Puerto Rican adolescents and helpers view the helping experience: A comparison of the populations and their perspectives

Lynskey, John Andrew, D.S.W.

Columbia University, 1987

Copyright ©1987 by Lynskey, John Andrew. All rights reserved.

D.S.W. converted to Ph.D. in 2011
ABSTRACT

PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENTS AND HELPERS VIEW THE HELPING EXPERIENCE

A COMPARISON OF THE POPULATIONS AND THEIR PERSPECTIVES

John Andrew Lynskey

This is an exploratory, descriptive study that examines perceptions of the helping experience taking the views of a group of Puerto Rican adolescents from Newark, New Jersey and comparing them with the views of a group of adult helpers also from Newark, New Jersey. The study samples are selected using a purposive, non-random approach. A major purpose of the study is to examine the impact that the ethnic background of a helper might have on congruence or dissonance of perception with a group of Puerto Rican teenagers. With this idea in mind the helper sample is quota selected yielding roughly even numbers of Black, Latino and White helpers.

A major assumption of the study is that congruence of views between a helper and client will have a positive impact on the helping experience.

The study first describes the demographics and perceptions of its adolescent subjects. It then goes on to describe the demographics and perceptions of its adult helpers employing tests of significance to do inter-group comparisons. Finally the demographics and perceptions of the Puerto Rican adolescent subjects in the study are compared with each of the adult groups.

The study hypothesizes that the ethnic background of a helping person will have an impact on congruence or dissonance of views with an
adolescent group. More particularly the study hypothesizes that the views of Puerto Rican adolescents will be closer to the views of helpers of their own ethnic background or at least to helpers of a minority background and further away from the views of non-minority helpers.

An instrument using both scaled and open-ended items was developed based on an operationalized definition of the helping experience. Data elicited through the instrument is analyzed using frequencies, chi-square and tests of significance. Qualitative material, which is used supportively relative to the central issues of the study, is analyzed using an inspection technique.

Outcomes suggest that the Puerto Rican adolescents in the study feel more positively about a helping experience than do any of the adult groups. They tended to be closer to the Latinos helpers than to the Black or White helpers in their perceptions, particularly in negative self perceptions and perceptions of their communities. Generally, they were closer to Whites than to Blacks in their perceptions. Beyond these general findings an analysis of congruence and dissonance of views between the adolescents and adult helpers in this study presents a very mixed picture, suggesting that for the population in this study there is not a consistent, overriding pattern.

The study does establish that for its subjects the ethnicity of a helper is of importance but not of major importance in a helping experience. Competence and human qualities of warmth and caring are equally important.

The study strongly suggests the need for basic research having to do with a significant population at risk — Puerto Rican adolescents — and
the development of supportive counselling programs that are capable of reaching this population.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Research Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiology of the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Describing a Population at Risk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Ricans in New Jersey and in Newark</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Ricans and Helping Resources</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Lack of Connection</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables in the Helping Equation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity and Perception</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to be Addressed in the Study</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Hypotheses</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance for Social Work</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELEVANT THEORY</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and Cultural Considerations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican Children and Adolescents</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Theoretical Areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Expectation and Mutual Perception</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>STUDY PLAN AND METHODOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying Assumptions of the Study</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Major Concepts</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of the Study Population</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Instrument</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. THE ADOLESCENTS.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics of the Puerto Rican Adolescents</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Adolescents' Perception of the Helping Experience</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Worker — Helper</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Background of the Social Worker—Helper</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. THE HELPERS</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics of the Helpers</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Helpers' Perception of the Helping Experience</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship.</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Worker — Helper</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Background of the Helper</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship.</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Worker — Helper</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Background of the Helper</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Review of the Study</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Findings</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Adolescents</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Adult Helpers</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Comparison</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where They Meet</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of the Helping Experience</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Impressions</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contributions. ........................................... 204
Limitations. ............................................... 205
Recommendations for Further Study. ............... 207
Implications for Practice. ............................. 208

APPENDICES. ........................................... 211

BIBLIOGRAPHY. ......................................... 244
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Where does one begin to acknowledge all of those who have helped along the long journey of completing a dissertation? It seems almost an impossible feat to remember, let alone properly thank the many individuals who in minor and major ways have contributed to the completion of this study. Recognizing these difficulties nevertheless we feel strongly the need to attempt this pleasurable but somewhat poignant task.

First and foremost I wish to thank Professor Shirley Jenkins, my advisor, for her endless patience and support "over the long haul" of completing this dissertation. For clarifying things when they became muddled, for supporting me when I needed it, for "cutting me loose" when I needed that, for encouraging persistence, for helping me to see research in general and my research in particular in a new light — for these things and many others she has my sincerest gratitude.

All of my professors in the Columbia University School of Social Work Doctoral program contributed directly or indirectly to the study by stimulating my awareness of social work as an area of scholarly endeavor. In particular I wish to thank Professor Samuel Miller, who encouraged my exploration of unmet needs in the area of community mental health and Professor Howard Polsky who first set me on the path of going directly to populations — such as the adolescent population in this study — and discovering through them what unmet needs actually exist. Professor Hope Leichter greatly stimulated my interest in non-verbal communication and in communication across class and culture — areas very important to my thinking in this study and Professor Jane Monroe helped me to realize that
statistics, after all, aren't really impossible.

A special note of thanks must go to Essie Bailey whose quiet warmth and encouragement saw me over many a difficult moment since the beginning of my doctoral work.

Special thanks too to Professor Jeffrey Slovak of Rutgers University in Newark for advice, consultation and support and to Professor Phyllis Peterman also of Rutgers University in Newark for acting as a one woman support system. Meg Kilduff, Ph.D. of the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Lou Marco of Rutgers in Newark provided invaluable technical assistance over a long period of time. John Roman of Newark too provided invaluable technical assistance and advice at the beginning of the research and Nina Rios Rivera, also of Newark, acted as a "gatekeeper" in helping us to gain entry to agencies serving the Puerto Rican community in Newark.

Our gratitude goes to Mildred Rivera who began the typing of the manuscript. Special thanks must go to Michael Petti who has handled the major part of the typing and clerical work. In addition to the typing, Michael has been a consistent source of support during the entire research effort.

To my family and friends, who have been so patient with me while I labored on the 'D' goes my heartfelt thanks.

Finally to all of those Puerto Rican adolescents who so freely and patiently participated in the study I give my sincerest thanks. Their spontaneity, eagerness and willingness to share made the research process memorable and alive.
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Agencies of Helper Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Settings Where Adolescent Subjects Had Contact with Helpers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Alpha Levels for Adolescents and Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Ethnic Identity by Birthplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>School Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Grade Placement by Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Family Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Status of Adolescent Scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Community Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Adolescents' Perception of their Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Relationship Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Adolescents' Perception of the Relationship Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Self-Perception Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Perceived Difference Between Puerto Rican Teenagers and Other American Teenagers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Problem Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Problem Areas and Percent of Adolescents Who Saw Helpers As Being Able to Assist with These Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Social Worker Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Adolescents' Perception of the Ideal Helper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Ethnic Background Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1 Ethnic Identity of the Helpers 130
5.2 Place of Residence by Ethnic Background 131
5.3 Previous Experience in Working with Puerto Rican Adolescents 133
5.4 Type of Setting by Ethnic Background 135
5.5 Type of Setting by Sex of Helper 135
5.6 Summary Table for Helper Variables 136
5.7 Status of Adult Scales 139
5.8 Adult Mean Responses to the Community Scale 141
5.9 Adult Perception of Puerto Rican Neighborhoods 144
5.10 Adult Mean Responses to the Relationship Scale 145
5.11 The Importance of Relationship 148
5.12 The Importance of Relationship to Puerto Rican Adolescents 149
5.13 Adult Mean Responses to the Self Perception Area 151
5.14 Perception of Difference Between Puerto Rican Adolescents and other American Teen-Agers 155
5.15 Adult Mean Responses to the Problem Scale 157
5.16 Problem Areas Where Intervention is Most Important 159
5.17 Adult Mean Responses to the Social Worker Area 161
5.18 Perception of Ideal Social Worker-Helper 164
5.19 Adult Mean Responses to the Ethnic Scale 166
5.20 Impact of Ethnic Background of Helper 171
5.21 Approaches of Puerto Rican Helpers 172

6.1 Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of Adolescents and Adults to the Community Scale using a t Test 175
6.2 Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of Adolescents and Adults to the Relationship Scale using a t Test 177
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of the Adolescents and Adults to Selected Items from the Self-Perception Area using a $t$ Test</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of the Adolescents and Adults to the Problem Scale using a $t$ Test</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of the Adolescents and Adults to Selected Items from the Social Worker Area using a $t$ Test</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of the Adolescents and Adults to the Ethnic Scale using a $t$ Test</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

Social work is a profession that concerns itself with populations at risk — populations that are, in a sense, in imminent danger. In imminent danger of becoming drug addicted, of falling into a condition of chronic poverty, of developing a mental illness, of going to jail, of dropping out of school — or simply in imminent danger of not living up to one's human potential. Incumbent upon social workers is to discover who these populations are, to define the degree of risk and to find a way of intervening. "At risk" suggests that not enough is being done about a situation and that as a result something calamitous is about to happen.

In this study Puerto Rican teenagers are defined as a population at risk. Gradually, over a period of years, this population has been "discovered," by the author. In the author's experience as a helper, it became apparent that Puerto Rican adolescents were generally not perceived as a group or population. There were troublesome individual Puerto Rican teenagers, but as a troubled "group" they were a largely ignored and abandoned population.

An impetus for the study was the need to understand better a population that was so obviously troubled and so easily ignored. Why was not this population more involved with helping resources? What happened with them when they were? What more could be done? To answer some of these questions the study examines the perceptions that a particular group of Puerto Rican adolescents in Newark, New Jersey have of being helped in some way.

However, in order to understand truly what a helping experience might
mean to a Puerto Rican teenager it was not enough to look simply at their view of it. It was also necessary to look at the view of the people who give help -- the helpers -- and compare the two.

Experience of the author as a social worker in the Newark community suggested that "being helped" for a minority youngster was often complicated by the fact that the helping person involved was of a different culture or ethnic background, or spoke a different language or came from a socio-economic background vastly different than the younger. In particular, the ethnic background of helpers was very often different than that of Puerto Rican teenagers. What did this particular difference do to the helping experience?

The study then is essentially an attempt to understand the impact of a helper's ethnicity on the helping experience when working with a minority adolescent.

The study seeks to add to our knowledge about a piece of the daily experience of an important population. In examining the involvement of Puerto Rican teenagers in the helping experience, in looking at the data that supports describing them as a significant population at risk, however, it is important not to lose sight of the larger picture -- a larger picture that includes the many strengths and positive qualities of Puerto Ricans in the mainland United States. Although much of Oscar Lewis' descriptive work concerning Puerto Ricans in New York and San Juan has been characterized as overly negative, he does describe many of these positive qualities in his book "La Vida" (1966) particularly when talking about the Rios family:
I am impressed by the strengths in this family. I am impressed by their fortitude, vitality, resilience, and ability to cope with problems which would paralyze many middle-class individuals. It takes a great deal of staying power to live in their harsh and brutalizing environment. They are a tough people, but they have their own sense of dignity and morality and they are capable of kindness, generosity and compassion. They share food and clothing, help each other in misfortune, take in the homeless and cure the ill. Money and material possessions, although important, do not motivate their major decisions. Their deepest need is for love, and their life is a relentless search for it (p. XXIX).

Twenty years after his book was first published the impression Lewis had of Puerto Rican families is still very apt and can easily be applied to many Puerto Rican families in Newark, New Jersey. Certainly this description fits many of the Puerto Rican adolescents who were subjects in this study.

Although some quantitative methods are utilized in the research this is essentially an exploratory, descriptive study that seeks to develop some insight about a poorly understood population and a particular piece of their reality — the helping experience.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1. Statement of the Research Problem

This is an exploratory study of how a particular group of Puerto Rican adolescents perceive the experience of being helped. At the same time the study examines how a group of Black, Latino\textsuperscript{1} and White helpers perceive the same experience. The study is interested in similarity and dissimilarity in the views of the two groups. In particular there is an interest in whether the ethnic background of a helping person somehow impacts on congruence or dissonance of view with a person being helped. Thus, the question is raised of whether the helping experience is perceived by a Puerto Rican adolescent in the same way as it is perceived by a Latino helper but in a different way than it is perceived by a White or Black helper. The study then, has several components: it examines the perceptions that a group of Puerto Rican teenagers have of the helping experience; it examines the views of a group of helpers, divided according to their ethnic background of the same experience; the study presentation allows for a comparison of views between adult groups as well as a

\textsuperscript{1} Throughout the study the term "Latino" refers to all helpers of Hispanic background.
discrete presentation of the views of each adult group. Finally, the study compares the views of the adolescent subjects with each adult group.

A major assumption in this study is that congruence of views between helper and client has a positive impact. In a field such as social work where "helping encounters" between people form a base for much of the activity, it would seem that the understanding of mutual perceptions is critical.

2. Etiology of the Study

The genesis of the ideas for this study lies in the author's interest in a particular population at risk - Puerto Rican adolescents - and the great disparity that exists between this population and helping resources. In attempting to understand the reasons for this disparity the variable of perception appears to be critical. How do Puerto Rican adolescents perceive the helping experience and is their perception similar or dissimilar from helpers? Would their perceptions be more similar to helpers of their own ethnic background? This is an important question since Puerto Rican adolescents are often involved with helpers not of their ethnic background. Furthermore, a person's perception of a helping experience -- whatever the influences on that perception might be -- would have an important impact on whether or not the experience was a positive one. From the inception of the study concerns were raised about congruence or dissonance of views between helper and client, the assumption being that congruence of views between these two groups would make for a more positive helping experience. Thus, a major thrust of the
study became not only to examine the perception of two groups but also to analyze congruence or dissonance in views between the groups. Beyond this a particular interest in the study has been to examine the possible impact that a helper's ethnic background would have on congruence or dissonance of views with a population of Puerto Rican adolescents.

Professional involvement as a social worker over a twenty year period made the author aware that Puerto Rican teenagers were a particularly troubled group. Although Puerto Rican teenagers are a population with problems similar to those experienced by other American teenagers, they have much less in the way of helping resources to turn to than the teenage population in the United States as a whole. The problems of Puerto Rican adolescents are further complicated by socioeconomic variables and a special kind of identity conundrum not experienced by most other American adolescents. This "conundrum" relates to a complex of racial-cultural-political-economic variables that are peculiar to the Puerto Rican experience in the United States, which will be discussed later in the study. Suffice it to say for now that this conundrum is important because of the way in which it complicates the already difficult struggle faced by Puerto Rican adolescents. It should be noted that the study is limited to Puerto Rican teenagers as represented by a Northeastern United States population, and the frame of reference is the Newark, New Jersey metropolitan area.
DATA DESCRIBING A POPULATION AT RISK

1. An Overview

Demographic data concerning Puerto Ricans in the United States varies from report to report and year to year. There is some question as to the reliability of Census data - on which many compilations are based - because of language and cultural barriers experienced during the 1980 Census. Various socioeconomic situations - absent fathers, children scattered with different relatives, etc., - make an accurate "counting" of a Puerto Rican population in the United States difficult. There is the added possibility that many individuals of Hispanic background "pass" as Puerto Rican because of the political safety this provides from deportation.

Additionally, many reports, including census reports, provide information on Hispanics but not subgroups. In this section data from the early 1960's through 1986 are given, although most of the material is based on demographic information drawn from 1979-81 data.

The weakness in the data having to do with a population of Puerto Ricans in the United States notwithstanding, there is compelling evidence that as a whole this is a population that could be described as being "at great risk." The report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights completed in 1976 clearly reaffirms previous smaller studies that Puerto Ricans in the United States are among our poorest and most depressed citizens (Puerto Ricans in the United States: An Uncertain Future, 1976).

As far back as the early 60's the data all describe a rather bleak picture. A statistical profile based on 1960 figures placed Puerto Ricans
on the lowest economic rung as well as indicating that they were the group with the youngest population. According to the National Puerto Rican Forum (in Cordasco and Bucchione, 1968, pp. 127-154), in the 1960's one of every two Puerto Ricans was considered to be below the poverty line. In 1960 only 13 percent of Puerto Rican men and women, 25 years of age and older, had completed either high school or more advanced education. More than half (53 percent) of Puerto Ricans in New York City at that time had less than an 8th grade education. By the early 1970's, as Wagenheim (1970, pp. 27-47) indicates, the general statistical picture had not dramatically changed. For example, he found that 24.1 percent of Puerto Rican families were headed by a woman compared to 11.6 percent of all United States families. Puerto Ricans continued to fare poorly in education in the 70's with 8.6 being the average number of school years completed. This is the average number of years completed by the average United States population in 1940. In 1970 among all Puerto Ricans in the United States ages 16 to 21, 55 percent were not in school and 36 percent of these were school drop-outs without jobs. In the Northeastern United States in the early 70's the school drop-out rate for "all Americans" ages 16 to 21, was 32 percent. Wagenheim's study also indicates that as of March, 1972, Puerto Ricans had the highest unemployment rate of virtually all social or ethnic groups in the United States.

More recent data into the mid and late 70's and early 80's prepared by the National Puerto Rican Forum (1980) and the Census Bureau (1980) appear to be merely an extension of the data from the 60's and early 70's. The indices presented all describe a population considerably disadvantaged especially relative to the United States population as a whole.
a. Income

According to the Forum (pp. 4 & 5) there were 434,000 Puerto Rican families in the United States mainland in March of 1979 with 96 percent of these families residing in the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut metropolitan area. More recent data as of September, 1986 give the United States mainland a Puerto Rican population of 2,004,961 with 12 percent or 242,367 of this population resident in New Jersey (Selected Demographic Characteristics of the United States Hispanic Population, p. 3). Of the population described by the Forum, 39.5 percent had incomes that were considered to be below the poverty level — an improvement but hardly a major one from the 60's. In March of 1978, 41 percent of Puerto Rican families were headed by females with 75 percent of these families considered to be in poverty. This situation continues into 1986 with Puerto Ricans having the highest proportion of births to unmarried women among Hispanics (Selected Demographic Characteristics, 1986, p. 4). In these families, a large percentage (86 percent in 1978) of the children under 18 years of age were considered to be living in poverty. In 1977 thirty-seven thousand Puerto Rican families were headed by individuals 14 to 24 years of age. Of these families 51 percent were considered to be living in poverty (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980, p. 6).

In March of 1979 the median income of Hispanic families in the United States was $12,566; for non-Hispanics it was $17,912 and for Puerto Rican families it was $8,282. In March of 1979, 16 percent of Puerto Rican families had incomes of less than $4,000 per year compared to 5.6 percent
of all United States families with this income. In the area of income the position of Puerto Ricans relative to other groups in the United States had actually deteriorated by 1979. In 1959, 45 percent of Puerto Rican families had two wage earners. By 1977, thirty-five percent of Puerto Rican families on the mainland had no wage earners at all. In 1959 Puerto Rican family earnings were 71 percent of the national average while in 1979 they were only 47 percent of the national average (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980, pp. 4 & 6).

b. Employment

The Forum further reports that in 1979 of 48,000 Puerto Rican youth aged 16 to 19 in the United States approximately 29 percent were unemployed compared to 16 percent of all other United States youths in that age group. In 1978, 470,000 Puerto Ricans in the mainland United States had jobs while by 1979 that number had been reduced to 458,000. Puerto Ricans held proportionately more low occupational jobs than other United States workers in all categories. Of Puerto Ricans who did have jobs, 22 percent were operatives and 22 percent were service workers. In March of 1979, 10 percent of Puerto Rican workers 16 years old and over were unemployed compared to 5.6 percent of all United States workers (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980, pp. 5, 6 & 7). In 1986 the rate of unemployment for Puerto Ricans in the United States mainland was 13 percent as compared to 11 percent for Mexicans and 8 percent for Cubans (Selected Demographic Characteristics, 1986, p. 4).
c. Health & Welfare

The Forum (p. 13) tells us that in 1979 in New York City, Puerto Ricans had a higher mortality rate from cirrhosis of the liver, drug addiction, accidents, homicides and diabetes than did the total population of New York City. According to Alerz (1978) the rate of admission of Puerto Ricans to community mental health centers and facilities for mental retardation was generally higher than for other groups.

The rates per 100,000 population of admissions to community mental health centers and mental retardation facilities for all psychiatric diagnoses was 2270 for Puerto Ricans, 2113 for Blacks and 1068 for Whites. The rates per 100,000 population for mental retardation alone in New York City were 86 for Puerto Ricans, 53 for Blacks and 21 for Whites. In 1977 Puerto Ricans constituted 53 percent of AFDC caseloads in New York City and 25 percent of the caseload in New York State (National Puerto Rican Forum, p. 13). Nevertheless, according to several studies, in spite of the enormity of their family and mental health problems Puerto Ricans are resistive to involvement in traditional psychotherapeutic counselling (Canino, 1980, Ghali, 1980, Arce, 1982).

d. Education

In education Puerto Ricans are far behind the rest of the United States population in almost every category. In 1978, according to the Forum, 32 percent of mainland Puerto Ricans, 14 years of age or older were high school graduates. In 1986, the figure for all Puerto Ricans on the mainland, 25 years of age or older, was 42 percent as compared to 70 percent for the total United States population (Selected Demographics, 1986, p. 4). Of 171,000 Puerto Rican females in the labor force in 1976,
46 percent had less than three years of high school education and of 301,000 Puerto Rican males in the labor force in that year, 60 percent completed less than three years of high school education (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980). School drop-out data for Puerto Ricans in the United States varies to some extent depending upon the reports consulted, but all reports indicate high dropout rates for Puerto Rican youth. The report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (1976) indicates that for the 14 to 17 year old age group there is a dropout rate for Puerto Ricans of 15 percent compared to 7 percent for the general United States population. However, the Commission quotes another report concerning the Chicago school system in the early seventies where the dropout rates for Puerto Rican students is reported at 59 percent (Isidro Lucas, Manuscript, 1971).

Data from the National Puerto Rican Forum (1980, p. 12) states that 8 percent of Puerto Rican males in the United States between the ages of 17 to 19 have completed high school and 7 percent of Puerto Rican females between those ages in the United States have completed high school. To get some sense of what these figures mean in comparison to a total population some of the United States Census data for 1980 are examined. According to 1980 data, for Hispanics in the United States, of those twenty-five years of age or older, 27 percent were high school graduates, compared to 35 percent for Blacks and 37 percent for Whites (U.S. Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics by Race, Table 204, 1980, p. 223). Data for 1986 however, as previously indicated suggests an improved picture with 42 percent of Puerto Ricans in the United States, twenty five years of age or older being high school graduates. Of
Hispanic youth in general - again according to the National Puerto Rican Forum for 1980 - of those not in school, 57 percent were not high school graduates. The percentage of Puerto Rican youth nationwide who are not in school and are not high school graduates is presumed to be even higher than for Hispanic youth in general. The 1980 Census data (General Social and Economic Characteristics, Table 124, p. 99) also tells us that Puerto Ricans have the highest percentage of young people entering the labor force at 16 years of age or older without finishing school. The figure in 1980 was 66 percent.

e. Age of Population

Education and problems of youth in general are of particular importance for Puerto Ricans since they comprise the youngest ethnic group in the United States. In this regard it can be noted that in March of 1979 the median age of Puerto Ricans in the United States was 19.9 compared to a median age of 29.8 for the United States population. The average age of Puerto Rican males was 17.9 compared to 28.5 for the United States male population and for Puerto Rican females the average age was 22.4 compared to 30.6 for the rest of the United States population (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980, p. 4). In 1986 the average age of Puerto Ricans in the United States Mainland had risen to 22, making them still the youngest population group in the United States (Selected Demographic Characteristics, p. 5). In 1978 Puerto Rican males between the ages of 14 and 21 comprised 17 percent of the Puerto Rican population on the United States Mainland while Puerto Rican females in that age
category comprised 14.6 percent of the Puerto Rican population on the Mainland. In sum, 52.3 percent of the Puerto Rican population on the Mainland in 1978-79 were twenty-one years of age or younger compared to 34.6 percent of this age category for the total United States Population (National Puerto Rican Forum, 1980, p. 4).

2. Puerto Ricans in New Jersey and in Newark

a. An Overview

Data concerning the Puerto Rican community in New Jersey is sketchy and incomplete. The 1980 Census figures gave New Jersey a population of approximately 492,000 persons of Spanish origin with the largest concentration of this group being in the City of Newark (U.S. Census, New Jersey, Table 16, 1980, p. 29). Generally speaking, most of the data for the Puerto Rican population presented above would apply in New Jersey. For example, in 1970 the average Puerto Rican male in New Jersey had completed 8.4 years of school compared with 12.2 for Whites and 10.2 for Blacks (Kal-Wagenheim, 1975).

The data for Puerto Ricans in the City of Newark varies widely. One figure in 1979 gave the city between 70,000 and 80,000 Puerto Ricans out of a total population of 331,000. However, the 1980 Census Report gives the Newark metropolitan area which includes Essex, Hudson, Union and Bergen Counties a total Hispanic population of 132,372 of which it was estimated that 62,236 were Puerto Ricans. According to the Census Report Newark itself had a total Hispanic population of 61,254 of which 39,732 were Puerto Rican (U.S. Census, New Jersey, 1980, Table 16, p. 29).
All of the adolescent subjects and some of the adult subjects in the study come from the City of Newark. It seems appropriate then, before a more detailed discussion of the risk factors for Puerto Ricans in Newark, to describe in a general way the city itself. Newark is the third oldest city in the United States, and among the fifty largest cities in the United States, it is the smallest geographically (Cummings & O'Connor, 1979). Settled in 1666 it has always been a busy manufacturing center although over the last few decades it has been increasingly characterized as a "university town" because of several universities and colleges within its boundaries and as the banking and financial nerve center of New Jersey. Large parts of the Central and South Wards of the City continue to be characterized by decay and abandonment, a process greatly accelerated by the infamous riot that occurred in 1967.

Its many problems notwithstanding Newark stubbornly persists in growing and displaying signs of vitality. Perhaps one of the more striking examples of this is the rebuilding of the downtown section from Pennsylvania Station outward.

For such a small city Newark has a disproportionately large population of the poor, minorities, senior citizens and problem ridden youth. To understand these demographics one has to look at Essex County and indeed the Newark metropolitan area. There is the question of whether a kind of socio-geographic-political "arrangement" has evolved over many decades that has made Newark (and cities like it) a kind of reservation for the poor and disadvantaged. One has only to view the dramatic contrast between Newark and its affluent suburbs - only minutes away - to begin wondering how it has happened that so many poor people are crammed into such a small area.
Newark has always been a city of immigrants. Benjamin Kluger (1971) who grew up in Newark's Ironbound section, gives the following very perceptive description of Newark as it was during the 40's and 50's:

How serene and ethnically ordered it all was. The Brahmins in Forest Hill; the more successful latter day American assimilation in Vailsburg; the Italians in the Branch Brook section; the Ginsbergs and Horowitzes and the smattering of Schmids and McCloskeys in Clinton Hill; the achieving Jews in Weequahic (Cradle of Portnoy); the neighborly Italian - Irish - German - Polish amalgam of the Ironbound; stainless Roseville; pure North Newark; and the Negroes, safely penned up, shooting dice,razoring each other, eating peanuts and watermelons, whiling away the years killing cockroaches and clubbing rats in their warrens off Springfield and South Orange Avenues - just above the court house where Lincoln sits - the festive White crowds thronging Broad and Market on Saturday night on their way to see Jimmy Cagney or Jean Harlow or meeting one another amid the amenities of the Essex House or the Robert Treat - scarceley an ebony speck in all that shining mass and absolute safety and well being from the gates of the iron foundries in deepest Down Neck to the pristine portals of the suburbs (p. 31).

Obviously Kluger is rather passionately indicting Newark for allowing a cauldron of racial tension to boil from the 20's all the way to the 60's when it finally exploded. From a middle class White person's point of view Newark was a very comfortable place to live during those years - as long as one didn't look too closely at what was going on in the city at the time. In 1986 the ethnic groups in the city are different (with Portuguese and Central Americans being the "newest") and the City could hardly be described as "ethnically ordered." But many of the problems and much of the struggle experienced in Newark now, particularly problems of youth, must be seen against the backdrop of a city that fiercely suppressed its problems of unemployment, out of school teenagers, sporadic
school attendance, poor family relationships and a sense of lawlessness and anomie among youth, particularly minority youth.

b. **Data Describing a Population at risk in Newark, New Jersey**

Census data for 1980 suggests that the majority of Hispanics in Newark between the ages of 13 and 20 belong to a Puerto Rican ethnic group. Thus, although there is no ethnic grouping relative to risk factors such as delinquency the census data can be extrapolated so that risk factors among Hispanic adolescents in Newark means risk factors among Puerto Rican adolescents.

All of the indices that describe a Puerto Rican population at risk in the United States can easily be applied to the population of Puerto Rican adolescents in Newark. These indices are described in some detail later in the study in the demographic description on adolescents. At this point two areas where the vulnerability of Puerto Rican adolescents in Newark is most dramatically evident are presented.

**Education**

The Newark school system indicates that 11,528 of the student body are "Hispanic"; there is no category for Puerto Ricans but it can be safely estimated, based on the population of Puerto Ricans in Newark, that the majority of this figure is Puerto Rican. In 1979, the total student drop out rate in Newark was 10.2 percent for high school students. For Hispanics the figure was 12.3 percent, for Blacks 10.4 percent and for Whites 6.4 percent (New Jersey School Enrollment, 1979).
Delinquency

The figures for delinquency rates in Newark are of some interest although they are for the adolescent population as a whole and are not broken down according to ethnic groups. The Newark Office of Criminal Justice Planning in 1978 estimated that there were 50,000 juveniles in Newark between the ages of 11 and 17 (Irving Kweller, 1978, p. 2). As indicated school and census data suggest that many (between one fifth and one quarter) of the adolescents in Newark are Puerto Rican. Using the above data, and assuming that contextual variables such as poor housing, low income and lack of positive opportunities are related to delinquency it can be surmised that a substantial portion of the data on delinquency in Newark can be applied to Puerto Rican adolescents (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

Although there are indications that crimes of violence have increased recently, up to 1978 the figure indicates that most juvenile arrests in Newark involved crimes against property. The principal age group among juvenile arrestees up to 1978 was 15 through 17. Kweller's report estimates that approximately 15 percent of Newark's 15 to 17 year old males (85 percent of juvenile arrests in Newark are males), including 20 percent among 17 year olds alone, were arrested in 1970 and 1971 and perhaps in each subsequent year. The report also estimates that before reaching age 18 a substantial proportion of Newark's males will have been arrested at least once, that an even greater proportion, perhaps most, will have been apprehended by the police by arrest or other procedures, and that males growing up in Newark might well have difficulty in avoiding
some experience of delinquency. It was estimated that the arrest incidence for 17 year old males in Newark was between 300 and 350 per 1000 of adolescent population (Kweller, 1978, pp. 2 & 3, pp. 27 - 34).

In 1978 there were 4,833 youth "processed" through the Youth Aid Bureau in Newark. Of this number, 4,438 complaints of juvenile delinquency were brought to the Essex County Probation Department Intake Division, and 35 were referred to the "Juvenile in Need of Supervision" Program of the Division of Youth and Family Service. One hundred and five were referred for counselling services to public or private agencies and 258 were disposed of by the Youth Aid Bureau. This means that only slightly more than 2 percent of all the youngsters handled by Newark in the Youth Aid Bureau in 1978, were referred out to public or private agencies for purposes of counselling (Kweller, 1978, p. 8).

**PUERTO RICANS AND HELPING RESOURCES**

1. **A Lack of Connection**

As was indicated at the beginning of this Chapter, a major impetus for the study was the researcher's awareness of a lack of helping resources for Puerto Ricans in general and for Puerto Rican adolescents in particular. The relationship between a Puerto Rican population and social workers or helpers is ambivalent at best. In discussing social workers in Puerto Rico, Vasquez states that:
It is evident that the Puerto Rican client has been more passive, more dependent, less able to utilize his rights of self-determination than clients on the mainland. It is also clear that Puerto Rican social workers have not been strongly involved in issues of social welfare and have not promoted the client's right to self-determination, as much as workers have on the mainland (Ligia Vasquez De Rodriguez, 1973, p. 32).

According to Vasquez, Puerto Ricans are seen by social workers as grateful, submissive and polite - as being very concerned with maintaining "dignidad" and giving assent when they do not feel it and saying "yes, they understand" when they really do not.

2. Reasons for "A Lack of Connection"

Jenkins and Morrison (Paper, 1974, p. 5) point out that "efforts to identify, outreach and assist Puerto Ricans are severely impaired by language barriers, a lack of cultural understanding, fragmentation of our human service delivery systems and the conspicuous absence of reliable information on the current status of the needs of Puerto Rican families." They further state that services for Puerto Rican families and their children are seriously inadequate and identify a lack of services available in Spanish and lack of culturally sensitive services as barriers to providing adequate human services for Puerto Ricans. Vucci's (1985) study examines the preferences of Puerto Rican mothers concerning the delivery of mental health services for their children. She found that her subjects preferred a school based site rather than a mental health clinic although this depended to some extent on the problems presented. There was also a general preference for staff that were fluent in Spanish as
opposed to being simply bi-culturally sensitive. She found that the preference for Spanish speaking staff depended to some extent on her subject's level of acculturation.

Ferre and Fitzpatrick (1971) both emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation in working with a minority population. Their program of delinquency prevention in La Playa section of Ponce, Puerto Rico is seen as successful because of its use of "personalism," that is, a helping style that emphasizes relationships and adapting to the cultural styles of client groups. Ghali (1982, pp. 98 - 102) emphasizes the importance of being sensitive to their traditions and values in working with Puerto Rican families. She mentions family obligation, personalismo and spirituality as being significant to Puerto Ricans. Being aware of cultural variables with Hispanics in general means knowing, for example, that they might very well see involvement in traditional mental health programs as "stigmatizing." Thus, according to Scott and Delgado (1979) it is critical to be aware of cultural variables when trying to understand the under-utilization of traditional mental health services on the part of Hispanics.

Of course, there are many reasons why Latinos do not use traditional mental health facilities: geographic inaccessibility, problems in communication, middle class values that lead to inaccurate diagnosis and treatment decisions and similar errors based on cultural differences are but a few. With therapists in particular, problems contributing to a lack of utilization of services are social distance, prejudice and dependence on a model of treatment that overlooks ethnographic data (Padilla and Ruiz, 1973, p. 23). Arce (1982, pp. 461-465) includes "middle class Anglo
bias, stigmatizing through the use of traditional techniques, language barriers and cultural distance, cultural stereotyping and generally poor service" as reasons for the underutilization of professional psychiatric services by Puerto Ricans. Both Delgado (1977) and Garrison (1976-78) emphasize that the success of native healers in the Puerto Rican community is largely related to their cultural sensitivity.

Generally, it would seem that the lack of involvement of Puerto Ricans in traditional helping agencies relates to the same problems that all people in a lower socioeconomic group have in terms of access to and utilization of health care services (C. Reissman, 1976 and Brooks, 1978). The reality in Newark, New Jersey is that traditional service agencies are not utilized by Puerto Ricans in proportion either to their numbers or the severity of their problems. In the author's experience in Newark, Puerto Ricans, particularly Puerto Rican youth, were viewed as a kind of "abandoned population." In attempting to bring a Puerto Rican adolescent and a helping resource together one often finds constriction, even in the kind of service offered in an ethnic agency. Too often a Puerto Rican adolescent is perceived as being in too much trouble or being too disturbed or living in the wrong section or having the wrong type of problem. Presumably, the ethnic agencies have a greater degree of success in engaging Puerto Rican adolescents partly because of their ethnicity. However, their small size and lack of resources in addition to the aforementioned restrictions limit their helpfulness. The traditional agencies, both public and private in Newark, on the other hand, are much larger and richer in resources. However, they lack the ethnicity that would seem to attract and hold an ethnic population. Essentially this
study aims to increase the understanding of this "lack of connection" between Puerto Rican adolescents and helping agencies of all kinds.

3. Variables in the Helping Equation: Ethnicity and Perception

Ethnicity and perception both seemed to be important variables to look at in an effort to understand the lack of connection between Puerto Rican adolescents and helpers.

Shirley Jenkins suggests that consideration of ethnic variables is critical in working with ethnic minorities. In her study on ethnic factors in social services she found that many ethnic agencies incorporated ethnic cultural context into their programs. There is the suggestion that not only are bilingualism and such particulars as use of ethnic food, music, etc., important but also the ethnic background of the helping person. In her study helping persons from ethnic agencies are more committed to the importance of ethnic variables than are helping persons from non-ethnic agencies. She found that a majority of parents in her study "opted for a helping person of their own group." At the same time the majority of helpers in her study felt that training was more important than the ethnic background of a helper (Jenkins, 1981, pp.75-121). In seeking help of various kinds Puerto Rican adolescents often encounter helpers not of their ethnic background. This kind of cross-cultural phenomena is frequently a part of the helping experience for Puerto Rican youngsters and is a major area of concern in this study.

As indicated another major area of concern is how a youngster perceives the helping experience and how those involved in giving help in
turn perceive the experience. Maluccio emphasizes how critical it is to understand both worker and client perception to know how to be effective helpers (Maluccio, 1977). Generally, it seems that not enough emphasis has been placed on looking at both perspectives - too often one sees only the view of helpers. As a balancing measure to this Canino suggest that the perspectives of client groups must also be looked at. The client groups he refers to are Hispanic children. He says:

Finally an invitation could be extended to those countless numbers of Hispanic children who have dealt successfully with principals, teachers, welfare workers, juvenile authorities, mental health clinics, building superintendents, pimps, drug addicts, sickness and all manner of separation and have remained relatively unscarred; they will be our best teachers (Canino, 1980, p. 10).

In this study, an invitation has been extended to both Puerto Rican adolescents and their "helpers" in an attempt to understand their mutual involvement in the helping experience. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter the study will focus in particular on the importance of the ethnic background of a helper in the helping experience. There are a number of questions deriving from the issues of the study presented up to this point:

**QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE STUDY**

- What are the perceptions of a group of Puerto Rican adolescents of the helping experience?
. What are the views of a group of helpers of the same helping experience?

. Is there a difference in the views of the helpers depending on their ethnic background?

. Will the sameness or difference of the views of helpers and Puerto Rican adolescents be influenced in some significant way by the ethnic background of a helper, i.e., are Puerto Rican adolescent clients likely to view significant areas related to the helping experience in the same way or in different ways than helpers depending to some extent upon the ethnic background of the helper?

Although this is an exploratory study there are a number of informal, working hypotheses emerging from our major questions. As suggested by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) even in exploratory research our work can lead to hypotheses formulation. A major hypothesis of the study is that ethnicity is an important variable in interaction between people — more particularly in the interaction that occurs when one person gives help and another person receives it. In selecting the client populations, for example, the assertion is made that there is something in their ethnicity (as opposed to say, their stage of life or economic circumstances) that separates them, gives them a special quality or character that somehow is important to their response to being helped. Within this larger context several more specific working hypotheses are suggested:
1. **Working Hypotheses**

A. Perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescent clients and helping people of the helping experience are more likely to be congruent if the adolescent client and the helper belong to the same ethnic group.

B. Perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescent clients and helpers of the helping experience are more likely to be congruent if the adolescent client and helper both belong to a minority group even if not of the same ethnic background.

C. Non-minority helpers are more likely to experience dissonance in perceptions of the helping experience when working with Puerto Rican adolescent clients than minority helpers.

D. Puerto Rican adolescents are more likely to have a negative perception of the helping experience in general, than are helpers.

In addition to these general questions and informal hypotheses the study seeks to look at a number of more specific areas:

a. What are the general demographics of the Puerto Rican adolescents and how do these compare to the general demographics of the helpers?

b. What is the professional and experiential background of the helpers?

c. What helping sources are most frequently used by the Puerto Rican adolescents?
d. How do the adolescents perceive their communities and how do these perceptions compare to those of the adult helpers?

e. What are the perceptions of the adolescents of the importance of "relationship" within the helping experience and how do these perceptions compare with those of the adults?

f. What are the perceptions that the Puerto Rican adolescents have of themselves and how do these compare with the perceptions of the adult helpers?

g. What are the problems that the adolescents view as important and how do these views compare with the views of the helpers?

h. Generally, how have the adolescents described their perceptions of an idealized helper and how do these compare to the perceptions of the adult helper?

i. Finally, what are the situations for both the adolescents and helpers where the ethnic background of a helper "makes a difference?"

SIGNIFICANCE FOR SOCIAL WORK

The study can contribute to knowledge in the field of social work in several ways. The whole area of client-helper perceptions is a critical
one to understand to be effective as helpers. A person constructs his social reality based partly on his subjective perception of phenomena (Berger & Luckman, 1967). In a symbolic interaction framework, relationships and interpersonal reactions very much depend upon how a person sees the world (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In order to be able to enter into another person's skin, to see the world as he sees it, to empathize, there must be a strong sense of mutual perception. Understanding a client's perception as it relates to one's own perception is very much tied into the whole concept of empathy, critical to functioning in a helping capacity. Roy Schafer points out that "helpers must be able to experience empathy that involves the helper experiencing the feelings of another person, which in turn relates to remembering corresponding affective states" (Schafer, 1959, pp. 323-31). In the same article Schafer goes on to say that "there must be availability of memory, making the past personal and the professional experience relevant to the current situations. Often, however, this transfer of feelings is not possible because the majority person cannot relate to the minority experience." Carl Rogers (1965, pp. 169-78), too, ties the concept of empathy to the mutual perceptions of client and worker when he states that "empathy involves the worker's ability to assume the internal frame of reference of the client - to see the situation as a client sees it."

Understanding mutual perceptions becomes more complicated when a client's life experiences or background is very different from one's own. This is territory that is very germane to social workers and helpers in general who often work with minority populations. It is certainly incumbent upon us to clarify our thinking in this area. Leichter and Mitchell (1967) underscore this very well:
The grasp of another person's experience probably requires more involved presentation and explanation when it is dissimilar to one's own. But as those who specialize in working with dissimilar cultures have noted the process of transcending such differences may itself be highly illuminating leading to special levels of understanding that do not ordinarily become as explicit between those of similar backgrounds (p. 258).

The study attempts to increase understanding of how a minority group of clients perceive the experience of being helped and how this perception compares with the views of a group of helpers of different ethnic backgrounds engaged in giving help. The study should add to the understanding of how the ethnic background of a helper impacts on congruence or dissonance of views with a group of minority clients. Again this knowledge is important in social work where helping efforts are often directed at minority clients.

Although the Puerto Rican community in the metropolitan area of the United States is generally considered to be at great risk and is represented in numerous social agencies, our general fund of knowledge about Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rican children in particular is very limited. Both Jenkins (1980) and Canino (1980) testify to the conspicuous absence of reliable information regarding Puerto Ricans.

This study too should contribute to an understanding of the significance of the "ethnic agency" or "ethnic setting" since many of the helpers and all of the clients in this study have experience in this kind of setting. Jenkins (1981, p. 7) found in her study that much of what was perceived as "working" by ethnic agencies had to do with primary group functioning, such as developing family supports and providing career advancements for clients; what was perceived as "not working" were more
traditional offerings such as group therapy for adolescents. Thus the ethnic component in her view is more than just a political response but eventually facilitates the delivery of services. It acts as a kind of go between or mediator between simple primary group activity and more complicated bureaucratic functioning because of how it values "primary group helping."

Although the study will only deal with a subset of Puerto Rican adolescents in Newark, New Jersey, hopefully it can serve as a basis for other studies having to do with a Puerto Rican client population as well as adding to knowledge about this population.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELEVANT THEORY

1. Historical and Cultural Considerations

Critical to an understanding of Puerto Ricans in the United States in the 1980's is an understanding of their history and culture. Whether one agrees or not with Maldonado Denis' (1972) interpretation that Puerto Rico still lives under a colonial regime, the reality for many Puerto Ricans in the United States is that they come out of a land that for many years had the status of a kind of colony to the United States - whose position politically and psychologically, relative to the powerful United States, was one of servitude or submission. The mentality of a conquered and oppressed people has a long history in Puerto Rico stretching back to the earliest relationships that existed between the invading Spanish and the Taino Indians (Wagenheim & Jiminiz de Wagenheim, 1975). It can be suggested that part of the bi-culturality with which Puerto Ricans in the United States now struggle very much ties into coming from a history of oppression and even humiliation. Certainly the world view of present day Puerto Ricans is strongly colored by the hostile dependent relationships that exist and have existed for many years between the Island and the United States. Feelings on the part of Puerto Ricans of suspicion coupled with a need to please and be compliant at all costs are easier to understand when seen against a broad tapestry of Puerto Rican history.

Puerto Ricans have for many years existed in a kind of
"double-limbo:" a political one because of the peculiar status of the island and an ethnic one because of the special blends of races that have occurred on the island — the Spanish, Indian, Negroid mix. Both of these "limbos" of course have a profound effect on how Puerto Ricans in the United States perceive themselves and the world. Heine and Garcia (1983) find that Puerto Ricans, well into the 1980's continue to find it difficult or impossible to achieve their dreams in the United States mainland. They do not by and large consider themselves part of the general political process. In 1980, for example, 75 percent of a sampling of Puerto Ricans in New York City did not consider themselves American. Fitzpatrick (1971) sees problems of identity as central for Puerto Ricans who have migrated to New York and sees Puerto Ricans as struggling with who they are and where they belong. In particular, the literature on Puerto Ricans is replete with references to the special struggle Puerto Ricans have around their racial and ethnic identity (Thomas, Fitzpatrick & Betances, 1967, 1971, 1975). Betances makes the distinction that the United States mainland has a problem of race while Puerto Rico has a problem of color. Not only color, but negroid features, such as "pelo malo" — meaning bad or kinky hair — becomes very important. Generally, Betances feels that the problem of color is serious enough in Puerto Rico as to complicate further a second or third generation's search for identity on the mainland.

Both Fitzpatrick and Elena Padilla (1971, 1971) point out the importance of class variables in understanding a Puerto Rican population on the mainland. Padilla states that:
—there is a tendency towards fostering separation and fragmentation within the Hispanic group which calls for rejection, dislike, intolerance and critical devaluation of Hispanics, simply on the grounds of being so. To speak of the culture of Puerto Rico in New York as if it were a uniform, homogenous body of cultural standards to which all Puerto Ricans respond or adhere only leads to oversimplifying the cultural picture and to distorting and ignoring significant facts. Puerto Ricans participate within different subcultures of the Hispanic group itself. The culture of Puerto Rican migrants in New York City will vary with respect to the socio-economic class of the individual, which is largely a function of his degree of acculturation, and with reference to his position within the Hispanic group, which is also a function of his class and extent of acculturation (p. 46).

E. Padilla (1971, pp. 56 and 63) feels that Latinos have bought the image of themselves as "bad and undesirable and as spoiling the country by the use of drugs." She relates delinquency amongst Puerto Ricans to slum conditions where there is a lack of effectiveness in providing the individual with suitable personal and social adaptation.

In describing the development of Puerto Rican children on the mainland, La Vietes (1979, pp. 264-271) gives a view of Puerto Ricans somewhat at variance with Padilla's, in its lack of emphasis on class as an important variable. She cites a number of different factors that would seem to be important to understanding Puerto Ricans in general on the mainland as well as understanding the development of Puerto Rican children. Among the variables she cites are: non-committal emigration; put simply, many Puerto Rican families come to the mainland, not with the idea of permanently settling here, but rather with the hope of improving their economic and general material situation, so as to make it possible to return to their "beautiful island" and settle there — this hope or
mentality often leads to frequent moves back and forth between the island and mainland, all of which, for Puerto Ricans, results in family fragmentation, delay in acquiring English, slow acculturation, educational handicaps and limited community organization and leadership; poverty, related to Puerto Ricans (according to the 1970 and 1980 census) having the highest birth rates, and largest families, the lowest income, and the second lowest educational attainment of all identified ethnic groups in the United States; traditional and cultural family factors, with an emphasis on sex role behavior in Puerto Rican families where the sons are expected to be sexually aggressive and the daughters house bound and virginal - La Vitee feels that since these values are not emphasized in the United States mainland, family conflicts and identity problems are exacerbated particularly for Puerto Rican males.

La Vitee also cites language difficulties, resulting in an overall delay in acquiring language which in turn causes major adaptive disabilities for Puerto Ricans - La Vitee relates this specifically to the low educational attainment of Puerto Rican children; concern for skin color - La Vitee agrees generally with the literature that this is a major source of identity conflict for Puerto Ricans; religion, where the emphasis on asceticism imposed presumably in the Pentecostal churches has negative effects particularly on adolescents and personality characteristics that include being outgoing, volatile and affectionate.

D. Lugo-Frey (1980) is critical of what he perceives as La Vitee's negative and stereotypical picture of Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rican children in particular. Lugo-Frey specifically identifies values of Puerto Rican culture which can be considered strengths. Among these he
includes: the importance of the family, a respect for an individual's worth and dignity providing a basis for a humanistic view of people, and emphasis on extended family ties that include godparents as well as natural family. F. Reissman (1976) agrees with Lugo-Frey and emphasizes that cultural values and beliefs can be considered strengths.

Relative to the above and to Puerto Rican culture in general Lauria (1967, pp. 53-67) emphasizes the importance of certain key attitudes in relationships, particularly relationships between men. Included here would be the concepts of "respeto" and "dignidad." The man who is truly "de respeto" or roughly, respected, possesses "dignidad," i.e., "takes the general moral and ceremonial order seriously." This is a man who is "macho." The man who complies with the obligation of proper interpersonal treatment is "cumpleador" and is considered to be the "hombre completo - the integral or complete man." In their interactions with each other it is critical for Puerto Ricans to know how far they can go with "relajo" or joking, so as to maintain their own "respeto", and the other person's "dignidad." With this overriding concern for "dignidad" and "respeto" one could easily see how faced with a mainland society where their role is greatly devalued, Puerto Rican men would develop what Sommers (1964, p. 342) calls an "identity neurosis."

In sum, Puerto Ricans are a people whose cultural background places great emphasis on family relationships, individual dignity and worth and the importance of receiving help through established family and personal networks. This is a culture that traditionally makes sharp distinctions between the sexes with men expected to be sexually aggressive and women to be committed to home and children. Some of these values are difficult to
sustain, some in open conflict with a complex, competitive, bureaucratized, industrial society as seen in the United States. In a sense Puerto Rican children and adolescents are the "transitional people" between the culture of the island and that of the mainland and for this reason it would seem critical to understand their views.

2. Puerto Rican Children and Adolescents

Literature concerning Puerto Rican children and adolescents in the United States is particularly limited. In this section, therefore literature concerning both pre-adolescent Puerto Rican children and adolescent Puerto Ricans in the United States is examined.

Generally it seems agreed by most authors that Puerto Rican children, but especially Puerto Rican adolescents in the United States are under tremendous stress. The main hypothesis of Canino, Early & Rogler's study is that "Puerto Rican children experience a greater array of potentially stress inducing events than do other children and are therefore at higher risk to mental health problems — the child who is disproportionately exposed to stress factors at each successive phase of development is more likely to manifest a stress response." (Canino, et al, 1980 p. vii).

Canino et al feels that the whole experience of immigration and cultural assimilation and adaptation is extremely stress producing. Relative to the mental health of Puerto Ricans in the United States they describe how countries that encourage rapid assimilation such as the United States and Australia have reported higher psychiatric hospitalization rates than those which accept or encourage ties to the original culture. The experiences of Puerto Rican people, both migrant and non-migrant,
according to Canino "have been characterized by a succession of major social transformations - these transformations whether considered alone or in concert are clearly potential stress inducers." (Canino et al, 1980, p. 11). Constantly moving back and forth between Puerto Rico and the mainland places Puerto Rican children in the position of being rejected by two cultures (Nazario, 1986). Against this background it is easier to understand how Puerto Ricans, especially Puerto Rican males, have the highest rate of mental illness of any identified ethnic group in the United States (Fitzpatrick & Gould, 1968). It is also easier to understand the need for cultural pluralism as emphasized by Fitzpatrick. Relative to assimilation Fitzpatrick (1971, p. 31) expresses his idea that people should have the freedom to "have their own culture while learning the new culture."

Studies by Cannon (1929) and Cassell (1970) emphasize that stress produces physical and psychological illness. Further, it has been well documented that Puerto Rican children suffer from an inordinate amount of stress (La Vite, 1979, Canino, 1980, Fitzpatrick, 1971). Since the family is so central in Puerto Rican culture any disruption of it is extremely stress producing. Cultural discontinuity in child rearing practices for example, between Puerto Rico and the United States, produces enormous conflicts for the Puerto Rican family. If, to complicate matters, the family does not have access to traditional support networks the utilization of agency facilities may itself serve as an additional source of stress and family disruption (Langnier, Gersten and Eisenberg, 1974).

Partly due to these "cultural discontinuities" the Puerto Rican
adolescent in the United States is in an especially vulnerable position. Fitzpatrick (1971) feels that the strictness that some Puerto Rican families insist upon in an effort to continue old island values actually exacerbates delinquent behavior. Preble (1968, pp. 48-70) indicates that the transition to urban mainland life has a negative effect on Puerto Rican adolescents in a number of ways. For economic reasons male dominance in the Puerto Rican family in the United States ceases and the repercussions of this for the adolescent children in the family are devastating - particularly, it seems, for adolescent males because of a male child's need to identify with a father figure. "An absent or ineffective father leaves a void which cannot be filled. This disadvantage weighs most heavily on the adolescent male in Puerto Rican families. He has lost a pattern for his male respect and identity and in many cases is encouraged to identify with his mother" (Preble, 1968, p. 65). On the other hand if a present father tries to compensate for his diminished role as a breadwinner by over strictness the result is that adolescent children (along with their mother) will attempt to evade what they perceive as domination especially in the permissive society of the United States. Preble feels that the main adaptive alternative for Puerto Rican adolescents is often to join the "hips or the hicks," i.e. become delinquent or opt for a cultural integrity that, although, within the law and blessed by their families, is often incongruent in many ways with the new environment. Unfortunately, this is an adaptation that often means settling for a menial job and cultural isolation.

Preble (1968) describes Puerto Rican adolescents as feeling alienated at one and the same time from their families and the institutions of an urban society. They are presented with problems not only of transition
from one culture to another but of maintaining a tie to two cultures
simultaneously, i.e. they find themselves struggling with biculturalism.
When these youngsters attempt to establish themselves in a job market that
is precarious at best they are seen as a threat. However, staying in
school is very often a losing battle for Puerto Rican adolescents:

"the group of high school dropouts or those primarily of
lower class who continue as nominal students while
learning little in the anonymity of urban high schools,
are subject to progressive alienation from the sources
of dominant societal power - feelings of unlovability or
of diminished self esteem are reinforced by contact with
the larger society. They seem, however, to be displaced
onto the peer or normative reference group and it is in
relation to each other that adolescents or adult
minority members strive for popularity and status."
(Preble, 1968, p. 69).

A major theme running through the available literature on Puerto Rican
adolescents relates to an identity struggle, which in turn seems to relate
to patterns of delinquency. The struggles of a political and racial
nature that all Puerto Ricans have around their self-identity have already
been indicated. These feelings are greatly exacerbated for a Puerto Rican
adolescent who is also struggling with his personal identity. One could
see how a Puerto Rican adolescent truly would not know where he belonged,
politically, racially or personally. Lewin (1948) points out how minority
group members suffer from a lack of belongingness resulting in a loss of
self esteem. This coupled with a self-fulfilling prophecy kind of
behavior mentioned by Merton (1948) often leads Puerto Rican adolescents
to seek deviant solutions. Hence, with this population there are high
rates of school dropouts and delinquencies in general, a heavy involvement
with drugs, sexual promiscuity, and chronic unemployment. All of this
very much relates to a frustrated attempt to resolve enormous identity problems. Some authors such as Parsons (1964) and Brim and Wheeler (1966, p. 18) relate this confused identity to a confused society. Brim and Wheeler state that:

societies in the process of accelerating change, especially if the change is not guided by a set of sharply defined master symbols that tell what the change is about may thus be assumed to be less effective than stable groups in the socialization of their young — subgroups with deviant values emerge which do not prepare the child for performance of the roles expected of him by the larger society.

La Viste (1979, pp. 267-271) traces delinquent behavior to what she calls paradoxical patterns of child-rearing. In a Puerto Rican home there is authority that demands docility and conformity and yet emotional behavior is traditional. Self control is neither valued nor taught, hence the appearance of somatic symptoms and "ataque." Against this kind of family background La Viste maintains that "action" that often takes place on the street is used as a defense against anxiety. Self esteem is bolstered by acts of danger and daring in the "machismo" tradition. The ego in this situation has a low tolerance for tension, discharging it with a burst of action which is often harmless but may be dangerous as in a crime of passion. La Viste points out that there are not infrequent incidents of older Puerto Rican adolescents hanging themselves in jail while awaiting trial on minor charges. Overall, La Viste feels that clinical problems, with Puerto Rican adolescent boys, in particular, are focused mainly in the area of delinquency and drug abuse. She sees "the antisocial behavior as the culmination of a life experience born basically
of poverty and peer influence and aggravated by the disorganizing result of migration, the alienating effect of language impoverishment and racial prejudice." (La Viete, 1979, p. 266)

In their study of delinquents and non-delinquents in Puerto Rico, Ferracuti, Dinitz and Acosta de Brenes (1975) relate delinquency among Puerto Rican adolescents to poverty and disorganized families. In their control group of families they find higher educational attainment among the parents and more control and legitimate marriage. In his study done in the 1940's, Schepses (1949) too relates delinquency among Puerto Rican adolescents to poverty and broken homes. Ferracuti et al also found that all Puerto Rican adolescents in their study who were delinquent also gave evidence of some sort of psychiatric problem while only about 50 percent of their control subjects gave similar evidence. Bram (in Bucichione and Cordasco, 1968) makes a further connection between loss of parental control and the acquiring of new values and language on the part of young Puerto Ricans. Gradually Puerto Rican families find themselves in a situation where their children know and use a language that they do not and acquire values that are strange and foreign. Within this context it becomes difficult to exercise parental authority.

La Viete offers many clinical impressions that are subjectively derived and as previously indicated are often perceived as overly negative. Describing the personality of Puerto Rican children La Viete (1979, pp. 264-271) finds little in the way of "ego ideal." According to her Puerto Rican youngsters tend to externalize sources of discontent, blaming reverses on bad luck, fate, the neighborhood or bad friends. Solutions to problems are sought in material goods and new possessions. With Puerto Rican youngsters there tends to be a denial of time and future expectations. Humor is a widely used defense against fear, despair and
resignation. She feels that there is a "greater degree of self acceptance with Puerto Rican adolescent males, that is born of his fatalism, tolerant superego and limited ego ideal, leading to certain freedoms which are absent in the larger culture. There is a capacity for the short term enjoyment of bodily and social pleasures in the midst of a marginal material existence" (La Viste, 1979, p. 270). La Viste sees a low aspiration level balancing the discrepancy between the standard of living of Puerto Ricans and others in the larger society. She feels that with Puerto Rican families fatalism cushions failure. "Family ties and acceptance and the option of returning to the beautiful homeland aids in the development of a pleasure seeking style of life which seems to survive the rigors of growing up impoverished in an alien culture." (La Viste, 1979, p. 270).

La Viste (1979) finds that many Puerto Rican children grow up in a home environment where there is little pressure brought to bear around time oriented tasks. Dependency and passivity are encouraged and as a result the Puerto Rican child is often not prepared for the structured, competitive world of school. This would seem to relate to the fact that many Puerto Rican children have a lower than average functional I.Q. even when tested in Spanish on culture free tests (Arando & Padilla, 1974). Cordasoo and Bucchione (1968) found that at a 3rd grade level only 10 percent of Puerto Rican children are reading at grade level and by the 8th grade two thirds are 3 years behind. This, according to Cordasoo and Bucchione, explains some of the feelings of helplessness, dependence and inferiority seen with Puerto Rican youngsters.

Generally, La Viste (1979) agrees with other authors concerning the
prevalence of emotional symptoms with Puerto Rican children. She estimates that half of Puerto Rican children on the mainland between five and nine have difficulty in going to bed, and various kinds of sleep disturbances. In particular she agrees with previously cited authors concerning the identity problems of Puerto Rican adolescents. Thomas (1974) feels that these problems are complicated for male children because of Puerto Rican fathers appearing simultaneously powerful in the family but inadequate in the society. With all of these problems La Viste (1979) asserts that by the time Puerto Rican children reach adolescence school often has little meaning to them. There is little push to plan for the future and gradually street peers become the reference group as opposed to families or society. As Puerto Rican children get older, La Viste sees them being very expressive and action oriented, particularly in sexual areas, and the spontaneous expression of feeling. According to her a low aspiration level makes sublimation difficult for Puerto Rican children.

From the small amount that has been written about Puerto Rican children in general and Puerto Rican adolescents in particular, one gathers a generally negative impression of a very troubled, delinquency prone population. Indeed, for a substantial number of Puerto Rican adolescents in the Northeastern part of the United States this does seem to be an important part of their picture. However, a number of sources suggest that part of the problem with Puerto Rican adolescents has to do with the negative and stereotypical way in which they are perceived. For example there has been some evidence in school systems that Puerto Rican children have been incorrectly classified as disturbed or retarded by child study teams (The Newark Star Ledger, 1974). Both D. Lugo-Frey
(1980) and Canino et al (1980), while decrying the lack of research having to do with Puerto Rican children both comment on the negative way in which these youngsters are perceived. Writing having to do with Puerto Ricans in general supports the idea that part of the difficulty with Puerto Rican adolescents has to do with the negative perception of the larger society. See for example Hidalgo (1971), Mayerson (1975), Palomare (1971), Thomas (1967).

Generally it would seem to be agreed that for a variety of reasons Puerto Rican adolescents are a population under great stress. Evidence of this would be the aforementioned high rates of delinquency, school and job dropouts, emotional disturbance and negative perceptions of the larger society. Few authors offer more than global suggestions for ways of helping this population. Increased employment and better housing are mentioned as important to a solution as are culturally sensitive schools and social service programs. La Viets (1979) specifically mentions training parents in less paradoxical child rearing patterns and collaboration with influential community figures such as spiritualists. Perhaps the most crying need that comes out of looking at the literature having to do with Puerto Rican children and adolescents is the need for more research concerning this population. Canino et al (1980) makes this point repeatedly.

3. Related Theoretical Areas

There are several distinct theoretical areas that would seem to be logically related to a study of congruence of perceptions where ethnicity
is a variable of particular concern. Principal among these would be theories and concepts related to ethnicity, to role expectations and mutual perceptions and to communication, especially across class and culture.

a. **Ethnicity.** Whether and to what degree ethnicity is an influencing variable in a helping relationship is one of the major concerns of this study. Generally, the literature strongly suggests that it is an important factor and a number of authors emphasize the importance of sensitizing ourselves to ethnic variables in working with minority group members. Weber (1961, p. 305) defines an ethnic group as "a collectivity based on an assumption of common origin real or imaginary." In referring to ethnic groups Schermerhorn (1970) calls them:

A collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements — a necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group — among symbolic elements are included physical contiguity, language or dialect, religion, phenotypical features, kinship patterns and nationality or any combination of these" (p. 12)

Mizio (1980, p. 5) feels that "ethnicity encompasses conscious and unconscious processes, fulfilling a deep psychological need for security, identity and a sense of historical continuity."

Whether or not ethnicity per se should be a prime consideration in the delivery of services is an important issue to be addressed especially as the public sector involvement in helping has increased. As Jenkins (1980) points out, in a small voluntary agency that defines itself ethnically
this is less of an issue. Jenkins (1980) maintains that recognition and sensitivity to ethnic issues is an important supportive measure especially if a person has lost traditional family supports. Unfortunately, there seems to be a tendency to play down the importance of ethnicity and as Jenkins and Morrison (1979) indicate there are few efforts to operationalize ethnic issues, attitudes or positions, for the purpose of improving access of minority clients to service. However, ethnic background is a major part of one's reality and its importance is emphasized by a number of authors. In discussing ethnicity Kolochny (1969) states that:

it is important however to recognize that in the American experience there has always been another aspect of social reality related to class, i.e., to the patterns of distribution of wealth and the life styles of aggregates of people possessing various forms and amounts of wealth, but distinguishable from it: — ethnic ties, sometimes in addition to but other times distinct from or even in opposition to those of class, have historically influenced the behavior and views of individuals in this country towards others and how they feel about themselves (p. 20).

Stein and Cloward (1975, p. 4) argue that "a general lack of systematic appraisal of ethnic factors in their more subtle forms impairs the fullest use of social workers understanding of psychology and philosophic orientations." Spiegel (1978, pp. 576-593) too feels that "in the future as much consideration will have to be given to problems of cultural dynamics as has been given in the past to purely psychological processes." Ethnic origins and divisions in our society strongly affect the views people have towards themselves and others and conditions many of the behavior choices they make as family members, producers, citizens, clients and patients (Kolochny, 1969). Katlin (1982, p. 168) feels that
helpers need to be more widely educated about ethnicity. He sees it as "an important component of one's identity -- involving conscious and unconscious processes that fulfill a deep psychological need for security, identity and a sense of historical continuity. It is transmitted in emotional language in the family. An attempt at re-establishing it is called ethnic bonding." In her work with students Pinderhughes (1979, p. 80) states that they "come to recognize that each person usually perceives his or her ethnic group and those of others as existing in a hierarchical relationship - with one group having more power and another less and that when these groups relate to one another their feelings and behavior tend to be complementary and to be influenced by their relative position of power." Representing what appears to be a minority view, Wong (1982) does not entirely support the idea that ethnicity is of major importance in a helping situation. She looked at the impact of ethnic status on social work clinical judgements using a sample of Japanese and Caucasian subjects. She was interested in such areas as problem solving, extent of disturbance and general sensitivity. Overall she found that professionalism was seen as a more important predictor of behavioral norms than ethnicity. These particular ideas concerning perception and ethnicity pertain very specifically to this study which looks at the relationship between congruence of views and ethnicity.

Speaking more generally other authors emphasize the impact that ethnicity has on various aspects of individual lives. Illich (1956) speaks of the effects of Puerto Rican ethnicity on the Puerto Rican immigration to New York City. Opler and Singer (1955) emphasize the
relationship between ethnicity and the forms that mental illness assumes and Glazer and Moynihan (1963, p. 16) spoke of the ethnic group in America "not as a survival from the age of immigration but as a new social form."

An issue of particular concern relative to ethnicity has to do with service delivery. Mizio (1980) discusses this area as do Jenkins and Morrison (Review of Literature, 1974, p. 31). Jenkins and Morrison maintain that service delivery to children of minority groups is very often hampered by a lack of recognition of ethnic variables. They state that "the social worker may be called upon in situations where cultural conflict is involved, where awareness of ethnic group values, internal stresses and acculturation concepts are essential for appropriate intervention." As previously indicated most of the literature supports the idea that ethnic minorities feel that services to children must be culturally sensitive if the children are to survive culturally. Billingsley and Giovanni (1972) put it more dramatically. They state that practitioners in child welfare must:

abandon the notion that a single, white conceived, white dominated and white administered system of child welfare, hampered as it is by racism, bureaucracy, professionalism and sectarianism, can possibly meet the needs of all children of all races and subcultures. We need to adopt a pluralistic, multi-ethnic conception of child welfare services and to develop deliberately systematically different child welfare services that will explicitly consider these ethnic realities (p. 221).

The Puerto Rican Task Force Report (Miranda, 1974), the New York Committee for the Care of Puerto Rican Children (1974), and the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Child Development (1971) emphasize the importance of staff in social agencies
being sensitive to ethnic and cultural issues in dealing with Puerto Rican children. For example, if placement is indicated for a Puerto Rican child studies from these groups recommend that it be in a Puerto Rican foster home so as to maintain cultural continuity. They encourage the hiring of Puerto Rican personnel and the training of non-Spanish speaking staff in the Spanish language. Both Rivera (1979) and Mizio (1972, pp. 267-272) express concern over the lack of Puerto Rican professionals in key agency positions. Specifically addressing herself to the therapeutic relationship, Mizio discusses the reality of racism in the relationship and contends that "admitting there is a problem can be extremely threatening to social workers who have an emotional and professional stake in viewing themselves as able to cut across class, racial and ethnic lines. They would rather see the development of new role techniques and approaches as sufficient."

In sum, the literature generally supports the notion that the concept of ethnicity is an important reality in American life. Moreover, there are repeated references to the importance of service agencies who deal with ethnic minorities being sensitive to ethnic variables. An awareness of and sensitivity to ethnic considerations would seem to be critical in working with ethnic minorities.

b. Role Expectations and Mutual Perceptions. The interaction that occurs between a client and a helper very much depends upon their mutually perceived roles. This study is concerned with the mutual perception of client and helper of a common area - the helping experience. Thinking, then, concerning role and role expectations is an important theoretical
base for the research.

In speaking of roles Goffman (1961, pp. 85-152) indicates that commitment to a role is generally important to sound mental health. He defines role as the typical response of individuals in a particular situation. How committed an individual is to a particular role will have a powerful impact on how the individual's role performance is perceived. He calls lack of commitment to a role, "role distance." In clients this same phenomena is referred to as "resistance." Thus, one might speculate that lack of awareness of cultural variables on the part of a social worker might be perceived by a minority client as a lack of commitment to a helping role. Conversely, a minority client's ethnic idiosyncrasies could be perceived by a social worker as a lack of commitment to a client role. According to Deutsch, Kraus and Morton in Stream (1967, pp. 77-78), a "social role" is supposed to denote "behavioral enactment of that part of the status which prescribes how the status occupant should act towards one of the persons with whom his status rights and obligations put him in contact." Along the same lines, Nelson (1962) feels that therapist and patient alike engage in efforts to induce one another to enact the role or roles which each deem necessary to maintain and promote the interpersonal situation. A client expects a social worker to play a helpful role in order for the interpersonal situation in which they find themselves to have meaning. According to Stream (1967, p. 81) "to be effective in the treatment situation, the helper, it is suggested, must realize that comprehensive treatment necessitates throughout the adoption of multiple stances and roles determined by the dynamic unfolding of each individual case." The client too is supposed to play certain "roles" relating to
involving himself in treatment, being on time for appointments, etc. Strain observes that sometimes the caseworker plays the role of a rejecting mother or father when the client does not enact his prescribed roles appropriately. Concerning mutual role expectations, Briar and Biller (1971) state that:

the caseworker, if he is to be perceived as helpful by the client, must minimize discrepancies between his own and his client's conception of what they are doing together. To do so requires that the caseworker make an effort to discover his client's conception and expectations and be prepared accordingly to modify his own behavior and his expectations of the client or else educate the client to the workers views (p. 109).

This sensitivity to how a client expects us to act and what in turn are our expectations of them is particularly important in dealing with clients whose status is unfamiliar to us - a situation that could prevail, for example, with a non-Puerto Rican helper working with Puerto Rican adolescents. The ethnic element in role behavior is a critical one and one that has been shown to differentiate role expectation (Nall, 1962). Jenkins and Norman (1975) found that Puerto Rican women perceived their role as formal vis-a-vis social workers and social agencies and that it was expected of them to verbalize concern for their children.

Overall, Jenkins and Norman (1975, p. 120) maintain that how clients perceive the helping experience very much relates to the role expectations they have of social workers and helpers in general where role refers to "a set of specifications for role appropriate behavior or ideas of what people think behavior ought to be with respect to a specific position in a social system." Clients perceptions of their roles very much relate to
the size and type of agency too. For example, mothers involved with nonsectarian agencies in Jenkins and Norman's (1975) study, tended to report their major expectations regarding appropriate role behavior as expressing concern for the child and acquiescence toward the social worker.

Intimately related to the area of role behavior are the mutual perceptions of client and worker. In their study of the expected behavior of helping persons, Thomas, Polansky and Kounin (1955, P. 166) maintain that a "client's decision to commit himself to a continuing relationship with a helping person is the result of two kinds of organizing perceptions: (1) that the helping person is competent to help on the problem and (2) that the helping person wants to help this particular client with this particular problem." Overall they found that an initial perception of a helper as sincerely interested affects client's role expectation of the helper.

A number of studies have focused on either client or helper perception. Studies by McCoy (1975), Overton (1960), Ballard and Mudd (1958) and Maluccio (1977) have all looked at client and helper views and all report agreement between client and worker on positive outcomes. However, there seems to be some lack of agreement as to why the helping experience was perceived as producing positive results. Maluccio (1977) speculates that some of this perceived positive outcome may simply be in the mind of the client who has invested a tremendous amount in time and energy in the encounter. Fanshel (1958) suggests that this perceived positive outcome may be related to the influence of a strong relational bond that has grown between the client or worker or may be related to resources in the client's environment that become mobilized. This raises the question as to whether mutual satisfaction with the outcome of a
helping experience necessarily means mutual perception of what the outcome actually is. It also raises the question of how and whether worker perceptions influence client perception, and vice-versa. Fanshel, for example, felt that social workers' perceptions of clients' was very important. In his study of caseworkers' perceptions of clients he found that returning clients were not considered "promising cases" and that marital problems and personality problems where there was little insight were given "poor ratings" by caseworkers.

Indeed, one might be led to ask whether there is any relationship, positive or negative between mutuality of perceptions and a positive encounter between helpers and clients. The literature does suggest that there is a positive relationship between the variables. Mayer and Timms (1970) indicate strongly that clients felt that only those who were like themselves in age, marital status and sex could really understand them. In their study of kinship patterns, Leichter and Mitchell (1967) found that congruence of values and experience may contribute to the caseworker's feelings of ease in working with a particular client. Similarly in their view, a client's perception of a caseworker's congruence to his own experience and values affects communication. However, as a caveat here it should be indicated that Leichter and Mitchell also express the view that it is not the degree of congruence in values and experience, but the extent to which the caseworker has a knowledge and understanding of the client's position - an understanding that involves an awareness of cultural variables - that is most important to treatment. Leichter and Mitchell (1967, p. 260) feel that "concepts relative to culture and social interaction must ultimately be part of the framework of practitioners," but seem to suggest that congruence though
helpful is not a sine qua non of successful practice. Littwin (1975) on the other hand found that the more agreement or congruence there is between client and worker around a number of areas such as political views, religious background, definitions of problems, etc., the longer the client-worker relationship lasted. She refers to mutuality between client and worker as "validation" and states that when client and worker validate each other there is self reported satisfaction in therapy. Her study as well as a number of others suggests that a positive response in therapy is related to client and worker being similar to each other. The studies of Hollingshead and Redlich (1958), Rubenstein and Lorr (1956) and Overall and Aronson (1963) all support the idea that sameness of demographic variables, for example, race, I.Q., education, verbal ability and socio-economic background, have an impact on the client-worker relationship. Adinolfi (1971) found that not only sameness of demographic variables but similarity of preferred ways of thinking and of personality in general was associated with therapeutic success.

Mayer and Timms (1970, p. 3) lament the paucity of social work research that focuses on the views of clients. They suggest that one of the reasons for this is the assumption that "the judgments of practitioners and clients would coincide." Their study focuses more on client perspectives along evaluative lines of their counselling experience and they cite a number of studies particularly in psychotherapy which reveals marked disparity between client views and practitioner views. They mention, for example, Kogan (1957) and Kogan, Hunt and Bartelme (1953). At the same time, the evidence as presented in Mayer and Timms (1970, p. 10) suggest that "although congruency in expectations between helpers and clients may be important, under certain conditions its
importance may be over-ridden by other considerations, as for example when clients have extramural reasons for remaining in therapy."

As an illustration of this Mayer and Timms cite the example of someone continuing in therapy to punish a family member. In looking at sources of client dissatisfaction, Mayer and Timms (1970, p. 155) see as a major reason the fact that clients and workers had "different ways of thinking about and coping with personal problems." Clients in their study tended to blame others in their environment for their problems while workers focus on client self awareness. Mayer and Timms suggest too that much of the disparity existing between client and worker has to do with a difference in thinking about how a professional client relationship should be structured. For example, professionals are supposed to maintain "emotional distance" from their clients while the clients in Mayer and Timms' study often did not see their workers as emotionally neutral. Similarly professionals assume an entitlement to intimate personal knowledge about their clients, while clients in the Mayer and Timms' research express the view that their workers were sometimes nosey or prying.

In all it would seem that the whole area of demographic and perceptual congruence between helpers and clients needs to be looked at carefully. Although many studies suggest the importance of congruence of views and demography in a social worker-client relationship the extent of its impact on the helping experience is not entirely clear.

In a situation where there is an obvious lack of congruity between worker and client relative to cultural, socioeconomic and ethnic variables
it would seem even more important to examine their congruence or lack of congruence of views. That ethnic and cultural variables affect both worker and client views seems evident. Gudelia Betancourt (1974, p. 20) expresses the view that Puerto Ricans who migrate to the United States are subject to the stresses of marginality. "Majority group members tend to perceive them as inferior because they are viewed as poor, unemployed, uneducated and politically weak." Mizio (1980, p. 16) too feels that many agencies have negative perceptions of Puerto Ricans and that Puerto Rican perceptions of social agencies are affected by their awareness of these perceptions. She states that simply hiring bi-lingual workers will result in many of them sitting alone in their offices because "the experience (of Puerto Ricans) with other social welfare agencies such as public assistance departments and other institutions such as schools and the police, have often made them leery, disenchanted and frustrated with Anglo institutions."

The particular perceptions of adolescents and their congruence with the perceptions of helpers is a difficult area, one in which the literature is weak. Bryt (1969, p. 294) offers the view that "in working with adolescents we often make the assumption that we share a semantic framework because we speak the same language." He noted that for some adolescents verbal language has no communicative meaning. Studies by Wroben (1955) and Jossylyn (1957) suggest that the perceptions of adolescents of social workers and the helping experience in general is very much influenced by the kind of relationship the adolescent experiences with the social worker. Some authors such as Ross (1941, pp. 231 - 239) suggest that adolescents see helpers as a vehicle for
identification, a kind of role model. In this view the social worker is seen as a kind of "ego ideal." Beker (1965, pp. 18 - 26) in his study found that social workers were looked upon as offering "succorance." Eismann (1977) in an "on the street" therapeutic community in the South Bronx looked at the perceptions of children and adolescents of therapeutic gains and change agents. In his program Eismann mobilizes the natural systems and relationships existing among youth to solve problems. The youth saw their peer groups as "family" where the relationships themselves are used to provide change.

In reviewing various theories relative to adolescents, Laycock (1970) indicates how the perspectives of adolescents can be "muddled" by a number of internal and transfe ren tial variables. He discusses a Freudian view, where seduction, homosexual crushes and fear of their own feelings all color the way an adolescent perceives helpers. Being a marginal kind of person psychosexually between the world of a child and the world of an adult will "skew" the view a youngster has of the world. If, as in Sullivan's (1955) view, the personality is the meeting place of all relationships then the adolescent's view of himself will depend on his relationship with significant others such as a social worker.

Authors such as Seidman (1958) and Remmers and Radles (1958) feel that how an adolescent perceives the world depends upon their social milieu. Thus the views of youth during the depression centered on concern over finding a job and during the 50's on the importance of conforming.

Regardless of the particular theoretical "thrust" the reality is that adolescents do have a point of view and in looking at a helper/adolescent dyad it is the adolescent's perspective that is often overlooked. As has
previously been indicated Canino et al (1980) suggests going directly to Hispanic children to understand their perceptions and indeed this does seem to be a much needed approach.

c. Communication - Knapp (1965, pp. 88-90) indicates that "each person's perceptions of others are structured by his or her own cultural conditioning, education and personal experiences." These circumstances in turn affect communication. The whole area of communication is an important one to look at in working with clients of various cultures and very much relates to the area of congruence or dissonance in perspectives. Stark (1959, pp. 179-183) indicates that clients from various cultures often have a meager or distorted understanding of casework services. She states that "certain clients can only believe in the helpfulness of social workers as they experience such help."
Schatzman and Strauss (1966, pp. 442-455) too found that class and culture have an impact on how clients communicate with helping sources. They felt that in communicating, lower class people tended to focus on themselves while middle class individuals had a perspective that included other people. According to Schatzman and Strauss the communication of lower class people is characterized by concreteness and a lack of imagery. They state that "cross class communication, while not rare, probably is fairly formalized or routinized." Hall and Whyte (1963) remind us of the complexity of communication across culture:

- when communication takes place between two cultures, these effects are even more complex - in these inter-cultural situation there is little of the co-orientation that is a prerequisite for communication in general. This greatly increases the possibility of misunderstanding and of unexpected reactions (p. 563).
Cross (1974, pp. 44-53) feels both race and social class create major expectations in the minds of participants in a social work interview and establishes that classes do indeed exist. He then goes on to assert that different classes have different "value ideas"—for example, ideas about authority—which are then brought into an interview situation. Cross, too, makes the point that cultural and class background affect not only verbal communication but all manner of non-verbal communication, body language, cues, facial expressions, etc. Leichter and Mitchell (1976) make the point that there are many ways of communicating and that perhaps the predominate way is non-verbal. In attempting to communicate across class and/or culture we have to be careful to look at our own "cultural assumptions." This is especially difficult to do if we are talking about an interchange with someone who is similar to ourselves in certain respects:

—although it may be relatively easy to perceive cultural assumptions when confronted with dramatic differences between widely disparate cultures, it is much more difficult to be aware of socially derived assumptions when working with a more subtle range of variations,—it is important to be able to distinguish professional thinking that embodies implicit cultural assumptions and that based on objectively validated knowledge (p. 261).

The ideas discussed up to this point concerning communication, it appears, are central to work with minorities—particularly adolescent minorities which in a sense is a minority within a minority. Concerning working with minorities, Kanno (1966, p. 516) too indicates that it is a mistake to focus too much on the importance of verbal communication. He
states that "it is true enough that ethnic differences between patient and therapist may foreclose linguistic correspondence. Under such circumstances both participants may accept perhaps too readily that they cannot communicate. Therapy then, often fails not primarily because of language difficulties but because of shared negative expectations."

Varon (1964, pp. 51-57) studied social work with minority families in a protective agency. The agency used "aggressive casework," that is, casework initiated by the agency not the client. She found that the clients "lacked not only knowledge but curiosity about the agency."

Although both social workers and social agencies were considered common neighborhood phenomena by her sample, generally they saw themselves as relating to a particular social worker and not to the agency. These people had negative ideas about the agency seeing it as punitive and existing to remove children. Social workers were seen, however, as "nosey, but helpful like bill collectors or the police." Against this background and for this population the possibility of difficulty in communication with social workers can be seen. This would be especially so for Varon's population since she feels that congruence between individual's frames of reference is crucial to being able to communicate. She defines effective communication as occurring "when senders and recipients of messages gave them the same interpretation."

According to several authors, for example, Dick and Strand (1958), Myers and Robins (1960) and Burgess (1969), middle class helpers have difficulty in communicating with lower class clients. One can surmise that the added ingredient of a difference in ethnic or racial background would intensify this difficulty. Indeed, Knapp (1969) points out the very real danger of a kind of "selective interaction" in social work practice, that is, communicating only with those like ourselves.
d. **Summary** - The literature strongly supports the view that Puerto Ricans in the United States in the 1980's are an extremely vulnerable population. Coming from a history of oppression they find themselves in a marginal position in the United States where there is often little support for traditional values such as the emphasis on the father's role in the Puerto Rican family. Puerto Rican adolescents find themselves in an especially stressful situation being in a transition between life stages and two cultures. High delinquency rates, school drop out rates and mental illness rates among Puerto Rican children all testify to the painful situation in which they find themselves.

Social agencies have not been notably successful in reaching this population and the literature suggests the importance of looking at several areas to understand why this is so. The literature repeatedly emphasizes the importance of ethnicity in working with minority groups as well as the importance of understanding role expectations and mutual perceptions of client and worker. Tied to the area of role expectations and mutual perceptions is the area of communication. Here too the literature emphasizes the importance of a sensitive understanding of how and whether helpers are communicating with clients, particularly across class and culture.
CHAPTER 3

STUDY PLAN AND METHODOLOGY

1. Overview

The questions and concerns of the study are addressed through obtaining data about two populations: a group of Puerto Rican adolescents and a group of adult helpers. Although much of the data measures the perceptions of the two groups, considerable material is obtained permitting a comparison of groups on demographic variables.

The basic idea of the study is to compare groups - particularly the perceptions of groups - as they relate to the helping experience. The groups of interest in this study are a sample of adult helpers of various ethnic backgrounds and a sample of Puerto Rican adolescents. The group of adult helpers has been selected based on ethnic background to see whether this variable had a significant influence on congruence or dissonance of views with the adolescents. Within this larger context the study seeks to examine the demographics and perceptions first of a group of Puerto Rican teenagers; it then moves on to look at the demographics and perceptions of a group of adult helpers. With the adult helpers there is an inter-group comparison made based on the helper's ethnic background. Finally the study compares the adolescents with each of the adult helper groups.

Although the study has quasi-experimental traits to it — relative to the manipulation of the adult population — essentially it is an exploratory study that seeks to gain understanding of previously uncharted
areas. Further, the study could be characterized as being what Kahn and Finestone (1960, pp. 46-61) call "pre-research" in that although it uses some quasi-experimental mechanics, it really seeks to generate ideas and thinking about an area where very little previous work has been done and where there is very little in the way of a theoretical framework to guide one. At the same time the techniques and methods that are used — a structured instrument, a survey approach to a sampled population — are those used in studies that are at least quasi-experimental. The hypotheses are suggestive, working hypotheses, but nevertheless ones that seek to explain the relation between certain variables, so the study can be called explanatory as well as exploratory (Williamson, 1977, p. 20).

The study can be characterized as being phenomenological as well as being both qualitative and quantitative. In a very real sense this is a study of how a group of people experience a particular aspect of their reality. In Bogdan and Taylor's words, "the phenomenologist looks at how the world is experienced; he is concerned with understanding human behavior from the actor's own frame of reference. For the phenomenologist the important reality is what people imagine it to be" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, p. 2.). Since the study looks at peoples' interpretations of phenomena, the research approach grows out of a symbolic interactionist framework where a situation has meaning only through peoples' interpretations and definitions of it (Blumer, 1969).

The particular approaches used in the study as well as the instrumentation are often qualitative. In the early data gathering there were direct encounters between the researcher and subjects, particularly the youthful subjects; the subjective, open ended items in the instrument
for both adolescents and adults can also be characterized as qualitative approaches. A qualitative approach is often justified in looking at previously unexplored areas. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) notions about grounded theory, that is, theory generated inductively from data systematically obtained and analyzed, are important to the researcher's thinking here.

Notwithstanding the various uses of qualitative approaches a major part of the approach to the material is quantitative. The sample size (N=128), although small, allows for a quantitative analyses. Much of the instrument consists of objective questions where the variables of interest are ordered, categorical items. The items are given numerical scores or weights so that, for purposes of measurement, discrete interval scores imposed on continuous interval variables are created (Monroe, pp. 10 & 47).

2. **Underlying Assumptions of the Study**

A basic assumption of the study is that what both client and helpers report as their perceptions and views accurately reflects their inner thoughts and feelings. Too, the assumption is made that there is value in knowing the perceptions of both clients and helpers. Studies by both Beck and Jones (1973) and Mayer and Timms (1970) emphasize the importance of looking at clients' and workers' views. Relative to the helping experience it is assumed in this study that congruence of perception between client and helper impacts positively on the experience. Along with this there is the assumption that dissonance in perception between client and helper impacts negatively on the experience.
The instrument is newly devised and not standardized so it is assumed that what is called an operationalized definition of the helping experience actually does define a person's experience of being helped. To a large extent it is assumed that the questions get at the experience of being helped and that a higher "score" value to the objective questions reflects a more positive attitude toward the helping experience. Although the idea of the study is explained in detail to the populations, still, to some extent, the assumption is made that the subjects' ideas about giving and taking help fit the study purposes.

3. Definition of Major Concepts

There are certain concepts that are crucial to the study. These include the following:

a. Ethnic Background - Refers to how the subjects identify themselves along ethnic lines. There is considerable confusion in dealing with terms in this area especially with individuals who identify themselves as Puerto Rican. For example, "Black" can refer to racial background or ethnicity although in the United States it more often refers to race, while "Puerto Rican" suggests both. For purposes of the study an attempt is made to get at where a person sees themselves along both dimensions with the understanding that in American culture "race" connotes ethnicity as it is more strictly understood.
b. **Ethnicity** - Ethnicity can have various definitions. The term refers to those characteristics in a person's identity that places them in an ethnic group. In a general sense an ethnic group consists of those who share a unique social and cultural heritage that is passed on from generation to generation (Mindel & Haberstein, 1977). Weber (1961, p. 305) defines an ethnic group as "a collectivity based on an assumption of common origin, real or imagined."

c. **Latino** - Refers to individuals in the study who identify themselves in any Hispanic category such as Puerto Rican, Puerto Rican American, Spanish American, etc.

d. **Anglo** - When used in the study refers to any individual who identifies as White or White-ethnic.

e. **Minority** - This term is used interchangeably with the names of the Black and Latino ethnic groups under consideration in the study. Thus, minority adolescent in the study means a Puerto Rican adolescent and minority helper means a Black or Latino individual. Schermerhorn's (1945, p. 347) definition is useful. He states that "minorities are subgroups within a culture which are distinguishable from the dominant group in power by reason of differences in physical features, language, customs or cultural patterns."
f. **Adolescent** - Refers to individuals in the study between the ages of 13 and 20. The term adolescent is a product of our society and recent times, referring to a particular phase of life. It can mean several things depending upon the context in which it is used. It can be considered a period of discovery, of the self and the world; a transition period between childhood and adulthood; or a time of physiological change (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1971). Kett (1977) documents the evolving of thinking concerning this period in a person's life and demonstrates how thinking in terms of keeping young men and women in a kind of developmental limbo during this time is useful to our modern society.

g. **Helpers** - although the majority of the adult helpers in the study identify themselves as social workers, a significant number who did hands on, frontline work with Puerto Rican adolescents did not. Strictly speaking, this number could not be called social workers or case workers or social work therapists or any of the other appellations that are usually thought of as referring to social workers. Some of those in the study who worked in a helping way with Puerto Rican adolescents called themselves counselors — others were guidance counselors, while still others were teachers. Since the concern of the study is the helping experience and not, in a major way, the professional identity of the helper, and since in Newark many individuals who work with Puerto Rican adolescents cannot, strictly speaking, be called social workers, our adult subjects are referred to interchangeably as helpers or social workers.
h. **Social Worker** - this term is used interchangeably with helper, and for purposes of the study means the same thing.

i. **Perceptions** - The study looks at the perceptions that the populations have of particular phenomena. Perception as used in the study denotes sensory experience that has gained meaning or significance (Gould & Kolb, 1964). There has been continued debate over the relationship between mind and objective reality, but generally psychology and sociology agree that perception pertains to the assignment of meaning to previously raw and undefined sensory experience — it is the process by which what is in the field of view is measured in a way that is meaningful (Gould & Kolb, 1964, pp. 491-492). "Perception of the helping experience" is the major dependent variable in the study and is operationalized through a breaking down of the "helping experience" concept into parts related to empirical referents.

j. **Congruence** - In this study this term means simply alike or similar or following the American Dictionary (1979 p. 120): "corresponding in character or kind — harmonious." This study is concerned with the congruence of the perceptions of two groups.
k. **Dissonance** - Following Funk and Wagnall's (1982, p. 370) definition, this term in the study refers to "disagreement, incongruity - to that which doesn't fit or match or which is not alike." The study is concerned with the dissonance in the perceptions of two groups.

1. **The Helping Experience** - In the study we have broken down the concept of the helping experience into its component parts based in a general way on the thinking of Helen Harris Perlman (1975) and Sister Mary Paul Janchill (1979). Perlman looks at the problem, the person, the professional representative and the process (involving the relationship) as being part and parcel of what she calls "social casework." For purposes of the study her "person" concept is taken and applied to the self-perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescents and the ethnic background of the helpers.

In Janchill's view (Janchill, 1979), the neighborhood is part of an ecological system that can (or cannot) be mobilized as a helping resource. She says:

ultimately it is in the neighborhood that youth must learn societal goals, develop human commitments and achieve functional roles. Ultimately also it is in the neighborhood — in the matrix of interacting, social organizations that make up a community — that children have become marginalized, set aside, rejected and made officially illegitimate. Thus, delinquency is not only a personal status for a given child, it is also a problem of the neighborhood (p. 260).
For purposes of the study then certain pieces of what Perlman and Janchill see as being related to the experience of being helped are taken and a composite, now operationalized, definition of the helping experience is formed. Each of these pieces can be further defined:

. The Person - Many aspects of one's persona come into play in the process of giving or receiving help. For the adolescents the study to looks at their self-perception and for the adults, their ethnic background. The ethnic background of the helpers is focused on to see if this variable has an important impact on the helping experience. Thus, the study examines the ethnic background of the helpers not only as part of the operationalized definition of the helping experience, but also as a major independent variable relative to the central questions of the study.

. The Community - Refers to the neighborhoods in which the Puerto Rican adolescents live and/or the total environment in which the helping experience occurs.

. The Helpers - Refers to those adult individuals in the study who have had substantial, direct, hands on experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents.
. The Problem - Refers to a perceived area of
difficulty or conflict.

. The Process - Refers to the "dynamic equation"
occurring between helper and client - to the
relationship that exists and by means of which
help is given. Relates to whatever interchange,
verbal or otherwise that occurs between a helper
and client that has as its purpose the benefit of
the client.

4. Selection of the Study Population

   a. Overview of Sampling Procedures

      The study uses a non-probability sampling procedure. The
selection procedures are purposive in that the populations were selected,
not because of their representativeness, but because of their relevance to
the study interests. A decision was made to develop an adult sample of
sixty, evenly divided between Blacks, Latinos and Whites and an adolescent
sample also of sixty. The adult helpers were selected from eleven
different agencies while the adolescents came from three agencies, with
the greater majority coming from one agency in North Newark.

      After a more formalized pilot effort the researcher was able to enlist
the aid of the Essex County, New Jersey, Division of Youth Services which
provided invaluable assistance in connecting us with appropriate resources. The Community Resources Unit of the Division of Youth Services within the County of Essex facilitated the research effort by strongly encouraging the participation of its member agencies in the project. Through their help the researcher gained entrance to agencies where it was possible to develop both an adult and adolescent sample.

In beginning this procedure, under the auspices of the Essex County Division of Youth Services, letters were sent out to fourteen Essex County agencies where it was felt that there would be staff who presently or in the past had substantial experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents.

1. The Adult Sample

In selecting the adult sample as indicated a decision had been made to include approximately sixty individuals. The main criterion for inclusion in the sample was that the identified helper have had substantial experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents. The letter sent to the administrators of the agencies specifically asked them to identify staff having this experience. This information was then communicated to the researcher who made contact with the agencies with staff appropriate for inclusion in the study. Out of the fourteen agencies contacted eleven reported having staff who presently or at some point in their career had worked with Puerto Rican adolescents. Through this purposive selection an adult sample of sixty-seven subjects evenly divided among Latinos, Blacks and Whites was developed.
Through early efforts at developing an appropriate adult sample it soon became apparent that a more meaningful sample of "social workers" would be developed if the concept were expanded to include individuals with a variety of backgrounds. As this was explored in greater depth it also became apparent that many of the "front line" people who work with Puerto Rican teenagers in Newark could not strictly be defined as "social workers" in the conventional sense. Particularly in the ethnic agencies, it was found that many staff members identified themselves simply as "counselors" and some did not have Bachelor degrees. Nevertheless, it seemed that many of these people had very significant helping contact with Puerto Rican teenagers. At the same time many workers, especially in the larger, more established agencies, did fall within a more traditional definition of "social worker," that is, someone with specific training in social work on at least a Bachelor's level, who defined themselves as social workers. It was evident that expanding the concept would produce an adult population that was reflective of those individuals in Newark who had real "helping" contact with Puerto Rican adolescents. The final adult sample then is a group with the kind of variety of background that a Puerto Rican teenager in Newark would be likely to encounter in a helping experience.

The Research Sites

As indicated the helpers selected came from eleven different agencies with the majority coming from child or public welfare agencies (31 percent) or ethnic agencies (26 percent); 10 percent came from
educational settings. Table 3.1 lists the agencies used in the study for the sample of adult helpers.

**TABLE 3.1**

**AGENCIES OF HELPER POPULATIONS**

- Essex County Welfare - Public
- Youth and Family Service Bureau - Public
- Youth Consultation Service - Private, multi service
- United Hospitals
- Project MAYRE - Neighborhood based organization
- La Casa - Ethnic agency
- Aspira - Ethnic agency
- FOCUS - Ethnic agency
- Boys Club - Youth agency
- St. Columba School - Educational
- St. Columba Neighborhood Club - Neighborhood based ethnic agency

### ii. The Adolescent Sample

Criteria for inclusion in the adolescent sample were that a youngster be between the ages of 13 and 20 and be of Puerto Rican background. In order to be included in the study, at some point in his life, a youngster also had to have had contact with at least one helping person. The goal was to find the same number of Puerto Rican teenagers as adult helpers, and sixty-one youngsters who met these criteria were included in the study.
Administrative constraints and considerations of confidentiality made it problematic for the youthful population to be selected from the active caseloads of the adult helpers. So the youngsters included in the study, although all having had experience with helpers, are not "matched" with the particular helpers selected; they may have had experience with the particular helpers but this was not established empirically.

The Research Sites

Ethnic agencies were focused on in selecting the adolescent population because by definition they worked with Puerto Ricans and, therefore, would give the researcher access to a larger Puerto Rican adolescent population. The youthful population was drawn from only three agencies, with the greater majority coming from one agency: La Casa de Don Pedro. There were practical reasons for narrowing the research sites for adolescents in this way: it was not an economic use of time to identify adolescent subjects in agencies such as Aspira because their population is scattered all throughout the city in public and private schools. Agencies such as La Casa and FOCUS work with essentially the same adolescent population and so it seemed inappropriate to use both in a major way. Administrative constraints made access to a client population in a public agency such as the Youth and Family Service Bureau almost impossible. So finally, sites were chosen -- La Casa, St. Columba Neighborhood Club and the Youth Consultations Service -- not only where there was a population of Puerto Rican adolescents, but where research conditions were
favorable. The agencies selected welcomed the project, were extremely flexible about scheduling, the use of space, etc., and were willing to use their own staff to facilitate the research process.

All three of the agencies used for the adolescent population have similar, activity-oriented youth programs serving a predominantly Puerto Rican population. Since the agencies are very similar and since 48 of the 61 youngsters in the sample come from La Casa it seems appropriate to describe that agency in more detail.

La Casa is a multi-service, youth-oriented ethnic agency located in one of the poorest sections of Newark. It is in a neighborhood bordering the downtown section of Newark close to a considerable amount of light industry, deteriorated housing and the notorious Columbus Housing Project. The agency offers crisis counselling and referrals to families, housing and neighborhood rehabilitation programs and a variety of youth activities. Many youngsters drift in and out of the La Casa building perhaps just to play pool or chat with a staff member without being formally involved in a "program." Some who come in are involved in more formalized activities such as sports/recreation groups, counselling or vocational training. Several of the supervisory staff in the agency hold MSW degrees but for the most part the staff are Bachelor level individuals who are identified as counsellors. The agency perceives many of its youth activities as being delinquency prevention programs, at least in intent.
Other Helping Sites

Although only three agencies were used to develop the sample of Puerto Rican adolescents, it was learned during the data gathering process that the youngsters had contact with "helpers" in a variety of settings. Table 3.2 describes the youngsters' contact with helpers. It should be noted that the various categories of settings are not mutually exclusive, so it is possible that a single subject could have had contact with more than one agency or helper. As indicated criteria for inclusion in the sample was that a subject have had contact with at least one helping person.

**TABLE 3.2**

**SETTINGS WHERE ADOLESCENT SUBJECTS HAD CONTACT WITH HELPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HELPER SETTING</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Guidance</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School - Social Worker</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Youth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Casa</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Ascertifiable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many of the youngsters who were in the sample from La Casa did not indicate this agency as a place where they had a "helping contact." Perhaps the very informal nature of the involvement of many of the youngsters at La Casa might explain this. Data suggests that Puerto Rican youth in Newark are involved to a significant degree in delinquent behavior and also that many Hispanic families in Newark have poverty level incomes. The major public agencies in Newark - the Youth and Family Services Bureaus and Essex County Welfare report large Hispanic caseloads. Nevertheless, few of the adolescent subjects reported contact with these larger, traditional public agencies.

5. Pilot Study

Early in the research process a tentative, relatively unstructured pilot project was conducted with approximately five adolescent subjects and five adult helpers. The subjects of this early effort were non-randomly selected from sites to which the author had immediate access: the St. Columba Neighborhood Club and the Youth Consultation Service. There were several purposes in doing the pilot: this was a test of an early form of the instrument as well as an attempt to test out the researcher's thinking relative to the study concepts. Additionally, the pilot indicated the possible availability of subjects for the larger study as well as providing subject feedback about the general ideas of the study.

In the process of doing the pilot study, subjects were interviewed.
This was helpful in formulating meaningful items for the questionnaire. At the same time an early form of the instrument was "pre-tested."

Generally, the instrument as originally conceived was too long, detailed and laborious to expect anyone, least of all adolescent subjects, to wade through. The pilot strongly suggested that it would be necessary to be much more actively involved in the administration of the questionnaire with the adolescents than with the adult subjects. The overall response of both the adults and the adolescents to the pilot was enthusiastic and responsive and encouraged the researcher to move ahead. At the same time from the early discussions with these small groups, some sense of the difficulties that would be involved in obtaining a substantial sample of subjects that would meet the project criteria became apparent. That is, it was soon discovered how difficult it might be to find Puerto Rican adolescents who had been involved in genuine helping experiences and adult helpers involved in the same kind of experience with Puerto Rican adolescents. Of course, this very much tied into the concerns that led to the study originally: the lack of connection between a population at risk and helpers.

At the outset, it was intended that all of the adults be identified as "social workers." Relative to the difficulties in obtaining an adult population the pilot also taught us that there would be a more meaningful sample of "social workers" if the concept was expanded to include individuals of a variety of backgrounds but still individuals who had direct "frontline" experience in working with Puerto Rican teenagers.
6. The Instrument

a. Overview

Although the total sample is relatively small, it was large enough to justify using a survey approach that employed a questionnaire. For all intents and purposes there has been no previous research that asks the questions presented in this study in this way so no attempt was made to use a standardized instrument. The questionnaire then is new and in a very real sense "experimental." As indicated, the various sections of it are based on an operationalized definition of the helping experience drawn from concepts developed by Helen Harris Perlman and Sister Mary Paul Janchill.

i. Structure of the Instrument

The instrument is divided into seven sections, the first six having to do with the total "helper-helpee" configuration and the last part dealing with demographic material. In the first section of the instrument inquiry is made about neighborhood or community. The adolescents are asked about how they see their community and the adults about how they see the neighborhoods or community of their Puerto Rican adolescent clients. The second section has to do with the relationship between a helper and client. The third section asks the adolescents how they see themselves and the adults how they see Puerto Rican adolescents. The fourth section has to do with the "problem" area of the helping experience and asks both adolescents and adults about the kind of problems with which social workers deal. In the fifth section the instrument is
concerned with the views that both the adolescents and adults have of social workers and in the sixth section the subjects are asked about the influence of the ethnic background of a helper on the helping experience. The seventh and last section elicits demographic information. Each of the "helper-helpee" sections has both structured and unstructured questions. The first six questions in each section are objective and create a scale related to a particular area of the helping experience. The last two questions in each section relate to the same area of the helping experience as the first six questions, but are open ended.

Throughout the scaled items and open ended questions the term "social worker" is used instead of helper with the idea that using both terms in the instrument would be confusing, and because field experience of the author suggested that the term was meaningful to Puerto Rican adolescents. When the instrument was administered to the youngsters, the definition of social worker was interpreted as including anyone with whom they had a meaningful helping experience. It was explained in some detail to the youngsters (and to the adult subjects) that the term "social worker" referred not only to social workers strictly defined, but also to helping individuals who called themselves counselors, guidance counsellors, teachers, etc. The interest was in conveying to the youngsters the idea that the study wanted to find out about their views of people who had worked with them in a helping capacity and that these helping people did not necessarily have to be called social workers. Since many youngsters in the author's experience have contact with guidance counsellors, at one point the instrument does suggest a difference between this group of helpers and other helpers with whom the youngsters had contact. This was an effort to see if a guidance
counsellor might have a distinct identity in the youngster's view. There was concern that this might have been confusing to the adolescents and so in the data analysis the responses to this particular item are not included.

Terms were used in the instrument which field experience of the author suggested would have meaning to the populations. Thus, for example, the term "tricky device" was used in the relationship scale because in the author's experience the phrase is often used by adolescents and adults when referring to what are perceived as negative approaches of helpers.

All responses were precoded to allow for quantitative analysis. The "codes" for the objective questions are actually weighted scores enabling the researcher to make some determination about the degree of positive or negative responses.

The scales themselves are made up of several related items, each item having five possible responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Each of these responses has a weighted score ranging from 5, the highest or most positive score to 1, the lowest or most negative score. If a figure of 3.0 is accepted as a middle point relative to positive or negative perceptions, then any mean score above 3.0 would be considered to be moving toward a positive perception and anything below 3.0 to be moving toward a negative perception.

The objective questions are balanced between positive and negative questions, as a way of exercising some control over arbitrary response. Thus on some objective questions "Strongly Agree" would indicate a very positive feeling and be given a "score" of 5, but on other objective questions would express exactly the opposite, earning a score of 1, depending on the content of the question.
The coding done on the unstructured questions has allowed for the development of frequencies with these items. Because of the content of these questions and the variety of ways in which they are posed no attempt is made to go beyond marginals relative to a quantitative analysis of the responses to these items. An inspection of the qualitative responses essentially uses the techniques suggested by Blumer (1969) and Shatzman and Strauss (1973). A copy of the final questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

b. Scale Construction and Reliability

Of critical importance to the study was whether or not reliable scales had been devised in the instrument. Did all the items in a particular scale "hang together" so that it could safely be said that they all related to the subject of the scale? To determine this the Alpha-Cronbach test of reliability was used. This procedure yields a statistic that indicates whether or not a scale can be considered reliable. Usually a figure of .700 or better suggests a reliable scale. However, in view of the variability of the empirical data in the study and the exploratory nature of the study a more flexible standard was applied, accepting as a reliability indicator a figure as low as .478.

The scales as originally devised were not sufficiently reliable so, using the correlation matrix for each scale, an attempt was made to find items that did strongly tie together or relate to each other. This is a process that necessitates eliminating items or "questions" in a scale that
do not strongly correlate with other items. While going through this process it was important to keep in mind that the study would be comparing the perceptions of two groups. So the scales constructed for one group had to be similar or comparable to the scales constructed for the other group. Eventually reliable, comparable scales for four areas of the instrument were constructed: the "Community," "Relationship," the "Problem" and "Ethnic Background." With the Perception scale, it was not possible to achieve reliability with the adolescents or comparability between the adolescents and adults although for the adults alone modest reliability was achieved. With the Social Worker scale, reliability was achieved for both adolescents and adults, but not comparability. For these two "scales" the populations' responses on selected significant items were compared since, in effect, because of the lack of mutual reliability for the same items, comparable scales were not produced.

Table 3.3 gives the breakdown on all the reliability scores and the items used for all scales for both adolescents and adults.
### TABLE 3.3

**ALPHA LEVELS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community (all items)</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship (items 1, 3, 4 &amp; 5)</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception (all items)</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem (items 1, 2, 4, 5 &amp; 6)</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker (items 4, 5 &amp; 6)</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial-Ethnic (items 1, 2 &amp; 3)</td>
<td>.612</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where comparability was not achieved on a scale it was felt that for purposes of comparing what was really produced were two sets of six discreet items. In this situation, which occurred with the Self-Perception and Social Worker areas, two things were done: the responses of all six items were presented. This was seen as being consistent with the descriptive character of the study. Additionally, particular items were selected out — the same items for both adolescents and adults — for more intensive discussion and comparison.
7. Data Collection

a. Overview

The exigencies of the research experience in this study required that the researcher be as creative and flexible as possible in obtaining data. The techniques and mechanics of the data gathering process for the adults were of necessity different than that for the adolescents. As indicated, in order to find adult subjects that met the criteria for inclusion in the study fourteen agencies were contacted in scattered geographic locations. The process was simpler with the adolescents because most of them were in a few locations. Partly for these reasons intermediaries were used to gather the adult data, but with the adolescents almost all of the data gathering was handled directly by the researcher. It was felt, too, with the youngsters that direct contact would provide them with needed support and clarification.

b. The Adult Helpers

Once an agency identified those staff who had experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents, with the help of the administrator of the agency, the mechanics of data collection for the adult helpers was begun. Using the administrator in the agency as the "key" or liaison person meant that the instrument was initially discussed with this person who in turn handled the actual distribution of the questionnaire among his staff. Essentially, the explanation of the study purposes were interpreted to staff by administrators and then the questionnaires were
self-administered by individual staff members. A very small number —
approximately four adult subjects — who were identified as appropriate
refused to participate citing the exigencies of heavy work schedules. A
quota sample approach was finally used involving three groups of
approximately twenty adults each -- Whites, Latinos and Blacks — in the
completion of the instrument.

The idea of the study and criteria for inclusion of subjects was
interpreted in detail to the various administrators. In several instances
this entailed meeting with administrators in groups. This was especially
ture in the larger, bureaucratic agencies such as the Essex County Welfare
Board or the Youth and Family Services Bureau. In two situations (with La
Casa and Aspira) the study and the instrument were interpreted directly to
staff members in group meetings at the request of the administrators of
these agencies. Once the initial ground work was done, it took
approximately two to three months for the questionnaires to be completed
and collected from the various agencies involved.

i. **Response to the Instrument**

The overall response rate of the adult subjects to the
scaled items was good with the greater percentage of the subjects
responding to each item. The response to open ended questions, though
generally good, was weaker, with a number of subjects leaving these items
blank. A protective, somewhat polemical flavor to the response of
subjects on open ended questions, in general, was noted, but particularly,
to those that had to do with the self concept of Puerto Rican adolescents.
Items in the scaled sections and in the open ended questions that touched on areas having to do with ethnicity seemed to provoke a more intense kind of response than other areas of the instrument. This was seen most frequently in subjects responding narratively to items that required objective response.

c. The Adolescents

Using "key" people in three agencies - La Casa de Don Pedro, The St. Columba Neighborhood Club and the Youth Consultation Service - a group of adolescents was selected from the ages of 13 through 20, all of Puerto Rican background and all having had experience with a helping person. A general sense of the researcher was that a very high percentage of the youngsters identified as appropriate for the study agreed to participate. Thus it is estimated that out of approximately fifty-five youngsters identified at La Casa de Don Pedro about forty-eight youngsters or 90 percent agreed to participate. Reasons for not participating usually had to do with work or school schedules. A few youngsters simply seemed uncomfortable with the idea of filling out a questionnaire. The researcher handled the administration of the questionnaire with the adolescents directly. Working with small groups - with about six youngsters to a group - the general idea of the study and the procedure for completing the questionnaire was interpreted. The researcher was identified as a social worker interested in learning about their experiences and ideas about getting help. Usually, the researcher "walked through" the first part of the instrument and the youngsters would handle
the rest on their own, having access to the examiner if they needed it. A major variable that had not been anticipated was a very low reading level for many of the adolescent subjects. This necessitated a fair amount of intervention on the researcher's part to explain the meaning of certain words or sentences. With three youngsters the instrument was paraphrased and responses recorded.

The overall gathering of data with the adolescents from selection of subjects to completion of the last questionnaire took approximately three months.

1. **Response to the Instrument**

Aside from the difficulties arising from low reading levels the general response of the adolescents to the instrument was good, especially to the scaled items where the greater majority of the adolescents responded to each item. The response to demographic questions varied greatly being generally weaker relative to family status.

Occasionally, the youngsters used the instrument as a vehicle to express anger and frustration sometimes refusing to respond to a particular section "because I feel like it," or expressing particularly negative feelings, somewhat out of context, to certain parts of the helping experience.

2. **Data Analysis**

In this study essentially the scales represent ordered, categorical variables and the unstructured items both nominal and qualitative material. Several approaches are used in analyzing the material:
a. **Frequencies and Crosstabulation Tables**

Simple frequencies are produced for all variables allowing for a presentation of the rates of responses on all of the scaled items as well as qualitative items. Where appropriate the marginals produced for qualitative items are compared.

Frequencies are also presented for demographic material permitting a composite comparison of the two groups, the adolescents and the adults.

Where appropriate the demographic as well as scaled item material are analyzed through the use of crosstabulation tables. Tests of independence between variables are done using chi square. This presentation is used where a relationship between variables is suggested that is important to the questions of the study.

b. **Tests of Significance**

Differences in perception between the adult groups and between each of the adult groups and the adolescents are examined through the use of tests of significance. A one way analysis of variance is done for the three adult groups. Using analysis of variance as described in Twaite and Monroe (1979, pp. 427-438) allows the researcher to examine the perceptions of the adult groups with an eye to determining whether there are significant statistical differences between the groups that might be related to their ethnic background. Using this statistical procedure can provide some evidence that, indeed, the adult groups do separate along ethnic lines.
A t test of significance is used to compare the perceptions of the adolescents and the adult groups separated according to their ethnic background. A series of t tests is done comparing the perceptions of the adolescents with each adult group on all scales or selected items that indicate whether differences in perception between the adolescents and the adults are statistically significant. Where qualitative responses as well as responses to objective items suggest it, t tests are also done between the adult groups.

c. Qualitative Analysis

The responses to the qualitative items are coded in such a way as to allow for the development of frequencies. These are presented along with a narrative discussion of qualitative responses. Responses to open ended questions are inspected using Blumer's (1969) techniques. Looking at raw data, an attempt is made to notice patterns of responses or repeated themes particularly as they relate to the central issues of the study. Schatzman and Strauss (1973, p. 111) describe this process as discovering key linkages in material, that is, "metaphors, models, a general scheme, overriding pattern or storyline" - again, all related to the central issues of the study. The data obtained in the qualitative responses is used supportively relative to the central concerns of the study.
9. **Limitations of the Study**

a. **Overview**

There are a number of areas related to issues of reliability and validity that limit the study. Reliability here refers to the "repeatability" of the methods used in the study. Could this study be repeated on a different population with the hope of obtaining similar results? Validity refers to whether or not the study is actually looking at what is purports to be looking at (Monroe and Twaite, 1979). Does the study really measure people's perceptions of a helping experience? Within these broad limitations there are a number of more specific concerns.

1. **Sampling Procedures**

The fact that the two populations are not matched is problematic. As indicated the adolescents are not drawn from the caseloads of the helpers. There are actually two discrete groups so it remains unclear if both groups are talking about the same kind of helping experience. Of course, if the adolescents did come from the caseloads of the helpers this problem would still exist, though not to the same degree. An attempt is made to deal with this problem through matching the instruments for the adolescents and adults and through intensive interpretation of the process and instrument to the populations.
ii. Uncontrolled Variables

Related to the above are concerns about many variables in this study over which the researcher had little or no control. These variables would include educational background, reading levels, socio-economic status and family status for the adolescents and educational background, age, sex, family and socio-economic status and professional status for the adults.

The study, however, represents a very early stage of research where attempts at controlling many variables would be inconsistent with its exploratory nature.

iii. The Instrument

The questionnaire used may be perceived as an expression of the exploratory nature of the study since it is not known empirically if the items in the instrument actually "tap into" the helping experience. The particular populations approached have not been approached in this way before and the questions asked are new, so of necessity a new tool had to be devised. Being non-standardized, of course, weakens the instrument's reliability. Using the term "social worker" instead of "helper" in the instrument could have been confusing but it was felt that this was a good 'key' word that would have more meaning to our populations than simply the word "helper."
iv. Data Gathering Process

Different processes were used to gather data for the adults and adolescents, using intermediaries for the adults and the researcher himself for the adolescents. This means that there were different intervening variables during the process for each group. With the adults, the effect of receiving a questionnaire to be completed from a supervisory individual has to be considered a limitation. With the youngsters the effect of receiving the instrument from the researcher himself, who is identified as a helping person, also has to be considered a limitation.

The physical conditions where instruments were completed for the most part is unknown for the adults since the questionnaire was self administered. With the adolescents there was an enormous amount of "static" in the way of background noise, lack of confidentiality and privacy and frequent interruptions that made the completion of the instrument difficult. All of these variables can be perceived as sometimes unavoidable impediments in exploratory research.
CHAPTER 4

THE ADOLESCENTS

Introduction

Part I of this Chapter concerns itself with a demographic description of the adolescent population used in this study. The chapter begins with a picture of the adolescents themselves and then moves on to look at the systems from which they come: their families and their community. In Part II their perceptions of the helping experience are described.

PART I. DEMOGRAPHICS OF A POPULATION OF PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENTS

Age & Sex

The population of adolescents used in this study consisted of 61 young people drawn primarily from the North Ward of Newark, New Jersey. The majority (70 percent) of this population was male and most of these were older adolescents. Of the total population, 20 percent were 18 years old, 26 percent were 17 years old and 15 percent were 16 years old. Cumulatively, 56 percent of the population was between the ages of 17 and 20.

\(^1\)Five youngsters in the sample live in the neighborhood of the St. Columba Neighborhood Club which is in the South Ward of Newark.
Nativity and Racial-Ethnic Identity

All of the adolescents were of Puerto Rican background. Although they all lived in Newark, New Jersey, only 41 percent were actually born there. Another 31 percent were born in Puerto Rico, 14 percent were born in New York and 14 percent were born in "other cities."

The question of national or ethnic identity is a knotty one for Puerto Ricans in general and perhaps for Puerto Rican adolescents in particular, partly because they are also struggling with their personal identity. When an individual's ancestors come from Puerto Rico thereby making him Puerto Rican, he may still identify himself in some other ethnic category such as Spanish American or Hispanic. The number of adolescents who identified themselves as Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American was about evenly divided with 40 percent identifying themselves as Puerto Rican and 34 percent identifying themselves as Puerto Rican American. Of the rest of the group, 26 percent saw themselves as either Black Puerto Rican, Spanish American or "other."

Table 4.1 compares nativity of the adolescents with their racial-ethnic identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Freq.)</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th>Puerto Rico</th>
<th>Continental USA</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican American</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Response:</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Education

The large majority (87 percent) of the youngsters attended public schools. Out of the total population of 61 youngsters, twelve or 19 percent indicated that they had dropped out. School data in the City of Newark in 1979 indicated that slightly more than 12 percent of Hispanic high school students had dropped out of school. Data for 1986 in Newark gives a dropout percentage for Hispanics of 8.5 percent. In any event the study population had a significantly higher proportion of dropouts than the Hispanic student population in Newark as a whole.¹ It should be noted that in the adolescent population two respondents indicated that they had graduated and three indicated that they had been suspended. The number of the youngsters reporting a grade level (49) combined with those who indicated that they had dropped out (12) equals the total population, suggesting that those who indicated suspension or graduation also reported a grade level.

Most of the youngsters were in high school with the largest single percentage being in the 12th grade. Table 4.2 illustrates the distribution of the adolescents according to grade.

¹ Dropout data is gleaned from enrollment reports of the Newark Board of Education Guidance Department. It is the author's impression that data varies widely from year to year, depending upon techniques of collection, summarizing, reporting, etc.
In Table 4.3 when age is compared with grade placement there is a general clustering of older adolescents in the upper high school grades. Age norms for grade placement in the United States would place 14 year olds in the 9th grade, 15 year olds in the 10th grade, 16 year olds in the 11th grade and 17 year olds in the 12th grade. So a number of the youngsters were behind in age appropriate grade placement.1

---

1 In the administration of the instrument the instruction for "school status" was to indicate current grade level. Although it does seem that many of the adolescent subjects were actually behind in appropriate grade placement, several of the 47 respondents represented in Table 4.3 may have understood the question to mean "highest grade completed." Names of high schools were not elicited. Thus the number of our adolescent subjects in special high schools can only be surmised. In Newark, for example, youngsters in the Montgomery Street School, which is a special high school, could easily be twenty years old and in the 11th grade. Our overall sense from the data gathering process is that approximately four subjects were in special education programs.
TABLE 4.3
GRADE PLACEMENT BY AGE (Absolute Numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of responses: 47

Since there are twice as many male respondents as females it is difficult to compare them relative to grade placement. It should be noted though that of the girls responding to both grade and sex questions a larger percentage (44 percent) were in the 12th grade than of the boys responding to the same questions (33 percent).

Family Data and Living Circumstances

The majority (57 percent) of the subjects live in families where there is only one biological parent. The response level of the adolescents relative to family circumstances was poor, particularly concerning fathers. From those who did respond the following picture is obtained: mother's average age is 40 years while father's is 47 years; the average mother's school attainment is 9th grade and she works either as a
homemaker or an unskilled worker; father's average reported school attainment is not quite 7th grade and job status is mainly skilled-unskilled.

Our subjects on the average report having three brothers ranging in age from 8 to 19 years old and two sisters ranging in age from 8 to 20 years. Approximately 45 percent of the youngsters live in families with six or more members. All of the subjects indicated that they live in apartments although it should be noted that the instrument did not elicit information concerning home ownership. The average apartment size reported was six rooms.

Income

Of those who reported family income, the largest percentage reported it as between five and ten thousand dollars per year. Cumulatively 64 percent of the youngsters reported an income of $10,000 or below. Twenty seven percent reported the family income to be $5,000 or below per year. Only 3 percent of the youngsters report income over $20,000 per year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Family Income</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,001 to 10,000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001 to 15,000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,001 to 20,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total response: 44
In comparing income and parent status, no relationship was found.
Equal numbers of youngsters reporting lower and higher income ranges also
reported being with one or two parent figures.

The Adolescent's Community

The responses of the youngsters regarding income, family size and
parent status suggests a marginal economic situation. The census date
(U.S. Census, 1980, p. 3) describing their neighborhoods corroborates
this. It should be noted here that 90 percent of the adolescents in this
study live in the same neighborhood, that is, the neighborhood immediately
surrounding the major research site for the adolescents.

The neighborhood immediately surrounding the major research site for
the study has a population of about 5,000 individuals, 60 percent of whom
are of Hispanic background. Census data for 1980 that looks at tracts
surrounding the research site presents several indicators suggesting that,
in fact, for our adolescent population, at least, the neighborhood is
marginal; tenure in present home is an average of 5 years for Hispanics,
as compared to 30 years for Whites and 10 years for Blacks; only one tenth
of Hispanics in the total population own their own home and in the total
population in the neighborhood, 42 percent had no employed head of
household.

Summary

The overall picture one gets with the adolescents in this study is of
a group of predominantly older, male adolescents who live in homes with
one biological parent in depressed or working class areas of Newark, New
Jersey. A large number of the adolescents (31 percent) were born in Puerto Rico and identify themselves in almost equal numbers as Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican American. Although the greater majority of our subjects are in school, some are behind in age appropriate grade placement. They tend to come from larger families where there are more than three children and live in apartments of 4 to 6 rooms. For the most part reported family income falls between $5,000 and 15,000, although a proportion of the population reported income of below $5,000 per year. Many of our subjects did not respond to specific items concerning their parents and it is surmised that they simply did not know or did not wish to respond to requested information. Those who did respond give the picture of father being older than mother and having less education. One or both parents work at skilled-unskilled jobs.

PART II. THE ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE HELPING EXPERIENCE

Overview

In this section the adolescents' perception of the helping experience as represented by the various components in our operationalized definition is described. First, their response to the various scales are examined. For those scales where there is poor reliability, for descriptive purposes the entire scale is presented, but only significant selected items are closely examined. A major reason for doing this is to produce data that can be compared with the adult responses. If there is no scale or if the items in a reliable adolescent scale are not similar to the items in a
reliable adult scale, it became necessary to choose significant items that could be compared with the same significant adult items. Responses to open ended items are also analyzed relative to each scale. Mean scores are presented for scaled items. The reader should recall that '5' represents the highest score and most positive response and '1' the lowest score and most negative response. For the open ended responses a qualitative discussion is presented and where appropriate an attempt is made to summarize some of the qualitative responses in quantitative terms. Because of their major relevance to the study the qualitative responses to the "ethnic" area are discussed in more detail than the qualitative responses in the other areas.

The status of each scale relative to reliability and comparability is presented in Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>RELIABILITY</th>
<th>COMPARABILITY TO ADULT SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Community**

In the Methodology Chapter "community" is described as that part of the helping experience that defines neighborhood or environment as a potentially helpful resource. It can refer either to the neighborhood of the adolescents where many of their helping experiences occur or in a larger sense to any environment where they experience being helped. In the researcher's view "community" is the context in which help occurs and is therefore part of that experience. Thus, if a community or neighborhood or agency is viewed positively, then a context that is potentially nurturing is viewed positively. If the environment is viewed negatively, then a potentially helpful context is viewed negatively.

a. **Response to the Scale**

The Community scale for adolescents has an alpha of .632 for all items indicating acceptable reliability. The scale is composed of the following six items.

- **Item 1** - "My neighborhood is a good place in which to live."
- **Item 2** - "Most of the houses in my neighborhood are well cared for."
- **Item 3** - "The house I live in is something to be proud of."
- **Item 4** - "I would never want to raise my own children in my neighborhood."
- **Item 5** - "The police in my neighborhood are not very helpful to residents."
- **Item 6** - "My neighborhood has poor schools."

In Table 4.6 the mean responses of the adolescents to the items
comprising the total community scale are presented.

**TABLE 4.6**

**MEAN RESPONSES OF THE ADOLESCENTS TO THE COMMUNITY SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Response: 59  
Grand Mean: 3.12

b. **Qualitative Responses**

"The neighborhood I live in is one of the 'baddest' in Newark - still, some people treat you with respect."  

Jesus

The qualitative items for this area are the following:

- Item 7-Describe your neighborhood in one or two sentences.

- Item 8-  
  a. "What are the three best things about your neighborhood?"
  b. "What are the three worst things about your neighborhood?"

An examination of the qualitative responses of the adolescents concerning their neighborhood suggests a perception that is somewhat at variance with the one described by their responses to the community scale, where there is some suggestion of positive feelings. When they are offered the opportunity to explain their views of their neighborhood, although there are positive expressions, for the most part the perceptions described are starkly negative. Certain themes or repeated expressions to both of these items were found.

---

1 Names are assigned to the adolescent subjects for illustrative purposes.
On the positive side, people, neighbors and friends are seen as important to the community. Helping networks, although not described as such, are repeatedly alluded to, for example in mentioning "neighbors who help you out." Small, neighborhood based social agencies are seen in a positive light as part of the neighborhood. Convenience in terms of transportation and "cheap rent" emerge as themes as does closeness to school and church.

However, even when describing positive aspects of their neighborhood, the adolescents convey a sense of an unwelcoming, threatening environment. The fact that the adolescents' qualitative responses included positive expressions might be partly a function of the instrument where at one point the "three best things in your neighborhood" are specifically elicited. The idea is suggested that if only a description of their neighborhood was requested, there would have been fewer positive responses.

The response of "Maria" is an example of what is meant by a positive response that conveys a negative impression. After a general description of her neighborhood as a terrible place with much crime, violence and noise, Maria lists the three "best things" in her neighborhood as:

i  "We have a sort of privacy"

ii "At night we can sleep peacefully" (sometimes)

iii "So far our house hasn't gotten robbed."

With their responses that are unequivocally negative, the adolescents repeatedly mention drugs, violence and crime as concerns. Frequently they see their surroundings as noisy, dirty and chaotic - or simply empty and
boring. The following quotes are illustrative of the responses of the adolescents concerning descriptions of their neighborhoods:

Jose: "My neighborhood is a place where drug pushers sell their so called 'high feelings'. It is very annoying to live in a place where you are not safe."

Pepe: "My neighborhood has only four houses, a U-Haul Rental and a closed-up Boys' Club - it's boring."

Carlos: "My neighborhood is not a place you would be proud of - the poor housing, crime and drugs make it a corrupted place."

Table 4.7 presents the responses of the adolescents to their community in positive and negative terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive/Negative</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. **Summary of the Adolescent Response to the Community Area**

An analysis of both the responses to the Community scale as well as an inspection of the qualitative material suggests that the adolescents have a predominantly negative view of their community. On two of the items for the scale mean scores fall below 3.0 and the others, with the exception of Item 3, hover just around 3.0. Item 3, the item that had the most positive response, did not concern itself with the community as a whole but with the houses that the subjects live in – a much more personal environment.

2. **Relationship**

The "dynamic equation", the "feeling flow", and the interaction that occurs between two people, all describe the relationship in a helping experience. This is a piece that can easily be seen as a part of the helping experience.

a. **Response to the Scale**

The alpha for the adolescent Relationship scale is .770 indicating good reliability. In order to obtain this alpha the scale was reconstructed omitting items two and six. The scale then is composed of the following four items:

- **Item 1** – "Feeling close to my social worker as if he were my friend makes it easier for me to be helped by him."

- **Item 3** – "Social Workers use "tricky devices" to get inside your head."
Item 4 - "It makes me feel good to talk with a social worker."

Item 5 - "It is important to talk about my feelings when I talk with a social worker if I really want to be helped."

In Table 4.8 the adolescents' mean responses to the items composing the Relationship scale are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Response: 59
Grand Mean: 3.90

b. Qualitative Responses

The qualitative items in this area are the following:

Item 7 - "Some people say that you have to like the person you go to for help — that you have to have a good relationship with this person in order to be helped.

a. Do you agree or Disagree

b. If you agree give three reasons why."

Item 8 - "Some people also feel that Puerto Rican adolescents are especially sensitive — maybe more so than other American teenagers. These people feel that it is even more important for Puerto Rican adolescents, than for other American adolescents, to have a good relationship with the person they go to for help.

a. Do you agree or disagree

b. If you agree give three reasons why."
The adolescents were almost evenly divided in their qualitative responses about the importance of a good relationship with about 46 percent asserting that it is important and 52 percent that it is not. The greater majority — 68 percent — did not feel that Puerto Rican teenagers were any more sensitive to the relationship in a helping experience than other American teenagers.

For those who responded positively to Item 7, about the importance of the relationship, there were several ideas that emerged. The creation of an atmosphere of trust, warmth and security were mentioned frequently as being conducive to "opening up", "expressing feelings" and "talking it out." Generally it was felt that a person you had a good relationship with was more likely to give you "better help" and was not going to "jive you."

Thirty percent of the adolescents felt that, indeed, Puerto Rican teenagers were more sensitive than other American teenagers to the relationship in a helping experience and gave several reasons for this. Generally, Puerto Ricans were described by these youngsters as oppressed, feeling inferior and being ashamed of having problems. Puerto Ricans were seen as having a kind of stigmatized identity and being put down by society. At the same time they were described as feeling things more intensely.

Table 4.9 describes the adolescents' perceptions of the relationship area in terms of its general importance and in terms of its importance to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular.
TABLE 4.9

ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Importance of Relationship</th>
<th>Important to P.R. Adolescents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>46 (28)</td>
<td>29 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>52 (32)</td>
<td>67 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Response:</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Total Response: 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response of the adolescents to all of the scale items on relationship, but particularly to Item 1, suggest a positive perception of the relationship in the helping experience. Item 1 in particular on this scale taps an area that deals directly with the "feeling flow" that occurs between a client and helper. Here the response of the adolescents was more positive than with any of the other items on the scale.

The response to the qualitative items, however, was not as strongly suggestive of a positive feeling about the relationship in a helping experience. There could be several reasons for this discrepancy but it is suggested that the major one here is a function of the instrument. It is speculated that many of the subjects who had difficulty with reading and writing, simply checked disagree in response to the open ended items. This was an option that required no further writing.

Notwithstanding the more negative responses to the open ended questions, there were many positive, qualitative responses that were consistent with the scale responses.
3. **Self Perception**

How one sees oneself has a great deal to do with how one experiences being helped. There are countless ways in which one's "persona", as defined by Perlman (1974), is an important part of the helping experience. Seeing oneself as a winner or loser, an insider or an outsider, as passive or aggressive all impact on what happens in the helping equation.

a. **Response to the Scale**

The Self Perception scale for the adolescents had poor reliability, producing an alpha for all six items of .305. None of the items correlated strongly with one another and so it was not possible to construct a more reliable scale. This "dimension" of the helping experience as defined in the study can be seen as a "scale" only in the sense of having a series of loosely related items, each one of which, however, produces useful descriptive information. For purposes of this descriptive chapter the self-perception of the adolescents is presented in scale form although technically what is presented is their perception of six discrete items.

Since the "self perception" dimension is not analyzed as a scale, Items 1, 2 and 3 are selected for a closer inspection. The general response to these items is high and they seemed most significant in their relevance to how the adolescents perceive themselves, based on the researcher's subjective judgement.

The items in the "self-perception" area for the adolescents are:
• **Item 1** - "Being of Puerto Rican (Hispanic) background is a definite advantage in the United States."

• **Item 2** - "Puerto Ricans in the United States are hardworking and industrious."

• **Item 3** - "Puerto Ricans in the United States tend to have many problems that require social work help such as drugs, mental illness and family problems."

• **Item 4** - "You feel that you stand as much chance as the average American teenager of getting a good education."

• **Item 5** - "Skin color and hair texture are important to Puerto Ricans."

• **Item 6** - "A lot of "white people" don't trust Puerto Ricans."

Table 4.10 describes the mean responses of the adolescents to the "Self-Perception" items.

**TABLE 4.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Response</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: + = Selected Items

With Item 1, 52 percent of the adolescents disagreed that there was an advantage to being of Puerto Rican background in the United States, while in Item 3 fully 66 percent of the subjects agreed that Puerto Ricans were a problem ridden population, experiencing such difficulties as drug abuse, mental illness and family problems. The responses to both of these items suggest a negative self perception on the part of the adolescents. Item 2 does suggest a more positive self perception with 71 percent of the subjects agreeing that Puerto Ricans in the United States are hardworking and industrious. But even here an important number — 20 percent —
disagreed. The responses to the non-selected items is of some interest. The mean of 3.9 for Item 4 would suggest a positive self concept while on the other hand the mean responses to Item 6 suggest the opposite.

b. Qualitative Responses

The qualitative items for this area are the following:

- Item 7- "Briefly, if you had to describe how you feel about yourself, how would you?"

- Item 8- "How, if at all, do you feel that Puerto Rican teenagers are different than other American teenagers?"

Overall, the adolescent subjects express positive feelings about themselves with two major themes emerging: a frequent expression of "pride" and frequent mention of closeness to others, friendliness and having good relationships, as being part of a positive self perception. Repeatedly the youngsters describe themselves in ways that suggest an almost self conscious pride. Often statements are made about being "proud of myself" in spite of many negatives. "The proudest race of all", "proud of my beautiful island", "pride in myself" are all examples of the various expressions used by the adolescents in describing themselves. Often though, there is a sense of poignancy and ambivalence in their expressions of pride. The remarks of Tony and Enrique illustrate this:

Tony: "One thing I can perfectly tell about me — and it's that I feel proud of being Puerto Rican and I would not turn my back on my people. I love my little, but big, big Island. I would do anything for it. I think Puerto Rican teenagers are different because they make us be different — the only solution is to demonstrate that we're people like them and that we also have feelings and they could be hurt too."
Enrique: "I am myself — I don't try to be like other people because I only make things difficult for myself — besides I kind of like myself."

The teenagers seemed to see sensitivity, friendliness and good relationships as a positive part of their "persona" and made frequent mention of this in their responses. Despite these positive expressions, a number of the responses of our youngsters suggested a decidedly negative self view giving the overall impression of ambivalence. Luis' response here is representative of the responses of many of the youngsters:

Luis: "You don't see many Puerto Ricans in school. They are involved in drugs and if they are female they have kids already. I don't give up that easily regardless of the prejudice that is going on. Puerto Rican teenagers let people put them down by the things they say to them like 'give up, there's no hope for you.' I don't believe in that. I go see for myself."

At the same time as their responses suggest positive feelings about themselves, they saw themselves as different — often in negative ways — from other American teenagers. Table 4.11 illustrates this.

| PERCEIVED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUERTO RICAN TEENAGERS AND OTHER AMERICAN TEENAGERS |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|
| No Difference                          | Frequency: 22  |
|                                       | Percent: 36    |
| Negative Difference                   | Frequency: 17  |
|                                       | Percent: 28    |
| Positive Difference                   | Frequency: 11  |
|                                       | Percent: 18    |
| Both Positive & Negative Difference   | Frequency: 5   |
|                                       | Percent: 8     |
| Total Response:                       | 55             |
Out of those who responded concerning the difference between Puerto Rican and other American teenagers then, 54 percent felt that Puerto Rican teenagers were different and more than half of this percentage saw the difference as negative. On the positive side, language, culture and customs were frequently mentioned as distinguishing Puerto Rican teenagers from American teenagers. Negatively, poor family background vis a vis parents' education and income, lack of opportunity in school, employment and involvement in delinquencies, particularly drug and alcohol related, were repeatedly mentioned as what made Puerto Rican teenagers different from other American teenagers. Some of the responses concerning negative differences were quite striking:

Carlos: "Puerto Rican teenagers feel differently about themselves than other American teenagers because they feel inferior — therefore they do loud, crazy and sometimes stupid things because they want to be noticed and recognized."

Manny: "— also Puerto Ricans, if they find a job they (sic) right for they go for it but if they can't find one they will just go and smell bush. You don't see white people in any corner selling anything — I think American teens try a lot harder than what (sic) Puerto Ricans do —."

The responses of the teenagers to the open ended self perception questions also suggested a consciousness of racial prejudice. In expressing how Puerto Rican adolescents are different from other American teenagers lack of prejudice on the part of Puerto Rican teenagers is mentioned. At the same time skin color is noted as what makes Puerto Rican adolescents different.
c. Summary of the Adolescents' Responses to Self Perception Area

The response of the adolescents to the "Self Perception" selected items suggests that the youngsters in the study have a perception of themselves that is positive, but barely so. The greater majority — 80 percent — did express positive feelings about themselves in response to Item 7 of the qualitative items but many see themselves as different than other American teenagers and in our population a significant percentage see Puerto Rican adolescents as negatively different. However, these results must be viewed with caution in view of the poor reliability of the scale and the limitations of the qualitative items.

4. The Problem

The problem — the perceived area of difficulty — is the "heart of the matter" in the helping experience. The problem is what must be solved, made better or made to "go away" altogether. Perlman (1974, p. 87) says it well:

thus, much of the problem solving work is on an unconscious or only partly conscious basis, that is, it happens spontaneously in the empathic interaction between caseworker and client. But all of it, let it be remembered, centers about some problem consciously brought by the client and affirmed by the caseworker — a problem to be solved by joint effort.

This section indicates not only the adolescent's perception of a helper's ability with a variety of problems, but discusses what problems the adolescent subjects felt were important to Puerto Rican teenagers.
a. **Response to the Scale**

The standardized alpha for the Problem area is .546, which was accepted as indicating reasonably good reliability. To obtain the alpha, Item 3 was omitted from the scale. The item total statistics suggests that the alpha would be even higher if Item 2 were excluded from the scale, but it was felt that substantively this was an important item and so it was included. The items included in the scale, then, are the following:

- **Item 1** - "Social Workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems."
- **Item 2** - "Social Workers are mainly helpful with things like getting you into programs or helping out with money."
- **Item 4** - "I would never want to tell a Social Worker what goes on in my family."
- **Item 5** - "It's OK to talk with a Social Worker about sexual problems."
- **Item 6** - "I wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a Social Worker about my friends."

The mean responses to the items included in this scale are described in Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.12**

**Mean Responses of the Adolescents to the Problem Scale**

Total Response: 61

Grand Mean: 3.22
b. **Qualitative Responses**

The qualitative items for this area are the following:

- **Item 7** - "List five types of problems with which social workers can be most helpful."

- **Item 8** - "Of these types of problems which one do you think would be most important to a Puerto Rican teenager and why?"

Table 4.13 presents a list of "types of problems" and indicates whether the adolescent felt that helping people could assist them with these problems.

**TABLE 4.13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Frequency</th>
<th>HELPFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Problems</strong></td>
<td>56 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Problems</strong></td>
<td>56 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Problems</strong></td>
<td>64 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Problems</strong></td>
<td>38 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Problems</strong></td>
<td>13 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problems with Friends</strong></td>
<td>29 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money Problems</strong></td>
<td>26 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drug Problems</strong></td>
<td>28 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>25 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The problem area that was felt to be most significant for Puerto Rican teenagers was "family problems" with 23 percent of our subjects describing this as the most important problem for them. The reasons given for the importance of this area suggest our subjects' concern over their parents' lack of understanding and being overly strict. Family is seen as being very important to Puerto Rican teenagers — as a kind of support in a turbulent world. Several times acculturation problems are described as "family problems." Thus, several subjects expressed concern over the fact that their parents treated them as if they were still on the island or did not speak English.

Education, career development and jobs were seen as areas of importance to Puerto Rican adolescents. Several youngsters expressed that this was partly so because of prejudice and "attitudes" that people had toward Puerto Ricans. At the same time many youngsters expressed how important education and training were for their future growth.

Finally, a number of the youngsters perceive Puerto Ricans in general as being heavily involved in drugs. Based on the subjects description, this is seen as being a serious problem for Puerto Ricans.

c. Summary of the Adolescents' Response to the Problem Area

The response of the adolescents to the Problem scale was positive, suggesting that they perceive helpers as assisting them with a variety of problems. The responses to the individual scaled items particularly to Items 1 and 4 further suggest that the youngsters in our population see social workers or helping people as helping them with personal, private kinds of problems.
The response to the open ended items was consistent with the response to the scaled items with large percentages of the youngsters identifying family and personal problems as most important to Puerto Rican teenagers and areas where social workers can be helpful. Family problems were often seen by the youngsters as related to acculturation difficulties. Problems related to school, employment and money were also important to our youngsters. Twenty eight percent of the adolescents also perceived drug related problems as important to Puerto Rican adolescents and an area where help is given.

5. The Social Worker - Helper

The term "social worker" in the study refers to one who gives help — a key actor in the helping equation. How a client sees the helper — as a compassionate human being, as a representative of an agency, as one who is knowledgeable and ready to help, or as the reverse of these things can determine the outcome of the experience (Perlman, 1974, p. 111).

a. Response to the Scale

To attain a reasonable degree of reliability the Social Worker scale was reconstructed to include only Items 4, 5 and 6. This reconstruction produces a reliability of .600. The scale that was constructed for the adolescents however is not comparable to the adult scale for the same dimension so in effect it became impossible to think in terms of comparing scaled responses in this area.

For descriptive purposes as with the "Self-Perception" area the
responses to all items are presented, while only those items that seem most relevant to this area are selected for a closer examination. Again, the selection is based on a high response rate and a subjective judgment that those items selected do indeed tell us something about how our adolescents perceive helpers. For these purposes, Items 2, 3 and 6 were selected. The items then, are the following:

- **Item 1** - "Social Workers have special ways of helping people that are different than the ways of a psychiatrist or guidance counsellor."
- **Item 2** - "Social Workers need to have a special kind of personality."
- **Item 3** - "Social Workers need a lot of special training, at least a college degree."
- **Item 4** - "Sometimes social workers are nosey or interfere too much."
- **Item 5** - "Social Workers receive more money than they are worth."
- **Item 6** - "Some social workers are really not interested in helping."

In Table 4.14 the mean responses to the Social Worker items are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Score</strong></td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean for Reliable Scale: 3.30

Key: + = Items part of reliable scale
* = Selected items.
The response to Item 2 indicates that approximately 72 percent of the youngsters feel that social workers need to have a special kind of personality, while the responses to Item 3 indicates that 66 percent feel that social workers need special training, at least a college degree. The responses here indicate a positive perception of helpers. With Item 6 the responses are still positive but not as strongly so with almost 30 percent of the youngsters agreeing that some social workers are not really interested in helping. The general response to these items as well as a review of the responses to the other items suggest that the youngsters have a positive view of helpers.

b. Qualitative Responses

The qualitative items for this area are the following:

- Item 7—"In one or two sentences describe what you would consider to be the ideal social worker."
- Item 8—"Describe one experience you've had with a social worker or 'helping person.' Tell whether you were helped or not and the general circumstances."

A repeated idea that emerges in the adolescents' responses to Item 7 is that a "good helper" is one who is able to communicate the feelings of caring, nurturing and of being concerned. Frequently a good helper is described as "a friend." Many of the adolescents, too, see a helper as "a problem solver"; one who helps you "figure things out," "understand things," "get things done." To a much lesser extent helpers were seen as people who "give good advice" and work "in the community." Table 4.15 summarizes these responses.
TABLE 4.15

**ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE IDEAL HELPER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Task Oriented (Problem Solving)</th>
<th>Person Oriented (Caring)</th>
<th>Advice Oriented (Guidance)</th>
<th>Community Oriented (Street Work)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 (31)</td>
<td>49 (30)</td>
<td>20 (12)</td>
<td>7 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Response:** 55

The response level to Item 8 was low. Of those who did respond only 7 percent described an experience where they were not helped. For the rest, helping experiences were described around a variety of areas, with "school problems," "family problem" and "personal problems" being the areas where the adolescents felt they were helped most often.

c. **Summary of the Adolescents' Response to the Social Worker Area**

Overall, the adolescents have a positive perception of helping people. Only one scaled item — Item 4 — suggested a negative perception with a majority of the adolescents agreeing that "sometimes social workers are nosey or interfere too much." The ideal helper is seen as one who is nurturing, caring and helpful in working out specific problems. Many of the youngsters did not respond to Item 8, but of those who did (thirty-nine youngsters) only 7 percent indicated having an experience with a helper where they were not helped.
6. The Ethnic Background of the Social Worker-Helper

In this part of the operationalized definition of the helping experience the study looks at the "persona" of the helper and the adolescents' feelings about a particular aspect of this "persona." Perlman (1974) discusses the person of a client and in the description of the self-perception of the adolescents the researcher borrows greatly from her ideas. In focusing on the ethnic background of the helpers her concept is extended and applied with its various ramifications to a helper group, particularly to their ethnicity.

It is important to keep in mind when examining the responses to the ethnic scale, that a positive response to the "persona" of the helper means that ethnic variables do not interfere in a major way with a helping experience and a negative response means the opposite.

a. Response to the Scale

The reliability for the scale tests out at .612. To obtain this degree of reliability the scale was reconstructed to include only items 1, 2 and 3. The items included in the scale then are the following:

. Item 1 - "I feel more comfortable talking with a social worker who is of the same ethnic background as my own. For example, Puerto Rican kids should talk with Puerto Rican social workers; Black kids with Black social workers, etc."

. "Item 2- "If you like the person you're working with, their background, that is, whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican makes no difference."

. Item 3 - "The first thing I notice about a social worker is whether he is Puerto Rican."
Although not included as part of the scale, the adolescents' response to Item 6 is also presented because of this item's major relevance to the issues of the study.

- Item 6 - "The bottom line (most important thing) in whether or not I am helped by a social worker has to do with the ability of the social worker, not his ethnic background."

In Table 4.16 the mean responses of the adolescents to the items composing the Ethnic scale are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Response: 60</td>
<td>Grand Mean: 3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Item 6**
Total Response: 60
Mean: 4.00

b. Qualitative Response

The qualitative items in this area are the following:

- Item 7 - "Describe a situation where the racial/ethnic background of a social worker might make a difference in how you relate with him. If you feel it should make no difference explain."

- Item 8 - "Give an example of a situation where what a Puerto Rican social worker does would be different from what a Black or White worker would do."
Most of the adolescents — almost 55 percent — felt that the ethnic background of a helper would make no difference in how they related with them. Franco's response sums up the feelings of many of the other teenagers when he says:

"Look, I don't care about it if (a person's) Black, White, Hispanic, green or purple. I care whether or not the person shows in his ways that he cares about me and my problems."

For those who did feel that this variable was important to the relationship the common theme emerging in their responses had to do with feeling more comfortable and being able to communicate better with someone of their own background. Forty percent did not think a Puerto Rican social worker would do anything differently than a White or Black social worker. For those who did feel there was a difference, language and cultural background were major reasons. A repeated expression was the idea that a Puerto Rican social worker would work a little harder for someone of his own background.

Perhaps more than in any other area the "ethnic" piece of the helping experience generated verbal responses from the adolescents. These responses, though not always recorded by the youngsters on the instrument, are very pertinent to the concerns of the study and so are included in this discussion of the adolescent's qualitative responses. To begin with the adolescents were quick to express their confusion over the meaning of "ethnicity." Many were certain that it meant the same thing as "race" and a few persisted in this idea even after a clarifying discussion led by the researcher. Emotionality was high in these discussions with some of the youngsters expressing shock and surprise that the question of the possible
influence of ethnicity in a helping situation would even be raised. With a certain amount of righteous indignation a number of the adolescents insisted not only that a helper's ethnic background did not make a difference in a helping experience but should not make a difference. Typical of adolescents many of the youngsters became quite self righteous here, adhering to what they apparently perceived as societal norms and sanctions — norms and sanctions that say a person's ethnic background should not be a consideration in any human relationship, certainly not in a helping relationship. It should be noted here that often in the small groups of youngsters formed during the data gathering process there was a range of racial-ethnic background judging solely by the youngsters' physical appearance. Thus, there were adolescents who were very dark skinned, having negroid features, who identified themselves as Puerto Rican and other youngsters who were fair to the point of being blond and blue-eyed who also identified themselves as Puerto Rican. Some of their underlying anxiety, as well as feelings about ethnicity were belied as joking references were made to each other's racial or ethnic features.

Much of the adolescent's written response on the instrument was consistent with their verbal expression and their responses to scaled items. However, a considerable amount of it, especially having to do with their thoughts about Puerto Rican social workers, was not. Few youngsters actually described in detail situations where what a Puerto Rican social worker does would be different from what a White or Black helper would do. Rather they responded in more general terms. Here, although many of the adolescents did not express it as such, the ethnic background of the helper was seen as important. By "not express it as such" is meant that
the adolescents often did not articulate specifically a connection between
a Puerto Rican helper's ethnicity and being a "better helper," rather, Puerto Rican helpers were lumped together with helping people and what
made them better helpers were such things as being able to speak Spanish or being familiar with the neighborhoods of Puerto Ricans. Of course, this raises the larger question of whether familiarity with a language or an ethnic neighborhood are as important considerations as ethnicity per se in a helping experience.

In any event, many of the youngsters in the study felt that somehow a Puerto Rican social worker was different and did different things than a Black or White social worker. Not only did Puerto Rican helpers speak Spanish and have a familiarity with Puerto Rican neighborhoods, they understood Puerto Rican families and, as one youngster put it, "the ways" of these families. For example one adolescent, whose parents spoke only Spanish and belonged to a Pentecostal church, said there were many things about his family and their customs with which an Anglo or Black helper would not be familiar. He went on to explain the strict practices and requirements of the Pentecostal church, the fact that his parents did much of their shopping in bodegas, the strictly defined roles in his family with his mother being expected "to go along" with the wishes of his father. All of these things he thought would be confusing to a non-Puerto Rican helper. The question is raised here, as a caveat, that the same "ways" might be confusing to a Puerto Rican helper not familiar with the Pentecostal church or bodegas. Certainly though, the probability of a Puerto Rican helper being familiar with these "ways" is greater than with a Black or White helper.
The adolescents seemed to perceive themselves and Puerto Ricans as being one, united, belonging to the same group, by virtue simply of their Puerto Rican background. This being so, it was deemed logical by many of the adolescents, that a Puerto Rican helper would go out of his way to help them. Puerto Rican helpers were seen — again, simply by virtue of being Puerto Rican — by some of the adolescents, as being warmer, more sensitive and being more willing "to be a friend" than non-Puerto Ricans. Many of the adolescents seemed to perceive Puerto Rican helpers as being more understanding and accepting of the problems that Puerto Rican adolescents experience. This expression on the adolescent's part was particularly interesting in view of the very negative expressions elicited from the Latino helper group about Puerto Rican adolescents. There was only one youngster who specifically said that he would not "trust" a Puerto Rican social worker. This young respondent expressed the view that Puerto Ricans "like to gossip" and he was sure that a Puerto Rican social worker, for this reason, would not be able to hold a confidence. He specifically indicated that he would prefer to go to a White helper because White helpers were usually "smarter" than Puerto Rican or Black helpers and had "better connections."

In sum, many of the youngsters thought that Puerto Rican social workers, both by virtue of knowing Spanish and familiarity with the "ways" of Puerto Rican families and by virtue of their ethnicity, more strictly defined, would do things differently than Black or White helpers.
c. Summary of the Adolescents' Response to the Helper Ethnic Background Area

Generally, their very positive responses to the ethnic scale suggest that the adolescents do not feel that the ethnic background of a helper is of major importance in the helping experience. The most positive response was to Item 2 which says not only that they do not place great emphasis on the ethnicity of a helper in a helping experience, but that they do place importance on the relationship in the helping equation — a response consistent with the response to the relationship area previously discussed.

In their qualitative responses, again the adolescents tend to downplay the importance of a helper's ethnic background while at the same time approximately 50 percent of the adolescents thought that the approaches a Puerto Rican helper would use would be different than the approaches of a Black or Anglo helper. Their reasoning here usually related to sharing language and cultural background with a Puerto Rican helper.
CHAPTER 5

THE HELPERS

Introduction

As in Chapter 4, Part I of this Chapter concerns itself with a demographic description - this time of the adult population. In this section first the helpers' personal data are presented and then their educational and professional background are described. The helpers' experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents is also examined in this section. In Part II, the adult's perception of the helping experience is described.

PART I: DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE HELPERS

The population of helpers in this study consisted of sixty seven individuals purposively selected from a variety of public and private agencies in Newark, New Jersey. Relative to the major questions of the study our adults were selected according to their ethnic background; the group is divided between Whites, Blacks and Latinos.

Age and Sex

There was a wide variation in the ages of the adult respondents ranging from 19 years of age to 59 years of age with the mean age being 34. Of all the adults 37 percent were 29 years of age or younger while
3 percent were older than 45. There were more than twice as many female subjects in our population as males.

Nativity, Racial-Ethnic Background and Community

Sixty eight percent of the adult population was born in the Continental United States and 26 percent in Puerto Rico. The remaining 4 percent were born in Europe or an Hispanic-Latin country. In Table 5.1, when the helper's racial-ethnic identity is examined without collapsing "Hispanic" categories it can be seen that only 3 percent of the helpers identified themselves as Puerto Rican Americans while 28 percent identified themselves as Puerto Rican.

| TABLE 5.1 |
| ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE HELPERS |
| $|$ | No. |
| Black | 31 | 21 |
| Puerto Rican | 28 | 19 |
| Hispanic | 6 | 4 |
| Puerto Rican American | 3 | 2 |
| White | 30 | 20 |
| Other | 1.5 | 1 |

In the adult population, Latinos have a higher proportion of males than either Blacks or Whites.

More of the minority helpers lived where they worked than did the
White helpers. In Table 5.2 when these variables are compared it can be seen that of the Blacks in our population, 57 percent live where they work; 41 percent of Latinos live where they work; and 20 percent of Whites live where they work.

**TABLE 5.2**

PLACE OF RESIDENCE BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Self-Description</th>
<th>Live Where You Work</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Response: 63  \( x^2 = 5.9 \)  d.f. = 2  \( p = .02 \)

**Education, Position and Professional Identity**

The greater majority (60 percent) of the helpers had BA degrees in a variety of fields, 4 percent had BSW's and 7 percent had less than a Bachelor's degree. Twenty one percent had MSW's while 8 percent had MA's in a variety of fields.

Most of the helpers had positions on the level of Bachelor level case aids. Twenty one percent had supervisory or administrative positions, while 13 percent were MSW practitioners.

A statistical presentation of the educational and career data of the helpers, using chi square did not seem appropriate in view of the small
"N's" that appeared in individual cells. However, an inspection of this material suggested significant trends.

Proportionately more Whites had more education than either Blacks or Latinos. Forty seven percent of our White respondents had MSW's while 12 percent of Blacks had the degree and only 8 percent of Latinos had it.

An inspection of the data having to do with education and current position, as would be expected, suggested that those individuals in the adult population with higher degrees tended to be in administrative positions and that proportionately more women in the population had graduate degrees than did men.

Out of the total adult population 58 percent identified themselves as social workers and 60 percent said they planned a career in social work. An important proportion (22 percent) indicated that they were undecided about their career plans. Significantly, as would be expected in view of their educational background, more Whites than either Blacks or Latinos planned careers in social work. Ninety four percent of Whites said they planned a social work career while 75 percent of Blacks said they did and 59 percent of Latinos said they did.

Overall, the White helpers tended to have more training than the other groups; they tended to be in administrative positions and to plan careers in social work more than Black or Latino helpers. Blacks had more training and were more often in administrative positions than Latinos. But the difference in the adult population between Blacks and Latinos along these dimensions was not as striking as the difference between Whites and the two minority groups of helpers. Further, in the populations women tended to have more training than men and were more
often in administrative positions. Thus, proportionately speaking, the helpers in this particular population who were more often in supervisory, policy-making positions were White females.

**Experience in Working with Puerto Rican Adolescents**

The average amount of experience for the helpers with their current agency was less than two years. Those who responded with a time amount to the questions about experience with Puerto Rican adolescents indicated an average amount of experience with this population of seven years.

As indicated in Table 5.3 many of the adults did not indicate a "time amount" in response to the questions about experience with Puerto Rican adolescents but rather simply indicated experience.

**TABLE 5.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not ascertainable</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the sex and ethnic background of helpers were examined in relation to experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents, the data suggest that females and Whites had more experience. The age range
(26-35) seen most frequently was the same across ethnic lines; at the same time, the instrument specifically elicited data concerning experience with Puerto Rican adolescents, not simply experience as a helper. Knowing this, and with the particular concerns of the study in mind, it was felt that it would be important to examine the variable of "experience with Puerto Rican adolescents," relative to sex and ethnicity. Of those, then, who responded to the "experience" items with a time amount, proportionately more Whites indicated greater experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents than either Blacks or Latinos and within the total population proportionately more females indicated experience with this group than did males.

**Type of Setting**

Fifty-four percent of the helpers were in a public agency setting with 31 percent in a child welfare setting and 22 percent in a public welfare setting. Twenty six percent were in an ethnic agency setting, while 10 percent were in an educational setting. Negligible percentages were in a private setting.\(^1\)

When data is analyzed relative to the settings where they have worked with Puerto Rican adolescents there is a similarity in types of settings for Blacks and Whites — for our population most often a public setting —

---

\(^1\) "Private setting" here refers to private family service agencies, private psychiatric clinics or private practice.
while the setting for the experience of our Latinos was most often an ethnic agency. Table 5.4 describes type of setting and the ethnic background of a helper.

**TABLE 5.4**

TYPE OF SETTING BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Black (Frequency)</th>
<th>Latino (Frequency)</th>
<th>White (Frequency)</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational Setting</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>21 (4)</td>
<td>11 (2)</td>
<td>11 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Setting</td>
<td>87 (13)</td>
<td>21 (4)</td>
<td>78 (14)</td>
<td>60 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Setting</td>
<td>13 (2)</td>
<td>58 (11)</td>
<td>78 (2)</td>
<td>59 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Response: 52

A further analysis of the data for adult helpers does not show a significant relationship between educational level and type of setting. However, sex and type of setting are not independent of each other as seen in Table 5.5

**TABLE 5.5**

TYPE OF SETTING BY SEX OF HELPER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Public Setting</th>
<th>Ethnic Setting</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37.5 (6)</td>
<td>6.25 (10)</td>
<td>31 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31 (11)</td>
<td>69 (25)</td>
<td>69 (36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Response: 52 \( \chi^2=13.6 \) d.f.=2 \( p=.00 \)
With Table 5.6 several of the variables for adults that have been discussed up to this point are summarized.

**TABLE 5.6**
**SUMMARY TABLE FOR HELPER VARIABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Statistical Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live Where You Work</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range Between 26-35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>p = .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Years or Less Experience with Current Agency</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 Years Experience with P.R. Adolescents</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Plan Career in Social Work</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S.W. Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The total number (67) of adult helpers was divided between Whites, Blacks and Latinos. The adult population tended to be females in their early thirties, who had Bachelor degrees and worked in large public agencies. With this group of helpers there was a wide range in ages and almost 68 percent of the population were female. The majority of the helpers identified themselves as social workers and indicated that they
planned a career in social work.

Forty percent of the total group of helpers indicated that they lived in the area where they worked. The majority of the adult helpers were born in the United States although a significant proportion of the Latino helpers were born in Puerto Rico. Within the larger group of Latino helpers the majority described themselves as "Puerto Rican."

Most of the helpers were individuals with Bachelor degrees doing "frontline" practice and having an average of less than two years experience in their present agency. The majority of the helpers who had professional training were White and the group of helpers with the least amount of training was Latino. Of those in administrative positions the majority were MSW's although a number of BA's indicated that they were in administrative jobs. All of the helpers indicated having a significant experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents. Although most of the helpers were female, the largest contingent working in ethnic agencies was Latino males.

The adult population tended to diverge along ethnic lines. Whites tended to have more training and consequently were more often in administrative positions, while at the same time having more experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents than either Blacks or Latinos. Whites tended not to live in the area where they worked, more so than Blacks or Latinos.
Part II: THE HELPER'S PERCEPTION OF THE HELPING EXPERIENCE

Overview

In this section, the helpers view of the helping experience as represented by the various components of the operational definition are described. Although essentially the material in this chapter parallels that in Chapter 4, it is organized somewhat differently because the presentation includes three groups as opposed to just one group. As with the adolescents the various dimensions of the operationalized definition are used as the organizing framework for the material with the perception of each group being presented under each section. Where there is poor reliability for a scale for descriptive purposes the responses to all items are presented, and then selected items are examined more closely. The highest score indicating the strongest agreement is '5' and '1' is the lowest score indicating the strongest disagreement. As with the youngsters, open ended responses are analyzed and a qualitative impression is presented. Qualitative responses to the "ethnic" area are presented in more detail because of this area's major relevance to the concerns of the study. Where appropriate, an attempt is made to summarize some of the qualitative responses in quantitative terms. Since the perceptions of three groups are presented here, a one way analysis of variance is done on their responses to the scales and to selected items where there is a lack of reliability for a scale. Where differences between mean scores as well as divergent qualitative responses suggest it, a t test is done between groups. Since the qualitative responses of our adult groups suggest a
degree of difference between each group and since the study has a particular interest in the impact that the ethnicity of helpers has on a helping experience, the perceptions of each group are presented even when there is not a significant ANOVA either on a scale or a selected item.

The status of each scale, relative to reliability, comparability (to the adolescent scales) and significance of ANOVA are presented in Table 5.7.

**TABLE 5.7**

**STATUS OF ADULT SCALES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Comparability</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all items)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Items 1,4,5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Perception</td>
<td>.555</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale items: 1, 4, 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Selected items, 1, 2, 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Significant only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Items 1, 4, 5, 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Scale items: 1, 3, 4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Selected items: 3, 5, 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.s. Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Items 1, 2, 3, 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Community**

This "piece" of the helping experience with the adult groups inquires about their views of the neighborhoods or communities of their Puerto
Rican adolescent clients. It does not ask them about their view of their own neighborhoods. Again, as with the adolescents, the study seeks to know if the adults see the environments of their Puerto Rican adolescent clients in a positive or negative light, keeping in mind that community or environment is seen as the potentially nurturing context of a helping experience.

a. Response to the Scale

The Community scale for the adults as a group produced an alpha of .717 for all six items indicating good reliability for the scale. An analysis of variance between groups controlling for ethnicity shows a significance of (p=0.007) suggesting that there is indeed a difference among the adult groups in their responses to the community scale, that is related to their ethnicity. An examination of difference in mean scores suggested the appropriateness of a t test. This indeed suggests a difference between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a Group.

The items in the Community scale for adults are the following:

- Item 1 - "These neighborhoods are good places in which to live."
- Item 2 - "Most of the houses in these neighborhoods are well cared for."
- Item 3 - "Most of the Puerto Rican families in the neighborhoods you visit are proud of their homes."
- Item 4 - "The Puerto Rican adolescents you know would probably not want to raise their children in their neighborhood."
. Item 5 - "The police in these neighborhoods are not very helpful to residents."

. Item 6 - "These neighborhoods have poor schools."

In Table 5.8 the mean responses of each adult group to each item in the community scale are presented along with the results of tests of significance between groups.

**TABLE 5.8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 8</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black n=21</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino n=25</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White n=19</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA: DF = 2  F = 5.44 Significance of F = 0.007

**t test:** (Comparing Black and Whites as a group with Latinos as a group)
D.F. = 63  t = 3.25  Significance of t = 0.002

Examining the responses of all three groups to the community scale suggests that not only do the groups differ significantly between themselves, but that there is a significant difference between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a group.

Overall, the responses of the adults to the Community scale are consistently negative, with Latinos being more negative than Blacks or Whites in their perceptions of the communities or neighborhoods of Puerto Rican adolescents. The only item where the responses approached a positive level was Item 3 which had to do with the homes of Puerto Rican
families — a much more personal environment than that suggested by the other items.

b. Qualitative Responses

The open ended items for the Community area are the following:

. Item 7 - "If you were to give a description of the neighborhoods of the Puerto Rican adolescent clients you have known in one or two sentences, what would it be?"

. Item 8 - "What are the three best and three worst things about the neighborhoods of your Puerto Rican adolescent clients?"

The responses of all of the adult groups to Items 7 and 8 were generally as negative as their responses to the scaled items but with shades of difference between groups again, particularly between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a group. Latinos presented the most negative responses while Whites, of the three groups, tended to be more positive in their responses.

In response after response, Blacks described "decrepit, slum ridden, filthy neighborhoods." More specifically, many Black helpers mentioned poor or deteriorated housing, lack of amenities such as neighborhood stores and drug trafficking as characterizing these neighborhoods. These communities were perceived by Black helpers as places where many people, but specifically adult males "hang out," with little to occupy themselves. Where Black helpers had positive responses, family and cultural support systems are mentioned. Several Black helpers also indicated that churches and social agencies are important sources of support in Puerto Rican neighborhoods.
Like the Blacks, the Latino helpers make frequent mention of a deteriorated physical environment in the responses to the qualitative items. Poor housing, filthy housing or simply lack of housing, become a theme in the Latino response. Several subjects describe homes "not fit for human beings." Too, there is frequent mention of drugs and street crime as being part of the environment of Puerto Rican adolescents. Neighborhoods are seen as lacking in amenities such as stores and essential transportation. Unemployment and youths "hanging out" are described as characterizing these neighborhoods. Several subjects mention lack of government involvement or government help as part of the negative picture. On the positive side the Latinos repeatedly mention family and cultural support systems as being important in Puerto Rican neighborhoods. Community institutions such as churches, schools and social agencies are described as part of the "bright side" of these neighborhoods.

The Whites, too, mention deteriorated housing, drug trafficking and crime as characterizing the neighborhoods of their Puerto Rican adolescent clients. However, one sees more positive responses with the Whites than with either the Blacks or Latinos. They mention clean, decent apartments, albeit ones existing in deteriorated buildings. They frequently mention family and community support networks and several times the neighborhoods of Puerto Rican adolescents are described as "colorful" or festive.

In Table 5.9 the adult perceptions of the neighborhoods of their Puerto Rican adolescent clients are summarized in positive and negative terms.
TABLE 5.9

ADULT PERCEPTION OF PUERTO RICAN NEIGHBORHOODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Black n=20</th>
<th>Latino n=24</th>
<th>White n=20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>10 (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Positive and Negative</td>
<td>29 (6)</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>45 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>43 (9)</td>
<td>64 (16)</td>
<td>35 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>14 (3)</td>
<td>24 (6)</td>
<td>20 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Relationship**

With this dimension of the helping experience with the adult groups inquiry is made about their relationship with clients in general and Puerto Rican adolescents in particular. Again as with the adolescents, the concern here is about empathy, the feeling flow, the interaction that occurs between helpers and clients.

a. **Response to the Scale**

After restructuring the scale based on the correlation matrix an Alpha of .478 is achieved. To achieve this Alpha Items 1, 4 and 5 are used. In addition to an ANOVA on the three groups, a t test is done comparing Blacks and Whites as a group with Latinos as a group based on an examination of differences in mean scores between these groups.
The items in the Relationship scale for the adults are the following:

- Item 1 - "Feeling close to your client can determine whether or not you can help him."
- Item 4 - "It makes your client feel good to talk with you."
- Item 5 - "It is important to talk about feelings if you really want to help a Puerto Rican adolescent client."

In Table 5.10 the mean responses of all adult groups to all items in the relationship scale are presented as well as the results of between group significance tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.10</th>
<th>ADULT MEAN RESPONSES TO THE RELATIONSHIP SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>Item 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA: $F = 5.30$  $Df = 2$  Significance of $F = 0.007$

$t$ Test: (Comparing Blacks and Whites as a group with Latinos as a group)
$t = 3.15$  $Df = 64$  Significance of $t = 0.002$

An examination of the responses of the adults to the items in the Relationship scale indicates a very positive view of this aspect of the helping experience. However, an analysis of variance between groups with a significance of 0.007 suggests that the adult groups diverge along ethnic lines with Latinos generally feeling more positively than either Blacks or Whites. A $t$ test further suggests that the significant difference is between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a group.
b. **Qualitative Responses**

The open ended items for the Relationship area are the following:

- Item 7 - "Some people say that you have to like the person with whom you are working - that you have to have a positive relationship with the person in order to be helpful.

  a. Do you agree?________ or disagree? _______

  b. If you agree give three reasons why."

- Item 8 - "If you agree about the importance of relationships would you think that a positive relationship with a helping person would be especially important to a Puerto Rican adolescent as distinct from other American adolescents?

  a. Yes________ No________

  b. If 'yes' give three reasons why you think a positive relationship with a helping person is especially important to a Puerto Rican adolescent."

The qualitative responses of the Blacks and the Whites in this area suggest a view at variance to that indicated by their responses to the scaled items. A majority of the Blacks and Whites in their qualitative responses give the impression of not seeing the relationship as important in the helping experience in general nor of special importance to Puerto Rican adolescents. The responses of the Blacks and the Whites here may be interpreted as partly a function of the instrument. The wording of Item 7 suggests that a positive relationship is a sine qua non of helping, whereas the wording of the scaled items was much more suggestive and general on this point. Negative responses to Item 8 would not preclude feeling very positively about the relationship in a helping experience, just about the importance of this relationship to Puerto Rican adolescents.
in particular.

Of those Blacks who did respond positively in this area, many mentioned the importance of trust and respect in order for help to take place. Conveying a sense of caring, sincerity and emotional involvement were seen by those Blacks who responded positively as critical in a helping situation. Several Black respondents did mention difference in "cultural background" and special sensitivity related to early material impoverishment as reasons why Puerto Ricans adolescents might be especially needy in this area.

The Latinos perception of the relationship area as expressed in their responses to open ended items was more consistent with their responses to the scaled items. The majority agreed on the importance of the relationship citing reasons of trust, mutual acceptance, communication and sincerity as why they felt it was important. Repeatedly the Latinos brought out the idea that more "happens" where there is a good relationship: more communication, more expression of feeling, more involvement, in short, more help.

Very pertinent to the issues of the study, many of the Latino helpers felt that, indeed, Puerto Rican adolescents were especially sensitive to relationship in the helping equation. The response of one of the Latino subjects summed up particularly well many of the other positive responses in this area:

"Yes, Puerto Ricans in general are more sensitive to relationship because of their culture and family background. They tend not to be trusting. If your relationship is poor with a Puerto Rican adolescent he will see you as one more oppressor and withdraw."
The Whites who agreed on the importance of the relationship mention trust and caring as part of what makes a client "work harder." Several Whites felt that communication opens up when the relationship between client and helper is positive. Of the two White subjects who agreed with Item 8, one expressed the idea that "personalismo" was very important to Puerto Ricans as opposed to dealing with an impersonal bureaucracy. The other subject simply felt that having more problems made Puerto Rican adolescents more sensitive to relationships.

In Tables 5.11 and 5.12, the responses of the adult groups to the area of relationship are summarized in terms of agreeing or disagreeing on its importance in general and its importance to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular.

**TABLE 5.11**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Blacks n=21</th>
<th>Whites n=20</th>
<th>Latinos n=24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>43 (9)</td>
<td>45 (9)</td>
<td>60 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>57 (12)</td>
<td>55 (11)</td>
<td>36 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 5.12

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP TO PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks n=21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>29 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>71 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 6.38 \text{ D.F. = 2 } p = .04 \]

3. Self Perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents

In this section the study looks at how the adult groups perceive Puerto Rican adolescents. To a limited extent the section also inquires about the views that the helpers have of the self-perception of Puerto Rican adolescents. So the interest here is really in trying to look at two perceptions: the perceptions that a group of adults have of a group of adolescents and the perceptions that a group of adults have of the self perceptions of a group of adolescents. Of course, how clients are perceived and their self-perception impacts directly upon the quality of the helping experience. Feeling positively about clients suggests a positive perception of the helping experience (Perlman, 1975).

a. Response to the Scale

After reconstructing the scale to include only Items 1, 4 and 6, an Alpha of .555 is achieved indicating acceptable reliability. However, there is no comparability with the same scale for the adolescents where none of the items strongly correlated. Since there is not a comparable
scale and with the descriptive interests of the study in mind, the adults' response to all six items in this area are described. In order to compare the adult responses to the adolescent responses the same three items that were selected for the adolescent — Items 1, 2 and 3 — are selected here for a closer inspection.

As with the adolescents, the selection of the items to some extent, is based on a subjective judgement on the part of the researcher that they do indeed relate to the questions of the study, relative to the self perceptions of a group of Puerto Rican adolescents.

The analysis of variance for the adults' reliable scale had a significance of $F$ of 0.399 indicating no statistically significant difference between groups on the scale. An ANOVA on the adult items to be compared with the adolescent items showed a significance of $F$ of 0.046 for Item 1, but a significance of $F$ of 0.703 and 0.165 for Items 2 and 3 respectively.

In spite of there being statistically significant differences for only one item in this area, in view of distinctions found in the qualitative responses and again relative to the study interests in ethnic variables, the responses of each adult group are presented.

The items in the adults' "Self Perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents" area are the following:

- Item 1 - "Being of Puerto Rican background is a definite advantage in the United States."
- Item 2 - "Puerto Rican adolescents are hardworking and industrious."
- Item 3 - "Puerto Ricans in the United States tend to have many problems that require social work help such as drugs, mental disease and family problems."
. Item 4 - "Puerto Rican Adolescents are hardworking and industrious."

. Item 5 - "Skin color and hair texture are important to Puerto Ricans."

. Item 6 - "A lot of White people don't trust Puerto Ricans."

In Table 5.13 the mean responses of each adult groups to all of the items in the Self-Perception area are presented. The grand means given are for Items 1, 4 and 6, the items that formed a reliable scale.

| TABLE 5.13 |

| ADULT MEAN RESPONSES TO THE SELF PERCEPTION AREA |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
|                | Item 1 | Item 2 | Item 3 | Item 4 | Item 5 | Item 6 | Grand Mean | S.D. |
| Blacks         | n=21   | 2.23   | 3.14   | 3.14   | 2.66   | 3.57   | 2.52     | 2.47 | 0.7 |
| Latinos        | n=25   | 2.64   | 3.12   | 2.63   | 3.12   | 3.08   | 2.00     | 2.58 | 0.8 |
| Whites         | n=20   | 1.90   | 3.31   | 2.65   | 2.40   | 2.60   | 2.40     | 2.23 | 0.6 |

Key: o = Selected Items
     + = Items part of reliable scale

An examination of the mean responses of the adults to all of the items having to do with the self-perception of Puerto Rican adolescents suggests two things: for the most part the adults have a generally negative view of Puerto Rican adolescents while at the same time they feel that Puerto
Rican adolescents have a negative view of themselves. Each of the groups disagreed with the idea that being of Puerto Rican background was an advantage for an adolescent in the United States. The White helpers in particular responded very negatively to Item 1, with 85 percent disagreeing with the idea that being of Puerto Rican ancestry is an advantage in the United States. Blacks too felt quite negatively about this notion with 75 percent of their group disagreeing while Latinos, though negative, were not as negative as Whites or Blacks, with only 56 percent of them disagreeing with the idea.

Majorities of both the Latino and White groups perceived Puerto Ricans as a problem-ridden population — 60 percent of each group — as suggested by their responses to Item 3. Blacks differed from Latinos and Whites here with 62 percent of their group disagreeing with this item.

On a more positive note, a majority of each group agreed that Puerto Rican adolescents are hardworking and industrious.

An examination of the responses to other individual items in this area is of some interest. The Latinos were the only group with a majority that agreed with Item 4 — that "Puerto Rican adolescents stand as much chance as the average American teenager of getting a good education." At the same time they had the largest majority — almost 80 percent — who agreed with Item 6, that "a lot of White people don't trust Puerto Ricans." Of the three groups as indicated by mean responses, Blacks felt the least strongly that "skin color and hair texture are important to Puerto Ricans," while Whites felt the most strongly about this item.
b. Qualitative Response

The open-ended items for the Self-Perception area are the following:

Item 7:  a. "Briefly, how would you describe your perception of Puerto Rican adolescents?"

b. "Do you think most Puerto Rican adolescents would agree with your perception?"

c. "If no to question "b", then how do you think Puerto Rican adolescents perceive themselves?"

Item 8: "What distinctions if any would you make between Puerto Rican teenagers and other American teenagers?"

Both Latinos and Whites describe Puerto Ricans adolescents in quite negative terms. The Latinos describe them as beset by a multitude of personal and environmental problems. The Latinos characterize them as feeling inferior and invalidated, as having to struggle against prejudice and as not having the same opportunities as other American teenagers. They are seen by the Latinos as aggressive, involved with drugs and being overly involved with sex. Frequently they are described by Latino helpers as street kids who lack role models and need a tremendous amount of help, as having a different physical appearance and being more cynical and violent than other American teenagers. Several of the Latino helpers did not think that Puerto Rican adolescents would agree with their perception, but instead would see themselves as "macho, cool and getting over."

Although the qualitative responses of the White helpers suggests a negative perception of Puerto Rican adolescents, their responses also suggest a kind of "simpatico" with this population. They give the impression in their responses of seeing Puerto Rican adolescents as
disadvantaged, lacking in opportunities, often with foreclosed futures. Puerto Rican adolescents are described as discriminated against and hence being guarded and defensive. One White helpers' response in this area summed up the responses of several White subjects:

"Puerto Rican teenagers have difficulty deferring goals such as having money, having cars, having babies, etc, for the sake of an education. Other American teenagers are much better at this. Puerto Rican kids get hit with the reality of 'no education, no job' when quite young."

Black helpers tended to be somewhat more positive in their qualitative description of Puerto Rican adolescents than either the Latinos or Whites. They tended to see negatives with these youngsters in terms of them having identity struggles or feeling that they are victimized minorities in a White dominated society.

Language and cultural background are seen by all of the adult groups as setting Puerto Rican adolescents apart. In spite of mentioning these differences the Blacks more than the Latinos of Whites described Puerto Rican teenagers as being like other American teenagers. The Latinos and Whites, on the other hand, felt that closeness to family, respect for authority and sensitivity to interpersonal relationships distinguished Puerto Rican teenagers from other American teenagers.

Overall, although the responses of the adults suggests a common negative view of Puerto Rican adolescents, a close look at the open ended data suggests a degree of difference in their perceptions. The impression with the White responses is that "negative" means Puerto Rican adolescents are a troubled, problem ridden population in need of help. For Latinos,
it also means a troubled population but one where the "trouble" is sometimes related to character or personality difficulties — here one recalls the descriptive phraseology of the Latinos referring to Puerto Rican adolescents as "cynical, violent and aggressive." For Blacks, negative seemed to relate more to the adolescents' "cultural separateness" from other American teenagers. Perhaps the common negative perception that was consistent across all of the adult groups had to do with their view that Puerto Rican adolescents had identity problems related to their ethnic background.

In Table 5.14 the adult perception of differences between Puerto Rican adolescents and other American teenagers is summarized.

**TABLE 5.14**

PERCEPTION OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENTS AND OTHER TEEN-AGERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Blacks (n=21)</th>
<th>Latinos (n=25)</th>
<th>Whites (n=19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Difference</td>
<td>19 (4)</td>
<td>4 (1)</td>
<td>20 (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Difference</td>
<td>24 (5)</td>
<td>52 (13)</td>
<td>45 (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Difference</td>
<td>24 (5)</td>
<td>32 (8)</td>
<td>10 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>33 (7)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
<td>20 (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The Problem

As with the adolescents we go to Perlman for our understanding of the importance of this piece of the helping experience. "How the caseworker perceives the problem may be a corrective to the client's vision and thus the client's ego is aided in its testing of reality and preparation for action" (Perlman, 1974, p. 89). So the helpers' perception here, presumably clearer by virtue of education and life experience, can help the client "see" his problem correctly and thus take appropriate action. Perception of this area then is central in the helping experience. A "positive" perception in this area, for purposes of the study, means simply that the subjects see helpers as helpful in a variety of problem areas. Where a response suggests that a subject does not see helping people as being capable of assisting in a particular area this is interpreted as a negative response.

a. Response to the Scale

Reconstructing the adult scale, to include Items 1, 4, 5 and 6 produces an alpha of .540, indicating acceptable reliability. An ANOVA among the three adult groups shows a significance of F as 0.557 indicating that the difference among the three adult groups on this scale is not statistically significant. The qualitative responses, however, do show a degree of difference. With this in mind and with a view towards looking at ethnic variables, the responses of each group to the scale are presented. The items in the problem scale are the following:

Item 1 - "Social Workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems."
Item 4 - "A Puerto Rican adolescent would never want to tell a social worker what goes on in his family."

Item 5 - "A Puerto Rican adolescent would feel that it's ok to talk with a social worker about sexual problems."

Item 6 - "A Puerto Rican adolescent wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a social worker about his friends."

In Table 5.15 the mean response of each adult group to all of the items in the Problem scale are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks (n=21)</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos (n=25)</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites (n=20)</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the adult groups had a positive response to the Problem scale. For purposes of the study this means that the adults saw helpers as offering positive assistance in a number of areas. Item 5 in the scale drew a consistently negative response from all three groups suggesting that the adult groups did not feel that Puerto Rican adolescents would feel comfortable talking about sexual problems. Somewhat paradoxically, each of the adult groups responded most strongly to Item 1 indicating their feeling that helpers can assist with "personal, private kinds of problems." Here one can speculate that the helpers would agree that they
could help an adolescent with a sexual problem but that this area would be particularly uncomfortable for the adolescent.

b. Qualitative Response

The qualitative items - Items 7 and 8 - for this area are the following:

- Item 7 - "List five types of problems with which social workers can be most helpful."
- Item 8 - "Of these five types of problems, which would you consider the major one facing Puerto Rican adolescents and why?"

An analysis of the qualitative responses of each adult group to the Problem area suggests a difference mainly of degree or in the amount of emphasis given to the importance of a problem area. Thus, all of the helpers felt that family, education and personal problems were important to Puerto Rican adolescents. However, more Latinos, than Blacks or Whites felt this way. Whites mentioned the need for jobs and family planning advice much more frequently than either Blacks or Latinos.

Blacks seemed to feel that many problems experienced by Puerto Rican adolescents were enormously complicated by their bicultural status. Few Blacks saw drugs as a major problem area for Puerto Rican teenagers while Latinos and, to a lesser extent, Whites did.

In Table 5.16 the responses of all of our adult groups are summarized in terms of the perceptions of problem areas where intervention is most important.
5. The Social Worker - Helper

In this section the helpers are asked to give their views concerning helping people. The term "social worker" is used throughout. As previously indicated, it was interpreted to the adult subjects that this term was being used in a general sense and could include individuals who might not strictly speaking, be defined as social workers, such as guidance counsellors or simply counsellors. The study now looks at the perceptions that the "other" major actor in the helping equation - the helper - has of the person giving help. The items used inquire not only about the role but also about the "person" of the helper (Perlman, 1975).

a. Response to the Scale

Reconstructing the scale using only items 1, 3 and 4 gave a reliability of .586. However, the items in the adult scale that correlated were not similar enough to the items in the adolescent's scale that correlated to permit a comparison here based on scales, between the

---

**TABLE 5.16**

**Problem Areas Where Intervention Is Most Important**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Freq)</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks n=20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites n=20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos n=24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
two groups. As has been done previously for descriptive purposes the responses of the adults to all six items are presented. For purposes of comparability, items were selected that seemed most pertinent to this area and are similar in content to the same items for the adolescents. These items for the adults are numbered 3, 5 and 6.

The ANOVA among the three adult groups on the scale produced a significance of $F$ of 0.430 indicating that the differences between the three groups is not statistically significant. Moreover, the ANOVA done on individual items did not suggest a statistically significant difference among our groups for the items. Item 3 had a significance of $F$ of 0.130, Item 5 had a significance of $F$ of 0.230 and Item 6 had a significance of $F$ of 0.437.

Although the difference between the adult groups on the scale items and selected items is not statistically significant, in view of the distinction found in the qualitative data and, again, with the study's interest in ethnic variables in mind, the perspectives of all three adult groups are presented. First, the study looks at their responses to the items for this dimension which includes the items in the reliable scale as well as selected items. Response to selected items are then more closely examined.

The items for the adults' Social Worker area are the following:

- Item 1 - "Social Workers have special ways of helping people that are different than the ways of a psychiatrist or guidance counsellor"

- Item 2 - "Sometimes Social Workers are nosey or interfere too much."

- Item 3 - "Social Workers need to have a special kind of personality"
Item 4 - "Social Workers receive more money than they are worth."

Item 5 - "Social Workers need a lot of special training -- at least a college degree."

Item 6 - "Some Social Workers are really not interested in helping."

In Table 5.17 the mean response of each adult group to all of the items in the Social Worker area are presented. The grand means given are for Items 1, 3 and 4, the items that formed a reliable scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: + = Reliable Scale Items
     0 = Selected Items

The general impression received from an examination of the mean responses of the adults to the selected items is that they view "social worker - helpers" in a positive light. Of course being helpers themselves makes them a biased sample. Therefore, their views are of interest for what they tell us about the helpers' perception of this particular "piece" of the helping experience not so much for what they tell us about their
views of helpers. Large majorities of each group felt that social workers needed to have a "special kind of personality." More than 80 percent in each group expressed this view. Although most agreed on the importance of special training for social workers, the consensus between the groups here was not quite so strong. Of the Whites and Blacks, 85 percent and 76 percent respectively agree with this idea but of the Latinos, only 68 percent were in agreement here. A majority of both the Blacks and the Whites but not of the Latinos agreed that sometimes social workers are not really interested in helping and of the Blacks a majority agreed with Item 2, that "sometimes social workers are nosey and interfering."

b. Qualitative Responses

The qualitative items for the Social Workers area are the following.

- Item 7 - "If you had to in one or two sentences, how would you describe the ideal social worker?"
- Item 8 - "Describe one case experience you've had in working with a Puerto Rican adolescent. Indicate whether you were helpful or not and why and describe the general circumstances."

All of the adult groups felt that human qualities of compassion and caring were important to being a good helper. This idea is seen repeatedly in their responses. With the Blacks, many of their responses suggested a perception where the "ability to handle assigned cases and specific tasks" was paramount to the functioning of a helper. They feel that social workers should be non-judgmental but rarely mentioned "lack
of prejudice" as an important quality for a helper. The Latinos on the other hand seemed to connect a non-judgemental attitude with lack of prejudice as seen in a number of their response.

White helpers, more often than either Blacks or Latinos, mentioned training and education as being important to being a good social worker. Knowledge of such specific areas as systems theory and the diagnostic model are cited a number of times as important to being helpful.

The adult groups diverged somewhat in response to Item 8. Blacks described situations where they worked with whole families, Latinos described situations where they counselled an adolescent one on one and the Whites tended to describe situations where youngsters were referred out for help. Helping pregnant teens is mentioned several times by both Blacks and Whites but not by Latinos, whereas Latinos in a number of instances describe counselling situations where cultural sensitivity is important.

The greater majority of each group felt that they had been helpful to a Puerto Rican adolescent. The White helpers were the only group who specifically describe situations where they were not helpful ascribing the cause to a lack of communication.

In Table 5.18 the helper's perception of "the ideal social worker - helper" is summarized.
TABLE 5.18
PERCEPTION OF IDEAL SOCIAL WORKER-HELPER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (Frequency)</th>
<th>Blacks n=20</th>
<th>Latinos n=23</th>
<th>Whites n=20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Social Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task oriented; helps with specific problem</td>
<td>62 (13)</td>
<td>44 (11)</td>
<td>65 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person oriented; a friend, understanding &amp; caring</td>
<td>62 (13)</td>
<td>64 (16)</td>
<td>80 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction &amp; Guidance Oriented</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>28 (7)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Systems Oriented</td>
<td>14 (3)</td>
<td>24 (6)</td>
<td>25 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Qualities</td>
<td>19 (4)</td>
<td>24 (6)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The Ethnic Background of the Social Worker - Helper

In this section the helpers' perceptions of the "ethnic" piece of the helping experience are examined. As with the adolescents the study seeks to understand how important the subjects feel the ethnic background of a helper is in the helping experience. As with the adolescents too, a positive response to the area means that the helpers do not see ethnic variables as having a major impact; a more negative response means that they are seen as important.
a. Response to the Scale

A reconstructed scale using Items 1, 2, 3 and 6 produces a reliability of .512. An analysis of the variance between the three groups shows a significance of F of 0.064 indicating that the difference between our three groups is not statistically significant. As with the Community and Relationship scales, divergent qualitative responses as well as differences in mean scores between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a group suggested the appropriateness of a t test. This was significant at the 0.002 level.

The items in the Ethnic scale are the following:

. Item 1 - "It is better for an adolescent to talk with a social worker who is of the same racial/ethnic background as his own. For example Puerto Rican kids would feel more comfortable talking with Puerto Rican social workers, Black kids with Black social workers, etc."

. Item 2 - "If a youngster likes the person he is talking with whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican doesn't make any difference."

. Item 3 - "The first thing an adolescent will notice about a social worker is the social worker's ethnic background."

. Item 6 - "The bottom line in whether or not I can help a Puerto Rican adolescent is my competence as a social worker, not my ethnic background."
In Table 5.19 the adult mean responses are presented for the Ethnic scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th>Grand Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t$ test: (Comparing Blacks and Whites as a group with Latinos as a group)
$t=2.27$ D.f. = 64 Sig. of $t = 0.002$

The overall impression received in examining the adult responses to the Ethnic scale is that for our group of helpers ethnicity is not a variable that intervenes in a major way in the helping experience. There are a number of important exceptions to this impression. The means for all of the adult groups to Item 3 were low suggesting that the helpers felt that (1) first impressions are important and (2) that it is likely that an adolescent will be immediately aware of a helper's ethnic background upon a first meeting. Blacks and Latinos tended much more so than Whites to agree with Item 1. The Black and Latino helpers in the group, then, tended to feel that it would indeed be better for an adolescent to talk with a helper of his own ethnic background. This response, coupled with the response of the Blacks and Latinos (and Whites) to Item 3, suggests that Blacks and Latinos do feel that ethnicity is an important intervening variable in an initial helping encounter.
These "negative" responses of Blacks and Latinos notwithstanding, the overall response to this scale puts Blacks closer to Whites than to Latinos in not seeing ethnic variables as of major importance in a helping experience.

b. Qualitative Responses

The qualitative items for the Ethnic area are the following:

- Item 7 - "Describe a case situation where the racial-ethnic background of a social worker might make a difference in how an adolescent relates to him. If you feel it should make no difference, explain."

- Item 8 - "Give an example of a situation where the approaches or methods a Puerto Rican social worker might use in helping a Puerto Rican youngster could be distinguished from those used by Blacks or White social workers."

There were many non-responses with the White helpers to the qualitative items. Of those who did respond many expressed the view that the ethnic background of a helper should make no difference in how an adolescent would relate with him. Moreover, a majority of those who responded did not feel that the approaches of a Puerto Rican helper could be distinguished from those of a White or Black helper. There were a number of Whites, however, who did feel that the approaches of a Puerto Rican helper were distinct. The Whites characterized Puerto Rican helpers as using approaches or techniques that were more aggressive and outreaching than the approaches of Whites and Blacks. Additionally, Puerto Ricans were seen by these Whites as being better role models for Puerto Rican teenagers than Blacks or Whites simply by virtue of being Puerto Rican. Because of being Puerto Rican, too, Puerto Rican helpers were seen
by some Whites as better able to handle any situation where race, 
ethnicity or culture became issues. Thus, several White helpers described 
situations where youngsters felt they were discriminated against because 
of being Puerto Rican. Here they thought a Puerto Rican helper would be 
more appropriate than a White or Black helper.

Several of the White helpers mention situations where they thought 
"ethnic matching" between a helper and an adolescent would be important. 
The situations described usually involved a youngster who was ethnocentric 
or was having some kind of problem around his racial-ethnic background. 
In these situations the Whites felt that the assigned helper should be of 
the same ethnic group as the youngster. One White helper, in fact, 
described a situation where a Puerto Rican youngster felt that his White 
teacher in school in general disliked Puerto Ricans. There was such a 
negative transference between this youngster and teacher that the youngster 
was failing. Unfortunately the negative transference between the teacher 
and student carried over into the relationship with the White helper who 
was trying to assist the student in handling the situation. This White 
helper expressed the feeling that this particular Puerto Rican adolescent 
could have been more effectively helped by a Puerto Rican helper.

As with the Whites, many of the Blacks did not respond to the open 
ended items in this area. Of those who did respond a majority discounted 
the ethnic background of a helper in the helping experience and most did 
not feel that the approaches of a Puerto Rican social worker would be any 
different than the approaches of a White or Black helper. The Blacks in 
the study, more so than the Whites or Latinos tended to make a distinction 
between class and ethnicity when responding in this area. Thus a number
of Blacks felt that the differences in class and/or socioeconomic background between a helper and an adolescent might make a difference in a helping experience, rather than the ethnic background of a helper. The qualitative responses of the Blacks, more so than with either the Latinos or Whites, suggested that they did not see ethnicity per se as important, except where it related directly to language or culturally specific issues. In their views of Puerto Rican helpers, several Blacks did express the idea that a Puerto Rican helper would be a more believable role model for a Puerto Rican adolescent or could be more helpful because of the sameness of class and family background. But, again, generally, most Blacks did not see Puerto Rican social workers as using approaches different than those of a White or Black social worker.

A majority of the Latino helpers saw the ethnic background of a helper as making a difference to a Puerto Rican teenager and a majority of the Latinos felt that Puerto Rican helpers used approaches that could be distinguished from those of a Black or White helper. In particular, the Latinos felt that a Puerto Rican helper would understand Puerto Rican families, especially newly arrived Puerto Rican families. Several Latinos indicated that a Puerto Rican helper could use his own background to help a Puerto Rican adolescent resolve complicated identity problems. Related to this area several Latinos thought that a major problem for Puerto Rican adolescents was a lack of positive role models and that a Puerto Rican helper could be a positive role model in a way that a Black or White helper could not.

Several Latino helpers felt that the approaches of a Puerto Rican helper would be different by virtue of Puerto Ricans being more
sensitive bi-culturally than Blacks or Whites. One helper mentioned as an example the case of a Puerto Rican adolescent who was homosexual. He felt that with Puerto Ricans there were culturally derived attitudes toward homosexuality that would be critical to understand in order to help this particular youngster.

In sum, there were significant numbers of non-responses to the qualitative items in this area, particularly for Blacks and Whites. The majority of the Blacks and Whites who did respond expressed the feeling that a helpers' ethnic background would not make a difference in how an adolescent would relate to him. However, both groups did feel that it could be important *initially*. In this regard several Black helpers mentioned class and cultural values as being important while White helpers mentioned language. One White helper summed up the responses of both the Blacks and Whites in this area: "First impressions are important -- cultural perceptions and misperceptions must be worked through before real work begins."

Relative to sameness of language and cultural background, some Blacks felt that the approaches of a Puerto Rican social worker might be different. Whites agreed with the Blacks on this but went further: Puerto Rican social workers were seen as better role models and better able to deal with culturally laden issues when dealing with a Puerto Rican adolescent. The White helpers also perceived Puerto Rican helpers as tending to be more involved in the community of Puerto Rican adolescents and more willing to use such approaches as home visiting than helpers of other ethnic backgrounds.

Many of the Latinos who did respond in this area felt that ethnicity
was important in the helping experience for an adolescent, citing language and bicultural sensitivity as two important variables. The Latinos saw Puerto Rican helpers as generally better with Puerto Rican adolescents in terms of being role models and having a better understanding of Puerto Rican mores. Puerto Rican helpers were seen by the Latinos as understanding Puerto Rican family customs, especially with families newly arrived from Puerto Rico. The sameness of ethnic background between a Puerto Rican adolescent and a Puerto Rican helper was seen as negating stereotypes, again, with the Puerto Rican helper acting as a role model.

In Table 5.20 the helpers' perception of ethnicity in the helping experience is looked at in terms of whether it makes a difference to a Puerto Rican adolescent. In Table 5.21 the helpers' perception of the techniques used by a Puerto Rican social worker are presented in terms of whether these approaches are seen as different from the approaches used by a Black or White helper.

**TABLE 5.20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT OF ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF HELPER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of helpers who felt that ethnic background of helper makes a difference to an adolescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of helpers who felt that approaches of a Puerto Rican helper differ from those used by Blacks and Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(total resp: 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(total resp: 13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE ADOLESCENTS AND THE HELPERS

Overview

This chapter compares the perceptions of the helping experience focusing attention on congruence or dissonance in views, comparing the perceptions of the adolescent subjects with each adult group. As in the other analysis chapters the "pieces" of the operationalized definitions of the helping experience are used as the organizing framework. For each section a t Test of significance is used, comparing the adolescents with each adult group on each part of the helping experience using a pooled variance estimate. The mean scores compared are the grand means for a scale. Where scales are not obtained the adolescents are compared to each adult group on selected items. After each Table presenting the results of the t tests a brief interpretation is given. The qualitative responses of the adolescents are also compared with the qualitative responses of each adult group. A major concern, as stated earlier in the study, is to examine congruence or dissonance in views between the adolescents and adults relative to their perceptions of the helping experience.
The items composing the Community scale for both adolescents and adults are the following:

**Community Scale Items**

**Adolescents**

- "My neighborhood is a good place to live."
- "Most of the houses in my neighborhood are well cared for."
- "I live in a house that I am proud of."
- "I would never want to raise my own child in my neighborhood."
- "The police in my neighborhood are not very helpful to residents."
- "My neighborhood has poor schools."

**Adults**

- "These neighborhoods are good places in which to live."
- "Most of the houses in these neighborhoods are well cared for."
- "Most of the Puerto Rican families in the neighborhoods you visit are proud of their homes."
- "The Puerto Rican adolescents you know would probably not want to raise their children in their neighborhoods."
- "The police in these neighborhoods are not very helpful to residents."
- "These neighborhoods have poor schools."

In Table 6.1, the grand mean responses of all groups on the Community scale and the differences between the adolescents and each adult group for the scale are presented.
The positive perceptions that the adolescents have of their neighborhoods comes out in their responses to the scale, particularly to the item having to do with their feelings about their own home. In their positive perceptions of "Community" more than with any other dimension, the adolescents differed from the adults. For every item in the scale the mean scores of adolescents were higher than the scores for each adult group. Although there was a statistically significant difference between the adolescents and each adult group the size of the difference between the adolescents and the Latino helpers was greater. For each item on the scale for the Latinos, the $t$ value was significant, whereas for the Blacks four items had a significant $t$ value and for the Whites only one individual item had a significant $t$ value.

Although a statistical analysis of this data suggests a dissonance of views between the adolescents and all of the adult groups relative to their perceptions of community, the qualitative responses in this area suggest a degree of congruence between the adolescents and Latinos where...
repeated negative expressions describing these neighborhoods are seen.

In their qualitative responses each of the adult groups as well as the group of adolescents had very negative perceptions of the neighborhoods or communities where Puerto Rican adolescents live. Although an analysis of the results of the t tests suggests that the Latinos are the adult groups "furthest away" from the adolescents in their perceptions in this area, an inspection of the qualitative responses of all of the groups suggests otherwise. The responses suggested that the intensity of the negative feelings to the "Community" area was greater with Latinos than with Whites or Blacks and as such was actually closer to the qualitative responses of the adolescents. The reader will recall Latinos describing homes in the neighborhoods of Puerto Rican adolescents as "unfit for human beings," and the responses of some of the adolescents who described their own neighborhoods as "dangerous, corrupted places."

The Puerto Rican adolescents, then, as expressed in their qualitative responses, have views of their own communities that are as pervasively negative as the views of the Latino helpers. However, the adolescents' and Latinos' negative view of this "part" of the helping experience differs from the Blacks and the Whites only in degree.

2. The Relationship

The items composing the Relationship scale for both the adolescents and adults are the following:
Relationship Scale Items

Adolescents
- "Feeling close to my social worker as if he were my friend makes it easier for me to be helped by him."
- "Social Workers use 'tricky' devices to get inside your head."
- "It makes me feel good to talk with a social worker."
- "It is important to talk about my feelings when I talk with a social worker if I really want to be helped."

Adults
- "Feeling close to your client can determine whether or not you can help him."
- (No Comparable Item)
- "It makes your client feel good to talk with you."
- "It is important to talk about 'feelings' if you really want to help a Puerto Rican adolescent client."

In Table 6.2 the grand mean responses of all groups on the Relationship scale and the differences between the adolescents and each adult group for the scale are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance of t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks Adolescents</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos Adolescents</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites Adolescents</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the mean responses of all of the groups suggests that the adolescents tended to share their perception of the relationship in the helping experience with Latinos and Blacks but not so much with Whites. The mean scores for the Latinos were highest in this area and closest of all the adult groups to the adolescents.

In the quality of their positive expressions in this area, as in their response to scale items, the adolescents tended to be closer to the Latinos than to either the Blacks or Whites. For example, like the Latinos, the adolescents frequently mentioned liking the person who is helping you as important. The general tone of the adolescent's response in this area with its emphasis on concern and caring is more like the Latinos than the Whites or the Blacks. At the same time in their qualitative responses, like the Blacks and Whites, the adolescents frequently disagreed about the importance of the relationship in general or to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular.

In terms of the number of adolescents who disagree on the importance of the relationship in general or to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular, the adolescents are closer to Whites and Blacks. More than 50 percent of the adolescents disagreed on the importance of the relationship in general while 67 percent disagreed on its importance to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular. Of the Latinos, however, 36 percent disagreed on the importance of the relationship and 50 percent disagreed on its importance to Puerto Rican adolescents. More than 50 percent of the Whites and Blacks disagreed on the importance of the relationship. Seventy percent of Whites and 71 percent of Blacks disagreed on its importance to Puerto Rican adolescents in particular.
The impressions given in this area concerning congruence and dissonance of views between the adults and adolescents is mixed. The quantitative data suggests that all of the groups have a positive perception of the relationship part of the helping experience especially the adolescents and the Latinos. However, the qualitative material suggests a separation here between the Latinos and adolescents, with a higher percentage of adolescents than Latinos not feeling strongly about the importance of the relationship in the helping experience.

3. The Self Perceptions of Puerto Rican Adolescents

Items 1, 2 and 3 on the Self-Perception Scale were chosen as being significantly related to this dimension of the helping experience. For purposes of comparing the perspectives of the adolescents and helpers, attention is focused on these items and not on the other items, as has been done for descriptive purpose in Chapters 4 and 5. Once again, the selected items for the adolescents and adults are the following:

**Self Perception Area - Selected Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. &quot;Being of Puerto Rican background is a definite advantage in the United States.&quot;</td>
<td>. &quot;Being of Puerto Rican background is a definite advantage for an adolescent in the United States.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. &quot;Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are hardworking and industrious&quot;</td>
<td>. &quot;Puerto Rican adolescents are hardworking and industrious.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Puerto-Ricans in the U.S. tend to have many problems that require social work help, such as drugs, mental disease and family problems."

In Table 6.3 the grand mean responses for the Self-Perception area for each item - for each group as well as the differences between groups on each item are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance of t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance of t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Puerto-Ricans in the U.S. tend to have many problems that require social work help, such as drugs, mental disease and family problems."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance of t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks Adolescents</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos Adolescents</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites Adolescents</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tests for significance suggests that the perceptions of the adolescents in this area tend to be more in agreement with Latinos and Whites than Blacks. They separate from the Blacks on two items where as with the Latinos and Whites they separate on only one item. The response to the items suggests that the adolescents, in agreement with the Latinos and Whites, tend to have a negative self-perception. This congruence to some extent is also seen in the qualitative responses particularly relative to how Puerto Rican teenagers are different than other American teenagers.

Generally, all of the adult groups expressed views that strongly indicated a negative perception of Puerto Rican adolescents. While the views of the adults suggested that Puerto Rican adolescents were greatly disadvantaged and needed help, still the overall impression conveyed was decidedly negative. This was especially true for the Latino helpers. Both the Whites and the Latinos qualitative responses described Puerto Rican adolescents as an almost "desperate" population. For their part, the adolescents described themselves in positive terms except when they compared themselves to other American teenagers and here they tended to be in agreement with Whites and Latinos, seeing themselves as being involved in drugs and delinquent activity.
At the same time, the qualitative responses also suggest that some of the self-perceptions that the Puerto Rican teenagers have of themselves are dramatically different than the perceptions held by the group of adult helpers. There are frequent expressions of pride elicited when the adolescents describe themselves. This is a far cry from the "desperate population" described by the adult subjects. It is of particular interest relative to the concerns of the study that in the qualitative section when the adult groups and the adolescents are asked their views about the self perceptions of Puerto Rican teenagers, the dissonance in perception is greatest between Latinos and adolescents.

If one's self perception is seen as having an impact on the helping experience and therefore being part of the experience, then the very mixed perceptions that the adolescents have of themselves here would suggest that their perceptions of a helping experience — vis a vis their view of themselves in that experience — would be ambivalent. The helper's view of this part of the helping experience with a Puerto Rican adolescent — except where they express their view that Puerto Rican adolescents need help — is decidedly negative. Seeing a Puerto Rican adolescent as needing help at least suggests the "potential" for a positive experience.

4. The Problem

The items composing the Problem scale for the adolescents and adults are the following:
Adolescents

• "Social workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems."

• "Social workers are mainly helpful with things like getting you into programs or helping out with money."

• "I would never want to tell a social worker what goes on in my family."

• "It's O.K. to talk with a social worker about sexual problems."

• "I wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a social worker about my friends."

Adults

• "Social workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems."

• "Social workers are mainly helpful with things like getting children into programs, or handing out money."

• "A Puerto Rican adolescent would never want to tell a social worker what goes on in his family."

• "A Puerto Rican adolescent would feel that it's O.K. to talk with a social worker about sexual problems."

• "A Puerto Rican adolescent wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a social worker about his friends."

In Table 6.4, the grand mean responses of all groups on the Problem scale and the differences between the adolescents and each adult group for the scale are presented.
### TABLE 6.4

**COMPARISON OF THE GRAND MEAN RESPONSES OF THE ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS TO THE PROBLEM SCALE USING A $t$ TEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>$t$ Value</th>
<th>Significance of $t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean scores and tests for significance suggest a general agreement in perception between adolescents and adult helpers in the Problem area. The $t$ test, however, did indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the adolescents and the Blacks on the scaled items. There was one item, Item 2, where the adolescents separated from the Blacks. Here, the greater majority of the Blacks did not see social workers as being mainly helpful with concrete services whereas the majority of the adolescents did.

The qualitative responses suggest a general agreement between the adolescents and the adults about the importance of certain problem areas particularly family, personal and educational problems. However, the adolescents views around drugs and acculturation difficulties tended to be more congruent with Whites and Latinos than with Blacks. That is, the adolescents agreed with the White helpers that drug and acculturation problems were important areas for Puerto Rican adolescents. Very few Black helpers indicated drugs as a problem area for Puerto Rican
teenagers. Both the Latino and White helpers identified acculturation problems with family problems, as did the adolescents. Again, though, this was not mentioned frequently by Blacks.

The Whites differed from the other adult groups and the adolescents in that several times in their qualitative responses they mentioned "family planning" as an important problem area.

Overall, their differences notwithstanding, both the adolescents and the adult helpers shared a positive perception of this part of the helping experience, feeling that there were a number of important areas in which social workers could be helpful.

5. The Social Worker

For purposes of comparing the responses of the adolescents with the adult groups only the responses to the selected items are examined. Attention is not focused on the other items as was done for descriptive purposes in Chapters 4 and 5. The items once again are:

The Social Worker Area - Selected Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;Social workers need to have a special kind of personality.&quot;</td>
<td>• &quot;Social workers need to have a special kind of personality.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;Social workers need a lot of special training, at least a college degree.&quot;</td>
<td>• &quot;Social workers need a lot of special training, at least a college degree.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;Some social workers are really not interested in helping.&quot;</td>
<td>• &quot;Some social workers are really not interested in helping.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 6.5 grand mean responses for the Social Worker area for each item for each group as well as the differences between groups on each item are presented.

TABLE 6.5

COMPARISON OF THE GRAND MEAN RESPONSES OF ADOLESCENTS AND EACH ADULT GROUP TO SELECTED ITEMS FROM THE SOCIAL WORKER AREA USING A t TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th></th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th></th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The adolescents tend not to feel as strongly as Latinos that helpers need to have a special kind of personality. In addition, they disagree
with Blacks and Whites, the majority of whom felt that some social workers are not really interested in helping. Aside from the lack of congruence in these areas the response to the items suggests that both our adolescents and adults agree in their positive perceptions of helpers.

The scores of Blacks and Whites do suggest some negative undertones relative to their general agreement with the idea that some social workers are not really interested in helping and here they differ from the Latinos and the adolescents.

The qualitative responses of all of the groups describe a perception of helpers that is characterized by human qualities of warmth and compassion. Repeatedly all of the groups describe helpers as people who care, who are concerned, who can be your friend, etc.

The Latinos and adolescents seem to be closer in this area, both groups emphasizing more than Blacks or Whites, the importance of human qualities in a helper. Blacks seem to have a perception of helpers that tended to be more task oriented and Whites emphasized the importance of training. The adolescents, in agreement with the adult perceptions in this area, described experiences where they were helped with family, personal and school problems. Perhaps the area where there is the most consistent agreement between all groups has to do with the importance of helpers possessing qualities of warmth and compassion.

Overall then, the adolescents agree with the adult helpers in their positive perception of helpers. In so far as a "helper" is a key actor in the helping experience, it can be said here that our subjects have a positive perception of this part of the helping experience.
6. The Ethnic Background of the Social Worker-Helper

The items composing the Ethnic scale for the adolescents and adults are the following:

**Adolescents**

. "I feel more comfortable talking with a social worker who is of the same racial/ethnic background as my own. For example, Puerto Rican kids should talk with Puerto Rican social workers, Black kids with Black social workers, etc."

. "If you like the person you're working with, whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican doesn't make any difference."

. "The first thing I notice about a social worker is whether he is Puerto Rican."

(Not part of scale for adolescents)

. "The bottom line (most important thing) in whether or not I am helped by a social worker has to do with the ability of the social worker, not his ethnic background."

**Adults**

. "It is better for an adolescent to talk with a social worker who is of the same racial/ethnic background as his own. For example Puerto Rican kids would feel more comfortable talking with Puerto Rican social workers, Black kids with Black social workers, etc."

. "If a youngster likes the person he's talking with, whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican doesn't make any difference."

. "The first thing an adolescent will notice about a social worker is whether he is Puerto Rican."

. "The bottom line in whether or not I can help a Puerto Rican adolescent is my competence as a social worker, not my ethnic background."

In Table 6.6, the grand mean responses of all groups on the Ethnic scale and the difference between the adolescents and each adult group for the scale are presented.
### Table 6.6

**Comparison of the Grand Mean Responses of the Adolescents and Adults to the Ethnic Scale Using a t Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grand Means</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>Significance of t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the ethnic scale, the adolescents are generally closer in their views to the White helpers and separate from the Latinos and Blacks. There is a pronounced difference in mean scores producing significant t values between the adolescents and each adult group on Item 3 in particular. This item states that "the first thing an adolescent will notice about a helper is his ethnic background." In addition to differing on Item 3 the adolescents have significantly different mean values than Latinos or Blacks on Item 1 - the item that says "it is better for an adolescent to talk with someone of his own ethnic background." What seems most notable in this area is that the views of the adolescents are closest to Whites and furthest away from Latinos in their response to objective items. Whites, of all the adult groups, have the highest mean values for the Ethnic scale suggesting that generally they do not place great emphasis on ethnic variables in the helping equation. Latinos on the other hand have the lowest mean values suggesting a perception that tends to emphasize ethnic variables more. The adolescents have the highest mean...
values of all of the groups suggesting that they place the least emphasis on ethnic variables in the helping equation.

Generally, in their qualitative responses, the Whites and the Blacks give responses that suggest that they do not place as much importance on the ethnic background of helpers as do Latinos, although Whites mentioned its importance in a helping experience more frequently than do Blacks. This is consistent with the data in Chapter 5 which shows a statistically significant difference between Blacks and Whites as a group and Latinos as a group relative to their perceptions in this area. In part of their qualitative responses, the adolescents agree with the Whites and Blacks, but not so much with the Latinos. However, concerning their views about the special approaches that a Puerto Rican social worker might use, the adolescents are closer to the Blacks and Latinos than to the Whites.

What is seen here, then, suggests that our adults as a group, but particularly Latinos, feel that ethnic variables in a helping experience are more important than do our adolescent subjects. At the same time in their qualitative responses having to do with the approaches used by a Puerto Rican social worker, the views of the adolescents tended to agree with those of the Latinos and Blacks who felt that the approaches of a Puerto Rican would be different than the approaches of a White or Black helper.

Translating all of this into "perception of the helping experience" would suggest that, insofar as they do not attach as much importance to ethnic variables as do the adults, our adolescents' perceptions here are more positive than the adults. Although based on their responses ethnicity has some importance to them, the adolescents do not see it
intervening in a helping experience to the same extent that the adult subjects do.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. General Review of the Study

This study examines the perceptions of the helping experience, taking the views of a group of Puerto Rican adolescents from Newark, New Jersey and comparing them with the views of a group of helpers also from Newark, New Jersey. The study attempts to discover whether and where the views of the two groups converge and separate and with this in mind the adult population was selected according to their ethnic background – Black, Latino or White – to discover if the ethnicity of a helper might influence congruence or dissonance of views with an adolescent group. In effect, the study has really examined the views of four groups relative to the experience of being helped. The original ideas of the study – which were presented as working hypothesis – were that the views of Puerto Rican adolescents would be closer to the views of helpers of their own ethnic background or at least to helpers of a minority background, and further away from the views of non-minority helpers.

In the discussion of the background of the study, as well as in the literature review, the need for looking closely at a population of Puerto Rican adolescents and their perception of the helping experience was established. It was shown that Puerto Ricans in general and Puerto Rican adolescents in particular are a population at tremendous risk both in the United states as a whole and in Newark, New Jersey more specifically. The literature strongly supports the idea of looking at clients' perspectives
in trying to understand the dynamics of a helping experience. The literature emphasizes that too often we only look at the views of helpers and repeatedly states the need to go to client groups for their perspectives.

The place and importance of ethnic and cultural variables is debated in the literature but it is generally agreed to be significant. The reality for many Puerto Rican adolescents is that they often find themselves in encounters with helpers not of their background when they seek help. In effect, they and helpers frequently find themselves in situations that require communicating across class and culture as well as across ethnic lines. The literature, then, as well as the author's own experience supported the idea of looking at the ethnic background of helpers, as the perceptions of the helping experience were examined.

An instrument was devised based on an operationalized definition of the helping experience. This definition in turn was drawn from the concepts of Helen Harris Perlman and Sr. Mary Paul Janchill where the "helping experience" is broken down into its component parts relative to the "persona" of both the helper and client, the problem, the relationship, the community and the helper. The instrument employed both objective scales and qualitative items and in a pilot study was found to be effective in "tapping into" both clients' and helpers' ideas about the helping experience.

Out of the original six scales devised, four were developed that were accepted as reliable. For the other two scales, significant items were selected out for analysis. The instrument also elicited demographic information. Essentially the instrument posed the same questions or items
for both the adolescent group and the adult group.

Both the adolescents and adults were purposively selected from social agencies in Newark and to a lesser extent, Essex County, New Jersey. The greater majority of the adolescents came to us through one ethnic agency and the majority of our adults from large public agencies - either child welfare or public welfare agencies.

The data gathering process was facilitated by significant agency contacts for the adults where the questionnaires were self administered. For the most part the author facilitated the self administration of the questionnaire with the adolescents.

Essentially this is an exploratory, descriptive study, where the material gathered was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Demographic material was presented descriptively for the most part using frequencies and chi square tests.

Mean score frequencies, chi square tests and tests of significance were all employed in examining the responses to scaled items. Qualitative material was analyzed through an examination of repeated ideas and patterns. Using frequencies, qualitative responses were also summarized in quantitative terms.

2. Summary of Findings

The Adolescents

The adolescent sample produced by the study is a predominantly older, male population, many of whom are behind in grade placement and barely literate. They come from single parent families for the most part and
often live in marginal economic circumstances. All of the adolescents are of Puerto Rican background and come from depressed neighborhoods in Newark, New Jersey. Most see school and neighborhood based ethnic agencies as helping sources but not large public agencies.

The adolescent subjects in this study give the impression of being confused and mixed in their feelings about themselves and of feeling negatively about their environment. The contention in this study is that self-perception and environment are an important part of the helping experience and to the extent that the adolescents are negative or at best ambivalent in these areas, to that extent their perceptions of the experience of being helped could be considered negative. At the very least, it could be said that their feelings about receiving help will be influenced by how they feel about themselves and their environment. For the most part, the youngsters do not seem to place great importance on the ethnic background of helpers but more on relationship and competence, suggesting a certain freedom to involve themselves in a helping experience unburdened by preoccupation with a helper’s ethnic background. However, here too there is an ambivalence on the youngsters’ part indicating that they are struggling in this area.

To those parts of the helping experience that are more easily seen as part of the experience — the relationship, the problem and the social worker — the adolescents, for the most part, respond quite positively. They feel that a good relationship is important in a helping situation and they see helpers in a positive light as trained people who are interested in helping with a variety of problems, but especially family, personal and career direction problems.
The Adult Helpers

The adult sample produced by the study is a predominantly female population where the average age is thirty four. The adult subjects are Bachelor level individuals who are engaged in frontline practice in public agencies. The largest contingent of adults working in private settings are Hispanic males who work in ethnic agencies. Most of the adults do not live where they work although Blacks and Latinos tend to live in the same area as clients more so than Whites. Of the three adult groups, White females have the most professional training and the greatest amount of experience with Puerto Rican adolescents.

The adult helpers generally express positive feelings about those areas of the operationalized definition of the helping experience that are more easily connected to the idea of giving or receiving help. Thus, they see helpers as warm people, who help with a great variety of problems. The ability to communicate concern and caring is important to being an effective helper in their view — more so, one would gather, than having education or training since, except with the Whites, these variables are rarely mentioned. Relationship in the helping experience seems to be more important to the Latinos than to the other groups.

Generally, the adults have negative perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescents and their environments. These negative expressions are especially pronounced for the Latino helpers. To some extent, for all of the groups, but especially for the Whites, these negative perceptions seem to indicate their view of Puerto Rican adolescents as being desperately in
need of help. To the extent that this is true it is felt that these views augured well, for a positive helping experience as they suggest a kind of "simpatico" with Puerto Rican adolescents.

Although the adults, especially the Latinos, express sensitivity to the importance of ethnic and cultural variables, for the most part their responses suggest that they do not place major or overriding importance on these areas. Instead, competence, experience and the ability to form an empathic relationship were also seen as important.

3. Summary Comparison

Demographics

In this study, an attempt has been made to look rather closely at the demographics of our populations, particularly the ethnic backgrounds of the adult subjects with the idea that this variable would have an important influence on the population's perceptions. It was felt that it would be important to see whether the populations resembled each other or whether they were markedly different, as this congruence or dissonance related to the central issues of the study. A strong preliminary sense with this study was that we would be looking at "communication across class and culture" and indeed, as the demographic description of the population shows this is at least partly true (Leichter & Mitchell, 1967).

Our preliminary sense, notwithstanding, the study was not designed in such a way as to allow us to say that the adolescent subjects were communicating with the particular group of adult helpers participating in
the study, in a helping relationship — they may or may not have been — there was simply no way of knowing this. Moreover, the populations were not representative samples. Thus the demographic differences found between the two populations can only suggest that these kind of differences may exist between a group of helpers and Puerto Rican adolescents with whom they are actually involved.

This being stated, it can be said that the demographics of the two populations present us with two groups where "difference" rather than "sameness" is more paramount. Aside from the obvious difference in ages between a study that compares adults and adolescents, we have a client population that is predominantly male and a helper population that is predominantly female. The amount of experience that the helpers have had in working with Puerto Rican adolescents suggests that in our population the Puerto Rican adolescents are more likely to have had contact with a helper who is neither Puerto Rican nor a member of a minority group.

The adolescents in the study come from economically marginal areas and live in family situations where reported income often hovers around poverty level. The adult's educational background, current position and professional identity suggest a socioeconomic status that separates them, if not from the adolescents where there is still the possibility of further attainment, than certainly from the family context of the adolescents where parent's school level is between 7th and 9th grade and job status is that of a skilled-unskilled worker. Additionally, most of the helpers do not live where they work, suggesting a further degree of separation from the adolescents in the study. Generally speaking, within the group of helpers, those of minority background seem "closer" to the
adolescents demographically than do the non-minority helpers, partly by virtue of their minority status and partly because they tended to live where they worked more so than the non-minority helpers.

Where They Meet

The data in this study suggests that small ethnic agencies or "natural" settings for children such as schools are more likely to be the environment where a Puerto Rican adolescent will meet a helper while large, public agencies are not.

Perceptions of the Helping Experience

The research was begun with the idea of asking a group of Puerto Rican adolescents about their perceptions of being helped. As the ideas for the study evolved there was an interest in comparing these views, first, only with a group of adult helpers, then with a group of helpers divided according to their ethnic background. The idea - a simple one it seems now - was that Puerto Rican teenagers would probably be closer in their views to an adult group of similar ethnic background. A basic assumption of the study was that congruence of views between a helper and client, particularly where they related to the helping experience, would produce a "better quality" of helping experience. What was found both confirmed and denied our original contentions. The overall picture that was finally put together is much more complex and mixed than the original working hypothesis suggested. The reader will recall these working hypotheses:

A. Perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescent clients and helping people of the helping experience are more likely to be congruent if the adolescent client and the helper belong to the same ethnic group.
B. Perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescent clients and helpers of the helping experience are more likely to be congruent if the adolescent client and helper both belong to a minority group even if not of the same ethnic background.

C. Non-minority helpers are more likely to experience dissonance in perception of the helping experience when working with Puerto Rican adolescent clients than minority helpers.

D. Puerto Rican adolescents are more likely to have a negative perception of the helping experience in general than are helpers.

This discussion of the relationship of the original working hypotheses to the findings is based on qualitative as well as quantitative responses. Within the qualitative responses there are shades of agreement and disagreement between the adolescents as a group and each of the adults groups with there being consistent (but not total) disagreement in only one area — "The Self-perception of Puerto Rican Adolescents." A clearer picture emerges when qualitative impressions are combined with objective responses. Looking at these findings then it can be said that Hypothesis A is partially supported: the Latinos perceptions were congruent with adolescents on three out of six scaled areas of the helping experience. They did experience some dissonance in the "Social Worker" area, but their responses here are characterized as congruent with the adolescents because the two groups had a generally positive qualitative response as well as a response to selected items that was close in value. The views of Whites were congruent with the teenagers in two scaled areas - the "Problem" and "the Ethnic Background" areas - and Blacks were congruent with the adolescents in only one scaled area - the "Relationship" area. Within each of the areas there are shades of difference. For example, when the self perception of Puerto Rican adolescents is examined we find that there
is a significant difference between Latinos and adolescents and Whites and adolescents for only one out of three items, whereas for Blacks there is a significant difference between them and adolescents on two out of three items. However, based mainly on qualitative responses, the views of Latinos are described as more negative than either Whites or Blacks. Interestingly, this negative qualitative response in the "Self Perception" area puts the Latinos closer to the adolescents than either the Blacks or the Whites because of some of the negative views the adolescents express about themselves.

Working Hypothesis B is generally not supported. There was only one area, the "Relationship" area, where Blacks and Latinos were closer to the adolescents than the Whites, based on the results of t tests comparing each adult group to the adolescents. However, even in this particular area where there is support for Hypothesis B, the picture is mixed. Looking at the qualitative responses, it can be seen that the adolescents are actually closer to Whites than to Latinos in their perception of the importance of relationship. Generally, Hypothesis C is only partially supported. As previously indicated Whites experienced congruence with the adolescents in two scaled areas — "the Problem" and "Ethnic Background" — whereas Blacks' views were congruent with the adolescents in only one scaled area — "the Relationship." Additionally, there were many mixed responses in other areas to scales, selected items and qualitative material, suggesting that the non-minority helpers in this study were at least as close, if not closer in their views, to Puerto Rican teenagers than minority helpers.
General Impressions

A careful review of the sometimes contradictory, often complex responses of both the adolescents and adult subjects in this study leaves several overriding impressions. In reviewing the data it appears that the adolescents in the study feel more positively about what has been called "the helping experience" than do any of the adult groups. Responses to both objective and qualitative material indicate this. Perhaps rather than saying "more positively" we should say "more hopeful." Their responses to the instrument as well as their interaction in the actual research process conveyed an attitude that could be described as positive, optimistic and hopeful. So Hypothesis D above is certainly not supported. However, here again it is necessary to qualify because in some of their responses the adolescents were more negative than adults. For example, more adolescents than adults tended to see Puerto Ricans as a problem-ridden population.

The responses of the Latinos in the study are somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand they tended to have a more negative view of Puerto Rican teenagers and their communities than Whites or Blacks, while on the other hand, speaking generally, their views were more congruent with the adolescent subjects than the views of either the Whites or the Blacks. Indeed, as indicated, the adolescents in many respects seemed to agree with the Latinos negative perceptions of both them and their communities. Tests of significance as well as an examination of qualitative material supported this. Possibly, what is being seen here are "members of the same family" who know each other's faults. What is suggested is that
possibly the Latinos' negative responses indicates a more meaningful knowledge and understanding of both Puerto Rican adolescents and their communities.

What then of the importance of ethnic variables in the helping equation? Many of what we have called the "positive responses" of the subjects suggest that such things as competence and caring are more important. The results of this research effort suggest that ethnic variables are important in a helping experience, but not as important as early contentions and some of the literature and theoretical conceptions of the study originally suggested. The adolescent subjects did tend to be closer to the Latino adults in more of their perceptions than to the Whites or Blacks. But sometimes it was a tenuous closeness and sometimes they were not close to the Latinos at all but to the Blacks and Whites, or sometimes just to the Whites.

In this study an attempt has been made to look at the perspectives of a helper group and a client group. As was suggested at the beginning of the study, too often we have looked only at the helpers' perspective. The original idea for the study was to go to only one group — a group of Puerto Rican teenagers — and inquire about their perception of the helping experience. Now that we have gone to a group of Puerto Rican youths, as Canino (1979) suggested, what has this group told us? They have told us that they do share views with adult helpers about being helped, although they seem to feel better about the experience than many of the adults. We learn from them that their feelings about themselves and their communities are at least as negative as the feelings of many adult helpers. They respect helpers who they perceive as being well
trained and having "special personalites." They are looking for qualities of warmth and caring when they go for help and are open to discussing personal, private parts of their lives. Competence and genuine concern are important in a helper but, especially when first getting to know someone, sharing a common ethnic and cultural background is also important.

4. Conclusions

Contributions of the Study

In the researcher's view, the greatest contribution of the study lies in its attempts to explore areas and look at populations that have not previously been closely examined. There have been few empirical studies that analyze the interaction that occurs between an adolescent client and an adult helper. Fewer still, if existant at all, are any attempts to examine what happens between a Puerto Rican adolescent client and an adult helper. What happens with a Puerto Rican adolescent in the United States who seeks help is largely unknown and presents us with many more questions than answers. At the same time, the need to look at this population at risk seems very apparent. The attempt to understand the possible importance of the ethnic background of a helper who is involved with a minority youngsters is relatively new and of importance particularly in any area where clients encounter helpers not of their own background.

The study's attempt to operationalize "the helping experience" and measure quantitatively perceptions of this experience, not so much for its success, but for its attempt and the possibilities for research that it
suggests, is a positive aspect of this research effort.

The study provides demographic data about two significant populations: a population of urban, Puerto Rican adolescents from a Northeastern United States city and a population of frontline, for the most part, Bachelor level helpers from the same area, who have had experience in working with Puerto Rican adolescents. The responses to the instrument, in addition to shedding light on the area of congruence or dissonance in perception between our several groups, offers numerous insights into the views of both our adolescents and adults about a number of different areas, that are very suggestive relative to research and practice. In particular the areas having to do with the communities of our adolescents, the importance of the relationship in the helping equation, the self-perception of a group of Puerto Rican teenagers and the views of all of our groups on ethnic variables provide potentially rich ground for further research.

Limitations of the Study

Much of what could be construed as contributions in this study also carries limitations. In trying to do something "new and different" we have had to develop new and untried instruments and apply them to small populations that are not randomly selected. The vagaries of the data gathering process in this sort of an exploratory study demand supreme flexibility. At the same time, one must acknowledge that these very "vagaries" - the use of the researcher to administer questionnaires, not being able to control the interpretation of key contacts in agencies
during the data gathering process, distracting physical settings, and a number of other variables could all be seen as contaminating responses.

In the analysis of qualitative data, although an attempt is made to adhere to techniques of inspection that provide for a certain objectivity, it becomes apparent that much of what is produced in this way is heavily subjective. This is particularly so if, as in the case of this study, there is only one inspector. Where qualitative responses support quantitative material the validity of the research is supported. However when this does not occur certain of the findings can be questioned.

This is a study that says ethnic variables are important to what goes on between a client and helper. However, with both the adolescent and adult populations in this study there are other variables that might have influenced perception of the helping experience. Variables with the helpers such as their age, sex and professional experience may have affected responses. Similarly, with the adolescents their maturity, educational background, reading levels and socio-economic status are all variables that might have affected their responses. However, particularly with the adults, the very limited range of these variables did not encourage closer scrutiny. Additionally, the realities of sampling in this study made controlling for many variables very difficult if not impossible. Moreover, more complicated controlling techniques might have developed samples and produced data not reflective of the interests of the study or the communities and experiences of the populations in the study.
Recommendations for Further Study

An appropriate area for further research then would be to look at what influence variables other than ethnicity have on perception of the helping experience. In particular, the possible need of a relatively young group of Latino helpers to separate themselves from a client population of a similar ethnic background is a variable that needs to be explored. Further, each of the areas of our operationalized definition of the helping experiences suggest research possibilities. The areas having to do with the communities and self-perception of Puerto Rican adolescents, the relationship in the helping experience and the ethnic background of helpers, all invite closer scrutiny.

A major assumption of the study was that congruence of perception between a helper and client would make for a "better quality" experience. Would this mean that the Puerto Rican subjects in the study will have a "better quality" helping experience with the Latino helpers because they share common negative impressions? One would wonder how an adolescent would have a positive helping experience with a helper who shares his (the adolescent's) negative view of himself and his environment. This "common negative view" and its meaning relative to the helping experience between an adolescent and a Latino helper would seem to be an important area for further research.

There were many "fuzzy" areas in the demographics of our adolescents. A much more intense examination, particularly of family variables would be most helpful in understanding this population at risk. Field research using a participant observation approach would seem appropriate in understanding the daily lives of urban, Puerto Rican teenagers.

The concept of "the helping experience" is a nebulous one. The
attempt to operationalize it in this study has emphasized this. What does it really mean? What happens in the interaction between two people when help is given or taken? What elements in this experience are necessarily personal and what elements are professional? What defines a satisfactory experience? Is it simply receiving a needed concrete service or object or is there truly an intangible, human element that gives the experience its true value? All of these questions need to be addressed through research.

A closer examination of the role of ethnic agencies versus public agencies particularly in working with a client population similar to the one described in this study, would be useful.

Implications for Practice

Generally, the study affirms the importance of ethnic and cultural variables in the helping equation. However, the research does not say that only a minority helper should work with a minority child. On the contrary, it says that competence and caring are also important to both a client and helper population. Within this larger context the study suggests several implications for practice: an examination of the helpers' demographics in the study suggests strongly that agencies need to develop strategies for attracting qualified minority practitioners — particularly male, minority members of Hispanic background. In 1986 social work is faced with a personnel dilemma which many thought it had outgrown in the 1960's, that is, a lack of male practitioners, particularly male practitioners of minority background.

Based on the responses of our subjects, intensive individual
counselling around personal and family matters is extremely important to a population of Puerto Rican adolescents. Programatic design and staffing patterns, when feasible, should take into consideration ethnic and cultural variables. However, human qualities such as sensitivity and the ability to empathize as well as professional training and experience must be a primary consideration in a supportive counselling offering. Ironically, few of the agencies represented in this study can offer this kind of service either by virtue of lack of trained staff or lack of programs — and yet both of the populations agreed on its importance. This suggests to us that agencies — public or private — having trained staff should, to the extent feasible, free this staff from responsibilities that keep them from direct practice. Agencies that use untrained staff for recreation, tutoring, athletics, etc. should consider enabling these individuals to involve themselves more extensively in supervised counselling. In this study, the perception that the adolescents have of themselves and the environments from which they come as well as the supporting background data on Puerto Ricans all cry out for a variety of helping strategies, but certainly, perhaps most immediately, the use of massive supportive counselling wherever staffing and agency setting permits. The role that large, resource rich public agencies could play with this very threatened, very vulnerable population, should be thoroughly explored not only in the area of counselling but in other support areas as well. Practice approaches based on a medical model and drawing heavily on traditional theory and approaches that involve negotiating complicated systems need to be reconsidered in working with a population of urban Puerto Rican adolescents. This is an alienated
population, very distrustful of the larger United States mainland society. The study suggests that a direct — perhaps one might even say aggressive — human, individualized approach that conveys a sense of caring, concern and "personalismo," is needed with young Puerto Ricans.

The study, in both its outcomes and its process, suggests, too, that the educational role of schools need to be emphasized with this population. It seems that many of the adolescents in this study perceive schools as places for the kind of help that they might more appropriately receive in a social agency. Certainly, part of "helping" these youngsters involves educating them as well as counselling them. Schools are natural bases for youngsters to receive counselling but agencies in an urban area such as Newark organized primarily to provide counselling services should have a larger role with Puerto Rican teenagers than they presently do.

Finally, the study suggests how little we know about Puerto Rican families in an urban setting, and based on their continued lower rung status in our society, how inadequately served they are by helping agencies. A practice approach that includes the families of Puerto Rican adolescents then, is critical and indeed could be seen as strengthening a family structure so important for the growth and development of a young man or woman.
APPENDICES
Dear

The Essex County Division of Youth Services is conducting research having to do with Puerto Rican adolescents. As you may know Puerto Rican adolescents in Essex County, in particular in Newark, represent a very significant population at risk. At the same time there has been very little in the way of systematic investigation of the involvement of this group with helping systems.

The research will be looking at the mutual perceptions that Puerto Rican adolescents and "helpers" have of the helping experience with a view toward examining dissonance or congruence in views. In addition, the research will explore whether or not the ethnic background of social workers is an important variable in the total helping experience.

We would like to ask for your assistance in this effort. To begin with, it would be helpful for us to know which workers on your staff either now or at some point in their careers have had experience in working with Rican adolescents. This can be communicated to us by phone or memorandum. Once this is established we would like to select a total of approximately sixty (60) individuals to ask each of them to complete a questionnaire which would then be returned to us. After staff members have completed the questionnaire we would like to explore with you how we might go about having the Puerto Rican adolescents involved with your agency complete a similar questionnaire.

Mr. John Lynskey, a doctoral candidate of Columbia University, will be conducting the research. Mr. Lynskey is presently acting as a research consultant within the Community Resource Unit of the Division of Youth Services and will communicate with you by phone concerning the details of the project and your participation.

Our knowledge in this area is sadly lacking and we feel strongly that this research through adding to our knowledge can enhance our work with Puerto Rican teenagers. We look forward to working with you on this project and thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

John J. Clancy, Director
Division of Youth Services
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENT CLIENTS

We are interested in how young people like yourselves view certain key areas related to getting help from a social worker and/or a social agency. These "key areas" relate not only to the specific experience of asking for or being involved in receiving help, but also to how you view yourself, your community and the ethnic/racial background of helping people.

The first six questions in each section can be answered by placing a " " under the appropriate answer. This is fairly easy but think carefully about your response: there is a difference between "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" and also between "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." If you really feel strongly about something then you should check the "Strongly Agree" or "Strongly Disagree" rather than the more neutral "Agree" or "Disagree". If, but only if you have no opinion at all then you should place a check under "No Opinion".

At the end of each section there are two open ended questions. Think about your answers and respond as fully and in as much detail as possible to the questions.
Our first section concerns how you see your community.

1. My neighborhood is a good place in which to live:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Most of the houses in my neighborhood are well cared for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The house I live in is something to be proud of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I would never want to raise my own children in my neighborhood:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. The police in my neighborhood are not very helpful to residents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. My neighborhood has poor schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Describe your neighborhood in one or two sentences.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

8. a. What are the three best things about your neighborhood?

   i - __________________________

   ii - __________________________

   iii - __________________________

b. What are the three worst things about your neighborhood?

   i - __________________________

   ii - __________________________

   iii - __________________________
In this section we are interested in how you see what goes on between you and a social worker. The following are statements about the relationship that you might have with a social worker. Indicate your feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feeling close to my social worker as if he were my friend makes it easier for me to be helped by him:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social workers should only be involved in giving people money, food and clothing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social workers use &quot;tricky devices&quot; to get inside your head:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It makes you feel good to talk with a social worker:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is important to talk about my feelings when I talk with a social worker if I really want to be helped:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talking with a social worker sometimes makes me feel that I'm being analyzed:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Some people say that you have to like the person you go to for help -- that you have to have a good relationship with this person in order to be helped:
   a. Do you agree? ________
      or disagree? ________

   b. If you agree give three reasons why:
      i - ________________________________
      ii - ________________________________
      iii - ________________________________

8. Some people also feel that Puerto Rican adolescents are especially sensitive -- maybe more so than other American teenagers. These people feel that it is even more important for Puerto Rican adolescents, than for other American adolescents, to have a good relationship with the person they go to for help.
   a. Do you agree? ________
      or disagree? ________

   b. If you agree, give three reasons why:
      i - ________________________________
      ii - ________________________________
      iii - ________________________________
SECTION III

Now we want to know about how you see yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being of Puerto Rican (Hispanic) background is a definite advantage in the United States:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are hard working and industrious:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Puerto Ricans in the U.S. tend to have many problems that require social work help, such as drugs, mental illness and family problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You feel that you stand as much chance as the average American teenager of getting a good education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Skin color and hair texture are important to Puerto Ricans:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A lot of White people don't trust Puerto Ricans:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Briefly, if you had to describe how you feel about yourself how would you?

8. How, if at all, do you feel that Puerto Rican teenagers are different than other American teenagers?
In this section we want to see how you view the kinds of problems with which social workers deal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social workers are mainly helpful with things like getting you into programs, or helping out with money:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sometimes problems can interfere with stuff you're supposed to do like school work or work:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would never want to tell a social worker what goes on in my family:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It's O.K. to talk with a social worker about sexual problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a social worker about my friends:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. List five types of problems with which social workers can be most helpful:
   a. ___________________________________________
   b. ___________________________________________
   c. ___________________________________________
   d. ___________________________________________
   e. ___________________________________________

8. Of these types of problems which one do you think would be the most important to a Puerto Rican teenager and why?
### SECTION V

Here we want to know your views about social workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social workers have special ways of helping people that are different than the ways of a psychiatrist or guidance counsellor:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social workers need to have a special kind of personality:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social workers need a lot of special training, at least a college degree:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sometimes social workers are nosey or interfere too much:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social workers receive more money than they're worth:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Some social workers are really not interested in helping:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. In one or two sentences describe what you consider to be the ideal social worker.

8. Describe one experience you've had in working with a social worker or "helping person". Tell about whether you were helped or not and the general circumstances.
Here we want to know how you feel about the racial/ethnic background of a social worker. By "racial/ethnic" we are really referring to whether or not a social worker is Puerto Rican, White or Black.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel more comfortable talking with a social worker who is of the same racial/ethnic background as my own. For example, Puerto Rican kids should talk with Puerto Rican social workers, Black kids with Black social workers, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If you like the person you're working with, their ethnic background, whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican, doesn't make any difference:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The first thing I notice about a social worker is whether or not he is Puerto Rican:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Black and White social workers do not understand Puerto Rican culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. White social workers have a very positive attitude towards Puerto Rican adolescents:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The bottom line (most important thing) in whether or not I am helped by a social worker has to do with the ability of the social worker, not his ethnic background:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Describe a situation where the racial/ethnic background of a social worker might make a difference in how you relate with him. If you feel it should make no difference, explain.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Give an example of a situation where what a Puerto Rican social worker does would be different from what a Black or White worker would do.

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
SECTION VII

In this last section we would like some personal data about yourself. Do not write your name or exact address.

Date of Birth:_______ Place of Birth____________ Sex____

(1) How would you describe your racial/ethnic background?
   Black____ Puerto Rican____ Hispanic____ Puerto-Rican American____
   White____ Black-Puerto Rican____ White-Ethnic____ Spanish-Amer.____
   Other____

(2) How would you describe the area in which you live?
   Upper class____ Upper middle class____ Middle class____
   Working class____ Blue collar____ Depressed____
   Other____

(3) School status:
   a. Grade ______
   b. Public____ Private____
   c. Special program; describe in one sentence.______________________________
   d. If not attending indicate why:
      dropped out____ graduate____ suspended____

(4) Current living situation:
   With family____ With relatives____ With friends____
   With a program____ Foster Home or Group home____
   Alone____ Other____
(5) Family description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living</td>
<td>Living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceased</td>
<td>Deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If living age</td>
<td>If living age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type of work</td>
<td>type of work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do your parents live together? ____________________________

Brothers: How many? _______  Sisters: How many? _______
Ages: From ____ to ____  Ages: From ____ to ____

(6) Total family income per year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $5000</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to $10,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to $15,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,100 to $20,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $20,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) Physical living arrangements:

If you live with family how many rooms in your apartment? _______

How many family members including yourself
live in the apartment? __________________________

If not with the family briefly describe living quarters _______

___________________________________________________________________
(8) Indicate which of the following agencies, or programs, or "helping people" you have had contact with:

a. Guidance counsellor in school

b. Welfare

c. Probation

d. Social Worker in School

e. Division of Youth and Family Services

f. FOCUS

g. La Casa de Don Pedro

h. Social worker in a hospital

i. Other places please indicate where:

Thank you for your help and patience!
APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

We are interested in how you view certain key areas related to the helping experience particularly as these pertain to a population of Puerto Rican adolescents. We are especially interested in whether there is congruence in how helpers view certain areas and how a population of Puerto Rican adolescents view the same areas. These "key areas" relate not only to the specific experience of asking for or being involved in receiving help but also to your perceptions of the self views of Puerto Rican adolescents, their communities and racial/ethnic variables involved in the helping encounter.

The first six questions in each section can be answered by simply placing a " " under the appropriate answer. At the end of each section there are two open ended questions. Think about your answers and respond as fully and in as much detail as possible to these questions.
Our first section concerns how you see the communities or neighborhoods of your Puerto Rican adolescent clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. These neighborhoods are good places in which to live:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Most of the houses in these neighborhoods are well cared for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Most of the Puerto Rican families in the neighborhoods you visit are proud of their homes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Puerto Rican adolescents you know would probably not want to raise their children in their neighborhood:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The police in these neighborhoods are not very helpful to residents:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. These neighborhoods have poor schools:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. If you were to give a description of the neighborhoods of the Puerto Rican adolescent clients you have known in one or two sentences, what would it be?


8. a. What would you say are the three best things about the neighborhoods of your Puerto Rican adolescent clients?

i - 

ii - 

iii - 

b. What would you say are the three worst things about the neighborhoods of your Puerto Rican adolescent clients?

i - 

ii - 

iii - 
In this section we are interested in how you see what goes on between you and a Puerto Rican adolescent with whom you've worked. Following are items concerning the relationship between social workers and clients. Indicate your feelings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Feeling close to your client can determine whether or not you can help him:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social Workers should only be involved in giving people money, food and clothing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social workers use &quot;tricky devices&quot; to get inside people's heads:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It makes your client feel good to talk with you:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is important to talk about &quot;feelings&quot; if you really want to help a Puerto Rican adolescent client:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social workers sometimes make their adolescent clients feel that they are analyzing them:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Some people say that you have to like the person with whom you are working - that you have to have a positive relationship with the person in order to be helpful:

   a. Do you agree?____

   or disagree? ______

   b. If you agree give three reasons why:

      i - ________________________________

      ii - _______________________________

      iii - _______________________________

8. If you agree about the importance of relationships would you think that a positive relationship with a helping person would be especially important to a Puerto Rican adolescent as distinct from other American adolescents:

   a. Yes_______  No_______

   b. If 'yes' give three reasons why you think a positive relationship with a helping person is especially important to a Puerto Rican adolescent.

      i- ______________________________

      ii- ______________________________

      iii- ______________________________
SECTIOI III

Now we want your general perceptions of Puerto Rican adolescents...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being of Puerto Rican background is a definite advantage for an adolescent in the United States:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Puerto Rican adolescents are hardworking and industrious:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Puerto Ricans in the United States tend to have many problems that require social work help such as drugs, mental disease and family problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Puerto Rican adolescents stand as much chance as the average American teenager of getting a good education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Skin color and hair texture are important to Puerto Ricans:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A lot of White people don't trust Puerto Ricans:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.a. Briefly, how would you describe your perception of Puerto Rican adolescents?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

b. Do you think most Puerto Rican adolescents would agree with your perceptions?

Yes_______ No_______

________________________________________________________________________

c. If 'no' to question (b) then how do you think Puerto Rican adolescents perceive themselves?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8. What distinctions, if any would you make between Puerto Rican teenagers and other American teenagers?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
In this section we are interested in how you see the kinds of problems with which social workers deal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social workers can be helpful with personal, private kinds of problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social workers are mainly helpful with things like getting children into programs, or helping out with money:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sometimes problems can interfere with a young person's functioning at home or in school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A Puerto Rican adolescent would never want to tell a social worker what goes on in his family:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A Puerto Rican adolescent would feel that it's O.K. to talk with a social worker about sexual problems:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A Puerto Rican adolescent wouldn't feel comfortable talking with a social worker about his friends:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. List five types of problems with which social workers can be most helpful.
   
a. ______________________________________

b. ______________________________________

c. ______________________________________

d. ______________________________________

e. ______________________________________

8. Of these five types of problems which would you consider the major one facing Puerto Rican adolescents and why?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
SECTION V

In this section we are interested in your views about social workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Social workers have special ways of helping people that are different than the ways of a psychiatrist or guidance counsellor:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sometimes social workers are nosy or interfere too much:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social workers need to have a special kind of personality:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social workers receive more money than they're worth:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social workers need a lot of special training or at least a college degree:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Some social workers are really not interested in helping:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. If you have to in one or two sentences how would you describe the ideal social worker?

8. Describe one case experience you've had in working with a Puerto Rican adolescent. Indicate whether you were helpful or not helpful and why and describe the general circumstances. Do not mention last names.
SECTION VI

Here we want to know how you feel the racial/ethnic background of a social worker might influence the helping experience. By "racial/ethnic" we are referring to whether or not a social worker is Puerto Rican, White or Black.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. It is better for an adolescent to talk with a social worker who is of the same racial/ethnic background as his own. For example Puerto Rican kids would feel more comfortable talking with Puerto Rican social workers, Black kids with Black social workers, etc. |

2. If a youngster likes the person he's talking with whether they're Black, White or Puerto Rican doesn't make any difference: |

3. The first thing an adolescent will notice about a social worker is the social worker's ethnic background: |

4. Black and White social workers do not understand Puerto Rican culture: |

5. White social workers have a very positive attitude towards Puerto Rican adolescents |

6. The bottom line in whether or not I can help a Puerto Rican adolescent is my competence as a social worker not my ethnic background: |
7. Describe a case situation where the racial/ethnic background of a social worker might make a difference in how an adolescent relates to him. If you feel it should make no difference explain.

8. Give an example of a situation where the approaches, or methods a Puerto Rican social worker might use in helping a Puerto Rican youngster could be distinguished from those used by Black or Anglo social workers.
SECTION VII

In this last section we would like some personal data about yourself. Do not write your name.

Age_________ Place of birth__________________ Sex____

(1) How would you describe your racial/ethnic background?
- Black____ Puerto Rican____ Hispanic____ Puerto-Rican American____
- White____ Black-Puerto Rican____ White-Ethnic____ Spanish-Amer.____
- Other____

(2) How would you describe the area in which you live?
- Upper class____ Upper middle class____ Middle class____
- Working class____ Blue collar____ Depressed____
- Other____

(3) Current social work position_________________________________________

(4) Years of experience with current agency: (Circle one)
- Less than 1 year, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years,
- 5 years, more than 5 years.

(5) Educational level
- BA ________
- BSW ________
- MA ________
- MSW ________
- Doctorate ________
- Post Doctorate ________
(6) How would you define yourself professionally?

Social Worker____ Psychotherapist____ Caseworker____
Child Welfare Worker____ Case Aide____ Social Work Trainee____
Psychologist____ Educator____ Guidance Counsellor____
Counsellor____ Other____

(7) Do you plan a career in social work?

Yes____ No____ Undecided____

(8) Do you live in the area you service as a social worker?

Yes____ No____

(9) Please indicate the amount of experience you have had working with Puerto Rican adolescents and where you have had this experience.

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Thank you very much for your patience and help!
REFERENCE LIST


New Jersey School Enrollment, Fall Report: *Enrollment Information in the Newark Public Schools as of September 28th, 1979.*


