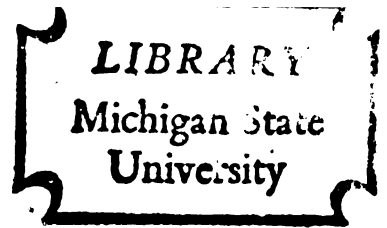


A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION  
PATTERNS AND ADOLESCENT AUTONOMY

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
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DANIEL E. COSTELLO  
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This is to certify that the

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Daniel E. Costello

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## ABSTRACT

### STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND ADOLESCENT AUTONOMY

by Daniel E. Costello

This study focused on the question as to whether or not there are characteristics of the communication between family members that are associated with the child's autonomy in his thoughts and actions.

The respondents were 25 families in the Holt, Michigan area. Personal interviews were conducted with the mother, father, and their son, who was between 14 and 16 years-of-age. A tape recording was made of the family members discussing various topics that dealt with adolescent problems.

The child's interaction with both his mother and father was analyzed. In addition each child was asked to select the one parent from whom he generally preferred to seek advice. The chosen parent's responses were then analyzed in a "primary parent" index.

Each discussion was analyzed using a modified form of Bales' interaction process-analysis categories. In the discussion, interaction was divided into statements that concerned the parents' support of the child's ideas, the child's support of his parents' ideas, and the relative contribution made by the child to the total family discussion.

The purpose was to check the relationships between these communication variables and other measures of the child's level of autonomy. After completion of their discussion, each family member was asked to make judgments concerning the child's autonomy.

Four measures of adolescent autonomy were investigated: the child's perceived influence on his parents' decisions; the child's perceived self-confidence in his own decision-making; the extent to which the parents let their child make his own decisions; and the child's claimed use of personal and mediated sources for ideas.

A correlational approach was used in testing the hypotheses. Of the twelve hypotheses tested, five were partially supported. It turned out that the most consistent predictor of the child's perceived autonomy was his communication style with his primary parent. Sole reliance on the child's relationship with either his mother or father did not point up any recurrent communication patterns.

Of the remaining seven hypotheses, two were not in the predicted direction, and the other five were not supported at all. Most of these hypotheses were concerned with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion, which turned out to be a very poor predictor of the child's perceived autonomy.

The data indicated that the primary parent's support of the child during the discussion consistently explained more of the variability in the child's level of autonomy than did the lack of agreement shown by the child of his primary parent's ideas during the discussion. The primary parent's support of the child in a discussion explained 21 percent of the variability in the child's perceived influence on his primary parent, while the child's lack of agreement with his primary parent's ideas accounted for 18 percent of the variability. Similarly, in explaining the child's perceived self-confidence, primary parent's support of the child's ideas during the discussion

Daniel E. Costello

accounted for 26 percent of the variability in this behavior, while the child's lack of agreement with his primary parent's ideas explained about 19 percent.

Furthermore, the primary parent's support of the child in a conversation explained 45 percent of the variability in the primary parent's judgment whether to let the child make most of his own decisions. In addition, primary parent's support of the child's ideas during the discussion accounted for 29 percent of the variability in the child's claimed use of television, magazines, and radio for ideas and about 16 percent of the variability in the child's indicated use of his mother, father, and relatives as sources of information.

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CHAPTER I  
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM  
An Approach to Family Study

In the study of the family, scholars from several disciplines and from a number of schools within disciplines have done and are doing research, theory-building, and counseling. Hill and Hansen (1960), Stryker (1959, 1964), and Nye and Berardo (1966) present detailed delineations of conceptual frameworks in family analysis. For purposes of this study, an interactionist approach which has contributed a great deal to an understanding of the family will be briefly described.

Kirkpatrick (1955) describes the interactionist framework as one in which the child observes the roles played by family members and incorporates these roles into his own personality structure. In the dynamic process of family members living together, there is interaction of roles. The concept of the family as a unity is a bridge between the family institution and the individual actor as a member of a family.

The unique, differentiating characteristic of the interactional approach is that it is based on the action of the family resulting from the communication process. It views family behavior as an adjustive process where cues are given and individual members respond to these stimuli. The primary focus of the framework has not been with external or environmental factors as such, but with the action of the family members in constant flux.

Within the internal workings of the family, the areas receiving considerable attention have been dating, mate selection, marital adjustment, parent-child relationships, and personality formation within the family context. Thus, the major concerns have been with the processes of socialization of the child and development of personality. Adults define for the child the meaning of events, values, and norms. This process is illustrated by Waller and Hill: "The child comes into the world to find an interactive system of the adults of his society." (1951, p. 39). The personality in the child develops slowly over time. A certain type of personality emerges or becomes stabilized to a degree by the interactive process of defining acts of others and thus becoming aware of one's own actions. This results in a persistent or stable pattern of behavior.

Burgess and Locke (1953) refer to the source of social control for the family unit as one of the major distinctions between the institutional and interactionist frameworks. In the institutional approach, the control of behavior is derived from the social structure outside of the family. In contrast, social control in the interactionist approach is viewed as stemming from mutual affection and compatibility of the family members. It may be said that the institutional approach is more community oriented while the interactionist approach is based on interpersonal relationships among family members.

It should be pointed out that the framework also differs from the structural-functional approach in sociology. Under the perspective of interaction, social action comes from acting individuals who fit their respective types of action to one another through a process of interpretation.

Family interaction is the collective action of such individuals. As opposed to this view, structural-functional conceptions generally lodge social action in the action of society or in some unit of society.

As a research framework the interactional approach addresses itself to a study of the internal workings of the family. In the study of the internal processes of family, the focus has been on husband-wife relationships or parent-child interaction. These processes consist of role-playing, status relations, communication problems, decision-making stress relations and socialization processes. There seems to be a scarcity of studies which view mother-father-child interaction patterns. Also, most of the family studies have dealt with testimonial descriptions of family communication furnished by its members. These studies have not attempted to analyze the nature of the communication behavior that occurred.

#### A Theoretical Interpretation of the Problem

One of the primary functions of the family is the preparation of a child to leave home. (Douvan and Adelson, 1966). The interaction of parent and child is conditioned by their mutual knowledge of the child's eventual departure. The family's task is to rehearse the child for it and to help him rehearse himself.

The direction of adolescent growth is clearly toward emancipation from the family. The period begins with the child almost entirely dependent on the family, needing its say-so for what he can and cannot do, still clinging to their ideas and ideals. It ends with the child reaching into adulthood, freer to make up his mind about what he will and will not do,

holding his own beliefs and values, and, if necessary, looking elsewhere than the family for love and support.

One of the key concepts in the growth and development of a child is the notion of autonomy. Autonomy is particularly important at adolescence, more so than at any other time since early childhood. Above all, at adolescence, autonomy becomes important for itself; it acquires a meaning beyond the particular, concrete issues at hand. The specific issues--what time to be in at night, or to buy one's own clothes--are important not only in themselves but also because they carry such high symbolic value. The particular freedoms the child is given are the visible part of a larger conversation between parent and child, having to do with the child's need for later independence.

Adolescent autonomy focuses on behavior and decisions. What can the youngster do on his own? What decisions can he make for and by himself? To give this concept meaning we have to know its antecedent, its sources. In the case of the adolescent, these are probably to be found in parental values. What the youngster is free or unfree to do and decide probably tells us less about him than it does about his parents; it tells us about him indirectly, through what it may suggest about the family milieu and the parents' ideology of socialization.

The parental value system is a complex notion. A variety of terms have been used to describe various types of value systems; however, the terms most often used to designate the opposing poles of this continuum are autocratic and democratic. (Lewin, Lippitt, and White, 1939). In all the value systems, interpersonal communication is an essential element.



Given that family members are involved in face-to-face communication, the question can be raised as to whether or not there are characteristics of the interaction among the family members that are associated with other behaviors and decisions of the child.

### Focus of Study

The present study extends the analysis of interaction to include: (1) a description of the relationship between family communication patterns and those behaviors of a child which are indicative of a child's growth toward emancipation from the family; (2) a breakdown of parent-child interaction into mother-father-child interaction patterns; and (3) the actual monitoring of family communication instead of the more typical use of testimonial reports furnished by family members. A modification of the Bales interaction process analysis categories (1950) will be used to analyze the interaction structure in the family groups. Since the family is one of the oldest and most influential learning contexts, surely a more detailed study of family communication should yield valuable clues to the etiology of such typical modes of interaction.

### Family Communication Patterns

The following interaction patterns will be analyzed, in order to determine the nature of the communication behavior that occurs between family members.

1. Relative child support by mother.
2. Relative child support by father.
3. Relative child support by primary parent.

4. Relative child support by non-primary parent.
5. Relative mother support by child.
6. Relative father support by child.
7. Relative primary parent support by child.
8. Relative non-primary parent support by child.
9. Percentage of child's contribution to family discussion.

### Indices of Adolescent Autonomy

The following variables are somewhat indicative of the child's growth toward emancipation from the family.

Child's perceived influence on parental decisions. One of the ways in which parents can encourage independence on the part of their child is by permitting the child to express himself on the daily decisions made by them. If the parents act with understanding and generally tend to support the child's ideas, the child may start to feel that his ideas are acceptable solutions. This should result in the child's perception of himself as affecting decisions made by his mother and father.

Child's self-confidence in decision-making. The degree of self-confidence that a child has in his own decision-making ability seems to be crucial to his development. How sure a child is of his own judgments should indirectly indicate whether he is prepared to break his dependency on his parents for making decisions.

Parent control over child's decision-making. Another indicator of whether a child has achieved a certain degree of independence is when the parents perceive the child as capable of making his own decisions. The amount of control the parents exert should indirectly indicate how well a child is prepared to make decisions on his own.



Child's information-seeking. Some parents encourage a child to explore new ideas. The more often a child exposes himself to varied ideas from many sources, the better he should become at evaluating and using information. With more sources of advice open to him, the child should become less dependent upon his parents for answers to his problems.

### The Relation of Small Group Research to Families

Although studies of the processes of interaction in small groups provide an increasingly firm basis for making generalizations about behavior in the family, gaps in our knowledge still remain. For example, much of the empirical work has been confined to ad hoc laboratory groups, often groups of the same sex, and frequently groups of college students. Without minimizing the value of these studies, questions can be raised concerning the generalizability of these findings and calling for research replications utilizing groups of differing composition.

A concept which might help bridge this inductive gap is that of group attraction or cohesiveness. The forces affecting group attraction are usually hypothesized to be a function of the degree to which members of a group find the group experience actually or potentially need-satisfying. Attraction has been associated with formal and informal group goals and activities (Schachter, 1951), with the prestige position of the group (Back, 1951), with affectional ties to group members (Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950), with opportunities for free emotional expression (Festinger, Pepitone, and Newcomb, 1952), and with protection against external threat (Gerard, 1953). Cartwright and Zander (1960, p. 70) point out some additional ways of viewing group attraction when they state:

A cohesive group might be characterized as one in which the members all work together for a common goal, or where everyone is ready to take responsibility for group chores. The willingness to endure pain or frustration is yet another possible indication of its cohesiveness. Finally, we might conceive of a cohesive group as one which its members will defend against criticism or attack.

Before the findings in small group research can be applied to family groups, an assumption must be made. The assumption is that groups high in attraction, whether ad hoc groups or family groups, have some common correlates. If this is so, the correlates of group attractiveness found in small group research should say something about the characteristics of attractive or cohesive families.

#### Review of the Literature

The democratic-authoritarian concept has been found to apply to both task-oriented small groups and family groups. Some of the characteristics that are commonly associated with democratic-authoritarian value systems should provide insights into family interaction patterns.

The parents' allowance of some form of expressed conflict seems a crucial variable for the comfort and development of the adolescent child. Douvan and Adelson conducted two national studies based on interviews with some 3500 children. Their studies include both boys and girls in grades 6 through 12, with no age limits. They found that boys and girls who report a high rate of disagreement with their parents come from more democratic or equalitarian homes. Also, children from equalitarian homes indicate a high level of participation in family decisions.

Thus, another important variable is whether the parents give the child an opportunity to participate in decisions which concern the family. The basic question here seems to be whether the parents hold the power for all decisions affecting the child or do they permit the child a degree of self-determination? It seems that the authoritarian parent will neither explain his act nor permit the child to question it. On the other hand, the parent who assumes a rational base for power treats the child as an understanding being, explaining his own acts and responding to the child's questions and arguments.

The interpretation of their results relies less on the notion of conflict than on a picture of relatively easy relationships in a family pattern where the parents encourage independence, permit the child to feel and express his differences and disagreements, and exercise moderate authority which they both explain and allow to be questioned.

Sargent (1967) conducted a study to determine whether democratic and authoritarian leaders differ systematically in certain communication behaviors. He classified 4-H Club leaders as democratic or authoritarian, and then, tape recorded their discussions with club members. The communication behaviors of the leaders were content-analyzed according to the major categories used by Bales.

He found that authoritarian leaders made more attempts to offer answers to the discussion questions; while the democratic leaders phrased more of their contributions to the group in the form of questions. In other words, authoritarian leaders more frequently offered solutions to the problems; while democratic leaders more frequently assisted the group in finding a group solution.



Sargent also found that authoritarian leaders made more negative Social-Emotional (non-supportive) comments than did the democratic leaders. There was also a tendency for democratic leaders to make a higher ratio of positive Social-Emotional (supportive) statements.

In addition, democratic leaders made more attempts to encourage participation in the discussion by group members. They offered more contributions to the group in the form of questions, alternatives, or speculations.

Furthermore, authoritarian leaders, according to Lippitt and White (1960), attempt to make all decisions themselves. Gibb (1951) found that democratic leadership was associated with freedom of expression. Also, Likert (1961, p. 171) states that a democratic leadership style involves "giving the group members ample opportunity to express their thoughts without being constrained by the leader pressing his own views."

In a democratic family system, then, one might expect parents to give a great deal of reinforcement to their children; while at the same time allowing the child to disagree with their ideas. On the other hand, an authoritarian family system might be characterized as giving the child very little support; while showing very little tolerance for expressed disagreement on the part of the child. This type of family system would tend to discount or limit a child's views, especially if these views were perceived as antagonistic to those of the parents. In addition, a child from a democratic family system would probably be encouraged to participate in family discussions; while a child from an authoritarian system would have little freedom to contribute his own ideas.

Participation and support have also been found to be related to group attraction or cohesiveness. Costley (1964) investigated the relationships between interaction characteristics in small group communication and sources of group attraction. The subjects were assigned to three-man groups and participated in a thirty minute discussion of civil rights issues. A modification of Bales interaction process analysis was used to content analyze the discussion.

He found a negative relationship between the percentage of negative social-emotional reactions and each of the following variables: (a) personal attraction, (b) coordination of effort, and (c) satisfaction with group decisions. In addition, he found a positive relationship between frequency of interaction and the percentage of attempted answers in the task area.

Cartwright and Zander (1953, p. 89), in their summary of research on group cohesiveness, indicate a number of correlates. They report that attracted members, while willing to listen to others, also try readily to influence others. In addition, attracted members are reported as usually accepting of others' opinions, and often change their minds to take the views of fellow members.

These findings are similar to the previous description of a democratic family system. The democratic family pattern is where the parents encourage independence, permit the child to feel and express his differences and disagreements, and exercise moderate authority which they both explain and allow to be questioned. Thus, it would seem that a democratic family system would be defined as a cohesive group.

In an attempt to handle the oversimplification of the authoritarian-democratic dichotomy, McLeod, Chaffee, and Wackman (1967, p. 2) devised a two-factor model of family types. They indicate that parents emphasize either or both of these two kinds of structural relations in raising their children.

The first kind of relation is called socio-oriented, in which the child is encouraged to maintain harmonious personal relations with his parents and others. The second is called concept-oriented, in which the child is encouraged to express his ideas and to challenge others' beliefs. The division of each dimension into high and low yields a fourfold typology of family types.

"Laissez-faire families emphasize neither type of relation. Children are not prohibited from challenging parental views, but neither are they exposed to information relevant to expressing independent ideas."

"Protective families stress socio-relations at the expense of concept-relations. The child is encouraged to get along with others by steering clear of the controversial realm of ideas. Not only is he prohibited from expressing dissent, but he is given little chance to encounter information on which to base his own views."

"Pluralistic families emphasize the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. The child is encouraged to explore new ideas and is often exposed to controversial material; thus, he can make up his own mind without fear that reaching a different conclusion from his parents will endanger social relations in the family."

"Consensual families stress both types of relations. While the child is exposed to controversy, he is constrained to develop concepts that are consonant with the existing socio-relations--i.e., to learn his parents' ideas and to adopt their views."

The investigators then studied the relationship between family communication patterns and the political behavior of the family members. They found that both the pluralistic parents and children appear to be more politically informed and active, and more often use the media for information. The pluralistic children are also the most active in the politically-relevant school activities of publication, speech and debate, and student government. In contrast, protective parents and their children tend to be low in public affairs competence. Both are heavy viewers of entertainment shows on television, but tend not to view public affairs television or read "hard" news in the newspaper. The children have low grade point averages, spend relatively little time with homework, and are the group least likely to participate in school activities.

McLeod, Chaffee, and Wackman also investigated the relationship between family communication patterns and the way people react to more specific situations. They devised an imbalanced situation of a liked person having a negative opinion of something the respondent favors. The respondent was then read a list of ten alternative responses, for which his subjective evaluation of the likelihood of each was recorded.

They found for parents raised in a pluralistic home, there is a strong likelihood of communication as a response coupled with an unwillingness to withdraw directly or indirectly from the situation. This type of parent is particularly likely to tell the neighbor why he is wrong, but believes he can do this without becoming angry. They also found that parents who establish protective or consensual communication environments with their children are relatively unlikely to give communication as a response to imbalance.

They are more likely than other types of parents to withdraw by forgetting the situation and by seeking authority.

### Hypotheses

According to the findings just reviewed, the predictor variables in this study should maintain a consistent relationship with one another. If the predictor variables of "parent support of child," "child support of parents," and "child's contribution to the family discussion" are all related to one of the dependent variables, such as, "child's influence on parents," the total set of relationships can be illustrated in Figure 1.

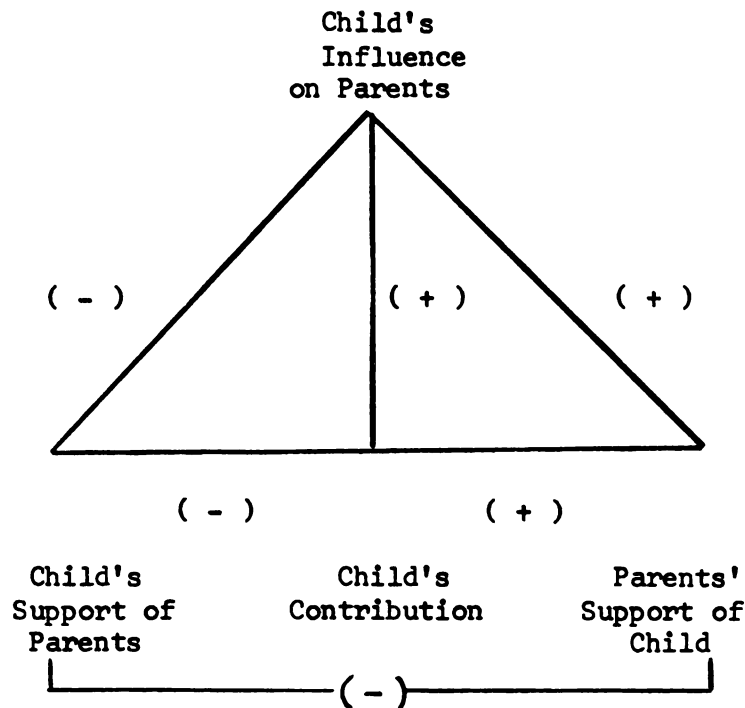


Figure 1. The interrelationship of the three predictor variables and one of the four criterion measures.

Since the previous findings also suggest that the four dependent variables in this study are all positively related to one another, the above set of relationships should apply equally well to the other three dependent variables. The following sets of hypotheses are categorized separately for each dependent variable under study.

#### Child's perceived influence on parents

Costley indicates that, the fewer negative social-emotional (non-supportive) statements made to group members, the greater a member's personal attraction to the group. Cartwright and Zander state that attracted members are more accepting of others' opinions and more often change their minds to take the views of fellow members. If it can be assumed that parents who make few non-supportive statements to their children will be inclined to make more supportive statements, the findings suggest:

H1: The more support parents give their child's ideas,  
the more the child will perceive that he influences  
his parents.

Both Gibb and Likert suggest that a democratic leadership style involves giving the group members ample opportunity to express their thoughts without being constrained by the leader pressing his own views, implying a high tolerance for disagreement. Douvan and Adelson report that democratic families tend to tolerate disagreement, while also having a highly attracted members. Since attracted members are more accepting of others' opinions and more often change their minds to take the views of fellow members, the findings suggest:

- H2: The less support that a child gives his parents' ideas, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents.

Douvan and Adelson found that children from democratic homes indicate a high level of participation in family decisions. Since, in a democratic family, support and participation are related to personal attraction, and attracted members more readily try to influence others, the findings suggest:

- H3: The more a child contributes to the family discussion, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents.

#### Child's self-confidence in decision-making.

The findings used in support of the first three hypotheses would also seem to reflect upon the development of a child's self-confidence. Thomas and Burdick (1954), and Cohen (1956) found that persons of high self-esteem exerted more influence attempts than persons of low self-esteem. With the relationship between self-esteem and influence suggested, similar hypotheses seem tenable for the development of a child's self-confidence can be equated.

- H4: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgment.
- H5: The less support that a child gives his parents' ideas, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgment.
- H6: The more a child contributes to the family discussion, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgment.

Parents control over a child's decision-making.

Since perceived influence and self-confidence have been suggested as factors in the make-up of a democratic system, similar hypotheses seem tenable for the concept of parental control. Parental control, or actually the lack of it, is defined as the parent trusting the child to make the most of his own decisions.

Costley reports fewer negative social-emotional (non-supportive) statements made, the greater the satisfaction with group decisions, suggesting that parents with democratic values might indicate greater satisfaction with the child's decisions. Sargent indicates that democratic leaders tend to make a high proportion of positive social-emotional (supportive) statements. He also found that democratic leaders phrased most of their contributions in the form of questions, implying a greater satisfaction with others' decisions. If it can be assumed that parents who make few non-supportive statements to their children will be inclined to make more supportive statements, then:

H7: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

As long as the relationship between perceived influence and parental control has been suggested, the findings used in support of the hypotheses concerning perceived influence would also seem to apply to the concept of parental control. Thus, the findings suggest:

H8: The less support that a child gives his parents' ideas, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

- H9: The more a child contributes to the family discussion, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

Child's information-seeking.

Democratic families emphasize, among other things, that a child can make up his own mind without fear that reaching a different conclusion from his parents will endanger social relations in the family. McLeod states that pluralistic families exhibit the same characteristics, which suggests that both types have some behaviors in common.

McLeod, Chaffee, and Wackman found that children from pluralistic homes are well informed and use the media for information. They also point out that pluralistic families encourage a child to explore new ideas and controversial material. It would seem that the rational used with perceived influence, self-confidence, and parental control might also apply to a child's information-seeking. Thus, the findings suggest:

- H10: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.
- H11: The less support that a child gives his parents' ideas, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.
- H12: The more a child contributes to the family discussion, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### General Study Design

Data pertinent to the present study were collected in 25 personal interviews with families in the Holt, Michigan, area. Thus, an experimental situation in which experimental variables could be manipulated was not set up. Consequently, a correlational approach is used to test the hypotheses, based on measuring instruments derived from the responses obtained in the interview schedules.

#### Sampling Procedure

The respondents selected to test the present hypotheses were 25 families with the following characteristics:

- (1) each family has a boy between 14 and 16 years-of-age;
- (2) each family consists of the boy's natural parents; and
- (3) that the boy and his parents have been living together, as a family.

For families with more than one boy within the specified age limits, the youngster was selected at random before the interview. This procedure had to be used for only three families in the study. The sample was limited to boys and their parents for control purposes, since it would require a much larger sample to make adequate comparisons between boys and girls on the major variables under study.

Listings of families based on the above criteria were obtained from school census records. A final list was compiled of approximately 100 families which met the qualifications established by the investigator. A personal letter was sent to each family, explaining the purpose of the study and asking for their cooperation. (See Appendix A). After two or three days, the letter was followed by a phone call, to set up an appointment-time for the interview.

Of the 100 families, one out of every four indicated that they would take part in the study. Four call backs were made on the remaining 75 families, with approximately 20% of the families not being contacted. Of the remaining 60 families who were reached, most refusals were due to a conflict with summer vacation schedules and a general inability to get three family members together for the interview. Interviews were conducted over a seven-week period in the months of July and August, 1968. A description of the sample is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Sample on Several Social and Demographic Attributes.

Personal Characteristics	Mother	Father
<b>Age:</b>		
35 years or under	20%	4%
36 - 40 years	32	48
41 - 45 years	16	20
46 - 50 years	24	20
51 years or over	8	8
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Median age for both mother and father - 40 years		
<b>Education:</b>		
Post- graduate work	0%	8%
College graduate	8	4
1 - 3 years college	8	16
High school graduate	64	56
9 - 11 years completed	20	8
8 years completed	0	4
1 - 7 years completed	0	4
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Median education for both mother and father - 12 years		
<b>Total Annual Income for Family:</b>		
\$7,000 or less		4%
\$7,000 - \$9,000		20
\$9,001 - \$11,000		16
\$11,001 - \$13,000		19
\$13,001 - \$15,000		25
\$15,001 or over		16
		<u>100%</u>
Median income \$12,500		
<b>Number of Children:</b>		
1	4%	
2	24	
3	16	
4	20	
5	16	
6	12	
7 or more	8	
	<u>100%</u>	
<b>Birth order:</b>		
First	32%	
Middle	36	
Last	32	
	<u>100%</u>	

## Operationalization of Variables

### Interaction Measurement

A modified version of Bales' interaction-process analysis system was used in this study. The twelve categories are shown in Figure 2. Perhaps the simplest way to conceive of an ideal problem-solving sequence is in terms of the four sections labeled A, B, C, and D. Section A contains several types of positive reactions, and Section D contains a similar group of negative reactions. Section B constitutes a group of attempted answers, while Section C constitutes a group of activities which can be characterized as questions. Using this conception, it can be suggested that the interaction process consists of questions, followed by attempted answers, followed by either negative or positive reactions.

Unit of Analysis. The unit scored was the smallest discriminable segment of verbal or nonverbal behavior to which the coder could assign a classification under conditions of continuous serial scoring. This unit is referred to as an act.

Often the unit was a single simple sentence expressing or conveying a complete thought. Complex sentences always involved more than one score. Dependent clauses were scored separately. Compound sentences joined by "and", "but", etc. were broken down into their component simple parts, each of which was given a score.

The categories used are all-inclusive, in the sense that every act can be classified into a defined category. The method requires the coder to make a classification of every sequential act he observes. This is especially important since acts are interpreted according to the context in

Social-Emotional  
Area: Positive  
Reactions

1 Shows solidarity, raises other's  
status, gives help, reward

A

2 Shows Tension Release, jokes,  
laughs, shows satisfaction

3 Agrees, shows passive acceptance,  
understands, concurs, complies

---

Task Area:  
Attempted  
Answers

4 Gives suggestions, direction,  
implying autonomy for other

B

5 Gives opinion, evaluation, analysis,  
expresses feeling, wish

6 Gives orientation, information,  
repeats, clarifies, confirms

---

Task Area:  
Questions

7 Asks for orientation, information,  
repetition, confirmation

C

8 Asks for opinion, evaluation,  
analysis, expression of feeling

9 Asks for suggestion, direction,  
possible ways of action

---

Social-Emotional  
Area: Negative  
Reactions

10 Disagrees, shows passive rejection,  
formality, withholds help

D

11 Shows tension, asks for help,  
withdraws out of field

12 Shows antagonism, deflates other's  
status, defends or asserts self

Figure 2. Bales' System of Observational Categories.

which they occur. Save for possible error, no acts are omitted from classification. The definitions of the interaction categories used by the coders in this study are provided in Appendix B.

Coders. Two coders were trained to record the interaction in the family groups. The coders went through a series of training sessions conducted by the investigator in which they read and discussed the theoretical framework of the Bales' interaction process analysis system, read and discussed the definitions of the categories, and recorded the interaction on two pre-test tapes. For the final analysis, five tapes were selected at random from the 25 tapes used in the study. Agreement scores were computed between the two coders and between each coder and the investigator for these five tapes. Scores were obtained for the following three categories:

	Coder 1 with Coder 2	Coder 1 with Investigator	Coder 2 with Investigator
Support	78%	83%	84%
Contributions	86%	87%	84%
Non-support	80%	79%	79%

Since the agreement scores are fairly high, it seems reasonable to consider their use in constructing the indices of support.

### Indices of Support

Each act is scored in sequence according to Bales' method of interaction process analysis. This score shows, first, who initiates the act and to whom it is directed. In addition, it indicates the relevance of the act either to the solution of the problem confronting the family or to the state of intergration of the family. Acts classified as relevant



primarily to the family problem (categories four through nine) are combined and called "contributions". Positive acts (categories one through three) directed specifically to other members in the family are called acts of "support"; negative acts (categories ten through twelve) directed specifically to others are called acts of "nonsupport." In this manner, interaction is divided into items offered to the family's solution and into positive or negative responses to what is offered.

More precisely, the rates indicate the preponderance of supportive versus non-supportive acts, for the calculation of the rate of support takes into account both classes of acts. Support is assumed to range from positive (where supportive acts outnumber non-supportive) through zero to minus (where non-supportive acts outnumber supportive). Details in the calculation of rates of specific members in the family are given in the following formula.

The rate at which member 1 supports member 2 (RS12) is given by the equation:

$$RS12 = 100 \times \frac{A12 - D12}{B2 + C2}$$

A = Agreement (support)  
 B = Number of answers given  
 C = Number of questions initiated  
 D = Disagreement (non-support)

Where: A12 refers to the frequency of supportive acts initiated by member 1 and directed to member 2.

D12 refers to the frequency of non-supportive acts initiated by member 1 and directed to member 2.

B2 and C2 combined refer to the frequency of "contributions" initiated by member 2 regardless of the recipients of the acts.

For input into the above formula, the following measures of interaction were obtained:

1. Frequency of mother's support of child.
2. Frequency of father's support of child.
3. Frequency of child's support of mother.



4. Frequency of child's support of father.
5. Frequency of mother's non-support of child.
6. Frequency of father's non-support of child.
7. Frequency of child's non-support of mother.
8. Frequency of child's non-support of father.
9. Frequency of mother's contributions.
10. Frequency of father's contributions.
11. Frequency of child's contributions.

In addition to mother, father, and child support patterns, indices of support for primary and non-primary parent were calculated. Each child was asked to respond to the question:

"On matters such as jobs and clothing, if you could ask for ideas from only one of your parents, which parent would you ask?"

Thus, the child was given an opportunity to express a preferred interaction pattern. It was reasoned that the primary parent index might give a more realistic picture of the actual parent-child interaction that occurs in the home. The primary parent index is composed of 15 mothers and 10 fathers. The average (mean) ratings and the variability of each support index are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Furthermore, the percentage of the child's contribution to the total family discussion was computed. The responses ranged from 4% to 32%, with a mean response rating of 20%.

#### Indices of Adolescent Autonomy

The conceptual and operational definitions along with some samples of the items used are:

Child's perceived influence on parental decisions: The extent to which a child perceives himself as affecting decisions made by his mother and father. Operationally, it is the sum of scores a child obtains from his responses to questions dealing with whether his parents ask for his



opinion on family decisions. For example,

"About how often would you say your parents ask you for your opinion on family decisions?"

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than once a month

\_\_\_\_\_ Once or twice a month

\_\_\_\_\_ About once a week

\_\_\_\_\_ Several times a week

---

Table 2. Average (mean) rating and variability on parents' support of child.

---

Parent Support of Child Index	Mother's Support of Child	Father's Support of Child	Primary Parent Support of Child	Non-primary Parent Support of Child
+.41 to +.50	-%	-%	-%	-%
+.31 to +.40	-	-	4	-
+.21 to +.30	-	4	4	-
+.11 to +.20	12	12	12	8
.00 to +.10	44	48	52	40
-.01 to -.10	24	24	12	36
-.11 to -.20	20	8	12	16
-.21 to -.30	-	4	4	-
-.31 to -.40	-	-	-	-
-.41 to -.50	-	-	-	-
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	.00	.03	.03	.00

A score of .00 is equal to "no support".

---

Table 3. Average (mean) rating and variability on child's support of parents' ideas. (N = 25)

Child's Support of Parent Index	Child's Support of Mother	Child's Support of Father	Child's Support of Primary Parent	Child's Support of Non-primary Parent
+.41 to +.50	-%	-%	-%	-%
+.31 to +.40	-	-	-	-
+.21 to +.30	4	-	4	-
+.11 to +.20	4	4	8	-
.00 to +.10	44	56	56	44
-.01 to -.10	48	32	32	48
-.11 to -.20	-	-	-	-
-.21 to -.30	-	8	-	8
-.31 to -.40	-	-	-	-
-.41 to -.50	-	-	-	-
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	.03	-.01	.03	-.01

A score of .00 is equal to "no support".

There are five items on which the child was asked to respond. For the "child's influence on mother" index, all ten of the inter-item correlations were in the right direction and ranged from .19 to .59, with a median correlation of .41. The inter-item correlations for the "child's influence on father" index were also in the right direction and ranged from .25 to .68, with a median correlation of .46. The average (mean) ratings and the variability of each influence distribution are shown in Table 4.

Child's self-confidence in decision making: The extent to which a child feels that he has the ability and willingness to rely on his own strengths. Operationally, it is the sum of scores a child obtains from his responses to

questions dealing with how sure he is that he has made the best possible choice in a decision situation. For example,

"If you had just joined a new club at school,  
how sure would you be that you had made the  
best choice possible?"

\_\_\_ Now sure

\_\_\_ Sure

\_\_\_ Very sure

Table 4. Average (mean) rating and variability on a child's perceived influence on his parents. (N = 25)

Child's Influence on Parents Index	Child's Influence on Mother	Child's Influence on Father	Child's Influence on Primary Parent	Child's Influence on Non-Primary Parent
17 (high)	4%	4%	4%	4%
16	4	8	12	-
15	8	8	12	4
14	-	8	-	8
13	8	8	8	8
12	8	-	8	-
11	12	12	12	12
10	20	8	16	12
9	-	8	-	8
8	12	12	4	20
7	4	-	4	-
6	8	4	4	8
5	-	8	-	8
4	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	4	-
2	4	4	4	-
1	-	-	-	-
0 (low)	8	8	8	8
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	9.7	9.8	10.4	9.2



"If your son needed new clothes for school...  
does he usually choose his own, or do you  
decide for him?"

- \_\_\_\_\_ I always decide  
\_\_\_\_\_ I often decide  
\_\_\_\_\_ Every now and then  
\_\_\_\_\_ I seldom decide  
\_\_\_\_\_ I never decide

Four items were used, and both mother and father responded separately to them. For the "father-child index of control," the six inter-item correlations ranged from  $-.02$  to  $.65$ , with only one in the wrong direction. The median correlation was  $.04$ . The six inter-item correlations for the "mother-child index" ranged from  $-.17$  to  $.52$ , with only one in the wrong direction. The median correlation was  $.32$ . The average (mean) rating and the variability of each control distribution was shown in Table 5. Although the father-child control index has no homogeneity, findings pertinent to it will be reported. This problem will be discussed further in the last chapter.

Child's information-seeking: The extent to which a child seeks ideas from both mediated and personal sources. Operationally, it is the sum of scores a child obtains from responses to questions dealing with how often he would look for ideas from both personal and mediated sources.

e.g., "If you needed to buy clothes for school  
and uncertain as to what choice to make,  
how often would you look for..."

Ideas from newspapers?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Often  
\_\_\_\_\_ Now and then  
\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom  
\_\_\_\_\_ Never



Table 5. Average (mean) rating and variability on parents' control of child's decisions. (N = 25)

Parent Control of Child Index	Mother's Control of Child	Father's Control of Child	Primary Parent Control of Child	Non-primary Parent Control of Child
14 (low control)	8%	4%	8%	4%
13	-	4	-	4
12	12	4	8	8
11	20	4	4	20
10	4	4	-	8
9	4	20	12	12
8	24	8	12	20
7	12	16	12	16
6	8	12	16	4
5	4	4	8	-
4	4	8	8	4
3	-	12	12	-
2	-	-	-	-
1	-	-	-	-
0 (high control)	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	7.6	9.1	7.4	9.2

The information sources used can be classified as personal vs. mediated, on the basis of whether or not face-to-face contact is involved. Thus newspapers, television, magazines and movies fall into the mediated category and all direct contacts with mother, peers, father and relatives fall into the personal category.

However, upon closer analysis, the data do not warrant differential predictions for these two types of sources. The six inter-item correlations for the four mediated sources ranged from  $-.30$  to  $.62$ , with three negative correlations. The median correlation was only  $.07$ . The three negative correlations were the relationship of newspapers to the other three mediated sources. Similarly, the six inter-item correlations for the four personal sources ranged from  $-.30$  to  $.60$ , with three negative correlations. The median correlation was  $.18$ . This time, however, the three negative correlations were the relationship of peers to the other three personal sources.

The data seem to suggest a somewhat different grouping of variables. For the mediated sources, it would seem to make sense to combine magazine television and movie usage into a single index. The three inter-item correlations are  $.36$ ,  $.59$ , and  $.62$ . The average (mean) rating and variability of this index are shown in Table 6. Since newspapers were negatively correlated with the other three sources and accounted for a great deal of source usage, a separate index was constructed for newspapers. The average (mean) rating and variability of the newspaper index are shown in Table 7.

Table 6. Average (mean) rating and variability on selected mediated and personal source usage of child. (N = 25)

Child's Combined Usage Index	Child's Combined use of Magazines, TV and Movies.	Child's Combined use of Mother, Father and Relatives
18 (high use)	--%	--%
17	--	--
16	4	4
15	4	4
14	--	8
13	--	16
12	4	--
11	--	8
10	8	4
9	12	4
8	4	16
7	12	8
6	12	8
5	12	8
4	16	4
3	4	--
2	--	--
1	4	--
0 (low use)	4	8
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	6.8	9.0

Table 7. Average (mean) rating and variability on newspaper and peer usage of child. (N = 25)

Child's Usage Index	Child's Use of Newspaper	Child's Use of Peers
6 (high use)	24%	48%
5	12	16
4	12	16
3	12	16
2	24	--
1	16	4
0 (low use)	--	--
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
Average Rating	3.5	4.8

In regards to the personal sources, a separate index was constructed which included mother, father, and relatives. The inter-item correlations are .56, .57, and .60. The average (mean) rating and variability of this "family index" are shown in Table 6. Similarly, since peer usage was negatively correlated with the other personal sources, a separate "peer index" was constructed. The average (mean) rating and variability of this index are shown in Table 7. For an explanation of these usage

patterns, the work of Riley and Riley (1951) would suggest this difference, based upon whether the child is "family oriented" or "peer oriented."

### Data Collection

Personal interviews were carried out in the home of each family. After some preliminary remarks to place everyone at ease, the interviewer introduced the family to the immediate task at hand, namely, their discussion of various topics dealing with adolescent problems.

The discussion topics selected were designed to meet several criteria. They had to be sufficiently interesting to the subjects to insure motivation for communication. They had to involve questions of social reality for which there were no "correct" answers. They had to permit several defensible solutions and to allow for differences of opinion among family members. They had to be topics on which all subjects would have adequate information to carry on a discussion.

The interviewer read the following instructions:

"Below are a series of situations which are discussed in most families at one time or another. Families seem to handle the problems in different ways. We would like for you to discuss among yourselves as many points of view that you are familiar with. From these different views, select a view which represents the thinking of your family.

"Please spend some time with each of the situations. There is no right or wrong answer...only what your family feels is the most appropriate answer for the situation. You will have 30 minutes to discuss all four situations below. Don't worry about the time; we will inform you when the half hour is up."

The list of suggested discussion questions given to the subjects is reproduced in Appendix C.

After reading the instructions, the interviewer answered any questions that the subjects asked. At this point, the interviewer turned on the tape recorder and indicated that he would leave the room until they finished their discussion, or until the 30 minutes for discussion had elapsed. Actual discussion time ranged from 8 to 32 minutes, with an average (mean) time of 19 minutes. Upon completion of their discussion, the interviewer handed out a brief questionnaire to each member of the family. The complete questionnaires given the respondents are presented in Appendix D. After respondents had filled out the questionnaire, the interviewer again answered any questions that they had. This completed the respondent's participation in the study.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS

#### Description of Sample

As previously stated, the original sample consisted of names and addresses of 100 families in the Holt, Michigan area. The interviewers were able to complete 25 interviews with families in the sample before field work halted late in August, 1968.

No attempt was made to get a representative sample of Holt families. The objective of the study was not to obtain estimates of what the whole population of Holt families is like. Rather, it was to come up with a sample of families which had specific characteristics so that they could be compared on the behaviors under study.

Half of the families reported an annual family income of at least \$12,500. Families at this particular stage seem to be fairly well established; thus, the variability on the income figures did not seem to be wholly unrealistic.

On age, mothers and fathers both averaged 40 years old. About 20 percent of the mothers were 35 or under, while only one of the fathers fell in this age bracket. In addition, only two of the mothers and fathers were over 50 years of age. This would be expected because parents of teenagers are likely to be under 50 years of age.

As for education, at least half of the mothers and fathers had finished high school. A sixth of the mothers had some college training, while a fourth of the fathers had been to college. On the other hand, none of the mothers, but two of the fathers never reached high school.

Half of the mothers had at least four children. Eight percent reported families of seven or more children. The boys used in this study split fairly evenly in regards to birth order, with first and last born each representing about a third of the sample.

By design, the boys in the sample ranged from 14 to 16 years of age, with the modal age being 15. Furthermore, they had all completed either their eighth or ninth year of school.

#### Analytic Scheme

As already mentioned, a correlational approach was used in testing the hypotheses. First, a simple index of relationship between each predictor variable and each criterion measure was obtained. This index indicates the zero-order correlation between two variables without potential contaminating factors being held constant.

Before drawing conclusions from these findings, a check was made to determine whether the predictor variables were themselves interrelated. In regards to parental support patterns, the correlation between "mother's support of child" and "father's support of child" is relatively small (.15). In addition, "primary parent support of child" has only a slight correlation with "non-primary parent support of child" (.16).

Furthermore, an analysis of the child's support patterns shows the correlation between the "child's support of mother" and the "child's support of father" to be moderate and in a negative direction (-.38). The same



relationship holds between the "child's support of primary parent" and the "child's support of non-primary parent" (-.38).

In order to check on spurious relationships, partial correlation analysis was used to hold variables constant while the relationship between two other variables was studied. Thus, it was possible to partial out the influence attributable to "father's support of child" while checking on the relationship between "mother's support of child" and the "child's perceived influence on mother." Also, this approach was used to control out the influence attributable to the "child's support of non-primary parent."

The stability of the relationship also had to be determined.\* With a sample size of 25, a correlation coefficient of .40 would occur simply because of sampling error only five in one hundred times and a correlation coefficient of .51 would occur by chance only once in one hundred times. In addition, the zero-order correlations were checked to determine whether the assumption of linearity was reasonable..

### Tests of Hypotheses

The findings are categorized according to the four criterion measures under study. Thus, there are four sets of findings with each set containing three hypotheses.

#### Child's perceived influence on parents.

Parents' support of child. The first hypothesis was concerned with

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\*The formula of the test can be found in McNemar (1952, p. 167). The null hypothesis tested was that the true, i.e., the population  $r$  equals zero.

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the parents' support of child during a conversation and the child's perceived influence on them:

H1: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents.

Data pertinent to this hypothesis are presented in Table 8. It would seem that, the more support the child receives from his mother or designated primary parent, the greater his perceived influence on his parents (.56, .40, .66, and .58). Before drawing such a conclusion, partial correlation coefficients were computed for each predictor variable. Support by his father or his non-primary parent did not significantly affect his judgment of influencing his parents.

The partial correlation indices are almost the same as the zero-order correlations for mother and primary parent. (.54, .38, .65, and .58). As Table 8 shows, three of the partial correlation coefficients were greater than would be expected from sampling error. The fourth was close to significant. In other words, the findings were in the predicted direction with three correlation coefficients reaching the .01 significance level. Thus, the hypotheses was supported for mother and primary parent support, but was not for father and non-primary parent support.

Child's support of parents. The second hypothesis was concerned with the child's support of parents and his perceived influence on them:

H2: The less support that the child gives his parents' ideas, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents.



Table 8. Test of Hypothesis 1--relationship between parents' support of child and child's perceived influence on parents.

	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
Relationship between child's influence on <u>mother</u> and:			
Mother's support of child	.56**	.54**	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.27	.22	Mother's support of child
Relationship between child's influence on <u>father</u> and:			
Mother's support of child	.40*	.38	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.37	.34	Mother's support of child
Relationship between child's influence on <u>primary parent</u> and:			
Primary parent support of child	.66**	.65**	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.09	-.02	Primary parent support of child
Relationship between child's influence on <u>non-primary parent</u> and:			
Primary parent support of child	.58**	.58**	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.04	-.07	Primary parent support of child

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Table 9. Test of Hypothesis 2---relationship between a child's support of his parents and a child's perceived influence on his parents.

	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
<u>Relationship between child's influence on mother and:</u>			
Child's support of mother	-.39	-.22	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	.60**	.53**	Child's support of mother
<u>Relationship between child's influence on father and:</u>			
Child's support of mother	-.31	-.16	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	.46*	.39	Child's support of mother
<u>Relationship between child's influence on primary parent and:</u>			
Child's support of primary parent	-.55**	-.43*	Child's support of non-primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	.61**	.51**	Child's support of primary parent
<u>Relationship between child's influence on non-primary parent and:</u>			
Child's support of primary parent	-.40*	-.21	Child's support of non-primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	.66**	.60**	Child's support of primary parent

\* p < .05

\*\*p < .01

Six out of the eight zero-order correlations were stable estimates (Table 9). Out of the six correlations, only two were in the predicted direction, while the other four are in the wrong direction to support the hypothesis.

As Table 9 shows, the partial correlation indices are somewhat different from the zero-order correlations. The data indicate that, the more the child supports his father or designated non-primary parent, the greater his perceived influence on his parents (.53, .39, .51, and .60). It would also seem that, the less a child supports his primary parent, the greater his perceived influence on the primary parent (-.43). Four of the eight partial correlation coefficients reached the prior-set significance level. However, the hypothesis was not confirmed, since three of the four significant correlations were in the wrong direction.

Child's contribution. The third hypothesis was concerned with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion and his perceived influence on his parents:

H3: The more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents.

The four zero-order correlations were not greater than would be expected from sampling error (Table 10). All the relationships were also in the wrong direction. Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Child's self-confidence in decision-making.

Parents' support of child. The fourth hypothesis was concerned with a parents' support of child and the child's self-confidence in his own judgments:

Table 10. Test of Hypothesis 3--relationship between the percentage of a child's contribution and a child's perceived influence on his parents.

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Relationship between the percentage of child's contribution and:	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Child's influence on mother	-.32
Child's influence on father	-.14
Child's influence on primary parent	-.18
Child's influence on non-primary parent	-.29

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H4: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgments.

The zero-order correlations between the variables are presented in Table 11. Three out of the four relationships are stable estimates. The data indicate that mother's support of child, father's support of child, and primary parent support of child have moderate bearing on the likelihood that the child will have self-confidence (.64, .40, and .65).

A comparison between the zero-order correlation and the partial correlation indicates only a negligible reduction in the simple correlations (.64, .40, and .64). Again, with a sample size of 25, the three correlation coefficients did not fall within the expected range of sampling error. Thus, the hypothesis was supported for mother, father, and primary parent support.

Table 11. Test of Hypothesis 4---relationship between parents' support of child and a child's self-confidence.

Relationship between child's self-confidence and:	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis	
Mother's support of child	.64**	.64**	Father's support of child	5
Father's support of child	.40*	.40*	Mother's support of child	
Primary parent support of child	.65**	.64**	Non-primary parent support of child	
Non-primary parent support of child	.30	.27	Primary parent support of child	

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Child's support of parents. The fifth hypothesis was concerned with a child's support of his parents and the child's self-confidence in his own judgments:

H5: The less support the child gives his parents' ideas, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgment.

Again, three out of four zero-order correlations were stable estimates (Table 12). Two out of three of the correlations were, also, in the predicted direction. However, when partial correlation coefficients were computed, only one correlation coefficient reached the prior-set significance level.

As in the previous cases, the primary parent concept remains a fairly consistent predictor of the child's behavior. It would seem that the less a child supports his primary parent, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgments ( $-.51$ ). The data suggest support of the hypothesis only when phrased in terms of the primary parent.

Child's contribution. The sixth hypothesis dealt with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion and the child's self-confidence in his own judgments:

H6: The more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more the child will have confidence in his own judgments.

A simple index of relationship between the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion and the child's self-confidence was obtained. The data indicate that there was virtually no relationship between these two indices ( $-.02$ ). Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Table 12. Test of Hypothesis 5--relationship between a child's support of his parents and a child's self-confidence.

Relationship between child's self-confidence and:	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis	
	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation
Child's support of mother	-.44*	-.36
Child's support of father	.33	.19
Child's support of primary parent	-.60**	-.51**
Child's support of non-primary parent	.45*	.30
		Child's support of non-primary parent
		Child's support of primary parent

47

\*p < .05  
\*\*p < .01

Parent control over a child's decision-making.

Parents' support of child. The seventh hypothesis was concerned with the parents' support of child and the degree of control parents exert over their child's decisions:

H7: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

Data pertinent to this hypothesis are presented in Table 13. Only two of the eight zero-order correlations were stable estimates. When the partial correlations were analyzed, both relationships remained greater than would be expected from sampling error. The findings suggest the more support the father gives his child, the more the mother will let the child have a say in his own decision-making (.43). Furthermore, the data indicate that primary parent support of child has a fairly strong bearing on the likelihood that the primary parent will let the child have a say in his own decision-making (.71). Thus, the hypothesis received partial support.

Child's support of parents. The eighth hypothesis was concerned with the child's support of his parents and the degree of control parents exert over their child's decisions:

H8: The less support the child gives his parents' ideas, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

The zero-order correlations between the variables are presented in Table 14. Only one out of the eight relationships was greater than would be expected from sampling error. A comparison between the zero-order correlations

Table 13. Test of Hypothesis 7--relationship between parent's support of child and parents' control over child.

	Factors Held		
	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
Relationship between father's control over <u>child's</u> decisions and:			
Mother's support of child	.37	.36	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.10	.05	Mother's support of child
Relationship between mother's control over <u>child's</u> decisions and:			
Mother's support of child	.11	.05	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.44*	.43*	Mother's support of child
Relationship between <u>primary</u> parent control over <u>child's</u> decisions and:			
Primary parent support of child	.72**	.71**	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.22	.16	Primary parent support of child
Relationship between <u>non-primary</u> parent control over <u>child's</u> decisions and:			
Primary parent support of child	-.20	-.21	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.08	.11	Primary parent support of child

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .001

Table 14. Test of Hypothesis 8--relationship between a child's support of his parents' control over child.

	Zero-Order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis	
Relationship between father's control over child's decisions and:				
Child's support of mother	-.21	-.07	Child's support of father	
Child's support of father	.40*	.35	Child's support of mother	
Relationship between mother's control over child's decisions and:				
Child's support of mother	.10	.01	Child's support of father	
Child's support of father	-.23	-.20	Child's support of mother	
Relationship between primary parent control over child's decisions and:				
Child's support of primary parent	-.44*	-.33	Child's support of non-primary parent	
Child's support of non-primary parent	.42*	.30	Child's support of primary parent	
Relationship between non-primary parent control over child's decisions and:				
Child's support of primary parent	.02	.04	Child's support of non-primary parent	
Child's support of non-primary parent	.06	.08	Child's support of primary parent	

\*p < .05

and the partial correlations suggests that the child support patterns have only a slight influence on the degree of control parents exert over decisions affecting a child. Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Child's contribution. The ninth hypothesis was concerned with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion and the degree of control parents exert over their child's decisions:

H9: The more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more the parents will let their child make his own decisions.

The zero-order correlations were not greater than would be expected from sampling error (Table 15). The data indicate virtually no relationship between the variables. Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

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Table 15. Test of Hypothesis 9--relationship between the percentage of a child's contributions and parents' control over child.

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	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Relationship between the percentage of child's contributions and:	
Mother's control over child	.01
Father's control over child	-.01
Primary parent control over child	-.11
Non-primary parent control over child	.15

---

Child's information-seeking.

Parents' support of child. The tenth hypothesis was concerned with a parents' support of child and the child's use of personal and mediated sources for ideas:

H10: The more support parents give their child's ideas, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.

The zero-order correlations for the personal source variables are presented in Table 17. Two out of the eight correlations were stable estimates. However, when the partial correlations were computed, only one correlation coefficient reached the prior-set significance level. The data suggest that the greater the primary parent support of the child, the more the child will use his mother, father, and other relatives in obtaining information (.60).

Similarly, the zero-order correlations for the mediated sources are presented in Table 16. Again, two out of eight zero-order correlations were stable estimates. A comparison between the zero-order correlations indicates only a slight reduction in the simple correlations. The data suggest that father's support of child and primary parent support of child have a moderate bearing on the likelihood that a child will use television, movies and magazines as sources of information (.50 and .57). Thus, the hypothesis received partial support.

Table 16. Test of Hypothesis 10--relationship between parents' support of child and a child's use of mediated sources.

Relationship between a child's use of newspapers and:	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis	
Relationship between a child's use of newspapers and:				
	Mother's support of child	.25	.27	Father's support of child
	Father's support of child	-.10	-.14	Mother's support of child
	Primary parent support of child	.15	.17	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	-.11	-.13		Primary parent support of child
Relationship between a child's combined use of TV, movies, and magazines and:				
Mother's support of child	.19	.13		Father's support of child
	.52**	.50*		Mother's support of child
Primary parent support of child	.58**	.57**		Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.10	.00		Primary parent support of child

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

Table 17. Test of Hypothesis 10--relationship between parents' support of child and a child's use of personal sources.

	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
Relationship between a child's use of others his own age and:			
Mother's support of child	-.11	-.18	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.34	.36	Mother's support of child
Primary parent support of child	.12	.09	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.20	.18	Primary parent support of child
Relationship between a child's use of mother, father, and relatives and:			
Mother's support of child	.34	.31	Father's support of child
Father's support of child	.42*	.39	Mother's support of child
Primary parent support of child	.60**	.60**	Non-primary parent support of child
Non-primary parent support of child	.08	-.02	Primary parent support of child

54

\*p < .05  
\*\*p < .01

Child's support of parents. The eleventh hypothesis dealt with the child's support of his parents and his use of personal and mediated sources for ideas:

H11: The less support the child gives his parents' ideas, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.

In regards to the personal-source variables, two out of eight zero-order correlations were stable estimates, but not in the right direction to support the hypothesis (Table 18). The partial correlations are only slightly smaller than the zero-order correlations. The data indicate that the greater the child's support of father and his support of the non-primary parent, the more the child will use his mother, father, and other relatives as sources of information (.41 and .51).

The zero-order correlations concerning the mediated sources were not greater than would be expected from sampling error (Table 19). The data suggest only a slight relationship between the variables. The hypothesis was not confirmed, since the only two significant relationships were in the wrong direction.

Child's contribution. The twelfth hypothesis dealt with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion and his use of personal and mediated sources for ideas:

H12: The more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more often the child will seek information from personal and mediated sources.

The four zero-order correlations were not greater than would be expected from sampling error (Table 20). Three out of four of the relationships were in the predicted direction, however. The hypothesis was not confirmed.



Table 18. Test of Hypothesis 11--relationship between child's support of parents and a child's use of personal sources.

	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
Relationship between a child's use of others his own age and:			
Child's support of mother	.22	.16	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	-.19	-.12	Child's support of mother
Child's support of primary parent	.12	.09	Child's support of non-primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	-.09	-.05	Child's support of primary parent
Relationship between a child's use of mother, father, and relatives and:			
Child's support of mother	-.24	-.08	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	.47*	.41*	Child's support of mother
Child's support of primary parent	-.38	-.22	Child's support of non-primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	.58**	.51**	Child's support of primary parent

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01



Table 19. Test of Hypothesis 11--relationship between child's support of parents and a child's use of mediated sources.

	Zero-order Correlation	Partial Correlation	Factors Held Constant in Partial Correlation Analysis
Relationship between a child's use of newspaper and:			
Child's support of mother	.17	.28	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	.22	.31	Child's support of mother
Child's support of primary parent	.13	.25	Child's support of non- primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	.25	.33	Child's support of primary parent
Relationship between a child's use of TV, movies, and magazines and:			
Child's support of mother	-.25	-.24	Child's support of father
Child's support of father	.07	-.02	Child's support of mother
Child's support of primary parent	-.37	-.33	Child's support of non- primary parent
Child's support of non-primary parent	.18	.04	Child's support of primary parent

Table 20. Test of Hypothesis 12--relationship between the percentage of a child's contribution and a child's use of both mediated and personal sources.

	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Relationship between the percentage of a child's contribution and:	
Child's use of newspaper	-.04
Child's use of TV, radio, and magazines	-.16
Child's use of others his own age	.21
Child's use of mother, father, and relatives	-.22

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## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

One of the primary functions of the family is the preparation of a child to leave home. This study focused on the question as to whether or not there are characteristics of the communication between family members that are associated with the child's growth toward emancipation from the family.

In order to determine the characteristics of the communication behavior that occurs between family members, personal interviews were conducted in the home of each family. The child's interaction with both his mother and father was analyzed. In addition each child was asked to select the one parent from whom he generally preferred to seek advice. The chosen parent's responses were then analyzed in a "primary parent" index. It was felt that the interaction between the child and his primary parent would be a good predictor of the child's development, since this parent would have more of an opportunity to influence the child's behavior.

A tape recording was made of the family members discussing various topics that dealt with adolescent problems. Each discussion was analyzed using a modified form of Bales' interaction process-analysis categories. The interaction indices showed, first, who initiated the communication and, second, to whom it was directed. In this manner, interaction was divided into statements

offered to the family's solution of the problem and into positive or negative responses to what was offered by each member. After completion of their discussion, each family member was asked to make judgments concerning the child's level of autonomy.

Douvan et. al. states that one of the key concepts in the growth and development of the child is the notion of autonomy. Adolescent autonomy focuses on behavior and decisions. How much perceived influence does the child have on his parents' decisions? How self-confident is he in his own decision-making ability? What decisions can he make for and by himself? How often and from what sources does the child seek advice? The child may show his growth in a number of ways but these four criterion measures were investigated in this study.

The respondents selected for this study were 25 families which have the following characteristics: (1) each family has a boy between 14 and 16 years-of-age; (2) each family is composed of the boy's natural parents; and (3) the boy and his parents are living together in the same household.

The findings were grouped according to the four criterion measures under study. In order to check spurious relationships, partial correlation analysis was used to partial out the influence attributable to one variable while the relationship between two other variables was studied. For example, it was possible to partial out the influence attributable to "father's support of child" in a discussion while checking on the relationship between "mother's support of child" in a discussion and the "child's perceived influence on mother."

### Child's perceived influence on parents

Parents' support of child. The first hypothesis concerned the relationship between the parents' reinforcement of their child's ideas when discussing family problems and the child's judgment as to his influence on his parents in general. The analysis showed the more support the child received from his mother in a discussion, the greater the child's perceived influence on her. Although not statistically significant, a similar trend was found between the child and his father. Furthermore, the primary parent's support of the child's ideas (i.e., the parent from which the child prefers to seek advice) explained more of the child's perceived influence on his parents than did the mother's or father's support, when they were studied separately. The hypothesis was supported as it pertains to mothers and primary parents.

Child's support of parents. The second hypothesis stated that, the less the child supports his parents' ideas in a discussion, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents. The findings suggested the less the child supports his primary parent in a discussion, the greater his perceived influence on this parent. However, the data also indicated that the less the child disagrees with his father, the more he will perceive himself as influencing both his mother and his father. There seems to be a trend for the child to find it easier to show disagreement with his mother's ideas, while showing moderate support of his father's ideas in a discussion. Therefore, the evidence only supports the hypothesis as it pertains to primary parents.

Child's contribution. Also hypothesized was the notion that, the more the child contributes to a family discussion, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents. The hypothesis was not confirmed by the data.

### Child's self-confidence in decision-making

Parents' support of child. The first hypothesis concerned the relationship between the parents' support of their child's ideas in a discussion and the child's indication of his perceived self-confidence in his own judgments. The analysis suggested the more the mother, father, or primary parent support the child in a discussion, the more the child will indicate that he is self-confident in his own decisions. The hypothesis was supported as it pertains to mother , father, and primary parents.

Child's support of parents. The second hypothesis stated that, the less the child supports his parents in a conversation, the more the child will indicate that he has self-confidence in his own judgments. The findings indicated the less the child supports his primary parent in a discussion, the more the child perceives that he has self-confidence. A similar negative relationship was found in regards to the child's support of his mother in a discussion; while the relationship was slightly positive in regard to the child's support of his father in a discussion. The data suggest support of the hypothesis as it pertains to mothers and primary parents.

Child's contribution. The final hypothesis of the series suggested the more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more the child will indicate that he has self-confidence. It was not confirmed by the data.

### Parent control over a child's decision-making

Parents' support of child. It was hypothesized that, the more support parents give their child's ideas in a discussion, the more the parents claim that they let their child make his own decisions. The data indicated that the primary parent's support of the child in a conversation has a fairly

strong bearing on the likelihood that the primary parent perceives that he lets the child have a say in his own decisions. Also the data suggested that the more a mother claims that she lets her child make his own decisions, the more the father tends to support the child's ideas in a discussion. Similarly, the more a father perceives that he lets his child make his own decisions, the more the mother supports the child's ideas in a discussion. Only in the case of the primary parent was there a strong positive relationship between the control exerted by a particular parent and the amount of support given to the child by that same type of parent. The hypothesis was supported as it pertains to primary parents.

Child's support of parents. The less support the child gives his parents' ideas in a discussion, the more the parents perceive that they let their child make his own decisions. There was a slight tendency toward this hypothesized relationship between the primary parent and the child. However, since the correlation coefficient did not reach the pre-defined significance level, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Child's contribution. The third hypothesis in this series stated the more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more the parents perceive that they let their child make his own decisions. It was not supported.

#### Child's information-seeking

Parents' support of child. The hypothesis stated that, the more support parents give their child's ideas in a discussion, the more often the child claims that he seeks information from personal and mediated sources. Newspapers, television, magazines and movies fall into the mediated category and all direct contacts with mother, father, others his own age, and relatives fall

into the personal category. The analysis suggested that, the greater the primary parent support of the child in a discussion, the more the child perceives that he uses his mother, father, and other relatives for information. In addition, the data indicated father and primary parent support of the child in a discussion have a moderate bearing on the likelihood the child uses television movies, and magazines as sources. On the other hand, the child's use of newspapers and peers for ideas showed only a very slight relationship with parental support of the child's ideas in a conversation. The hypothesis was supported as it pertains to primary parents.

Child's support of parents. It was next hypothesized that, the less support the child gives his parents' ideas in a discussion, the more often the child claims that he seeks information from personal and mediated sources. The findings suggested the greater the child's support of his father's ideas in a discussion, the more the child indicated his general use of mother, father, and the other relatives as sources of information. However, the relationship was not in the hypothesized direction. Furthermore, there were no significant relationships concerning the mediated sources. Actually, the child's use of newspapers showed a slight positive relationship with an increase in the child's support of his parents' ideas in a discussion; while an increase in the child's use of television, movies, and magazines varied inversely with support of his parents' ideas in a discussion. Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed.

Child's contribution. The final hypothesis stated the more the child contributes to the family discussion, the more often the child claims that he seeks information from personal and mediated sources. The hypothesis was not confirmed.

### Interpretation of Findings

The direction of adolescent growth is clearly toward emancipation from the family. The period begins with the child almost entirely dependent on the family, needing its say-so for what he can and cannot do, still clinging to their ideas and ideals. It ends with the child reaching into adulthood, freer to make up his mind about what he will and will not do, holding his own beliefs and values. The particular freedoms the child is given are the visible part of a larger conversation between parent and child, having to do with the child's need for later independence. It was the purpose of this study to analyze the relationships between parent-child communication in family conversations and the degree to which the child claims to have achieved independence in his thoughts and actions.

A number of findings supported the hypotheses growing out of the exploratory framework. Some did not. Of the twelve hypotheses tested, five were partially supported (H: 1, 4, 5, 7, 10). In regard to these hypotheses, it turned out that the best predictor of the child's perceived independence was his communication style with his primary parent. Of the remaining seven hypotheses, two were not in the predicted direction (H: 2 and 11), and the other five were not supported at all (H: 3, 6, 8, 9, 12). Most of these hypotheses were concerned with the percentage of the child's contribution to the family discussion, which seems to be a very poor predictor of the child's perceived independence. In this situation, the researcher can ask whether it was the theory or his operationalization of the theory that led to non-significant results.

### Conceptual Evaluations

A basic consideration here is the assumed interrelationship of the concepts in this study. Lack of earlier empirical evidence utilizing these concepts in similar circumstances forced the hypotheses to be drawn in such a manner that the relationships assumed had only indirect support from existing literature. However, data from this study should provide some insight into the assumptions underlying the conceptual framework used. Are all of these indices of a child's increased feeling of independence from his parents related to a fair degree?

Interrelationship of the criterion measures. Implicit in the formulation of the hypotheses was the assumed positive relationship between the child's perceived influence on his parents, the child's perceived self-confidence, parents' perceived control over the child, and the child's claimed information-seeking behavior.

The relationship between the child's perceived influence and his self-confidence can be shown as follows:

Child's self-confidence and:	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Child's perceived influence on mother	.69
Child's perceived influence on father	.68
Child's perceived influence on primary parent	.78

The finding of Thomas and Burdick (1954), and Cohen (1956) that persons of high self-esteem attempt to exert more influence has received additional support. The assumption that the concepts of self-esteem and self-confidence have some overlapping behavioral characteristics seems reasonable.

The relationship between the child's perceived influence on his parents and the control parents indicate they exert over their child is somewhat tenuous at this time, due to the weak measures of parental control. However, for the index which tapped the extent of control exerted by the primary parent over the child, the six inter-item correlations ranged from .04 to .65, with the median correlation being .36. The relationships are as follows:

The degree to which the primary parent lets the child make his own decisions and:	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Child's perceived influence on mother	.54
Child's perceived influence on father	.75
Child's perceived influence on primary parent	.80

The data reflect this in the finding that primary parent support of the child's ideas in a discussion has a fairly strong bearing on the likelihood that the primary parent will let the child have a say in decisions that concern him. Also, as would be expected, the more the primary parent indicates that he would let the child make his own decisions, the greater the child's judgment as to his own self-confidence in decision-making (.76).

Finally, the relationship between the child's perceived influence on his parents and the child's use of various sources for ideas is presented. The data indicate only a slight relationship between the child's claimed use of either newspapers or peers for ideas and his perceived influence on his parents. In contrast, however, the child's use of mother, father, and relatives or his use of television, magazines and movies for ideas seems to show a moderate relationship to the child's perceived influence on his parents.

Child's use of TV, movies and magazines for ideas and:	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Child's perceived influence on mother	.34
Child's perceived influence on father	.33
Child's perceived influence on primary parent	.42

Actually, only the relationship between the child's claimed use of television, movies, and magazines for ideas and the child's perceived influence on his primary parent is greater than would be expected from sampling error. A much stronger relationship is indicated between the child's claimed use of mother, father, and relatives for ideas and the extent to which the child feels he influences his parents.

Child's use of mother, father, and relatives for ideas and:	<u>Zero-order Correlation</u>
Child's perceived influence on mother	.65
Child's perceived influence on father	.77
Child's perceived influence on primary parent	.76

In addition, the extent of the child's self-confidence is positively related to his use of television, magazines and movies (.60) and his use of mother, father, and relatives (.65) for ideas. Similarly, the extent to which a parent lets the child make his own decisions is positively related to the same sources, respectively (.62 and .53).

In summary, it is noticeable with a few exceptions, the criterion measures were related to each other in the assumed direction. Actually, the child's indicated use of newspapers and peers for ideas were the only variables negatively correlated with the other criterion measures under study. Also,

the concept of parent control over the child and its relationship to other criterion measures could not be fully evaluated due to the lack of the internal consistency of the scales.

Relative predictive value of communication variables. The most consistent predictors of the child's behavior were the primary parent's support of the child's ideas in a discussion and the lack of agreement shown by the child of his primary parent's ideas during the discussion. The relative predictive value of each of these communication variables was also calculated. It was possible to partial out the influence attributable to the "non-primary parent's support of the child" in a discussion, the "child's support of his primary parent" in a discussion, and the "child's support of his non-primary parent" in a discussion, while checking on the relationship between the "primary parent's support of the child" in a discussion and the "child's perceived influence on his primary parent." This procedure was followed for each of the criterion measures under study.

Only in the case of the child's perceived influence on his primary parent and the child's perceived self-confidence was it possible to compare the relative predictive value of the communication variables. The reason was that in regards to the primary parent's indicated control over the child and the child's claimed information-seeking, the primary parent's support of the child in a discussion was the only variable significantly related to these criterion measures.

The data indicated that the primary parent's support of the child during the discussion consistently explained more of the variability in the child's behavior than did the lack of agreement shown by the child of his primary

parent's ideas in the discussion. The primary parent's support of the child in a discussion explained 21 per cent of the variability in the child's perceived influence on his primary parent, while the child's lack of agreement with his primary parent's ideas accounted for 18 per cent of the variability. Similarly, in explaining the child's perceived self-confidence, primary parent's support of the child's ideas during the discussion accounted for 26 per cent of the variability in this behavior, while the child's lack of agreement with his primary parent's ideas explained about 19 per cent.

Furthermore, the primary parent's support of the child in a conversation explained 45 per cent of the variability in the primary parent's judgment whether to let the child make most of his own decisions. In addition, primary parent's support of the child's ideas during the discussion accounted for 29 per cent of the variability in the child's claimed use of television, magazines, and radio for ideas and about 16 per cent of the variability in the child's indicated use of his mother, father, and relatives as sources of information.

Interrelationship of the predictor measures. The initial assumption was that in a discussion, parental support of the child's ideas would be inversely related to the child's support of his parents' ideas (see page 38 for findings). The notion being, the more parents encourage their child to express his own ideas, the greater the probability that the child's ideas will be in disagreement with that of his parents. A child that continually receives reinforcement from his parents should not feel reluctant to express controversial ideas in a discussion with them.

The data, however, point out somewhat of a different trend. The assumed

inverse relationship holds between the child's support of his mother or primary parent and their support of him in a discussion. On the other hand, the relationship between the child's support of his father, and the mother or father's support of the child in a discussion is strongly positive. The original theoretical framework did not take into account that the child would relate to his parents in different ways, but these data strongly suggest a revision. Also, this could account for the reversed significant relationships in Hypotheses 2 and 11.

The relationship between the concept of the child's contribution in a discussion and the concepts of parent and child support in a discussion would be difficult to analyze, since the data indicate that the range of former concept was restricted. The restricted range of the child's contribution in a discussion could be one factor which leads to lower correlations between it and the other predictors. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient varies with the degree of heterogeneity of the sample.

Furthermore, one of the most important findings of this study was that neither the child's relationship with his mother or father explained the child's behavior with any consistency. Only the child's relationship with his primary parent seemed to be a regular predictor of the child's actions. Therefore, the split into mother-child and father-child interaction patterns does not seem to be the most fruitful approach to the study of family communication.

Generalizability of the study. The present study concerned itself with the process of building into a teen-ager the values that will enable him to depart from a family subsystem into the larger social system. To extricate himself from his immediate family, while teaching himself the norms of the larger social system he must move into, he must break a number of existing

dependencies and acquire a certain independence in his own thoughts and actions. The present study was designed to explore the patterns of communication within his immediate family which might aid him in learning how to operate functionally in other social systems.

In other words, this study focussed on the general process of training persons in the skills they need to know so that they can move from one system to another without much difficulty. They are trained to "get along" within the norms of the larger social system. The concern here, of course, is the process by which they learn how to overcome the narrow norms of their family subsystem, so that they can operate effectively in other subsystems within the larger social system.

This study dealt only with family communication. Whatever findings are borne out by this analysis, however, should apply to the communication behavior of persons in a wide variety of social situations. How strongly these findings apply to diverse social situations is subject to future research of course. However, it seems worth checking how strongly the socialization patterns designed to create perceived independence of thought and action in the family subsystem might alter a person's ability to adapt his behavior in other social systems. For example, laborers and foremen in small work groups, if they have management potential, tend to be trained to develop "independence" from the norms of their immediate subsystem so that they can manage persons to be productive in the goals of the larger social system. Through the process of communication a person acquires a level of independence that enables him to move with relative ease through social systems that vary in their norms and goals.



### Methodological Evaluations

Better instrumentation. Several scale construction problems appeared. Four out of five hypotheses not supported (H: 3, 6, 9, 12) dealt with the percentage of the child's contribution to the total family discussion. If the family members contribute equally to the discussion, each member would have given one-third of the total contribution. Yet, one-third represented the upper-limit of the child's contribution, with a mean response rating of 20 percent. This restriction of the range could have been partially responsible for the low correlations. However, it may not be reasonable to assume that a child could contribute equally with his parents in a discussion. If this be the case, the findings indicative virtually no relationship between the amount the child contributes in a discussion and the rest of the variables under study. Also, some scales that appeared in the questionnaire had reliability problems. Two of the hypotheses not supported (H: 8 and 9) included indices of parental control over the child. Two indices of control consisting of four items each, were constructed to measure the amount of control the mother and father exerted over their child. In both indices, one item correlated negatively with the other three, resulting in very weak measures. Furthermore, the median correlations for the father and mother control indices were .04 and .32, respectively, indicating a lack of unidimensionality of the measures. Thus, the final analysis might have been confounded. Only in the case of the primary parent did the scales meet acceptable standards.

Methodological alternatives. This study was limited to the extent that only one question was used to find out the child's preference for one parent or the other. In future studies, it might prove interesting to measure the

intensity of the child's feelings toward his parents. Also, instead of forcing the child to pick one "primary" parent over the other, he should have the alternative of selecting neither or both parents as possible choices. Thus, there are the problems of giving the child more meaningful choice-alternatives and also determining how strongly he feels about the chosen parent.

In addition, whether the child prefers the same parent across a number of different problem areas is another question which needs to be explored. As the child's problems change, so might his choice of primary parent, which suggests a need for a study which takes into account children at various ages and the problems they encounter at various stages of life. One of the reasons that only boys were included in this study was because girls do not tend to be confronted with the same problems that boys do for a given age. A concern for independence in boys, as earlier studies suggest, seems to take place at an earlier age than a similar concern on the part of girls. This is an empirical question, however, and needs further explication.

Also, in order to verify the child's choice of primary parent, each parent should be asked the extent to which the child seeks information from either his mother or father. Actually, relationships outside of the immediate family, such as, peers and teachers should probably be taken into consideration since the basic conceptual notion deals with people who exert influence on the child. Are there distinct communication patterns between the child and his "primary" source of information?

Discussion topics. Actual discussion time for the families ranged from 8 to 32 minutes, with an average (mean) time of 19 minutes. The "support patterns" constructed from the discussion, in some cases, could have been somewhat

restricted in variability. Theoretically, the potential range of the patterns was from +1 to -1, but none of them approached the limits. For example, primary parent support of the child ranged from +.40 to -.30, with an average (mean) response of +.03. This pattern exhibited more variability than any of the others. Possibly, increased variability on the measures would be obtained by using a greater number of or more salient topics for discussion.

Assumption of linearity. As mentioned previously, the zero-order correlations were checked to determine whether the assumption of linearity was reasonable. The data shown in Appendix F indicated that only a very few of the relationships might be suspect. On the whole, linearity did not seem to be a factor in the low correlations in this study.

Sampling frame. Instead of the correlational approach used in this study, another type of analysis could have been performed on the data. When dealing with relationships between individuals and not the individual as the unit of analysis, a conditional probability analysis could be performed on the data. For example, the sequence of communicative utterances could be counted and the probability of who talks to whom and in what order could be estimated. With a mother, father, and a child in a discussion situation, the mother can either talk to her husband or the child, the father can talk to his wife or his child, and the child can either talk to his mother or father. Thus there are six possible combinations of communication sequences and when these are analyzed over an entire discussion, a "style" or a number of communication patterns could be established for that family. In a similar manner, it was the intent of this study to explore recurrent communication relationships between family members and the extent to which these relationships are common across families.

### Contributions of the Study

The evidence from this study suggests that family communication patterns are important in explaining a child's development. Sole reliance on the child's relationship with either his mother or father does not seem to point up any recurrent communication patterns. Only when the child's interaction with his primary parent is analyzed does a consistent pattern become apparent.

The child who perceives himself as influencing his primary parent receives encouragement and support of his ideas from that parent. This finding follows from two theoretical propositions and one basic assumption. Costley (1964) indicates that the fewer non-supportive statements made by the group members, the more a member's personal attraction to the group. In addition, Cartwright and Zander (1953) state that attracted members are more likely to accept others' opinions and more often change their minds to take the views of fellow members. In order to tie the propositions together, it is necessary to assume that parents who make few non-supportive statements to their children will also be inclined to make more supportive statements. Therefore, the finding not only supports the hypothesis drawn from these propositions but adds greater specificity to the relationships within the family to which it applies.

Both Gibb (1951) and Likert (1961) suggest that a democratic leadership style involves giving the group members ample opportunity to express their thoughts without being constrained by the leader pressing his own views. In the same manner, Douvan and Adelson (1966) report that democratic families tend to tolerate disagreement, while also having highly attracted members. As suggested before, attracted members are more accepting of other's opinions and more often change their minds to take the views of fellow members. In this study,

the finding that the less the child supports his primary parent in a discussion, the more his perceived influence on this parent follows from the above propositions.

Douvan and Adelson furthermore suggest that children from democratic homes indicate a high level of participation in family decisions. Also, in a democratic family, support and participation are related to personal attraction; and attracted members more readily try to influence each other. However, from monitoring family discussion, the hypothesis that the more the child contributes to the discussion, the more the child will perceive that he influences his parents, is not confirmed.

The rationale used in the development of the propositions dealing with a child's perceived influence is the same one used in explaining the development of a child's self-confidence. It has been shown that the child's perceived influence on his parents and his self-confidence are highly related. The findings suggest that the child who indicates that he is fairly self-confident in his own ability to make decisions also receives support of his ideas from his primary parent. Again, the child who can openly disagree with his primary parent seems to develop self-confidence in his own judgments. A parent who listens with attentiveness, communicates to his child that his ideas are valued and that he is respected. Such respect gives the child a sense of self-confidence. The feeling of personal worth might enable the child to deal more effectively with his own problems.

Since perceived influence and self-confidence are suggested as important factors in the child's development, a similar rationale seems tenable in regards to parents' allowing their child to make most of his own decisions. Costley (1964) reports fewer non-supportive statements made by group members, the more

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the group members are satisfied with group decisions. Sargent (1964) indicates that democratic leaders tend to make a high proportion of supportive statements, while phrasing most of their contributions in the form of questions, suggesting that parents with democratic values might indicate greater satisfaction with the child's decisions. The findings from this study indicate that primary parent support of the child in a discussion varies directly with the parent's judgment whether to let the child make his own decisions.

Unlike the relationship between a child's support of his primary parent in a conversation, and the child's perceived influence and self-confidence, the child's support of his primary parent in a conversation has only a slight influence on whether the parent lets the child make his own decisions. Similarly, the child's contribution to the family discussion has virtually no influence on the primary parent's decision.

Finally, McLeod, Chaffee, and Wackman (1967) indicate that children from democratic homes are well informed and use the media for information. They also point out that democratic families encourage a child to explore new ideas and controversial material. The findings here indicate that support by the child's primary parent in a discussion has a direct bearing on the child's use of his mother, father, and relatives for ideas and his use of television, movies, and magazines as sources of information. As before, the child's support of his primary parent in a discussion is not related to his use of these personal and mediated sources for ideas. In addition, the child's interaction with his primary parent does not influence the child's claimed use of newspapers or peers as sources of ideas. Also, the amount the child contributes to the family discussion is not related to his use of these sources.

In the long-run the significance of these findings lies in the fact that usually the child observes the behavior of his parents and incorporates these behaviors into his own personality structure. The personality in the child develops slowly. A certain type of personality emerges or becomes stabilized to a degree by the interactive process of defining acts of others and thus becoming aware of one's own actions. This results in a persistent or stable pattern of behavior.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

In light of the findings of the exploratory study, attention now can be given to the consideration of future attempts in this direction.

The findings dealing with the primary parent's relationship with the child seem to be a most fruitful area for further study. The concept of primary parent consistently aided in explaining the child's behavior. For example, primary parent support of the child during the discussion, explained 42 percent of the child's perceived influence on his primary parent.

A question that presents itself is, what is the nature of the communication between the child and his primary parent, regardless of parent's sex? Also, what other factors in the child's development are nourished by the child's interaction with this parent? A greater understanding of the child's preference for one parent or the other may be a promising area for communication research.

The group leader in the small group research may be compared with the concept of primary parent in the family, since both tend to encourage and support their members. However, the authority of the group leader stems from his position, whereas, this notion does not necessarily hold for the primary parent



This might lead one to ask about the relationship between family communication patterns and the nature of the power structure within the family.

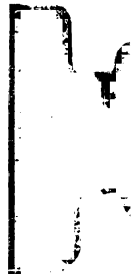
Also, the child's use of personal and mediated sources for information might be studied more closely. Why was the child's use of peers and newspapers for ideas negatively correlated with his use of the other sources? Are his use of television and movies a means of maintaining social relations within the family? Or better still, what are the functions served for the child by his use of various personal and mediated sources?

It would be desirable to study a group of boys and girls over time as they move up to, and then through, one or more of these stages in their development. Not only should such a longitudinal study shed further light on this communication process and the factors involved, but it also would serve as a check on how well the present technique estimates the state of the relationships between family members.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER SENT TO RESPONDENTS

July, 1968

Dear Mr. & Mrs.

Most of us recognize that what we say to others is pretty important. We are interested in the important communication within families; that is, what do families talk about and how do they talk about certain topics. We would, therefore, like to study the communication which goes on between members of a family.

We are graduate students in the Department of Communication at Michigan State University. Our interests are in looking at patterns of discussion within families as they relate to other kinds of social activity, such as, where you go to look for ideas about particular topics, and how you go about making decisions about things of concern to the family.

Your family (father, mother, and teen-age son) would be asked to participate by sitting and discussing a few topics, such as school activities, dating, and so forth. This discussion would take about one half hour followed by a short questionnaire concerning how you make the daily decisions of concern to your family. You can be assured that the answers of any specific family will not be made public. We are interested in groups of families only, and in their patterns of discussion.

In two or three days we will be contacting you by phone to ask for your cooperation in discussing among yourselves, topics concerned with areas of interest to you and your family. We hope that you will agree to help us in our graduate programs.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter. We hope that you will be interested in our research and find an hour in your day in which to help us.

Sincerely,

Daniel E. Costello  
Graduate Assistant

Duane D. Pettersen  
Graduate Assistant

## APPENDIX B

### DEFINITIONS OF INTERACTION ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

# I. POSITIVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Acts of Active Solidarity and Affection. Includes greeting another by saying "hello" or in some other friendly manner, welcoming another, acts in return to a friendly gesture, accepting an offer of help or assistance, thanking another, indications of mannerly considerations, indications of good will, indications that the actor is friendly. A friendly comment on the weather or some other matter of common interest to "break the ice." The expression of sympathy - "I can see how you feel." Any indication in the course of interaction that the relationship is becoming intimate or familiar. Any act of adherence where the actor chooses to be a fellow member with another.

Status-Raising Acts. Includes all acts which have the specific aim or effect of raising or enhancing the other's status. Including praising, rewarding, boosting the other, giving approval or encouragement. Examples: "That's fine," "That's a good idea," "Swell," "You've covered a lot of ground today." Complimenting, congratulating showing approval of another, giving credit to another, showing enthusiasm for another's views. Expressing gratitude or appreciation, showing admiration or respect.

Responses to Shows of Tension. Includes any behavior in which the actor offers assistance to another. Any act of sharing. Any behavior in which the actor defends another. Giving support, reassurance, comfort, encouragement, showing of sympathy.

Responses to Disagreements. Includes acts which may appear after a situation of difficulty, such as interceding, mediating, or moderating in a difficulty between two others. Any act where the actor urges unity or harmony, agreement, cooperation, or expressed other values of solidarity.

In cases of disagreement or antagonism between members, the suggesting of a compromise.

Indications of Relief. Includes expressions of feeling better after a period of tension, any manifestation of cheerfulness, satisfaction, enjoyment, pleasure, delight, joy, happiness. Positive responses to a compliment. Includes the making of friendly jokes, trying to amuse or entertain. Positive responses to joking, such as smiling, grinning, or chuckling.

Responses to Acts of Decision with Agreement. Includes any concurrence in a proposed course of action. Examples: "I second the motion," "Let's do that." Includes any act in which the actor either verbally or overtly complies with a request or suggestion. Agreement with an observation or report, or analysis which another has made. Examples: "That's the way I see it too," "I think you are right about that," "Yes, that's true." Similarly includes agreement, approval, or endorsement of an expression of value or feeling. Examples: "I feel the same way you do," "I hope so too," "That's right." Includes giving any sign of recognition, interest, receptiveness, readiness, responsiveness. Includes giving specific signs of attention to what the other is saying by nodding or saying "I see," "Yes." Includes showing comprehension, understanding, or insight. Examples: "Oh," "I see," "Yes," "Sure, now I get it." Includes admitting an error or oversight, admitting that some objection or disapproval is valid, conceding a point to the other, giving way, withdrawing politely. Examples: "Now I may be wrong about this. . ." "This is not an important point perhaps . . ." Includes any indication of a permissive attitude, where another is led to understand that he is accepted "as he is," so that the incorrectness of his solution to any problem or the quality of his performance does not

adversely affect his status, so that he can "make mistakes without blame." Includes any act in which the actor submits passively, accepts coercion, criticism, without retaliation, rebuttal, rebellion, or complaint.

## II. ATTEMPTED ANSWERS: TASK AREA

Giving Suggestions or Direction Related to Task. Includes all acts which suggest concrete ways of attaining a desired goal by attacking or modifying the outer situation, or by adapting activity to it, proposing a solution, indicating or suggesting where to start, what to do, how to cope with a problem in terms of action in the near future. Includes giving instructions or making proposals, showing where, when, how, why, something is to be done. Examples: "We will have to stop at the end of one-half hour." "Consider for a moment what would happen if..." "Suppose we set up the following situation..." "Go right ahead." Includes direct attempts to guide the others regarding some activity, to persuade someone, to urge or to inspire someone.

Giving Opinions, Evaluations, or Analysis. Includes all indications of thought-in-process leading to an understanding, such as reasoning, thinking, or concentrating. The actual statement of a hypothesis or expression of understanding or insight. Includes logical elaboration, exploration, or testing of a hypothesis, whether by example, analogy, analysis of cause and effect relations, categorical labeling or any sort of conjectural process. Includes any expression of desire, want, liking, wishing, any expression of moral obligation, any affirmation of values, any statement of intention, referring to a broad and indefinite future time perspective, as yet unimplemented as to ways and means. Examples: "I think we ought to be fair about this." "I hope we can do something about that." "That seems to be the right thing to do." Includes activity

in which the actor attempts, by inference or reasoning, to understand or interpret his own motivation or the "why" of his own behavior in relation to the problem being discussed. Examples: "I can see now that I misjudged the situation." "I think I behave that way because..." Includes activity in which the actor attempts to understand the motivation or activities of others in relation to the problem situation. Includes all statements about the nature of the outer situation in relation to the group.

Giving Orientation, Information or Clarifying. Includes all acts which are intended to focus attention on the problem to be discussed, calling attention to what one is going to say, or pointing out the relevance of what one is saying. Examples: "There are two points I'd like to make." "In the first place..." "Now with regard to our problem of..." "Going back for a moment..." "What I am about to say relates to..." Includes efforts to prevent or repair breaks in the flow of communication, such as, repeating, clarifying confusion about something said, explaining, summarizing, restating. Includes any account of one's own private experience where the actor tells what he felt, what was done, how it was done, the position he took on some issue. Includes showing an understanding of the other or something the other has said by restating or reporting the essential content of what has been said. Includes statements of fact about the nature of the outer situation facing the group.

### III. QUESTIONS: TASK AREA

Asking for Orientation of Information. Includes acts which indicate or express a lack of knowledge, confusion or uncertainty about the position of the group with regard to its task, about what has been said or is going

on, about the meaning of a word or phrase. Includes the appearance of any attitude the observer would describe as puzzled, bewildered, or baffled. Examples: "What?" "What was that?" "I don't quite get what you mean." "Where are we?" "Where do we stand now?" Includes direct or outright questions which require the giving of a factual answer. Also includes more indefinite expressions of a lack of knowledge. Examples: "I don't know about this." "It isn't clear to me." "It may be true, or it may not be."

Asking for Opinion, Evaluation, or Analysis. Includes any kind of question which attempts to encourage a statement or reaction on the part of another without limiting the nature of the response. Examples: "Tell me more about it." "Tell me more about..." "What do you think?" "What should our policy be?" Includes inferences or evaluations requested. Examples: "How long do you suppose it will be?" "I can't figure out how long it would take." "I wonder if there are any other possibilities?" "Why do you think you feel that way?"

Asking for Suggestions or Direction. Includes requests for suggestions as to what should be done in terms of finding ways, means, and solutions, requests for suggestions as to where to start, what to do next, what to decide. Examples: "I wonder what we can do about this?" "I don't know what to do." "What do you suggest?"

#### IV. NEGATIVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Disagree or Shows Passive Rejection. Includes passive forms of rejection such as remaining immobile, rigid, silent, uncommunicative, responseless, in the face of overtures of others. Working at something other than the problem with which the group is concerned. Includes

disagreement, disbelief, incredulity regarding reports and observations made by others. Includes failure to give requested repetition, ignoring a request of any kind or a complaint. Examples: "I don't think so." "I'm not going to repeat it."

Showing Tension, Asks for Help. Includes all manifestations of impatience, indications that the subject feels strained, on edge, restless, agitated. Includes any manifestation or indication to the observer that the actor is startled, alarmed, dismayed, or has misgivings about something he has done or intends to do. Any show of anxious emotionality, such as hesitation, speechlessness, trembling, blushing, stammering. Includes nervous or apologetic acts where actor admits his own ignorance or incapacity. Acts of blaming, belittling, accusing, condemning, scorning, humiliating. Includes expressions of unhappiness, discouragement, despair, brooding, distress, discomfort, fatigue. Showing any kind of need to be supported, forgiven, consoled. Includes any behavior which indicates that the actor is unattentive, bored, or psychologically withdrawn - slouching, yawning, daydreaming.

Showing Antagonism. Includes the arbitrary assignment of a role, a defining or restricting of another's power by demands or commands such as "Come here!" "Stop that!" "Hurry up!" "Get out!" Includes acts that are assertive, inconsiderate, repressive. Includes any act in which the actor rejects, refuses, or ignores directions, shrugging the shoulders, avoiding or quitting activities. Includes aggressive acts such as griping, nagging, annoying, disturbing, or pestering others. Includes attempts to override the other in conversation, interrupting the other. Active attacks on another's status, any implication of inferiority or incompetence on the part of another. Includes making charges against another, blaming, imputing unworthy motives, denouncing. Includes any acts of disapproval

of self, or of others. Includes any behavior in which the actor appears to be provoking or irritating. Includes threats, attacking and challenging others.



## APPENDIX C

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Below are a series of situations which are discussed in most families at one time or another. Families seem to handle the problems in different ways. We would like for you to discuss among yourselves as many points of view that you are familiar with. From these different views, select a view which represents the thinking of your family.

Please spend some time with each of the situations. There are no right or wrong answers...only what your family feels is the most appropriate answer for the situation. You will have 30 minutes to discuss all four situations below. Don't worry about the time; we will inform you when the half hour is up.

- 
- (1) It has been proposed that the minimum age for getting a drivers' license be raised from age 16 to age 18. Discuss the different points of view that you are familiar with on this topic, and select one which represents the thinking of your family.
  - (2) Some parents feel that if their teen-age son or daughter wants to smoke, the choice should be left up to the teen-ager. Other parents insist that their teen-age son or daughter may smoke only when the parents consider them ready to smoke. Discuss the different points of view that you are familiar with on this topic, and select one which represents the thinking of your family.
  - (3) Some parents allow their teen-age son or daughter to go to movies based on violence, sex, and other adult themes. Other parents regard films recommended for adults only as strictly off-limits, until the teen ager is older and more mature in his thinking. Discuss the different points of view that you are familiar with on this topic, and select one which represents the thinking of your family.
  - (4) Some parents feel that their teen-age son or daughter should be allowed to wear their hair or clothes in keeping with the current fads. Other parents insist that conformity to teen age fads is unnecessary and that teen-agers should leave the final decision up to their parents. Discuss the different points of view that you are familiar with on this topic, and select one which represents the thinking of your family.

## CHILD'S QUESTIONNAIRE

To begin with...what specific topics are discussed most often in your family at meal-time?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I'd like you to read each of the following questions carefully...then place an "X" in the blank in front of the answer you consider most appropriate. Please choose only one answer for your father and one answer for your mother for each question.

11-12 About how often would you say your parents ask you for your opinion on family decisions?

MOTHER

- ☐ Several times a week  
☐ About once a week  
☐ Once or twice a month  
☐ Less than once a month

FATHER

- ☐ Several times a week  
☐ About once a week  
☐ Once or twice a month  
☐ Less than once a month

13-14 If your parents said that they depended a great deal on your judgment regarding family decisions, would you believe them?

MOTHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

FATHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

15-16 Compared with other teen-agers...are you more likely, or less likely...to be asked by your parents for opinions on family decisions?

MOTHER

- ☐ More likely  
☐ Less likely  
☐ About the same

FATHER

- ☐ More likely  
☐ Less likely  
☐ About the same

17-18 In regards to family decisions, would you like to think your parents consider your opinions?

MOTHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

FATHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

## CHILD'S QUESTIONNAIRE

To begin with...what specific topics are discussed most often in your family at meal-time?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I'd like you to read each of the following questions carefully...then place an "X" in the blank in front of the answer you consider most appropriate. Please choose only one answer for your father and one answer for your mother for each question.

11-12 About how often would you say your parents ask you for your opinion on family decisions?

MOTHER

- ☐ Several times a week  
☐ About once a week  
☐ Once or twice a month  
☐ Less than once a month

FATHER

- ☐ Several times a week  
☐ About once a week  
☐ Once or twice a month  
☐ Less than once a month

13-14 If your parents said that they depended a great deal on your judgment regarding family decisions, would you believe them?

MOTHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

FATHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

15-16 Compared with other teen-agers...are you more likely, or less likely...to be asked by your parents for opinions on family decisions?

MOTHER

- ☐ More likely  
☐ Less likely  
☐ About the same

FATHER

- ☐ More likely  
☐ Less likely  
☐ About the same

17-18 In regards to family decisions, would you like to think your parents consider your opinions?

MOTHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

FATHER

- ☐ Yes  
☐ I guess so  
☐ Probably not  
☐ No

19-20 When you discuss family decisions with your parents, what part do you usually play?

MOTHER

     I talk mostly  
     I mainly listen  
     A little of both

FATHER

     I talk mostly  
     I mainly listen  
     A little of both

Now, I would like for you to read about some problems that teen-agers your age sometimes face. Listed below are some of the possible ways of finding answers to these problems.

If you were concerned about finding a part-time job and uncertain as to what choice to make, how often would you look for ...

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>NOW &amp; THEN</u>	<u>SELDOM</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
21. <u>IDEAS</u> for newspapers	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
22. <u>IDEAS</u> from your mother	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
23. <u>IDEAS</u> from television	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
24. <u>IDEAS</u> from others your age	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
25. <u>IDEAS</u> from magazines	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
26. <u>IDEAS</u> from your father	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
27. <u>IDEAS</u> from movies	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
28. <u>IDEAS</u> from other relatives	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

If you needed to buy clothes for school and uncertain as to what choice to make, how often would you look for ...

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>NOW &amp; THEN</u>	<u>SELDOM</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
29. <u>IDEAS</u> from newspapers	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
30. <u>IDEAS</u> from your mother	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
31. <u>IDEAS</u> from television	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
32. <u>IDEAS</u> from others your age	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
33. <u>IDEAS</u> from magazines	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
34. <u>IDEAS</u> from your father	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
35. <u>IDEAS</u> from movies	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
36. <u>IDEAS</u> from other relatives	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

37. On matters such as jobs and clothing, if you could ask for ideas from only one of your parents, which parent would you ask? Mother      Father

Now here is a different kind of question. Place an "X" in the blank in front of the answer you consider most appropriate.

38. If you had just bought new clothes for school, how sure would you be that you had made the best choice possible?

☐ Very sure  
☐ Sure  
☐ Not sure

39. If you had just joined a new club at school, how sure would you be that you had made the best choice possible?

☐ Very sure  
☐ Sure  
☐ Not sure

40. If you had just accepted a part-time job for this summer, how sure would you be that you had made the best choice possible?

☐ Very sure  
☐ Sure  
☐ Not sure

41. Finally...just a few more questions about yourself...what is your age?\_\_\_

42. And what was the last grade you completed in school?\_\_\_\_\_

43. Are you taking or going to take a college prep or vocational or business training courses in high school?

☐ College prep.  
☐ Vocational  
☐ Business

44. What subject is easiest for you?\_\_\_\_\_

45. What subject is hardest for you? \_\_\_\_\_

46. For the first 10 years of your childhood, what state or country did you live in for most of these years?\_\_\_\_\_

Did you live primarily in a rural (farm) or urban (city) area during this time? ☐ rural ☐ urban

47. Do you speak a language other than English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What language? \_\_\_\_\_

Does anyone else in your family speak it? ☐ Mother ☐ Father

Is it used frequently in the home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

APPENDIX D

MOTHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

To begin with...what specific topics are discussed most often in your family at meal-time?

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I'd like you to read each of the following questions carefully...then place an "X" in the blank in front of the answer you consider most appropriate. Please choose only one answer for each question.

In general, how are most decisions made between you and your teenage son on the following situations . . .

11. If your son needed new clothes for school...does he usually choose his own, or do you decide for him?

☐ I always decide for him  
☐ I often decide for him  
☐ Every now and then I decide for him  
☐ I seldom decide for him  
☐ I never decide for him

12. In regards to your son's friends...does he usually choose his own, or do you suggest who they should be?

☐ I always suggest to him  
☐ I often suggest to him  
☐ Every now and then I suggest to him  
☐ I seldom suggest to him  
☐ I never suggest to him

13. When your son goes out with others his own age..does he usually come home when he wants to, or do you usually remind him of what time to be home?

☐ I always remind him  
☐ I often remind him  
☐ Every now and then I remind him  
☐ I seldom remind him  
☐ I never remind him

14. In regards to your son's dating...does he usually determine how often he goes out, or do you tell him when he is allowed to date?

☐ I always tell him  
☐ I often tell him  
☐ Every now and then I tell him  
☐ I seldom tell him  
☐ I never tell him

15. Finally...a few questions about yourself...what is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
16. And what was the last grade you completed in school or college? \_\_\_\_\_
17. How many children do you have living? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are their ages? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Does anyone else live with your family? Who?  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you speak a language other than English?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No  
What language? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does anyone else in your family speak it?    ☐ Husband    ☐ Teen-age son  
Is it used frequently in the home?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No
20. For the first 10 years of your childhood, what state or country  
did you live in for most of these years? \_\_\_\_\_  
Did you live primarily in a rural (farm) or urban (city) area during  
this time?    ☐ rural    ☐ urban
21. What is your family's religion?  
☐ Protestant  
☐ Catholic  
☐ Jewish  
☐ Other

**APPENDIX E**  
**FATHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

To begin with...what specific topics are discussed most often in your family at meal-time?

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I'd like you to read each of the following questions carefully...then place an "X" in the blank in front of the answer you consider most appropriate. Please choose only one answer for each question.

In general, how are most decisions made between you and your teenage son on the following situations. . .

11. If your son needed new clothes for school...does he usually choose his own, or do you decide for him?

☐ I always decide for him  
☐ I often decide for him  
☐ Every now and then I decide for him  
☐ I seldom decide for him  
☐ I never decide for him

12. In regards to your son's friends...does he usually choose his own, or do you suggest who they should be?

☐ I always suggest to him  
☐ I often suggest to him  
☐ Every now and then I suggest to him  
☐ I seldom suggest to him  
☐ I never suggest to him

13. When your son goes out with others his own age...does he usually come home when he wants to, or do you usually remind him of what time to be home?

☐ I always remind him  
☐ I often remind him  
☐ Every now and then I remind him  
☐ I seldom remind him  
☐ I never remind him

14. In regards to your son's dating...does he usually determine how often he goes out, or do you tell him when he is allowed to date?

☐ I always tell him  
☐ I often tell him  
☐ Every now and then I tell him  
☐ I seldom tell him  
☐ I never tell him

15. Finally...a few questions about yourself...what is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
16. And what was the last grade you completed in school or college? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What kind of work do you do or usually do?

---

What type of business or industry do you work for?

---

18. What was your family's approximate total annual income for last year (1967)? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you speak a language other than English? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No
- What language? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does anyone else in your family speak it? \_\_\_\_\_Wife \_\_\_\_Teen-age son
- Is it used frequently in the home? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No
20. For the first 10 years of your childhood, what state or country did you live in for most of these years? \_\_\_\_\_
- Did you live primarily in a rural (farm) or urban (city) area during this time? \_\_\_\_rural \_\_\_\_urban

**APPENDIX F**

**TABLE 21**

Table 21. A check on the assumption of rectilinearity: Comparison of the Pearson product-moment  $r$  with  $\text{Eta}$ 

Criterion Variables	Predictor Variables	$r^2$	$\text{Eta}^2$
INFLUENCE INDEX			
Child's influence on mother...	Mother's support	.40	.46
	Father's support	.04	.05
	Support of mother	.05	.10
	Support of father	.15	.26
	Child's contribution	.08	.17
Child's influence on father...	Mother's support	.23	.47
	Father's support	.08	.16
	Support of mother	.02	.13
	Support of father	.03	.20
	Child's contribution	.02	.11
Child's influence on primary parent...	Primary parent support	.66	.67
	Non-primary parent support	.02	.18
	Support of primary parent	.12	.12
	Support of non-primary parent	.27	.32
	Child's contribution	.03	.10
Child's influence on non-primary parent...	Primary parent support	.49	.52
	Non-primary parent support	.01	.07
	Support of primary parent	.02	.03
	Support of non-primary parent	.23	.38
	Child's contribution	.07	.20
SELF-CONFIDENCE INDEX			
Child's self-confidence in his own judgments...	Mother's support	.44	.56
	Father's support	.10	.10
	Primary parent support	.55	.71
	Non-primary parent support	.14	.23
	Support of mother	.14	.26
	Support of father	.01	.04
	Support of primary parent	.21	.23
	Support of non-primary parent	.12	.17
	Child's contributions	.00	.06

Criterion Variables	Predictor Variables	$r^2$	Eta <sup>2</sup>
<b>CONTROL INDEX</b>			
Mother's control over child...	Mother's support	.04	.08
	Father's support	.05	.13
	Support of mother	.00	.18
	Support of father	.11	.20
	Child's contribution	.00	.00
Father's control over child...	Mother's support	.09	.15
	Father's support	.06	.08
	Support of mother	.00	.23
	Support of father	.08	.09
	Child's contribution	.00	.01
Primary parent control over child...	Primary parent support	.51	.51
	Non-primary parent support	.05	.25
	Support of primary parent	.09	.09
	Support of non-primary parent	.20	.27
	Child's contribution	.01	.07
Non-primary parent control over child...	Primary parent support	.00	.02
	Non-primary parent support	.00	.10
	Support of primary parent	.02	.03
	Support of non-primary parent	.01	.07
	Child's contribution	.01	.09
<b>INFORMATION-SEEKING INDEX</b>			
Child's use of newspapers...	Mother's support	.03	.07
	Father's support	.00	.08
	Primary parent support	.08	.10
	Non-primary parent support	.01	.04
	Support of mother	.04	.13
	Support of father	.01	.03
	Support of primary parent	.06	.06
	Support of non-primary parent	.02	.10
	Child's contribution	.00	.03

Criterion Variables	Predictor Variables	$r^2$	$\text{Eta}^2$
Child's use of magazines, television, and movies...	Mother's support	.08	.22
	Father's support	.12	.18
	Primary parent support	.18	.23
	Non-primary parent support	.00	.10
	Support of mother	.07	.12
	Support of father	.01	.15
	Support of primary parent	.15	.16
	Support of non-primary parent	.02	.05
Child's use of persons his own age... ..	Child's contribution	.02	.05
	Mother's support	.02	.05
	Father's support	.08	.14
	Primary parent support	.00	.20
	Non-primary parent support	.01	.22
	Support of mother	.03	.14
	Support of father	.00	.04
	Support of primary parent	.00	.00
Child's use of mother, father, and relatives...	Support of non-primary parent	.03	.05
	Child's contribution	.04	.06
	Mother's support	.18	.36
	Father's support	.09	.10
	Primary parent support	.45	.48
	Non-primary parent support	.02	.13
	Support of mother	.01	.03
	Support of father	.03	.18
	Support of primary parent	.02	.03
	Support of non-primary parent	.20	.33
	Child's contribution	.03	.19

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