compadrazgo system. This system is similar to the American godfather system but much more detailed and complex. The sense of family is still present to some extent in today's Hispanic American families. Bean, Curtis, and Marcus (1977), in their study of family and marital satisfaction among

Mexican-Americans, define "familism" as a "constellation of values which give overriding importance to the family and the needs of the collective as opposed to individual and personal needs." This definition is very indicative of the Hispanic view of the family.

Family loyalty and closeness in the Mexican American family.

Mirande and Enriquez (1979) describe the Mexican culture as putting more emphasis on "la familia," which includes the immediate family and extended relatives. Americans put a greater value on individualism, where even the family itself holds accomplishments of the individual in high regard. Mexicans are more oriented towards the group, and the needs of the group take precedence over those of the individual. Achievement and success are measured according to the contribution made to the family. It is not uncommon for the Mexican family to combine its resources to help members of the immediate family or other relatives; older siblings will work so that younger ones can go to school, or money may be combined to purchase large, expensive items such as a car or a house.

In Mirande (1985) the family is described as a warm and nurturing unit that gives support to its

members throughout their lifetime. In times of stress or when problems arise, one typically turns to the family rather than to outside agencies for help. Sharing and cooperation are encouraged and valued among children and even adult family members. Mirande states that these aspects of the Mexican-American family need to be understood by social service agencies which find it difficult to understand why Mexican families are often leery of outside help.

Keefe and Casas (1978) describe a characteristic of the Mexican-American family that attests to its closeness when compared to the Anglo-American family. Namely, they found that Mexican-Americans have strong extended family systems. This extended family is typically defined as a local kin group consisting of many related households whose members frequently interact and exchange mutual aid. They conclude that the extended family is important in providing support for both groups, but they differ in that Mexican Americans have more accessibility to the familial support due to the greater number of relatives living in the immediate vicinity.

Gilbert (1976) points out that the closeness of the Mexican-American family includes both the affective

interactions and the material well-being of its members. He paraphrases William Madsen (1969) who says that the family can be seen as an anxiety-sharing and an anxiety-reducing mechanism in stressful situations. A crisis is seldom faced alone. He further states that "the anxiety producing stress seldom precipitates mental illness when the anxiety is shared and relieved by a tightly knit kin group." Sotomayor (1971) illustrates the material sharing in the following passage:

In the extended family pattern, the members often rescue the head of the household by sharing their goods to meet the daily needs of the family. The head of the household does not lose face, but the extended family pattern couches his feelings of failure. The feeling of isolation of the nuclear family in similar situations is diluted by the support and help of the variety of members of the extended family. (p.215)

Keefe, Padilla and Carlos (1978) seem to concur with the description of the Mexican-American family given thus far. In addition, they mention the extended family ritual of the compadrazgo system. These compadres are seen as coparents, and they take on the rights and obligations more characteristic of relatives than friends.

Family loyalty and closeness in the Puerto Rican family.

Fitzpatrick (1971) describes the preeminence of



the family and the compadrazgo system in Puerto Rico. The individual has a deep consciousness of his membership in a family, and he thinks of his importance in terms of this membership. It is a strong bond for both the very rich and the very poor in the society. With this preeminence of the family comes a deep sense of obligation. If a person advances in public office or succeeds in business enterprises, he/she has a strong sense of obligation to use his/her gains for the benefit of the family. As economical development proceeds on the mainland, or as its citizens adjust to American life, the need increases to sacrifice family loyalty and obligation to efficiency. The Puerto Rican has a great deal of difficulty doing this.

In the compadrazgo system, the compadres act as "companion parents." Sponsors at baptism become godparents of the child and compadres of the child's parents. This is also the case with sponsors at confirmation, and witnesses at marriage become compadres of the married couple. These compadres constitute a network of ritual kinship that is as serious and important as that of natural kinship. There is a deep sense of obligation on the compadre for economic assistance, support, encouragement, and even personal

correction. A compadre may feel much freer to give advice on a family problem than a brother or sister would.

Family loyalty and closeness in the Cuban American family.

The Cuban family shows similar patterns of operation as the Mexican and Puerto Rican families. Boswell and Curtis (1983) describe the traditional Cuban family as being the institution that is primarily responsible for a Cuban's self-confidence, sense of security, and identity. A contrast is again made between the individualism of the United States which values a person in terms of his/her abilities to compete independently for socioeconomic status. The culture of Cuba views life as a network of personal relationships. The Cuban knows that in stressful times a relative or a very good friend can be counted on for needed assistance.

In Cuba, the compadrazgo system is very close to the American tradition of godparents, except that it is taken more seriously and involves a higher level of personal obligation. The child receives a set of compadres or "companion parents" at baptism or confirmation. These compadres are sometimes relatives,

however, even if they are not, they will become members of the family. The purpose of the compadre is to offer both economic and moral assistance to the family.

Changing family structure of Hispanic-Americans.

In the last several years, the research on the family system of Hispanics has centered on its characteristic of extreme closeness and its function in a supportive role. For most Hispanic groups, the support of the extended family is essential to help reduce the problems and stresses associated with acculturation and assimilation to the American society.

Greene and Monahan (1984) in a study that looked at utilization of community based long term care services by Hispanic and Anglo elderly in a case management system, found that Hispanics use significantly less agency services than Anglos despite exhibiting greater levels of impairment. The researchers found that Hispanics utilized much greater levels of informal support from their extended family and friends.

Triandis et. al. (1984) found that Hispanics associated a greater degree of closeness with the family system than did non-Hispanics. They compared role perceptions of 217 Hispanic and 235 non-Hispanic U.S.

Naval recruits, focusing on work roles and how they differ from family roles. The main pattern of findings suggest that Hispanics, relative to non-Hispanics, see a warmer, supportive family environment and a colder, hostile work environment.

Taylor, Harley, and Riley (1986) studied the effects of living in a single parent family, by examining differences in maternal acculturation and the adjustment of 129 preschool Mexican-American children. Results suggested that less acculturated Hispanics rely on family support, which may lessen the impact of the stress from being from a single parent home.

Two similar studies conducted by Vega, Kolody, Valle, and Hough (1986) and Vega, Kolody, and Valle (1986) look at depression among immigrant Mexican women in the United States. The results indicate a definite correlation between the symptoms of depression and the amount of family support. Thus, it is again evident that the close knit Hispanic family continues to be an important support system in dealing with a new society and culture.

In summary, Hispanics hold certain assumptions about male/female roles which are much more delineated than Anglo-American sex roles. The man is seen as

superior and is the decision maker of the family. The woman exerts her power and influence in the home. Despite this division of sex roles, the Hispanic family is a close knit unit where members of the family achieve an identity through the family. The American ideal of individualism is not the main emphasis.

Chapter III will examine the cultural aspects of language, education, and religion in terms of the Hispanic-American. Chapter IV will give the conclusions and implications of the material outlined in the thesis and the recommendations for the counselor or therapist. Suggestions for future research will also be discussed.

## CHAPTER III

### Cultural Issues

To the Hispanic, the process of acculturation to the mainstream American culture is often a difficult one. Important in this assimilation process are the areas of language, religion, and education. This section will review these areas for the major Hispanic groups in the United States. The relevance of these findings for the delivery of counseling services will be discussed in the final chapter.

#### Language

For the Hispanic-American, the Spanish language offers a measure of comfort and security and reinforces a feeling of belonging. It also helps foster a sense of ethnic identity that transcends ties of kinship and community boundaries. However, their native language has been a source of problems. It has helped to accentuate an internal sense of distinctiveness and an external perception of that distinctiveness. Language differences also readily identify Hispanics as a minority, and if continued use of Spanish persists to the point of retarding the rate at which English is learned, serious social and economic problems may

arise. The degree to which language patterns are maintained is often an important indicator of assimilation.

#### Language use among Cuban-Americans

Boswell and Curtis (1983), in their section on the language use of Cuban-Americans, state that almost all first generation Cubans living in the United States use Spanish as their primary language. And, like most other immigrant groups who have come to America, it is common for first generation Cuban-Americans to teach their native language to their children, especially when both parents are of Cuban origin, or when one is from Cuba and the other from another Hispanic country.

Spanish remains the language of use in Cuban-American homes. In a survey conducted by Diaz (1980) of a sample population of over 3500 households in Miami and Union City, New Jersey, it was found that about 90% of respondents spoke "only Spanish" at home. The findings seem natural when you realize that the home is the most intimate of all social environments and a place where one's sense of kinship is greatest.

The above study, sponsored by the Cuban National Planning Council also found that a majority of Cuban-Americans spoke "exclusively" or "mostly Spanish"

at work. They concluded that "proficiency in English, at least for the majority of Cuban-Americans in the two metropolitan areas of Miami and Union City, is not necessary for employment."

This brings up one of the more interesting differences concerning Cuban-Americans when compared with other Hispanic groups. Due to the nature of the Castro revolution, the immigrants who fled Cuba were primarily from the professional and managerial classes. These immigrants eventually formed the core of the Cuban-American economic base that expanded with the growth in population. Eventually, this strong economic base began to provide employment opportunities for the greater Cuban-American community. In this business center, the dominant language was Spanish. Thus, the Cuban-American was able to not only work, but find economic success without the necessity of learning the English language. Rogg (1974) describes this situation when he says that "because of the density of the exile community and its almost immediate mobilization in terms of businesses to serve its own people, for many adults, learning English was not necessary for survival or for socialization."

In a study conducted by Stolzberg (1982) this



point is more dramatically illustrated. Namely, he found that differences in salary between Cubans who are fluent in English and those who can barely speak the language are insignificant. In California, Mexican Americans who speak English fluently earn approximately 30% more than those who do not speak the language. In a similar study conducted by the National Commission for Employment Policies (1982) it was concluded that only 18% of Cuban-born Americans consider English to be their dominant language. This compares with nearly one-third for Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans born on the island.

One positive sign found in the study by the National Commission for Employment Policies was that almost two-thirds of all second generation Cuban-Americans speak English as their dominant language. The changing language use patterns among second generation and school-age first generation Cuban-Americans is further documented by the results taken from Diaz (1980). His survey revealed that English is clearly the dominant language used in school by Cuban-American students, with over 75% of those questioned in Miami and 60% in Union City using "mostly" or "only English" while in school.

Language use among Puerto Ricans.

In the Puerto Rican community, language takes on a different significance than that which is seen in the Cuban community. The Puerto Rican is able to return to his native land at any time, and losing the Spanish language is equivalent to cutting off ties with the mother country. Fitzpatrick (1971) brings up this dilemma when he states that Puerto Ricans are native born citizens of the United States whose native language is Spanish. This problem has already been recognized in New York State where the laws for voters registration, which require a literacy test in English, have been changed. The real problem, however, is that many Puerto Ricans do a great amount of traveling between their native land and the United States. This makes it more difficult to learn English well and to retain their fluency in Spanish.

Padilla (1958) describes another aspect of this problem that is still in effect today. She distinguishes among three groups: older immigrants, recent immigrants, and those born and reared in New York. Each has a different reference group and a different espousal or denial of Spanish as a language to be maintained. The New York born and reared Puerto

Rican and those immigrants who have been in the United States for a long period of time may identify with American society and may feel insulted if spoken to in Spanish by a health professional. Newly arrived immigrants, however, may actually exaggerate their use of Spanish to compensate for a feeling of confusion from being in a new culture.

Longres (1973), in his faculty training project, came across this difference. Spanish speaking ability varied widely among his group members. Everyone could understand and carry on a routine conversation in Spanish, but not everyone could speak about social welfare, curriculum or other such abstract issues in Spanish. He states that "this is a dilemma for the continental Puerto Rican since it is a sign of cultural breakdown and change."

Glazer and Moynihan (1963) point out that the language problem is compounded by the social and economic changes that have taken place. When the Jewish and Italian immigrants entered New York in the 1920's, it was common for children to leave school early, before language became a problem. Today, children are required by law to stay in school until the age of sixteen.

The existence of the Puerto Rican language

problem in the school system was recognized as early as 1948, when a report entitled "A Program of Education for Puerto Ricans in New York City" was released. The result of this report was the hiring of Spanish-speaking teacher assistants to work with teachers and supervisors in helping Spanish-speaking pupils and their parents to adjust to the school and the community.

#### Language use among Mexican Americans.

The Mexican-American community faces problems similar to the Puerto Rican and Cuban American communities in this country because of the attachment to the Spanish language. Mirande (1985) discusses the language problem from the perspective of the displacement of the Spanish-speaking population during the late 1800's from the area that now constitutes the southwest region of the United States. This phenomenon was a definite precursor to the problems encountered in today's Mexican-American community.

Camarillo (1979) states that the southwest area of the United States was under Mexican influence until about the late 1860's. Despite a constant threat from the Anglo population, Mexicans managed to retain control of the educational and political systems. In Santa Barbara, for example, common council minutes were

recorded in Spanish until 1970, and Mexican juries seldom convicted Mexican defendants. English language instruction was not available until 1858.

The American takeover of the Southwest imposed an alien culture, economic system, religion, and language on the people. A consequence of the Americanization was the beginning of the process that has been termed "barrioization" of the Mexican community (Mirande, 1985). This entails the formation of the separate Mexican barrio or neighborhood.

The result of this division on the Mexican-American accounts for the dilemma which Bayard (1978) describes when she says that

Ethnic identification, or the individuals values, attitudes, and preferences representative of a particular cultural group, is an integral part of totality of identification formed by all Mexican Americans. In some ways, it is useful to visualize Mexican American ethnic identification as a result of the interrelationship of the alternatives: the degree of identification with Mexican culture and the degree of identification with Anglo culture. (p.110)

Ruiz, Padillia, and Alvarez (1977) develop on this theme by presenting a model which identifies four basic types of ethnicity: Traditional, non-traditional, bicultural, and marginal. "Traditional" ethnic identification consists of high Mexican affiliation and

low Anglo affiliation. The opposite, or "non-traditional" ethnic identification, consists of high Anglo affiliation and low Mexican affiliation. High Mexican and Anglo affiliation constitutes "biculturalism" and, conversely, low Mexican and Anglo affiliation is called "marginality." A cultural index such as language is needed to categorize a person according to this model. Someone categorized as being of the "traditional" ethnic identification would speak fluent Spanish and little or no English. One would probably be of an older generation and identify with the more traditional cultural patterns of Mexico. The person from the "non-traditional" category would speak fluent English and identify with the more American aspects of their culture. The person would probably be of a younger generation, and if one spoke Spanish at all, it would be at home with older family members. The "bicultural" and "marginal" persons would speak varying degrees of both Spanish and English, with the "marginal" person being classified as exhibiting some pathological maladjustment.

As with the other Hispanic groups, all of the above mentioned categories may exist in the same household at the same time. Such a situation is a

definite source of stress and can lead to family disunity. The mental health practitioner must take this into account when dealing with an individual client or a family unit.

Recent studies on language use of Hispanics.

More recent studies on Hispanics in general have continued to focus on the problems encountered by lack of fluency in the English language and the effect this has on health care services. A study conducted by Laval, Gomez, and Ruiz (1983) on Hispanics found that language was an added obstacle to the access to quality mental health care. They argue that Spanish speaking Americans can be seen as a language minority in the United States, and their study focuses on the problems and main implications of the language barrier for the process of psychotherapy.

A similar study by Marin, Marin, Padilla, and de la Rocha (1983) found that low rates of utilization of preventive services were due to four major obstacles, one of them being language barriers (the others being financial difficulties, lack of child care, and time conflicts).

Coe (1985) conducted a study on 50 low-income Hispanic family members who use a health maintenance

organization (HMO) and a culturally relevant fee-for-service clinic. She found that Hispanic families preferred to pay for clinic services than receive the same services at almost no cost through their HMO coverage. The reason given for this is the culturally relevant services, including fluency in Spanish of workers, given at the clinic.

In a still more recent study, Malgady, Rogler, and Costantino (1987) looked at the issue of psychodiagnosis. They argue that the majority of clinicians are monolingual and white, and that this will cause an increasingly larger problem for mental health service delivery for Hispanics. They state further that "Even if unbiased assessment techniques can be developed, valid psychodiagnosis of Hispanic patients will remain illusory to the extent that clinicians are insensitive to the linguistic and cultural nuances of their clientele."

Thus, it appears that the barriers imposed by non-fluency in the English language continue to be a problem for Hispanic groups. The previous studies have demonstrated a definite connection between this problem and underutilization of health care services. The implications for the client's choice of ethnicity of



counselor will be discussed in chapter IV.

### Religion

Religion is one part of an immigrant's culture that one is not expected to change when coming to the United States. Unlike language, where there is great pressure to conform, religious freedom is a basic right of all Americans. Hispanic-Americans have looked at their religion as a means of obtaining spiritual support and a sense of belonging in a new culture.

#### Religion among Cuban-Americans

Religion is an important aspect of the Cuban-American experience. Roman Catholicism is, by far, the dominant religion, but there are also aspects of Protestantism and, to a lesser degree, the Jewish faith is represented. There is also an influence of African cult religions.

The Cuban Catholic experience is described by Boswell and Curtis (1983) as being more personal or communal than institutional. A Cuban's affiliation, association and identification with the church's formal structure is often different than those of other Catholics in the United States. The personalistic character of religious practice that evolved in Cuba is evident in the importance given to the saints and the

Virgin Mary. The saints are seen as close friends to whom a person can confide and seek comfort and support from life's daily stresses. This relationship often takes place outside the church structure and is indicative of Blutstein's (1971) estimate that as few as 10% of the population in Cuba attended mass on a regular basis.

Plazas (1983) states that the Cuban society was very secular, and for the most part, the church was left for the women and children. In the United States, however, men have become more attached to their families in terms of their activities, and the church has become a place of worship for a people for whom religious expression is now also a form of anti-communism and solidarity against Castro.

The benefits provided by the church have been numerous. The Catholic Church has served Cuban-Americans as an important spiritual foundation, offering emotional security and a sense of identity during a period of great stress, trauma, and confusion. For others, the church has provided support and assistance through its various agencies and sponsored programs. The church has also provided educational opportunities and alternatives to many Cuban-American

parents who prefer that their children attend Catholic schools. Garcia (1982) attributes this preference to the fact that, in Cuba, the public school system was oriented primarily toward education of the poor. This is also indicative of the negative impression held by many Cuban-Americans toward the public school system in the United States.

There has been some recent evidence of the declining domination of Catholicism among Cuban Americans. Rogg and Cooney (1980) state that the preference for the Catholic faith decreased from 91.5% to 78.3% among Cubans in West New York, while those with no particular religious preference increased from 1.2% to 11.3%. Also, attendance rates for church dropped. The number of those attending church at least once a month went from 79% to 47.1%, while those who never attended increased from 5% to 19.6%. However, three-fourths of those surveyed indicated that religion was very important in their lives. Any explanation for these declines would be speculative, but Boswell and Curtis (1983) come up with several possibilities:

First, it is possible that they are being influenced by the lower participation levels of non-Spanish Americans. Second, the percentage of practicing Catholics has declined as the Cuban American population has become more

representative of the total population of Cuba. Although only about 10 percent of the total population in pre-Castro Cuba attended mass regularly. the percentage of practicing Catholics was over-represented in the first waves of immigration after the 1959 revolution... Three, Castro's efforts to purge Cuba of religion may have reduced the religiosity of some Cuban immigrants, especially those who are recent arrivals (p.129)

Cuban-American Protestants and Jews make up a small proportion of the population of Cubans in the United States. Rogg and Cooney (1980) found that in 1968 and 1979 respectively, the percentage of Protestant Cubans in West New York was 6.9% and 6.1%. The Jewish population is even smaller with Boswell and Curtis (1983) estimating about 4000 residing in the North Shore area of Miami Beach, the area of their largest concentration.

Santeria, an Afro-Cuban cult faith that combines elements of Roman Catholicism and other European influences with ancient African tribal beliefs, is the last major religion found among Cubans. Santeria includes theological beliefs, magical and medical practices, detailed systems of rituals, and a recognized group of priests called santeros. For today's Cuban Americans, Santeria may represent a belief of last resort. Diaz (1980) found that whereas only 1.2% of

households reported practicing Santeria, 7.1% of the respondents in Miami and 23.5% of the respondents in Union City said they would use a santero if they felt they needed help. It appears that one of the more attractive aspects of Santeria is its function as a mental health care system.

#### Religion among Puerto Ricans.

Like most areas of the Spanish empire, Puerto Rico became a predominantly Roman Catholic colony. Fitzpatrick (1971) describes the communities that were created as mixtures of religion and people. Being religious was not perceived in terms of adherence to the organized church, as it is in the United States. A person in the United States is Catholic because he/she is affiliated with the church and identifies with its structures. In Puerto Rico, religious practice is marked by the quality of "personalismo," a pattern of close and intimate relationships. The individual perceives religious life as a network of personal relationships with the saints, the Blessed Virgin, and Jesus Christ. He/She looks on these as close friends and prays, lights candles, and builds shrines to them. He/She expects them to deliver assistance and special favors as needed. This personal relationship with the

saints takes place outside the church and would continue even if the church were shut down. Ghali (1977) stresses that Puerto Rican Catholics are not often regular church goers but are very spiritual people and are very fond of processions, rituals, and pageantry. They often make promises to God and the saints for return of favors.

The traditional community makeup and personalistic nature of the Puerto Rican Catholic Church are ideas that Americans have difficulty understanding. When they come in contact with these Puerto Rican ideas, they usually try to change a person's beliefs to a more American way of thinking. This can sometimes be a source of stress to a new immigrant. Longres (1973) emphasizes this idea when he says that

Puerto Ricans are said to be non-materialistic, preferring spiritual achievement to material achievement. This may be the case. But how could it be otherwise after 500 years of Spanish and Catholic indoctrination, in which Puerto Ricans were offered rewards after death rather than during life?... Whether materialism is to be favored over spiritualism is an issue which the Puerto Rican people must resolve; however, the Puerto Rican people should not be exploited with the excuses that they do not want to improve themselves materially. The desires of a people are largely determined by the kinds of expectations and alternatives which they have had; and Puerto Ricans, simply have not had the alternatives for developing materialistic motives.

Mintz (1960) estimates that about 20% of the Island of Puerto Rico is Protestant, most members belonging to a Pentecostal sect. He attributes the attraction of the Pentecostal Church to the changes that took place as the economic system changed from one of "field" workers to one of "wage" workers in a more impersonal setting that stressed getting ahead through economic gains. Longress (1973) attests to this changing status when he remarks that "there is less and less work producing sugar, coffee, and tobacco, and more and more in large factories under foremen and corporation capitalists."

Like the Cubans, Puerto Ricans had a great deal of African spiritualism interjected into their belief system. Ghali (1977) describes the spiritualist as someone who will teach the Puerto Rican about the nature and cause of their problem and recommend treatment. This usually includes the calling of spirits, intercession of saints, application of herbs and potions, lighting of candles, and the exhortation to accept the illness as a test for spiritual development. Fitzpatrick (1971) describes the "curandero" as a man, or more frequently a woman (curandera) who has a wide

knowledge of folk practices of medicine. The personal attention of the curandero is often an important factor in people's lives. He or she is a substitute for the doctor. Probably the most valuable service of the spiritualists is the help they give in times of illness. Rogler and Hollingshead (1961) describe the importance of this in the traditional Puerto Rican community. If a Puerto Rican is mentally disturbed and goes to a mental hospital, he/she is labeled as "crazy." If, however, one goes to a spiritualist for assistance, the people will see him/her as suffering from evil spirits and be less hostile toward him/her. This, in the long run, can make a big difference in how well the person will recover from the illness.

#### Religion among Mexican-Americans.

The religious experience of the Mexican community revolves around the Catholic ideals introduced during the Spanish conquest. To fully understand the nature of these Catholic ideals, two aspects of its existence must be examined: (1) the changes that were incorporated into traditional Catholicism introduced by the Spanish, changes that allowed Catholicism to be accepted by the poor class of indian-mixed people that made up the majority of the population, and (2) the history of the



Catholic Church in the southwest area of the United states and its relationship with its Mexican-American people.

Ricard (1966) discusses the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the Catholicism which they incorporated in the new country. This religion was destructive to the natives because it saw them as inferior, and this destruction was seen as being God's will. The natives themselves, having viewed the arriving white Spaniards as being almost God-like, saw their people as inferior.

The turning point in this belief system was the apparition of the Virgin Mary to a young Indian boy who had been converted to Catholicism. The significance of this apparition is that the Virgin Mary is believed to be a uniquely Mexican symbol and appeared to an Indian, signifying their existence as humans worthy of salvation. The "Virgin de Guadalupe," as she is called, became the patron saint of the Mexican and a national patriotic symbol. She is also the symbol of liberation for Mexicans in the United States.

Mirande (1985) describes the dilemma of the Mexican-Americans in the southwest area of the United States. The numbers indicate that 90% of all Mexican-Americans are Catholic, and they comprise

one-fourth of the total Catholic population in the southwest. Despite this fact, the church has not used its influence to assist Mexican-Americans in obtaining equality. There is also a huge disparity between the wealth of the church and the extreme poverty in the barrios. Much of this is due to the poor representation of the Mexican-American in the church. Soto (1979) states that the number of Mexican-American priests is very small. There are about 200 in the 58,000 plus priests in the United States, and there are only a handful of Mexican-American bishops. In contrast, the Irish make up 17% of the Catholic population in the United States, but they comprise 35% of the priests and 50% of the bishops.

The Chicano movement in the southwest during the 1960's provided much of the impetus for a confrontation with the Catholic church. Part of the movements position was to gain control over institutions that played a role in their lives. The church was the last institution to be looked at due to its position as a religious body. However, when it was, it came under a great deal of attack. A group called "Catolicos por La Raza" came out with a statement (1972) expressing that

...it is our fault if the Catholic Church in the South west is no longer a Church of blood, a Church of struggle, a Church of sacrifice...We can't love our people without demanding better housing, education, health, and so many other needs we share in common.

In a word, we are demanding that the Catholic Church practice what it preaches...And remember that the history of our people is a history of the Catholic Church in America. We must return our Church to the poor. (p. 392)

Despite the confrontations of this era, the southwest hierarchy remains largely unresponsive to Mexican-Americans. Mirande (1985) states that there are several factors contributing to this:

First, it is important to note that the United States is a Protestant nation and that Catholicism has been a minority religion in this country. The United States was founded by and for Protestants... Exploitation and discrimination against Chicanos has therefore occurred not only because of their race but because of their religious affiliation. Second, Chicanos have been subjected to a subordinate and dependent relation within the southwest Anglo church, serving as a minority within a minority institution. Third, racial, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity within the United States generally make solidarity and mobilization difficult. Could Chicanos unite with other Catholics, or is such unity precluded by racial, ethnic and class differences! (p.144)

We can see that generalities can be made about the religious idealism of Hispanics. The culture has a very personalistic view of religion and there is a strong faith. However, the differences between Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans are evident, and these

differences are just as important to understand when working with an Hispanic individual.

Religious beliefs and folk medicine among Hispanics.

More recent studies have found that many Hispanic Americans continue to be strongly religious and to use folk medicine to help alleviate physical and mental problems. Castro, Furth, and Karlow (1984) studied the health beliefs of Mexican, Mexican-American, and Anglo-American women. They found that Mexican and Mexican-American women expressed mild acceptance of Mexican folk beliefs. The less acculturated subjects reported having a somewhat lower sense of responsibility and control over their health, as characterized by greater acceptance of powerful external agents as determinants of health outcomes. Results suggest that women of Mexican origin have a dual system of belief that tends to weaken but not disappear with increasing acculturation.

A similar study by Meredith (1984) also described mild components of the Mexican-American ethnic medical system. In this study, however, fewer subjects adhered to the system. He attributed this to the relatively

high socioeconomic status and acculturation level of the subjects.

Ruiz (1985) conducted a study which examined the cultural barriers to effective medical care among patients of Hispanic-American background. He found evidence of these barriers in all three major Hispanic groups in the United States. In Puerto Rican patients, he found a culturally related syndrome with trembling, seizure-like convulsions, and semi-consciousness with no physical pathology. He suggests that the syndrome is a psychological expression of anger and/or libidinal conflicts, and that a doctrine of spiritism ingrained in the Puerto Rican culture functions as a barrier to medical management in its view of illness as supernaturally related. In Mexican-American patients, he found barriers to medical care due to three specific folk beliefs concerning the causes of medical problems: (1) the dislodging of the fontanel caused by an infants fall, (2) illness associated with the concepts of evil eye, and (3) illness caused by an upsetting experience. In the work conducted on Cuban-Americans, he found a strong belief in the use of witchcraft to fight disease. Often, it was preferred to medical treatment.

In a study of the awareness of Hispanic

cultural issues in the health care setting, da Silva (1984) reports that for psychosomatic and "supernatural" ailments, a family member, neighbor, or folk healer is ordinarily consulted because it is believed that an Anglo physician would not know how to treat these conditions. However, most cases of infectious diseases, broken bones and serious wounds are taken to a physician. If the established health system does not satisfy the patients or their families, they may return to a folk practitioner or use both systems together.

In a related but somewhat different study, Caraveo-Ramos, Francis, and Odgers (1985) examined the attitudes of Mexican-American and Anglo-American college students toward psychologists and psychiatrists. They found that Mexican-Americans knew less about the differences between psychologists and psychiatrists and said they would prefer to discuss problems with a clergy member.

Continued acculturation of Hispanic-Americans to the religious and medical beliefs of the American majority will undoubtedly change some of the folk beliefs, weakening some and eliminating others. At this time, however, it appears that folk beliefs still play a significant role in the lives of Hispanic-Americans.

## Education

### Education among Cuban-Americans.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Report (1980), Cuban-Americans tend to be better educated than the total Hispanic population. The percentage of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans that have not attained 5 years of schooling is about 24% and 14% respectively. For Cuban-Americans the percentage is about 7%. In terms of completion of high school, approximately 35% of Mexican-Americans and 38% of Puerto Ricans qualify, while about 50% of Cuban-Americans have reached this level. Completion of college shows the same differences: approximately 4% for Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, and 12% for Cuban-Americans. These numbers indicate that Cuban-Americans occupy a middle position between the other major Hispanic groups and the non-Hispanics in the United States.

Much of the reason for these educational statistics has been the educational level of the Cubans that came to the United States in the early years of the Castro revolution. Wenk (1968) reported that about 60% of the Cuban sample that he studied during this period had been of professional, business, skilled or

semi-skilled background while in Cuba. Out of the total group, 80% had attended or completed more than an elementary school education.

More recent figures show that the importance of education has persisted in the United States with the second generation Cubans. As was mentioned in the section on religion, Cuban-Americans consider a Catholic education to be the best. Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh of the Miami Archdiocese (from Boswell and Curtis, 1983) has stated that during the 1982-83 school year, Hispanics (mostly Cuban) accounted for over 65% of the more than 19,000 students enrolled in the 30 primary and 8 secondary Catholic schools in Dade County. Despite the fact that tuition was as high as \$1450 per year in the secondary schools, some schools have immense waiting lists. The major problem faced at this time is meeting the demands for additional schools.

Despite the apparent success in the education of Cuban-Americans, there have been reports of deterioration in this area. Szapocznik (1980) states that second generation Cuban-Americans have not done as well as the first generation in the area of education. Youngsters who did some of their growing up in Cuba and later came to the United States appeared highly



motivated to continue their education. However, at present, the high school dropout rate seems to be growing rapidly for Cubans in the Miami area. Many youngsters have become involved in drugs and in antisocial behavior. Szapocznik attributes these problems to difficulties in adjustment and the weakening of the family bonds.

#### Education among Puerto Ricans.

Education in the Puerto Rican community has had many problems. It has become increasingly clear that a major reason for the failure of the schools rests in cultural differences. The school system presupposes a cultural style and preparation which are different from those which characterize the Puerto Rican.

Chess (1967) conducted a study that was important in demonstrating how culturally acquired patterns could determine a child's performance in the educational setting. The study sample used two groups of three year olds from stable families, one group of 136 children of educated, middle class, American parents, and the other of 95 children of unskilled and semi-skilled Puerto Rican working class parents. The children were treated for the effects of child rearing practices on cognitive performance. The findings support the hypothesis that

the differences in functioning were not due to the rejection by parents or deficiencies in the children. Instead, it may be a consequence of the total socialization patterns in which the child was reared.

Ghali (1977) brings up the problem of conflicting cultures and the resentment felt by the Puerto Rican youth toward those of the dominant culture. Reactions are often expressed as negative behavior at home and at school. The educational system, she states, is not working for Americans, much less for Spanish speaking youngsters.

These problems were examined by Longres (1973) when he drew up several statements for social change:

1. Assure that the educational system of the United States is held accountable for the success of the Puerto Rican students.
2. Provide qualitative education at all levels.
3. Assure sufficient bilingual and bicultural programs at all levels in order to best meet the educational needs of all Puerto Ricans.
4. Help to increase state and federal financial assistance for Puerto Rican students.
5. Insure that existing technical schools, colleges, and universities do not discriminate against Puerto Ricans in their admissions and educational policies. (p.21)

It is hoped that this compensatory education and focus on culture will allow the Puerto Rican to develop with a sense of identity that will allow him/her to be successful as a minority in the United States.

Education among Mexican-Americans.

The inability of the educational system to deal with Mexican-Americans is evident in the data taken from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1971) and the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1979). For every 100 Mexican-American children who enter the first grade, only 60 graduate from high school. This compares with 67 out of every 100 blacks and 86 out of every 100 Anglo-American youths. Among those who stay in school and reach the twelfth grade, 3 out of 5 will be reading below that grade level. Of persons of Mexican origin 25 years and older, 23.9% have completed less than five years of school and only 34.9% have completed 4 years of high school or more. The corresponding figures for the total U.S. population are 3.6% and 65.9% respectively. In the statistical manual entitled "The Condition of Education" (1982), the figures show little difference from the above numbers. When examining high school graduation and college enrollment, respectively, as a percentage of the racial population, the numbers for each group are: 82.5% and 26.4% for Whites, 69.7% and 19.4% for Blacks and 53.7% and 16.1% for Hispanics. These numbers are even worse when you consider that (1) the figure for Mexican-Americans is probably worse than

for Hispanics in general, due to the fact that they are less educated than other Hispanic groups, and (2) the over-all numbers are based on Mexicans who enter school, and many, especially the large number of those who are in the country illegally, never begin school.

Lopez and Flores (1976) describe this gap between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans as being even greater at higher educational levels. Nearly half of the American students who begin first grade eventually entered college. On the other hand, only one in four Mexican-American students made it to the college level.

In a comprehensive study of the educational system in the southwest done by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1974), a series of barriers to equal educational attainment for Mexican-Americans were isolated. The findings and recommendations in the reports indicated that:

Chicanos are instructed in a language other than the one with which they are most familiar.

The curriculum consists of textbooks and courses which ignore the Mexican American background and heritage.

Chicanos are usually taught by teachers whose own culture and background are different and whose training leaves them ignorant and insensitive to the educational needs of Chicano students.

And when Chicano pupils seek guidance from counselors they rarely can obtain it and even

more rarely from a Mexican American counselor.  
(p. 68)

The commission goes on to conclude that the findings reflect a systematic failure of the educational process, which not only ignores the educational needs of Mexican Americans but also suppresses their culture and stifles their hopes and ambitions. Having established these conditions that assure failure, the schools then judge the performance of the Mexican-American students.

Recent evidence that the commission's findings concerning the education of Mexican-American students by teachers whose own culture and background are different can be seen in the figures on racial/ethnic distribution of full-time teachers in public elementary schools in the states most populated by Mexican-Americans. Only 11% of the teachers were of Hispanic origin. On the other hand, almost 82% of the teachers were White.

Arevalo and Brown (1983) assert that failures of the educational system in dealing with Mexican-Americans constitute a social problem called "Educational Abuse." They attempt to change the focus of the problem from one of individual pathology, which suggests individual change, to one of social pathology, which suggests prevention and societal change.

Mirande (1985) attempts to do just this when he describes the problems in the educational system as it pertains to the Mexican-American. He discusses possible alternative systems. The three models of education are (1) traditional, (2) liberal, and (3) Chicano alternative.

In the traditional model, there is an implied view of the Mexican language and culture as being inferior. A predominant function has been to deny the culture and language. The Mexican can be incorporated into society if he/she rejects one's culture and abandons the native tongue, but this still will not guarantee definite advancement. Not only are teachers, counselors, and administrators almost exclusively Anglo-American, but the curriculum reflects the values of the dominant society. The culture of the Mexican-American is held responsible for many of the problems held by its children, i.e. providing low stimulation in regard to motivation and fulfillment, while suppressing creativity and individuality. The family is an authoritarian, male dominated structure where the needs of the individual are subjected to those of the group. Parents, thus, are seen as their own childrens' worst enemy. The school's function is to

counterbalance the negative parental influence. Therefore, Mexican-American children must pay a heavy cost for success in school--alienation from their family and culture.

The liberal model of education emerged as a response to the criticisms of the traditional model. It recognizes the failure of the traditional school system and goes part way toward finding solutions. These solutions focus the change on the Mexican-American child instead of the school or society. If the child is to succeed in the educational system, he/she must acquire the skills and values necessary to compete equally with the Anglo American child. Two basic assumptions of the liberal model are (1) minorities share a common human nature and are socializable to the conditions of society, and (2) their low position and general inability to compete reflects unequal opportunity and inadequate socialization to whatever is required to succeed with American society. The model sees Mexican-Americans as disadvantaged or deprived, not as innately inferior.

Some of the major problems with the liberal model are the attention given to "parental involvement," which becomes a schooling term and not actually

followed, and the token approval given to bilingual and bicultural education. Programs are usually run by and for the benefit of tenured Anglo-American faculty.

The Chicano alternative follows a true bilingual and bicultural model of education that stresses the culture and history of the Mexican-American. It wants to change the school from one of traditional stability to one of change and reform. It also must be a system run to serve the needs of the Mexican-American community and the Mexican-American family. Ideally, parental involvement is seen in all aspects of the school such as planning, curriculum development, decision-making, etc.

In a recent study, Saldate, Mishra, and Medina (1985) investigated the long term impact of a bilingual education program on the academic achievement of 31 Mexican-American children who were followed from the first grade through the third grade. The subjects were compared to 31 Mexican-American children in regular education who were matched for their verbal ability and language acquisition. At the end of the third year, subjects in bilingual instruction outperformed controls in Wide Range Achievement Tests in reading and math. The authors state that the findings suggest that language instructions based on a sequence of listening,



speaking, reading, and writing facilitate achievement in both English and Spanish.

The problem with this type of model is that it holds certain assumptions about society; assumptions which have been questioned. Galicia (1973) defines these when he says the Chicano alternatives

are alternative institutions reforming existing concepts of school. They have not challenged the basic notion of school. They rather feel that schools are necessary but that Chicanos must control them. This implies a superficial analysis of the function of school, if the desire by Chicano educational reformers is to break American class structure down. This notion (a) assumes that schools can reform society and (b) accepts the classroom as a viable learning situation. (p.14)

Whether these assumptions are true or not, the Mexican-American continues to battle the obstacles to obtaining an education that is truly equal and fair.

It is evident that the major Hispanic groups in the United States have had sometimes similar and sometimes different problems in dealing with the educational systems of the United States. The next chapter will discuss the implications of the information given here for the therapist involved with Hispanics.

## CHAPTER IV

### Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of this chapter is to reach some conclusions from the information gathered in this thesis, and to discuss the implications of these conclusions for the therapist who is involved in counseling Hispanics. The author will also give recommendations and suggestions for future research.

#### Conclusions

Based on the findings of the studies reviewed in this thesis, several conclusions can be drawn about Hispanics and the Hispanic family. The conclusions are:

1. In the traditional Hispanic family, there are definite divisions in the role demand of each sex. These divisions come from a predisposition to see the male as superior. He is the ultimate authority in the family, while the female is expected to follow his initiative in all decisions. The male's role is to provide for the family. He is expected to work and is responsible for how his income will be spent. The female's role is that of housewife and primary

caretaker. She is responsible for insuring that the home is run according to the wishes of her husband.

2. The Hispanic family unit is characterized by a great degree of closeness and loyalty among its members. The needs of the family are given more importance than the needs of any particular individual. Achievement and success are measured according to the contribution made to the family. The family is also turned to for support in times of stress or when problems arise. Outside agencies are rarely looked to first for support.

3. The Spanish language has been maintained in use in the United States by Hispanic immigrants. The native language has also become the primary language of use in many Hispanic homes. This phenomenon has caused some problems as later generations began to lose the Spanish language and have been unable to communicate with older family members. It has also caused problems for school-aged children in dealing with educational systems that are not bilingual.

4. Education of Hispanic-Americans has had its share of problems due to the difficulties associated with assimilation to the mainstream American culture. Language, as mentioned, is probably the biggest obstacle

in preventing Hispanic children from completely melding into the American school system. There is also the problem of teachers whose own culture and background are different, leaving them ignorant and insensitive to the educational needs of Hispanics.

5. The religious characteristics and ideas of Hispanics are different than that of the mainstream American culture. Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion, but more important than this is the fact that Hispanics have a very personal view of religion. Religious figures are thought to be able to communicate with and intervene in the lives of humans. There is also, due to the influence of the African cult religions, a sense of the magical and mystical.

6. Each of the Hispanic groups mentioned in this thesis has a distinct cultural history. There are, therefore, obvious differences between the members of each group, and treating all Hispanics as if they possess the same background and characteristics will result in difficulties.

### Implications

The conclusions listed in the previous section have certain implications for the counselor or therapist working with Hispanic clients. Following are the

implications for each section discussed in the thesis.

Implications concerning male/female sex roles of Hispanics.

1. Marital counseling and individual counseling with Hispanics are bound to be full of problems associated with the traditional male/female roles. This is especially true as the time spent in the United States increases and the client becomes more aware of the differences in male/female roles among Anglo-Americans.

2. The Hispanic female, as she begins to assert herself, may have to overcome feelings of inadequacy. She may also feel guilt, especially if her new assertive role means full-time employment which reduces the time spent with her husband and children. Some Hispanic females may actually have difficulty asserting themselves and may require services in assertiveness training.

3. The Hispanic male may experience feelings of anger and resentment toward his wife as she takes a more dominant role in society and the home. He may begin to feel threatened and respond in a number of different ways--hostility, depression, apathy, etc.

4. Because of the strong sex role stereotypes

held by Hispanics and the respect given to older members of society, an older male therapist may be seen more positively in the role of authoritarian leader, while a female therapist will conflict with the cultural values of appropriate sex role behavior. This will be especially true if the female therapist is very directive in therapy style.

Implications concerning the Hispanic family.

5. The Hispanic family, because of its closeness, affords the therapist an instrument with which to deal with problems. It can also, however, be a source of misunderstanding to the therapist who does not keep in mind that when dealing with an individual, the family should be kept in touch with the treatment and incorporated, as much as possible, into the care. The therapist must also keep in mind that the family may be larger than the nuclear group.

6. The therapist should be careful to investigate the significant extended family members in the client's life, recognizing that relatives outside of the immediate family may often be significant in the cause of the problem and its solution. If the client's extended family lacks cohesion and integration, the therapist should be aware that this is atypical of

members of this ethnic group and may therefore be a point of significant stress. Furthermore, the complete lack of an extended family should be viewed as a greater source of stress than a similar situation in an Anglo-American family.

#### Implications concerning language use by Hispanics

7. The issue of acculturation or assimilation is important to the understanding of the dilemma facing Hispanics in the United States. The counselor has to be aware of these problems which are being faced by the client, and how the client is adapting to the mainstream American culture. Language is critical in this attempt to assimilate, and the counselor should be able to speak fluent Spanish, at least with clients who are only marginally acculturated and speak little English. The sharing of the Spanish language will also facilitate the feelings of trust and companionship that the client will hold toward the counselor. Therapists who do not speak Spanish and are working with bicultural and unacculturated Hispanics who prefer the Spanish language may interpret symptoms differently from bilingual therapists.

#### Implications concerning the education of Hispanics.

8. The education of Hispanics has been characterized by some major problems in terms of poor enrollment and large dropout rates. The blame for this is mixed, with Hispanic groups focusing the trouble on the Anglo-American culture's insensitivity to their cultural traits, and the Anglo-American culture tending to see the problems as indicative of poor parenting and cultural rigidity on the part of the Hispanic. The solution to this problem is more difficult for the counselor to tackle, but knowing of its existence and the added stress that Hispanics are under due to the cycle of poor education and poor employment will allow him/her to assist the client in making the needed choices to improve his/her educational and occupational status.

Implications concerning religious beliefs of Hispanics

9. The area of religion is very important to understand because of the Hispanic characteristic of using the saints and other unseen forces as both the cause of, and the solution to, their problems. Although this type of thinking is based on the Hispanics religious education and upbringing and may be considered quite normal, a counselor who is unaware of the cultural



differences may attribute such ideas to delusional systems of thought related to psychosis.

### Recommendations

Looking at each section discussed in this thesis, there are specific recommendations which can be made for the therapist involved in counseling Hispanic clients. The author will deal with each section separately and bring in appropriate references as examples of the recommendations mentioned.

### Recommendations concerning male/female sex roles in Hispanics.

1. The therapist should recognize that some Hispanic females may actually have difficulty asserting themselves and may need to learn methods to increase assertiveness. Boulette (1976), in his studies with Mexican-American females, observed that many Hispanic women respond to stress by crying, praying, and enduring. They attempt to conceal their problems from others and will not openly discuss their needs. He states that the role of the therapist is to help the client explore factors inhibiting assertion. The therapist can also model assertive behavior and give information, such as the availability of child care centers and women's groups. Role playing or behavioral

rehearsal can also be used to test out new assertive behaviors.

2. The Hispanic male may need to have therapy revolve around acceptance of the new female role and an understanding that it does not imply a weakness or unmanliness on the part of the man. Newton (1978) states that the male will often hide these feelings of insecurity for fear of showing his vulnerability. He describes this problem as a major reason why mental health services are underutilized. Desiring to maintain a self-image of strength, the man will wait and struggle with a problem by himself or possibly with a family member. Once the man decides to go for help, pride or shame become crucial concepts. He needs to be assured of confidentiality on the part of the therapist.

3. In cases where the cultural barriers due to sex roles interfere with counseling, such as when a female therapist is not viewed in a positive authoritarian role, a referral may be necessary to get the client involved in the therapy.

Recommendations concerning the Hispanic family.

Because of the closeness of the Hispanic family, the members should not be excluded from the therapy situation when they are available and willing to

participate. Galbis (1977) and Padilla, Ruiz, and Alvarez (1975) discuss how the family is central not only to the preservation of cultural values, but also to the establishment and continuation of an effective therapeutic alliance. For many Hispanics, going for treatment is a family affair. Thus, if the family is asked to wait outside while the therapist treats the client, the effectiveness of the therapeutic encounter will be at risk.

5. If the client is very close to another family member, this person can be used to help in therapy. Ramirez (1973) states that family therapy offers great hope with Hispanics because of the importance given to kinship ties. A close family member can, if the goals and methods of therapy are explained, serve as a strong co-therapist. Christensen (1977) describes a similar approach when he talks about working with a member of the family as a consultant who will, in turn, work with the client.

6. Another technique to use when involved in family therapy with Hispanics is the description of the "family group constellation" described by Pollack and Menackel (1971). In this method of therapy, several families combine with several counselors to discuss

family dynamics, and the different family groups help one another resolve their conflicts. Counselors will also meet individually with each family member to improve communication skills to be used in the group meetings.

7. When involved in a parent-child relationship, the therapist needs to be cautious due to the Hispanic culture's emphasis on respect of elders. Canino and Canino (1980) bring up a word of caution in this area. When the relationship between parents and children is strained, the therapist should serve as a bridge. If he allies himself with the youngsters to defend them from what appears to be inappropriate parental control, the therapist will only alienate himself from the parents. This will ultimately serve to aggravate the problems between the parents and the child. Parental authority cannot be dismissed or attacked.

Recommendations concerning language and acculturation in Hispanics.

8. It would be best, when working with marginally acculturated clients of Hispanic origin, to be bilingual to effectively deal with the issues. Padilla (1981) describes the importance of skill at labeling a problem and assisting the client in

interpreting their emotional problems in terms of the clients own world view. Being able to do this with the right language brings conflict to a conscious level. Ruiz, Casas, and Padilla (1977) and Ruiz and Padilla (1977) state that without the rudiments of verbal communication between therapist and client, the process of treatment is, at best, slow and inaccurate. Complete understanding of the clients world view and experiences can only be achieved with adequate linguistic tools. It is not only the Spanish speaking client who must be considered, but also the bilingual/bicultural client.

9. In terms of a client's preference for counselor ethnicity, it is recommended that the acculturation level of the client be taken into account. The extensive research on client preference for counselor has been done almost exclusively with White and Black subjects. Several studies with Hispanics, however, indicate that the degree of acculturation of the client to the American culture may be a determinant of this choice. Vasquez (1975), in a study with Puerto Rican students who knew a counselor's background when given a choice, preferred help from a counselor of the same ethnic background and with a similar degree of ethnic orientation.

A more recent study conducted by Sanchez and Atkinson (1983) with Mexican-Americans found that preference for counselor ethnicity was related to cultural commitment. Subjects strongly committed to the Mexican-American culture expressed the greatest preference for an ethnically similar counselor.

Another study done by Reyes (1985) found similar results. This study was conducted on Puerto Rican college students. The counselor preference for acculturated and non-acculturated students differed for problems of an academic-vocational nature.

Non-acculturated students preferred the Puerto Rican male counselor, but acculturated students had no preference for counselor for help with this type of problem. For help with problems of a personal-health-psychological nature, acculturated students still expressed no preference for counselor, and non-acculturated students still preferred a counselor of the same ethnic background. In this case, however, the non-acculturated students chose a Puerto Rican female rather than a Puerto Rican male. Reyes views this as an extension of the cultural belief regarding the role of the mother as the central affectional figure in the family.

In the case of family social problems, acculturated students preferred the Puerto Rican female. Reyes again states that "the switch from the no preference selection to the Puerto Rican female counselor suggests that despite their more Americanized ways and their greater or equal comfort with counselors who are not Hispanic, acculturated students maintain ties to some traditional beliefs." She goes on to point out that the literature indicates that where matters of family and child rearing practices are concerned, traditional beliefs remain stable despite many years of Americanization (Fernandez-Marina, Maldonado-Sierra, and Trent, 1958; Christensen, 1975; Fitzpatrick, 1971; Wagenheim, 1975).

Recommendations concerning education of Hispanics.

10. Group therapy has been used fairly successfully in the area of Hispanic education to facilitate learning, and with troubled Hispanic youth to increase acceptance of self as a minority. Maes and Rinaldi (1974) conducted a study with elementary school Mexican-Americans in which they perceived group counseling as particularly effective for furthering children's skills in expressing their feelings in

English, stimulating self-respect and pride in Hispanic culture, and clarifying personal values. Herrera and Sanchez (1976) conducted groups based on behavioral principles. Members were asked to define behavioral goals, and were taught relaxation techniques. Group discussions assist clients in applying behavioral principles to their goals. Rueveni (1971), in a study with Puerto Ricans ranging from 15 to 31 years of age who had been labeled destructive and aggressive and had been truant from school, found that free expression of negative feelings and bombardment with positive feedback in the group setting decreased truancy and aggressiveness. Also, the members self-reports about the group experience were quite positive.

Recommendations concerning religious beliefs of Hispanics.

11. Due to the Hispanic cultural characteristic of having a close and personal relationship with the saints while trying to fight off evil forces, it is probably best for the therapist to not be too confrontive of these religious ideas. The ideas may not be a sign of a psychosis but a legitimate cultural expression. Instead, the therapist may deal with it more appropriately by not refuting the claims, but



instead, working with the client on specific maladaptive behaviors or thoughts.

### Suggestions for Future Research

The area of Hispanic counseling has attracted a fair amount of research, but because of the misconceptions that always exist about minority groups, the general population still needs to learn a great deal about Hispanics. This thesis has reviewed the major cultural factors that are characteristic of the three largest Hispanic groups in the United States. The implications for the counselor are many, and being aware of the culture and background of Hispanics can lead to increased success in communication and understanding. The future of counseling with Hispanics is uncertain, as is evidenced by the history of misinformation, but one thing is certain, we need more information to improve services. This section will give several areas of suggested research which the author feels will be relevant and important in the future. The suggestions for future research are:

1. In the area of male/female sex roles, future research should center on the effects the changing roles for women will have on the Hispanic family. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that because of the

poverty level of the average Hispanic family, the woman may be forced to immediately enter the work force. This will invariably effect the entire household, and studies should focus on all members--wife, husband, children, older adults, etc.

2. The Hispanic family has had some problems as it has become more Americanized. Future research in this area should focus on how therapy with the Hispanic family can help the members of the older generation understand the changes that are occurring with the second and third generation members. The younger generations will also need to develop some understanding of the cultural values held by the parents and grandparents, and therefore, researchers should focus their studies on the differences between the generations as the family becomes more assimilated into the mainstream American culture.

3. The language use of Hispanics can sometimes be confusing. Depending on the level of acculturation, the person may speak mostly Spanish, mostly English, or a mixture of each with either one being dominant. Research in the area of language use by Hispanics should focus on (a) how differences in fluency in the Spanish language effect the relationship of family members of

different generations and the consequences of this for the therapist involved with a multi-generational Hispanic family, and (b) the importance of a therapist being bilingual/bicultural to more effectively deal with Hispanic clients. This issue may have very important consequences for many community mental health centers in Hispanic neighborhoods who are mixed in their opinions on the need for Hispanic counselors.

4. The education of Hispanic youths has been deficient in many areas. Future research should look at (a) the importance of having positive role models in schools with Hispanic students, including Hispanic teachers and administrators, and (b) the difficulties encountered by Hispanic youth due to language problems and differences in expectations by parents--especially for Hispanic females whose parents may believe that education is not as important because they will eventually be taken care of by a husband.

5. Research on the religious beliefs of Hispanics should focus on the therapy session and the misconceptions and misrepresentations which may be picked up by the counselor or therapist who is not fully familiar with the cultural characteristics of the Hispanic's religious ideas.

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The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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