

1

9 3

1 6 2 8 4

U·M·I

MICROFILMED 1993

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# U·M·I

University Microfilms International  
A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

PREVIEW

**Order Number 9316284**

**Daughters without fathers: Effects on subsequent intimate relationships**

**Cangelosi, Donna Marie, Psy.D.**

**Pace University, 1988**

**Copyright ©1993 by Cangelosi, Donna Marie. All rights reserved.**

**U·M·I**

**300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

PREVIEW

DAUGHTERS WITHOUT FATHERS:  
EFFECTS ON SUBSEQUENT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

by

Donna Marie Cangelosi

A Doctoral Project Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology  
in the Department of Psychology at Pace University

NEW YORK

1988



PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
PSY.D. PROJECT  
FINAL APPROVAL FORM

(Please type all information)

NAME: Donna Marie Cangelosi

TITLE OF PROJECT: Daughters without Fathers: Effects on  
Subsequent Intimate Relationships

DOCTORAL PROJECT COMMITTEE:

PROJECT ADVISOR: Alfred Ward, Ph.D.  
(Name)  
Assistant Professor, Pace University  
(Title) (Affiliation)

PROJECT CONSULTANT: Pamela E. Hall, Psy.D.  
(Name)  
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Pace University  
(Title) (Affiliation)

FINAL APPROVAL OF COMPLETED PROJECT:

I have read the final version of the doctoral project and certify that it meets the relevant requirements for the Psy.D. degree in School-Community Psychology.

Alfred Ward  
(Project Advisor's Signature)

8/4/88  
(Date)

Pamela E. Hall  
(Project Consultant's Signature)

8/4/88  
(Date)

PREVIEW



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing a monumental task of this nature has led to a review of the special people who have helped along the way. I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with two very talented, professional, and knowledgeable mentors, Dr. Alfred Ward and Dr. Pamela Hall.

Dr. Ward's ability to convey complex principles in a clear, concise manner helped me to understand the area of psychological research much better than I ever dreamed possible. In addition to being an excellent teacher, Dr. Ward was a consistent source of support and guidance. His enthusiasm and optimistic manner were extremely encouraging and I truly enjoyed working with him.

Dr. Hall has been a mentor and positive role model throughout my graduate studies and has taught me the true meaning of "giving". She has unselfishly shared her knowledge, skills and experiences with me and has consistently been available to provide guidance, encouragement, and emotional support. As a dissertation consultant, Dr. Hall was instrumental in helping me to express my ideas clearly and maintain the enthusiasm and motivation needed to complete a project of this nature. Her enthusiasm was contagious and extremely inspiring.

I also wish to express appreciation to Dean Richards, Dr. Norris and Dr. Badin for their help in recruiting subjects for the study, to Mr. Steve Salbod for assisting me with data analyses, and to Dr. M. Elizabeth Langell for her help with the final manuscript.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my family, Michael, Vita, and Annette Gower, for their love, support and encouragement and for their growing appreciation psychology.

This dissertation is dedicated to girls who are faced with the challenges brought about by divorce-related father absence.

"What you are is God's gift to you...

What you become is your gift to God."

DAUGHTERS WITHOUT FATHERS:  
EFFECTS ON SUBSEQUENT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract

A study of the long-term effects of voluntary father absence, resulting from parental divorce, was conducted with 144 college women, ages 18 through 22. Adhering to Erik Erikson's developmental theory, focus was on the impact of father absence during adolescence (ages 12-16), on identity formation and ability to establish intimate heterosexual relationships. Sixty-two women from divorced families whose fathers permanently left their home prior to their twelfth birthday were compared with eighty-two demographically similar women who were from intact, father-present homes.

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire, the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory, and the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory. It was hypothesized that the two groups would differ significantly in their resolution of Erikson's identity and intimacy stages and in their level of emotional and sexual intimacy. Age at time of father's departure and amount of interaction with him were expected to relate significantly to the overall adjustment of women from father-absent homes.

The level of identity development among the father-absent group was significantly higher than that of the father-present group ( $p < .01$ ). The father-absent group also

demonstrated slightly higher sexual intimacy scores and slightly lower emotional intimacy scores than did the father-present group. Age at time of father's departure and amount of interaction with father did not relate to adjustment. However, a significant relationship was identified between the father-absent group's perceptions of their fathers and the level of emotional intimacy these women experienced in heterosexual relationships.

The results are discussed as they pertain to the findings of current divorce research. Directions for further research are offered and implications for treatment are discussed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements . . . . .	.iv
Abstract . . . . .	.vi
List of Tables . . . . .	.xi
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction . . . . .	.1
Review of the Literature . . . . .	.2
Children's Reactions to Parental Divorce . . . . .	.2
The Preschool Child . . . . .	.4
The School Age Child . . . . .	.7
The Adolescent . . . . .	.9
The Young Adult . . . . .	.14
The Father-Daughter Relationship . . . . .	.18
Role of the Father in the Female Child's	
Psychosocial Development . . . . .	.19
Effects of Father Absence on the Female	
Child's Heterosexual Adjustment . . . . .	.31
Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of the	
Voluntary Father-absence Resulting from	
Parental Divorce: The Present Study. . . . .	.36
Definition of Terms . . . . .	.40
Research Hypotheses . . . . .	.42
CHAPTER TWO: Method . . . . .	.44
Subjects . . . . .	.44
Instrumentation . . . . .	.45

The Demographic Questionnaire . . . . .	46
The Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory . . . . .	47
The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory . . . . .	49
Procedure . . . . .	52
CHAPTER THREE: Results . . . . .	55
Description of the Sample . . . . .	55
Tests of Hypotheses . . . . .	57
Group Differences . . . . .	57
Intercorrelations Among Variables . . . . .	60
Additonal Analyses: Assessment of the Father-Daughter Relationship . . . . .	64
Correlational Analyses . . . . .	64
Further Breakdowns of the Father-Absent Group: Perceptions of the Non-custodial Father . . . . .	66
CHAPTER FOUR: Discussion . . . . .	82
Psychosocial Adjustment . . . . .	83
Intimate Heterosexual Relationships . . . . .	87
Determinants of Heterosexual Adjustment . . . . .	90
Implications of the Study . . . . .	95
Directions for Further Research . . . . .	98
Recommendations and Strategies for Clinical Intervention . . . . .	100
REFERENCES. . . . .	103

APPENDIX A	The Demographic Questionnaire . . . . .	112
APPENDIX B	The Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory . .	116
APPENDIX C	The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Inventory . . . . .	121

PREVIEW

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Mean Statistics of the Sample . . . . .	.56
2. Means and Standard Deviations for the Father-Absent Group on Major Variables . . . . .	58
3. Intercorrelations of Major Variables among the Father-Absent Group . . . . .	.61
4. Intercorrelations of Major Variables among the Father-Present Group . . . . .	62
5. Means and Standard Deviations for the Father-Absent Group when Broken down by Amount of Time spent with Father . . . . .	.67
6. Intercorrelations of Variables among the Father-Absent Group by Amount of Time spent with Father . . . . .	.69
7. Means and Standard Deviations for the Father-Absent Group when Broken Down by Dependability of Father. .	71
8. Intercorrelations of Variables Among the Father-Absent Group by Dependability of Father . . .	73
9. Means and Standard Deviations for the Father-Absent Group when Broken Down by Consistency of Father . .	.75
10. Intercorrelations of Variables Among the Father-Absent Group by Consistency of Father . . . .	77



11.	Means and Standard Deviations for the Father-Absent Group when Broken Down by Amount of Emotional Closeness with Father . . . . .	.79
12.	Intercorrelations of Variables Among the Father-Absent Group by Amount of Emotional Closeness with Father . . . . .	.81

PREVIEW

DAUGHTERS WITHOUT FATHERS:  
EFFECTS ON SUBSEQUENT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In our time, the divorce rate in this country has increased dramatically and the subject of divorce has become a focal point of much psychological research. In 1982, the divorce rate was one and one half times greater than it had been in 1972 and nearly three times greater than it had been in 1962 (National Center for Health Statistics: Vital Statistics of the U.S., 1986). Consequently, the number of children affected by broken marriages has increased dramatically over the past two decades. Approximately 1,108,000 children under the age of eighteen experienced parental divorce in 1982 compared to 532,000 children in 1962 (National Center for Health Statistics: Vital Statistics of the U.S., 1986).

It has been projected that 30% of all children born in the United States during the 1980's will experience parental divorce before they reach the age of eighteen and will consequently live in a single parent home for a portion of their lives (Bane, 1979). Single parent lifestyles resulting specifically from parental divorce have increased by 111% since 1970 (Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry, & McLaughlin, 1983). Hetherington, (1972) has found that on

the average, children of divorce spend six years of their lives living in a single parent home. While an increasing number of single parent families are headed by fathers, 90% of custody arrangements are still awarded to mothers (De Frain & Eirick, 1981; Hetherington, 1972). As such, father absence is often a natural outcome of parental divorce. The present study investigated the effects of voluntary father absence, resulting specifically from parental divorce, on the female child's subsequent intimate heterosexual relationships.

#### Review of the Literature

##### Children's Reactions to Parental Divorce

Recent research suggests that regardless of the age of the child, his/her reaction to parental divorce begins precisely at the point when one parent physically leaves the home (Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1978; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1972, 1980). Wallerstein and Kelly note that parental divorce, in and of itself, is not as important a determinant of the child's eventual adjustment as is the "process" or chain of events set in motion by the initial separation. They argue that the assimilation of divorce-related changes is a process that continues to unfold throughout the development of the child.

Wallerstein (1983) proposed that the child's long range adjustment to parental divorce requires the child to master six interrelated, hierarchical coping tasks. These tasks represent an added burden to the routine developmental tasks faced by all children. As such, children from divorced families must master two kinds of developmental challenges simultaneously. The developmental demands of dealing with parental divorce begin with the initial break up of the family and culminate at the close of adolescence. Wallerstein proposed that children of divorce must first acknowledge the reality of the marital rupture, then disengage from parental conflict and finally, pursue customary activities within one year of the initial separation. It is only after these three tasks are accomplished that the child can progress to subsequent challenges which are mastered over a period of many years. These involve resolving feelings related to the partial or total loss of a parent from the family unit, working through feelings of anger and self-blame, and accepting the permanence of parental divorce. Finally, during adolescence, or perhaps at entry to young adulthood, the child of divorce is faced with the task of achieving realistic hope regarding intimate heterosexual relationships.

McGrab (1978) has also taken a developmental perspective in looking at the effects of parental divorce on children. He asserts that parental divorce may hinder the youngster's ability to master the developmental tasks of childhood put forth by Erik Erikson. These include: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, and identity versus role confusion. Erikson's theory regarding these stages of development states that a relatively successful resolution of each hierarchical conflict is necessary for the individual to progress to the subsequent stage of development. Unlike other theorists, Erikson notes that development continues beyond adolescence. As such, he proposes that the adult must confront the challenges of intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and finally, dignity versus despair.

#### The Preschool Child

According to Erikson (1963) the developmental task of the toddler is that of autonomy versus shame and doubt. During this phase of development the child must transcend difficulties related to separating from the primary caretaker and must develop a sense of curiosity, initiative, and adventure via the world around him/her. An application of McGrab's theory on children's reactions to parental divorce suggests that losses and separations

associated with divorce could quite naturally compound the toddler's difficulty establishing a sense of autonomy and inner security. Consistent with this premise, a cluster of researchers have proposed that the father's departure from the home commonly elicits guilt and a sense of self-blame on the part of the preschooler. Preschoolers faced with parental divorce demonstrate an increased sense of anxiety, sadness, guilt, apathy, and evidence a lesser degree of initiative in terms of task involvement than do preschoolers with no history of parental divorce. They commonly exhibit increased attention seeking behaviors and demonstrate separation anxiety, sleep disorders, confusion, and regressive behaviors (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978, 1979; McDermott, 1970A; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1972, 1980).

Bewilderment over the loss of father and anxiety about losing mother has been repeatedly reported in studies which have investigated preschoolers following parental divorce. In one study (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1972) preschool boys and girls expressed a desperate longing for their father and feared that he would replace them with a new child. They were unable to comprehend the complexities of the divorce and commonly expressed self-blame and personal responsibility for their father's departure. Another study (McDermott, 1970A) identified a subgroup

of preschool girls who expressed a strong desire to dress like "grown up ladies". McDermott interpreted such behaviors as attempts to identify with mother in order to ensure her love and prevent her from abandoning and rejecting them as they perceived their fathers had done.

Follow-up studies of preschoolers who have experienced parental divorce reveal a strong correlation between parent-child relationships and the child's psychological adjustment to the divorce experience (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1972, 1980). In their five year follow-up Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) reported that "the extent to which the child did not feel rejected in relationship with the noncustodial or visiting parent and the extent to which this relationship had continued on a regular basis" (p. 207), was a critical factor in the child's long range adjustment to parental divorce. Still another longitudinal study by Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1985) revealed that boys tend to adopt a stable pattern of impulsivity and antisocial behaviors in response to parental divorce while girls tend to withdraw and evidence behaviors indicative of depression and anxiety. It appears evident that these patterns lead to more prompt clinical interventions for boys because of the disruptive nature of their symptoms. The emotional pain of little girls, on the other hand, tends to go unnoticed and often remains

untreated because it is not as overt or disruptive in nature.

### The School-Age Child

According to Erik Erikson (1963) the developmental task of the school-age child revolves around learning to become a productive individual and developing a sense of industry. Successful resolution of this stage involves developing a consolidated sense of achievement and academic competence and forming close interpersonal relationships with same-sexed peers. Unsuccessful resolution at this phase results in a sense of inadequacy and inferiority. According to Erikson's paradigm, the child's self image and sense of worth depends upon whether s/he experiences failure or mastery during this challenging phase of development.

A number of researchers have proposed that children who perceive that they have failed to keep their parents' marriage intact or see themselves as powerless because of the break up, tend to develop a helpless, negative self concept which contributes to low self esteem. (McDermott, 1970B; Parish & Taylor, 1979; Toomin, 1974; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976A & B; Young & Parish, 1977). Using a clinical population, McDermott found that children from divorced families tend to exhibit depression, self-destructive behaviors, and a disregard for personal safety. Robinson and Williams (1973) note that children who witness