

FATHER-ABSENCE AS RELATED TO
PARENTAL ROLE-PLAY BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

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By

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The specific problem of this study was to compare the parental role play behavior exhibited by black five year old children from father-absent homes, where the father had been absent for a minimum of one year or more as a result of separation, divorce, desertion, death or military duty, with parental role play behavior exhibited by black five year old children from father-present homes, where there had been no significant discontinuity in the presence of either natural parent, in two ten minute simulated doll play family settings for each child.

The dependent variables of concern were choice of role and dimensions of role play behavior, and the independent variables were father-absence/presence and sex with age, race, social economic status and geographical location controlled by exclusion.

The forty subjects were selected from four Head Start centers in and around Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Projective doll-play was chosen as a measurement procedure since it required less verbal skill than other projective techniques and was flexible enough and play-oriented enough to allow free expression of the child's real feelings.

The data were gathered from two doll-play sessions. In the first session, the child was asked to choose the parental role he wished to play, while in the second session he was asked to play the father role.

Following quantification coding of the direct observation protocols, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to analyze the several variables within each of three projective dimensions of the role play situation; verbal behavior, physical interactions and household tasks. Only the data of the session in which the child was directed to play the father role were used in these analyses.

A chi-square analysis was used with the nominal data related to parental role choice in the initial doll-play session.

For the purpose of discussion a probability of chance occurrence level of .10 was selected as appropriate.

Parental role choice in the initial doll-play situation indicated that children made the appropriate sex role choices irrespective of the father's presence or absence.

The Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) revealed no significant interaction on main effects among the independent groups in verbal behavior, physical interactions or projected household tasks. However, intercorrelations of related variables indicated adequate independence in the case of projected punitive acts, child care tasks and cleaning tasks to warrant consideration of related univariate analyses.

Comparisons of independent group cell means for these variables indicated that females projected twice as many supportive acts as males, and that father-absent children were more supportive than their father-present peers. Analyses of the univariate further indicated that the father-present children projected more cleaning tasks but fewer child care tasks. In addition, father-present males projected more cleaning tasks than did any other group, while the females projected more child care tasks than did males.

Due to the preliminary nature of this study these data should be interpreted with caution, but directions for further research are clear.

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Eula Mae Masingale

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Father-absence is of growing concern to society. Research evidence is accumulating to show the effect of prolonged absence of either parent upon the socialization and development of the child (Yarrow, 1964; Clausen, 1966).

This evidence is highly equivocal in nature, however, and all children are not affected in the same way. A high degree of variability in the effects of father-absence upon specific children has been shown in such aspects of behavior as sex role identification, anxiety dependency, aggression, antisocial behavior, delay of gratification and field independence (Biller, 1969; Wohlford, Santrock, Berger and Liberman, 1970). A large body of research having to do with family composition is concerned with father-absence on sex role learning or identification.

According to Kriesberg (1970), children learn by direct inculcation and by implicit accommodation. He implies that values, beliefs, social behaviors and orientations may be inculcated through the child's identification with parents and through the directed rewards and punishment of the parents. Children learn by observing what really is

going on as well as by what they are told. The child is formed in part, then, by the patterns he develops in accommodating to the circumstances in his family.

However, the effect of father-absence cannot be regarded as an isolated factor. Hetherington and Deur (1971) comment that the consequences of paternal absence for the children involved will depend on the reasons for his absence, the quality of the marriage and family relationship prior to the father's departure and the nature of the family's subsequent interaction. If the father were a major source of conflict within the family, his absence could conceivably have some ameliorative effects upon family members. Even if it is assumed that the father's absence results in general hardships for the family, other factors will be extremely important in determining the degree to which the specific family member is affected.

Examples of factors that may affect the impact of father-absence include: the manner in which the mother copes with the problems caused by the father's departure; the type of support provided by relatives, friends and father surrogates; the length of time of separation; the presence of siblings; socioeconomic status, sex, age and race of the child. It follows from this, then, that an increased number of studies examining the effects of father-absence on specific aspects of child behavior for specific groups of children are necessary.

This study was designed as an attempt to answer basic questions regarding relationships of father-absence to selected parental role-play behaviors of preschool children. These behaviors included parental role choice in addition to number and nature of physical interactions, amount and nature of verbal behavior and number and nature of household tasks projected.

General Statement of Problem

The problem of this study was to compare defined parental role-play behavior exhibited by black five year old children from father-absent homes with the parental role-play behavior exhibited by a similar group of children from homes where there had been no significant discontinuity in the presence of either natural parent.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to investigate relationships between the parental role-play behavior exhibited by father-absent children with the parental role-play behavior exhibited by father-present children. The specific objectives were:

1. To evolve a conceptual framework to enable the comparison of parental role-play behavior of father-absent children with that of father-present children in a projective role-play situation.

2. To adapt a projective doll play technique while using a simulated family setting as originally developed by Robinson (1946) in order to assess the projected role-play behavior of five year old children.
3. To determine if the parental role choice made by father-absent children differed significantly from the parental role choice made by father-present children in a parental role-play situation when the child was asked to choose one or the other parental roles.
4. To determine the amount and nature of projected physical interactions exhibited by father-absent and father-present children among the doll figures used in a parental role-play situation.
5. To determine the amount and nature of verbal behavior projected by father-absent and father-present children in a role-play situation.
6. To determine the amount and nature of household tasks projected to the father role in a parental role-play situation.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

A father contributes to his family by his roles outside as well as inside the family. He serves as a link to many spheres of the external community, and he brings reports and concerns from these spheres into the home. The father-absent home is void of these reports and concerns.

To some extent the father contributes to the family as the socially required companion and, thus, helps to provide a status identity. Within the family the husband's role as father means that the children know another adult with skills, activities, attitudes and feelings which can broaden their range of experience.

Parents are models for imitation. Such identification is commonly held to be a function of parental nurturance. The ages from one to five are crucial years in the life of a child (Biller, 1970); these are considered the root years when children give emotional allegiance to one parent and attempt to duplicate in their own lives the attitudes and behaviors of the parent with whom they identify. In many cases this parent is the father. When the

father is absent, however, a void in the life of the developing child often exists.

Father-Absence

More than one-tenth of the children in the United States live in households where no father is present (Clausen, 1966; Pettigrew, 1964; Schlesinger, 1966). The incidence of fatherless families is especially high among lower class families (Miller, 1958) and particularly among lower class Negro families, approaching 50 percent in some areas (King, 1945; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964).

Theories of identification have contributed the major hypotheses pertaining to the boy's sex-role development. A primary assumption of these theories is that the father's presence is of crucial importance in the boy's sex role development. According to these theories, the boy learns to be masculine by identifying with the father and imitating his behavior (Bandura and Walters, 1963; Biller and Borstelman, 1967; Bronfenbrenner, 1960).

There is a wealth of evidence pointing to the importance of the father-son relationship in masculine development which was reviewed by Biller and Borstelmann (1967). In general, a warm relationship with a father who is himself masculine seems to be a very significant factor in the boys' sex-role development. Boys who have passive, ineffectual fathers generally appear to be less masculine

than boys who have interested fathers who play a decisive role in family interactions. It could be expected from such evidence, then, that father-absent boys will be less masculine than father-present boys.

In a pioneering investigation of the effects of father-absence, the doll-play activity of three to five year old father-absent and father-present children was analyzed. (Sears, 1941; Sears, Pintler, and Sears, 1946). Father-absent boys generally manifested less doll-play aggression than father-present boys; their doll play behavior also seemed to be less influenced by the common sex factor of the father and boy doll.

Using a similar procedure to study six to ten year old children, Bach (1946) also found that father-absent boys were less aggressive than father-absent boys and noted that:

The father-separated children produced an idealistic and feminine fantasy picture of the father when compared to the control children who elaborated the father's aggressive tendencies (p. 63).

A number of studies were made of the impact of the father's absence on the personality development of young children during World War II. Sears *et al.* (1946) and Bach (1946), using projective doll-play to assess personality and behavior patterns, found less aggressive doll-play among boys in families where the father was absent than among boys whose father was present. This pattern of play was interpreted as indicative of a more feminine orientation.

Stolz *et al.* (1954) discovered more feminine fantasy behavior and more overt feminine behavior in boys during their father's absence and after his return. He also noted behavior difficulties among the boys whose fathers had been absent during at least the first year of their lives. These boys were having difficulties in establishing and maintaining genuine relationships with adults as well as peers. Such children showed higher levels of anxiety, and in the doll-play experiment conducted after the father had returned, they exhibited more aggression than did the children in the control group of nonseparated families. Bach (1946) suggested that children's attitudes toward the absent father are very much influenced by the mother's basic feelings for the father. In individual case analyses he found that the mother's unfavorable attitude toward the absent father was reflected in a curiously ambivalent, aggressive-affectionate father fantasy in the children.

The study by Stolz (1954) highlights the difficulties in adjustment for both father and son which arise following the father's return after a long absence in military service.

Burton and Whiting (1961), in reviewing cross-cultural data, presented evidence that boys reared in societies in which the father is absent during infancy and in which no male figures are available as identification models will have conflicts in sex-role identity. They

noted, too, that in certain cultures feminine identification in boys is compensated by exaggerated masculine behavior. Similar interpretations of overcompensatory masculine behavior in lower-class delinquent boys have been made.

Stolz *et al.* (1954) reported that four to eight year old boys, who for approximately the first two years of their lives had been separated from their fathers, were generally regarded by their fathers as "sissies". Their study also revealed that these boys were less assertively aggressive and independent in their peer relations than boys who had not been separated from their fathers; moreover, they were more often observed to be overly submissive or to react with immature hostility.

Other studies also suggest that boys who have had fathers absent in their preschool years, even after their fathers return, are less masculine than boys whose fathers have been consistently present. Carlsmith (1964) found that, among middle class and upper-middle class high school males, early father-absence up to and before age five was related to the patterning of College Board Aptitude Scores. In contrast to the usual male pattern of math score higher than verbal score, the pattern of the father-absent subjects was more frequently the same as the female pattern: verbal score higher than math score. In addition, Carlsmith (1964) stated that "the relative superiority of verbal to math aptitude increases steadily the longer the father is absent and the younger the child is when the father left."

The impact of paternal absence on actual school performance is reflected in Deutsch's (1960) finding that lower-class Negro children from broken homes were far more likely to score below grade level on tests of academic achievement than their classmates from intact families. Children from intact families did better in school than those from broken homes, despite the fact that intact homes were more crowded, a circumstance which led Deutsch to conclude that "who lives in the room is more important than how many." In a subsequent study, Deutsch and Brown (1964) showed that a significant difference of about eight points in IQ was specifically attributable to absence of the father from the home.

According to Deutsch (1960), it is not only the absence of the Negro father that prevents the son from seeing the future realistically. Also relevant is the inferior position held by the adult Negro male in the economic world. In the matter of occupational choice, the Negro boy has few models to emulate that are actually within the realm of his possible achievement. In a study of occupational aspirations among lower class children, this circumstance was reflected. When asked what they wanted to be when they grew up, 25 percent of the Negro boys named high-prestige professions, such as doctor or lawyer, goals completely beyond practical realization and, hence, reflecting idle wish-fulfillment rather than an active achievement drive. In

contrast, Negro girls were more realistic in scaling down their aspirations to occupations within their reach. Deutsch accounted for this difference in terms of the greater availability for the girls of an accepted role model both within the family and in the outside world. A current replication of this study might produce different findings.

Leichty (1960) studied male college students who were father-absent between the ages of three to five and a matched father-present group. On the Blacky Pictures, fewer of the father-absent students said "Blacky" would like to pattern himself after his father; more often they chose "Mother" or "Tippy", a sibling. This observation can be conceived of as a projective indication of underlying sex-role orientation, the father-absent males being less masculine. Unfortunately, one does not know from the data Leichty presents how many of the father-absent group chose Tippy, an identification which might also indicate a masculine sex-role orientation. Interestingly, on this same item Rabin (1958) found that fewer nine to eleven year old kibbutz boys compared to nonkibbutz boys said Blacky would like to pattern himself after his father.

Phelan (1964) compared father-absent and father-present boys in terms of their human figure drawings, and speculated that boys who drew a female when asked to draw a person had failed to make a shift from an initial identification with the mother to an identification with the

father because of a lack of relative paternal influence in the home. Though the processes of identification in young children have been investigated extensively, relatively little research has assessed the behavioral effects of paternal absence on children. A particular void in research exists concerning the possible influence of paternal absence on the behavior of girls.

Sears, Pintler, and Sears (1946) demonstrated that if the father were absent from the home, his preschool age son would be delayed in acquiring sex-appropriate behavior patterns. But, according to the theory, mere presence of the like-sexed parent in the home is not enough to promote identification with him. It has also been hypothesized that the process is influenced by the degree of affection accorded the child by the person with whom identification is attempted, and the extent to which the child's needs are gratified by the person with whom identification is attempted (Stokes, 1950).

Sears (1953) presented some indirect evidence, however, which is highly relevant. She found that the five year old sons of warm, affectionate fathers tended to play the father role in doll-play activities more frequently than boys whose fathers were relatively cold. Insofar as extent of playing this role may be an index of the degree of identification with the father, it may be inferred that warm fathers are likely to foster strong father identification in their sons.

Direct rewards for imitation of the father's behavior also play an important role in the adoption of masculine behavior patterns. If the child is frequently and consistently rewarded for "acting like daddy," he develops a generalized tendency to imitate his father. As Mowrer (1950) pointed out, the extent to which the child is rewarded for sex-appropriate behavior depends not only on the actions of the like-sexed parent, but also on generally harmonious interparental relationships.

When the father is absent, the mother tends to be a more functional parent to the children (Winch, 1962), that is, she is relied on more than in two parent families. The boys in the father-absent families tend to be infantile and dependent and manifest conflict in their sex identification and compensatory masculinity more than father-present boys (Lynn, 1961).

Barclay and Cusumano (1971) investigated the effects of father-absence upon cross sex identity and field dependency in male adolescents. It was found that father-absent male adolescents were more field dependent than were father-present male adolescents. It was further discovered that the masculinity scores of the two groups did not differ significantly, nor were there differences in indices of cross-sex identity, at least at an overt level. The findings were related to various aspects of sex-role identification, and their implications were discussed, father-

absence being defined as the absence of the real or surrogate father since the subjects were age five.

Aberle and Naegele (1952) viewed the parent (father) as socializing the child for the role he expects the child to hold as an adult, and the model for this role is the occupational orientation he himself holds. Thus, the occupational structure appears to have an indirect but nevertheless meaningful impact on child-rearing practices and, although occupation itself is felt and transmitted most directly by the parent, so, too, are overall value orientations which are part and parcel of the social class system and which also affect socialization.

According to James (1967), little boys see their fathers as sharing more activities with them than do little girls, but this research also points out that young children think of the fathers as performing more roles than the fathers, in turn, attribute to themselves.

In order to ascertain the effects of father-absence and degree of maternal encouragement of masculine behavior on boy's sex role development, Biller (1969) matched father-absent and father-present kindergarten age boys. Compared to father-absent boys, father-present boys were found to be much more masculine in projective sex role orientation and slightly more masculine in game preference, but were not significantly different in terms of a rating scale measure of overt masculinity. For father-absent boys, but not for

father-present boys, the degree of maternal encouragement of masculine behavior was related to masculinity of game preference and the rating scale measure of overt masculinity.

A review of studies dealing with father-absence and sex-role development suggests that the possible effects of differences in maternal encouragement of masculine behavior among father-absent boys has been overlooked (Biller and Borstelmann, 1967). Because most fathers are very critical of having their sons overprotected and because fathers generally serve as models for masculine independent behavior, when the father is absent the probability of maternal overprotection seems increased. There is some evidence that father-absence during the preschool years is associated with overdependency of the child on the mother.

Biller (1968) designed a study to assess the effects of father-absence and sociocultural background on masculine development in lower class Negro and white boys. The subjects were boys enrolled in a summer program of the Education Improvement Program in Durham, North Carolina. A total of 29 boys participated in the study, 15 Negro boys and 14 white boys. The boys ranged in age from five years, 10 months to six years, 11 months with a mean age of six years, four months. All subjects were from families of very low socioeconomic status. Of the 11 father-absent boys, six were Negro and five were white. These boys had been without their fathers for at least two years, several since birth.

The Negro and white father-absent boys did not differ in length or cause of father-absence.

The results of this study suggest that underlying sex-role orientation is more influenced by both father-absence and family background than are more manifest aspects of masculinity.

When a boy's father is absent during his preschool years, his opportunities to interact with and imitate males in positions of competence and power are usually severely limited. In families where the father is absent or ineffectual and, in addition, little value is attached to being male and being masculine, the young boy seems to have even more difficulty in developing a masculine self-concept. It appears that a vague feminine orientation may persist even though a boy becomes masculine in other aspects of his behavior.

Smith, Rosenberg and Landy (1968) reported that the sibling composition of the unaffected females suggests that the possession of a like-sex sibling modifies the effect of father absence. The boy with a younger brother is less affected than the boy with a younger sister, and the girl with a younger sister is less affected than the girl with a younger brother. An only girl is affected by the father's absence, but an only boy is not. Given the fact that the same cognitive outcomes often have functionally diverse antecedents in the two sexes, each of these conditions probably requires a separate explanation (Siegel, 1965).

This is a relatively novel area of research and there is little systematic literature on such parent-child and child-child interactions, but it would seem probable that, in the absence of a father, male siblings may act as mediators for male sex-role values in a way that female siblings may not. But boys do not have the same effect on girls; in fact, the girl who is affected deleteriously by the father's absence is the one with a younger brother; the boy with a younger brother is not affected.

Sutton *et al.* (1968) found that the only male is not strongly affected by the father's absence and that the only female is. It would be expected that the males would model themselves after their father and the girls would model themselves after their mother. But this finding suggests that the reverse process is occurring, and is supported by Hooker (1931) and Rosenberge and Sutton-Smith (1964).

In psychoanalytic theory the father's influence is first given serious consideration around the Oedipal period of development. Neubauer (1960), in a selective review of the psychoanalytic literature on the effects of the death or absence of the father, pointed out the almost unanimous conviction that lack of an appropriate identification object during early childhood is likely to result in sexual inversion in boys. In Aichhorn's (1935) study of delinquents, he commented on the inadequate ego ideal of the fatherless boy. Andry (1960) failed to discover any relationship

between father-absence during early childhood and later delinquent behavior; his findings do suggest, however, an association between delinquency and disturbances in the father-child relationship.

The effects of father-absence which are influenced by specific factors contributes to knowledge of the developmental processes. Santrock and Wohlford (1970) reported that, in terms of aggression, divorce appears more disruptive than death, and the later occurrence of father-absence seems to facilitate aggression. The greater aggression evidenced by the father-absent divorced boys compared to father-absent death boys indicates that not all types of father-absent boys show a compensatory masculinity to express aggression.

Wohlford and Liberman (1970) suggested that the reason for father-absence may be more important than the age at which the absence occurs. This study replicated the Barclay and Cusumano (1967) finding that father-absence is associated with field dependence. While their measure of field dependence was the rod and frame test, the present measure was the Children's Embedded Figures Test (CEFT). Both male and female subjects were used, and there were no sex differences in virtually any of the comparisons; i.e., both father-absent boys and girls had shorter protension, less future direction and less field independence than father-present boys and girls. Therefore, an explanation

that accounts for the effects of father-absence must go beyond arguments that are premised on sex typing.

Benson (1968) commented that the father is the model of masculinity for his son, while the mother is the feminine model for her daughter. Examples of masculinity are seen almost everywhere, but the father is the most visible and the most significant male figure for his own children. He is the guide for how men talk, how they express the sentiments of friendship and indignation, what they are interested in and what they stand aloof from.

Siegman (1966), in a study of first year law and medical students, found that males who were without a father for at least one year from age one through four scored higher on self-reported antisocial behaviors, such as parental disobedience, property damage and drinking, than did father-present boys. Suedfield (1967) found Peace Corps volunteers who without a father for at least five years before their fifteenth birthday tended to be among those volunteers who returned prematurely because of adjustment or conduct problems.

By providing experience and security in interacting with males, and reinforcement for appropriate sex-role behavior in his daughter, the father can be a powerful force in the shaping of feminine behavior. Biller and Weiss (1970), in their review of the literature, suggested that "it appears that the more a father participates in

constructive interplay with his daughter and the more this interaction involves access for her to learn specific activities defining her feminine role, the more adequate will be her identity." This would seem to suggest, then, that absence of the father may have implication for the feminine sex-typing process also.

McCord, McCord and Thurber (1962) found that father-absent boys were more likely than father-present boys to show a pattern of aggressive behavior plus either high dependency on adults or homosexual tendencies--a pattern similar to that noted by Lynn and Sawrey (1959).

In an extensive study of seventh-grade white children (Hoffman, 1970), father-absent boys, in contrast to father-present boys, had less well internalized standards of moral judgment. They tended to evaluate the seriousness of an act according to the probability of detection or punishment rather than in terms of interpersonal relations and social responsibility. They were rated by teachers as more aggressive and less willing to conform to rules or show consideration for others. Following transgressions, father-absent boys demonstrated little guilt and were unwilling to accept blame for their own behavior. Instead of accepting responsibility or trying to rectify the situation, these children responded in an immature fashion, denying they performed the act, crying, making excuses or blaming others. In this study no differences were found between father-present and father-absent girls.

The importance of the age at which separation occurs is indicated in a study by Hetherington (1966) which involved observations by male recreation directors of school-aged boys in a community recreation center. Father-absent boys scored as less masculine on a projective test of sex-role preferences and were reported to be more dependent on peers, less assertive, and to engage in fewer physical contact activities than were father-present boys, but only if separation occurred before the age of five. Boys who were six years of age or older at the time of separation did not differ from children reared in a normal home situation.

Thomas (1968) studied children whose homes had been broken by the absence of the father (owing to divorce, desertion or separation) for a minimum of two years. In a test situation the father-absent children made significantly fewer choices of the father to carry out parental activities than did the control group, and while father-present children perceived the father as teacher, disciplinarian and protector, father-absent children tended to ascribe these functions to mother. Thomas found no significant differences in peer relationships or self concept, but there was some suggestion that the girls were more affected by father-separation than the boys.

Tasch (1952) used a flexible interview method with a group of 85 fathers in an attempt to provide "a functional approach to the paternal role." The activities in which the

fathers participated most frequently fell into the following areas: routine daily care and safety; children's intellectual development; children's motor development; recreational activities; and development of social standards. The study indicated that fathers were taking an active part in child-rearing, but that few were aware of their function as an example of masculinity.

The study by Tasch (1952) is one of the few that has investigated the father directly. The author interviewed 85 fathers who had a total of 160 children. They were drawn from the greater New York area, and covered a diverse range with regards to nationality of origin, education and occupation. She investigated such matters as the father's participation in routine daily care, recreational activities and discipline. One of the most interesting conclusions come 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 did not see support as their only or major function.

The effects of paternal absence, and its relationship to the presence of older siblings and a father substitute, on the dependency, aggression and masculinity-femininity of preschool male and female Negroes were assessed by structured doll-play and maternal interviews (Santrock, 1970). Preschool father-absent boys were significantly more

feminine, less aggressive and more dependent than their father-present counterparts, but no significant differences occurred between father-absent and father-present preschool girls.

In a study by Lynn *et al.* (1959) on the effects of father-absence on Norwegian boys and girls, the literature reveals that father-absence has a significant effect on the child's development when children are old enough to be aware of the father's role in the home.

There is evidence that childhood bereavement by loss of a father is a factor in adult depressive illness as reported by Wynn (1954). There is also evidence that the loss of a father while the child is under the age of two is a factor in other mental illness. Yet while many fatherless children have made a great success of life, still the fatherless child is a greater risk. Fatherless children, particularly small children, are more likely to be under-protected and undersupervised, to be homeless, to live in inadequate accommodations or to have repeated changes of home.

The review of literature reveals very few studies directed entirely towards the father. Gardner (1943) tried to build up a picture of the attitudes and activities of 300 fathers. Using interview methods, she investigated their share in routine care of and play with the child; she also explored their role as confidant for the child's

troubles, and their part in child punishment. She found that 60 percent of the fathers took some share in routine care; 78 percent played with the children. Nine percent of the fathers were the sole confidant for the child's troubles, while 31 percent were joint confidants with the mother. And punishment was left entirely to the father in 11 percent of the cases, and occasionally to him in 18 percent.

Yarrow (1964) pointed out that much of the research and the theoretical speculation has focused on the significance of separation from the mother, with relatively little consideration given to separation from the father. Although the effects of the loss of the father have not been explicitly considered in the studies of maternal separation, however, it should be recognized that in most of these situations paternal separation has also been involved. But there has been relatively little theory and much less research on the father's role in the child's development in contrast to the vast literature on the significance of the maternal relationship for the infant and young child.

Role-Play

Role-play is used to encourage children to explore an area of human experience by reliving the activities and relationships involved in it. Its major purpose is to help children identify emotionally with people, their life activities and the time and place involved, so that they may

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develop real interest in the activities being experienced and real felt needs that will impel them forward towards vital learning.

According to Coutu (1951), every person in every society holds or occupies certain positions or statuses--parent, educator, healer and public servant. With every social position there are socially prescribed duties or functions to be performed and rights to be enjoyed. These functions are called "social roles" or just "roles." Every role involves a whole system of behaviors more or less expected and enforced by various groups.

Cottrell (1942) gives the following explanation of role:

A role is an internally consistent series of conditioned responses by one member of a social situation which represents the stimulus pattern for a similarity internally consistent series of conditioned responses of the other subject in the situation. Dealing with human behavior in terms of roles, therefore, requires that any item of behavior must always be placed in some self-other context (p. 370).

A role, then, is a patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation. The organizing of the individual actions is a product of the perceptual and cognitive behavior of person A upon observing person B; B performs one or a number of discrete acts which A observes and organizes into a concept, a role. On the basis of this conceptualization of the actions of B, A expects certain further actions from B.

Brown (1952) was interested in the effects and interactions in role-taking situations in terms of the following characteristics: sex of person enacting the role of another person, sex of the "other" (the reference person), sex orientation of the cultural content of the situation and incidental learning. His main hypothesis was that "there exists a partial disjunction between the cultural worlds of males and females in American society which will be exhibited in the partial failure of role-taking." In other words, the results of learning role expectations of males and females are such that role enactment of an opposite-sex peer will be inadequate or distorted. In general, Brown concluded that (a) males are slightly better than females in role-taking skill and that (b) role-taking across the sex line is more difficult than role-taking within sex categories.

Johnson (1966) pointed out that the dramatic play of childhood is concerned chiefly with role-playing. It provides the child with a rich variety of roles to tackle. To be a cowboy is easy. To be a railroad engineer or a parent is not much more difficult. But to be a sandbox, or something equally inanimate, may be quite a challenge. According to this author, most roles played offer some preparation for later roles in real life. Conceivably, the play of girls with dolls, for example, provides a base for later care of real children both in attitudes towards infants and in knowledge of how to care for them.

Lamb (1969) saw role-play as a forceful technique for helping children understand themselves and others and as an excellent means of teaching interpersonal and group skills. In addition, it can enrich the study of persons of distant times and places and bring the characters of literature to life. It is important to remember that role-playing is useful in dealing with a distinct group of problems involving human relations.

Shaftel and Shaftel (1967) viewed role-play and sociodrama synonymously as a group problem-solving method that enables young people to explore through spontaneous enactment how they tend to solve such problems, what alternatives are available to them, and what the personal and social consequences are of the proposals they offer. Such enactment is followed by guided discussion utilizing critical evaluation and full discussion in a supportive atmosphere.

Moreno (1953) defined play as a basic means by which infants and young children begin to explore their world. It is a process of coming to terms with reality in which the young child is beginning to manage his inner world in relation to the world outside him. He constantly revises his ideas of reality by playing them out, by testing them in action.

Erik Erikson (1950) proposed the theory that the child's play is the infantile form of the human ability to deal with experience by creating model situations and to master reality by experiment and planning. Through its movement, informality, humor and empathy-arousing drama, role-play catches young people's interest, involves them, and holds them attentive (Riessman, 1963).

In the role-play session the informality, permissiveness and security and the situation allow self-conscious and uneasy children to respond with a spontaneity that permits them much fuller expression than does a more formal situation. Riessman describes this process in action:

In role-play sessions we have had occasion to observe that the verbal performance of deprived children is markedly improved in the discussion period following the session. When talking about some action they have seen, deprived children are apparently able to verbalize much more fully. Typically they do not verbalize well in response to words alone. They express themselves more readily when reacting to things they can see and do. Words as stimuli are not sufficient for them as a rule. Ask a juvenile delinquent who comes from a disadvantaged background what he doesn't like about school or the teacher and you will get an abbreviated, inarticulate reply. But have a group of these youngsters act out a school scene in which someone plays the teacher, and you will discover a stream of verbal consciousness that is almost impossible to shut off (pp. 77-78).

Witkin (1969) made an evaluation of views held by children of their parents in a study of their projections of parental role in TAT stories. TAT stories containing parental figures were rated in terms of whether the parent

was portrayed in an essentially supportive or nonsupportive role, and a total score was then computed for each child for "mother" stories, "father" stories and both kinds combined. In a first study, and in two subsequent validation studies, these scores showed a pattern of significant correlations with scores for tests of perceptual field dependence. Field-dependent children tended to see both mothers and fathers as nonsupportive.

It is impressive that the characterization of parental role by children in their TAT stories, though often taking the exaggerated and caricatured form which the fantasy setting of the TAT allows, was consistent with impressions derived from interviews with mothers. Significant correlations were found between children's TAT ratings and ratings of mothers' interactions with their children made from the home interview data. There is thus congruence in the aspects of parent-child interaction relevant to development of the global-articulated cognitive style revealed by these two different approaches, each assessing the parent-child relation from the viewpoint of one of the members of the interacting pair.

According to Hill and Aldous (1969), the limitations of the family orientation as a setting for learning parent or marital roles are exacerbated by structural factors that affect the complement of family positions with those incumbents the child interacts, the range of behaviors he observes and the content of these behaviors. The child gains

his knowledge of the behaviors appropriate to the various roles incorporated in the positions of husband-father, wife-mother, son-brother and daughter-sister by observing role models or through participation in interpersonal situations (Brim, 1960; Goode, 1960) in his family. However, certain positions are lacking. He is, as a result, culturally deprived with regard to the role performance norms associated with those positions, but he lacks the opportunity to take the role of the other, or to observe role models if there is a deficit of structure.

Hill and Aldous (1969) pointed out that children in smaller families will engage in more interaction with their parents in which the latter perform as companions, advisers, and confidants, as well as social control agents. The children's acquaintance with a wider selection of the parental role repertoire may help to compensate for their lesser opportunity to rehearse the roles. With fewer siblings in the family, there would be less opportunity to serve as parental surrogates in caring for younger children. The children should, however, possess more extensive knowledge of marital roles.

Cultural changes in the structure of family life facilitate the opportunities for the father to play a more constructive role. Katz indicated that the father no longer occupies the position of patriarchal authority, commanding obedience and reverence as his right. Rather he can be a "pal"--a model for their emulation--and combine authority

and love. By this shift in the father's parental role, the child is thus helped in achieving integrity and individuality at the same time that he learns to participate in truly social activities (Katz, 1957).

Brim (1958) held that social roles are learned through interaction with others; such interaction provides one with the opportunity to practice his own role as well as to take the role of others. On this basis, one may hypothesize that family structure, by influencing the degree of interaction between family members, would be related to the types of roles learned in any group--one would learn most completely those roles which he himself plays, as well as the roles of the others with whom he most frequently interacts.

Parson (1955) stated that both boy and girl first identify with the mother and tend to play an expressive role. In the development, however, the boy must break away and establish a new identification with the father, which is difficult and involves much new learning, in the role-taking sense. At the same time, the boy must "push far and hard to renounce dependency." Girls, continuing identification with the mother and the expressive role, face neither of these problems.

Summary

The father-absence studies, for the most part, deal with families that continued to exist, and as such, allow the researcher more readily to study father-absence as an isolated variable, i.e., by comparing families that are alike in most other respects. The fact that families are otherwise intact has made it possible to study the effects of father-absence on family interactions.

Father-absence appears to be associated with a wide range of disruptions in social and cognitive development in children. The effects seem to be most severe if the father leaves the home during the child's preschool years, but can be modified by positive factors such as an emotionally stable, loving mother who reinforces the child for appropriate sex-typed behavior and the presence of male siblings.

In boys the effect of father-absence on social and personality development appears as feminized behavior during the preschool years, but with increasing age and extra familial interaction, this behavioral tendency often disappears or is transformed into compensatory masculinity. In contrast, in girls the effects of father-absence are minimal in the early years. At adolescence, however, a dramatic inability to respond appropriately in heterosexual relations is apparent.

Although deviations in cognitive functioning appear, there is considerable uncertainty as to the form and reasons

for these cognitive deficiencies. Since the effects of father-absence are such important practical problems in a nation where 10 percent of children are reared in broken homes, further research might focus on factors which can ameliorate the harmful consequences of paternal separation, as well as pinpoint more precisely the interpersonal processes which mediate these effects.

In general, father-absence has a depressive effect throughout, with the greatest effects during the early and middle years; boys without brothers are more affected than those with brothers; girls with a younger brother more affected than other girls; and only girls more affected than only boys, as pointed out in this review.

Other than father-absence, many factors that were not attended to in this review of literature, such as race, ages of parents, education, group standards or expectations and generational differences, may affect a child's role-play behavior. Therefore, learning and performing parental role-play is a multidimensional process: each sets limits on the child's acquisition of parental role-play behavior.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM

Conceptual Framework

Father-absence is a multidimensional phenomenon involving many factors. As indicated in the review of literature, a number of theoretical approaches are possible as a basis for the study of father-absence and its effects upon family members (Bartemeir, 1953; Landis, 1962; Willie and Weinandy, 1963; Chilman and Sussman, 1964). The theoretical framework of this study is based upon role theory with defined parental role dimensions (Sears, 1950).

According to Cottrell (1942), one learns the behavior appropriate to his position in a group through interaction with others who hold normative beliefs about what his role should be and who are able to reward and punish him for correct and incorrect actions. As part of the same learning process, one acquires expectations of how others in the group will behave.

The principle agent for transmitting culturally determined values, activities and social behavior to the child is his family (Clausen, 1966). Role modeling,

therefore, appears an appropriate means by which children gain knowledge and understanding of parental roles through interaction with members of their family.

The ages from one to five are considered the root years for learning and development of the child (Hoffman, 1969). It would seem logical that the child will model his behavior upon that of those significant adults or older siblings in his primary environment as he interacts with them during routine daily activities. Brim (1958) supported this concept when he pointed out that social roles are learned through interaction with others. Such interaction provides the child with the opportunity to play his own role as well as experiment with the role of others.

Following from this, one may hypothesize that father-absence, by influencing the nature, quality and degree of interaction among family members, would have a definitive effect upon the role learning of young children within the family. The child will learn most completely those roles which he himself plays as a result of his observance of those roles performed by others with whom he most frequently interacts.

Riessman (1963) recommended role-play as a most useful method in the study of low income children. He felt that such children respond more fully and directly to action than to verbalization, and role-play provides this action. Role-play is considered a primary mechanism by which a child

learns to internalize the behavior of others. This theoretical model is described further in Figure 1.

Statement of Problem

The specific problem of this study, therefore, as stated earlier, was to compare the parental role-play behavior exhibited by twenty black five year old children (10 boys and 10 girls) from father-absent homes, where the father had been absent for a minimum of one year or more as a result of separation, divorce, desertion, death or military duty, with parental role play behavior exhibited by twenty black five year old children (10 boys and 10 girls) from father-present homes, where there had been no significant discontinuity in the presence of either natural parent, in two ten minute simulated doll-play (family) settings for each child.

The dependent variables of concern were choice of role and dimensions of role-play behavior. The independent variables of the study were father-absence/presence and sex, with age, race, social economic status, and geographical location being controlled by exclusion.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this study:

1. The child develops basic patterns of role behavior from involvement and interaction with his immediate family.

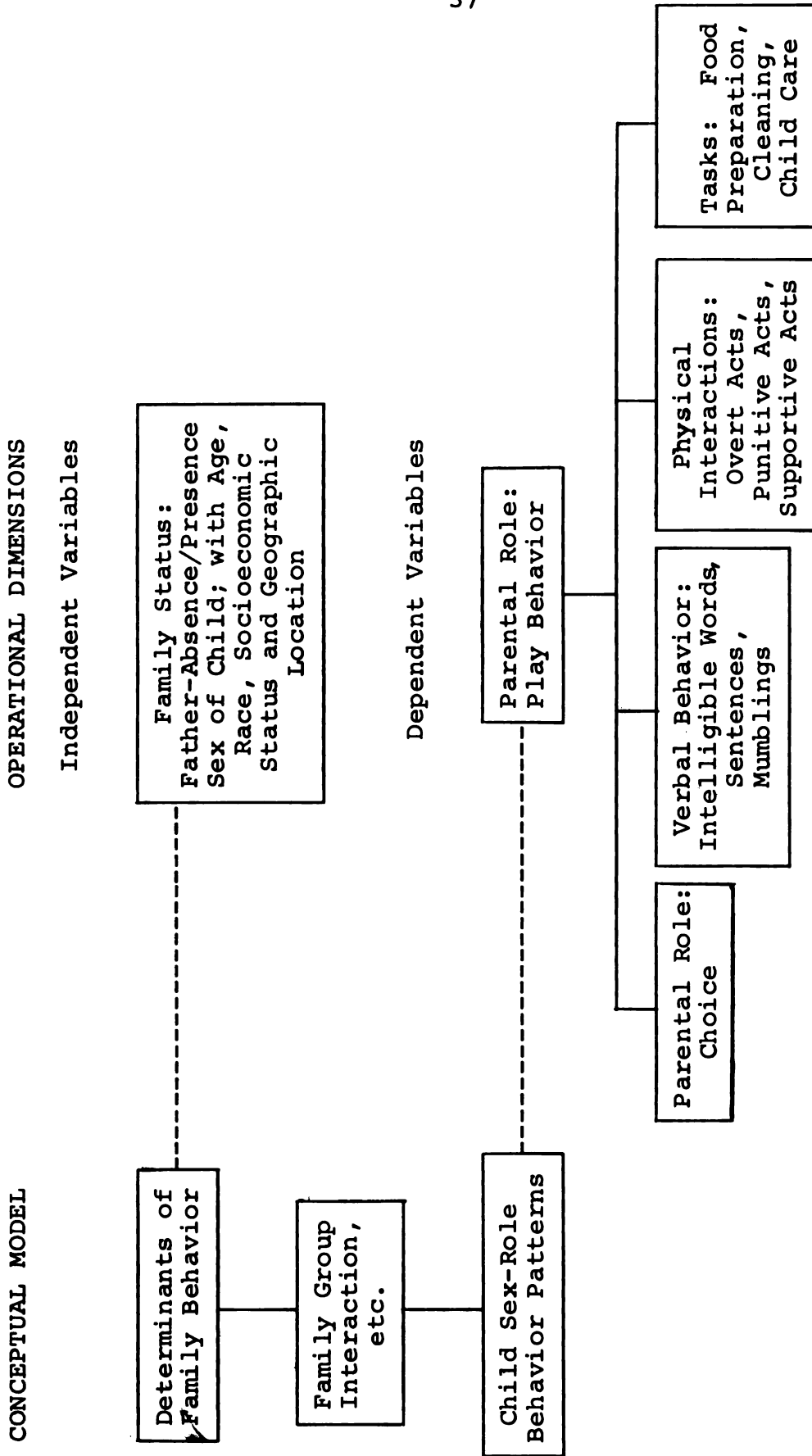


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the effects of father-absence upon children's sex-role behavior, including concomitant operational dimensions of the study.

2. By the age of five the child is able to engage in role-play.
3. The five year old child can project internalizations of his own and other family member's role in a role-play situation.
4. The amount and nature of verbalizations, physical interactions and household tasks projected to family members in a role-play situation reflect aspects of actual parental role concepts held by the child.

Hypotheses

I. Choice of Parental Role

1. Five year old children from father-absent homes will differ in their choice of role in parental role-play behavior from five year old children whose father is present in the home.
2. Five year old boys will differ in their choice of role in parental role-play behavior from five year old girls.
3. Five year old children will differ in their choice of role based on family status and sex in a parental role-play situation.

II. Verbal Behavior

1. Five year old children from father-absent homes will exhibit less verbal behavior in a parental role-play

situation than five year old children whose father is present in the home.

2. Five year old boys will differ in their verbal behavior in parental role-play from five year old girls.
3. Five year old children will differ in their verbal behavior based on family status and sex in a parental role-play situation.

III. Physical Interactions

1. Five year old children from father-absent homes will exhibit more physical interactions among doll figures in a parental role-play situation than five year old children whose father is present in the home.
2. Five year old boys will differ in their physical interactions among doll figures in parental role-play behavior from five year old girls.
3. Five year old children will differ in their physical interactions among doll figures based on family status and sex in a parental role-play situation.

IV. Household Tasks

1. Five year old children from father-absent homes will delegate less household tasks to the father in a parental role-play situation than will five year old children whose father is present in the home.

2. Five year old boys will differ in household tasks delegated to the father in parental role-play behavior from five year old girls.
3. Five year old children will differ in household tasks delegated to the father in parental role-play behavior based on family status and sex.

Operational Definitions

Choice of parental role in the role-play situation as well as verbal behavior, physical interactions and household tasks projected to the doll figures in the role-play situation, were used in this study as definitive dimensions of parental role-play behavior. For examples of applications of operational definitions, see Appendix D.

Choice of Parental Role

Defined as the decision on the part of the child to select the role of the mother or the father in a free play situation independent of any coercion from the experimenter. This decision was assumed to be an act of the child's will as reflected by a statement of preference based on a discrimination between the father role and the mother role.

Physical Interaction

Physical interactions pertained to the total number of bodily contacts or movements made by the child among the doll figures, toys and house in the simulated family setting.

Sub-categories of physical interaction were further defined as follows:

Overt physical acts referred to those movements made by the child among the doll figures, toys and house such as the movement of a doll figure or toy or the touching of any of the objects in the simulated setting.

Doll interactions were confined to all movements of the child which brought the doll figures into bodily contact with each other, such as placing the baby into the lap of the mother, father, or siblings, having the dolls hold hands, hit, kiss or touch each other in any form.

Punitive acts referred to those acts performed or suggested by the child which denoted punishment, such as to refuse (one who asks), to whip, spank or restrain as a penalty for some offense, to chastise.

Supportive acts pertained to those acts exhibiting a helpfulness or assistance to someone; a concern or care indicated through words or actions, such as giving the baby a bath, feeding the children, dressing the baby, putting the baby to bed or rocking one of the dolls in a comforting manner.

Verbal Behavior

Operationally, this concept was defined as a quantification of the verbalizations made by the child rather than the ideas or actions that were conveyed.

Sub-categories of verbal behavior were further defined as follows:

Words were defined as that which was said or spoken as a brief remark or expression such as "stop," "go," "yes" and "no."

Sentences pertained to a group of words expressed; a stated opinion, a command given to the doll figures or to the experimenter made on the part of the child.

Mumbling sounds were defined as muttered sounds which were heard but not intelligible to the listener; a low, confused utterance or humming as an attempt to sing.

Household Tasks

Pertained to those functions suggested or performed by the child around or within the household which were selected as being necessary for harmonious functioning of a household.

Sub-categories of household tasks were further defined as follows:

Food preparation pertained to cooking, serving, eating or preparing food in any way, setting the table in preparation to eating or washing dishes after eating.

Cleaning referred to the task of removing soil, or pollution in a thorough fashion, as performed through work around or in the doll house.

Child care was defined as the watchful attention given to the children by the child as he/she performed the mother or father role during parental role-play behavior.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Sample and Geographical Location

Composing the sample for this study were forty black preschool children, age five (60-68 months), living in East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR), Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There were 20 boys and 20 girls and all were enrolled in the Head Start Program. Within each sex group, half the children were from homes from which the father was absent. In each case the father had been absent for a continuous period of one year or more as a result of death, divorce, separation, employment, military service or desertion. The remaining children were from father-present homes, where the father and mother were both present.

Baton Rouge (EBR) was chosen as the geographical location for the study because of the size of its black population and its representation as a major metropolitan area with a population of almost 300,000 people. Baton Rouge provided an ample pool of subjects since many people migrate from throughout the state to EBR parish seeking employment. According to the United States Department of

Agriculture, Louisiana has approximately 47,000 A.F.D.C. families (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) with approximately 155,000 children who receive \$1,000 a year of so-called "Section E benefits" (local welfare). The number of these families who are located in Baton Rouge and who participate in the Head Start Programs are numerous.

The decision was made to select subjects from the Head Start Centers because Project Head Start provides services to children from families whose yearly income places them below the poverty level. This appeared to be an appropriate group in that of the 24.3 million Americans fitting the government definition of poverty in 1969, 7.2 million were black according to the Committee for Economic Development; this population also met the economic criteria set up for this study.

The subjects were drawn on the basis of their availability from the Bertel T. Winder Head Start Center, Community Association for the Welfare of School Children (CAWSC), Monte Sano Head Start Center and Ryan Head Start Center. The directors and teachers in the selected centers were informed of the study and the approximate time it would take to do the study, as to date, days and weeks involved.

Background material included sex and age of the child, marital status of the family (father-absent or father-present), length of father-absence, reason for father-absence and number of children in the family, income and ordinal position of the child (see Appendix B).

Development of the Instrument

As previously indicated, one of the specific objectives of the study was to adapt a projective technique initially developed by Robinson (1946) involving doll-play within a simulated family setting in order to enable the measurement of the child's concept of parental roles and his identification with them.

Doll-play was chosen as the principal measure of parental role since it requires less verbal skill than other projective techniques such as the Children's Apperception Test (CAT) (Levine, 1966). Role-play is also flexible enough and play-oriented enough to allow free expression of the child's real feelings. Furthermore, it is adaptable to experimental purposes because of its simplicity, its appeal to young children and its ease of administration (Breckenridge and Lee, 1965). This technique also helps reduce any anxiety the child may have in regards to the test situation, since the projective situation is considered as play and children look upon it as a game (McNeil, 1959).

The two major categories of doll-play technique that appear in the literature are "free" or unstructured play and structured play. Both techniques were used in this study. Each subject was presented with two ten minute sessions of doll-play. The first ten minute session was unstructured and the second ten minute session was structured. These

sessions were presented on the same day with a five minute interval between sessions.

Description of the Instrument

Specific adaptations were made in Robinson's (1946) Simulated Family Setting (Figure 2), which included a black doll family composed of father, mother, preschool-aged boy and girl and baby. The adult dolls were 12" in height, the boy doll $6\frac{1}{2}$ ", the girl doll 8" and the baby doll $3\frac{3}{4}$ ". The dolls were lifelike in appearance and dressed in clothes selected as being representative of the type of clothes worn by low income families, as suggested by Dr. Joanne Eicher, Department of Human Environment and Design, Michigan State University. The dolls in this study were larger than the dolls used by Robinson and the overall dimensions of the doll house varied from his dimensions.

The setting included a Town and Country two story doll house of steel with durable plastic furniture and accessories, proportional to the size of the house, and was realistic and colorful in appearance. The house had five rooms: two bedrooms, kitchen, bath, and living room and dining room combined, with overall dimensions of 12" wide x $39\frac{1}{2}$ " long x $12\frac{1}{2}$ " high. The dolls were placed in a row before the house. Robinson (1946) gives a more detailed description of the setting.



Figure 2. Simulated family setting.

An observation sheet was developed and is provided in Appendix A. Background information (see Appendix B), the four criterion variables, choice of parental role, physical interactions, verbal behavior and household tasks were recorded on this form for each subject.

Procedure

Each center provided office space for the experimenter. The simulated room was set up with the doll family and was maintained throughout the observations at each of the centers. Acquaintance was made with each of the children before he was asked to enter the simulated room. This was done through conversation which proceeded as follows: "My name is Mrs. Masingale. What is yours? I would like for you to play a game with me and a doll family."

Direct observation was used and the behavior of the child was recorded verbatim in long hand. As a supplementary and validating device, a tape recorder was used to assist the examiner in this process. Following the observation sessions, the tape recordings were used to check out and expand the long hand direct observation protocol.

At a later time these validated long hand protocols were scored for the number of verbalizations, household tasks and physical interactions that the child had projected and this number was transferred to the Observation Sheet (see Appendix A). This was done on the basis of the

previously outlined operational definitions of each of the sub-categories of the three general categories of defined parental behavior (Appendix C).

Examples of sub-categories for verbal behavior, physical interactions and household tasks are provided in Appendix D.

It should be noted that no inclusive list of verbalizations or tasks can be provided for this type of projective device; an assumption inherent in the use of projective measures is that any replication will necessitate a certain degree of judgment in the scoring of raw protocols.

Session I

When the subjects were brought into the room, the materials were in view on the floor. The experimenter led the child over to them and sat on the floor with the child in front of the set (doll family placed on the floor in front of doll house); the experimenter then staged a conversation which proceeded as follows: "See all the toys I have. Here's a whole house, isn't it?" Each room was pointed out to the subject, and the experimenter proceeded as follows: "Now here are the people who live in the house. Here's the mother, the father, the little girl, the little boy and the baby. You can make them do anything you want. But first of all, let's pretend that you are either the mother or the father. They are the big dolls. Which one of the big dolls will you pretend you are?" If the selection

was made by pointing, the experimenter said, "Who is that, the mother or the father?" This was done to make certain that the child had clearly established the difference between the father doll and the mother doll and was sure of his choice. The choice was recorded. The child was then told, "You go ahead and play with the dolls and toys anyway you like." Recording began and continued for ten minutes on the child's verbal behavior and physical interactions.

If the subject asked questions, the experimenter answered as correctly and clearly as was possible so as to satisfy the child with the answer. Then the experimenter attempted to get the subject to return to the experimental task by asking, "What's going to happen next? What do they do now?" or other specific questions about the doll family. The experimenter then became an interested onlooker. No specific doll actions were suggested and no interpretations were made or asked for.

At the end of the ten minute session, the experimenter said, "That was fine! You really know how to play the game. Our time is up for now; let's take a rest, and you'll have another chance to play the game after we rest." The child was escorted out of the room for a drink of water, a trip to the rest room, or just free play for five minutes.

Session II

Session two began as follows. The child was escorted back into the room and told, "I like to play games with little children. Especially when they play the game as well as you do."

The mother doll was removed from the doll family setting before the second session began. This procedure was used because the father's role was the role the experimenter was interested in observing in all the children; it gave each child a chance to play-at the father's role, even though this may not have been their parental role choice in session one.

The same position was taken as in session one. Conversation proceeded as follows: "Let's pretend this is another day and mother had to go away from home to visit someone, and she will be gone all day. I want you to make believe you are the father and will be home while the mother is away--you are the father, show me and tell me everything you will do at home while mother is away. Remember, you are pretending you are the father. Now go on and begin."

At this point the tape recorder was turned on, especially for the children who were extremely verbal, and at the end of the session, the tape was replayed in order to make sure nothing was omitted.

During the second ten minute session all verbal behavior, physical interactions, and household tasks were recorded. At the end of the session the child was told, "That was fine; you really know how to play the game. Our time is up for now. Thank you for playing the game with me." Each child was given a lollipop as a reward for playing the game. The child was then asked, "May I take your picture?" If the answer was yes, the picture was taken, if the child said no, the picture-taking was omitted. The pictures will be used later for classroom discussion.

The same procedure was used with each of the 40 subjects that participated in the study.

Statistical Model

A two way 2 x 2 (Table I) Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to analyze the majority of the data. The multivariate procedure was used because the number of related dependent variables involved in the study suggested the use of this model.

According to McCall (1970), MANOVA is a method of wide applicability in all kinds of investigations of the development of individual differences and is the analysis of variance using several, rather than just one, dependent variable in which these variates are weighted to provide the maximum possible effects. Multivariate techniques may be used with experimentally generated as well as observational data and allow for examination of a more global

TABLE I
DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLE CATEGORIES
AND SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

		A. Sex	
	Male	Female	Total
<hr/>			
B. <u>Family Status</u>			
Father Present	10	10	20
Father Absent	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>
Total	20	20	40

Main Effects

A - Sex

B - Family Status

Interaction A x B - Sex x Family Status

behavioral display rather than artificially excising variables out of their natural context.

An analysis using chi-square (χ^2) was carried out for hypothesis one only, because of the nominal nature of the parental choice data. The analytical model is summarized in Table II.

TABLE II
ANALYTICAL MODEL

Dependent Variables	Nature of Data	Analytical Method
Parental Role Choice	Nominal Data	Chi-Square (χ^2)
Verbal Behavior Intelligible Words Sentences Mumbling	Ordinal Data	Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)
Physical Interactions Overt Acts Doll Interactions Supportive Acts Punitive Acts	Ordinal Data	MANOVA
Household Tasks Food Preparation Cleaning Child Care	Ordinal Data	MANOVA

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of discussion of these data, a chance probability level of .10 was selected as appropriate. The .05 level is generally interpreted to be an appropriate "significance" cut-off level for research. It is the investigator's judgment, however, that the .10 level should be employed for discussion purposes in this study. This decision was made in light of the fact the preliminary nature of these data require thorough, but cautious interpretation. In any case, replication and further study will be needed.

Chi-square (χ^2) was used to analyze hypothesis one, related to parental role choice. Justification for the use of this test was based on the nominal nature of the data, which required a choice of the mother or the father role. Data for these analyses came from Session I.

Further analyses involved the Multivariate Analysis of Variance, which was used to test the hypotheses related to the children's projected verbal behavior, physical interactions and household tasks. This test was employed because in each category more than one dependent variable was used

for which independence could not be assumed. Data for these analyses came from Session II. In this session children were asked to play the father role.

The interpretation of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance calls for three steps. The first involved interpreting the degree of interaction between the two main effects, which in this study were sex and family status. The second step included the interpretation of the two main effects, while the third involved interpreting univariate differences within the main effects. Interpretation of these univariate differences was dependent in each case upon a satisfactory degree of independence being shown among these variables through an examination of their inter-correlations.

Each of the hypotheses involving ordinal data was tested using this multivariate procedure, and the interpretation of the analyses followed the above steps in each case.

Where appropriate, tables of cell means have been included which provide a basis for interpreting the direction of meaningful differences.

Hypothesis I: Parental Role Choice

The chi-square (χ^2) for father-absent vs. father-present children's parental role choice of the father role indicated no significant relationship between sex and family status (Table III).

TABLE III

CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-ABSENT vs. FATHER-PRESENT
CHILDREN'S PARENTAL ROLE CHOICE
(CHOICE OF FATHER ROLE)

	Total	Male	Female
Father-Absent	11	9	2
Father-Present	<u>12</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	23	19	4

$$\chi^2 = .009$$

Probability of chance occurrence < .30

1 Degree of Freedom

The chi-square for father-absent vs. father-present children's parental role choice of the mother role also revealed no significant relationship between sex and family status (Table IV).

TABLE IV

CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-ABSENT vs. FATHER-PRESENT
CHILDREN'S PARENTAL ROLE CHOICE
(CHOICE OF MOTHER ROLE)

	Total	Male	Female
Father-Absent	9	1	8
Father-Present	<u>8</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	17	1	16

$$\chi^2 = .944$$

Probability of chance occurrence < .90

1 Degree of Freedom

Father-absent males did not differ significantly from father-present males in parental role choice (Table V). This was also true of female subjects, as indicated in Table VI.

TABLE V
CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-ABSENT vs. FATHER-PRESENT
MALE'S PARENTAL ROLE CHOICE
(FAMILY STATUS)

	Total	Father Absent	Father Present
Father	19	9	10
Mother	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	
Total	20	10	10

$\chi^2 = 1.053$
Probability of chance occurrence < .30
1 Degree of Freedom

TABLE VI
CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-ABSENT vs. FATHER-PRESENT
FEMALE'S PARENTAL ROLE CHOICE
(FAMILY STATUS)

	Total	Father Absent	Father Present
Father	4	2	2
Mother	<u>16</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	20	10	10

$\chi^2 = 0.000$
Probability of chance occurrence < .90
1 Degree of Freedom

There was a significant sex difference between males and females from father-absent families in their parental role choice, as indicated in Table VII; this difference was significant at $p < .01$ level. These sex differences also occurred in the case of the father-present children, as indicated in Table VIII.

TABLE VII
CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-ABSENT MALE'S vs. FATHER-ABSENT
FEMALE'S PARENTAL ROLE-CHOICE
(SEX)

	Total	Male	Female
Father	11	9	2
Mother	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	20	10	10

$\chi^2 = 9.899$
Probability of chance occurrence $< .01$
1 Degree of Freedom

It was hypothesized that five year old children from father-absent homes would differ in their choice of role in parental role-play behavior from five year old children whose father was present in the home. This hypothesis was not supported.

TABLE VIII

CHI-SQUARE FOR FATHER-PRESENT MALE'S vs. FATHER-PRESENT
FEMALE'S PARENTAL ROLE CHOICE
(SEX)

	Total	Male	Female
Father	12	10	2
Mother	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	20	10	10

$$\chi^2 = 13.333$$

Probability of chance occurrence < .01

1 Degree of Freedom

It was further hypothesized that five year old boys would differ in their choice of role in parental role-play behavior from five year old girls. The data support this hypothesis in that 19 of the 20 boys chose the father role, while 16 of the 20 girls chose the mother role, an indication of a clear difference in the children's parental role choice on the basis of sex.

Factors that may have influenced the sex appropriate parental role choice made by these children were maternal behavior and the relative availability of surrogate models. The fact that the father was absent did not eliminate a female model for the females. The females continued to identify with the mother and did not have to break away and establish a new identification with a male as Parson (1955) points out.

This lack of difference in role choice based on the choices made by the children supports the idea presented by Wohlford, Santrock, Berger and Liberman (1970) which points out that either mothers have a way of providing a male surrogate for their children or that male surrogates are already available. Their basic contention is that the presence of the natural father is not crucial as long as a male model is available. In a review Biller (1970) concludes that of the possible father surrogates, including grandfathers, uncles, neighbors and so forth, the potential surrogate model existing most frequently is the older brother. This conclusion can be applied to approximately one-fourth of the boys in this study who did have older brothers (Table XXIX in Appendix B). This idea raises an interesting question for further study: How do older male siblings serve as father-surrogates if they were probably deprived of a father as an adult male model for their own development, and are themselves presumably defective with regard to male role-related behaviors?

A further rationale can be drawn from the work by Miller (1958) who contends that the boy from a father-absent family may encounter his first male model on the street. Male siblings, then, may adopt the pattern of street behavior and perform exaggerated, male sex-typed, aggressive and independent behavior within the home.

Another explanation for the role choice of the children in this study might have been the children's pre-disposition as to what the "appropriate" or "expected" role of the male or female was even though their behavior might not have reflected a knowledge of this role. This point is supported by conversation with the children when their responses were not being recorded. The children were arbitrarily asked, why did you choose to be the mother or father? Some children were able to give answers such as, "boys cannot be mothers," "when girls get big, they are mothers," while others said, "I don't know," "because, just because, that's why," "I don't know," and "I told you, I don't know."

Hypothesis II: Verbal Behavior

Because father-absence was believed to have a negative effect on children, it was hypothesized that five year old children from father-absent homes would exhibit less verbal behavior in a parental role-play situation than five year old children whose father was present in the home. It would seem that father-absence might cause a child to be somewhat shy and withdrawn and to lack the courage and ambition to speak out and be as expressive as a child whose father was present in the home (Stolz, 1954).

The multivariate test for sex x family status interaction revealed an F of 0.51 ($p < .51$; Table IX). Based on

the number of mumbling sounds, number of sentences and number of intelligible words, there were no significant interactions among the four groups. This lack of significant interaction justified a look at the main effects.

TABLE IX

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR VERBAL
BEHAVIOR--SEX x FAMILY STATUS INTERACTION

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of mean
vectors = 0.77

D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .51$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Mumbling	5.62	2.32	0.14
Sentences	0.62	0.27	0.61
Intelligible Words	3.60	1.37	0.25

Carlsmith *et al.* (1964) points out that females are more verbal than males; therefore, it was hypothesized that five year old boys would differ in their verbal behavior in parental role-play from five year old girls. These data did not support this hypothesis; however, multivariate differences in verbal behavior on the basis of sex show a chance probability of occurrence of as much as .80, which indicates little reason to discuss these data differentially.

In addition to this fact that the father was absent or present in the home did not seem to make a difference in the children's verbal behavior. Family status as a main effect revealed an F of 0.32 ($p < .81$), which was much greater than the .10 level of chance occurrence that was chosen for this study (Table X).

TABLE X
MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR VERBAL
BEHAVIOR--SEX MAIN EFFECT

F ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 0.32
D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .81$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Mumbling	0.22	0.09	0.76
Sentences	0.02	0.01	0.92
Intelligible Words	0.00	0.00	1.00

Carlsmith (1964) alludes to the idea that the verbal pattern of females involves the use of more words than does the verbal pattern for males. This study did not support this idea. The lack of difference in verbal behavior noted by this study could have been due to the age of the child at the time of the study and to the fact that the experimenter was a stranger to the children. Even though the experimenter

did her best to establish rapport with the children, they may not have been at ease enough to express themselves freely.

As shown in Table XI the family status main effect analysis for the verbal behavior variables indicated no significant differences among the four groups ($F = 0.77$, $p < .52$).

TABLE XI
MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR VERBAL
BEHAVIOR--FAMILY STATUS MAIN EFFECT

F ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 0.77
D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .52$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Mumbling	5.62	2.32	0.14
Sentences	0.22	0.10	0.76
Intelligible Words	4.90	1.86	0.18

Table XII shows the intercorrelations among verbal behavior variables. The high negative correlation of mumbling with intelligible words indicates a relative lack of independence with these two variables for the population of this study. These correlations also indicate that the sentences variable was the most independent of the group,

however the univariate analysis for the sentences variable was not significant (Tables X and XI).

TABLE XII
INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG VERBAL
BEHAVIOR VARIABLES

	Intelligible Words	Sentences
Sentences	0.30	
Mumbling	0.88	0.11

Hypothesis III: Physical Interactions

Physical interactions were defined in this study as the actual contact made with or between the doll figures and were classified as overt, punitive, or supportive. It was hypothesized that five year old children from father-absent homes would exhibit more physical interactions among doll figures in parental role-play situations than would five year old children whose father was present in the home. This hypothesis was made based upon Biller's findings (1968) that the absence of the father causes a frustration for the developing child. When children are frustrated, they tend to become more physically involved with whatever is available at the time of their frustration. This has been

evidenced by the experimenter in working with young children in preschool situations.

Based upon the total number of doll interactions, supportive acts and punitive acts, there was no significant interaction among the four groups ($F = 1.70$, $p < .17$; Table XIII).

TABLE XIII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHYSICAL
INTERACTIONS--SEX x FAMILY STATUS INTERACTION

F ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 1.69
D.F. = 4 and 33.00, $p < .17$

Variable	Between Mean Square	Univariate F	p Less Than
Doll Interactions	0.00	0.00	1.00
Supportive Acts	202.50	2.39	0.13
Punitive Acts	12.10	1.06	0.31
Overt Acts	1232.10	1.85	0.18

No significant multivariate difference was indicated for the sex groups on physical interactions during parental role-play as indicated in Table XIV ($F = 1.55$, $p < .20$).

TABLE XIV

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHYSICAL
INTERACTIONS--SEX MAIN EFFECT

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 1.56
D.F. = 4 and 33.00, $p < .20$

Variable	Between Mean Square	Univariate F	p Less Than
Doll Interactions	250.00	4.00	0.05
Supportive Acts	324.90	3.84	0.06
Punitive Acts	4.90	0.43	0.52
Overt Acts	2.50	0.00	0.95

The family status main effect analyses also indicated no significant difference in physical interactions ($F = 0.86$, $p < .50$; Table XV).

Table XVI provides the intercorrelation of the physical interaction variables. The correlation of doll interactions with the other physical interaction variables are relatively high, with the exception of the correlation with supportive acts, making interpretation of this univariate questionable. The intercorrelations of supportive acts with the other physical interaction variables, however, are relatively low, warranting further consideration of this univariate.

TABLE XV

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHYSICAL
INTERACTIONS--FAMILY STATUS MAIN EFFECT

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 0.86
D.F. = 4 and 33.00, $p < .50$

Variable	Between Mean Square	Univariate F	p Less Than
Doll Interactions	36.10	0.58	0.45
Supportive Acts	28.90	0.34	0.56
Punitive Acts	22.50	1.98	0.17
Overt Acts	230.40	0.35	0.56

TABLE XVI

INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG PHYSICAL
INTERACTION VARIABLES

	Overt Physical Acts	Doll Interactions	Punitive Acts
Doll Interactions	0.40		
Punitive Acts	-0.12	-0.87	
Supportive Acts	0.11	0.20	0.18

According to the cell mean for doll interactions in Table XVII, based on sex, the father-present females initiated almost twice as many doll interactions as did any other group. In addition, Table XVIII shows that father-present males also initiated more doll interactions during their doll-play.

TABLE XVII
MEAN NUMBER OF DOLL INTERACTIONS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	1.20	1.10
Father-Present	2.90	1.50

For supportive acts exhibited by these children, females were twice as supportive in their doll-play as were the males, and according to family status, father-absent children were more supportive than father-present children (Table XVIII).

TABLE XVIII

MEAN NUMBER OF SUPPORTIVE ACTS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	10.50	4.50
Father-Present	6.40	3.10

Punitive acts were very low for each of the four groups; however, most punitive acts were exhibited by the father-present females (Table XIX).

TABLE XIX

MEAN NUMBER OF PUNITIVE ACTS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	0.00	0.40
Father-Present	1.20	0.00

Overall the girls projected a larger number of physical interactions than did boys. One interpretation of these findings might be that mothers interacted with their children more often than did fathers. Another might be that these children internalized the interaction they exhibited as being the responsibility of a female. Even though these interactions were exhibited during the time the children were playing the father role, this might have been an indication that these children had returned to the mother role or to the role that they had internalized as their own, which supports the contention of Parson (1955) that children vacillate from one role to the other.

Still another explanation of these differences might be that these children did not yet clearly distinguish between the mother role and the father role; but have instead a general parental role concept.

The boys performed fewer supportive acts than did the girls. The direction that was shown in supportive acts tend to suggest two things to the author. First, females at a very early age appeared to perceive the act of supportiveness as being a feminine role, and father-absent children indicated a need to care for themselves and other family members as a result of the father's absence. This idea is also supported by Hill and Aldous (1969) when they refer to the mother in the fatherless home who encourages independence on the part of the children to live and work in order to meet their own basic needs.

The punitive acts were very low for all the groups in this study. Although the punitive acts exhibited by father-present females were somewhat higher than the other independent groups there were no significant differences. This result disagrees with the findings reported by Thomas (1968) who discovered that father-present children perceived the father as disciplinarian, teacher and protector, whereas father-absent children tended to ascribe these functions to the mother. However, Gardner (1943), in an investigation of 300 fathers, found that punishment was left entirely to the father in 11 percent of the cases and occasionally left to him in 18 percent of the cases. This study would tend to support the general direction of differences shown in Table XIX.

The lack of difference in physical interactions might be due to the age of the children at the time of the study. At the age of five, boys do not seem to regard doll-play as an activity for girls and not for boys; rather they accept it as a game to be played by all children. Doll-play is not atypical for boys at the age of five. This discovery is supported by the findings of Sears (1951), and Sears, Pintler and Sears (1946) in their investigations of the effects of father-absence during doll-play activity of three to five year old father-absent and father-present children. They indicated that boys' doll-play behavior seemed to be less influenced by the common sex factor of the father and

boy doll. The findings in this study are not supported by Bach (1946), however, who used projective doll-play to assess children's personality and behavior patterns, and found less aggressive doll-play among boys in families where the father was absent than in boys whose father was present. This pattern of play was interpreted as indicative of a more feminine orientation. The children used in Bach's study, however, were older than the children in this study, and no assumption is made that punitive acts are equal to aggressive doll play.

Hypothesis IV: Household Tasks

When the father is present, he sometimes shares in the many tasks needed for harmonious functioning within the home (Tasch, 1952), and children model their behavior from available adults (Yarrow, 1964; Clausen, 1966). It would seem likely that the consistent presence of the father would influence the number of household tasks that father-present children would delegate to the father. It was hypothesized, therefore, that five year old children from father-absent homes would delegate less household tasks to the father in a parental role-play situation than would five year old children whose father was present in the home.

There was no significant sex x family status interaction for household tasks as indicated in Table XX.

TABLE XX

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR HOUSEHOLD
TASKS--SEX x FAMILY STATUS INTERACTION

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 0.06
D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .99$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Cleaning	0.90	0.07	0.79
Food Preparation	0.22	0.04	0.84
Child Care	1.60	0.11	0.74

Further, Table XXI indicates that there is no significant sex main effect differences for the household task variables.

TABLE XXI

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR HOUSEHOLD
TASKS--SEX MAIN EFFECT

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 1.22
D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .32$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Cleaning	0.10	0.01	0.03
Food Preparation	5.62	1.02	0.32
Child Care	48.40	3.35	0.08

The household tasks multivariate analysis for family status main effect revealed an F probability of chance occurrence of .15 ($p < .06$; Table XXII). Although the probability of chance occurrence of this multivariate F was lower than most, it was, however, nonsignificant.

TABLE XXII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR HOUSEHOLD
TASKS--FAMILY STATUS MAIN EFFECT

F-ratio for multivariate test of equality of
mean vectors = 1.92
D.F. = 3 and 34.00, $p < .15$

Variables	Between Mean Squares	Univariate F	p Less Than
Cleaning	44.10	3.62	0.07
Food Preparation	0.03	0.00	0.95
Child Care	32.40	2.24	0.14

The intercorrelations for household tasks were generally low (see Table XXIII), with the exception of the correlation between the child care and food preparation variables. This would suggest a careful look at the univariate differences for both main effects, particularly with regard to the cleaning variable.

TABLE XXIII
INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG HOUSEHOLD TASK
VARIABLES

	Food Preparation	Cleaning
Cleaning	-0.00	
Child Care	0.50	-0.03

The univariate analyses for cleaning tasks indicated a significant difference among the four groups, in the main effect multivariate for both sex and family status ($F = .01$, $p < .03$; Table XXI and $F = 3.62$, $p < .07$; Table XXII). Table XXIV shows the mean number of cleaning tasks performed by boys and girls in each of the four independent groups.

TABLE XXIV
MEAN NUMBER OF CLEANING TASKS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	1.00	0.80
Father-Present	2.80	3.20

The father-present males projected more cleaning tasks than did any other group, while the father-absent males projected the least; although the father-present girls exhibited somewhat fewer tasks than did father-present boys, they projected nearly three times as many cleaning tasks as did their father-absent peers. This finding does not agree with previous research. Walker (1970) found relatively little shared homemaking and pointed out that household tasks were usually done by women. Another interpretation of this finding might suggest that little cleaning was going on in the children's homes, or that the distinction between the real role of the parental model was not yet established for these children by the age of five years.

Hill and Aldous (1969) contend that a major concern of mothers in fatherless homes is to involve children in a common enterprise in which they can learn to work and live together democratically and in some measure begin to meet their own basic needs irrespective of the father's presence or absence in the home. These authors imply a need for independence on the part of the children. This may be particularly true in lower classes where roles are so clearly differentiated for men and women (Rainwater, 1965) and where women appear to exhibit a greater commitment to family roles throughout their developmental history and are able to a degree to encourage this orientation upon their children when necessary, especially when the children are

young. Since a husbandless mother is subject to competing demands upon limited resources of time, money and energy, she may encourage her child toward early independence. The absence of the father induces some modification in age expectation for activities directly relevant to the mother's needs; i.e., she may expect a boy to help out in the house at a younger age than does the mother of a boy whose father is present.

The cell means for the number of child care tasks for each of the four groups are presented in Table XXV; the females performed more child care tasks than did the males.

TABLE XXV
MEAN NUMBER OF CHILD CARE TASKS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	6.50	3.90
Father-Present	4.30	2.50

Based on family status, the father-absent females and father-absent males performed more child care tasks than did the father-present females and father-present males, a difference which could be a result of the orientation of the father-absent children by their mothers to a sense of responsibility, to a sharing of the task of caring for each other in that the father was not present to help with this task.

The cell means for food preparation indicated that the females performed slightly more food preparation tasks than did the males. Based on family status, however, there was little difference in food preparation tasks performed (Table XXVI).

TABLE XXVI

MEAN NUMBER OF FOOD PREPARATION TASKS EXHIBITED
BY INDEPENDENT GROUPS

Family Status	Sex	
	Female	Male
Father-Absence/Presence		
Father-Absent	1.90	1.00
Father-Present	1.70	1.10

Even though the children were playing the father role, the lack of outstanding significant difference in the number of household tasks performed might be due to a lack of knowledge of what the father role entailed, and it is possible that these children were still playing the mother role. There seemed to be conflicting views as to what the father is supposed to do. When the children were asked arbitrarily what a father is supposed to do, some of the children said, "drive the Mustang," "go for a ride," "read the paper," "look at television," "go to work," "do nothing," "care for the children," "Daddies are not supposed to cook," or "take a bath and sit down." Others said, "I don't know."

This study did not coincide with Thomas' finding (1968) that father-absent children made fewer choices of the father to carry out parental activities than did the father-present children. It does appear to agree with the issue posed by Biller and Borstelman (1967) who believe that it is not the presence or absence of the father that is crucial, but rather, the significant factor which affects the child's behavior is how passive or ineffectual the father is when he is present. In line with this distinction, Sears, Pintler and Sears (1946) point out that mere presence of the father in the home is not enough to promote identification with him, but the process is influenced by the degree of affection accorded to the child by the person with whom identification is attempted and who is considered the power figure for the child.

This lack of outstanding significant difference in physical interactions found between father-absent children and father-present children might suggest that children are more alike at the age of five than they are different, and should be viewed and studied from this likeness rather than from a difference that might exist because the father is absent or present.

There are many factors which play a part in determining how a child behaves. Some of these might be the child's physical condition, his social environment, the fact that he may or may not be hungry, the number and/or age of his siblings, or the culture from which he comes. If this same study were replicated with a different socioeconomic group, a different racial group, etc. the findings might indicate a quite different pattern.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The research investigated aspects of the relationship between father-absence and parental role-play behavior of children. Previous research had suggested father-absence as an important prediction of negative factors related to the development of the child (Bach, 1946; Burton and Whiting, 1961; Bandura and Walters, 1963; and Wynn, 1964).

Projective doll-play as initially developed by Robinson (1946) was adapted as a measurement technique with defined dimensions of parental roles employed.

The 40 black five year old children who participated in the study were enrolled in Head Start Centers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. All children were from low socioeconomic families. Social economics, geographical location, age and race were controlled by exclusion.

The data were analyzed using chi-square (χ^2) and a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) based upon a 2 x 2 design involving the independent variables of sex and family status.

Doll-play parental role choice indicated that children made the appropriate sex role choices irrespective of the father's presence or absence. These results supported the contention of Biller (1969) and Wohlford (1970) who felt that the presence of a father surrogate negates the contention that the natural father's presence is paramount.

The Multivariate Analysis of Variance revealed no significant differences among the independent groups in verbal behavior based upon measures of total intelligible words, total sentences and total mumbling sounds that occurred in the doll-play. Moreover, this finding did not support Carlsmith (1969) who implied females were more verbal than males.

Overall physical interactions were nonsignificant at the .10 level probability of chance occurrence selected for discussion of this study. However, the intercorrelations of the physical interaction variables as well as those of projected household tasks indicated relative independence in the case of the projected punitive acts, cleaning and child care variables. This warranted interpretation of the univariate analyses for each of them.

According to the cell mean for doll interactions for the four groups, based on sex, females initiated almost twice as many doll interactions as the males. For family status the cell mean indicated that father-present children initiated almost twice as many doll interactions during their doll-play. For supportive acts exhibited by these

children, females were twice as supportive in their doll-play as were the males, and according to family status father-absent children were more supportive than were father-present children. Punitive acts were very low for each of the four groups; however, more punitive acts were exhibited by the father-present females.

The cell mean for food preparation indicated that the females performed slightly more food preparation tasks than did the males, but there was little difference in food preparation tasks based on family status.

Sex differences were found related to household tasks. Father-absent and father-present males projected more cleaning than did father-absent and father-present females, and father-absent and father-present females projected more child care tasks than did father-absent and father-present males, a result which could have been modified by many variables. Father-absence is a unique experience for each given family, for each person's behavior is composed of multiple action systems, and the ultimate consequences of interruption of facilitations are to some degree specific to each system.

The lack of outstanding significant differences among these four groups or the significant differences found cannot be regarded as conclusive. The sample was a purposive one and no claim is made for representation of a general population; generalizations do not pertain beyond the study sample.

Limitations

Several factors might have been operative to confound these results. First, sampling procedures were pragmatic by necessity and might not have been as representative as the investigator believed. Second, the lack of outstanding differences in the findings might imply similarities within a given subculture--all subjects were from low socioeconomic families. Finally, there is a possibility that the child's perception of the father role was not clearly established (Biller, 1969) by him in the doll play situation used.

Implications

The research relevant to the effects of father-absence and parental role learning is meager (Hill and Aldous, 1969). On the basis of available research and theory, one can speculate that the effect of father-absence is unique to each family and to each family member. The interactions between parents and siblings are by no means clearly delineated which indicates a clear need for further research in this area.

Recent research implies that the absence of the father is less critical than has been postulated (Wohlford, 1970), and it is important to consider whether there are justifiable bases for father separation, and equally important to consider alternatives to father-absence from the family.

The results of this study pointed out a great need for an appropriate approach to studying the interaction and interpersonal relationship between parents and children within the family. This approach may provide a better understanding of what this interaction and interpersonal relationship mean to the child in later life and to society. Role-theory incorporated with other theories is a suggested approach which may reveal more clearly defined conclusions concerning the behavior of children as a result of intervening variables.

Information about child behavior and their relationship to family resources is needed to determine specific effects of family environment on child development. This suggests a systems approach for a better understanding of the dimensions of child behavior.

In search of more accurate assessment of behavioral effects of father-absence on children, a comprehensive investigation of paternal absence would involve a doll-play interview, observations of children's play, a maternal interview, observations of parent-child behavior, observations of interaction in father-absent and father-present families and detailed case studies of successes and failures in father-present homes as well as in father-absent homes.

In summary, then, the implications of this study suggest that there is a great need for research involving ecological theories which would aid in understanding interaction between parents, children and family environment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION SHEET

APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION SHEET

CHILD'S NAME: _____ REASON FOR ABSENCE: _____
 AGE: _____ LENGTH OF ABSENCE: _____
 BIRTH DATE: _____ INCOME: _____
 SEX: _____ NUMBER IN FAMILY: _____
 FAMILY STATUS: FA FP* ORDINAL POSITION: _____

I. Choice of Parental Role:

II. Physical Interactions

Number of Interactions	Interactions Directed Toward						
	M	F	S(B)	S(M)	S(F)	S	T*
1. Overt Physical Acts							
2. Doll Interactions							
3. Punitive Acts							
4. Supportive Acts							

*FA = Father Absent
 FP = Father Present
 M = Mother
 F = Father
 S(B) = Sibling Baby
 S(M) = Sibling Male
 S(F) = Sibling Female
 S = Self
 T = Toys

III. Verbal Behavior

Verbalization	Number of Verbalizations
Single words	
Sentences (short or long)	
Mumbling sounds	
Aggressive and shouting	

IV. Household Tasks

Tasks	Number of Tasks
Food Preparation: Cooking Serving Washing dishes, etc.	
Cleaning Sweeping Dusting Washing clothes Ironing Mopping Mowing lawn Raking leaves, etc.	
Child Care Feeding Combing hair Bathing and dressing Reading to, etc.	

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Family Status	Sex					
	Male			Female		
	N	\bar{X}	SD	N	\bar{X}	SD
Father-Absent	10	61.80	1.93	10	62.90	1.96
Father-Present	10	62.80	2.44	10	62.70	2.71

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TABLE XXVIII

Family Status	Sex					
	Male			Female		
	No. of Families	\bar{X}	SD	No. of Families	\bar{X}	SD
Father-Absent	10	1.90	0.73	10	2.30	0.94
Father-Present	10	2.70	1.15	10	2.60	2.71

```

 $\bar{X}$  = mean
SD = standard deviation
Probability level of occurrence = .05 - .60
                                   .01 - .73
                                   .10 - .52

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TABLE XXIX
ORDINAL POSITION OF SUBJECTS

Family Status	N	Males		Sex		Females	
		\bar{X}	SD	N		\bar{X}	SD
Father-Absent	10	2.50	1.35	10		3.00	1.15
Father-Present	10	3.80	2.74	10		3.70	2.71

N = sample size

\bar{X} = mean

SD = standard deviation

Probability level of occurrence = .05 - .60

.01 - .73

.10 - .52

TABLE XXX
FATHER-ABSENT CHILDREN--REASON FOR ABSENCE

Reason for Absence	Sex				Total %
	Male		Female		
	N	%	N	%	
Death	1	10			10
Desertion	2	20	1	10	30
Divorce			1	10	10
Military	1	10			10
Separation	6	60	8	80	140
Total	10	100	10	100	200

TABLE XXXI

FATHER-ABSENT CHILDREN--LENGTH OF ABSENCE

Length of Absence	Sex						Total
	Male			Female			
	N	\bar{X}	SD	N	\bar{X}	SD	
	10	2.60	0.69	10	1.30	0.67	
Total	10			10			20

N = sample size

 \bar{X} = mean

SD = standard deviation

Probability level of occurrence =

.10 - .52
.05 - .60
.01 - .73

TABLE XXXII
LEVEL OF INCOME FOR FATHER-ABSENT AND
FATHER-PRESENT FAMILIES*

	Sex					
	Male			Female		
	N	\bar{X}	SD	N	\bar{X}	SD
Father-Absent Families	10	2.00	0.94	10	2.80	1.13
Father-Present Families	<u>10</u>	3.60	1.64	<u>10</u>	3.40	1.42
Total	20			20		

Levels of Income*
 1 = 000 - 999
 2 = 1,000 - 1,999
 3 = 2,000 - 2,999
 4 = 3,000 - 3,999
 5 = 4,000 - 4,999
 6 = 5,000 and above

N = sample size
 \bar{X} = mean
 SD = standard deviation
 Probability level of
 occurrence = .10 - .52
 .05 - .60
 .01 - .73

APPENDIX C

CODE BOOK

APPENDIX C

CODE BOOK

<u>Column Number</u>	<u>Number of Columns</u>	<u>Range of Valid Codes</u>	<u>Item Description</u>
1-2	2	01-40	Child's I.D. No.
3	1	1, 2	Child's Sex 1 = male 2 = female
4	1	1, 2	Family Status 1 = father absence 2 = father present
5-6	2	60-67	Child's age in months
7	1	Blank, 1-5	Reason for absence 1 = separation 2 = desertion 3 = divorce 4 = army 5 = death (Leave blank for F.P. <u>Ss</u>)
8	1	Blank, 1-5	Number of years of absence (Leave blank for F.P. <u>Ss</u>)
9	1	1-6	Income 1 = 000-999 2 = 1,000-2,999 3 = 2,000-2,999 4 = 3,000-3,999 5 = 4,000-4,999 6 = 4,999-and over

<u>Column Number</u>	<u>Number of Columns</u>	<u>Range of Valid Codes</u>	<u>Item Description</u>
10	1	1-5	Number of children in family. 1 = 1-2 children 2 = 3-4 3 = 5-6 4 = 7-8 5 = 9-10
11	1	1-7	No. Ordinal Position
12	1	Blank	
In second session one parental role was played.			
13	1	1, 2	Choice of Parental role: 1 = father 2 = mother
14-15	2	00-	<u>Overt Physical Acts (OPA)</u>
16-17	2	00-	OPA - M OPA - F
18-19	2	00-	OPA - S(b)
20-21	2	00-	OPA - S(m)
22-23	2	00-	OPA - S(F)
24-25	2	00-	OPA - S
26-27	2	00-	OPA - Toys
28-30	3	000-	OPA - Total
31	1 Blank		Doll Interactions (DI)
32-33	20-	00-	DI - M
34-35	2	00-	DI - F
36-37	2	00-	DI - S(b)
38-39	2	00-	DI - S(m)
40-41	2	00-	DI - S(F)
42-43	2	00-	DI Total

<u>Column Number</u>	<u>Number of Columns</u>	<u>Range of Valid Codes</u>	<u>Item Description</u>
44	1	Blank	
45	1	0-	Punitive Acts (PA) M
46	1	0-	PA - F
47	1	0-	PA - S(b)
48	1	0-	PA - S(m)
49	1	0-	PA - S(F)
50-51	2	00-	PA - Total
52	1	Blank	
53-54	2	00-	Supportive Acts (SA) M
55-56	2	00-	SA - F
57-58	2	00-	SA - S(b)
59-60	2	00-	SA - S(m)
61-62	2	00-	SA - S(F)
63-64	2	00-	SA - Total
65-79	15	Blank	
80	1	1	Card Number I
<u>Card No. 2</u>			
1-4	4	Repeat from Card No. 1	
5	1	Blank	
6-7	2	00-	Total Interactions Directed Toward M
8-9	2	00-	TIDT - F
10-11	2	00-	TIDT - S(b)
12-13	2	00-	TIDT - S(M)
14-15	2	00-	TIDT - S(F)

<u>Column Number</u>	<u>Number of Columns</u>	<u>Range of Valid Codes</u>	<u>Item Description</u>
16-17	2	00-	TIDT - S
18-19	2	00-	TIDT - Toys
20-22	3	000-	Total No. of Physical Interactions
23	1	Blank	
<u>Verbal Behavior</u>			
24	1	1-5	Number of single words 1 = 1-100 2 = 101-200 3 = 201-300 4 = 301-400 5 = 401-500
25	1	1-5	Number of sentences 1 = 1-10 2 = 11-20 3 = 21-30 4 = 31-40 5 = 41 + over
26	1	0-9	Number of mumbling sounds
27	1	1, 2	Aggressive and shouting verbalizations: 1 = Did occur 2 = Did not occur
28	1	Blank	
<u>Household Tasks</u>			
29-30	2	00-	Number of food preparation tasks
31-32	2	00-	Number cleaning tasks
33-34	2	00-	Number child care tasks
35-36	2	00-	Total household tasks
37-79		Blank	
80	1	2	Card Number

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF CLASSIFIED SUB-CATEGORIES

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF CLASSIFIED SUB-CATEGORIES*

I. Verbal Behavior:

A. Single Words

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. no | 7. town |
| 2. yes | 8. car |
| 3. stop | 9. candy |
| 4. go | 10. milk |
| 5. father | 11. doll |
| 6. mother | 12. diaper |

B. Sentences

1. "This is a sister and a little brother."
2. "I am going to the store and buy the baby some milk."
3. "I don't know."
4. "Close the door mother."
5. "The daddy went around the house and bumped his head."
6. "He took off his clothes and put them into the washing machine."
7. "Why don't you have a screen door on this house?"

*For definition of sub-categories see operational definitions.

8. "I am going to wash my hands."
9. "When mother comes back I am going to have to go to work."
10. "Where is the baby's bed?"
11. "Her diaper fell off."
12. "I have two brothers and two sisters."

C. Mumbling Sounds

1. Muttered sounds that could not be understood by the experimenter.
2. Such usage as: "huh"--for what,
"un-huh"--for yes and
"on-un"--for I do not know.
3. Humming as if attempting to sing.

II. Physical Interactions:

A. Overt Physical Acts

1. "Look the dolls can stand alone." (Child stood all dolls alone in a row in front of house.)
2. The mother and father dolls were placed on the couch.
3. The baby doll was dressed.
4. "Everybody is putting on his clothes." (Child dressed all dolls.)
5. "I am going to pull all their clothes off." (All clothes were removed from the doll figures.)
6. "I am fixing this lamp." (Child fixed lamp.)
7. Mother doll was placed on the couch.
8. All siblings were placed in a circle on the floor.
9. Girl was placed into kitchen and told, "you cook now."

10. Father cut the grass.
11. Mother washed the dishes.
12. Boy doll was spanked by child.

B. Doll Interactions

1. Dolls were holding hands going for a walk.
2. Boy doll and girl doll were fighting.
3. Mother doll hugged the baby.
4. Father doll and mother doll were placed beside each other on the couch.
5. The boy doll was placed into bed beside the baby.
6. The girl doll was put on the couch beside the father.
7. All doll figures were seated on the floor touching each other.
8. The sibling dolls were piled on top of each other in the bath tub and told, "now wash all that dirt off of you."
9. Baby was placed into mother doll's lap.
10. Baby was placed into arms of father.
11. Mother doll spanked baby doll.
12. All doll figures were piled into the living room on top of each other. They were told, "You look at the television."

C. Punitive Acts

1. "You can not go play, you did not do your work."
2. "Sit in that corner, you have been bad."
3. Mother doll spanked boy doll.
4. Mother doll whipped girl doll and said, "I am going to whip the girl for hurting the baby."

5. "I am not going to give you any candy because you were fighting."
6. "You will have to stay home because you did not obey."
7. "I am going to whip all the children for hurting the baby."
8. "You can't go for a ride with me because you did not take a bath and put on clean clothes."
9. "No, you can't have any cake, you did not eat your dinner."
10. "I am going to whip the mother when she comes back for leaving this house."
11. "Sit down and hush, if you cry I'll slap you."

D. Supportive Acts

1. "I am going to give the baby a bath."
2. "Come here let me brush your hair."
3. "Now you feed the baby, because you are a big girl."
4. "Sit in the daddy's lap, he will rock you to sleep."
5. "Don't cry, I will take you for a ride."
6. "I am putting the baby to bed."
7. "The mother is staying at the grandmother's, cause she is sick, to take her medicine, that's what my mother does."
8. "I am going to buy candy for the children, if I have any money."
9. "I am going to wake up the kids and get them ready for school."
10. "I gave baby a bath, he was all wet."
11. "Hold this baby." (Baby was placed into sister's lap.)

12. "I am going to stay with the children while the mother is gone to keep the "boogey man" away."

III. Household Tasks

A. Food Preparation

1. "I am going to cook a cake."
2. "Set the table so we can eat."
3. "Fix cornflakes for the children."
4. "I like to cook crawfish, this is how I do it." (Pretend to put something in pot.)
5. "I am going to make ice cream."
6. Opened refrigerator, "Get this milk for the baby."
7. "You wash the dishes."
8. "Cook dinner for the children."
9. "Let the cake bake."
10. "When the children wake up I am going to give them something to eat."
11. "I will give the children a cold drink with their dinner."
12. "I went into the kitchen to peel an apple for the little girl."

B. Cleaning

1. "I am going to sweep this house."
2. "Now, I'll clean up the house."
3. "Mop the house."
4. "Sweep and mop."
5. "Straighten the room up."
6. "Make the beds."

7. "Clean up the leaves that I raked."
8. "Wash out the bath tub."
9. "Straighten the furniture in the house."
10. "Put some wax on the floor."
11. "Shine the furniture."
12. "Take the curtains down and wash them."

C. Child Care

1. "Nurse the baby."
2. "Comb the children's hair."
3. "Fix the baby's diaper."
4. "Fasten the girls' dress."
5. "Feed the baby."
6. "Stay with the children until the mother comes."
7. "Buy the children candy."
8. "Take the children for a ride."
9. "Give the baby a bath."
10. "Buy the girl some new clothes."
11. "Cut the boy's hair."
12. "Read the children a pretty story."

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