

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A STUDY OF THE DISTRIBUTION  
OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO FATHERLESS  
FAMILIES IN WINNIPEG PROPER

Being a Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Social Work

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## ABSTRACT

This project was designed to investigate the distribution of social services to fatherless families in Winnipeg proper.

The study was based on data obtained through recording the registrations at social agencies of a sample group of one hundred fatherless families receiving financial assistance from either the Welfare Department of the City of Winnipeg or the Public Welfare Department of the Province of Manitoba. As well as investigating the general distribution of social services to these families, the use of services by families where the father was deceased was compared with the use by families where he had deserted, or the parents were divorced or separated. A predication was also made that problems of various specific types are indicated by this use.

The findings revealed that fatherless families who are financially dependent do use other social services extensively (82% of the families) and that families where there is desertion, separation or divorce show a much higher requirement for social services as indicated by registration. The highest use was found to be by families in the deserted group, followed by the separated. Divorced families appeared to have a different configuration of needs from the other groups.

This led to the conclusion that paternal deprivation combined with financial need results in high concentration of social services having to be centred on this type of family.

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## CHAPTER I

It is generally accepted that the most important social institution in the life of man is the family. The dynamics of it set the basic pattern for the subsequent life of every individual. The importance of the family has been recognized in this century as in no other. The growth of psychology, sociology, psychoanalysis and the other scientific studies of man have all contributed to this recognition. Social work too, has seen the need to understand and support the family and there is great emphasis on it in both theory and practice.

The family is admittedly hard to define in a way sufficiently broad to cover the groups described in all known societies. An adequate general definition devised on the basis of considerable reading, however, seems to be that a family is a group of interacting persons who recognize a relation to each other based on marriage or some other arrangement which establishes or maintains the mating relationship, common parentage, and approximation to economic unity and, normally, a common habitation.

Whatever way one defines the "family" however, one always implies that, normally, there will be both a male and a female parent and thus when one parent is absent an abnormal situation will result, which will mean partial or complete disorganization of the family unit. While the remaining parent may double his or her efforts to make good the loss suffered by the children, the family is stripped

of its normal atmosphere. There is an imbalance in the potential for gratification that means a lack of cohesion in the family as a group. The remaining parent must try to become both mother and father-- obviously an impossible task emotionally. Consequently the home functions as a broken instrument.

If there has been greater recognition of the family's importance in this century, there has also been a development of stresses for the family and the individual as never before. The disturbance of the kinship group and its reduction to the nuclear grouping, the mobility and technological demands resulting from the Industrial Revolution as well as more recently, the rise of automation combined with the tensions of the international situation have made life for the individual and the family stressful and insecure. The growing acceptance of divorce and separation, the high level of hasty marriages resulting in excessive burdens which the partners cannot carry and other modern factors have resulted in the one-parent family becoming more and more a common phenomenon. It was felt by the members of this project-group, after considerable consultation of writings on the subject, that the broken family was an important and vital fact of today's life. The actual works consulted and their contents will be discussed more fully in succeeding chapters, but suffice it to say here that both these and the practical professional experience of the members of the project-group led to the decision that this type of family merited examination through research.



This project was done as part of a larger inquiry instituted by the Masters' students of the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, into the distribution of social services among families in Winnipeg proper and the problems occurring in the families using these services.

It was felt that the family in which the father was absent was more fruitful for research than that in which the mother was missing. For one thing, paternal absence is commoner and therefore these families were more accessible to study in the time available. The writers thought that in the fatherless family there would likely be a discernible pattern of problems and use of social agencies observable through research, and thus this type of family is the subject of this study. The purpose of the study was to discover the distribution of services to, and some of the problems of, fatherless families.

For the purpose of our study a family will be defined as a unit which consists of a male and female parent who were at one time legally married, and at least one child. A "fatherless family" will be defined as a family in which the father's absence is due to death, desertion, separation or divorce.

The families in the study were selected from active cases on the September 1962 rolls of two Winnipeg financial agencies: the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department and the Province of Manitoba Department of welfare. They were all resident in Winnipeg proper.

It was felt that inclusion of families where the father was ill--mentally or physically--or incarcerated, would involve variables difficult to control which would make any conclusions much less valid. The unwed mother and her family (though this was recognized by the group as a very common cause of fatherlessness) was also left out, since a study of the results of paternal absence where the father had been part of the group at some period was intended. The other involved an emotional and social situation too complicated for the confines of this study.

It was believed that families in which the father was permanently absent, i.e. deceased, would likely have less severe problems, and therefore less use of social agencies than those in which his absence was intermittent or temporary. Use of social agency was defined in terms of registration at the agency. It was recognized, however, that registration may not necessarily imply use.

The main hypothesis of the study was that "fatherless families enrolled at a social agency providing financial assistance make use of other social agencies."

It was thought that prior inadequate social functioning could have existed in families fatherless due to desertion, divorce or separation. Representative of this prior disfunction could be such problems as a prior financial dependency when the father was present and marital strife gradually invading the home.

It is not surprising that children from broken homes often present behaviour problems. They may have been the innocent but unhappy victims of their parents' personality conflicts. If one parent has disappeared through desertion, divorce or separation, the children's development may be seriously handicapped. Therefore, it was expected that it would be found that behaviour and learning problems among children from such homes were common. Shulman said that Glueck's study suggested that divorce, desertion or separation recur very often as a concomitant factor in juvenile delinquency.<sup>1</sup> Permanent loss of a father through death may cause much suffering to a child but he should recover if the family has functioned normally previously.

Rarely do children who have had normal healthy lives come to agencies for placement. It seems that most of the children placed by agencies come from broken or potentially broken homes.<sup>2</sup>

Dependency and neglect often occur as a result of family desertion or non-support, and since the welfare of the children is the concern of the community, some of these children and their families will

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<sup>1</sup>Harry Manuel Shulman, "The Family and Juvenile Delinquency", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences (January 1949) p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Margaret W. Gerard, The Emotionally Disturbed Child. Child Welfare League of America, 1957, p. 66.

be brought into contact with social agencies with legal sanction such as courts and child care agencies.

In the space available it would be impossible to recount all the relevant social problems of the fatherless families considered by the study group. For the purpose of the research project, however, some of the problems discussed above were chosen for consideration in relevance to use of social agencies. Those chosen included behaviour problems, as shown by registration at the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg and Juvenile Court; child placement, as shown by the records of the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg; financial dependency prior to family breakup, marital strife as shown by registration at the Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg and Family Court; and the use of involuntary agencies, as shown by registration at the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg and Juvenile Court.

The following sub-hypotheses specifically were studied:

1. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show greater use of social agencies than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

2. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show a greater incidence of financial dependency prior to becoming a fatherless family than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

3. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce, will have a greater incidence of marital strife prior to losing the father than families in which the father's absence

is due to death.

4. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show greater incidence of recognized behaviour problems than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

5. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show greater incidence of child placement outside the home than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

6. Families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show more use of involuntary agencies than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

Due to practical considerations, it was assumed that problems of a specific nature would be accepted as existing in a certain family if that family had had contact with an agency treating that type of problem. This has obvious limitations, but since the data had to be obtained from file and records only, the amount of research that could be done into the ephemeral and individual variations in emotional and social problems was restricted. This criterion has, at least, the merit of objectivity. The data for this project was obtained, then, from the files and records of the two financial agencies, the Confidential Exchange,<sup>1</sup> the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, the Juvenile

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<sup>1</sup>The Confidential Exchange was a co-ordinating registry for Winnipeg social agencies run by the Welfare Department of the City of Winnipeg. It ceased operation on December 31, 1960.

and Family Court, the Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, and the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg. "Social agency" used in the context of this study refers to these latter agencies or any other agency listed with the Confidential Exchange, and "financial agency" to the two indicated above. The establishment of the reason for the father's absence was also accepted as listed from the files of the financial agency where the family was registered.

Though registration at an agency was accepted as evidence of categorical need, this implies, of course, use of service, and as this project was not designed to consider the influence of agency service on family conditions it was assumed that the service given by the various social agencies was of an equal calibre.

The study, as has been outlined, was concerned specifically with families in which the father was absent and the family receiving financial help. The two major sub-groups--families where the absence was due to death, and those where it was due to divorce, separation or desertion--have been indicated as well. The method of the study involved recording on a schedule information about agency registrations of the families in the sample. The files and records of the Confidential Exchange and the social agencies mentioned were used as informational sources. The analysis of this information involved comparisons of the two categories of families on the basis of number and kinds of agencies listed.

In summation, it is felt that the ramifications of paternal absence are of major interest today. The following outline of the research into this, while far from definitive, will, we hope, indicate some of the problems encountered by these families and the services required to alleviate them in order that the people involved can function more adequately as members of society.

## CHAPTER II

The fatherless family is a problem of national scope that affects all economic groups in our society. It has been a topic of concern not only for social workers and other helping professions but for the community as a whole who may be contributing in divers ways to the support of such families. While the problems of the fatherless family have engaged the attention of numerous writers, there has been little actual scientific study conducted on this subject to date. In fact, no studies with our particular focus could be found.

Recent statistical information on this problem is unfortunately not readily available. Part of the difficulty may be in the fact that surveys about fatherless families have tended to focus on the problem in more or less gross terms. For instance, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports that in 1961 there were 31,835 widows and 1,601 divorcees in Manitoba,<sup>1</sup> but does not indicate the number of women who are left with children to support. Similarly, there were no statistics on the number of marriages broken through desertion or separation. However, such statistics as are available tend to be in such broad terms as: "In 1957, 13,500 Canadian husbands and wives broke up their homes, severed their marriage ties and placed the birthright of their

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<sup>1</sup>Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961 Census, Bulletin 1.2-4, Population, Marital Status, p. 28-3.



children in jeopardy. Through no fault of their own, some 10,000 children of these marriages were thus denied a normal healthy family life in their formative years. Another 5,000 couples secured legal separations and an unknown number are living in common-law union."<sup>1</sup>

The family can function only through the individual differences of its members, determined and experienced in the three basically related roles of father, mother and child. Spouses meet each others' needs through the performance of emotional, sexual, economic and ego-strengthening functions. They give each other an opportunity to receive security, tenderness and consideration and they may experience a spectrum of common interests. Furthermore, they give each other freedom to express a measure of individuality which they cannot do elsewhere in our society. Children, through their positive experiences of family living, are helped in their strivings for growth and identity. But if the family shows a deficit in carriers of family roles there will probably be a role redistribution within the membership resulting in personality conflicts due to the assumption of incompatible roles.<sup>2</sup> When the father's presence is denied or obliterated, the configuration essential for normal living changes, and confusion and chaos result.

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<sup>1</sup>Deryck Thomson, "Family Breakdown a Costly Item", Canadian Welfare (May 15, 1961) p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Pollak, "A Family Diagnosis Model", The Social Service Review (March 1960) p. 26.

The break in the husband and wife association through death of the male parent head is one of the major crises for the family group. It is a critical experience often taxing to the full the family's resources. Death may strike suddenly, taking the family by surprise and leaving the mother unprepared to cope with single parenthood. And even if she has been forewarned by long illness or disability, it is not always possible for the widow to adjust to the loss before it becomes an actual fact. Since the widow may be either unable or unprepared to work for a living, she may become more dependent upon economic aid programs.

Death is a critical problem not alone for the mother but also--perhaps even more critical--for the children, since it cannot be glossed over. There is no return to normality. The change in the child's life is permanent and has to be absorbed. One project organized under the auspices of the Baltimore Department of Education for parents who, because of death or divorce, were rearing children by themselves, reported that children were likely to feel deserted in the case of a parent's death. This was particularly true of the younger child. Children were also likely to counteract the sense of failure by unflagging efforts to create or maintain an image of themselves as meaningful to the missing parent. They seem reassured by the display of the deceased parent's pictures and the reiteration of episodes illustrating that parent's fondness of them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it would appear

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<sup>1</sup>Kurt Freudenthal, "Problems of the One-Parent Family", Social Work, IV (January 1959) p. 46.

that death of the father causes many problems of adjustment for the children.

A second major category of crises would revolve around the breakup of the family group through legal separation and/or divorce. These breakups, however, do not tell the whole story; they simply indicate the number of marriages which are completely dissolved or the number of marriages where there has been legal sanction for the marital partners to live apart from one another. In contrast to the widow, the separated or divorced woman has had the opportunity to reduce the emotional attachment to her spouse because of the long periods of conflict that may have existed between them. This is well illustrated by New York Supreme Court Judge Samuel Rabin's words: "Long before a judicial divorce is sought, an emotional divorce has already taken place . . . Somewhere along the way a happily married couple has ceased to be happy, conflicts have arisen and frictions developed which have resulted in separation . . ."<sup>1</sup> The end of a marriage through separation or divorce is mined with difficulties not encountered through death. This is due to the fact that many people feel "there is a stigma attached to divorce and to a lesser degree to separation. The stigma is even greater . . . when children are involved."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jim Egleson and Janet Frank, Parents Without Partners. (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1961) p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

"Children, no matter how much they may feign indifference and lack of concern regarding their parents' separation, cannot ever emerge from divorce completely unscathed."<sup>1</sup> The previously mentioned Baltimore Department of Education project found that in children of divorced group members, the sense of failure seemed to relate to their inability to prevent the family breakup. Rather than being related to the parents' incompatibility it was experienced as being due to the child's own inability to hold on to the lost parent. Doubts about personal worth and attractiveness were likely to be expressed by these children. Such children frequently had the tendency to hold the divorced parent responsible for the dissolution of the marriage, depriving him of a normal home situation. In some instances, these sentiments were reported readily verbalized, especially in the course of argument. More frequently, these feelings were found to be expressed on a seemingly nonconscious level--by enuresis; by poor school achievement because of daydreaming, a mechanism permitting the child to avoid performing in accordance with actual endowment; by poor eating habits, and so on--but in all instances they were in areas in which the parent was vulnerable.<sup>2</sup>

This, however, does not necessarily represent the general consensus of opinion. While some authors believe that divorce itself

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<sup>1</sup>Graham B. Blaine, "The Children of Divorce", The Atlantic (March, 1963) p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Freudenthal, loc. cit., pp. 46-48.

might be a traumatic experience, disorganizing the child's personality temporarily or permanently, the majority of them would agree that the emotional situation of the home, with or without divorce, is a major factor in the child's adjustment. Dr. Despert says that it is the emotional rather than the actual legal divorce which is the basically harmful factor as far as children are concerned. Dr. Bugler also confirms this in his statement: "An unhappy marriage is no less an unfavorable psychic burden for the child, a test of psychic strength that the child generally is unable to meet, and that therefore fosters neurosis although it certainly cannot cause it."<sup>1</sup>

A third type of crisis for the family group centres around desertion. It is frequently an impulsive, unplanned action. It may be more traumatic than divorce itself because it is unannounced and more often than not comes as a surprise to the unprepared party remaining in the marriage.

The deserted wife is then obliged either to request help from friends and relatives, thus placing herself in a somewhat embarrassing and humiliating position, or to seek employment which might necessitate her having to leave the children in the care of a baby-sitter. Long term arrangements by the mother may be difficult due to the father's intermittent coming and going. Hence, her planning is apt to be a

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund Bugler, Unhappy Marriage and Divorce. (New York: International Universities Press) p. 23.

haphazard day-to-day affair, not conducive to stable family living. Her feelings are a melange of embarrassment, guilt, anger and a desire for her husband to return even though she may wish to punish him for the humiliation that he has caused her. In the eyes of the community she may feel that she wasn't a good wife and that she failed in her marriage.<sup>1</sup>

For children, too, desertion brings problems in adjustment. Their needs may not be met effectively because mother, overwhelmed by her guilt around the failure of her marriage, is preoccupied with her own chores and conflicts, thus having little energy left to devote to their demands. The youngsters may also question their father's absence. As Wolf and Stein say, in the case of desertion, "Children are often resentful at what seems to them an injustice and are embarrassed to have their friends know about it."<sup>2</sup>

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

In considering the disruptive effect of the father's removal from the home one can assume that such a family may require a myriad of social services. The plight of these families is the concern of both private and public agencies. In fact, one of the primary sources

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph E. Steigmen, "The Deserted Family", Social Casework, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (April, 1957) pp. 167-171.

<sup>2</sup>Anna W.M. Wolf, and Lucille Stein, The One-Parent Family. Public Affairs Committee Inc., 1959, p. 7.

from which help is sought is the financial agency, since economic aid, even if only temporary, is usually a first necessity. There is a likelihood that mothers in families broken due to separation, divorce or desertion would receive financial assistance more frequently than widows. This may be due to the fact that the widow may have other financial resources such as insurance moneys, annuities and compensatory pensions. Thus families headed by divorced, deserted and separated women would have lower incomes than families headed by widows.<sup>1</sup> Besides financial assistance, casework services may also be required. Therefore, it may be necessary to engage the services of family counselling agencies, child guidance clinics, domestic relations courts, and child welfare agencies in the rehabilitation of these families.

Child placement agencies may be one of the facilities used by fatherless families. As Esther Glickman of the Jewish Children's Bureau of Chicago states: "A tragedy or some combination of unfortunate circumstances, such as the sudden death . . . of either parent, may in and of itself make placement of the children necessary if other reality resources are not available within the family or among the relatives."<sup>2</sup> The mother's own subjective needs may not permit her to

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<sup>1</sup>United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Economic and Social Factors Related to Absent Father Problem in Aid to Dependent Children, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Esther Glickman, Child Placement Through Clinically Oriented Casework. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957) p. 50.

adjust realistically to the low standard of living provided by financial assistance and she may prefer placement of her children. Moreover, in the cases of separation, desertion or divorce her feelings of guilt and self blame in causing problems for her children may arouse conflicts within herself. Therefore, she may attempt either to solve her own conflicts by placement of the children or to project her problems on to her children and consciously believe that placement will solve her difficulties.<sup>1</sup> However, "To the child, separation from any remaining member of his family spells the ultimate in rejection by parents, even though the child may have experienced much rejection before placement in his new home."<sup>2</sup>

Family breakdown would also have some correlation with occurrence of juvenile delinquency. Sheldon and Glueck studied 966 cases referred by the Boston Juvenile Court to Dr. William Healy and his associates at the Judge Baker Foundation and found that 48% came from broken homes. In an earlier study of the family backgrounds of 500 youths committed to the Massachusetts Reformatory for serious offenses, the same authors reported 60% came from broken families.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-51.

<sup>2</sup>Oliver E. Byrd, Family Life Sourcebook. (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1956) p. 280.

<sup>3</sup>Harry Manuel Shulman, "The Family and Juvenile Delinquency", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (January, 1949) p. 24.



Thus it can be seen that fatherless families are not new clientele for social welfare agencies. They have absorbed a large proportion of the environmental services--such as financial and child care--and are major objects of attention in the domestic relations courts. However, the majority of these families who apply for assistance are trying, in their own way, to achieve, preserve, or to regain a satisfying family life.

It appears from the available literature, that the absence of the father through death, desertion, separation or divorce creates numerous problems for the family. These problems are reflected in the use of particular social agency services. This, then, is the subject of our study.

### CHAPTER III

In order to test the validity of the hypothesis and the sub-hypotheses discussed in the preceding chapters a schedule was used to record data on a sample of one hundred fatherless families. In choosing this sample, fifty fatherless families were selected from the September 1962 active caseloads of each of two major financial assistance agencies, namely: the City of Winnipeg public Welfare Department and the Province of Manitoba Department of Welfare. This sample was divided into two numerically equal categories: (A) death, (B) desertion, separation and divorce.

The data used as the basis for the differentiation of the families into categories was obtained from the files and records of the aforementioned two major financial agencies. These same agency files and records were used as the major source of the basic family statistics. These statistics such as name, alias, address, marital status, names and birth dates of children were used to identify these same families at Confidential Exchange and other social agencies. As well, two registrations for financial assistance, namely the initial registration with father as head of the family and the initial registration with mother as head of the family, were recorded for each family unit in order to determine whether or not there had been financial dependency prior to breakup of the family.

Confidential Exchange provided the main data re social agency registrations for all of the fatherless families in the sample. All

the social agencies at which each of the families had registered were recorded. However, only one registration at any particular agency was recorded, irrespective of subsequent registrations at that particular agency. Provision was made on the schedule for the separate recording of registrations at certain specific social agencies, namely Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, Juvenile and Family Court. All other social agency registrations at Confidential Exchange were merely totalled and designated as "other" on our schedule. This was done because our concern was with the variety in the use of the social services by fatherless families rather than the intensity of this use. Due to the method of recording social agency registrations by Confidential Exchange it was often impossible to differentiate between hospital medical and hospital social service registrations. When definitely indicated as Social Service registrations, these were included under "other" social agency registrations; otherwise hospital registrations were omitted.

Due to the cessation of Confidential Exchange's operation, in December, 1960, subsequent registrations were obtained directly from the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, Juvenile and Family Court. Because the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg did not register with Confidential Exchange, the clinic's central rotary index was consulted directly to obtain information regarding the registration of children of all families in the sample.

Thus the data involves registrations at "other" social agencies only up to December, 1960. This is a limitation, in that any registrations at "other" social agencies after December, 1960 have not been included in our study. This limitation, however, is not found in the case of Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, Juvenile and Family Court and the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg, since any registrations at these agencies up to the time of data collection were included in our study. An attempt was made to obtain accurate data on registrations for the previously mentioned agencies which are involved in specific sub-hypotheses. It was deemed impossible within the limits of our study to contact directly all "other" social agencies in Winnipeg proper in order to obtain similar up-to-date data.

Confidential Exchange was lacking in that it gave no specific reason for agency contact. This meant that contact for child placement had to be determined by direct consultation of the Children's Aid Society files.

Subsequent to the determination of the informational sources, a sample group of fatherless families was chosen. Initially, a simple random method of sampling was employed to select fifty fatherless families, from the September 1962 active caseload of the Province of Manitoba Department of Welfare. This sample was found to consist of forty-one cases in which the father's absence was due to death and nine cases in which the father's absence was due to desertion.

The composition of one sample of one hundred fatherless families is shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
SAMPLE COMPOSITION:  
ACCORDING TO REASON FOR THE FATHER'S ABSENCE  
AND FINANCIAL AGENCY ENROLLMENT

Category	Provincial Welfare Department	Winnipeg Welfare Department	Total
A. Death	41	9	50
B. Desertion	9	11	20
Separation	0	24	24
Divorce	0	6	6

In order to ensure the selection of two equal categories, that is, fifty families in category A (death) and fifty families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) the sample from the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department was weighted to include nine families in which the father's absence was due to death. This stratified random sampling method used at the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department resulted not only in the selection of two equal categories, but also decreased the possibility of a mere comparison of the active caseloads of the two financial agencies. An extremely limited number of cases in which the father was absent due to divorce was available for inclusion in our sample. No cases of this nature were available at the Province of Manitoba Department of Welfare. In view of this, conclusions which could be

drawn about families fatherless due to divorce would be limited. Data on families fatherless due to divorce might have a disproportionate influence on our findings. The sample at the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department was not representative of the total caseload of families fatherless due to separation, desertion or divorce because of overweighting of the widows. This is a possible limitation.

A schedule was devised to record information concerning family demographic information and data on social agency registrations. This schedule was tested in a pilot study using ten fatherless families from the two financial agencies. Following this testing, minor changes were introduced in order to facilitate a more efficient employment of the schedule. These changes consisted of alteration in the order of questions and the addition of demographic information. The final version of this schedule may be found in Appendix A.

The name, alias, and address of the family was the initial information recorded by the schedule. Aliases were included since the possibility of irregular unions, variations in surname spelling or anglicization of names could result in agency registrations under several different names. Additionally, the addresses provided further identification of the family. Identification of families was also facilitated by the inclusion of demographic information such as the number, sexes, names and birth dates of children in each family. Provision was made for the recording of information on social agency registrations. The first such information recorded was on the financial agency with which

the family was currently enrolled. Information on the financial agency registrations included both the particular agency of enrollment and the date of enrollment with mother as family head. It further included information indicative of any prior enrollment with the father as head. Facts regarding registrations at certain specific agencies, namely the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Family Bureau of Greater Winnipeg, Juvenile and Family Court and the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg were next included, and, in the case of the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, registration for the specific purpose of child placement was indicated on the schedule. Lastly, the schedule indicated listings with any other social agencies without an exact specification of the social agencies concerned. It was not felt necessary to differentiate between the "other" services used since the main hypothesis around which this information was obtained concerned the quantity of additional agencies used and not the specific nature of the additional social agencies used.

The schedule, of course, is limited since it was not designed to show anything other than a single registration at an agency and does not indicate multiple registrations at the same agency, duration of contacts or reason for contact, except in one case. However, this is more a limitation of the study itself, than of the schedule alone.

The analysis of the data was made after this data had been obtained through the use of our schedule. The fatherless families were divided into the two previously mentioned categories, A (death) and B

(desertion, separation and divorce) and a comparison was made of the use of social agencies by the families in each of these categories. For category B (desertion, separation and divorce), not only was the use of social agencies determined for the category as a whole, but the use of social agencies by each of the deserted, separated or divorced families, was determined separately.

In summation, then, this study consisted of investigation into the distribution of social services to, and some of the social problems of, economically dependent fatherless families. Comparisons were made of this distribution as relevant to the reasons the family was without the father. The analysis of the data obtained and the findings resulting from this analysis follow in the succeeding chapters.



## CHAPTER IV

The data for analysis was the known registrations at various social agencies for a sample of one hundred fatherless families.

The majority of the families fatherless due to death were selected from the Province of Manitoba Department of Welfare. The majority of families fatherless due to desertion were selected from the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department, as were all families fatherless due to divorce and separation.

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### DO FATHERLESS FAMILIES WHO ARE ENROLLED AT A FINANCIAL AGENCY USE ADDITIONAL AGENCIES?

The total number of agency registrations, in addition to the financial agency, for category A (death) was found to be 94. The total number of agency registrations, in addition to the financial agency, for category B (desertion, separation or divorce) was found to be 168. The fatherless families were found to have a total of 262 additional registrations at social agencies.

The mean number of additional social agency registrations for the sample of fatherless families was found to be 2.62.

A differentiation of the additional social agency registrations, according to the categories, is presented in Table II.

TABLE II  
CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES  
AND ADDITIONAL SOCIAL AGENCY REGISTRATIONS

Category	Number of Families Registered at						Total Registrations
	C.A.S.	F.B.	F.C.	J.C.	C.G.C.	Other	
A) Death	18	3	3	14	21	35	94
B) Desertion	12	5	15	8	11	17	68
Separation	15	8	20	7	9	27	86
Divorce	3	1	4	2	1	3	14

<sup>1</sup>This figure indicates total number of agency registrations other than those specifically defined in the table.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL  
SOCIAL AGENCIES USED WHEN THE FATHER IS ABSENT  
DUE TO DEATH, THAN WHEN THE FATHER IS ABSENT  
DUE TO DESERTION, SEPARATION, OR DIVORCE?

None of the families in category A (death) were found to be registered at more than six additional agencies. In the case of category B (desertion, separation or divorce), 10% were found to be registered at either seven or eight additional agencies. 76% of the families in category A (death) were found to be registered with at least one additional social agency. 98% of the families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) were found to be registered with at least one additional social agency. Only one family in the latter category, a family in which the father was absent due to divorce, was

found to have no additional registrations.

The relative number of additional registrations for each family in each category is presented in Table III. The difference in additional agency registrations between category A (death) and category B (Desertion, separation and divorce) has been found to be statistically significant.

TABLE III  
CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES AND RELATIVE NUMBER  
OF ADDITIONAL AGENCY REGISTRATIONS

No. of Additional Agency Registra- tions	DEATH Number of Families	DES., SEP., DIV. Number of Families	Total
No other	12 (24%)	1 (2%)	13
1 - 2	21 (42%)	19 (38%)	40
3 - 4	14 (28%)	17 (34%)	31
5 - 6	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	11
7 - 8	0 (nil)	5 (10%)	5
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	100

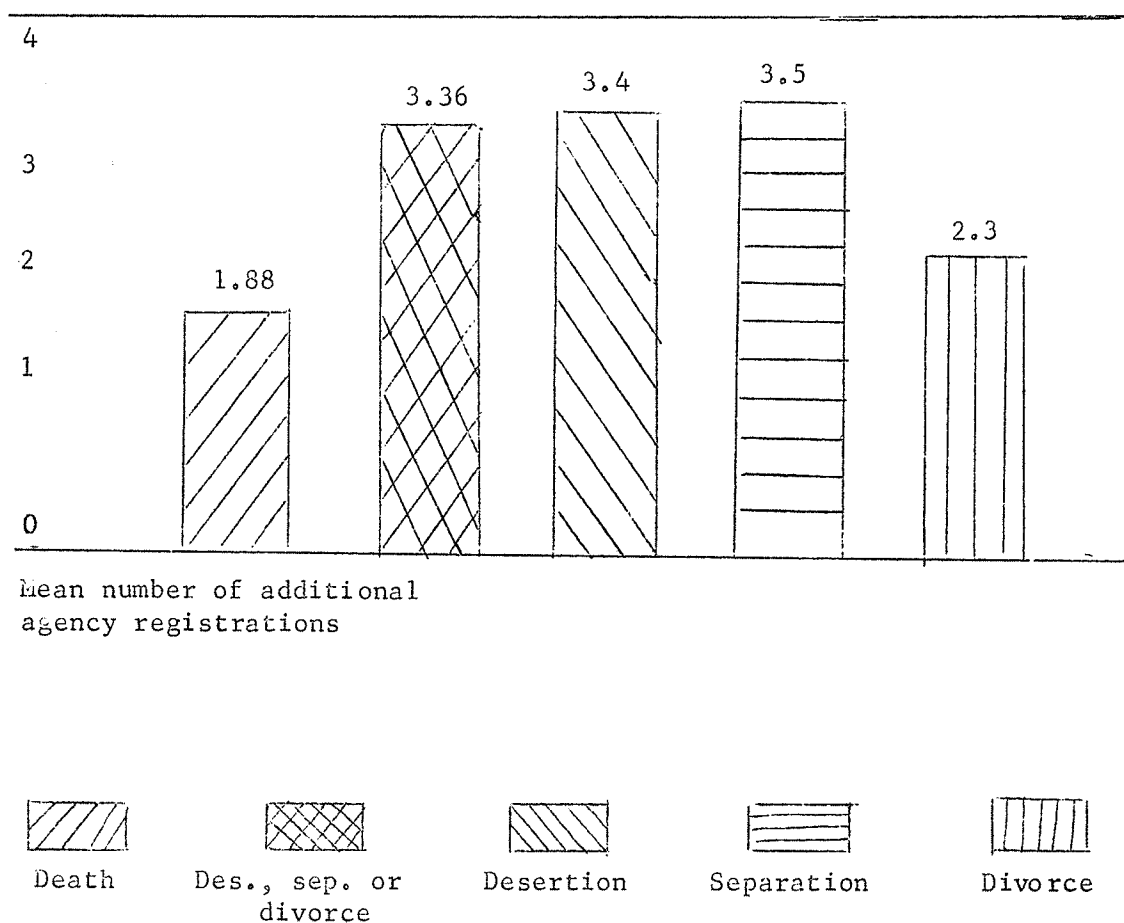
$$x^2 = 16.97 \quad \text{Pr} \quad .01.$$

Data which represents a further differentiation of category A (death) and category B (desertion, separation or divorce) may be found in Appendix B, Table IV. This table presents the exact number of additional agency registrations.

The total number of registrations in addition to the financial agency were added and the mean number of additional agency registrations was determined for each category. In addition, separate means for desertion, separation and divorce were determined. The findings are presented in Figure I.

FIGURE I

CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES AND MEAN  
NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL AGENCY REGISTRATIONS



For category A (death) the mean number of additional registrations at social agencies was 1.88. For category B (desertion, separation or divorce) the mean number of additional registrations at social agencies was found to be 3.36. This latter mean was determined by the division of the total number of additional agency registrations (168) by the total number of families in the category (50). Establishment of the mean in this way was designed to compensate for the possible disproportionate influence of the data for families in which the father's absence was due to divorce. The mean registrations for divorce, separation and desertion were found to be 3.4, 3.5, and 2.3 respectively. The mean number of additional agency registrations for both desertion and separation was considerably higher than in the case of death. However, the difference between the mean for divorce and the mean for death was not as great as in the case of desertion or separation.

DOES THE INCIDENCE OF PRIOR FINANCIAL  
DEPENDENCY VARY WITH THE REASON FOR  
THE FATHER'S ABSENCE?

Information in connection with registration at a financial agency, when the father had been present, was obtained for each category. The findings are presented in Table V.

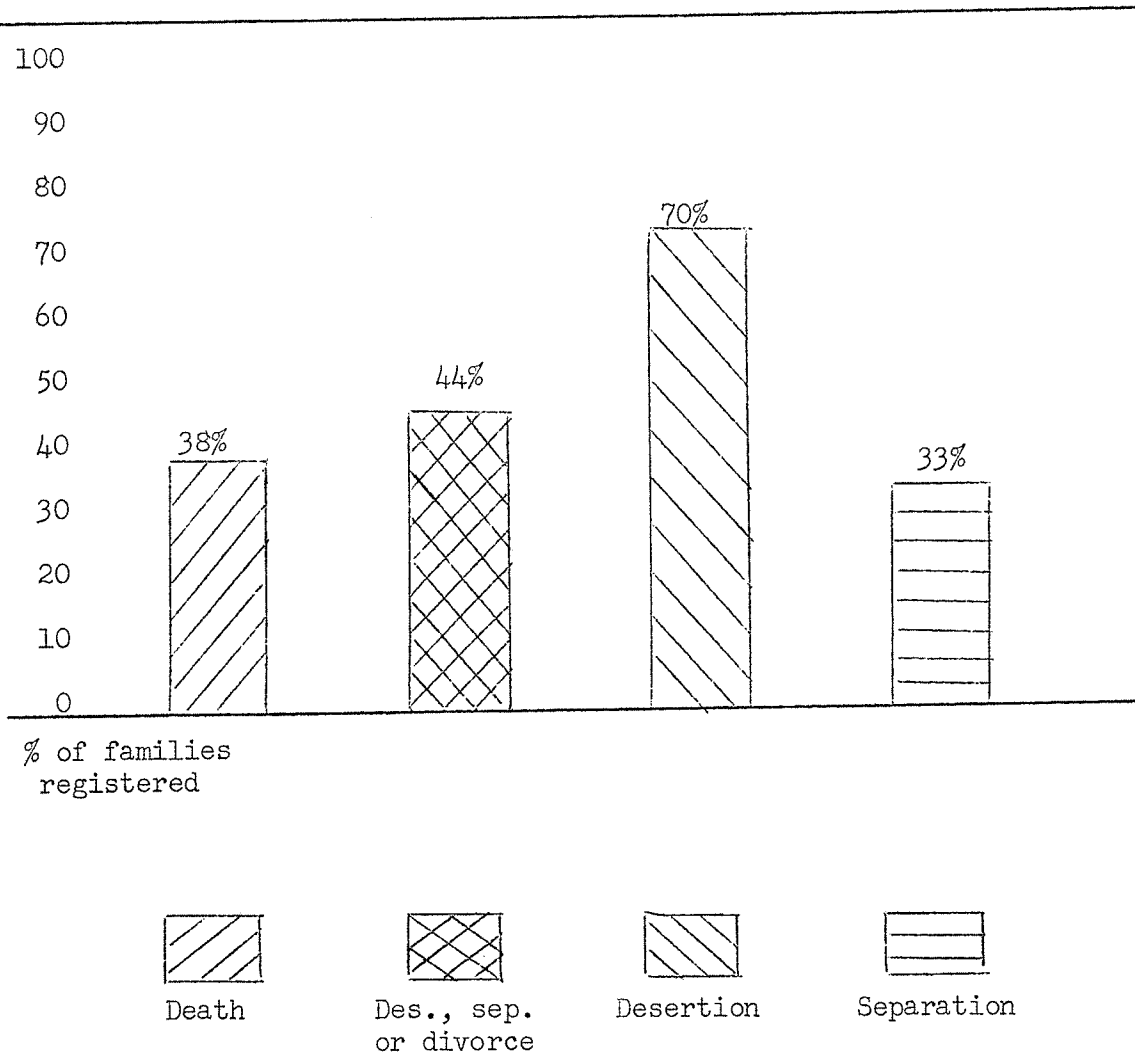
TABLE V  
CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES AND PRIOR  
FINANCIAL AGENCY REGISTRATIONS  
WITH FATHER PRESENT

Category	Winnipeg Department	Provincial Department	Either	Neither	Both
A) Death	13	6	19	31	0
B) Desertion	14	1	14	6	1
Separation	8	0	8	16	0
Divorce	0	0	0	6	0

44% of families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) showed prior registration at a financial agency, at a time when the father had been present within the home. 38% of families in category A (death) showed similar registrations. None of the families fatherless due to divorce; 33% fatherless due to separation; and 70% fatherless due to desertion showed similar registrations. While the difference between category A (death) and category B (desertion, separation or divorce) was not great, category B showed considerable variation. Desertion showed a particularly high prior registration, while divorce showed no prior registration. These findings are presented in Figure II.

FIGURE II

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES REGISTERED AT A FINANCIAL  
AGENCY, PRIOR TO THE FATHER'S ABSENCE,  
BY CATEGORY OF FAMILY



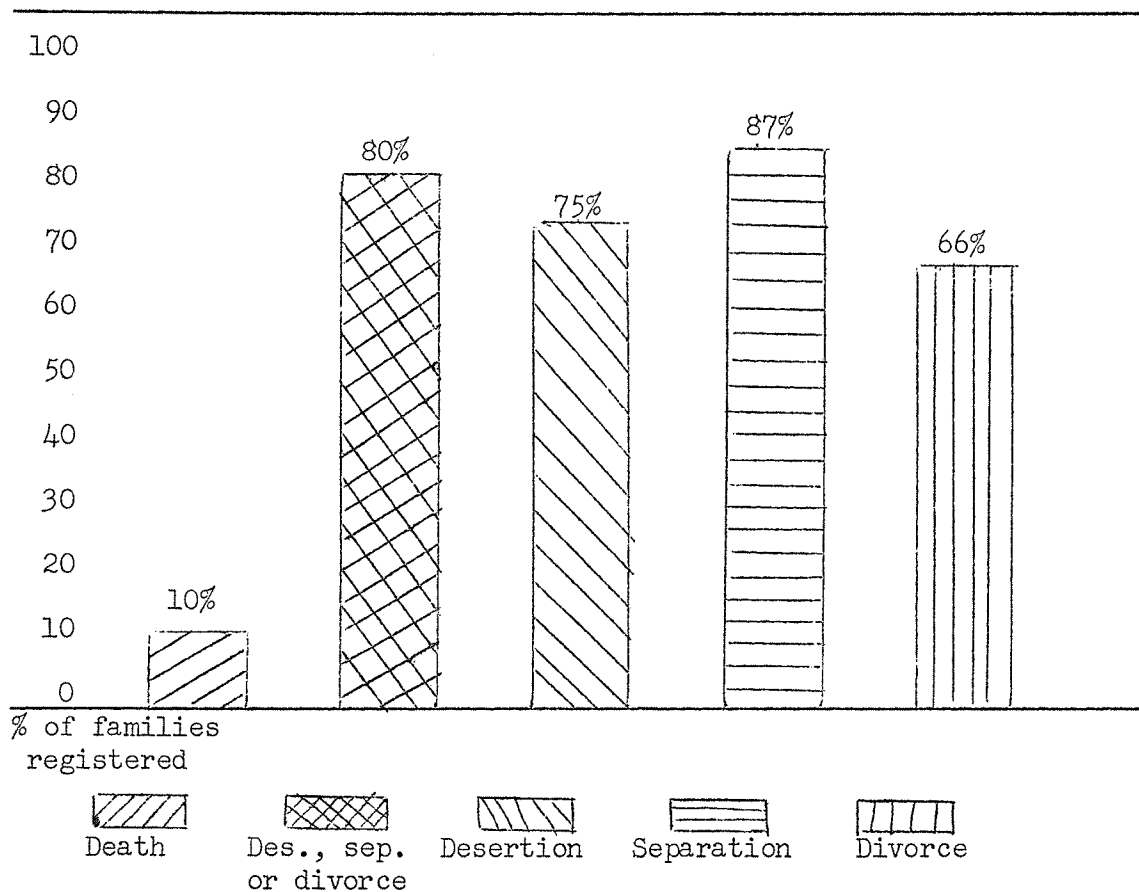
DOES THE INCIDENCE OF PRIOR MARITAL STRIFE  
VARY WITH THE REASON FOR THE FATHER'S  
ABSENCE?

80% of the families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) were found to have registrations at a marital counselling

agency prior to the absence of the father. Only 10% of the families in category A (death) were found to have similar registrations. The percentages for desertion, separation and divorce were found to be 75%, 87% and 66%. Each of desertion, separation and divorce show a high percentage of registrations at a marital counselling agency. In the case of death, the percentage of these registrations is low. The specific marital counselling agencies consulted were the Winnipeg Family Court and the Winnipeg Family Bureau.

These findings are presented in Figure III, and the data on which they are based is presented in Appendix B, Table VI.

FIGURE III

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES REGISTERED AT A MARITAL  
COUNSELLING AGENCY BY CATEGORY OF FAMILY



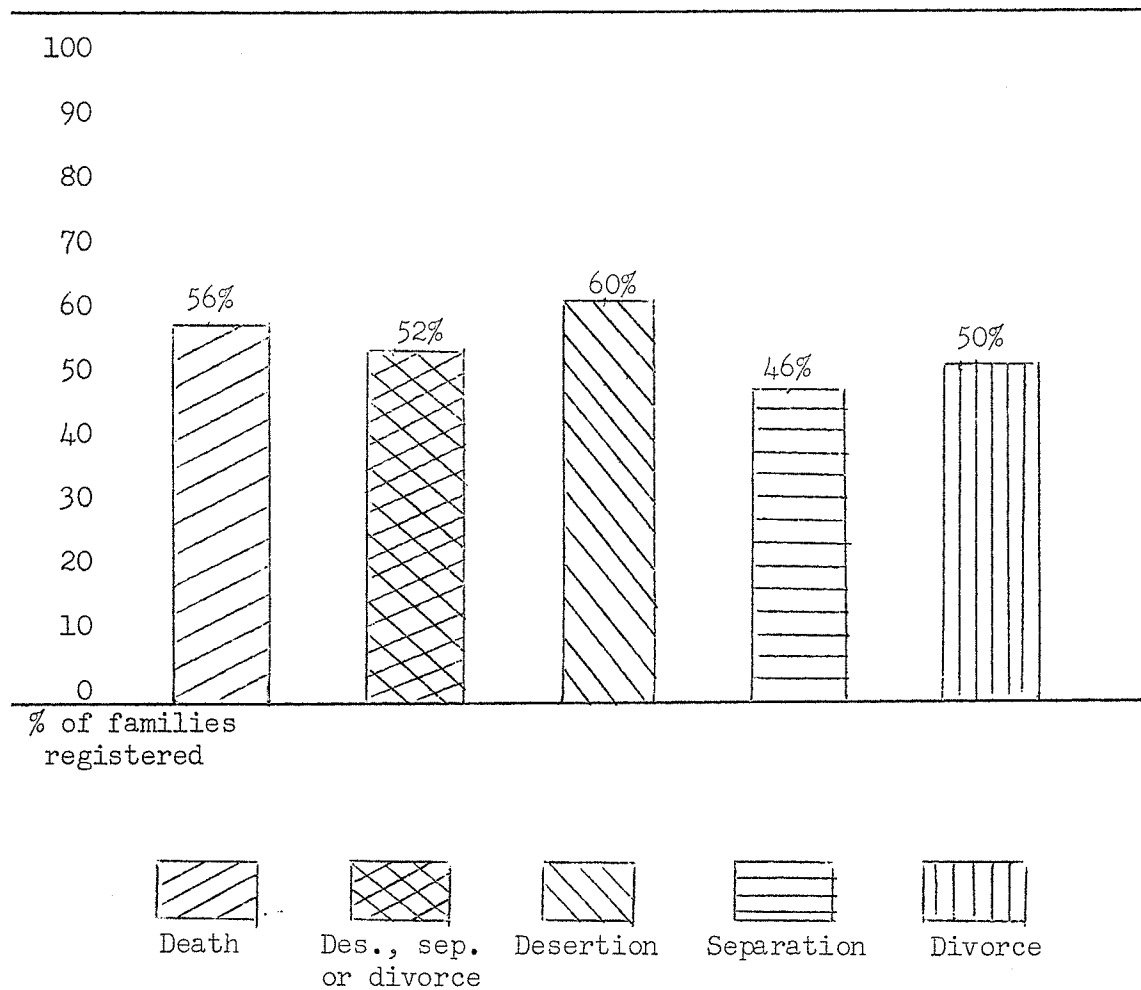
DOES THE INCIDENCE OF RECOGNIZED CHILD BEHAVIOUR  
PROBLEMS VARY WITH THE REASON FOR THE FATHER'S  
ABSENCE?

52% of the families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) were found to be registered at agencies which dealt with child behaviour problems. 56% of families in category A (death) were found to have the same registrations. The percentages for desertion, separation and divorce were 60%, 46% and 50%. Approximately 50% of the fatherless families were found to be registered at agencies which dealt with child behaviour problems. There was little variation in accordance with the reason for the father's absence. The specific agency registrations which were used to indicate child behaviour problems were the Winnipeg Child Guidance Clinic and the Winnipeg Juvenile Court.

The findings are presented in Figure IV, and the data on which the findings are based is presented in Appendix B, Table VII.

FIGURE IV

CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES AND PERCENTAGE  
REGISTERED AT AGENCIES WHICH DEAL WITH CHILD  
BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS



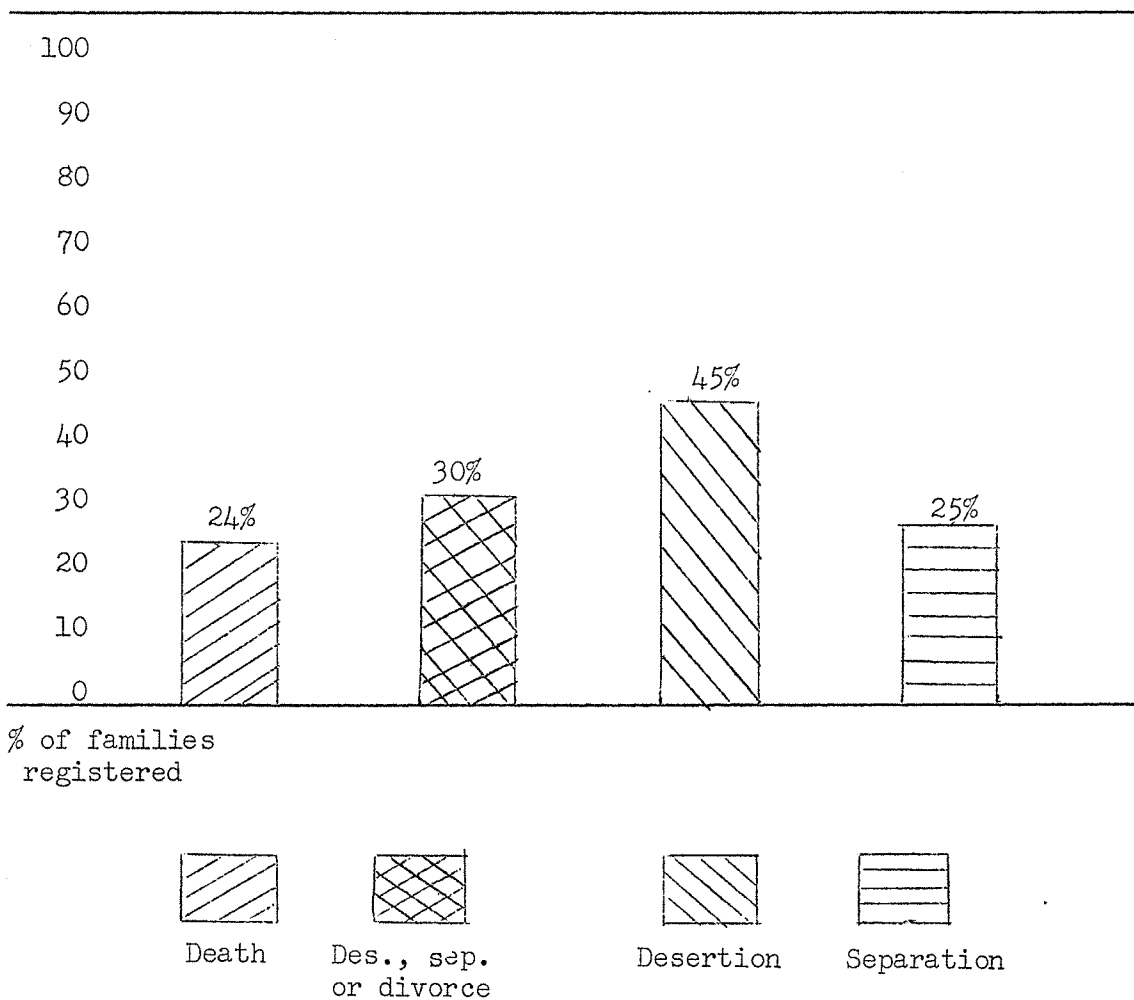
DOES THE INCIDENCE OF CHILD PLACEMENT VARY WITH  
THE REASON FOR THE FATHER'S ABSENCE?

30% of the families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) showed registration at an agency for the purpose of child placement. 24% of the families in category A (death) showed similar registrations. The percentages for desertion, separation and divorce were 45%, 25% and 0%. While the difference between category A (death) and category B (desertion, separation or divorce) was not great, considerable variation was found within category B. Desertion showed a high percentage of registrations, while divorce showed no such registrations. The records of the Winnipeg Children's Aid Society were used to obtain these findings.

The findings are presented in Figure V, and the data on which they are based is presented in Appendix B, Table VIII.

FIGURE V

CATEGORIES OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES AND PERCENTAGE  
REGISTERED AT AN AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
CHILD PLACEMENT



DOES THE REGISTRATION AT INVOLUNTARY AGENCIES VARY  
WITH THE REASON FOR THE FATHER'S ABSENCE?

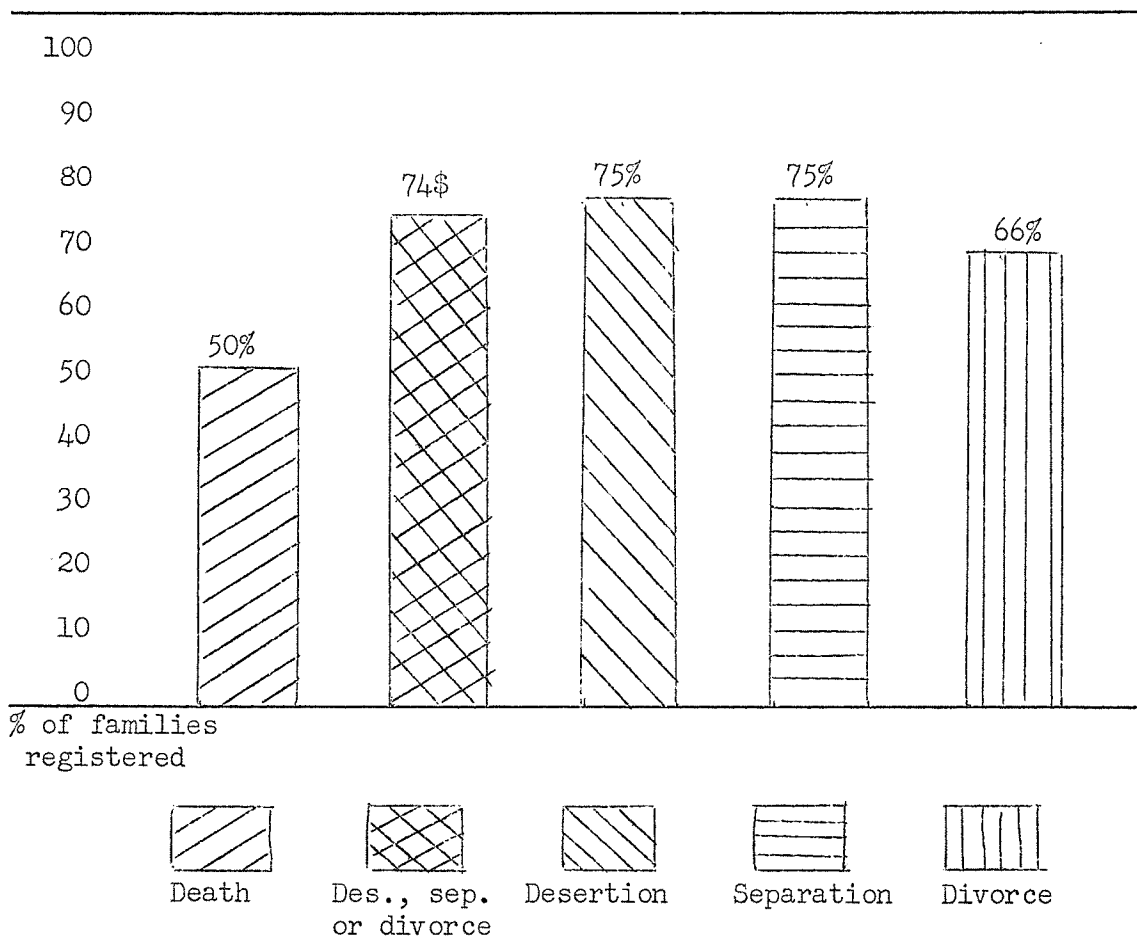
74% of the families in category B (desertion, separation or divorce) showed registration at an involuntary agency. 50% of the families in category A (death) showed the same registration. The percentages for desertion, separation and divorce were 75%, 75% and 66%.

All of the fatherless families showed a high percentage of registrations at involuntary agencies. In the case of category B (desertion, separation or divorce) the percentage of families registered was approximately 25% higher than in the case of category A (death). Registrations at the Winnipeg Children's Aid Society and the Winnipeg Juvenile Court were used to obtain these findings.

The findings are presented in Figure VI, and the data on which the findings are based may be found in Appendix B, Table IX.

FIGURE VI

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES REGISTERED AT AN INVOLUNTARY AGENCY, BY CATEGORY OF FAMILY



## CHAPTER V

A sample of one hundred fatherless families was studied in order to discover some of their social problems and their use of social services. Fifty of these fatherless families were in receipt of financial assistance from the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department. The other fifty families in the sample were receiving financial assistance from the Province of Manitoba Department of Welfare.

The sample was divided into two major categories and these were compared as to their relative use of social services. In addition, the use of agencies for certain specific social problems was compared. The problems selected for study were marital conflict, child placement, prior financial dependency, and child behaviour problems. Finally, the use of involuntary agencies was compared.

The hypothesis tested was that fatherless families enrolled at one financial agency make use of other social agencies.

Our findings substantiated this hypothesis. The data revealed 262 additional registrations at social agencies. This represents a mean of 2.62 additional registrations for the sample group.

Evaluation of the data in connection with the six sub-hypotheses will now be undertaken.

The first sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce will show greater use of social agencies than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

This sub-hypothesis is definitely borne out by our findings. The mean number of additional agency registrations, 3.36 for category B (desertion, separation, divorce), and 1.88 for category A (death) indicate that families in the former category have almost double the number of additional agency registrations. The relationship between the categories of fatherless families and use of other agencies was found to be statistically significant. The data also indicates that almost 100% of the families in category B (desertion, separation, divorce) are registered with at least one additional social agency. The actual percentage for category B is 98%. On the other hand, only three-quarters of the families in category A (death) are registered with at least one additional social agency. The actual percentage for category A is 74%. Thus, not only are more services used by category B (desertion, separation, divorce) but a greater proportion of the families in this category are involved in this use of additional services.

The second sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce, will show a greater incidence of financial dependency prior to becoming fatherless, than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

Our findings with regard to this sub-hypothesis were inconclusive. Between the main categories there was only a slight difference in the percentage of families who showed prior financial dependency. However, within category B (desertion, separation, divorce) a high

percentage (70%) of families in which the father's absence was due to desertion, was found to show prior financial dependency. This percentage was greater than the percentages for families rendered fatherless by separation or divorce. Also, it was evidently greater than the percentage for category A (death): 38%. None of the families rendered fatherless by divorce was found to show prior financial dependency. This may be due to the fact that divorce is an expensive method of marriage dissolution. Families seeking divorce, therefore, must have some financial resources in order to afford it. Such financial resources may not be available to families in which a temporary desertion, referred to as a "poor man's vacation", or a separation, referred to as the "poor man's divorce", have taken place. Thus, while the findings are inconclusive in connection with a difference between the major categories, prior financial dependency seems to be a definite and greater problem for families in which the father has deserted.

The third sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce, have a greater incidence of marital strife prior to becoming a fatherless family than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

This sub-hypothesis is substantiated. The findings show that four-fifths (80%) of the families in category B (desertion, separation, divorce) were registered at a marital counselling agency prior to the family breakdown. Similar registrations were found to exist in the case of only one-tenth (10%) of the families in category A (death).



The fourth sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce show a greater incidence of recognized behaviour problems in the children than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

The findings in regard to this sub-hypothesis are inconclusive. Approximately one-half of the families included in the study were found to be registered at agencies which dealt with child behaviour problems. The families represented in category B (desertion, separation, divorce) were found to have a slightly lower percentage of child behaviour problems (52%) than the families in category A (death): 56%. This finding suggests that there is an important association between child behaviour problems and family breakdown irrespective of cause of such breakdown.

The fifth sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce, show a greater incidence of child placement, outside the home, than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

Our findings in connection with this sub-hypothesis were inconclusive. A difference of only 6% between the major categories was established. Approximately one-quarter of the fatherless families have had children placed through social agencies. Also, approximately one-half (45%) of the families in which the father's absence is due to desertion have similar registrations. These findings suggest two conclusions: (1) That a need for child placement is associated with

family breakdown, and (2) That this need is especially great in the case of families in which the father has deserted.

The final sub-hypothesis states that families in which the father's absence is due to desertion, separation or divorce show more use of involuntary agencies than families in which the father's absence is due to death.

This sub-hypothesis was definitely confirmed. Approximately three-quarters of the families in category B (desertion, separation, divorce) were found to be registered at involuntary agencies. However, only one-half of the families in category A (death) were found to have similar registrations. Thus, a high registration at involuntary agencies appears to be a characteristic feature of fatherless families. As compared to death, desertion, separation and divorce show not only higher (approximately 25% higher) registrations as a category on the whole, but higher registrations on an individual basis.

In general, families in this study show a higher need for certain services than for other services. This suggests that certain problems, namely marital conflict, which although low in category A (death), was strikingly high in category B (desertion, separation, divorce), and child behaviour difficulties are prevalent in fatherless families. The existence of other problems has been confirmed but these have not been found to exist to the same extent.

Families in which the father was absent due to desertion showed a relatively high number of registrations at social agencies. This could indicate that these families have a greater incidence of social stress than other families studied in the project and are less able to function.

On the other hand, families fatherless due to divorce showed a tendency towards a relatively low number of registrations at social agencies. No registrations indicative of prior financial dependency or a need for child placement were found. These findings thus indicate a unique combination of problems which is different from those found in other types of fatherless families included in this study. However, any conclusions in connection with families in which the father is absent due to divorce are limited by the size of the sample. Only six (6% of total sample) such families were included in the study. Despite this, there appears to be some differences in the nature and extent of the problems encountered by these families. This difference may also warrant further research.

Because this study is confined to fatherless families who are receiving financial assistance our conclusions are not applicable to fatherless families in general. It was also impossible to differentiate between the relative influence of the paternal absence and the relative influence of the economic situation on the use of social services. Possibly these factors may be inter-related. The paternal absence may result in financial stress. This stress may result in

additional problems which, in turn, may require the services of social agencies. This could constitute an area for further research.

Since registrations at social agencies constitute the basic data of this study, the reliability of our findings is closely related to consistency in agency registration. Where a family alias was known to exist, registrations under the alias were traced. In the case of medical services, it was sometimes found to be impossible to differentiate between registration at a medical agency for social service only, or for both medical and social service. This could result in a lower total number of additional registrations for the fatherless families than actually exists.

It will be recalled that it was assumed in this study that agency registration would be indicative of the need for the type of service with which the agency was predominantly associated. However, in actuality, the registration may have indicated use of a service other than the predominant one. Also, no attempt was made to distinguish between the father's intermittent coming and going. It is possible that reunion and departure are a characteristic family interactional phenomenon. In this event, different problems may arise from when the father is permanently absent. This may be clarified by further research.

Within our study no differentiation was made between use of social services and such factors as socio-economic class, religious or cultural background, age of parents, educational level, and the like.

Thus, differentiation of factors and the original assumptions limit the validity of our findings.

In the selection of our original sample, the number of families in which the father was absent due to divorce was low (6 out of a total sample of 100 fatherless families). As a result, conclusions concerning the social problems and use of social agencies by families fatherless due to divorce were limited.

Originally, through our practical experience and theoretical knowledge, we expected that a defect in a basic social institution, the family, would result in a considerable number of family problems. These family problems would require the provision of resources unavailable for one reason or another within the family, thus requiring social services not only to restore but to sustain and enhance social functioning.

The breakdown of the family group through loss of the father is a problem affecting all economic groups in our society. Its effects on the low income families seem to be particularly severe. It has been found that these fatherless families are besieged by numerous social and economic forces which create stresses and strains for them. Consequently, they need help not only with material needs, but with problems in social functioning. In future, it is hoped, more attempts will be made to study these fatherless families so that they may be helped more effectively to deal with the problems confronting them; thus strengthening the basic institution of our society--the family.

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APPENDIX A

Staff initials \_\_\_\_\_  
Grp. member  
initials \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency initials \_\_\_\_\_  
File # \_\_\_\_\_  
Code # \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP V

SCHEDULE

STUDY OF FATHERLESS FAMILIES

- I. a) Name of family \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Alias \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Address \_\_\_\_\_
- II. 1. a) With which agency is the family now enrolled?  
Mother's Allowance \_\_\_\_\_  
City Welfare \_\_\_\_\_  
b) First date of enrollment with mother as head  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. a) Was the family ever registered at either of the above  
agencies prior to becoming fatherless? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
b) If "yes" to the above, give date of first enrollment  
Mother's Allowance \_\_\_\_\_  
City Welfare \_\_\_\_\_
- III. a) Reason for absence of father as of September 1962.  
(check one)  
death \_\_\_\_\_  
desertion \_\_\_\_\_  
divorce \_\_\_\_\_  
separation \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Number of children (write number in)  
male \_\_\_\_\_  
female \_\_\_\_\_

c) List names and birthdates of children

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

a) Is family on rolls (present or previous) of any agency other than the financial one? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

b) If "yes" to above, check names of other agencies

1. Children's Aid Society \_\_\_\_\_

Was there child placement? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Family Bureau \_\_\_\_\_

3. Family Court \_\_\_\_\_

4. Juvenile Court \_\_\_\_\_

5. Child Guidance Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

List children involved \_\_\_\_\_

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Other (circle number) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APPENDIX B

TABLE IV

ADDITIONAL REGISTRATIONS AT SOCIAL AGENCIES  
BY CATEGORY OF FATHERLESS FAMILY

Number of Additional Registrations	Number of Families				Total Other Agencies Used			
	Death	Des.	Sep.	Div.	Death	Des.	Sep.	Div.
0	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1	13	2	4	1	13	2	4	1
2	8	5	5	2	16	10	10	4
3	8	6	4	1	24	18	12	3
4	6	2	4	0	24	8	16	0
5	1	3	3	0	5	15	15	0
6	2	0	1	1	12	0	6	6
7	0	1	1	0	0	7	7	0
8	0	1	2	0	0	8	16	0

TABLE VI

CATEGORY OF FATHERLESS FAMILY AND REGISTRATION AT A  
MARITAL COUNSELLING AGENCY PRIOR TO THE FAMILY  
BREAKUP

Category	F.B.	F.C.	Either	Neither	Both
A) Death	3	3	5	45	1
B) Desertion	5	15	15	5	5
Separation	8	20	21	3	7
Divorce	1	4	4	2	1

TABLE VII

CATEGORY OF FATHERLESS FAMILY AND REGISTRATION  
AT AN AGENCY INVOLVED IN CHILD BEHAVIOUR  
PROBLEMS

Category	J.C.	C.G.C.	Either	Neither	Both
A) Death	14	21	28	22	7
B) Desertion	8	11	12	8	7
Separation	7	9	11	13	5
Divorce	2	1	3	3	0

TABLE VIII

CATEGORY OF FATHERLESS FAMILY AND REGISTRATION  
AT AN AGENCY FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHILD  
PLACEMENT

Category	Number of Registrations for Child Placement
A) Death	12
B) Desertion	9
Separation	6
Divorce	0

TABLE IXCATEGORY OF FATHERLESS FAMILY AND REGISTRATION  
AT INVOLUNTARY AGENCIES

Category	J.C.	C.A.S.	Either	Neither	Both
A) Death	14	18	25	25	7
B) Desertion	8	12	15	5	5
Separation	7	15	18	6	4
Divorce	2	3	4	2	1