An exploratory study of fatherled families in the Windsor-Essex county area.

Michael A. Bull

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UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FATHERLED FAMILIES
IN THE WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY AREA

by

Michael A. Bull, B.S.W.
Theresa Ann Eve, B.S.W.

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the School of Social Work in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Social Work at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario Canada
1976
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and
Theresa Ann Eve
1976
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Dr. P. Kumar Chatterjee, M.S.W., Ph.D.  Chairman

Professor Margrit Meyer, B.A., M.S.S.  Member

Professor Gerald Booth, B.A., M.A.  Member
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twenty-three fathers who volunteered to participate in the
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Jeffrey and Derek, the researchers note how enjoyable it
will be to become full-time family members once again.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the psychosocial experiences of single-parent, fathered families in the Windsor area.

The researchers selected five theoretical areas for examination in the review of the literature: family disorganization, the one-parent family, the motherless family, maternal deprivation, and the role of the father.

A sample of twenty-three single fathers was obtained through contacts with local agencies and through various media presentations. Data was collected by means of structured interviews with the fathers in their homes.

The sample consisted primarily of separated and divorced fathers, and the ages of the fathers ranged from 25 to 57. The average length of time as a single father was three years and two months, and an average of 2.1 children were living with each father. It was found that a majority of the fathers had become single parents as a result of the mother's abdication of her parental role rather than as a result of some activity of the father.

The initial period of motherlessness was found to be most difficult, with intense feelings being related to
the family breakdown and functional problems being related to the father's role adjustments. Both short-term and continuing problems were found to exist for the fathers. The fathers tended to use community resources infrequently and received the most help from their close support systems of family and friends. Generally, the fathers rated as less serious the feelings and problems of the children.

While the fathers' concerns as single parents related to their ability to raise the children properly, the fathers had a high self-concept and enjoyed their single-parent role. The mother's absence was found to bring the family closer together and to have only limited negative effect outside the family.

The researchers concluded that the fathers studied were functioning successfully as single parents and that the factors which led to this success merited continued examination. The motherless family was seen to have both social and individual ramifications, and it was concluded that the number of fatherled families would increase as sex roles changed further, necessitating increased consideration of the needs of these families.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Problem

In the past decade, social scientists have demonstrated considerable interest in the phenomenon of the one-parent family. The phenomenon itself is not new for, as Benjamin Schlesinger notes, "undoubtedly it has existed as long as there have been human beings." However, the number of one-parent families has increased dramatically in the last ten years. While the total number of families in Canada increased 12.0% between 1966 and 1971, the number of one-parent families increased 28.7% in the same time period. The significant increase in one-parent families has resulted in a visibility and an awareness of the circumstances these families face, and researchers have responded by extensively

\[1\] Benjamin Schlesinger, One-Parent Families in Canada (Toronto: Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, 1974), p. 5.
examining the area.²

The concept of the one-parent family, however, has generally come to mean "motherled family." This tendency is understandable in that "most one-parent families in Canada and the United States are the 'matriarchal type'."³ Schlesinger has written that 90% of one-parent families are headed by the mother, as a result of the events which usually accompany divorce, desertion, and death.⁴ What is interesting is that the other 10%, the fatherled families, have gone virtually unnoticed in the study of one-parent families. It was this fact which, to a large degree, prompted the researchers to undertake a study of motherless families in the Windsor area.⁵

Further exploration has revealed that the incidence of fathered families is much greater than Schlesinger has

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³Schlesinger, One-Parent Family, p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁵Throughout this report, the authors have used the terms "motherless family" and "fathered family" interchangeably.
suggested. Census information indicates that fathered families have comprised nearly 20% of one-parent families in Canada over the past twenty years, as shown in Table 1. Between 1966 and 1971, the number of fathered families in Canada grew from 71,502 to 100,680, constituting a considerable increase of 40.8%. Yet, until 1974, only thirty-two fathered families in Canada had been studied in any systematic or scientific way. In statistical terms, the fathered family appears to be a phenomenon which, although largely disregarded, is of considerable significance and merits further examination.

**TABLE 1**

**ONE-PARENT FAMILIES IN CANADA BY SEX OF FAMILY HEAD, 1951-71**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>One-parent Families</th>
<th>Fathered Families</th>
<th>Mothered Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>325,699</td>
<td>74,757</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>318,439</td>
<td>74,975</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>347,418</td>
<td>75,203</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>371,885</td>
<td>71,502</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>478,745</td>
<td>100,680</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motherlessness, however, cannot be considered in terms of numbers alone. Although the problem has existed for centuries, the nature of motherlessness has altered with social changes. Victor George and Paul Wilding, in their comprehensive study of motherless families in Britain, outlined the primary cause of motherlessness through history—maternal mortality:

Before the days of censuses and statistics numerous contemporary sources give evidence of the high maternal mortality rates which were common to all classes. The Book of Common Prayer stresses on various occasions "the great pain and peril of childbirth." The plight of the orphan is one of the great themes of Victorian literature. Samuel Butler writing of nineteenth-century family life recorded that most mothers wrote letters bidding farewell to their families shortly before their confinements and "50 per cent kept them afterwards."

The best estimates we have of maternal mortality in the mid-nineteenth century suggest that one birth in every hundred resulted in a mother's death. The ritual and solicitude which surrounded Victorian childbirth were the product of the very real risks involved.6

Yet, despite the high incidence of maternal mortality, little attention seemed to be accorded to the motherless family. George and Wilding have accredited this lack of study to the fact that the motherless were traditionally absorbed by the extended family where a source of unmarried women usually existed, ready to assume the role of substitute mother. If relatives were not available, the middle-class father could

engage the services of maids and governesses; and failing all else, the children could be cared for by the parish or union.  

The trend in the causes of motherlessness has changed, however. The rate of maternal mortality in Canada was 18.3 per 100,000 live births in 1973, compared to 107 in 1951 and 51 in 1931.  

Correspondingly, the number of families left motherless due to the mother's death decreased 5.1% from 1966 to 1971. On the other hand, the number of motherless families resulting from separation, divorce, and non-marriage has increased dramatically, as Table 2 indicates. Not only has the actual number of divorces and separations increased, as evidenced by census figures, but the number of fathers who are obtaining custody of their children following marital dissolution is increasing as well. Although the custody process still presents some stumbling blocks for the fathers, the court system has demonstrated an increasing willingness

---

7 Ibid.
### TABLE 2

INCREASE IN FATHERLED FAMILIES BY TYPE, 1966-71*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Fatherled Families</th>
<th>Percentage Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>24,511</td>
<td>38,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>40,143</td>
<td>38,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3,494</td>
<td>11,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>3,354</td>
<td>12,505</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


to grant custody of children to fathers.  

Several other factors have had an influence on the existence of motherless families. The extended family is less accessible and available as a resource to the motherless family due to increased geographical mobility. With more women working, and with marriage becoming more popular and occurring at younger ages, there are fewer females with the time and energy to commit to the care of motherless children.

At the same time, changes in the roles of men and women have meant that fathers are now more involved with their children. Considerable emphasis has been placed in the

---

literature on the changing role of women.\textsuperscript{11} Frederick Elkin comments on this change:

The woman is not as subordinate as she once was and is less discriminated against in education, employment and social relationships. From a personal point of view, she has a greater freedom of choice, with many more alternatives open to her and with greater possibilities for realizing her intellectual and artistic potentialities.\textsuperscript{12}

The changes in women's roles have led to corresponding changes in the roles of men. The trend in Canada has been toward a more egalitarian partnership between husband and wife,\textsuperscript{13} and studies over the last twenty years indicate that men are becoming involved in what have been traditionally female tasks.\textsuperscript{14}

One consequence of this fusing of roles has been that contemporary fathers are interacting to a larger degree with their children than might have been the case in the past.


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

Increased recognition of the importance of the family unit has fostered social attitudes which encourage keeping the family together, with or without both parents. Although the family as a primary group has long been a focus of study in the social sciences, it has been only in the last two or three decades that social workers have recognized the significant influence of the family on the psychological development of family members. Family therapy has burgeoned and gained acceptance as an effective and legitimate treatment mode. Erickson and Hogan have noted that

... during the early 1950's, the focus on family variables intensified. The family was perceived as a unit with properties of its own, subject to a form of homeostatic balance and understandable apart from any individual member. The aim of therapy turned from individual change with a treatment of relationship to family change, with individual change a by-product.

In its review of the literature on the family as a unit of study and treatment, the Regional Rehabilitation Research Institute of the University of Washington came across twelve thousand pieces of literature written on the topic between 1954 and 1967.  


16 Joan W. Stein, The Family as a Unit of Study and Treatment (Seattle, Wash.: Regional Rehabilitation Research Institute, University of Washington, 1973), p. ii.
Recognition of the family's importance and its influence on emotional stability and development has resulted in an attitude among the helping professions specifically and society in general—an attitude which has promoted the maintenance of the family unit. Given this attitude and the other factors outlined above, it has become

... less unthinkable than it once was for a man to contemplate trying to bring up a family on his own. ... A generation ago it would have seemed almost out of the question for a man to try to look after his children by himself. Now many more men regard it as their duty to do so, if faced with such a responsibility. 17

The changing social context in which motherlessness has developed has resulted in more fathered family units and a decrease in the appropriateness of previous solutions. As the causes of motherlessness have changed, so has the meaning of the phenomenon both for the families who have experienced the situation and for society. Motherlessness no longer means simply the physical loss of the mother through death. As Table 2 indicates, motherlessness has become more a result of family conflict, disorganization, and dissolution. Often, the mother is in many ways still involved with family, and "motherlessness" has become somewhat of a misnomer. Certainly, the changing nature of motherlessness suggested to the researchers that the concept and the phenomenon needed

17 George and Wilding, Motherless Families, p. 3.
further evaluation; in view of the apparent need, this study was deemed appropriate, timely, and, hopefully, valuable.

Introduction to the Study

Although the broader, external issues related to motherlessness played an important role in the initiation of this project, there were also personal motives involved for the researchers. Both researchers had had considerable work experience with one-parent families, including a number of fatherled families. This involvement had created an interest in the dynamics of the fatherled family and also provided an exposure to the considerable difficulties which these families experienced. The opportunity to research the area further was welcomed.

As the study developed, it became clear that, although motherlessness was a significant and increasing social reality, very little research existed on the topic. Others who have examined the field of family research, such as Hoffman and Lippitt, have found this gap to exist:

Authors of studies involving the father's absence from the family often begin their reports with the comment that everyone studies mother absence but few have studied father absence. Strictly speaking, this is not so. We know of very few studies of mother absence per se....The reason for this paucity is partly that families without mothers are uncommon and cannot be found in concentrated groups....It would be worthwhile to seek out as subjects families in which the mother is absent

Although a limited number of studies have been published which deal specifically with motherless families,\footnote{19}{See George and Wilding, Motherless Families; and Rubin Todres, "Motherless Families: Results of a Toronto Study," Canadian Welfare (July-August, 1975): 11-13.} the general lack of information on fatherled families made the project appear more worthwhile and useful.

Two intentions were part of the initial project formulation. First of all, the aim was to conduct a study which was primarily client-focused, in that it would attempt to measure the perceptions of the individuals who were members of motherless families. This focus was seen as preferable, based on the belief that much research in social work examines the perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and values of the professional workers and that the thoughts of the clients may often be overlooked. Secondly, the intention of the researchers was to examine an aspect of motherlessness which had not been researched in previous studies. A degree of differentness or uniqueness was hoped for in order that the range of knowledge in the area of study could be broadened.
At first sight, the implementation of the second goal appeared to be easily accomplished in view of the relatively unexplored nature of the problem area. However, the breadth of opportunities for research in fact created somewhat of a dilemma. On the one hand, previous studies of motherless families had tended to be wide in scope, examining motherlessness in an extensive rather than intensive manner. The selection of a specific aspect of motherlessness for intensive study, then, did not appear to present a problem. Yet the very fact that the area had been researched in broad terms suggested that a specific, focused study might be premature, in that not enough "groundwork" appeared to exist on the subject.

The solution to the dilemma appeared to be some kind of balance between breadth and depth; that is, the selection of an area which had not been largely studied but the avoidance of too narrow a focus. Two possibilities for study were initially considered. The first was an examination of the needs of motherless families in the Windsor area and the relationship of these families to the social service agencies in Windsor and Essex County. Although the needs of single-parent and motherless families had been largely the focus of previous studies, the specific situation which existed in Windsor in relation to fathered families was unknown. The
second possibility was to focus on the experiences of the children in motherless families. The information available which related to motherless children had been gathered using the fathers' perceptions, and it was the contention of the researchers that these perceptions may have been incomplete, if not inaccurate.

At first, the project was designed in two stages: the first stage involving the examination of needs and service delivery, the second stage addressing itself to the children. Eventually, however, both of these focuses were rejected by the researchers. As an interview schedule was developed which dealt with service delivery for fathered families, the researchers thought that the approach being taken was, in some ways, irrelevant in comparison to more basic issues related to motherless families. This approach also failed to maintain the interest of the researchers, no doubt due to their questions about the relevancy of their efforts. The direct focus on the children was abandoned, not due to second thoughts about the value of the topic, but due more to procedural complications. The researchers did not know the size of the sample of motherless children in Windsor, nor whether the available children were old enough to discuss their experience of motherlessness, nor whether the fathers would consent to interviews with the children.
In view of the number of unknowns connected with the second research possibility, it was deemed appropriate not to pursue this course of research.

A decision eventually was made to concentrate primarily on the father's psychological and social experience as the key figure in a motherless family. Although the previous studies of motherless families had considered the father's emotional experience, primary consideration appeared to have been given to factual data about the motherless family and the structural changes in the family's functioning. At the same time, George and Wilding had recognized the importance of examining the father's emotional situation: "We felt that it was only through a close study of the father's feelings and reactions that the other issues could be understood."\textsuperscript{20} The researchers felt that an emphasis on the psychological and social aspects of motherlessness might be of considerable value to social work professionals who might be involved with motherless families.

Having adopted a major focus for the study, and keeping in mind the need to balance breadth with depth, the following purposes or goals were established for the study:

1. To increase the available information dealing with fathered families

\textsuperscript{20}George and Wilding, \textit{Motherless Families}, p. 21.
2. To examine to a greater degree the psychological and emotional experience of the motherless family

3. To increase social and professional awareness of the phenomenon of the motherless family

4. To survey the problems experienced by fathered families in the Windsor-Essex County area

5. To obtain a knowledge base from which recommendations could be made regarding services for fathered families

A major concern for the researchers was how to obtain a sample with which to carry out the study. Census data indicated the number of fathered families in the Windsor area, but there existed no comprehensive means by which to determine the location of these families. Of the four categories of fathered families—separated, divorced, widowed and never married—potential sources for locating families existed for only two, divorced and widowed. However, the process of reviewing court records, death records and obituaries promised to be both time-consuming and ineffective, in that these records would not necessarily contain the names of all fathered families resulting from divorce or death. To locate families headed by fathers who were separated or never married appeared to be a task even more Herculean in nature.

In view of the considerable roadblocks facing the authors if a systematic search for fathered families was to
be undertaken, it was decided instead that efforts would be made to enlist respondents on a volunteer basis. Community agencies were approached and asked to assist the researchers by contacting fatherled families on their caseloads and obtaining their permission to be contacted. Since it was assumed that a number of fatherled families may not have been in touch with social service agencies, the news media also were used extensively. Articles appeared in three local papers, explaining the project and requesting volunteers, and the researchers were interviewed on a local radio program. Although doubts remained about how effective these approaches would be in obtaining a large enough sample, the cooperation of the media and agencies and the enthusiasm of the fathers led to the development of a list of approximately sixty potential respondents, twenty-three of whom eventually took part in the study.

The design of the research project was basically exploratory or formulative, based on the classifications of Claire Selltiz et al.\(^{21}\) Selltiz has outlined the functions of an exploratory study:\(^{22}\) several of these functions appeared to apply directly to the authors' study:


\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 51.
1. To formulate a problem for more precise investigation or to develop hypotheses 
2. To increase the investigator's familiarity with the phenomenon he wishes to investigate in a subsequent, more structured study 
3. To clarify concepts 
4. To provide a census of problems regarded as urgent in a given field 

In relation to the unresearched nature of the area of motherlessness and to the researchers' goals for the research project, these four functions were seen to be most applicable to the study. It definitely was hoped that the study would increase familiarity with the awareness of the phenomenon of motherless families, and perhaps clarify some of the dynamics and conceptual aspects involved. Furthermore, the researchers strongly felt that the study could provide a base from which more in-depth research into the area could take place.

The research design was determined to a large degree also by the nature of the sample. As outlined earlier, obtaining a sample presented certain difficulties; these difficulties precluded the possibility of obtaining a probability sample—a sample which could be assumed to be representative of the total population of fatherled families. While other research designs demanded systematic sampling in order to
maximize the reliability and validity of the hypothesis-testing, the exploratory design did not require stringent sampling procedures and corresponded most closely to the sampling opportunities available to the researchers.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted at the School of Social Work, University of Windsor. The city of Windsor, located in the extreme southwestern part of Ontario, has a population of 198,569\textsuperscript{23} and includes some 62,000 family units.\textsuperscript{24} Windsor is a relatively established community, having been in existence since 1836, and has been characterized by steady growth which continues at present, particularly in the suburban areas.

Being situated on the Canada–United States border across from the large metropolitan area of Detroit, Michigan, Windsor has been subject to considerable influence from its American neighbour. News, entertainment, music, television and radio programming, and life style in general have in many ways been as much American as Canadian, if not more at times. The geographical isolation of Windsor from other large Canadian centres has tended to increase Windsor's

\textsuperscript{23} City Hall figures for 1975.

\textsuperscript{24} Census figures for 1971 indicate 62,905 families in Windsor.
"apartness" from the mainstream of Ontario and Canada. More recently, however, federal legislation governing Canadian content in broadcasting, a commercial boom in Windsor, and a decrease in Detroit's attractiveness due to rising crime have resulted in Windsor beginning to develop a stronger Canadian identity.

The population of Windsor and of Essex County, of which Windsor is the major centre, contains a significant ethnic community. British, French, Italian, German, Chinese, and many other Asian and European groups are well represented. A diversity of religious denominations also exists. It has been said that Windsor has many, if not all, of the elements of a large Canadian city, although to a lesser degree.

Economically, Windsor relies to a large degree on the automotive industry. Three major auto producers have plants in Windsor, and a number of feeder companies have developed as suppliers. A significant proportion of the population is employed by these auto-related industries; much of Windsor's population, therefore, is of the working class. Throughout Essex County, farming activity takes place and a variety of fruits and vegetables are grown for domestic and commercial use.

The University of Windsor, which has existed since 1963, has a student population of approximately 7,000 and
offers a variety of academic programs in the arts and sciences. The School of Social Work consists of 380 students in the undergraduate and graduate programs and has attracted students from parts of Canada, the United States, and several other foreign countries.

Summary

The motherless family has become a phenomenon of some statistical significance. The causes of motherlessness have shifted considerably in the past twenty years, thus changing the nature of the problem. The area of motherlessness was relatively unresearched and the researchers decided to focus primarily on the psychological and social experience of the motherless family.

An exploratory design was adopted because of the lack of research on motherless families and the sampling techniques which were feasible. A sample of twenty-three volunteer participants was obtained through contacts with local social service agencies and news media.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Family Disorganization

There is an abundance of literature on marital adjustment, ways of building a successful marriage, family adjustment, and child rearing. There is probably an equal amount of research on marital dissolution, the divorce process, and children of divorce. The researchers have reviewed, therefore, only a limited number of authors' contributions on the subject of family disorganization, and have not made a complete review of the vast amount of literature in this area.

Family disorganization, or marital dissolution, according to Robert Winch, involves "all forms of termination of marriage, including separation, divorce and death,"\(^1\) although separation seldom is treated as distinct from divorce in the literature. The most obvious evidence of family disorganization is the increase in divorce rates. Table 3 indicates that the divorce rate in the province of Ontario is

gradually increasing. This gradual increase corresponds

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Divorces</th>
<th>Rate for 100,000 Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>12,451</td>
<td>164.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>12,211</td>
<td>158.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>13,190</td>
<td>168.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>13,781</td>
<td>173.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>15,277</td>
<td>188.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


to the trend in Canada. In 1970, there were 29,775 divorces in Canada, compared to 36,704 in 1973 and 45,019 in 1974.²

Causes of Divorce

Clifford Kirkpatrick identifies one of the social causes of the increased rate of divorce. He states that "the loss of economic function has weakened some of the bonds of family solidarity and furthered maladjustment."³ With the growth


of modern industry, the economic function of the family is assuming less importance.

Related to this economic independence is the growing practice of women working outside the home. Women are now more autonomous than they were traditionally. Both the resource theory and the exchange theory of marital power assert that the wife's employment increases her power. A redistribution of authority in an egalitarian direction usually does follow the wife's employment, and more of her wishes are honoured. This necessitates a modification of the husband's role and a change in the division of labour between the marital partners. Discrepancies may occur in the ways in which the partners wish to define the division of labour and complementarity may break down. Ambiguity in expectation and performance may come to characterize their roles in one or more functions of the family. Lutz claims that

... the discrepancies, failures and rigidities induce tension within the partners and a decrease in their ability to sustain each other's self-esteem and sense of being loved.

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At times, the career opportunities, noted by Christensen as an "external attraction" of a marriage, may be in conflict with marital obligations. This one attraction may be considered reason enough to break down the marriage and allow the partners to pursue their own career goals.

The influence of the new economic status of women upon the divorce rate quite readily is perceived. Marriage is no longer the main vocation open to the woman and for which she is qualified. She is not, therefore, forced into marriage as her only means of support and if her marriage proves to be a failure, she does not have to face the alternative of enduring it for years to come.

Another social development combines with those already mentioned to tax the stability of marriage further:

... the belief in the right to personal fulfillment, in the justice of terminating relationships that fail to provide fulfillment, and in the immorality of maintaining those that do not.

Kirkpatrick supports this growing belief. The happiness aspiration is strongly associated with modern marriage. He adds that this may mean that divorce is frequent, "not because marriages are extremely unhappy, but because they are

not happy enough." Lichtenberger explains:

... so long as marriages were maintained by economic necessity or by other types of coercion, either traditional or legal, the happiness of the parties was not of particular concern. ... Today if agreeable and helpful companionship cannot be maintained within marriage, there are few other reasons for its existence.

Love, companionship, and personality needs are identified by Christensen as internal attractions to the continuation of the marital relationship.

Kirkpatrick states, regarding other causes of divorce, that a "lapse of institutional support includes declining religious controls, a confused moral code and a liberalism which may contribute to divorce." Religion probably gives less support than formerly to the tradition of family life in spite of the uncompromising attitude of the Catholic Church. The moral code in the past, in relation to sex norms, has dissolved so rapidly that in many groups the individual is his own moralist in areas which specifically affect divorce frequently. Kirkpatrick explains the use of the term "liberalism" as a factor in causing divorce:


11 Christensen, Marriage and the Family, p. 462.

Feminism as an expression of liberalism may clash in the home with patriarchal conceptions of family life and prompt women to regard divorce as a laudable escape from masculine tyranny.\(^{13}\)

Christensen identifies stigma attached to divorce as an external support to the continuation of a marriage.\(^{14}\) Levinger also classifies "community stigma" as a barrier strength against divorce.\(^{15}\) Kirkpatrick states, however, that the stigma attached to divorce is undoubtedly decreasing.\(^{16}\)

**Psychological Effects of Divorce on the Children**

It is impossible to dissect neatly the influence of a divorce upon a child, thus separating it from the influence of the parents' marital maladjustment already felt by the child. Common sense tells us that if a child had experienced a very unhappy home before the divorce, the final break-up would not be so traumatic as it would be to a child who thought his home was happy. In this case, common sense is sustained by the evidence. Judson Landis discovered that, among the children old enough to remember their home before the divorce,


\(^{14}\) Christensen, *Marriage and the Family*, p. 462.


the degree of trauma the children experienced was closely associated with how they viewed the home before the divorce. For those who had seen the home as happy, their adjustment to the divorce was more difficult than for those who had viewed the home as unhappy and full of conflict.\textsuperscript{17}

Kirkpatrick states that "divorce often brings a shock to the child's sense of security."\textsuperscript{18} The child may reason that if one parent can depart, so might the other, thus leaving him utterly desolate. The child may foster a growing suspicion that if the mother could reject the father, for example, the child too could be rejected by her. It is difficult for the child to believe that his mother cannot divorce him in the same way his father was divorced.

The child may experience guilt over the fantasy of having come between his parents and caused them to divorce. Bernard Steinzor states that this feeling of guilt is "at the heart of any embarrassment he experiences when others express or imply disapproval of divorce."\textsuperscript{19} Ted Klein shares Steinzor's sentiments and adds that "this guilt is related to the fact that children of divorce usually feel that, in


\textsuperscript{18} Kirkpatrick, \textit{The Family}, p. 617.

some way, their parents' marriage was destroyed by their acts.\textsuperscript{20} If the guilt is not resolved, it is likely to cause difficulty for the child. The child may try to resolve this guilt by taking on the challenge of trying to reunite his parents. His continual efforts at this often hopeless venture only produces a sense of failure and added guilt over the marital breakdown.

Kirkpatrick states that there is almost always some conflict of loyalty in the mind of a child made aware of parental conflict by the overt behavior of the divorce process. An aspiration to love and be loved by the mother is common, but so also is the aspiration toward mutual love with the father. It is not easy to fully love a mother who hates a loved father or a father who is hostile toward a beloved mother. Full emphatic 'loyalty to each of two parents who are being divorced is almost psychologically impossible.\textsuperscript{21} Given shared custody, there may be an active competition for the child's loyalty, to the point of bribing, encouragement of spying, and attempts to distort unfavorably the child's father or mother-image. A child separated by divorce from a parent may build up a glorified picture of the parent on


\textsuperscript{21} Kirkpatrick, \textit{The Family}, p. 617.
the other side of the divorce barrier. Irrespective of age and sex, love is often nourished by obstacles to love, and hence the greater loyalty to the absent parent. Kirkpatrick adds that a conflict of loyalties could be transformed into a hostility to both parents. He could reject both parents as unworthy love objects and, moreover, conclude that marriage made them worse than they otherwise would be. He might then avoid marriage as an adult because of an unfavorable generalization from the one most familiar case, namely, the marriage of his parents.

Needless to say, the behavior of the parents is directly related to the child's adaptation to divorce. In explaining divorce to young children, Evelyn Pitcher states that it is essential for the child to be given "some emotional assurance that the father and mother will both continue to care for him and love him."²²

Adjustment to Divorce

Marriage is a social and emotional interlocking of two personalities with their particular behaviours and role expectancies. Divorce means a profound rearrangement of roles for the two people involved. It involves a considerable

amount of readjustment to a new and different life style.

The effects of divorce are highly variable and personal. Schlesinger writes that the problems of divorcees fall into two groups: subjective and objective. Subjective problems involve feelings of personal guilt and blame, anger, fear, frustration, and an ever present and deep sense of loneliness. Among the objective problems are limited income, problems related to the job, and time to maintain a home and contribute to the educational and emotional development of children.

The crisis of divorce is also complicated by the lack of normative guides available to the divorcee. The kinship structure fails to define clearly an acceptable behaviour pattern for him or for those with whom he interacts. William Goode mentions some of the problems to which the nuclear family system fails to furnish unambiguous solutions. For example, there are no ethical obligations for relatives or friends to provide material or emotional support during the crisis and afterwards to the divorcee as a divorcee. The nuclear family has no moral imperative to take the divorcee


back into their home and as a divorcee he has no such rights to be helped by them.

The change from the married to the unmarried state requires a radical change in the individual's conception of his role. Goode supports this statement by adding that there is no clear definition concerning the proper behavior and emotional attitudes of the spouses most directly concerned. As opposed to the widowed person who is free to mourn, and to be grieved, there is ambiguity as to whether the divorced should be grieved or relieved.

Paul Bohannan describes divorce as a "complex social phenomenon as well as a complex personal experience." He lists six different experiences of separation:

1. Emotional divorce, centred around the problem of the deteriorating marriage
2. Legal divorce, which is based on grounds
3. Economic divorce, which deals with money and property
4. Co-parental divorce, which deals with custody, single-parent homes, and visitation

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26 Goode, "Role Problems," p. 505.
5. Community divorce, surrounding the changes of friends and community

6. Psychic divorce, with the problem of regaining individual autonomy

Bohannan summarizes that a successful divorce begins with the realization by the couple that they do not have a constructive future together and that the divorce is a positive act promoting their potential growth and happiness.

Effects of Death on the Family

Kirkpatrick uses the term "bereaved family" for cases in which ties are broken by death and the term "disintegrated family" for cases in which the breaking is due to divorce. He also distinguishes between father-deceased and mother-deceased families. The mother-deceased family is one in which the roles of the bereaved male spouse are affected. He suddenly ceases to be a husband but must be both father and mother to his children. This is a stressful time for the father, considering the fact that he must go through the mourning process in addition to taking on the extra tasks and responsibilities involved in parenting. Kubler-Ross states that a husband's sense of loss may even be greater, since he


\[29\] Ibid.
may be less flexible or at least less used to concerning
himself with matters of children, school, after-school ac-

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tivities, meals, and clothing.

Doris Guyatt, in her study of the one-parent family
in Canada, describes her observations of widowed persons.
She notes that they experience a deep feeling of deprivation
and loss which may be crippling for weeks or months. They
also feel hostility toward the deceased spouse for having
left them alone and guilt for their present feelings of
hostility and their past feelings of displeasure toward the
spouse. This guilt may cause severe depression and apathy. 31

Lily Pincus reinforces the belief of the prevalence of guilt
experienced by the surviving spouse: "There is always guilt
at the death of an important person—guilt about what has
been said or not said, done or not done, justified guilt and
guilt which has no rational justification." 32

Shock is the first response to the death of an im-
portant person and will be particularly pronounced at sudden,
unexpected death. Pincus states that usually the phase of
acute shock lasts only a few days and is followed by a more


31 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 60.

controlled phase:

The real pain and misery makes itself felt when this controlled phase is over and the task of testing reality, coming to terms with the new situation, and the painful withdrawal of libido from the lost person begin.33

From her many studies done in this area, Erna Furman concludes that the "indispensable first step of the mourning process is the individual's awareness, comprehension and acknowledgement of the death of his loved one."34 She also writes that the unavailability of the loved person calls forth longing. The closer, more frequent, and more meaningful the interaction with the love object has been, the more continuous and intense is the longing. The sense of loss would also be greater. Pincus adds that searching is the principal behaviour pattern evoked by loss. The bereaved adult, even if he is aware of the irrational component in his behaviour, keeps on searching for his dead, during unguarded moments, in hallucinations and especially in his dreams.

When a loved person dies, the bereaved has a threefold task—to cope with the immediate impact of the circumstances, to mourn, and to resume and continue his emotional life in.

33 Ibid., p. 54.


harmony with his level of maturity. 36

Kirkpatrick states that the degree to which children suffer is affected by age at bereavement. Young infants and children well-launched into grade-school probably suffer less than the preschool child. 37 Up to the age of three, a child is concerned only about separation, later followed by a fear of mutilation. 38 He is not able yet to understand the concept of death. Furman adds that younger children, from about two years, need help in developing their concept about death and maintaining it because their reality testing is immature and depends on that of the adult. 39

Kubler-Ross writes that death is not a permanent fact for the three-to-five year old. After the age of five, death is often regarded as a man, a bogey-man who comes to take people away; it is still attributed to an outward intervention. Kubler-Ross states that the five year old who loses his mother is both blaming himself for her disappearance and being angry at her for having deserted him and for no longer gratifying his needs. 40 The dead person then turns

36 Furman, A Child's Parent Dies, p. 163.


38 Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying, p. 178.


40 Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying, p. 4.
into something the child loves and wants very much but also hates with equal intensity for this severe deprivation. Steinzor adds that a major aspect of the tragedy of losing a parent is that the child no longer has an opportunity to make his own evaluation of the dead parent; he tends to form distorted ideas about his good and negative traits. 41 He also mentions that some experts have concluded that it is easier for a child to come to terms with the death of a parent than with divorce. He does not cite any studies, however, to substantiate his comment.

Around the age of nine or ten, the realistic conception of death begins to show and death becomes regarded as a permanent biological process. Furman writes:

The stress of the circumstances (of death) is usually greater for the younger child. This is due to his limited ability to test reality and master anxiety, as well as to his bodily and psychological dependence on the adult. In some cases, however, the circumstances are so upsetting that even latency-aged and older children cannot cope with them adequately. 42

For an adolescent, however, mourning is not much different than for an adult. Adolescence is, in itself, a difficult time in a young person's development and the loss of a parent is often a great deal for the youngster to endure.

41 Steinzor, When Parents Divorce, p. 58.
In summary, there is no norm for mourning and no norm for adaptation, nor can there be any definite time limit for either. Even after the adjustment, periods of despair and grief, as well as searching, may recur. Pincus writes that only when the lost person has been internalized and becomes part of the bereaved, a part which can be integrated with his own personality and enriches it, is the mourning process complete. With this enriched personality, the adjustment to a new life has to be made. 44

The One-Parent Family

Although the amount of literature dealing with the phenomenon of the one-parent family is not plentiful, there appear to be recurrent themes in those writings which do exist. These themes examine four aspects of the one-parent family: the structural-interactional aspect, the psychological-emotional aspect, the problem and service aspect, and the broader social issues.

Structural-Interactional Aspect

The physical absence of one parent necessitates changes in the structural organization and interactional pattern for the remaining family. The one-parent family is

44 Pincus, Death and the Family, p. 124.
characterized by an alteration in the family homeostasis, or balance, of the system as described by Don Jackson.45

Otto Pollak, in writing on the one-parent family, makes use of the term "broken family" since it suggests "a disaster in the development of the family and a loss in the membership."46 Using role theory, Pollak notes that the one-parent family loses both a resource person and a person with whom to interact in terms of need gratification. Redistribution of the resource role increases the role demands on the remaining family members, or the family may seek out a substitute resource person. For need gratification, the family also may look for a substitute, perhaps through remarriage or a member of the extended family. Pollak points out that structural-interactional changes go beyond the one-parent family itself and often include the extended family and friends who are used as substitutes or who find themselves taking sides in the marital breakdown. Interaction with the wider community changes as well in that the one-parent family often becomes financially dependent on community resources.


Paul Glasser and Elizabeth Navarre discuss the one-parent family specifically in terms of structural changes and consider the task, communication, power, and affection structures. Based on the premise that the provision for physical, emotional, and social needs of family members is a full-time job for two parents, the absence of one parent results in either the reduction of the tasks performed or a reduction in the adequacy of performance. The pursuit of task efficiency in the one-parent family may result in the children being excluded from task performance or, on the other hand, overloaded; tasks also may be neglected.

Glasser and Navarre note that the absence of one parent "produces a structural distortion in the communications between the child and the adult world," in that the child needs parents of both sexes to provide a balanced view of the world. The remaining parent also loses touch with communication about experiences typical of the opposite sex parent, and the limited social interactions which often accompany single parenthood impede communication with peers.

With regard to the power structure of the one-parent


48 Ibid., p. 102.
family, Glasser and Navarre write that the children are likely to see authority as personal and absolute and, having identified power with one sex, may have difficulty adjusting to the sharing of responsibility between sexes. The single parent's lack of experience in democratic decision-making may make it difficult to allow the adolescent children to become independent, and the lack of reinforcement and mediation present with two parents may result in discipline which is changeable, inconsistent, or rigid. ⁴⁹

Navarre and Glasser state that the single parent is "structurally deprived of a significant element in the meeting of his own emotional needs." ⁵⁰ The parent cannot get adequate support from the children, and sexual gratification is diminished. The authors indicate that relationships in one-parent families become more intense, and the denial of negative feelings may occur to avoid the threat of further family conflict. As with power, the source of affection may be identified with one sex, potentially affecting the psychosexual development of the children. ⁵¹

Many of the significant concepts outlined by Glasser

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 103.
⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 106.
⁵¹ Ibid.
and Navarre are reiterated by other authors. Guyatt, in her study of 112 Canadian one-parent families, found that the economic problems of these families often resulted from the fact that one parent could not earn as much or provide as many sources as two parents. The lack of a parent also led to problems in disciplining the children; constant, unrelieved responsibility for the remaining parent; and concerns about the absence of a sex model for the children. Dennis Marsden, who studied 116 fatherless families in Britain, observed that in some one-parent families, the family became overpoweringly close, while others became anarchic and disintegrated, with both extremes being likely to have detrimental effects on the family members. Pollak also writes that the child in a one-parent family may develop a symbiotic relationship with the remaining parent and fail to gain normal independence. However, he notes that a child with one parent may, through the redistribution of responsibilities, experience premature independence and develop an unrealistic feeling of adequacy. In his consideration of the one-parent family structure, Jettee Sprey writes that the absence

52 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 59.


of one parent necessitates the difficult task of reorganizing the various parental roles:

Not only do the instrumental role obligations of the missing parent have to be fulfilled, but also the emotional ones. Given the reciprocal nature of emotional role behaviour, it is highly doubtful that all obligations of this nature can be absorbed by the remaining parent.55

Pollak's view that structural-interactional changes go beyond the family unit has been discussed; other writers support this observation. Sprey notes that, simply because the one-parent structure is a minority which deviates from the statistical norm, there are implications beyond the family. One such implication is stigmatization of the one-parent family. Marsden found that mothers without husbands often did not fit in with their kin and felt stigmatized and ostracized by the community.57 Guyatt reported that single parents had difficulty in establishing new relationships with adults and groups in Canada's two-parent society.58

Guyatt and Benjamin Schlesinger have written, however,

56 Ibid.
57 Marsden, Mothers Alone, p. 303.
58 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 59.
59 Schlesinger, One-Parent Family, p. 4.
that the degree of stigmatization depends on the cause of the one-parent family; whereas the widowed receive sympathy, the separated and divorced are distrusted and disapproved of, while the unmarried parent is least accepted.

Apart from the nature and effects of structural-interactional changes in the one-parent family, the authors also address themselves to how the structural changes of the one-parent family should be viewed by the professions. While Pollak refers to the disastrous nature of the broken family and Frederick Elkin uses the term "structural deviance" to describe the one-parent structure, others tend to emphasize the functionality of the one-parent structure. Schlesinger concludes that, in Canada, the one-parent family is not "not normal." Despite the problems which occur, he writes "most single-parent families function quite well and manage to produce healthy children." Jane Burgess, after her review of the literature on one-parent families, points out that "it is apparent that there is a need to look at the family with new eyes and to begin to study the one-parent

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60 Pollak, "Broken Family," p. 34.

61 Elkin, Family in Canada, p. 139.

family as a form of family in its own rights." 63 Elisabeth Herzog and Cecelia E. Sudia, after reviewing fifty core pieces of research on fatherless families, echo Burgess' sentiments:

It would be useful to give clearer recognition to the one-parent family as a family form in its own right—not a preferred form, but nevertheless one that exists and functions and represents something other than mere absence of true familiness. We need to take account of its strengths as well as its weaknesses; of the characteristics it shares with two-parent families as well as its differences; of ways in which it copes with its undeniable difficulties; and of ways in which the community supports or undermines its coping capacity. 64

The literature suggests a strong trend not to consider the one-parent family as unacceptable or inferior simply due to the structural changes that have resulted from the absence of one parent.

Psychological-Emotional Aspect

Although the absence of one parent very much involves the family as a group, such a situation also has psychological and emotional effects on the individual family members. As early as 1957, Louise Despert wrote that the emotional climate and emotional maturity of the single parent were the


most important factors in the adjustment of the one-parent family. In 1970, Jane Burgess maintained the same emphasis on individual psychological and emotional factors in her study of the one-parent family. In her study of one-parent families, Guyatt found that loneliness and emotional problems ranked first and third among difficulties experienced most often by single parents. In Britain, 25% of the single mothers studied by Marsden had had nervous breakdowns, while one-ninth had attempted suicide. Clearly, the emotional and psychological implications for the one-parent family are significant.

One of the most impressive examinations of the emotional aspect of the one-parent family is that of Kurt Freudenthal. Freudenthal used his observations of a single-parent group in Baltimore to study the dynamic factors frequent in one-parent families. He concluded that there were four dynamic elements which affected both the parents and

66 Burgess, "Single-Parent Family."
67 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 75.
68 Marsden, Mothers Alone, p. 304.
children of one-parent families: a sense of incompleteness and frustration, a sense of failure, a sense of guilt, and feelings of ambivalence between the parent and child.

The sense of incompleteness and frustration was attributed to the "couple" orientation of society. Parents missed companionship and the sharing of child-rearing responsibilities. Freudenthal observed that "loneliness emerged as probably... (the) most outstanding single characteristic"\(^{70}\) of the single parent; this finding has been made also by Guyatt,\(^{71}\) Schlesinger,\(^{72}\) Burgess,\(^{73}\) and Margaret Wynn.\(^{74}\) The children of one-parent families experienced a sense of differentness and deprivation, and Schlesinger found that the fear of being different was the largest problem of the children.\(^{75}\) Schlesinger also writes that children experience considerable confusion, humiliation, and embarrassment due to the fact that their family is incomplete. Freudenthal pointed out that the sense of incompleteness and frustration was attributed to the "couple" orientation of society. Parents missed companionship and the sharing of child-rearing responsibilities.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^{71}\) Guyatt, *One-Parent Family*, p. 75.

\(^{72}\) Schlesinger, *One-Parent Families in Canada*, p. 7.


\(^{75}\) Schlesinger, *One-Parent Families in Canada*, p. 11.
completeness was evidenced in the consistent desire of single parents to remarry and the urging by the children for their parents to remarry. Marsden, on the other hand, found that remarriage was contemplated by few mothers as a solution to their problems. However, in his study, up to one-third of the families were not really fatherless and remarriage either was precluded by the mother's social situation or was economically disadvantageous. Marsden did find that the mothers tended to "complete" their families with alternative relationships with men, for example, through lodging or cohabitation.

Freudenthal found that both parents and children experienced a sense of failure—the divorced parent for failing in a choice of partner, the widowed parent for not achieving lasting togetherness, and the children of divorce for not preventing the marriage breakup. The result was a loss of self-esteem; Guyatt, Burgess, Lerner, and Pollak report this finding as well. Freudenthal noted

76 Marsden, Mother Alone, p. 304.
77 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 60.
80 Pollak, "Broken Family," p. 323.
that single parents tended to eradicate the sense of failure by trying to prove their competency as parents: "Members of the group studied shared marked concern about raising their children 'right', or 'doing the right thing' in coping with a given problem facing them in bringing up their children."81 Children handled their feeling of worthlessness by trying to create an image of themselves as meaningful to the missing parent through letters, pictures, or denial of the remaining parent's derision of their partner. Despert writes that it is of foremost importance that the child be made to feel loved by both parents, despite their differences.82

Schlesinger,83 Guyatt,84 Burgess,85 and Lerner86 have reported on the feeling of guilt that operates in the one-parent family. Lerner87 and Despert,88 using the psychoanalytic framework, note that the son's guilt feelings de-

83 Schlesinger, One-Parent Families in Canada, p. 8.
84 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 60.
87 Ibid., p. 5.
velop out of the oedipal rivalry with the father for mother's affection. Both Freudenthal and Lerner have observed that the single parent tends to compensate for his guilt through increased responsibility to the child, trying to be two parents in one to make up for the loss of the absent parent.

Freudenthal's dynamic of ambivalence consists of the mixture of hostility and closeness which characterizes many relationships in the one-parent family. Several writers report on the feeling of hostility which surrounds the absence of one parent. Schlesinger notes that marital separation often leads to hostility toward the absent partner. Fréudenthal observed that parents resented the need to be so involved with the children and to "sacrifice" for them; children were also viewed by single parents as barriers to remarriage. Pollak has written that the very fact that the remaining parent has to assume greater role responsibilities leads to resentment. The children as well experience

91 Schlesinger, One-Parent Families in Canada, p. 8.
feelings of hostility, in that they may blame the remaining parent for the family breakdown and resent the increased role demands made upon them. Freudenthal and Lerner note that the single parent's hostility and resentment toward the absent partner can be displaced onto the children through a "You're just like your father" attitude.

Freudenthal reported that hostility and resentment toward the child often led to guilt for single parents, because the child was very meaningful to the parent:

In many instances he (the child) was felt to represent the one remnant of the dissolved marriage which had positive emotional significance, a lasting source of gratification and an object of love for the only parent. Frequently the tie between the single parent and her child appeared exceptionally close, especially between parent and child of the opposite sex.

Herbert Holt and Charles Winick, in their examination of the psychodynamics of divorce and separation, write that, for the separated parents, the children can be used to meet disrupted emotional needs and may act as a symbol of the marriage situation to which the parents wish to return.

Pollak suggests that single parenthood involves a

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process of social and psychological regression. The single parent often reverts to a dependent relationship with his or her parents; economically, the single parent may regress by entering a dependent financial situation. Socially, the single parent must go back to behaviours which were used earlier in life, such as dating and courtship behaviour. Such regression may lead to adjustment problems for the single parent. Lerner supports the concept of regression in the single parent and writes that a husbandless wife becomes like a child, exhibiting childlike traits such as frustration, rebellion, and dependency on a mother figure.

The emphasis that writers have placed on the emotional experience of the one-parent family indicates that the phenomenon is more than simply a sociological one. Indeed, the absence of one parent holds significant meaning for each individual family member; the literature indicates this fact is receiving considerable recognition.

Problems and Service Aspect

Apart from or in addition to the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics which are associated with the one-parent family, various authors have considered the problems

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which one-parent families experience and the services which would meet the needs of such families.

Dennis Marsden surveyed 116 fatherless families on national assistance in Britain to study the effects of father-absence and low income. He found that income was significantly lower for these families, less than half the income of a two-parent family. Income levels did vary according to the type of fatherlessness, with widows being least poor and unmarried mothers the poorest. Low income and the absence of the father led to several other problems, such as poor housing conditions, lack of food, outdated clothing, and inferior educational opportunities for the children. Marsden found that single mothers felt the need to maintain a standard of living dictated by community standards, and that this pressure to conform often served to increase the feeling of being poor.

Although Marsden's findings were influenced by the bias toward national assistance families, Margaret Wynn's literature and statistical study of fatherless families in Britain confirms many of Marsden's findings. Wynn concluded that poverty was a common consequence of fatherless-

100 Marsden, Mothers Alone.
101 Wynn, Fatherless Families, pp. 162-63.
ness, and that fatherless families were unable to compete for rented housing in the open market. Two further problems for fatherless families were inadequate protection and supervision of the children, and the risk of complete family breakdown.

Studies conducted in Canada do not differ significantly in their conclusions about the problems for one-parent families. Guyatt found that the ten most frequently experienced problems were loneliness, insufficient income, emotional problems, tiredness, child discipline, sexual problems, medical problems, dental problems, housing, and legal problems. Insufficient income, however, was ranked by the respondents as the most important problem. Overall, Guyatt concluded that the greatest need among one-parent families was financial, followed by social need such as community acceptance. Guyatt also found that society is largely unaware of the problems of one-parent families.

The Canadian Council on Social Development surveyed 113 heads of one-parent families and, although the Council tended to emphasize the diversity of situations, experiences, and problems among one-parent families, it did determine a

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102 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 75.
103 Ibid., p. 109.
number of widespread problems. Problems caused by low income were predominant, partly due to inadequate social assistance rates and low wage rates for single mothers who were working. Adequate housing was a problem particularly for smaller and rural families; prejudices against single parents, large families, and racial minorities compounded the housing difficulties. Other problems reported were the lack of appropriate day care services, legal problems resulting from the court system, inadequate homemaker support, and emotional difficulties, particularly in the initial period after separation.

Schlesinger writes that common problems of one-parent families are financing, childrearing, maintaining a satisfying social life, and emotional problems of adjustment. Referring to the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Schlesinger also notes that over one-third of the women who head families are poor, with almost one-quarter being dependent on government assistance, which is often inadequate. Mary Hargreaves, in her study of single-parent families in Windsor, Ontario, found that poverty is a reality for many of them, and that even those single parents who were

104 Canadian Council on Social Development, The One-Parent Family, pp. v-xii.

105 Schlesinger, The One-Parent Family, p. 10.
employed were "working poor." Day care, housing, and personal and emotional adjustment difficulties were also reported as problems for one-parent families.

Several authors suggested that services for one-parent families were inadequate or, in some cases, totally lacking. Guyatt observed that "despite the fact that a large proportion of services, both public and private, go to one-parent families, many of the needs of these families are still unmet." 107 Schlesinger has commented that one-parent families often are not aware of or do not understand the nature of community services, 108 while the Canadian Council on Social Development found that most community services are organized with only the needs of two-parent families in mind. 109 Hargreaves found that, although one-parent families often composed a large proportion of agency caseloads, agencies had "not assumed the responsibility for evaluating their programs for the one-parent family in order to increase effectiveness in dealing with a particular group"; 110 agencies,


107 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 107.

108 Schlesinger, The One-Parent Family, p. 11.

109 Canadian Council on Social Development, The One-Parent Family, p. xi.

rather tended to feel that the present needs of one-parent families were being met.

Guyatt presented a list of twelve needs felt by one-parent families:

1. Adequate financial support
2. Subsidized housing
3. Low cost convenient day care
4. Tax exemptions
5. Relief from constant parental responsibility
6. Job training
7. Information centres and professional advice
8. Low cost legal service
9. Family counselling
10. Recreational services
11. Groups for single parents
12. The assistance of relatives, friends and the community

Guyatt concluded that services for one-parent families should not be provided by separate agencies; standardization of information from various levels of government was suggested, as was the implementation of measures to prevent family breakdowns.

Pollak examines the concept of services for broken

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Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 78-79.
families in terms of prevention, rehabilitation, and alleviation.\textsuperscript{112} With regard to prevention, he proposes professional intervention during courtship and premarital counselling. Pollak further suggests more rigid laws regarding marriage and the redefinition of masculinity and femininity in view of social changes to facilitate the marriage relationship. In terms of rehabilitation, Pollak recommends premarital counselling for couples who are remarrying and the provision of substitute models for one-parent families. To implement alleviation, Pollak proposes casework for one-parent families, casework which involves the absent parent.

Wynn found in her study of British one-parent families that better day care sources were needed, as were more trained social workers to work with one-parent families and more unified services for fatherless families.\textsuperscript{113} Hargreaves reported that agency personnel recommended greater education and knowledge for one-parent families regarding their legal rights and the right to assistance. They also recommended education in the schools regarding money management, homemaking, family planning, and credit buying, and school courses regarding the legal rights and duties of

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{112} Pollak, "Broken Family," p. 335.
\textsuperscript{113} Wynn, \textit{Fatherless Families}, p. 152.
\end{flushright}
marriage. 114

Schlesinger outlines eight recommendations for services for one-parent families. 115 These recommendations include close contact between social services and doctors, lawyers, and clergy; earlier marital counselling; day care; substitute models; matrimonial bureaus; after-school care for children; greater assistance from professionals in interpreting separation to children; and single-parent groups.

The Canadian Council on Social Development makes forty-seven wide-ranging recommendations related to one-parent families. 116 The Council considers such diverse areas as employment and social assistance, job training, the legal system, housing, day care and homemaker services, family life education, holiday services, health care, the service network, counselling services, and the central organization of single parents. The goals of the Council are to promote changes in social policy which affect one-parent families and to increase the effectiveness of the services which one-parent families are likely to use.

114 Hargreaves, Survey on One-Parent Family, p. 9.
115 Schlesinger, The One-Parent Family, pp. 11-12.
Social Issues

A few authors have considered the broader issues related to the existence and the functioning of the one-parent family phenomenon. Otto Pollak discusses the social values which contribute to the existence of the one-parent family as a problematic segment of society.\textsuperscript{117} The value which contemporary society places on the pursuit of happiness and the non-acceptance of discomfort has meant that marriage is viewed as a happiness-increasing institution which can be discarded if it proves disappointing. The success-orientation which exists implies that one's worth is measured by one's success. Since single parenthood suggests failure, it also suggests a loss of self-esteem. The fun morality of today dictates that if one does not have "fun", one must be deficient in some way. The restrictions placed upon the one-parent family decrease its fun-seeking capabilities, and the family sees itself as lacking and different. Pollak further outlines the social factors which are conducive to character disorder; these include permissive child rearing, the relativity of morality, and the fascination with changes in values and behaviour. Pollak concludes that these factors lead to expectations regarding family life

\textsuperscript{117} Pollak, "Broken Family," p. 329-31.
which do not correspond to the challenge; in view of these social values, family disorganization and dissolution are more likely to develop.

Marvin Sussman, in his discussion of the future of the family, notes that family structures change with value systems. He states that variant family forms, such as the one-parent family, are largely the result of increased societal complexity and differentiation. The most salient factor in this development, according to Sussman, is the increased opportunity for women outside the home in both the employment and educational systems, and the autonomy, privacy, and power which have resulted from such increased activity.

Wynn and Schlesinger allude to the effect of social mobility on the one-parent family. Wynn comments that the problems of the fatherless family are made more difficult by fragmentation of society and the greater mobility of the population. She writes that "the fatherless family suffers much more when it is an isolated social fragment unable to obtain much real support from grandparents or other relations."\(^{119}\) Schlesinger supports this observation.


\(^{119}\) Wynn, Fatherless Families, p. 158.
with the view that the decline of the close-knit family has hit the one-parent family hardest, since the extended family would be a primary source of assistance for the one-parent family.  

The Motherless Family

Until 1971, there was virtually no literature published which dealt with the particular phenomenon of the motherless or fatherled family. Guyatt, in her survey of Canadian one-parent families, concluded that, although fatherled families comprised one-fifth of the single-parent families in Canada, nothing was known about the specific needs of motherless families or how these needs were being met. In recent years, however, the increased professional awareness of families headed by single fathers has been reflected in a gradual, although not overwhelming, increase in the amount of literature devoted to the topic.

Guyatt's study of 1971 included, in its sample of 112, twenty-two families which were male-headed. Although Guyatt made some significant findings in terms of the one-parent family in Canada, as discussed earlier, she did not

120 Schlesinger, One-Parent Families in Canada, p. 12.
121 Guyatt, One-Parent Family, p. 110.
122 Ibid., p. 47.
address herself to the specific subgroup of motherless families. The Canadian Council on Social Development issued a report on one-parent families in the same year, having studied ten fathered families in a sample of 113. The Council found that, for single fathers, the greatest gaps in community services were in adequate homemaker services and day care. Homemaker services were reported not to be geared to the situation of single fathers, for example, in terms of the length of involvement. Supervision for school children was a need for single fathers, particularly during lunch hours, after school, and during summer vacations. The report pointed out the difficulty experienced by single fathers who wished to find community resources which would enable them to keep and care for their children over a long period of time. It also was indicated that "a man's plan for his motherless children depends on what he can afford as well as on his understanding of what would be best for the children."

The most extensive examination of motherless families in Canada was conducted in Toronto in 1974. Rubin Todres,

123 Canadian Council on Social Development, The One-Parent Family, p. 49-53.

124 Ibid., p. 51.

125 Rubin Todres, "A Study of Seventy-Two Motherless Families in the Metropolitan Toronto Area," Toronto, 1975. (Mimeographed.)
along with a group of graduate social work students, studied seventy-two motherless families in terms of their histories, present life styles, and problems encountered. Todres found that the single fathers were generally well-educated and in a better financial position than other males in the general population. Although the dissolution of the family had effects on both the father and the children, it was indicated that the family breakdown was most difficult for the father; the effects on the father included emotional stress, emotional relief, increased parental responsibility, and financial stress. Acute loneliness for the father was common, as were the father's doubts about his ability to care for the children. The study revealed that the motherless family tends to fulfill the family obligations from within the family, with the father assuming responsibility for most of the household tasks traditionally performed by the mother. While family interaction increased following the mother's absence, the father's social interaction outside the family either decreased or altered. The most frequent concern mentioned by the fathers was the financial burden of maintaining the family alone.

Todres reported that fathers felt they were treated differently than single mothers in the areas of financial help, the system of justice, and the attitudes of society:
It was felt that it was more difficult for single fathers to obtain social assistance. The legal system was considered discriminatory as it would rarely award custody of the children to the father. Society in general seemed to feel that men were unable to raise a family appropriately.\textsuperscript{125}

Todres urged that further empirical investigation is needed into the area of motherless families, so that specific problems can be more precisely identified. The single father's assumption of various major roles is described as leading to emotional, social, and financial situations which merit remedial action. Todres concludes that the issue for society is one of single parenthood rather than single motherhood or fatherhood, with equal consideration being given to the capabilities and responsibilities of both parents.

Considerable attention has been given to the motherless family in Britain. In 1970, George and Wilding undertook a comprehensive study of 600 fathered families in England and later presented their findings in the book, \textit{Motherless Families}.\textsuperscript{127} George and Wilding found that, surprisingly, a large number of fathers reported little or no immediate or long-range effect of the mother's absence on the children. The greatest type of loss which was reported was an emotional loss, such as loss of love and affection.

\textsuperscript{126}Ibid., p. 8.

\textsuperscript{127}George and Wilding, \textit{Motherless Families}. 
For the fathers, the mother's absence most often meant extreme shock, particularly for widowers. Other commonly reported reactions were anger, especially among fathers whose wives had deserted the children, and loneliness and depression. Although loneliness and depression were found to last longer for widowers, a significant number of non-widowers reported that they continually felt lonely or depressed. George and Wilding found that separation and divorce was a much more confusing experience for non-widowed fathers in terms of feelings; whereas widowers most often felt shock, separated and divorced fathers felt a variety of emotions.

One-half of the fathers in the study reported a decrease in their social life due to restrictions at home and due to a loss of desire to go out. Many fathers found that others behaved differently toward them as single fathers, with 38% reporting a positive change and 39% a negative change. George and Wilding found that many fathers needed reassurance that they were doing well as a parent.

In terms of assistance for the family, most help was received from relatives, particularly during the initial period after the mother's absence. The greatest help from relatives was in day care and housekeeping. George and Wilding concluded that personal social services were not that helpful for single fathers.
The personal social services are at best peripheral to the problems of most motherless families. That fathers managed to look after their children owed little to the personal social services. It was the result of their devotion, hard work and the help they received from relatives, friends and neighbours. The failure of the personal social services was two-dimensional; they failed to reach most of the fathers, and when they did, they failed, in most cases, to provide any meaningful help. 128

What was significant regarding social services was that the fathers found agencies most helpful in the area of advice, information, and support.

The position taken by George and Wilding is that motherlessness is not simply a family issue, but is a social problem because of its origins, nature, and implications. Motherless families have been caused by social situations, particularly changes in women's roles and the de-emphasis on the extended family. The problem has implications for society, in that the motherless family is less able to perform the functions of the family—functions which contribute to the functioning of society at large. Motherlessness challenges certain social values, such as that a child should have two parents, that a child has the right to good parenting and should not suffer for his parents' mistakes, and that a father should work. George and Wilding conclude that motherlessness, being a social problem, requires social action for its alleviation—action such as an adequate income for

128 Ibid., p. 149.
the father who stays home and adequate services for the single father who works.

In a paper presented to a 1973 symposium on single fathers, Wilding has elaborated on certain areas of his original study. He states that the most recognizable problems for single fathers include combining work and child care, finding suitable babysitters or child care for holidays, and the father's domestic inexperience. However, three less obvious problems are revealed by the study. Money is found to be the greatest continuing problem for single fathers, in that the absence of the mother reduces the family income while the cost of living increases due to such factors as ineffective shopping. Stress and strain and loneliness are the other problems which had been unexpected but which are found to be significant for the fathers.

A second paper presented at the single-father symposium examines some policy issues related to motherless families. Cyril Smith suggests that "it would be a mistake to concentrate only on the differences between the two types of one-parent families and overlook the difficulties that

all of them are likely to experience. Smith discusses the double standard which operates in terms of financial assistance for single mothers and single fathers. Whereas the single mother can receive social assistance relatively easily, the single father is expected by welfare administrators to first attempt to manage on his own while working without "scrounging" off public funds. Considering the suggestion by public officials that single fathers get housekeepers, Smith effectively summarizes the dichotomy that exists:

It seems a curious reflection on our values that a woman living on supplementary benefit needs to be very careful indeed about allowing a man into her home for fear of losing her benefit, yet the same government department which will penalize her will suggest to a man in a similar situation that he should bring in a woman.\textsuperscript{131}

Carol Passingham discusses the motherless family from her experience in a British project designed to provide crisis intervention for deserted and widowed fathers.\textsuperscript{132} She emphasizes that one of the most significant differences between motherless and fatherless families is the decision of


\textsuperscript{131}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 7.

whether or not to work. A father is expected to work, and much of his self-image is derived from the nature of his job and his income; the dilemma for the single father, then, becomes one of having to choose how much of a mother and how much of a father he is going to be.\textsuperscript{133} The conflict is further increased by the fact that fathers who do choose to continue working are often defeated by the lack of available supportive resources.

Passingham discusses some of the other pressures experienced by single fathers. Many fathers suffer from the continuing anxiety about the crises which might occur in the near future. As a result, they cannot relax or express the warmth and affection they would like toward their children. Passingham also observes that many single fathers fear that the court will decide in the future that the children should be with the mother; as a result, the fathers are very sensitive about how people view them as parents and about how the children talk about the absent parent. Professional persons also are seen as threatening, "powerful people whose opinions may literally make or break the situation."\textsuperscript{134} Passingham concurs that motherless families re-

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 37.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 48.
ceive the most help from relatives, friends, or neighbours. She also stresses the point that functioning as a single father is more than just mastering a series of skills but, more importantly, depends on the feeling the father has about performing the tasks required of the single father.

Using a sample of thirty motherless families taken from the Bristol Motherless Families Project of which Pasingham writes, Mervyn Murch takes a somewhat more empirical look at motherless families. Murch examines the goals and operation of a service specifically designed for single fathers. Although crisis intervention was the treatment model of the project, it is found that many families need more long-term involvement. Murch identifies immediate practical assistance, such as housekeeping and day care, as a major need for motherless families and reports that this need often leads to the father's unemployment for at least a temporary period. Social services are generally lacking in the provision of these concrete services and it is suggested that this gap in service might lead to the children coming into care or the father giving up the children. Relatives, friends, and neighbours are the most helpful with regard to concrete assistance. Murch notes that the single father's main worries

focus on the care of the children. In terms of the father's own psychological state, records indicate that fathers go through the stages of crisis often associated with bereave-ment. Murch concludes that motherlessness challenges the father to under-go a major role change in terms of the taking on of mothering tasks and that fathers need professional help in making this change.

Elsa Ferri studied data on 237 motherless families who were part of the National Child Development Study in Britain and compared the sample with fatherless and two-parent families. Her sample was divided into three sub-groups—families with fathers alone, families with fathers and step-mothers, and families with fathers and mother substitutes. Ferri found that single fathers were five times more likely to have a co-parent substitute than were single mothers, suggesting that the single-father situation attracts more sympathy. Single fathers were found to have fewer and older children than single mothers while, compared to two-parent families, single fathers were in a somewhat lower social-economic class and were likely to have fewer children. Younger single fathers (under 40) were more likely to re-marry or have a grandmother as a mother substitute, while

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older single fathers (over 50) were likely to have older children as mother substitutes. "Middle age" fathers (40-49) were more often left single-handed with the family. In terms of employment, Ferri found that lone single fathers were more often unemployed than those who had remarried or had mother substitutes. It was speculated that this unemployment may be either voluntary to take on the new parent role, or may reflect a decrease in the father's employability due to demands at home.

The only published study of motherless families in the United States is that by Helen Mendes.¹³⁷ Mendes studied thirty-two single fathers and examined specifically the processes and motivations that led the fathers to become single parents and the subsequent adjustments that the fathers made. It was found that a key factor seemed to be whether or not the father had chosen to be a single parent, and Mendes differentiated two groups--the seekers and the assenters. Seekers sought the role of single parent and found self-validation in their relationship with their children. Aggressive seekers placed an important symbolic meaning on their children, while conciliatory seekers had few close relationships and tended to see custody of their

children as minimizing their own social isolation. On the other hand, assenters were less likely to enjoy the parent role or to let the parent-child relationship supersede the marital relationship. Aggressive assenters were those who were deserted by the wives and these fathers were more often angry and resentful. They accepted the parent role out of a sense of duty, guilt, or fear of retaliation and had lower satisfaction in the parent role and incorporated fewer expressive functions. Their anxiety about their performance as parents also was higher. Widowers were found to take on the parent role due to their positive feeling for the children or out of a reluctance to experience another loss. Mendes compared the acceptance of the single-father role to the acceptance of an unwanted pregnancy, in that a greater desire to have the children often led to a more positive experience and adjustment as a parent. Mendes has commented that "those single fathers who did not want to assume the role had severe problems in their relationships with the children."\textsuperscript{138} In relation to the use of community resources, Mendes found that assenters needed social services most, but used them the least, while seekers, who had a need to succeed as parents, used social services to achieve this goal.

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{ibid.}, p. 311.
Maternal Deprivation

Basic to the discussion of the motherless family is the concept of the separation of mother from child, a situation which has come to be known as maternal deprivation. For over thirty years, the effects of mother-child separation have been the subject of extensive study and, therefore, the literature available on maternal deprivation has grown to be almost overwhelming in volume. Michael Rutter, for example, in his assessment of maternal deprivation, makes reference to 436 pieces of literature in the area. 139 In view of this fact, the researchers have selected a limited number of studies for review—studies which are seen as presenting many of the classical and contemporary views of maternal deprivation.

The classic work on maternal deprivation is that of John Bowlby who, in 1951, presented his report, Maternal Care and Mental Health, 140 to the World Health Organization. Rutter notes that, although research on maternal deprivation had been undertaken for some fifteen years prior to Bowlby's report, he (Bowlby) was the first person to draw the strands


Maternal deprivation was defined by Bowlby as the absence of a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with the mother. Bowlby's hypothesis was deceivingly simple: "That the prolonged deprivation of the young child of maternal care may have grave and far-reaching effects on his character and so on the whole of his future life." In his 1951 report, Bowlby concluded that the hypothesis was indeed true based on the psychoanalytic dynamics of ego and super-ego development. Bowlby held that ego and super-ego functioning were dependent upon the individual's ability to think in abstract or symbolic terms; the absence of this abstract attitude in the infant and the young child necessitated reliance on the mother to perform the functions of the ego and super-ego. Effective transference of these functions to the developing child was possible only through a continuous and satisfactory primary relationship with the mother.

Bowlby identified three phases in the child's capacity for developing human relationships:

1. Phase I (age 5-6 months) in which the child establishes

141 Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation*, p. 120.
142 Bowlby, *Maternal Care*, p. 46.
a relationship with a clearly defined person, the mother.

2. Phase II (until age 3) in which the child needs the mother as an ever-present companion.

3. Phase III (from age 4-5 on) in which the child can maintain a relationship without the presence of the mother.

Disruption of the mother-child relationship in the first phase was reported to result in the child never clearly identifying with one individual, and deprivation in the last six months of the first year would result in psychopathic character. Deprivation in Phase II would result in regression and withdrawal to "safe" behaviour, along with resentment and an unwillingness to engage in relationships. Although deprivation in the third phase was viewed as less destructive in terms of ego and super-ego development, it would result in "excessive desires for affection and excessive impulses for revenge, which cause acute internal conflict and unhappiness and very uncomfortable social attitudes." Bowlby also concluded that anxiety and depression in later life were more common results of less severe deprivation experiences in childhood.

Bowlby's views on maternal deprivation tended to be extreme. For example, in discussing the families in which 

\[144\text{Ibid., p. 57.}\]
deprivation occurred, he wrote:

... deprived children are often sick and many are born of unstable or defective parents. Family relationships while they last leave much to be desired and the home is commonly broken because of destitution, neglect or death. Many of the children are illegitimate and unwanted.145

Regarding the treatment of deprivation, Bowlby maintained that only prolonged residence with an adult with insight into the problem, skill in handling it, and unlimited time could be of avail in combatting deprivation.

Bowlby's somewhat pessimistic ideas regarding maternal deprivation did not prevent, however, his consideration of possible variables which might operate in the dynamics of maternal deprivation. He suggested that certain factors be studied further, such as the age of the child, the length of deprivation, the degree of deprivation, and the relationship with the mother before and after separation. In fact, Bowlby's recognition of these potential intervening factors led to his continued study in the area of maternal deprivation and the publication of more extensive findings.146

Subsequent studies of maternal deprivation have almost invariably used Bowlby's 1951 report as a point from


which to agree or disagree. While Bowlby's conclusions have often been the topic of controversy, there is much agreement on the importance the report played in increasing social awareness of the needs of children separated from their families. Aase Skard notes that Bowlby's work

... served the purpose of at least directing the attention of psychologists and psychiatrists to the problem, making it possible to develop a rudimentary theory of the effects of the many and different factors in the mother-child relationship.\textsuperscript{147}

Margaret Mead comments on the practical implications of the early work on deprivation:

The effects of Bowlby's original monograph were highly beneficial to the degree that world-wide attention was focused on the evils of impersonal institutional care for infants and young children and on types of hospitalization of either mother or child which resulted in traumatic interruptions of a highly exclusive relationship.\textsuperscript{148}

Wotton echoes the sentiments of Mead, referring to the previously "deplorable patterns of institutional upbringing" and the "crass indifference of certain hospitals to childish


sensitivities.  

Bowlby's initial conclusions have received support, albeit qualified support at times, in subsequent writings. Leboyici, in his review of research on maternal deprivation, cites Spitz' 1959 study of the effects of institutionalization on children, a follow-up study of which revealed that 37% of the sample of institutionalized children had died before age 2, and other ill-effects included inability to dress, lack of sphincter control, and limited language ability. Leboyici himself concludes that separation is particularly dangerous when a true object relationship has been established, i.e. at the end of the child's first year. Goldstein, Freud, and Solnit concur with these effects of early deprivation:

When infants and young children find themselves aban-


152 Leboyici, "Maternal Deprivation," p. 278.
doned by the parent, they not only suffer separation distress and anxiety but also setbacks in the quality of their next attachments, which will be less trustful.\textsuperscript{153}

They observe further:

The first attempt at object love has been destroyed; the next one will not be of quite the same quality, will be more demanding, more intent on immediate wish fulfillment, i.e. further removed from the more mature forms of love.\textsuperscript{154}

The increasing research on maternal deprivation has generally tended to either differ with or elaborate on Bowlby's earlier work. Mead approaches the issue from a cultural-anthropological point of view and warns against the tendency to over-attribute consequences to a single cause or event.\textsuperscript{155}

She disagrees with Bowlby's assumptions that there is a biologically given need for continuity of the mother-child relationship, that this relationship cannot be distributed among several figures, and that a disruption of the relationship will necessarily be harmful emotionally or characterologically. She refers to other cultures in which children are cared for and nursed by a number of figures, both male and female, with no apparent detrimental effects and some


\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 138.

\textsuperscript{155} Mead, "Cultural Anthropologist's Approach," p. 238.
possibly beneficial results.

Wootton criticizes Bowlby's initial work on six points. She notes that Bowlby failed to consider those studies which disagreed with his theory, although such studies were not numerous at the time but have tended to increase in number since 1951. She cites Hilda Lewis who found that the quality of mothering and the nature of the father-child relationship were intervening factors in deprivation. Wootton criticizes Bowlby for failing to consider the settings from which his institutionalized samples of children came and in which they were residing when studied. Wootton also points out that Bowlby may have biased his sample by obtaining children for study through child guidance or psychiatric clinics rather than from a more general population. Wootton disagrees with Bowlby's claim that the effects of deprivation are irreversible, stating that no studies have proved this point and such a conclusion at this time is "reckless and unjustified." Bowlby's claim that separation leads to delinquency is also refuted, and Wootton concludes by emphasizing the need to differentiate "separation" and

156 Wootton, "Social Scientist's Approach," pp. 255-64.


"deprivation," with the latter being entirely possible while the child is with the mother.

Lebovici reports that institutionalization can have a variety of effects not necessarily deleterious to the child; indeed, certain children will progress while hospitalized.\textsuperscript{159} The conditions in the hospital, the attitude of the nursing staff toward the children, the conditions of family life before admission, and the individual characteristics of the child are cited as factors which determine the effects of hospitalization. Lebovici also notes that recent studies have introduced the importance of stimulation on personality. J. G. Howells' differentiation\textsuperscript{160} between separation or deprivation (loss) and privation (lack) is referred to, with the point being made that privation can occur within the complete family and that improvements in institutional settings can minimize privation.

An important variable which Bowlby recognized and which has received subsequent attention is that of the child's age at the time of deprivation. Skard writes that separation in the first six months of infancy is really a loss of sensory stimulation or physical care, rather than a loss of

\textsuperscript{159} Lebovici, "Maternal Déprivation," p. 276.

Not until approximately the age of seven months does the child "imprint" with one particular person but not necessarily the mother. From six months to 3½ years, the child needs a consistent person to whom he can return from his outside activities and separation from the love-object is difficult. Goldstein et al. maintain that disruption of continuity at this stage affects those achievements, such as speech and toilet training, which have developed from the stable parent-child relationship. For the school age child, who has a better memory, separation can be of greater length, but prolonged deprivation will lead to disruption of achievements based on the child's identification with the parents' demands, prohibitions, and social ideals.

Lebovici comments that, for the older child, separation triggers a process of mourning. Goldstein et al. identify this mourning even in the young child and emphasize that the external grief of the child is short-lived but not insignificant:

Mourning of equal intensity in an adult person would have to run its course throughout a year; the same process in the child between 1 and 2 years will normally be over in 36 to 48 hours. It is a psychological error to conclude from this short duration that the reaction is only a

161 Skard, "Maternal Deprivation."

162 Goldstein et al., Best Interests, p. 33.

163 Lebovici, "Maternal Deprivation."
superficial one.\textsuperscript{164}

A very comprehensive evaluation of the entire area of maternal deprivation has been presented by Michal Rutter.\textsuperscript{165} He examines the literature regarding the short-term and long-term effects of deprivation and discusses each in terms of the modifying factors and the possible mechanisms involved. Rutter's work clearly demonstrates that the concept of maternal deprivation has developed from a relatively simple one, as presented in Bowlby's hypothesis, to one of great complexity, and in fact, Rutter notes that confusion has resulted from the fact that the concept has come to stand for a diversity of different phenomena.

Rutter makes a number of significant conclusions. He points out that Bowlby's initial claims regarding maternal deprivation led people mistakenly "to place an almost mystical importance on the mother and to regard love as the only important element in child rearing."\textsuperscript{166} Rutter maintains that distress and psychopathy, both of which Bowlby connected to the failure to form bonds, are more accurately the products of two mechanisms: the disruption of bonds and the failure to achieve bonds, respectively. Rutter de-em-

\textsuperscript{164} Goldstein et al., \textit{Best Interests}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{165} Rutter, \textit{Maternal Deprivation}.
\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 123.
phasizes the special importance of "mother," in that the bond with mother, in and of itself, is not different from other bonds; furthermore, the child's chief bond need not be with the mother or even with a female. The significance of bonds with others is outlined:

The father, the mother, brothers and sisters, friends, school-teachers and others all have impact on development but their influence and importance differs for different aspects of development. A less exclusive focus on the mother is required. Children also have fathers.167

Rutter continues to look at the total family picture when he points out that distorted family relationships, rather than weak bonds, can be responsible for antisocial behaviour and can occur outside of early childhood.

Rutter completes his evaluation of maternal deprivation by calling for greater clarity and specificity in the study of "maternal deprivation":

The term is misleading in that it appears that in most cases the deleterious influences are not specifically tied to the mother and are not due to deprivation.168

He adds:

The concept of "maternal deprivation" has undoubtedly been useful in focusing attention on the sometimes grave consequences of deficient or disturbed care in early life. However, it is now evident that the experiences included under the term "maternal deprivation" are too

167 Ibid., p. 125
168 Ibid., p. 123.
heterogeneous and the effects too varied for it to continue to have any usefulness. It has served its purpose and should now be abandoned. 169

As with many other concepts, the development of new theories of human behaviour has resulted in the reassessment, clarification, and elaboration of the concept of maternal deprivation. No longer confined by the boundaries of psychoanalytic theory, researchers have recognized the complexities of the phenomenon and have sought to identify and specify the particular dynamics involved in the disruption of the mother-child relationship.

The Role of the Father

Lack of Research

As one reviews the literature on the father's role in the family, it becomes evident that there has been a substantial neglect of research in this important area. In comparison with the large number of studies on mother-child interactions and a very considerable literature discussing this topic, the attention given to fathers is limited. In one major study of parents, probably the most elaborate published in recent years, there were 582 interviews with

169 Ibid., p. 128.
mothers but not one interview with a father. In this published report, written by Miller and Swanson, the word parent seems to be equated with mother. Such instances can be multiplied and, for many writers, "parent" means "mother."

When one considers how many fathers there are and the many problems they have in common, it seems rather surprising how little notice they have received. Much of the scientific literature that is written in this field is sociological rather than psychological in content.

In 1963, Jules Henry wrote that the American father is widely regarded as a beloved but playful "imp" and need not be taken too seriously. Irene Josselyn, in discussing the impact of cultural forces on the role of both mother and father, stated that the father is often considered little more than mother's helper in child rearing.

Leonard Benson suggests that perhaps we automatically turn to the study of mother rather than father because of a vivid combination of favourable images of both mother and

the mother-child relationship. Benson suggests that

... the figures of Mary and maternal tenderness are preserved in Christianity from the Judaic tradition, for example, along with the unsympathetic elements of patriarchal rigor and harsh legalism associated with fatherhood. 173

Too, research into mother's role is relatively easy to conduct. She is more accessible for study than the father and she has more time than the father in which to cooperate.

Robert Lane found that the father simply is not as conspicuous in his parental role as the mother. 174 John Nash, in his comments on the influence of matricentrism on the psychological literature, adds that fathers are generally undervalued in our mother-centred culture. 175

For whatever reason, the mother's role in child rearing does inspire more research than the father's, which leads in turn to a still greater emphasis on the mother. Benson states that more research is done that increases our knowledge of the importance of mother's role, and the fact that we know little about father contributes to our continued

173 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 7.


ignorance of his function. 176

The curtain of silence about males in the family is gradually being lifted. More authors are concerning themselves with the role of father in the family, with the result that more is being discovered about this important area of family life. 177

Brief Historical Perspective

In their efforts to gain insight into the contemporary father role, David Lynn 178 and Louise Despert 179 have traced its historical roots. Despert, in her research into the past, learned that the early Greek, Hebrew, and Roman fathers possessed unlimited power and authority. Despert has written:

For the Romans (also) the very word "father" signified dignity and power. The father continued to have the right to reject the child at birth, and it was he who kept the child in case of divorce. 180

Clifford Kirkpatrick, in his historical review of the Roman family, writes:

176 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 8.
177 See Klein, The Father's Book; Lynn, The Father; and Benson, Fatherhood.
178 Lynn, The Father, p. 63.
180 Ibid., p. 22.
The Roman family is sometimes regarded as the perfect ideal-typical patriarchal family system. The phrase "the Roman father" is still used as synonymous with the stern patriarchal ruler.\textsuperscript{181}

The Roman tradition survived into America, but was short-lived. When the colonists started their new life on this continent, they did not leave the father's tyrannical authority behind. Lynn writes that "in general, the colonial father was the supreme authority, the wife administered his will and the children obeyed without question."\textsuperscript{182}

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were many forces mediating against the patriarchal family as a viable structure. Children began to free themselves and to break away from the authority of the father. As he grew older, the son became master of his own conduct. Alexis De Tocqueville's description of American life in 1831, from the author's perspective as a Frenchman, reveals few remnants of austere Calvinistic patriarchy.\textsuperscript{183} Moreover, many of Tocqueville's observations on American life in general, and on the role of father in particular, sound startlingly contemporary. Tocqueville attributes the father's willingness to relax his authority to the American climate of democracy,

\textsuperscript{181} Kirkpatrick, \textit{The Family}, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{182} Lynn, \textit{The Father}, p. 68.

which taught one to judge everything for oneself.

Despért concludes her review of the historical heritage of the American father by discussing influences from the post-Victorian age:

If the weakening of the father's might during the beginning of the nineteenth century was in part the result of the child's rebellion, we find an altogether different motivation in the freeing of the child which took place after the Victorian age. By this time, modern psychologists had gained insight into the emotional needs of the child and in particular his need for self-expression. Simultaneously, the emancipation of women tended to reduce the power of the father.\footnote{184}

Today, the father is not the formidable figure that he was, to various degrees, in the past.

Little is known about the historical background of the Canadian father. Frederick Elkin writes briefly on the history of the Canadian family and describes these families as rural, self-sufficient units of production and consumption.\footnote{185} The husband, wife, and children had clearly defined tasks. The father was the leader of the household, but the wife often exercised a major influence in family decisions. Schlesinger also writes about the historical background of the Canadian father:

\[\text{From our pioneer days, we have preserved the myth of a}\]

\footnote{184}{Despért, "Fatherless Family," p. 23.}

\footnote{185}{Elkin, Family in Canada, p. 33.}
self-sufficient household in which the father farmed, 
hunted, built and was home all day to keep the boys' and 
girls' minds on their chores and their schooling; a home 
in which the division of labour between father and mother 
was clear but both were strong and self-reliant. . . . 
The male of that day was regarded as the biological par-
ent, the provider, and disciplinarian.186

The Father's Role—Role Theory

The role of the father in theory may best be clari-

fied by reviewing a leading contemporary analysis of the fam-

ily as a social system by Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales.187

The family is both part of a large system—society—and a 
subsystem in itself. To relate the subsystem to the overall 
system—to relate the family to society—requires effort. 
Parsons regards the father as the parent who primarily car-
ries out this role. His role in the family is characterized 
by Parsons as "instrumental." Parsons defines instrumental 
in terms of boss-manager, leader, and executor of punishment, 
discipline, and control over the family.188 Benson defines 
instrumental as follows:

The instrumental orientation evokes a disciplined pursuit 
of goals transcending the immediate situation and en-
courages resistance to any emotional involvement as an 
end in itself. It fosters affective restraint along 
with a desire for achievement, acceptance of objective

186Schlesinger, Families, p. 41.

187Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales, Family, Social-
ization and Interaction Process (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free 

188Ibid., p. 318.
standards for performance and task fulfillment. 189

The instrumental activities involve a rational attitude toward the external system and an inhibition of emotions toward other members of the system. The system cannot continue in this state forever, according to Parsons:

In order for the system to continue as a system, there must be at some point a change in attitude and behavior to integrative-expressive activities—-to laughing, playing, release of inhibited emotions, the expression of affection for each other, a warmth and a symbolization of common membership through supportive accepting behavior. 190

The more expressive role in the family system is taken by the mother. Lynn states that the "expressive role involves keeping intact the internal affairs of the family by coping with its stresses and strains." 191 In keeping with Parsons' theory, a study done by Kagan in 1956 with boys and girls resulted in perceptions of the father as more instrumentally nurturant and the mother as more affectionally nurturant. 192 Kagan suggests that these children were influenced, at least in part, by the cultural attitude that fathers ought to be less affectionate and more dominant than

189 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 21.

190 Parsons and Bales, Family, p. 311.

191 Lynn, The Father, p. 104.

mothers. Perhaps the fathers were also influenced by this attitude.

The allocation of the instrumental leadership to the husband-father rests on two aspects of this role. The role involves, firstly, a manipulation of the external environment and, secondly, a good deal of physical mobility. According to Parsons, the father not only brings the society into the family, but also the family into society. 193

Lynn supports Parsons' theory by writing that fathers are able to execute their instrumental functions because they are traditionally less tied to child care than mothers, work more often outside the home, are more involved in community affairs, and are more concerned with politics. 194 In their daily affairs, they are usually more mobile than their wives and must deal with more people. Hence, they are in a strategic position to bring the concerns of the society into the family. Lynn adds:

In most families, for example, father has the primary voice if not the final word on any major expenditure or major change: a new car or house, a move to a new location, a decision to save money or spend the savings, and so on. Thus, the father demonstrates to the family the art of planning, the disciplined pursuit of goals, and the delaying of immediate gratification in favour of

193 Parsons and Bales, Family, p. 314.
194 Lynn, The Father, p. 104.
ultimately more satisfying goals. 195

Fathers are conditioned to the idea that they are mainly responsible for the instrumental role, namely, providing a living for the family. In fact, Canadian laws perpetuate this idea by insisting that the father continue the financial support of the family even after the separation of the parents. It is interesting to note that the mother, the expressive parent, is under no such obligation to support the family after the marital union is broken.

Leonard Benson states that the father

... is more likely than mother to convey a kind of authoritative concern for his children due to his size, strength, the depth of his voice, assuring a kind of protectiveness, which is a bit different from that guaranteed by the presence of the mother. 196

Lynn agrees that it is not easy for a woman, whose voice is not as strong and deep as a man's, who is not as large, and who cannot physically subdue a large boy, to present the same image of power that the father presents. 197

In summary, the father is the primary family executive, expected to supply authority, discipline, and neutral, objective sound judgement. Like executives in other institutions, he must be able to absorb the hostility generated

195 Ibid.
196 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 67.
197 Lynn, The Father, p. 217.
by the conduct of his role. If the mother is taking the expressive, integrative, supportive role and not the instrumental one, the father must execute the crucial instrumental operations to enable the family to function well in society and to launch the children as effective, independent adults.

The Father's Role—Psychoanalytic Theory

Most of Freud's theory pertaining to the role of the father centres around the resolution of the Oedipus conflict. Since the Oedipal period for the child usually begins at age three and lasts for approximately two years, we are dealing with a limited time period in examining the role of the father. Regardless, the father's role during this developmental phase of the child's life is an important one.

According to Theodore Lidz, the conflict arises during the oedipal phase, when

... the little child develops an intense sexualized love for the parent of the opposite sex and that love arouses jealousy, guilt and anxiety which leads the child to repress the feelings into the unconscious. 198

In the Freudian view, girls develop some hostility towards their mother, but also fear retaliation in the form of withdrawal of the mother's love. 199 Lynn supports this view and


adds that "the girl turns to her father, wishing to supplant her mother in his affections but begins to fear losing her mother's love." 200 This fear then provides the motivation to "accept her identification with her mother and strive to become a woman who can gain a man like her father." 201

Boys gradually transfer identification from mother to father, largely due to fear of castration and fear of the aggressive male who controls and therefore often frustrates the child. "Identification with the father," Lynn explains, "means that the father becomes his model and the boy strives to be like him." 202

Benson states that the Freudian formulation of Oedipal conflict resolution is discordant with most recent theories stressing warmth and affection as the qualities most likely to promote identification between parent and child. 203

In summary, according to Freud's view, the child requires two parents for proper psychosexual development--a parent of the same sex, with whom to identify and who provides a model to follow into adulthood; and a parent of the opposite sex, who becomes a cardinal love object and whose

201 Lidz, The Person, p. 226.
202 Lynn, The Father, p. 100.
203 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 175.
love and approval is sought through identification with the parent of the same sex.

The Father's Role—Social Learning Theory

Lynn writes that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a social learning theory of the father, although some aspects of the father's influence in the child's development have been formulated in the language of learning theory. Several investigators, such as Mowrer, Sears, and Lynn, have focused on the way the child identifies with his father and on the influence of the father on the child's acquisition of masculine or feminine characteristics.

Freud has stated that the child, in his development, tends to identify with the parent whom he fears most. Mowrer distinguished two kinds of identification, "developmental" and "defensive." Developmental identification is powered

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mainly by biologically given drives, "such as the fear of loss of love in the analytic sense," and defensive identification is powered by "socially inflicted discomforts, such as fear of punishment." Thus, Mowrer has added another dimension to generalize Freud's principle, restricted to fear of castration, to include defensive identification, resulting from fear of punishment. Benson does not feel that fear of retaliation or negative admonishments produce effective identification. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin support Benson's contention:

The threat of punishment is an ineffective means of discouraging unwanted behaviour in the long run precisely because the child often fails to identify with the punitive parent.

Lynn has made some theoretical formulations about sex-role identification and parental identification and he postulates that males tend to identify with the cultural stereotype of masculinity, whereas girls tend to identify with their mother's role specifically. He further explains that, because the father is typically at work all day and, even when he is at home, he does not usually participate in as many intimate activities with the child as the mother

209 Benson, Fatherhood, p. 170.
does, the father does not represent an available model for the boy at all times. Thus, the boy has to rely on his peers, teachers, and mother to help him define the masculine role. In social learning framework, these people in the boy's life help spell out the masculine role for him by selectively reinforcing and rewarding masculine behaviour and punishing feminine behaviour.

Identification and imitation are powerful means of sustained self-control on behalf of social goals and values. As a result of the child's identification with his father, his proper development and appropriate sex style are promoted.

The Changing Role of the Father

John Mogey probably was correct when he said that it is almost impossible to understand the emerging nature of fatherhood without placing it in the social and historical context of declining family functions. He noted that, in the early stages of the factory system, the father had to work away from home for long hours and returned to his family tired and unable to exercise firm control. He contends, however, that the father currently is being re integrated within the family; he earns more than his forebears

211 Lynn, The Father, p. 108.
and works shorter hours.\textsuperscript{212} Tasch, in a study on the role of the father in the family, adds:

Changes in the economic pattern, such as the five-day working week, have already reduced the father's necessary absence from home, so that he can spend more time with his children.\textsuperscript{213}

Lynn, however, states that father detachment due to work demands is one of the factors undermining the father's role and eroding his position in the family. He supports his view by contrasting two groups of workers, "executive-professional men" and "working men," in order to differentiate the degree of father absence in each group. One of his research findings is that work hours have been increasing for the executive-professional man and the working man's hours have been decreasing. In addition, though, he states that working men are much less likely than professional-executive fathers to see child rearing as part of their parental duties.\textsuperscript{214}

The mother is still considered the primary parent, at least during the child's first few years. Bowlby has


\textsuperscript{213} Tasch, "Role of the Father," p. 320.

\textsuperscript{214} Lynn, \textit{The Father}, p. 7.
left no doubt as to his views on the place of the father, at least during the infancy of the child. The father is to him, "of no direct importance to the young child, but is of indirect value as an economic support of the mother."  

Bar-
temeier, like Bowlby, sees one role of the father in the family as an emotional support of the mother and points out that the father-mother relationship is one that often has profound effects on the mother-child relationship.

Westley and Epstein support this belief that the father's most important contribution can be made by promoting the woman's emotional security and stability; she will then be a more effective mother and this leads to a higher level of emotional health in the children.

Oversimplifying a little, one might have said not so long ago that, in addition to loving his wife, the father was expected to be the breadwinner, the disciplinarian, and the dominant voice in all important decisions which affected the family. Now he shares all these roles with his wife, but


with no clear picture of how much sharing should be accomplished. Parental roles in our society are also loosely prescribed. In her study, Tasch points out that the greater freedom which modern parents have exercised in defining their roles has brought about changes in functions which have been largely unexamined. This is particularly true concerning the father's function.

Tasch's study is a valuable one, being one of the few that have investigated the father directly. Her article contains data on many aspects of the parental role, but one of her most interesting conclusions is taken from the reports of the fathers themselves. They did not see themselves as "vestigial," nor as merely secondary to the mother. They saw themselves instead as active participants in routine daily care, and they also saw child rearing as an integral part of their role as father; they did not see support as their only or major function. Tasch also found that companionship with the children was highly valued by fathers and, where this companionship was good, it was one of the major satisfactions.

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219 Tasch, "Role of the Father," p. 320.
220 Ibid., pp. 319-61.
In summary, Duvall states that "fathers are assuming more intimate roles in nurturing their children." 221 She offers no proof, however, that this is in fact the case. Schlesinger comments on the changing role of the father:

Because of the cultural changes, because of the urban industrial civilization that we now have, and because of the shift in the female role, the Canadian male seems to be more domesticated than in any previous period of our history. 222

Tasch's study is one of the few studies that provides evidence that the father is becoming more involved in meeting the expressive needs of his family. His involvement in child rearing is increasing. On the whole, fathers seem relatively content with their new role. More research is essential, however, before any further opinions about the father's changing role in the family can be substantiated.

Summary

Five areas related to the fatherled family were reviewed. Family disorganization was examined in terms of the effects of divorce and death on the family. The psychological and sociological factors related to the increased rate of divorce were discussed, as well as the psychological and


222 Schlesinger, Families, p. 41.
role adjustments necessitated by divorce. The effects of death on the family were examined with specific reference to the mother-deceased family.

Four aspects of the one-parent family were reviewed, these being the structural-interactional aspect, the psychological-emotional aspect, the problem and service aspect, and the aspect related to broader social issues. The researchers continued by examining the literature which dealt specifically with the motherless or fatherled single-parent family.

Maternal deprivation was discussed, beginning with a review of the initial work of John Bowlby in this area and continuing with an examination of the subsequent theories which developed regarding mother-child separation.

Finally, the review outlined the limited research on the role of the father. The historical development of the father's role was briefly reviewed, followed by a comparison of the major psychological and sociological theories on the father's role. The review concluded with comments on the changing role of the father.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the study was exploratory or formulative in nature, based on the lack of research in the field and the sampling limitations which existed. Although the testing of specific hypotheses was not procedurally possible, the following research questions were formulated for examination:

1. How many motherless families exist in the Windsor area and what are the characteristics of these families?
2. What problems do these families experience as a result of the mother's absence?
3. How do these families attempt to cope with their problems?
4. What community resources do fathered families use?
5. Do existing social service agencies meet the needs of these families, as perceived by the families?
6. What role changes and role adjustments occur in motherless families?
7. What are the psychosocial effects of the mother's ab-
sence on family members?

8. What continuing relationship, if any, does the mother have with the family and what effect does this relationship have on the family?

A number of these questions (2, 3, 6, 7, 8) related to the primary focus of the study—the psychosocial experience of the members of motherless families. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 dealt with the aspects of the needs of and service delivery to motherless families.

From the research questions, decisions had to be made as to which items or variables needed to be measured in order to obtain answers to the research questions. The researchers considered the research questions and developed variables which appeared relevant to each. In addition, certain additional questions were formulated which the researchers felt were important and which were to be included in the research instrument. From these questions other variables were extracted. The variables selected then were classified as either independent or dependent, as follows:

I. Independent Variables

A. Related to the Father

1. Age

2. Education

3. Marital status—cause of motherlessness
4. Religion
5. National-cultural background
6. Employment--status and occupation
7. Income--amount and sources

B. Related to the Children
8. Number of children
9. Ages of children
10. Sex of children
11. Residency of children

C. Other
12. Presence of other household members
13. Length of single parenthood
14. Nature of mother's absence
15. Nature of father's obtaining custody
16. Mother's present interaction with family
17. Children's understanding of mother's absence
18. Father's relationship with children (before and after mother's absence)
19. Father's use of personal and community resources
20. Family situation prior to mother's absence: marital relationship, parent-child relationships, and task assignment
21. Availability of substitute female model
II. Dependent Variables

A. Related to the Father

1. Initial emotional effect of mother's absence on father

2. Initial effect on father's behaviour and social interactions

3. Long-term emotional effect on father

4. Other long-term effects on father

5. Self-concept of father as a parent

6. Role conflict of mother-father role

7. Reaction of others to single father

8. Father's interaction with children

9. Father's interpersonal relationships

10. Father's sexual functioning

B. Related to the Children

11. Initial emotional effect on children

12. Initial effect on children's behaviour and social interactions

13. Long-term emotional effect on children

14. Other long-term effects on children

15. Children's interaction with father

C. Related to the Family Functioning

16. Initial problems as a single father

17. Intermediate and long-term problems as a single
father

18. Father's use of personal and community resources
19. Family's task assignment

Although the purpose of the research project was not to test specific relationships between independent and dependent variables, as would be the case in a more experimental study, the delineation of variables as either dependent or independent was intended to clarify what in fact was being measured and how each variable was viewed by the researchers on a cause-effect continuum. Furthermore, Tripodi, Fellin, and Meyer have specified that an exploratory type of study, although not strictly experimental in nature, must attempt to conceptualize the interrelations among the phenomena observed.¹ The consideration of independent and dependent variables provided a framework in which the data analysis could take place in a manner leading to the inference of relationships among the variables measured.

The number of variables to be examined was large due to the number of research questions being asked and the exploratory nature of the study. Although each variable was considered important, the intensity to which each was mea-

sured varied according to the researchers' priorities, the
type of instrument being used to measure the variable, and
the respondents' ability to report on each variable.

Operational Definitions

Contained in the research questions and variables
were certain terms which were thought to need elaboration
and clarification in order to be understood within the con-
text of the study:

Motherless family was defined as a family system con-
sisting of the father and at least one child who was
eighteen years of age or younger living in the same
residence. The mother could be absent from the family
due to either death, separation, divorce or non-marriage,
and was to have been absent from the family for at least
six months.

Psychosocial effects were defined as the influence of
the mother's absence on the individual psychological
dynamics of the family members and on the interaction
of the family members with each other and with their
external social environment. In terms of psychological

2This definition is based on the psychosocial ap-
proach to social work as discussed by Florence Hollis, "Social
Casework: The Psychosocial Approach," Encyclopedia of Social
dynamics, the researchers were particularly interested in feelings, coping abilities, attitudes, and self-image. In terms of social interactions, the researchers were particularly interested in changes in relationships, the nature of relationships, with whom interaction occurred, and the attitudes of others toward the members of the motherless families.

Role was defined as the pattern of expected behaviours to be carried out by an individual who occupies a particular social position. The two roles which were of particular importance in the fatherless family were the roles of "single father" and "motherless child."

Problems were defined as those situations, experiences, needs, feelings, and behaviours which were associated with the mother's absence and which the family thought had presented difficulties. These situations, etc. could be experienced by individuals, by the family system as a whole, or could be a result of the family's interaction with the community.

Community resources were defined as those individuals, agencies, programs, and organizations which provide a

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3 This definition is based on the role concept presented by Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1954), p. 337.
service to the Windsor community. The specific resources identified by the researchers are listed in Question H-3 of the interview schedule (Appendix A).

Personal resources were defined as those individual assets, qualities, skills, capabilities, and strengths possessed by the father which were used in coping with the experiences surrounding the mother's absence from the family.

Self-concept was defined as the manner in which the father viewed himself in his role as a single father. The father's view of self was measured in terms of how the father felt about being in the role, how successful the father thought he was in fulfilling the role, and how the father thought others viewed him in his role.

Task assignment was defined as the manner in which the various functions related to the maintenance of the household and the interaction of the family members were distributed among the family members. The specific tasks identified by the researchers are listed in Question H-10 of the interview schedule (Appendix A).

Population

In terms of the researchers' definition of a mother-
less family, the population consisted of all motherless families living in the Windsor area with at least one child eighteen years of age or younger. The exact number of families in the population as of 1976 was unknown for two reasons: firstly, the most recent census figures for Windsor were for 1971, and secondly, the census classification of motherless families which most closely corresponded to that of the researchers was for families with all children under eighteen years of age. Families with children eighteen years old were excluded from the classification.

The census figures indicated that there were in Windsor 450 fathered families with children under eighteen years of age in 1971.\(^4\) Based on calculations designed to include those families with children eighteen years of age,\(^5\) and using 10% as the rate of increase of fathered families between 1971 and 1976,\(^6\) the researchers speculated that there


\(^5\) In 1971, there were 130 fathered families with all children of ages 18-24 living in Windsor. Based on the fact that this classification includes seven age categories, it was speculated that there were 130/7 or approximately nineteen fathered families which had children eighteen years of age in Windsor in 1971.

\(^6\) Census figures issued every five years from 1951-1971 indicated no consistent percentage increases for either single-parent, mothered or fathered families. The census
were approximately 516 fathered families in Windsor as of 1976.

Sample

As outlined earlier, the sample for the study was obtained through contacts with local social service agencies and the use of news media. The resulting sample consisted of twenty-three volunteer participant fathers.

The size of the sample was small in relation to the population; however, a number of factors contributed to this situation. First of all, the researchers depended considerably upon third parties to make contacts with potential participants, as there existed no central source which was aware of the fathered families in Windsor. Even though the researchers received much cooperation from the agencies and media, the method of contacting respondents had its shortcomings; it could not be known how many potential respondents missed the media items and the researchers had to rely on the interpretation of the project used by those who approached

figures which did remain fairly constant were related to percentage increases for all families in Canada, an increase of about 10% for each five year period between 1951 and 1971. As no other basis for comparison seemed available or appropriate, 10% was used to calculate the percentage increase for Windsor's fathered families between 1971 and 1976. It should be noted that these calculations are highly speculative and their accuracy cannot be assured.
potential participants. The indirect method of obtaining the sample, coupled with the fact that the researchers were dependent upon volunteer participants, tended to keep the sample size from becoming larger.

The researchers had decided that the sample should consist of approximately thirty respondents due to the time which would be involved in interviewing each participant. Thirty was seen to be a realistic number of respondents in view of the exploratory nature of the study and the time limitations under which the researchers were operating. Although the sample ultimately consisted of twenty-three participants, it should be noted that the researchers were in fact quite pleased that they were able to obtain this size of a sample, in that a similar study in Toronto had included seventy-two respondents taken from a much larger population and there initially had existed some doubt as to whether even twenty participants could be obtained in the Windsor area.

The method by which the sample was obtained meant that the sample was nonrandom and nonprobability in nature, and could most accurately be termed an accidental sample. 

7 Selltiz et al., Research Methods, p. 515.
The researchers had considered the use of quote sampling to ensure the inclusion of the four types of fatherless families, but the limited number of potential participants precluded the possibility of selecting certain numbers to be included in the different categories of motherless families. Since the representativeness of the sample could not be determined, the sample was not assumed to be representative of the population. An examination of the census figures indicated that the sample was biased and did not include proportionately the four categories of single fathers. However, since the study was exploratory, the bias of the sample and the unknown representativeness were accepted as limitations about which little could be done given the researchers' time restrictions.

Method of Data Collection

After considering the type of research to be undertaken (exploratory) and the nature of the phenomenon to be studied (motherless families), the researchers decided upon an interview format as the means of data collection. Selltiz has written:

The interview is the more appropriate technique for revealing information about complex, emotionally laden subjects or for probing the sentiments that may underlie an expressed opinion. 8

8Ibid., p. 242.
In that the researchers hoped to study specifically the psychosocial aspect of motherless families, the interview was seen as the most effective tool for gathering information. Furthermore, the interview would produce a higher percentage of responses, would allow the researchers to probe for more complete and in-depth data, would promote a rapport with the respondent, and would facilitate effective communication with the respondent so that the accuracy of the information could be increased.

Initially, the focused interview, as developed by Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, was selected as the appropriate type of interview for the purposes of the study. However, further examination of this interview style suggested that certain difficulties might be encountered in coding and analyzing the data. In that the focused interview incorporates a large degree of flexibility in terms of what kind of and how information was collected, it was foreseen that considerable time would need to be spent in data analysis—time which was not available to the researchers. The fact that two interviewers would be involved increased the possibility that the information gathered might not be consistent from one respondent to the next; thus the reliability and validity

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of the data might be reduced.

In view of these potential difficulties, the researchers developed a standardized interview schedule which can be found in Appendix A. The schedule provided a formal structure for the interviews and promoted consistent data collection. The researchers, however, did not want to sacrifice the "spirit" of the focused interview, and therefore, it was understood that the interviewers would have the freedom to probe and ask further questions within the framework of the interview schedule. This approach appeared to work well, in that data collection remained consistent, yet the depth of the information was increased by the use of follow-up questions if deemed necessary during the interview.

The researchers attempted to achieve a balance between data collection consistency and data collection depth by also using a combination of fixed-alternative and open-ended questions. An early draft of the schedule had extensively used fixed-alternative questions, but showed that this approach was superficial and missed the feeling level of experiences. As a result of these initial observations, the researchers decided to utilize open-ended questions primarily and accept the inherent limitations involved in relation to reliability and data analysis. The researchers
opted for the flexibility, depth, clarification, and probing offered by the use of open-ended questions.\textsuperscript{10}

Based upon the research questions and the variables which had been selected, the interview schedule was divided into eight sections:

1. Personal information
2. Family system
3. Major problems and services
4. Personal experience of the father
5. Father's relationship with the children
6. Mother's relationship with the family
7. Interpersonal relationships
8. Conclusion

Although the majority of questions were developed by the researchers, some questions were based on or replications of questions used in previous studies of motherless families.\textsuperscript{11}

The researchers pretested the interview schedule with three potential participants in order to examine the effectiveness of the instrument. One of the pretest interviews was tape-recorded, and parts of the recording were re-


\textsuperscript{11} The researchers had obtained copies of the questionnaires used by George and Wilding in England, and by Todres in Toronto.
viewed by the two interviewers. It was hoped that a comparison of interviewing styles and techniques would result in greater interviewer reliability during the study. In addition, the researchers discussed the wording, order, and clarity of the questions, as well as how the respondents had reacted to the questions and the interview in general. The pretest led to minor changes in the schedule, such as the rewording or exclusion of some questions and reorganization of the question order. By and large, the researchers considered the interview schedule to be effective in terms of the study's goals; the final interview schedule can be found in Appendix A.

The interviews were completed over a period of approximately four weeks, and were held at the convenience of each of the respondents. One of the interviewers conducted the majority of the interviews (19) while the other researcher conducted the remainder (4). Most of the interviews took place at the homes of the respondents and ranged in length from two hours to four hours, with the majority of interviews lasting approximately 2½ hours.

The interview schedule consisted of two parts, the schedule itself and a supplementary questionnaire. The schedule was a series of questions read aloud by the interviewer; the responses were recorded on the schedule by the
interviewer. The questionnaire was made up of those questions which the interviewers wanted the respondent to complete on his own; these questions, by and large, consisted of scales. The respondent was given the questionnaire at the beginning of the interview and, at times throughout the interview, was referred to the questionnaire and asked to complete the appropriate question. It was thought that the respondent could more easily complete these fixed-alternative questions if he had them in front of him, and this method was found to be an effective way of administering these questions.

At the beginning of each interview, the interviewers explained that the information discussed and recorded would remain strictly confidential, and respondents were encouraged to ask questions for clarification throughout the interview.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Since most of the information collected by the researchers was obtained in response to open-ended questions, it was necessary to examine the responses and develop categories into which they could be placed. The categories, once developed, were coded along with the responses to the fixed-alternative questions, and the responses for each participant in the study were punched onto computer cards. A computer program using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was run to indicate the frequencies of the
coded responses.

The frequencies of responses were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the eight research questions. Possible variable relationships were calculated by hand by the researchers in four-cell tables. The data was considered to be nominal in nature; as a result, the researchers used lambda as the test of association between variables.

In that the sample was nonrandom and small in size, the use of the applicable test of significance, chi-square, was deemed unnecessary since the test results would be unreliable.

Limitations of the Design

There were, in the research design, a number of limitations which needed to be recognized.

In terms of the sample, there existed definite biases which limited the external validity, or generalizability, of the study findings. Campbell and Stanley have written that sample selection biases jeopardize generalizability.\(^1\)\(^2\) In that the sample for the study consisted of volunteers and as such constituted a nonrandom, accidental sample, the sample could not be taken as representative of the population.

of motherless families in the Windsor area. However, this fact, in and of itself, did not present a major limitation, in that the exploratory design did not demand strict sampling techniques. The methods used to obtain the sample also introduced biases; the respondents tended to be those who listened to a particular radio program, read a particular newspaper, or had contact with a particular agency. The use of volunteers may have biased the sample also by obtaining respondents who, for instance, either felt satisfied with their situation and were willing to discuss it, or felt the need for assistance and wanted to talk to a resource person. The sample also was biased in that the distribution of respondents according to the types of motherless families was skewed from the distribution indicated in census data. In general, the sample biases dictated that the project findings could not be generalized reliably beyond the sample.

A second limitation was the small size of the sample. The sample size was determined to a large degree by the means which were available for contacting respondents, and the time limitations which existed for the researchers. However, the size of the sample did limit to some extent the validity of the findings.

The degree of reliability of the data collection instrument was considered a further limitation. Use of the
interview technique introduced the possibility of what Isaac and Michael have termed "memory errors and contamination because of intervening events and biasing factors which increase with time";\(^{13}\) objectivity was minimized by the use of the interview. Furthermore, since the interview schedule was not rigidly structured, the potential existed that certain questions or areas might be covered in varying degrees from one interview to the next. Reliability was further jeopardized by the extensive use of open-ended questions which could be interpreted differently by different respondents, thus reducing the comparability of the responses.

In that more than one interviewer was involved in the collection of the data, there existed a fourth limitation. Despite the efforts taken to maintain interviewer reliability, the two interviewers no doubt introduced their own biases in terms of how areas were probed and how responses were recorded. It was found, for example, that one interviewer generally took longer to complete an interview, a fact which had implications regarding interviewer reliability. In addition, it has been written that sex differences between the interviewer and respondent may affect

responses, \(^{14}\) and since the interviewers for the study were of different sexes, this factor may have been operating in the interviews.

Finally, the difficulty in coding data for analysis was seen as a limitation. The majority of information was gathered through open-ended questions, and as a result, clearly defined categories did not exist into which data could be coded. The researchers developed these categories after the information was collected; this procedure introduced the possibility that categories might not consistently apply for each respondent. In fact, the coding of data proved to be less of a limitation than had originally been expected, in that categories were formulated which covered virtually all of the information which had been gathered during the interviews.

**Summary**

Based on eight research questions and certain other questions to be included in the data collection instrument, the researchers developed a list of independent and dependent variables among which associations could be sought. A number of terms from the research questions and variables were oper-

ationally defined for clarification. From the population of motherless families in Windsor, an accidental sample of twenty-three volunteer respondents was obtained through agencies and the news media. Data was collected by means of a structured interview schedule which was administered in two parts during interviews of approximately 2½ hours. Five limitations of the research design were outlined.
CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis of the data collected was based upon the research questions which had been formulated for the study. The seven areas examined were (1) the description of the sample, (2) the process of becoming a single father, (3) the problems experienced by the fathered family, (4) the methods of coping with the problems, (5) the psychosocial effects of the mother's absence, (6) the role changes experienced by the single father, and (7) the mother's relationship with the family.

Description of the Sample

The sample was composed of twenty-three single fathers whose marital status was divorced, separated, or widowed. Table 4 gives the frequency and percentages of the fathers' marital status, and indicates that the majority of the fathers were either divorced or separated, with ten (43.5%) in each category. In actuality, there were only two widowers who became single fathers as a result of the death of their spouse; one father had become a widower after eight
years of marital separation, during which he had been raising his children alone. It is clear that, for the sample studied, motherlessness was the result of marital breakdown rather than the mother's death—a situation which corresponds to the trend evidenced in Canada by census data.

The ages of the fathers ranged from 25 to 57, the average age of the fathers being 36.6.

Table 5 shows that the largest age bracket was

### TABLE 5

**AGE OF THE FATHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 - 28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 - 34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29 - 34 years of age, with eight fathers (34.8%) in this group. Over one-half of the sample, thirteen fathers (56.6%), were in the age range of 29 - 39. There was only one father (4.3%) over the age of 50.

The education of the fathers ranged from grade three to the post-graduate level. Table 6 indicates the frequency and percentages of the fathers' education. Of those fourteen fathers (60.9%) who did not complete high school, the grades completed ranged from three to eleven, with the main representation from grades nine, ten and eleven. Four fathers (17.4%) had a university education. The educational achievement of the sample was found to be slightly higher than that of the general population of Windsor.

**TABLE 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete high school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eleven fathers (47.8%) were of the Protestant faith, while nine fathers (39.1%) were Roman Catholic. One father (4.4%) reported being of the Jewish faith and two fathers (8.7%) reported that they had no religious affiliation. The distribution of religious affiliation in the sample studied does not differ significantly from the distribution for the city of Windsor.

With regard to employment status, most of the fathers (78.3%) were employed on a full-time basis. Five fathers (21.7%) reported being unemployed, and no father was employed on a part-time basis.

The types of occupations of the fathers are shown in Table 7, with their frequency and percentages. Eight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION OF THE FATHER</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer and unskilled</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fathers (34.8%) occupied positions at the managerial, professional, and technical levels. An equal number of fathers reported their occupations as labourers or in an unskilled trade. There seems to be no overt relationship between type of occupation and single fatherhood, as there was not a significant number of fathers in any particular occupational field.

Table 8 indicates the amount and source of the father's income. Income ranged from $3,000 to $32,000, with the average income being $13,130. In that the average income for males in Windsor is estimated to be $10,918,\(^1\) the fathers in the sample appear to be in a better economic situation than the general population. This factor may contribute to the ability of the father to assume the care of the children on his own.

All of the fathers in the sample reported being in receipt of family allowance, and no difficulty was expressed by the fathers in obtaining this benefit. Of those five fathers who were unemployed, three (13.9%) were in receipt

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\(^1\) The average male income for Windsor in 1971 ($7,804 as per 1971 Census, Catalogue 94-762, Income of Individuals, Table 8) was increased by 39.9%, the percentage increase shown for average weekly incomes in Windsor between December, 1971, and December, 1975 (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 72-002, Employment, Earnings and Hours, January, 1973, and January, 1976, Table 4).
TABLE 8

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 0 - 5,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 6 - 10,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 11 - 15,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 16 - 20,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $20,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family allowance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment insurance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of social assistance, one father (4.4%) was on unemployment insurance, and one father was receiving financial assistance in the form of a student loan. Two of the fathers on social assistance were receiving Family Benefits, while the other father was in receipt of municipal welfare, not being eli-
eligible for the provincial assistance. These sources of income account for the number of fathers in the lower income brackets.

The average length of time the fathers had been caring for their children on their own was three years and two months; the length of time as a single father ranged from six months to ten years and six months.

The lengths of single parenthood are indicated in Table 9. Thirteen fathers (56.6%) have been single parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 1 year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 6 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from one to three years and five fathers (21.7%) from four to six years. All but three fathers (13.0%) have cared for their children alone for over one year. In that the average length of time as a single father was three years and two months, these families apparently have been able to cope
rather successfully with the problems they have encountered. The fact that these families have functioned for a considerable period of time tends to support the researchers' initial belief that a sample of successful single-parent families might be obtained.

The total number of children in the sample was forty-eight; the average number of children residing with each father was 2.1.

The age and sex of the children are indicated in Table 10. The children ranged in age from two to twenty-one years. There were more female than male children in the homes, twenty-seven girls (56.3%) and twenty-one boys (43.9%). The average age of the female children in the homes was 10.3, while the average age of the male children was 10.1. The majority of the children of both sexes (79.2%) were between the ages of six and fifteen; 81% of the males and 78% of the females were found in this category. There was no significant difference in age distribution between the male and female children.

There were three preschoolers (6.3%) found in two families in the sample. These two families, in which the fathers were fully employed, suggest a need for day care assistance. By subtracting the average age of the children from the average length of time as a single father, the
researchers calculated that the average age of the children when initially left solely in their fathers' care was 6.9 years.

Table 11 illustrates the ages and sex of the children.

### TABLE 10

**AGE AND SEX OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and over</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 11

**AGE AND SEX OF CHILDREN AWAY FROM HOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and over</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

away from home. Nine of the families (39.1%) had one or
more children away from home. The total number of children was fifteen; five (33.4%) were males, ten (46.6%) were females. The ages of the children ranged from three to twenty-two; the average age of the children away from home was 17.2 years, excluding the one three-year-old in the group. Six of the fifteen children away from home resided with their mother. Four of these six children were females who previously lived with their father, but chose to return to mother as they grew older. This may indicate that the girls felt more comfortable with the female parent during their teenage years. It is interesting to note that, for the most part, the dependent children were seldom split up in any of the families through joint custody, and those away from home were old enough to either be married or living on their own. A comparison of Tables 10 and 11 suggests that, in terms of the care and custody of the children, the residency of the children does not appear to be determined by age or sex, and the father in most cases assumes care of all the children in the family.

Process of Becoming a Single Father

The researchers were interested in looking at how the respondents had become single fathers and what the implications were for the motherless families. The fathers were asked to describe the circumstances surrounding the
breakdown of the family unit; their responses are presented in Table 12. In nine families (39.1%), the mother had left

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother left without children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother left with children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother died</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father left without children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the home without taking the children, while eight mothers (34.8%) had taken the children when they left. In two cases, the mother's death had caused the family dissolution. In only four cases (17.4%) had the father been the parent who left the household, and none of these fathers had taken the children at the time of departure.

Table 12 shows that in 73.9% of the families, the mother had left the home either with or without the children. This figure corresponds to the recent trend for wives more frequently to take the initiative in precipitating marital separation; interestingly, the largest category in Table 12 deals with mothers who had deserted their families. Nearly
one-half of the fathers (47.8%), therefore, had found themselves left as the sole parent quite suddenly and unexpectedly due to either desertion or death, as a number of fathers reported that their wife's departure from the family was unforeseen.

Table 13 further clarifies how the fathers acquired the care of the children. Of the fathers who had not assumed care of the children immediately after their wife's absence, four (17.5%) had the children returned to them by the mother, while in two cases the children themselves decided to live with the father. In three cases (13.0%), the children were returned to the father by a custody order, and three other fathers had actively taken the children away from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manner</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remained with father</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned by mother</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided to return</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned by custody order</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken from mother by father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the mother.

Table 13 further supports the point that mothers may feel freer to abdicate their active mothering role, in that 60.9% of the mothers were prepared to have the children in the care of the father. The table also indicates two groups of single fathers: those who immediately assumed care of the children and those who assumed care of the children at some later point in time. It can be suggested that the latter group may be able to prepare more adequately, both psychologically and practically, for the role as single parent and may experience fewer adjustment difficulties in the initial period after assuming care of the children. Both the children and fathers in families which suddenly become motherless may undergo a different set of emotional and structural experiences—a hypothesis which merits further examination.

The fact that 13.0% of the fathers were able to obtain legal custody of their children suggests that in Windsor courts there exists an attitude which recognizes the possibility and feasibility of fathers taking care of their children alone. It should be noted further that these fathers obtained custody in the pre-divorce stage, i.e. custody was granted to them as part of a separation agreement. In view of the recent recommendations of the Ontario
Law Reform Commission which endorse a more egalitarian approach to custody matters, it is possible that the number of single fathers who obtain legal custody of their children may increase significantly in the next decade.

The fathers were classified according to the categories developed by Helen Mendes in her doctoral dissertation on single fathers (see page 72 of the literature review). The researchers viewed these classifications as basically an amalgamation of the concepts in Tables 12 and 13. Table 14 indicates that, indeed, the fathers were most frequently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seekers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conciliatory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assenters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conciliatory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

left with the children unexpectedly, since there were nine aggressive assenters (39.1%). Mendes' classifications indicate that the majority of fathers (60.8%) were reactors.
who assented to having the children, while only 39.2% were actors who sought to assume care. It appears that, of the single fathers studied, many acquired their role "by default," in that they found themselves in the role due to the wife's death or her abdication of the mother role. The implication here is that single fatherhood may be a phenomenon which occurs less due to the desire of the father, but more due to the desires of the mother. However, the fact should not be overlooked that nearly 40% of the fathers did seek the care of the children, and nearly one-half of these fathers did so aggressively—a finding which suggests that fathers, to a significant degree, are willing to assume the role of single father.

To further explore the father's motivation for becoming a single father, each father was asked why he had decided to assume care of the children alone rather than make use of some alternative, such as having the children live with a relative. Table 15 shows that the fathers most frequently reported their love for the children as the motivating factor (69.6%). Eight fathers (34.8%) felt that they were capable of raising the children better than their wives, and seven fathers (30.4%) had wanted to keep the family together as a unit. A sense of responsibility (26.1%) and a need to have the children for mutual comfort
TABLE 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love for children</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could raise children better</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep the family together</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt the responsibility</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some fathers gave more than one response.

and gratification (8.7%) were also mentioned by the fathers.

Although the researchers thought that the responses to this question might be somewhat defensive in nature, the number of responses related to the emotional relationship between the father and children was seen as significantly high. The fathers' responses tended to deal more with expressive-emotional factors (love, togetherness, mutual need) than with instrumental-functional factors (responsibility, ability to parent). This fact suggests that the majority of the fathers studied may have seen themselves as having a strong relationship with their children and that the existing relationship may have facilitated the adopting of the single-father role. In addition, the willingness of the fathers to verbalize their feelings for the children may indicate
that they are relatively comfortable in an expressive role and are able to function in this role in the mother's absence. The expressive abilities of the father and his comfort in the expressive role may be a determining factor as to whether he assumes the role of single father.

Problems Experienced by the Families

The researchers had been interested specifically in the types of problems experienced by fathered families. The fathers were asked what difficulties they had experienced in the period immediately after the mother's absence, what present problems they had, and what had been the biggest continuing problems. As presented in Table 16, the responses were categorized for comparison according to the problem list presented to the fathers in Question H-1 of the questionnaire, with the addition of a category for "family relationship problems."

It was found that the fathers experienced considerably more problems in the initial period of motherlessness than at the time of the interview, i.e. an average of 2.4 initial problems per father as compared to an average of 1.5 problems at the time of the interview. The most frequently reported problem was the care of the children, experienced by thirteen fathers (56.5%). Emotional problems, such as
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th></th>
<th>Continuing</th>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional problems</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationship problems</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job problems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for social life</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child discipline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval of friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problems</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(8.7)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(21.7)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(13.0)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Brackets indicate that the number is not included in the TOTAL.*
depression, loneliness, shock, stress, and guilt-feelings, were reported by ten fathers (43.5%), as was lack of time for children. Housekeeping was a significant problem for 34.8% of the fathers. An examination of the initial problems suggests that much of the difficulty for the single father (child care, lack of time, housekeeping) relates to his new role as the sole parent and mother substitute.

Only two fathers reported that they had experience no initial problems.

As indicated in Table 17, the incidence of initial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE OF THE CHILDREN AND THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD CARE PROBLEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

lambda = .40

child care problems was crosstabulated with the age of the children. Of the thirteen fathers who experienced child care difficulties, ten reported having at least one child under the age of ten. On the other hand, only three of the
ten fathers who reported no child care problems had any children under ten. The table demonstrates a relationship between the age of the children and the incidence of child care problems, with child care difficulties being experienced more frequently by those fathers with younger children. In that child care problems were reported most frequently as an initial difficulty for the single father, Table 17 suggests that the father's initial adjustment to his single parent role is affected, to a considerable degree, by the age of the children.

With regard to the present problems, there was a tendency for the total number of problems to decrease while certain types of problems increased and certain others decreased. Financial problems were reported most frequently by the fathers (30.4%), followed by child care and family relationship problems (21.7%), which included conflict with the spouse and in-laws. It was found that emotional problems, lack of time for the children, and health problems decreased considerably while financial problems, family relationship problems, child discipline, and sexual problems tended to increase. The trend toward a total lessening of problems over time was confirmed by the fact that the number of fathers who were experiencing no difficulties had increased to five (21.7%).
Child care and sexual problems stood out as the most frequent continuing problems for 26.1% of the fathers, followed by financial problems and family relationship problems.

Looking at the pattern of problems for the single fathers, certain trends are apparent. Clearly the initial period of single fatherhood was the most critical for the fathers in terms of the frequency of problems, and in terms of the emotional and functional adjustments which were necessitated by the new role of single father. Child care was reported most consistently as a problem, while financial problems, sexual problems, and family relationship problems were problems which increased in intensity as time passed. An interesting fact was that no fathers reported the disapproval of friends as a problem at any time—a finding which goes contrary to the literature on stigmatization of the single parent.

In order to obtain a measure of the intensity of specific problems as well as the frequency, the fathers were asked to rate a list of possible problems on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that the problem was not serious at all and 5 indicating that the problem was extremely serious (see Question H-1 in Appendix A). Ratings of 3, 4, and 5 indicated that the problem was of some seriousness to the father, and Table 18 presents the problems
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial problems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for children</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for social life</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual problems</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job problems</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval of friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in relation to how many fathers ranked them as serious. The mean score indicates the relative intensity of the problems.

In that Table 16 categorizes responses made in reply to an open-ended question while Table 18 presents responses to a fixed-alternative question which did not rely on recall, Table 18 may be a more valid representation of
the total problems experienced. Financial problems, lack of time, and housekeeping were reported as difficulties by over one-third of the fathers (34.8%), with financial problems ranking somewhat higher in seriousness. Sexual problems were reported by 30.4% of the fathers and emotional problems and job problems by 26.1%.

While Table 16 corresponds closely with Table 18 in terms of the ranking of problems, some discrepancies appear. Lack of time for social life is ranked higher on Table 16, suggesting that time demands are indeed considerable for the single father. Job problems appear to be more serious than Table 16 indicates, while on the other hand, child care was ranked much lower by comparison in Table 18. This difference may relate to a discrepancy between the definitions of child care used by the researchers and by the fathers. Disapproval of friends, however, does remain as the lowest ranked problem for the fathers.

An overview of Tables 16 and 18 indicates that child care, emotional problems, lack of time for the children, and housekeeping are major initial problems of the single father. Difficulties which are of a more continuing nature include financial problems, child care, family relationship problems, housekeeping, and sexual problems.

The early period of single fatherhood was further
explored when the fathers were asked about any initial
cchanges in their job, social life, and personal behaviour.
Eleven fathers (47.8%) reported no change in their job
situation. Five fathers (21.7%), however, reported a de-
crease in job effectiveness and four (17.4%) stated that
they had spent less time at work. Two fathers experienced
changes in their job schedule and one father reported that
he spent more time at work. The fathers' responses indi-
cated that, when a change occurred in the work situation,
it tended to be directly related to the negative influence
of the family situation at the time.

Twenty-one fathers (91.3%) reported that their
social life had decreased during the initial period of
single parenthood. For some fathers, the decrease was
dramatic, with social life being reduced to nothing in
several cases. The decrease in social life often was con-
ected to the increased demands at home; other fathers cut
back their social involvement voluntarily. Two fathers
reported that their social life had altered in nature, with
more home entertaining taking place or more social involve-
ment with particular groups of people. The role of single
father obviously had significant initial effects on the so-
cial interaction of the sample.

Regarding changes in personal behaviour, fifteen
fathers (65.2%) reported a negative change, six (26.1%) reported a positive change, and two fathers had experienced no change. Negative changes included withdrawal, depression, increased drinking, loss of sleep and sense of humour, and a quick temper and moodiness. Positive changes described were more settled behaviour, increased assertiveness, less drinking and smoking, and more social involvement.

The time demands and emotional pressures of the initial period take their toll in terms of the work situation, social life, and behaviour of the single father. It is clear that the adjustments necessitated by the father's new role are not easily made and that support at this point would be valuable to both the single father and his children.

The researchers were also interested in the difficulties experienced by the children in motherless families; therefore, the fathers were asked to rate the seriousness of a number of problems which the children might experience. Table 1 indicates that the fathers perceived emotional problems most frequently in the children (21.7%), followed by disciplining problems (17.4%). The remainder of the problems presented to the fathers were rated as of little or no seriousness for the children.

The fathers noticeably rated the children's problems as being less serious in nature, as indicated by an
TABLE 19

SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS FOR THE CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional problems</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplining problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationship problems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time for social life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug/alcohol problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual/dating problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

average mean rating of 1.89 for the fathers and 1.39 for the children. The researchers speculated that even the relatively high rating of disciplining problems measured more the father's difficulty in disciplining the children, rather than a problem actually experienced by the child.

The lower ratings for the children's problems can be attributed to a number of possible factors. Firstly, the father's experience and perceptions of his own problems is naturally more intense and accurate. Secondly, the father's involvement in his own problematic situation may
have limited his ability to "tune in" to the difficulties felt by the children. A contributing factor also may have been the father's inexperience and unfamiliarity with relating to the children at an intense level in the parent role; the father may not know the child's behaviour patterns very well and, therefore, may not know whether he is observing "normal" or "problem" behaviours. Another factor is that the children internalize their problems or exhibit their feelings and behaviours less overtly and for shorter periods of time, making the observation and interpretation of problems more difficult. Finally, recent literature in the area of family dissolution suggests that children are not affected by family breakdown as frequently or as dramatically as once was believed.

One implication of Table 19, however, is that the single fathers studied may be failing to perceive and subsequently deal with certain difficulties experienced by the children. For example, 50% of the children with the fathers were pre-adolescents or adolescents of ages 11-18. No fathers, however, rated sexual/dating problems or drug/alcohol problems as of any seriousness to their children. While the sample of children may have been well adjusted developmentally, and while parental myopia regarding sexual and drug-related matters may not be limited only to the
fathered family, the fathers' responses do suggest that certain children's problems may be remaining unobserved and unresolved.

A further indication of potential problem areas for the children was obtained by having the fathers outline the initial effects of the mother's absence on the children's behaviour and social relationships. Table 20 shows that the fathers most frequently reported no initial effects in the areas examined. Reported effects tended to be negative, particularly in the areas of behaviour in class, lateness, relationships with classmates, and behaviour at home. Positive effects were most frequent in relationships with siblings and with the father. School marks were seen as having been affected positively and negatively.

In general, the negative effects for the children at school tend to be higher than was indicated in Table 19, while the negative effects on home behaviour compare with the seriousness of discipline and emotional problems reported in Table 19. Table 20 reveals that the fathers saw family relationships as improving, particularly the father-child relationship. This finding corresponds with the fathers' responses when asked how their relationship with the children had changed. Twenty-two fathers (95.7%) felt closer to their children and twenty-two said they spent
TABLE 20

INITIAL EFFECTS OF THE MOTHER'S ABSENCE ON THE CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected Areas</th>
<th>Positive effect</th>
<th>Negative effect</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>TOTAL*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With classmates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With siblings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With father</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals were dependent upon whether a child attended school, had siblings, or was old enough to have made friends.

more time with the children. Initial effects on the children, then, tended to be predominantly non-existent; those effects that did occur tended to be negative at school and on behaviour at home, while positive changes took place
Methods of Coping with the Problems

The researchers were interested in examining the different methods used by the fathers in dealing with the difficulties they encountered. The fathers were asked from whom they sought help during the initial period as a single father. The different sources of help received are identified in Table 21. The fathers' personal resources were the

TABLE 21

INITIAL SOURCES OF HELP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source*</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal resource</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (nuclear)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work associates</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some fathers gave more than one response.
most frequently used source of help, as fifteen fathers (65.2%) chose to deal with their problems on their own or to take the initiative to find appropriate methods of coping. For example, some of the fathers increased their social interaction by attending more parties and social functions, others used the trial and error method, while others discussed their feelings with their children or increased the time spent at work to improve the financial situation. The high use of personal resources indicates a good deal of independence and initiative on the part of the fathers. Such a high use of personal resources also may indicate, however, that there were no other resources available to meet the needs; available resources also may have been unknown to the fathers.

There was a tendency for the fathers to seek help then from those persons closest to them, particularly relatives. Thirteen fathers (56.5%) sought help from their relatives, while seventeen fathers (73.9%) received help from their nuclear family and friends. Six of the fathers (26.1%) found the persons they worked with helpful. The tendency to seek help from relatives, friends, and family is consistent with results of other studies on single fathers.

It is interesting to note the low frequency of the
use of agency resources during the initial adjustment period of the single father. The "other" category of sources of help included doctors, lawyers, common-law partner, neighbours, and housekeepers. Only one father reported not receiving any assistance from any source; therefore, most of the fathers did receive some help.

The fathers were also asked who was most helpful during the initial period. The responses of the fathers corresponded to the rank order of the frequencies of the sources of help. For example, 12 fathers (52.2%) reported that a relative was most helpful, three fathers (13.0%) reported a friend was most helpful, and three fathers (13.0%) reported a neighbour as having offered the most help. Five fathers (21.7%) reported no one was most helpful, indicating that the assistance received was not considered significant. As one-fifth of the fathers reported no external source as being very helpful, this confirms the high level of the use of personal resources.

Table 22 indicates the types of help received by the single fathers. The types of help received appear to correspond with the initial problems expressed by the fathers, indicating that assistance was received to alleviate or lessen some of the difficulties experienced by them in the initial period. For example, emotional problems
TABLE 22

TYPE OF INITIAL HELP RECEIVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Help</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No help received</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

were rated high as an initial problem for the fathers, and the corresponding type of help, moral support and counselling, was received by 30.4% of the fathers.

Table 23 clarifies the relationship between the initial experiencing of emotional problems and the receipt of moral support and counselling. Of the seven fathers who reported receiving moral support and counselling, six were fathers who had experienced emotional difficulties. The table also shows that a majority of the fathers who experienced emotional problems received assistance related
TABLE 23

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE FATHER AND MORAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING RECEIVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moral support, counselling</th>
<th>No moral support, counselling</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional problems</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>10 (43.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No emotional problems</td>
<td>1 (4.4)</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
<td>13 (56.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>7 (30.4)</td>
<td>16 (69.6)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\lambda = .42
\]

To the problem. These findings indicate that, in the area of emotional problems, the initial assistance received directly met the need of the single father, supporting the researchers' observation that initial help, to some extent, appeared to correspond to initial problems.

The use of community resources was also examined. The fathers were asked to indicate whether they had used or were aware of a number of agencies. The responses are shown in Table 24. The average number of community resources used per family was 4.7. Recreational services and the Children's Aid were identified as being used most frequently. Organized leagues, such as hockey and baseball, and use of community arenas and parks were included in re-
TABLE 24

FATHER'S USE AND AWARENESS OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Resources</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Did not know about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Aid</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Court</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Institutions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Manpower</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Organizations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Counselling</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Without Partners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric Services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Social Services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Care</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Sisters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Welfare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Service Bureau</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Housing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Assistance of Windsor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addiction Research Foundation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryvale</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Children's Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Counselling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Group Therapy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholics Anonymous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Court</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
creational services. Fourteen fathers (60.9%) reported being actively involved in the use of recreational services of a supportive nature, reinforcing the quality of family life. Much of the contact with the Children's Aid Society related to the activity of the Official Guardian personnel, who report on the family situation in matters of legal custody. Other contacts were of a supportive nature, where the agency supplied counselling and consultation related to child-rearing practices. All twelve fathers (52.2%) who had some involvement with the Children's Aid Society reported it as positive and supportive in their role as single fathers.

Although financial problems were expressed as a major concern, not one father utilized the budgeting services provided by the Credit Counselling Bureau. Also, a number of fathers had identified the need for an information source for single fathers, yet not one father reported having used Community Information Service and seventeen fathers (73.9%) were unaware that this service existed. This agency was the least known by the fathers, along with the Regional Children's Centre and Windsor Group Therapy.

Only five fathers (21.7%) reported being involved in Parents Without Partners. This low level of involvement may be accounted for by the fact that some of the fathers
remarked that Parents Without Partners did not serve the specific needs of male parents raising children on their own.

With the exception of recreational services, the children's involvement in community resources was minimal. Of the services contacted by the fathers, 72.5% of them provided services of a functional nature, such as job searching, legal aid, financial support, day care, housing, and others, as opposed to services of a therapeutic or treatment-oriented nature. Table 25 shows, however, that of the eight fathers who did use treatment-oriented resources (private counselling, psychiatric services, and Family Service Bureau), six were fathers who had experienced emotional problems. A majority of the fathers who experienced emotional problems made use of community resources which were able to deal with these problems. Tables 23 and 25 indicate that those fathers with initial emotional problems received a significant amount of initial help related to their difficulties, which may account in part for the fact that emotional problems dropped considerably as a present or continuing problem.

Fourteen of the community resources were known by all the fathers, while eleven of them were known by the great majority of the fathers. Only three of the community
TABLE 25

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE FATHER AND USE OF TREATMENT AGENCIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment agency used</th>
<th>No treatment agency used</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional problems</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>10 (43.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No emotional</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
<td>13 (56.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
<td>15 (65.2)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lambda = .33

resources were not well known. These figures indicate that the fathers are aware of the resources available to them, although the resources are not used extensively. The fathers' lack of use of community resources, therefore, may be attributed more to their unwillingness to use them rather than their lack of knowledge of the services available.

The researchers took the position that other persons in the household contributed to the father's adjustment to his single-parent role, thus aiding in the family functioning and problem-solving process. Eight families (34.8%) had other persons living in the household; Table 26 indicates the identity of these other persons. Relatives represent the largest category of other persons in the house-
hold (62.5%). The types of relatives included a nephew, a brother, parents, a sister and brother-in-law, and a mother.

TABLE 26

OTHER PERSONS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no consistent pattern, therefore, or any particular relative residing with the single father. The "other" category included two common-law partners. The one live-in housekeeper was obtained by the father through the social services department. In many cases, the fathers reported receiving considerable assistance from the other adult in the home.

The fathers were asked to reflect on their total experience as a single father and respond to the question "What was most helpful to you?" The variety of answers are categorized in Table 27. The highest category rated was external resources, which included agencies, a babysitter, Parents Without Partners, church, family, and
friends. Eight fathers (34.8%) responded in this category. The most frequently reported external resources were individuals such as friends and family members, while agencies were reported least frequently. Nine of the fathers (39.1%) mentioned that their relationship with their children was most helpful, referring to the love they shared with them. This may be indicative of the amount of emotional need between parent and child in a single-parent family. It is interesting to note that the fathers felt quite comfortable in expressing the love, warmth, and affection they had for their children.
Psychosocial Effects of the Mother's Absence

As part of the examination of the psychosocial effects of the mother's absence on the family members, the fathers were asked to rate how strongly they had experienced certain feelings immediately following the mother's absence. A rating of 1 indicated that the father had not felt the feeling at all; a rating of 5 indicated that the feeling had been extremely strong. Table 28 presents the list of feelings with an indication of how many fathers rated a feeling as being of at least some strength, i.e. a rating of 3, 4 or 5; the mean rating for each feeling is also given. The feelings were categorized according to those which relate most directly to the family breakdown and those which relate most directly to the assumption of the new role of single father.

It can be said that, at the point of the mother's absence, the father must undergo two types of adjustments—adjustment to the loss of the spouse and adjustment to pressures which accompany the role of single parent. Table 28 indicates that the single fathers interviewed initially experienced feelings more often and more intensely in relation to the loss of their spouses. Strong feelings related to the family breakdown were reported. 36.7% more often than feelings related to the role of single parent.
TABLE 28
STRENGTH OF FEELINGS EXPERIENCED BY THE FATHER IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MOTHER'S ABSENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related to family breakdown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resentful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieved</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to single-father role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprepared</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-conscious</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incapable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpless</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeless</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intensity of the former feelings was also higher, with the average mean rating being 2.6 compared to 2.1 for the latter feelings.

These findings indicate that the loss of the spouse
is the most immediate difficulty experienced by the single father following his wife's absence. The depression, loneliness, anger, and rejection which accompany the loss were felt most strongly; interestingly, 52.2% of the fathers experienced a sense of relief, perhaps related to the lessening of marital conflict in the household. Somewhat surprisingly, feelings of guilt were rated low. This low rating may be accounted for in part by the low number of widowed fathers in the sample. Furthermore, it is possible that the high incidence of desertion or abdication by the mother, coupled with social attitudes which still "frown upon" such behaviour, may have led the fathers to put the blame on their wives and thereby minimize their sense of guilt.

Regarding the second group of feelings, the majority of fathers did feel worried (56.5%) and unprepared (52.2%) with eleven fathers (47.8%) feeling discouraged in their role as single parents. On the other hand, feelings related to the father's ability or inability to handle the situation, i.e. incapable, helpless, and hopeless, were rated lowest. The ranking of feelings suggests that, despite some initial worries and questions about how to deal with the situation, the fathers do not tend to feel unable to meet the immediate challenge. A later consideration of
the father's involvement in the family prior to the mother's absence (see Table 49) suggests that these fathers had been active as parents before family dissolution and therefore may have required less adjustment in their new role as single parent. The implication of Table 28 is that single fathers may need more assistance initially in dealing with their feelings related to the marital breakdown, and that intervention related to the parenting role of the single father should focus on concrete ways of preparing the father to meet the new demands and relieving some of the worries which arise for the father in his situation.

The researchers explored the relationship between when the father had assumed care of the children and the intensity of feelings initially experienced by the single father. The time at which the father assumed care was determined from Table 13 and was described as either immediate or later care. The intensity of feelings was determined by totalling the scores given for each feeling in Table 28, and the intensity was described as either high (over 50) or low (50 and under). Table 29 shows that, of the eleven fathers who assumed care of the children immediately, six experienced a high level of feelings. Even more significantly, none of the fathers who assumed care of the children later experienced a high level of feelings.
The lambda score indicates that there is an association between the time at which care of the children was assumed and the intensity of feelings experienced by the father, with more intense feelings accompanying immediate care and less intense feelings accompanying later care.

Although the time of assuming care is associated with the overall intensity of feelings experienced by the father, Tables 30 and 31 suggest that the time at which the father assumed care of the children may be associated more to the feelings which have been described as relating to the new role of single parent. "Worried" and "unprepared" had been reported as the two feelings felt most often and most intensely by the single fathers in their parental role. These feelings are shown in the tables to be associated with the time at which care was assumed, the lambda scores being .43. On the other hand, the crosstabulation between time of care and depression, the most intense feeling related to the family breakdown, indicated only a minimal association (see Appendix E, Table 54). The implication is that the time at which the father assumed care of the children affected the intensity of the feelings experienced by the father, and particularly those feelings related to the role of the single parent. Immediate care appears to be a more emotional experience and to present more adjustment difficulties for the
### TABLE 29

**WHEN FATHER ASSUMED CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND THE INTENSITY OF FATHER'S FEELINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Care</th>
<th>Low feelings</th>
<th>High feelings</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate care</td>
<td>5 (21.7)</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later care</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17 (73.9)</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \lambda = .41 \]

### TABLE 30

**WHEN FATHER ASSUMED CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND FEELING OF PREPARATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Care</th>
<th>Prepared</th>
<th>Unprepared</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate care</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
<td>10 (43.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later care</td>
<td>9 (39.1)</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>13 (56.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \lambda = .43 \]

### TABLE 31

**WHEN FATHER ASSUMED CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND FEELING OF WORRY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Care</th>
<th>Worried</th>
<th>Not worried</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate care</td>
<td>9 (39.1)</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later care</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>13 (56.5)</td>
<td>10 (43.5)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \lambda = .43 \]
father who is attempting to deal with the challenge of his new role.

In response to a subsequent question, 86.9% of the fathers reported that there had been a positive change in their feelings since the initial period of adjustment. Responses indicated that the fathers were no longer resentful and were more optimistic, more confident, happier, less depressed, and less lonely. Only one father reported a negative change, stating that his resentment and depression had increased. Two fathers expressed no change in their feelings. It appears that these fathers, by and large, had been able to resolve their initial negative feelings—a finding which supports the notion that the sample consisted of fathers who function fairly well.

A further indication of the psychological experience of the single father was given in the responses to a question related to the father's concerns about raising the children alone. The fathers had most frequently rated "worried" as a strong feeling they had experienced as a single father; Table 32 shows the nature of these worries.

The two concerns mentioned most frequently clearly indicate the doubts which the fathers have about the success they can have as parents without a female in the family. Indeed, with the exclusion of the concerns regarding
### TABLE 32

**FATHER'S CONCERNS AS A SINGLE PARENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether father can raise children properly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether children will develop properly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether children will get a good education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether father has enough time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether father can love children enough</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether children will get into trouble</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No concerns</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some fathers gave more than one response.*

Education and potential "trouble," all the concerns deal directly with the father's perception of himself as a parent. Only the sixth concern deals with some outside person, and this concern ranks last. It would appear that, as time passes, the father's initial concerns over marital breakdown diminish and are replaced by more intense worries about the continuing problems of being a good parent. The litera-
ture on family breakdown does indicate that single parents may need to compensate for feelings of failure and guilt by attempting to be the best parents possible (see page 48 of the literature review). Such a dynamic appears to be operating in the sample being considered.

The fathers obviously feel their loneliness in their role as single parents; advice and support would be most helpful. Since the proper development of the children is viewed by the fathers as hinging somewhat on the influence of a female model, the fathers need to know how the female role can be filled within the family, either by themselves or by some outside source. In that approximately 80% of the fathers expressed concerns of such a nature, the need is a significant one.

What the fathers missed as parents without their spouses was taken as another factor in the psychological effects of motherlessness. The fathers were presented with a list of six items and asked to rank from 1 to 6 what they missed most since their partner's absence. By weighting each "1" response as 6 and each "6" response as 1, a score for each item was obtained; the highest possible score was 138, the lowest 23. Table 33 shows the item ranking based on the scores and the mean ranking.

The fathers obviously missed the companionship of
TABLE 33

ASPECTS OF THE CO-PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP MISSED MOST BY THE SINGLE FATHER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult communication</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared responsibility</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared tasks</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their spouse the most, followed by sexual activity; these responses correspond closely with the high frequency of loneliness among the fathers and the high rating of sexual problems as a continuing difficulty. Emotional support, adult communication, and shared responsibility were ranked very closely, while shared tasks clearly stood out as being missed the least. Table 33 indicates that the fathers were able to handle the family tasks relatively well, perhaps due to their active involvement in this area prior to the family breakdown and due to the fact that the fathers tended to receive considerable help in task-oriented areas, such as housekeeping. The fathers appeared to miss most
significantly the emotional aspect of the two-parent situation as opposed to the functional aspect, a finding which implies that the emotional needs of the single father are considerable.

This observation regarding emotional need was supported when the researchers asked those eight fathers who had other adults in the household what they appreciated most about having that other person with them. Out of a possible maximum score of 48, the fathers ranked emotional support as most appreciated (36), adult communication (31), and companionship (31). Again, shared tasks ranked considerably lower (21); sexual activity ranked lowest (12) in that the other persons in the home were not, in most cases, possible sex partners. The ranking confirms that the meeting of emotional needs is a major concern for the single father, and suggests that a relatively constant relationship with another adult can contribute considerably to the meeting of these needs.

This observation appears to be supported in Table 34, which shows an association between the presence of another adult in the household and whether the father reported missing companionship. Of the twenty fathers who did miss companionship, fifteen had no other adult living in the household, whereas all of the three fathers who reported
not missing companionship had other persons living with them. The table suggests that the presence of another adult in the household serves a supportive function for the father.

TABLE 34

PRESENCE OF OTHER ADULT IN THE HOUSEHOLD AND COMPANIONSHIP MISSED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Companionship missed</th>
<th>Companionship not missed</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>5 (21.8)</td>
<td>3 (13.0)</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No other adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>15 (65.2)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>15 (65.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>20 (87.0)</td>
<td>3 (13.0)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{lambda} = 0.27\]

The researchers had thought that the father's marital satisfaction prior to his wife's absence might determine to some degree how the father felt after the absence, and specifically what he missed as a single parent. The fathers were asked to indicate their marital satisfaction for the six aspects of the co-parental relationships used in Table 33. Table 35 shows the nature of the responses, with satisfaction ranking highest for sexual activity and dissatisfaction being highest for adult communication and emotional
support. Overall, the fathers gave more responses indicating satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction, with over one-half of the fathers being satisfied with five of the six aspects of the marital relationship. The aspect of emotional support appears to be one about which the fathers had some ambivalence.

TABLE 35

FATHER'S SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual activity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared responsibility</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared tasks</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult communication</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When compared with the fact that 91.3% of the families were motherless as a result of marital breakdown, the higher level of marital satisfaction suggests that the fathers were unaware of or did not understand the problems in their marriages. This suggestion appears to be supported
by the fact that, in many cases, it was the wife who initiated the marital separation as a result of her apparent dissatisfaction in the marriage. If it is assumed that the wife, as the expressive partner, is the one who perceives marital difficulties more accurately, it can be hypothesized that marital dissolution is more unexpected and more difficult for the single father than for the single mother—a hypothesis which merits further study.

A further explanation of the father's previous marital satisfaction may be that the difficulties of single fatherhood have made the prior two-parent situation seem more attractive. In retrospect, the fathers may have felt that some marital interaction was better than none at all.

While a comparison of Tables 33 and 35 does not reveal any overt relationship between marital satisfaction and what the father misses as a single father, there is, with the exception of sexual activity, a suggestion of a slight inverse relationship. Such a relationship would imply that what is missed in the marriage, i.e. that which is unsatisfactory in the marriage, then the father will miss emotional support even more as a single parent. This relationship, however, would require further examination as the hypothesis is at best tentative based on the data from the study.
In fact, the crosstabulation of past marital satisfaction with the father's initial feelings of loneliness and depression suggests that marital satisfaction is directly associated with what the father misses as a single parent. A measure of marital satisfaction was obtained by totalling the satisfaction scores for the six aspects of the marital relationship. A score of 15 and under was considered to indicate low satisfaction; a score over 15 indicated high satisfaction. Tables 36 and 37 indicate that fathers who reported high marital satisfaction tended to experience feelings of loneliness and depression more frequently than fathers with low satisfaction. These findings suggest that the areas of satisfaction in the marriage do tend to be missed by the father following his wife's absence.

To obtain a measure of the social effect of single fatherhood on the father, the respondents were questioned regarding changes in their interpersonal relationships. Table 38 shows the pattern of these changes. The most frequent responses indicated that no change had occurred in interpersonal relationships, particularly with work associates (78.3%). When change did occur, however, it tended to be positive, and positive change occurred approximately twice as often as negative change with relatives and neighbours. With regard to relationships with friends,
### TABLE 36

**PAST MARITAL SATISFACTION AND FEELING OF LONELINESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Satisfaction</th>
<th>Lonely</th>
<th>Not lonely</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High satisfaction</td>
<td>10 (43.6)</td>
<td>3 (13.0)</td>
<td>13 (56.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low satisfaction</td>
<td>5 (21.7)</td>
<td>5 (21.7)</td>
<td>10 (43.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>15 (65.3)</td>
<td>8 (34.7)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \lambda = .11 \]

### TABLE 37

**PAST MARITAL SATISFACTION AND FEELING OF DEPRESSION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Satisfaction</th>
<th>Depressed</th>
<th>Not depressed</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High satisfaction</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>13 (56.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low satisfaction</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>10 (43.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>17 (73.9)</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \lambda = .13 \]

Negative and positive changes tended to occur with similar frequency.

The positive changes reported included greater closeness, more visiting, more respect, and increased helpfulness. Negative changes included criticism from in-laws, less communication, lack of or fewer contacts, disapproval from relatives, and complete termination of relationships.
TABLE 38

CHANGES IN THE FATHER'S INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Positive change</th>
<th>Negative change</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With relatives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With work associates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With neighbours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The question was not applicable for two fathers.

Although there was some indication of stigmatization, the trend was much less prevalent than that toward an improvement in relationships. This finding again corresponds to the low rating as a problem the fathers had given disapproval of friends.

The reasons given for the changes in interpersonal relationships appeared to relate to the process of side-taking which occurred following the marital separation. Negative changes in relationships would occur when friends, relatives, and others took the side of the wife in the conflict. Other negative changes were attributed to the father's increased time at home due to family demands, leaving less time for
social interaction. Positive changes in relationships were reported to occur when others felt sorry for or sympathized with the father's situation, or when they respected the father's action in keeping the children. Siding with the father also led to positive changes in relationships.

When asked how the changes in interpersonal relationships had affected them, seven fathers (41.2%) reported a negative effect, six (35.3%) reported no effect. Negative effects described were depression, a negative change in values, and fear of further male-female relationships. Positive effects included greater happiness and freedom, relief, and a feeling of increased friendliness. These responses suggest that, although changes in relationships clearly tended to be positive as shown in Table 38, the fathers were affected more or recalled more clearly the negative changes. It may be this factor which accounts for the stigmatization reported in other studies of the single father.

Changes in relationships with friends had been reported most frequently among the negative changes in Table 38, and fifteen fathers (65.2%) reported that they had attempted to make new friends. The means used for meeting new friends are outlined in Table 39. Seven fathers (31.8%) had increased their social interaction, for example, by
TABLE 39

FATHER'S MEANS OF MAKING NEW FRIENDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means*</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased social interaction</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs, organizations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No attempt made</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some fathers gave more than one response.  
** Based on 22 responses.

talking to people more or by going to parties. Clubs, organizations, work, and church were other avenues used in attempts to initiate new friendships.

Table 39 indicates that the need for new social contacts following the wife's absence is a significant one, being reported by 68.2% of the fathers and perhaps applying to those who made no attempts, but who may have felt the desire to do so. However, the meeting of this need does not appear to have been difficult for the fathers, who seemed comfortable in initiating social contacts. What is not revealed, however, is how helpful these sources were in meeting the need of the father.

The psychosocial effects of the mother's absence on
the children were also examined. In relation to the children's emotional situation, the fathers were asked to rate from 1 to 5 the strength of feelings which the children might have experienced immediately after the mother's absence. As shown in Table 40, sadness, hurt, disappointment, and confusion were reported most often as strong feelings for the children. Happiness was reported by approximately one-third of the fathers, a finding which is somewhat unexpected and may indicate that the relief experienced by the fathers was projected onto the children. As with the children's problems, the fathers rated the children's feelings lower than their own, the average mean ratings being 1.9 and 2.3 respectively. Specific feelings were ranked surprisingly low, such as embarrassed, unloved, angry, and guilty. The ranking suggests that, while certain feelings may be more difficult for the father to perceive than others, it can be assumed that these feelings do exist in many cases but are not being dealt with adequately, if at all, by the father. The implications for intervention are clear: single fathers must be helped to become aware of the possible feelings which their children may experience, and means must be made available to the family so that these feelings can be dealt with and resolved as adequately as possible.
TABLE 40

STRENGTH OF FEELINGS EXPERIENCED BY THE CHILDREN IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MOTHER'S ABSENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unloved</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-conscious</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resentful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieved</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpless</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A measure of the children's present feelings was obtained when the fathers were asked how the children felt about their mother's absence. The nature of the responses is demonstrated in Table 41, which indicates that eight fathers (36.4%) thought that their children missed their mother and wanted her to return. On the other hand, five fathers (22.7%) perceived their children as not missing the mother and six fathers (27.3%) stated that the children had accepted the mother's absence. Three fathers indicated that the children did not remember their mother, mainly due to their young age.

The tendency for the fathers to misperceive or to minimize the experiences of the children is again demon-
strated in Table 41. Fifty per cent of the fathers reported that the children had at least neutral, if not positive feelings about their mother's absence. In view of the fact that 69.6% of the children have been motherless for three years or less, and considering that little attention, either familial or professional, appears to have been given to the children with regard to their experiences of motherlessness, the possibility appears more than remote that the children's feelings about mother's absence are much stronger than the fathers have indicated.

In response to a question dealing with how the children had been affected by the mother's absence, ten fathers (45.4%) said there were negative effects, while 36.4% reported positive effects; only four fathers (18.2%) stated that there were no effects on the children. The negative effects mentioned tended to deal with the gap left by the mother's absence and the feelings initiated by the absence; these effects included the children shying away from friends at school, missing a female model or reference, the lack of a mother's care, the jealousy of the children toward complete families, and feelings of embarrassment, rejection, and sadness. The children who had been affected positively were happier, more independent, more responsible and grown-up, and interacted more socially.
Role Changes Experienced by the Single Father

As the sole parent in the home, the father becomes responsible for the complete care and authority of the children. The researchers were interested in examining what role changes the father experienced as a result of assuming the single-parent position. The fathers were asked what difficulties they had in getting along with or relating to any of their children. Table 42 indicates the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disciplining problems</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties relating in mother role</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difficulties</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

frequency and percentages of the different responses.

The highest percentage of responses (47.8%) indicated that no difficulties were experienced in relating to their children. The difficulty most frequently expressed was disciplining problems (34.8%) followed by communication problems (21.7%). One father (4.4%) reported difficulty
in relating in the mother role with his children.

When asked how these difficulties were dealt with, six fathers (50%) indicated that they talked to their children about the problem, three fathers (25%) enforced stricter discipline, and two fathers (16.7%) used another means of dealing with the problem. Only one father had made no attempt to deal with his particular difficulty.

The researchers investigated further the father's role changes as the sole disciplinarian by asking specific questions about the changes in their disciplining patterns since the absence of the mother. Table 43 gives the

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N  %</td>
<td>N   %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>11  47.8</td>
<td>8  34.8</td>
<td>4  17.4</td>
<td>23  100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strictness</td>
<td>7  30.4</td>
<td>11  47.8</td>
<td>5  21.8</td>
<td>23  100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>11  47.8</td>
<td>8  34.8</td>
<td>4  17.4</td>
<td>23  100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1  4.4</td>
<td>15  65.2</td>
<td>7  30.4</td>
<td>23  100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicalness</td>
<td>0  0.0</td>
<td>14  60.9</td>
<td>9  39.1</td>
<td>23  100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

frequency and percentages of changes in the disciplining patterns of the fathers. In the majority of responses,
some kind of change is evidenced, as few fathers reported no change in their disciplining habits. In each of the changes mentioned, there seemed to be a trend toward what the fathers might view as positive changes in discipline. This change pattern may be indicative of the increased confidence they have in handling discipline matters as the sole disciplinarian. The disciplining pattern changed to become more flexible, more consistent, less strict, less frequent, and less physical. The most outstanding changes included a decrease in physicalness (60.9%) and a decrease in frequency of discipline (65.2%). These findings do not support the theory that discipline may become more inconsistent and more physical in single-parent homes, due to the lack of a mediating influence from the spouse. Most of the literature in this area is based on studies of the single mother, however, who is the expressive parent and generally not considered the authoritarian or disciplining figure in the family. The total assumption of the disciplining role may be more difficult for the single mother.

Five fathers (21.7%) stated that they had communication difficulties with their children as indicated in Table 42. In order to explore this particular area further, the fathers were given a list of areas and were asked to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 5 as to the difficulty
they experienced in discussing each area with their children. Table 44 lists the areas and the frequency of responses of those fathers who rated each area as difficult.

TABLE 44

DIFFICULT AREAS OF FATHER-CHILD COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother's absence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's sexual concerns</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's personal problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family problems</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean of each response indicates the relative intensity of the difficulty.

The mother's absence and the sexual concerns of the children were rated as the most difficult topics for the fathers to discuss with their children. The higher mean scores for these areas indicate further that the communication difficulties in these areas were felt more intensely. The difficulty in discussing sex corresponds to the father's expressed need for a female model for the children, as they find sex uncomfortable to discuss, particularly with their'
daughters. The difficulty in discussing the mother's absence may reflect the father's unresolved feelings about his marital situation. The least difficulty experienced by the fathers was in talking to the children about their personal, school, and family problems, and their problems with their friends. For the most part, as evidenced by the low frequency of responses and the low mean scores, the fathers did not appear to have any great difficulties in communicating with their children.

The fathers were asked, in an open-ended question, to describe their communication with the children. As evidenced in Table 45, the fathers rated the quality of parent-child communication as generally high. Five fathers (21.7%) rated the communication as excellent, sixteen

| TABLE 45 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **RATING**      | **NUMBER**      | **PERCENT**     |
| Excellent       | 5               | 21.7            |
| Good            | 16              | 69.6            |
| Fair            | 2               | 8.7             |
| **TOTAL**       | **23**          | **100.0**       |

fathers (69.6%) rated it as good, and only two fathers (8.7%)
as fair. These findings correspond with the finding that the fathers experienced only limited difficulties in communicating with their children; the fathers, in fact, perceived the nature of the parent-child communication to be of high quality.

The researchers wished to obtain an indication of the father's self-concept as a single parent. The fathers were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 7, their success as parents. Table 46 indicates that twenty-two fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very successful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately successful</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately unsuccessful</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsuccessful</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(95.6%) rated themselves on the successful end of the scale, and one father (4.4%) was undecided. Fourteen fathers (60.9%)
rated themselves as achieving more than moderate success. In terms of the father role, the fathers' self-concept was high. The fathers' general feeling of success as parents may indicate that the sample, indeed, is one which contains fathers who have been successful, rather than those who are experiencing considerable difficulties in the single-father role.

An important aspect of the father's self-concept was seen as involving how he felt in performing his role as a single parent. Therefore, the fathers were asked how they felt about having to act as both mother and father to their children. The various responses are indicated in Table 47.

### TABLE 47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys it</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds it difficult</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels it is his obligation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not filling two roles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is used to it</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixteen fathers (69.6%) expressed enjoyment or satisfaction
in the dual role of mother and father. There was some degree of ambivalence, however, in that seven fathers (30.4%) found the role difficult, with some fathers expressing extreme frustration and pressure. The "other" category included responses such as "sometimes sad, sometimes rewarding" or "it doesn't bother me, I just do it." Three fathers (13%) did not view themselves in a combined role, but rather saw themselves as only the father, stating that they could not fill the mother role.

Generally, the fathers expressed enjoyment with their role, which corresponds to their high success rating as a parent. Some fathers, however, felt the burden, pressure, and responsibility which is implied in trying to fill two roles. The fact that three fathers did not see themselves as filling two roles suggests two groups of single fathers: those attempting to fill the role of two parents and those resigned to being only the father. Further investigation of the role changes, adjustments, and conflict experienced by each group appears to merit further consideration.

In order to discover what the fathers felt they could not provide as single male parents, the researchers asked the fathers what they thought children needed that only a mother could provide. Table 48 indicates the fathers' perceptions of the maternal needs of the children. Fourteen
TABLE 48

FATHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S MATERNAL NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love and affection</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female model</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to discuss sex</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone to complete the family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

fathers (60.9%) said that the children needed maternal love, care, and affection. Eight fathers (34.8%) reported the children's need for a female model, while other needs reported were someone with whom to discuss sexual concerns, a need for the mother's discipline, and someone to complete the family unit. Only three fathers (13.0%) felt that mothers provided nothing that they, as fathers, could not provide for their children equally as well.

The high frequency of reports regarding the children's need for maternal love and affection does not seem to correspond with earlier responses which reflect an apparent high degree of expressiveness in the fathers, particularly if
Table 48 is interpreted as indicating those areas where the fathers feel incapable as parents. The table suggests that the fathers think their children are lacking certain things due to mother's absence, which may reflect the personal shortcomings felt by the fathers in fulfilling the parental role. These particular concerns, such as meeting the affectional needs of the children, providing a female model, and discussing sex with the children, may indicate the father's need for supportive intervention in these areas. It must be noted here, however, that the fathers' responses may have been influenced by the prevalent social value which places high importance on the mother-child relationship, particularly with regard to maternal love.

An indication of the father's involvement with the family before the mother's absence was sought, particularly as an indicator of potential role changes and role conflict for the father and of the father's ability to assume the single-parent role.

The fathers were presented a list of twenty-two tasks which might be performed in a family and were asked to indicate who performed these tasks before mother's absence and at present. Table 49 shows the father's involvement in role performance before and after the mother's absence. For analysis, one task was eliminated as not
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's involvement</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive tasks</td>
<td>87.7*</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental tasks</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All tasks</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children's involvement</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive tasks</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental tasks</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All tasks</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures are expressed in percentages.

Applicable and the tasks then were categorized as either expressive or instrumental. Expressive tasks were defined as those which related to interaction with the children, for example, putting them to bed or helping them with their homework. Instrumental tasks were defined as those which dealt with the maintenance of the household, such as meal preparation and housework. It was found that fathers were generally involved in a high number of family tasks (72.0%) before the mother's absence, and surprisingly involved in expressive tasks directly related to the children (87.7%).
The lower involvement with instrumental or household tasks was not unexpected in view of the traditional division of labour associated with male-female roles.

After the mother's absence, involvement in all tasks increased to a very high degree (92.0%) and fathers became involved in almost all of the expressive tasks (98.0%) and 87.7% of the instrumental tasks. While the children had been involved in relatively few tasks (3.8%) before the mother's absence, their involvement after the mother's absence increased almost five times (18.0%). The children's involvement in instrumental tasks increased four times, from 7.4% to 31.3% after the mother's departure from the family. This increased involvement in household tasks indicates that the children tend to assume more responsibilities around the home, thereby alleviating some of the burden of the father's role. The increase in instrumental involvement can be attributed also to the age increase of the children. The involvement of the children in the expressive tasks remained low, since the children would not be responsible for caring for one another.

Generally, it was found that the fathers had been very much involved with the children before the mother's absence and were involved more in family tasks after. Their reported experience prior to the mother's absence
indicates that the fathers may have been well prepared for their role as single fathers, and this may be one of the factors accounting for their success as single parents. The high degree of involvement in the expressive tasks after the mother's absence may be indicative of the father's emotional need for the children—a factor which may play a part in the father's decision to assume care of the children on his own. The apparent strong emotional relationship between the father and his children also may have helped the father to feel more comfortable about the prospect of dealing with and relating to the children.

The greatest role change the fathers had to make was in the area of household tasks, which corresponds to their reported difficulties in maintaining the household. In view of the father's high involvement with the children before the mother's absence, the child care problems reported by the fathers may tend to be more practical in nature rather than emotional or interactional difficulties.

When asked how satisfied they were with task performance in the family before and after the mother's absence, 78.3% of the fathers responded that they were satisfied now as opposed to 65.2% who were satisfied before. The higher rate of satisfaction at present may indicate that present task performance does not present a major problem for the
father, again suggesting that the fathers interviewed are experiencing considerable success in their role as single fathers.

A further measure of the father's self-concept as a single father was taken to be how the fathers thought people viewed single fathers. Table 50 shows the nature of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect him</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are suspicious of him</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have sympathy, pity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy him</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See him as different</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the different responses. Generally, the fathers reported their perceptions of how people they knew viewed them in their situation. Most of the fathers (78.2%) reported that they were respected by others, while eight of the fathers (34.8%) reported they felt suspicion from others, and four fathers (17.4%) felt some degree of sympathy or pity. Overall, 70.6% of the responses referred to a positive view of
the father, while only 29.4% referred to a negative view. These positive responses correspond to earlier responses which indicated that disapproval from friends is not a problem and that interpersonal relationships tended to improve or not change.

Mother's Relationship with the Family

The nature of the mother's present relationship with the family was considered because of its possible bearing on the present functioning of the family. An early determinant of the mother's relationship with the family was seen to be how the mother's absence had been explained to the children. The types of explanation given are listed in Table 51. In eighteen families (78.3%), the mother's absence had been explained to the children, while in five families (21.7%) no explanation was given since the children were assumed to have known the reasons for the absence. The explanation in approximately one-quarter of the families was that the parents did not love one another and could not live together. The remainder of the explanations varied, ranging from mother's death in the two cases where applicable to the simple explanation that the mother had gone away. The two "other" explanations were that the parents had different goals and that the mother didn't care to see


TABLE 51

EXPLANATION GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN ABOUT THE MOTHER'S ABSENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents did not love one another</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother sick, needed to get better</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother living with another man</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother gone away</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother died</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No explanation given</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The children any more. The variety of explanations, no doubt, reflect the diversity of situations surrounding the mother's absence from the family.

The fathers were asked who had been involved in making the explanation to the children. Eleven fathers (47.8%) had made the explanation themselves, four mothers (17.4%) had done so, and in one case both parents had been involved in making the explanation to the children.

The timing of the explanation was determined and revealed that, in nine cases (39.1%), the explanation had
been made just before or at the time of the mother's absence. Another three (13.0%) were given within the first year after the absence. For four fathers, the explanation was a continuing process and two fathers had waited until the children were old enough to understand, i.e. 5 - 7 years of age.

The researchers examined the explanations given to determine whether the children were told that they were still loved by the mother despite the marital separation. In the twenty-two cases where such an explanation was appropriate, four fathers (19.0%) reported that the mother's continuing love was part of the explanation; seventeen fathers (81.0%) made no mention of this factor in their responses.

Of those fathers who had discussed the reasons for the mother's absence with the children, six (33.3%) reported difficulty in doing so; comments ranged from "felt uncomfortable" to "the hardest thing in my life". The remaining twelve fathers reported no difficulty in this area.

As to whether the children understood why the mother was absent, eighteen fathers (78.3%) thought that their children understood, one father thought that the children did not understand, and four fathers (17.4%) were unsure.

Although the fathers were for the most part involved
in explaining the mother's absence and most reported no difficulties in doing so, there appear to be certain inadequacies in the way the mother's absence was presented to the children. Explanations tended to be primarily factual in nature and at times shallow, e.g. "mother is gone"; little attention appears to have been given to the children's feelings about the absence. Over one-half of the explanations were not given at the time of the absence, and in five families no explanation at all was given, based on a somewhat tenuous assumption that the children understood the situation. In addition, only four fathers reported that the topic was a matter for ongoing discussion.

In Table 44, it was shown that 30.4% of the fathers reported difficulty in discussing the mother's absence with the children. This finding corresponds with the responses given about the explanation of the mother's absence; perhaps the topic is not difficult for more fathers because it appears that the area has not been dealt with adequately by the fathers, but rather has been superficially discussed in a number of cases. The implication is that the area is one of considerable difficulty for the single father, one which involves many feelings for both the father and the child. Support and direction for the father regarding how the mother's absence can be handled with the
child would seem to be a needed and valuable resource for the motherless family.

The nature of mother-child visiting was considered a second significant factor in the mother's relationship with the family. The frequency of visits is indicated in Table 52, showing that, in the twenty-one families in which

**TABLE 52**

**FREQUENCY OF MOTHER-CHILD VISITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two weeks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two-three months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every six-twelve months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No visits occur</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>21*</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Visiting was not applicable were the mother had died.

the mother was still alive, eleven (52.4%) maintained at least periodic mother-child visiting, while in ten families (47.6%) no visits were taking place. In only six families (28.6%) was there frequent visiting of at least once every two weeks.

Of the eleven fathers in whose families visiting
took place, five reported that the visits had negative effects on the children, such as emotional upset, disturbance of routine, arguing from the children, and the children being spoiled. Positive effects were reported by two fathers, who noted that the children enjoyed seeing the mother. Four fathers noticed no effects from the visits.

The father's feelings about the visits were seen to be a significant factor in the operation of the visiting. Two of the eleven fathers objected to the visits, three stated that they did not mind the visits, three fathers approved of the visits, and three fathers expressed other feelings which tended to be related to their own difficulties in separating from the mother each time she visited the children.

Overall, visits with mother, if they occurred at all, were only sporadic for the majority of children. In all but six cases, the mother's continuing involvement with the family was minimal and tended to take place in an atmosphere of at best tolerance by the father, or at worst disapproval. The underlying dynamic appears to be that visiting activates feelings and situations with which the single father finds it difficult to deal; therefore, visiting is terminated, objected to, discouraged, or tolerated.

The existence of this dynamic appears to be confirmed
in Table 53. The researchers crosstabulated the occurrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>No difficulty</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>6 (28.6)</td>
<td>5 (23.9)</td>
<td>11 (52.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No visits</td>
<td>1 (4.7)</td>
<td>9 (42.8)</td>
<td>10 (47.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7 (33.3)</td>
<td>14 (66.7)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\lambda = .24$

of mother-child visits with the father's difficulty in dis-

cussing the mother's absence with the children. The table

indicates that visiting occurred in six of the seven fami-

lies in which the father experienced difficulty in dis-

cussing the mother's absence. At the same time, nine of

the fourteen fathers who experienced no difficulty were in

families where no visits took place. Table 53 indicates

an association between mother-child visits and the father's
difficulty in discussing the mother's absence, and suggests

that visiting may increase anxiety for the father regarding

the mother's continued relationship with the children.

The use of visits as a means of continuing a healthy

and helpful relationship between the mother and child is
minimal. This situation tends to be consistent with the
way in which separated couples deal with their continued
interaction with each other and the children. The area is
clearly one in which single fathers could profit from coun-
selling directed at easing the anxieties aroused by visits,
and at helping the father handle the visits in a way help-
ful to all family members.

Summary

The sample consisted of twenty-three fathers, the
majority of whom were divorced and separated. The average
age of the fathers was 36.6 years, the age range being
from 25 to 57 years. The fathers varied in educational,
religious, and occupational backgrounds. Most of the
fathers were employed full-time and the average income was
$13,130. The average length of time as a single father was
three years and two months, ranging in time from six months
to ten and one-half years. The average number of children
with the fathers was 2.1, and the ages of the children
ranged from two to twenty-one years, the average age being
approximately ten. It was found that the age and sex of
the children did not appear to be a factor in whether the
fathers assumed care of the children and the fathers tended
to have all the children in the family living with them.
By examining the process through which the respondents became single fathers, it was found that there were two groups of fathers: those who immediately assumed care of the children and those who assumed care later. The majority of the fathers had acquired their single-parent role "by default", in that, for many fathers, single parenthood was a result of the mother's abdication of her parental role rather than the result of the father actively seeking his new role. Expressive-emotional factors stood out as the major motivation for the fathers keeping the children.

The fathers experienced the largest number of problems in the initial period of motherlessness, with these problems being related to the fathers' adjustment to their new role as single parents. The initial problems included child care, emotional, and housekeeping difficulties. Sexual problems, financial problems, and family relationship problems tended to be more continuous in nature. Child care remained a major problem throughout the experience of single fatherhood and was found to occur more frequently in families with younger children. Problems experienced by the children included emotional difficulties and disciplining problems, and the fathers generally reported the children's problems as being less serious than their own. The mother's
absence appeared to have a negative effect on the children's school involvement and behaviour at home, while positive changes were reported in family relationships.

In coping with their problems, the fathers used most frequently their personal resources. Initial help that was received came from sources closest to the fathers, such as relatives and friends. There was some indication that the initial help received corresponded with the initial problems reported. On the average, families used 4.7 community resources, with recreational services and the Children's Aid Society being used most frequently. The fathers appeared to be generally aware of the resources available in the community and the services used tended to be of a functional nature rather than treatment-oriented. Eight families reported having another adult in the household, all of whom offered considerable assistance to the fathers.

The initial feelings experienced by the fathers related more to the family breakdown and loss of the spouse rather than to the assumption of the single-parent role. Depression, loneliness, anger, and rejection were the strongest feelings experienced. Feelings related to the parental role were more intense when the father assumed care immediately, although the fathers generally indicated
a feeling of being able to meet the challenge of the role. Concerns as a single parent dealt significantly with the father's ability to raise the children properly.

The fathers appeared to miss most the emotional support and interaction of the two-parent situation and the presence of another adult in the household helped considerably to alleviate the loneliness and burden for the single father. The majority of the fathers reported satisfaction with their past marital relationship, and there was an indication that the degree of marital satisfaction influenced the intensity of feelings following the mother's absence. Changes in interpersonal relationships tended to be positive when change did occur, although negative changes appeared to affect the fathers more intensely.

The children experienced feelings of sadness, hurt, disappointment, and confusion most frequently following the mother's absence. The fathers rated the children's feelings lower than their own, and there was an indication that the fathers were not perceiving their children's feelings accurately or were failing to recognize the intensity of these feelings.

The most frequent difficulties reported in relating to the children were disciplining and communication problems. Discipline was described as having become more
flexible, more consistent, less strict, less frequent, and less physical following the mother's absence. Father-child communication was perceived as being of high quality; difficulties which did exist related most often to the discussion of the mother's absence and the children's sexual concerns. The self-concept of the fathers tended to be high and most fathers felt respected by others, although some reported that others were suspicious of them. It was found that the fathers were involved in a high number of family tasks prior to the mother's absence, particularly in the performance of expressive tasks. Following the mother's absence, the fathers were involved in nearly all of the family tasks and the children became much more involved in the instrumental tasks.

The researchers found that the explanation of the mother's absence did not appear to have been given much consideration and attention by the fathers, and the emotional aspect of the child's separation from the mother tended to be neglected. Mother-child visits were predominately non-existent or sporadic; and it was found that the occurrence of visits tended to lead to anxiety for the father in discussing the mother's absence with the children.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Before drawing conclusions from the findings of this study, it is important to recognize the limitations within which the study took place; specifically, one must realize the nonrandom nature of the small sample. The researchers emphasize that the conclusions drawn can apply validly to the study sample only. The conclusions, no doubt, hold implications for the wider population of fatherless families, but only further research will reveal the extent of such implications.

The researchers initially had speculated that the sample, as a result of its voluntary nature, might consist of two types of single fathers: those who were experiencing difficulty and perhaps would view the researchers as resource people, and those who were experiencing success and would feel comfortable in discussing their situations. It was found that the fathers were predominantly those who were successful. The father-child relationships were very close and positive ones, and the fathers demonstrated
strong parental feelings and a high motivation to do a good job as a parent. The researchers found that the fathers' motivations for having the children with them were primarily healthy and functional, based on strong relationships and realistic considerations of the family situation at the time of dissolution. Potential indications of vindictiveness toward the mother or over-dependence between father and child were not apparent in the sample.

The success of the fathers can be attributed to a number of factors. The income of the fathers was found to be, on the average, somewhat high, suggesting that financial variables figure in the successful functioning of the fathered family. Such variables might include the father's ability to afford the extra expenses resulting from the mother's absence and the ability of the father to take time off work to meet family responsibilities. Yet, money alone does not maintain the fathered family. It was found that successful functioning may be a result of the father's high level of family involvement prior to the mother's absence. For the sample, such involvement was high, suggesting that the father's prior exposure to the family operation equips him practically and psychologically for the role of single parent.

The existence of external supports available to the
fathers was found to contribute further to the functioning of the families. A close support system, which included extended family and friends, proved to be a significant, if not the most significant, source of assistance and strength for the single fathers. Finally, it appeared that a factor basic to the successful functioning of the family was the personal coping abilities of the father.

The fathers' responses and the perceptions of the researchers indicated that self-reliance and independence were strengths present among the respondents. These assets, accompanied by a determination to maintain the family as a unit, enabled the single fathers to deal with the problem situations encountered by the families.

The researchers concluded that the mother's absence precipitated two types of adjustments for the single father -- an adjustment to the loss of the spouse and the family disorganization, and an adjustment to the assumption of the new role of single parent. There existed a psychological and a practical aspect to each of these adjustments. It was found that the psychological adjustment to the loss of the spouse was most immediate for the fathers after the wife's absence; adjustment to the single-parent role involved more practical adjustments, such as housekeeping and child care, and tended to be more long-term in nature.
In relation to the issue of different dynamics for fathered and mothered families, the researchers observed that the single fathers, in many ways, had to take on the dual role of mother-father. It is postulated by the researchers that this role may be much more demanding and necessitate more emotional adjustment for the single father than for the single mother. The assumption of maternal tasks appear to involve items which are day-to-day in nature, e.g. child care; the demands on the single father, from work and at home, are continuous. For the single mother, who has to assume the role of the breadwinner, alternatives such as social assistance are more readily available. Psychological adjustment, as well, would appear to be more difficult for the single father; he must contend with the social attitude that fathers should work and also reconcile himself to a role for which he has been poorly, if at all, socialized—the role of the parent who takes care of the children.

It should be noted, however, that such a differentiation between fathered and mothered families is based on traditional views of male and female roles. As social values and attitudes continue to change, the comparison of single fathers and single mothers will require ongoing re-examination.
While the motherless family has become increasingly the result of social factors, such as the changing roles of men and women, the study has indicated that the development of a motherless situation incorporates a myriad of variables related to the individuals involved. Individual decisions to keep or not to keep the children, the pressure of complex and ambivalent feelings, marital conflict between two individuals, the presence or absence of extended families and friends, personal coping abilities—each of these factors may operate in the fathered family. To define the phenomenon of motherlessness only in sociological terms would be to overlook the individual dynamics, experiences, and needs of the members of fathered families. For this reason, further research must take place to examine both the social and psychological variables which relate to the motherless family.

This study has suggested implications related to the service and treatment needs of fathered families. Despite their apparent success and capabilities, the fathers did have a number of questions directly related to their ability to parent and concerns about the damage to the children as a result of the mother's absence. The need for moral support and information is evident. While much initial help was received from sources close to the fathers, consider-
ation must be given to the long-term needs of fatherless families and the needs of families which are without available support systems. Furthermore, it is clear that professional intervention is necessary in areas ignored by or too complex for family and friends. These areas include the explanation and discussion of the mother's absence, the father's sexual concerns, recognition of the children's feelings and problems, and the resolution of the father's feelings about himself as a result of the loss of his spouse.

As the study has revealed, the increase in motherless families is related to the changing social atmosphere regarding the woman's role in the family. For the single father, this development has meant the acquisition of a new role, often unexpectedly, perhaps even unwillingly; the father is left alone with the decision as to how to care for the children. As the definitions of sex roles change further, more women will feel free to step out of their mother role in pursuit of other interests; as a result, more fathers will find themselves caring for their families alone. The number of motherless families will grow; the reality of the phenomenon increasingly will confront society. The social sciences and helping professions must be prepared to give adequate consideration to the complex-
ities of this emerging family form.

**Recommendations**

In view of the researchers' initial goal of conducting a study which was client-focused in nature, it seems appropriate to present the recommendations made by the fathers themselves:

1. The equalization of opportunities for motherless and fatherless families, including such areas as custody, child support, and income maintenance

2. An educational and consultative service for single fathers to assist in the adjustment to marital breakdown and child rearing

3. The coordination of community services for single fathers

4. The provision of supportive services to assist single parents who decide to work, including such resources as subsidized babysitting, day care during shift hours, and summer care of school-age children

5. The development of a housekeeping service which would provide easier access to potential live-in and part-time housekeepers for single fathers

6. The organization of a group for single fathers in which they could share common experiences and discuss common problems
7. Extended outreach by the Big Sister Association to contact single fathers and increase their awareness of the service offered

8. Professional recognition of the sexual needs of single parents

9. Increased awareness and intervention by clergy and lawyers regarding the prevention of marital breakdown

   The researchers concur with and endorse the recommendations of the fathers and offer, in addition, the following recommendations:

10. Earlier intervention by community resources with father-led families to assist with the initial emotional and practical adjustments of motherlessness

11. Professional attention to the father-led family's need for resolution of the feelings regarding the mother's absence

12. Increased consideration among marriage counsellors, child welfare agencies, and family courts of the possibility and functionality of placing children with the father in the event of family dissolution

13. Continued media exposure of the single-father situation to increase public awareness of the phenomenon

14. Recognition by social planners and policy makers of the increasing growth of single-father families, and
the development of social service programs to meet the specific needs of these families

15. Education at the high school level regarding parenting skills for males and the importance of the father in the family

16. Increased, premarital and separation counselling to prevent the dissolution of families and to facilitate the adjustment of families in which dissolution occurs

17. Parent effectiveness courses designed to consider the specific difficulties experienced by single parents

Suggestions for Further Research

The researchers strongly urge that further research be conducted on the phenomenon of fatherled families. This study has suggested the following possibilities for examination:

1. The replication of this study in various communities across Canada to determine further demographic variables related to motherless families

2. A longitudinal study beginning in the early months of motherlessness, to examine the factors which allow the father to maintain the family successfully

3. A comparative study of motherled and fatherled families, focusing on the different psychological and role changes
in the two groups

4. A comparative study of social attitudes toward single fathers and single mothers

5. Further consideration of the differences between single fathers who assume care immediately and those who assume care later

6. An examination of the factors involved in the decision for the father to assume care of the children

7. A study of children in motherless families, considering such factors as feelings, perceptions of mother and father, role changes, social changes, problems, and self-concept

8. A study of service use and service needs of single fathers, examining such areas as attitudes toward the use of agencies, service gaps, satisfaction with services, and difficulties in contacting services.
APPENDICES
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. Personal Information
II. Family System
III. Major Problems and Services
IV. Personal Experience of the Father
V. Father's Relationship with the Children
VI. Mother's Relationship with the Family
VII. Interpersonal Relationships
VIII. Conclusion
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Personal Information
   1. How old are you? __________
   2. Please describe your education.
      (1) Highest grade completed __________
      (2) _______ High school graduate
      (3) _______ Community college
      (4) _______ Vocational training
      (5) _______ University
      (6) _______ Post-graduate
      (7) _______ Other
   3. What is your marital status?
      (1) _______ Separated
      (2) _______ Widowed
      (3) _______ Divorced
      (4) _______ Other
   4. What is your religion?
      (1) _______ Roman Catholic
      (2) _______ Protestant
      (3) _______ Jewish
      (4) _______ Other
      (5) _______ None
   5. What country were you born in? __________
   6. What is your present employment status?
      (1) _______ Full-time
      (2) _______ Part-time
      (3) _______ Unemployed
      (4) _______ Other
   7. What is your occupation? __________
   8. What was your gross income for 1975? __________
9. What are your sources of income? (Check as many as appropriate.)
   (1) ___ Job
   (2) ___ Unemployment insurance
   (3) ___ Municipal welfare
   (4) ___ Family benefits
   (5) ___ Federal assistance
   (6) ___ Investments
   (7) ___ Child support
   (8) ___ Alimony
   (9) ___ Estate of late spouse
   (10) ___ Family allowance
   (11) ___ Child's earnings
   (12) ___ Other (specify) ____________________________

II. Family System

10. Children living with you.

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11. Children not living with you.

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</table>
12. Is there anyone else living in the household?  ___ Yes  ___ No

If yes, please specify.  
(1) ___ Housekeeper  ___ ___  ___ Male  ___ Female
(2) ___ Relative (specify)  
(3) ___ Roomer/boarder  ___ ___
(4) ___ Other (specify)  

13. How long have you been a single father?
   ___ years  ___ months

14. Could you describe the circumstances surrounding your wife's absence from the family?

15. Could you describe how the children came into your care following your wife's absence?

16. Why did you decide to take on the responsibility of caring for your children alone rather than having them live elsewhere, e.g., with relatives, care of the C.A.S.?
III. Major Problems and Services

17. Can you recall any problems you encountered at the beginning which you found particularly difficult?

18. Did you attempt to deal with these problems?

19. Did you seek or receive help from any of the following?

(1) ____ Friends
(2) ____ Relatives (specify)
(3) ____ Community agencies
(4) ____ Family
(5) ____ Work associates
(6) ____ Clergy
(7) ____ Other (specify)

Kind of help received

20. Who was the most helpful at the beginning?

21. What problems are you and your family experiencing at present?

22. What do you think have been the biggest continuing problems?
23. We've been talking about some of the problems which you have experienced. (Refer father to H-1.) Please indicate how serious, if at all, these problems have been for you.

24. (Refer father to H-2.) Please indicate how serious, if at all, the following problems have been for your children.

25. (Refer father to H-3.) What community agencies or resources have you or your family used since your wife's absence?

IV. Personal Experience of the Father

26. (Refer father to H-4.) What feelings did you experience immediately after you assumed care of the children?

27. How did your lifestyle change at that time? (Assist father to relate to his behaviour, social life and job.)

28. Have your feelings changed since then? If so, please describe.
29. (Refer father to H-5.) What feelings did the children experience immediately after their mother's absence?

30. Could you describe how their mother's absence initially affected the children? (Probe each of the following areas.)
   
   (a) At school:
   
   (1) marks
   (2) attendance
   (3) lateness
   (4) behaviour in class
   (5) with classmates
   (6) other

   (b) At home:
   
   (1) relationship with siblings
   (2) relationship with father
   (3) relationship with friends
   (4) behaviour in house
   (5) other

31. In what ways do you think the children have been affected by their mother's absence?

32. How do the children feel about their mother's absence at this point?
33. What things concern you about raising your children alone?

34. (Refer father to H-6.) How successful do you feel you have been as a parent?

35. How do you feel about having to act as both mother and father to your children?

36. Do you think that children need certain things that only a mother can provide?

37. (Refer father to H-7.)
   (a) What have you missed most about not having your former partner around the home all the time?
   (b) How satisfied were you with each of these areas prior to your wife's absence?
   (c) (If there is another adult in the household.) What do you appreciate most about having another adult in the household?
V. Father's Relationship with the Children

38. How do you feel your relationship with the children has changed since the absence of their mother? (Probe regarding closeness and time spent together.)

39. What difficulties have you experienced in getting along with or relating to any of your children?

40. Have you tried to deal with these particular difficulties? If so, how?

41. (Refer father to H-8.) What things are you and your children able to discuss?

42. How would you describe your communication with your children?
43. In what specific areas do you encounter problems in disciplining your children? (Probe for differences between children.)

44. (Refer father to H-9.) How do you think the pattern of disciplining your children has changed since your wife's absence from the family?

45. (Refer father to H-10 for list of family tasks.)
(a) Once father has completed the list, ask him to check that he has included ages of the children and has identified the "other persons".
(b) Once father has completed the satisfaction scale, ask him why he feels that way.

(c) Once father has completed the satisfaction scale, ask him why he feels that way.

VI. Mother's Relationship with the Family

46. How was their mother's absence explained to the children?

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<tr>
<th>Oldest</th>
<th>By Whom</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>What Told</th>
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</table>
47. Did you have any difficulty in telling your children about their mother's absence?

48. Do you feel that the children understand about their mother's absence at this point?

(Ask the following three questions only where applicable.)

49. Do the children and their mother visit one another?
   ___Yes ___No  If yes, how often? ____________________________

50. What effects does the visiting have on the children?

51. How do you feel about mother's visits?

VII. **Interpersonal Relationships**

52. Since you've been a single father, have you noticed any changes in your relationships with your
   (1) relatives? Please describe.
   
   (2) friends?
   
   (3) work associates?
   
   (4) neighbours?
53. How do you account for these changes?

54. How have these changes affected you personally?

55. Have you attempted to establish new friends? If so, how?

56. How do you think people view a man caring for his children alone?

VIII. Conclusion

57. In your experience as a single father, what has helped you most in caring for your family on your own?
58. We are very interested in your ideas on what services would assist single fathers. What kind of help would you recommend to assist single fathers and their families?

59. Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding fathered families or this interview?
Questionnaire

To be given to respondent and completed by him at appropriate times throughout the interview.
Please indicate how serious, if at all, the following problems have been for you. Please circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate answer.

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Not very serious</td>
<td>Rather serious</td>
<td>Very serious</td>
<td>Extremely serious</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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Please indicate how serious, if at all, the following problems have been for your children. Circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate answer.

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</table>
What community agencies or resources have you or your family used since your wife's absence? Please check in the appropriate column for each of the agencies listed below.

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<th>Agency or resource</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Did not use</th>
<th>Did not know about</th>
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<td>9. Credit Counselling</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Financial Institutions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Family Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Juvenile Court</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Parents Without Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Psychiatric Services</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Maryvale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Canada Manpower</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Recreational Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Windsor Group Therapy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Alcoholics Anonymous</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Salvation Army</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. St. Vincent de Paul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Private Counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Regional Children's Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Community Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Municipal Welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Community and Social Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Church Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Addiction Research Foundation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How strongly, if at all, did you feel the following ways, immediately after your wife's absence? Circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate answer, using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Resentful</td>
<td>Not strongly at all</td>
<td>Not very strongly</td>
<td>Rather strongly</td>
<td>Very strongly</td>
<td>Extremely strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Angry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lonely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Depressed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Afraid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Guilty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Unhappy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Helpless</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Confused</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Relieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Worried</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Lost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Overwhelmed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Self-conscious</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Unprepared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Discouraged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Hopeless</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Rejected</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Embarrassed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Incapable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How strongly, if at all, did the children feel the following ways, immediately after their mother's absence? Please circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate response, using the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Scale 1</th>
<th>Scale 2</th>
<th>Scale 3</th>
<th>Scale 4</th>
<th>Scale 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unloved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Relieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hopeless</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Helpless</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Self-conscious</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Resentful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How successful do you feel you've been as a parent? Please circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate answer using the following scale below.

1 - Very unsuccessful
2 - Unsuccessful
3 - Moderately unsuccessful
4 - Undecided
5 - Moderately successful
6 - Successful
7 - Very successful
a) What have you missed about not having your former partner around the home all the time? Please rank the six items listed below in the order of what you missed the most to what you have missed the least. Use the numbers 1 through 6 to indicate your order.

(1 - what you missed most and 6 - what you missed least)

For example, if 'adult communication' was missed third most, it would appear on the list as follows:

____ 3  adult communication
____ ______ adult communication
____ ______ companionship
____ ______ sexual activity
____ ______ shared responsibilities for the family (e.g. parenting, planning for the future)
____ ______ emotional, and moral support
____ ______ shared tasks (chores)
____ ______ other

b) How satisfied were you with each of the following areas prior to your wife's absence? On the scale next to each item, circle the appropriate number using the following code:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{1} & \text{2} & \text{3} & \text{4} & \text{5} \\
\text{very dissatisfied} & \text{rather dissatisfied} & \text{undecided} & \text{rather satisfied} & \text{very satisfied}
\end{array}
\]

adult communication
companionship
sexual activity
shared responsibilities for the family
emotional, and moral support
shared tasks
other
c) (If there is another adult in the household) Indicate what you appreciate most about having another adult in the household by ranking the items listed below from 1 through 6.

(1 indicates what you appreciate the most and 6 indicates what you appreciate the least)

- adult communication
- companionship
- sexual activity
- shared responsibilities for the family
- emotional and moral support
- shared tasks
- other
What things are you and your children able to discuss? Circle the number which best indicates how you feel about discussing each of the following areas with your children, using the scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not difficult</td>
<td>Not very difficult</td>
<td>Rather difficult</td>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>Extremely difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a) job problems</th>
<th>b) financial concerns</th>
<th>c) mom's absence</th>
<th>d) household tasks</th>
<th>e) family problems</th>
<th>f) your children's personal concerns or problems</th>
<th>g) your personal problems</th>
<th>h) school problems</th>
<th>i) children's sexual concerns</th>
<th>j) problems with friends</th>
<th>k) other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How do you think the pattern of disciplining your children has changed since your wife's absence from the family? Please circle the number which corresponds to the most appropriate answer for each of the following statements.

a) Since my wife's absence, the discipline pattern in my family is
   1) much less flexible
   2) somewhat less flexible
   3) the same
   4) somewhat more flexible
   5) much more flexible

b) Since my wife's absence, the discipline pattern in my family is
   1) much less strict
   2) somewhat less strict
   3) the same
   4) somewhat more strict
   5) much more strict

c) Since my wife's absence, the discipline pattern in my family is
   1) much less consistent
   2) somewhat less consistent
   3) the same
   4) somewhat more consistent
   5) much more consistent

d) Since my wife's absence, the disciplining or punishment of the children occurs
   1) much less frequently
   2) somewhat less frequently
   3) with the same frequency
   4) somewhat more frequently
   5) much more frequently

e) Since my wife's absence, the discipline pattern in my family is
   1) much less physical, e.g. spanking, etc.
   2) somewhat less physical
   3) the same
   4) somewhat more physical
   5) much more physical
a) Here is a list of tasks which might be performed by a member or members of a family. Please indicate who, in your family,
a) performed each task when the mother was present with the family and who,
b) performs each task now.

To indicate the appropriate person or persons, use the following code:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>OP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>child</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>other person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If more than one person performed or performs the task, please indicate this by using all the letters of the code which apply. If you indicate a child, please include the age of the child. If you indicate 'other person', please include who that person is.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When mother present</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>At present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M, F.</td>
<td>Talking to children's teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking to children's teachers</td>
<td>F, C (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking children to doctor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of breakfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of supper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dish washing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housecleaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disciplining the children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Putting the children to bed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on the next page ...............
Helping children with homework

Money earning

Giving emotional support to the children

Organizing task assignment

Encouraging religious beliefs

Babysitting

Taking children to their outside activities

Participating with children in social activities

Encouraging children's educational progress

Talking to children about their concerns

b) How satisfied were you with the arrangement of family tasks prior to the mother's absence?

1 2 3 4 5
very dissatisfied rather undecided rather very satisfied dissatisfied satisfied satisfied

c) How satisfied are you with the present arrangement of family tasks?

1 2 3 4 5
very dissatisfied rather undecided rather very satisfied dissatisfied satisfied satisfied
RESEARCH PROJECT

A Study of Motherless Families

The Project

The proposed research project is a descriptive-exploratory study of father-led families in the Windsor area, and it is being undertaken by two graduate students in the School of Social Work, University of Windsor. To date, only one study has been published on the single father in Canada, and with the number of motherless families increasing significantly (40% from 1966-1971), the need for further research in this area is evident.

The Focus

Although the research possibilities are numerous, our attention will be upon the specific, and perhaps unique, problems and adjustments faced by the motherless family unit and its individual members. In addition, the study will examine how these families have attempted to deal with their new situation through personal and community resources.

The study will include father-led families in which the mother is absent due to death, desertion, separation, divorce or non-marriage (unwed fathers). Families must include at least one child 18 years old or younger.

The Method

Data will be collected through a structured personal interview with each participating family; all personal and identifying information will be kept strictly confidential. The research sample is being reached through the use of public news media and through contacts with social service agencies and community organizations in the Windsor area.

The Goal

It is our hope that this project will result in greater community awareness of the needs and problems experienced by the single father raising his family alone. The findings may be of assistance to social agencies in their efforts to meet the needs of motherless families.

Persons who wish to be part of the study, or who know of anyone who may be interested, are invited to contact Theresa Eve or Mike Bull, School of Social Work, University of Windsor, tel. 253-4232.
New project will study motherless families

There seems to be a shortage of help designed to aid father-led families, and two graduate students in the Social Work program at the University of Windsor are initiating a research project in this area. They intend to learn more about motherless families in the Windsor district and they are asking for help in finding such families.

Theresa Eve and Michael Bull, both of whom have their B.S.W. degrees, have observed that the number of motherless families is increasing and that more fathers are deciding to maintain their children on their own. This presents unique problems as the fathers try to cope with their normal workload and then assume the domestic chores and problems solving at home.

How do Michael and Theresa plan to help such fathers? By inviting all single fathers (separated, divorced, widowed or unmarried) to participate in the project by consenting to meet with one of the researchers to answer specific questions about the family's adjustment to the absence of the mother in the home.

Interviews will take from one to one and a half hours, will be scheduled in your home at your convenience, and of course all personal and identifying information will be kept strictly confidential.

Mr. Bull said that the findings of the study will hopefully result in some changes in community programs so that motherless families will be able to cope successfully with their situation. "We are relying significantly on the willingness of the fathers to volunteer to participate in the study," he said.

If you are interested in taking part in this study, or would like further details please contact Theresa Eve or Mike Bull at 233-4232, the School of Social Work, University of Windsor.

Only through the cooperation of single fathers can research in this important area be accomplished.

The Essex Times, March 10, 1976

WANTED: Fathers without partners who would like to assist in a thesis on father-led families in Windsor and Essex County.

Theresa Eve and Mike Bull, master of social work students at the University of Windsor's school of social work are doing a study on the number of fathers they'd like to interview for their thesis. Such fathers, willing to volunteer, will be contacted for an interview at the volunteer's convenience. All information will be kept confidential.

Wanted: Fathers to speak about their experiences in addition to relating their own experiences. Contact Mr. Bull at 233-4232 and ask for Theresa.

The Windsor Star, June 19, 1976
The Windsor Star, March 8, 1976

Doris Dickson

Students preparing report on father-led families.

Theresa Eve and Michael Bull are asking for help. They are graduate students working toward their master's degrees in the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor. They want help in getting in touch with fathers in Windsor and Essex County who are raising their children alone, without the help of a marriage partner. The fathers they want to contact may be divorced, deserted, legally separated, widowed, or may never have married, but should have at least one child aged 18 or less.

Mike and Theresa believe that if they can learn from fathers of motherless families what their difficulties are in raising their children, they can recommend measures that may help to alleviate some of the problems. If motherless families require services that are not now available in the community, they say, their report should be helpful in informing the powers that be of these needs and perhaps result in some changes.

Mike is 26 and Theresa is 24 but they already have had considerable experience in dealing with other people's problems. Mike's interest is working with motherless or father-led families and was sparked through an experience he had as a caseworker while an undergraduate student. One of his clients was trying very hard to keep his family together, four school-age children, while working a job that did not pay him enough to hire a full-time housekeeper.

"He had difficulty plugging into the homemaker services in Windsor," Mike said. He wonders how many other men are having the same difficulties. Do they find the daycare services adequate and open at times that are convenient to them?

Theresa Eve arrived at her interest in motherless families through her work for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, first as a legal aid interviewer, then as a social worker.

"I dealt mainly with mother-led families. Where the father had left home," Theresa said, "but I had several cases where the mother was out of the home and the father was left with the children."

While it is commonplace for the mother of small children to be able to obtain a mother's allowance from the government, or welfare assistance, it is much more difficult for a man to get the same kind of help. In such a case that she dealt with, Theresa said, the father had to be disabled or permanently unable to work before he could obtain a "dependent father's allowance."

The 1971 census in Canada showed there were then 100,680 single fathers in Canada struggling with the problems of raising children, of those 33,960 lived in Ontario. There was a 40 per cent increase in the number of motherless families in Ontario over the five-year period between 1966 and 1971.

More and more, recently, men have taken a more active part in "parenting" their children. Judges are more open to the idea that fathers have a right to the custody of the children, too, in marriages which end in divorce courts. In earlier times, grandmothers or sisters or aunts were more available to share in the care of children when tragedy struck.

Mike and Theresa want to know how fathers faced with the prospect of raising their children alone are coping. They can imagine some of the problems of coming home from a full day's work and being faced with the grocery shopping, preparation of meals, dealing with emotional upsets, but they want to know more.

Because of their mutual interest in the subject, the two students are working together, with Professor F. C. (Bud) Hansen as their research co-ordinator. They are preparing a series of questions, structured in such a way as to help them understand the experiences that are common to motherless families. They want to ask the questions in person in an interview that they judge would take from hour to an hour-and-a-half. They will schedule the interviews for any time in May that suits the single fathers they are trying to reach. All information gained during the interviews will be strictly confidential and the names of those who participate will not be used in the report.

"The report wouldn't include information about specific people but would be a collection of data from the total study," Mike said.

We need a minimum of at least 30 families so we can generalize a little," Theresa said. "We hope to get an understanding of their social, emotional and financial needs. If we have a better understanding, backed up by research data, we can make recommendations to the appropriate agencies about other services that should be provided."

"It's an exploratory study that we're doing," Mike said. "We are assuming that there are problems in motherless homes, but we are also assuming that the men have had some degree of success in coping with them or the families wouldn't be together. We'd like to know if they could have used more assistance from the community, what adjustments had to be made by the families as a result of the mothers being absent, and how they were made."

Besides helping other people through reporting on these needs, Mike and Theresa are, of course, anxious to do a good study and report. The report will be their thesis on which they will be judged for their MSWs.

If anyone can help social work students get in touch with fathers who are raising their children without mothers in the home, would you please telephone them at 233-4232, extension 453, and leave a number for them to call.

Both students, by the way, are married. Each has a small son. Theresa, before her marriage to Martin Eve, was Thérèse Bezoire from Malden Twp. She obtained her BA in psychology from the University of Guelph, then, after three and-a-half years' work for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, decided she wanted more professional training and obtained a bursary from the ministry to return to school.
The research interest is focused on the social interaction of the study with the students and with the teacher to explore the impact of the study on the students' behavior. The study is aimed at understanding how the study can be made more effective by supporting the teachers and students. The study will be conducted in the schools where the students will be selected according to their performance.

According to the teachers, parents, and students, 233-235,100,000 students of school age showed interest in this research project. They were interested in participating in the research and gathering information about the topic. The research community is looking forward to the results of the study for the advancement of education in the teacher-student relationship. The study will help in understanding the role of the teacher in the education process. The results will be published in a research paper to share the findings with the educational community.
APPENDIX E

TABLE 54
WHEN FATHER ASSUMED CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND FEELING OF DEPRESSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Care</th>
<th>Depressed</th>
<th>Not depressed</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate care</td>
<td>9 (39.1)</td>
<td>2 (8.7)</td>
<td>11 (47.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later care</td>
<td>8 (34.8)</td>
<td>4 (17.4)</td>
<td>12 (52.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17 (73.9)</td>
<td>6 (26.1)</td>
<td>23 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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VITA

Michael Bull was born on January 10, 1950, in Windsor, Ontario. He obtained his elementary education at Glenwood Public School, Windsor, Ontario and secondary education in 1968 at Vincent Massey Secondary School in Windsor.

Following one year in the Bachelor of Architecture program at the University of Toronto, Mr. Bull commenced undergraduate studies in the School of Social Work, University of Windsor in 1969. Upon graduating with his Bachelor of Social Work degree in 1973, Mr. Bull accepted employment with The Roman Catholic Children's Aid Society of Essex County, for two years. In 1975, Mr. Bull entered the Master of Social Work program at the University of Windsor.

In the final year of undergraduate social work studies, Mr. Bull was placed for field practicum with the Separate School Board, Windsor, Ontario. His field placement during the M.S.W. candidate year was with Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan.

Mr. Bull has acted as a teaching assistant in the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor and he also served as the graduate representative on the School's Curriculum Committee in 1976. He expects to graduate October, 1976.
Theresa Eve was born on January 22, 1952, in Windsor, Ontario. She obtained her elementary education at St. Theresa's School in Malden Township and completed her secondary education in 1969 at General Amherst High School in Amherstburg, Ontario.

After studying Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph, Mrs. Eve obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree. In May, 1969, Mrs. Eve accepted employment with the Department of Social and Family Services in Windsor as a field worker. In 1972, Mrs. Eve was promoted to the position of social service worker. Upon being granted educational leave, Mrs. Eve then entered the Bachelor of Social Work program with advanced standing at the University of Windsor. Her field placement during the year was with The Windsor Group Therapy Project.

Mrs. Eve was accepted into the Master of Social Work program and following summer employment with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, was placed for field practicum with the Separate School Board, during her graduate year, focusing on work with children.

Mrs. Eve has acted as a teaching assistant in the School of Social Work and served on the School's Field Practice Committee. She expects to graduate in October, 1976.