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CHILDREN'S PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT
AS RELATED TO
FAMILY ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

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Yanon Volcani

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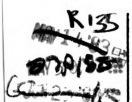

CHILDREN'S PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AS RELATED TO FAMILY ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

By

Yanon Volcani

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ABSTRACT

CHILDREN'S PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT
AS RELATED TO FAMILY ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

By

Yanon Volcani

The current investigation explored the relationship between children's psychosocial adjustment and family alignment patterns exhibited by 33 middle-class family triads (mother, father, and child) engaged in two interactional tasks (Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb). The sample was from a previous study by Messé and Stollak and their colleagues (Stollak, Messé, Michaels, Buldain, Catlin, and Paritee, 1977) which examined the relationship between interpersonal perceptual style, family interactions, and adjustment in 4-9 year old "normal" children.

Five sets of two-member rater teams independently coded videotapes of the family interactions on dimensions developed by the current E to assess alignment patterns among family members. Building upon Haley's (1967) distinction between alliances--in which a relationship between two individuals is independent of a third person--and coalitions--wherein a two person relationship actively excludes or extrudes an other--the current research attempted to delineate such patterns.

It was predicted that families whose children were rated as highly adjusted by teachers would exhibit higher amounts of aligning behaviors (i.e. Who-Speaks-To-Whom, Aligning Verbalization, Activity, Physical Proximity,

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Physical Plane, Physical Aligning, as well as ratios reflecting greater Aligning than Extruding Verbalization and Physical contact), equally distributed among family members (i.e. low Dispersion Scores), than families of children rated lower on adjustment. Such behaviors were assumed to reflect the former families' ability to form simultaneous, mutual alliances among members. In contrast, the latter families were expected to exhibit higher amounts of extruding behaviors (i.e. Extruding Verbalization, Physical Extruding, and ratios reflecting greater Extruding than Aligning Verbalization and Physical contact), and unevenness of aligning and extruding behaviors among family members (i.e. high Dispersion Scores), as compared to the families of "highly" adjusted children. Such behaviors presumably indicated coalitions among family dyads that excluded the third member.

Among the many statistically significant findings, Pearson product moment coefficients revealed significant positive relationships between child adjustment and several father-to-child, child-to-father aligning behaviors. Furthermore, several of the father-to-mother and mother-to-father aligning behaviors were also positively related to child adjustment. In contrast, several mother-to-child aligning behaviors were <u>negatively</u> associated with child adjustment during Free Play.

To further examine relationships between child adjustment and family alignment patterns, families having children rated in the highest and lowest third on adjustment were

compared on the various aligning and extruding dimensions. T-test, chi square, and Sign test analyses, as well as the ratios of Aligning to Extruding Verbalization within and across family members, revealed stronger father-child and father-mother alignments in the families of the "healthiest" as compared to the most "poorly adjusted" children. The latter group had stronger mother-child alignments. These findings appeared to support psychodynamic and family systems theories on child development, wherein strong father-mother and father-child alignments allow the latency-age child to differentiate from the mother.

Some differences for sex-of-child were noted. For example, there were stronger alignments between same-sex as compared with cross-sex parent-child dyads; the positive association between child competence and father-to-child aligning behaviors was stronger for father-daughter dyads than father-son; and the negative association between child competence and mother-child aligning was stronger for boys than girls.

Task differences were also noted, with the Free Play as compared to the Teach-A-Proverb task eliciting aligning and extruding behaviors that were more evidently related to child adjustment. Furthermore, the tasks appeared to provoke divergent socially prescribed role behaviors, with the mother being the "expressive leader," while the father was the "instrumental leader."

This dissertation is dedicated

with deep love

to Big Ben and Tiny Ton'

my first alignments

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"I'm really a jazz musician" you have said, so Gary Stollak I thank you for wonderous melodies and improvised, syncopated ideas that have enchanted and enriched me. I have listened well, memorizing certain rifts, varying others, and most importantly have heard the essential theme--that I must create my own song. It is for this that I am most grateful--your unconditional support and encouragement of my discovering, exploring, and expressing what was of essence. And thus my tune is unique, yet your notes are there, your song continues.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES (cont'd.) Page

LIST OF TABLES

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CHILDREN'S PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AS RELATED TO FAMILY ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

INTRODUCTION

A pivotal construct in family systems theory is that of alignments--the forms and expressions of bonds among family members. Indeed, attempts to understand the nature and function of alignments within a family--and particularly the differences between alignment patterns in families having a psychologically disturbed individual as compared with those that did not--was the very bedrock from which family systems theory first evolved. The centrality of the concept, however, has not been matched by a rigor in its explication, delineation, and operalization. Thus, the terms "alignment," "coalition," "alliance," "subsystem," and others have been used indiscriminately and interchangeably throughout the family theory literature.

Furthermore, family alignment patterns either have been assessed through the use of one or two microanalytic dimensions (e.g., frequency counts of who-speaks-to-whom or who-agrees/disagrees-with-whom), or indirectly measured through the study of other seemingly related variables such as "power," "dominance," or "support." Such approaches to the measurement of the concept would seem insufficient given

the complexity of the phenominon. Indeed, the conceptual ambiguity and overlap between alignments and other related constructs in family research has lead Jacob and Grounds (1978) to conclude:

> The meaning of and referents for the suggested dimension (term?, concept?, process?) coalition are vague, to say the least, including the possibility of an affective component (parent ↔ child ↔ parent ↔ parent), and influence component (parent$_1$ + child vs. parent$_2$) or both (p. 379).

It was precisely this lack of exactitude in the definition, measurement, and explication of family alignment patterns that served as an impetus for the current investigation.

One exception to the indiscriminant use of terminology, however, has been the work of Haley (1959, 1967), who differentiates between "alliances"--in which the relationship between two people is independent of a third person--and coalitions--defined as "a process of joint action which is against the third person" (Haley, 1967, p. 16). Sluzki (1975) alludes to this distinction in speaking of "inclusive and exclusive coalitionary structures." The current investigation attempted to further clarify this differentiation, assessing numerous aligning/extruding behaviors that would help distinguish alliances and coalitions. In this way, the current research attempted to increase the understanding of family alignments by more fully delineating the subtle

behaviors that punctuate, attenuate, and demarcate the nature and intensity of a given alignment.

In addition, it was the current investigator's clinical observation that what constituted "health" in a family system was not merely the predominance of flexible alignments among family members, but the further ability to form various types of simultaneous, mutual alliances between all members of the family. The measures used in the current study attempted to empirically elucidate and test this assumption, as will be made clear at a later point.

A broader analysis of alliances and coalitions--their nature, origins, function, and possible reasons for their effects--can be found in Appendix N. The present discussion will be limited to definitions of the concepts as used in the current research, and a review of empirical findings directly relevant to the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and family alignment patterns.

Definitions

Wynne (1961) was one of the first family theoreticians to put forth a concise definition of alignments. Echoing the sociological definitions of the concept (e.g., Caplow, 1956; Heider, 1958; Mills, 1953; Simmel, 1950), Wynne defined alignments as "the perception or experience of two or more persons that they are joined together in a common endeavor, interest, attitude, or set of values, and

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that in this sector of their experience they have positive feelings toward one another" (p. 96). Splits, on the other hand, involve a "perception or experience of opposition, difference, or estrangement, with associated negative feelings" (p. 96).

Similar to Wynne's (1961) definition, "alignment" in the current research was used as a generic term for any enjoinment of two or more people--whether it be an alliance or a coalition--based on a shared perception that certain physical and/or psychological needs are being, will be, or could be fulfilled in the relationship, and/or based on mutual valuing and respect. As a further differentiation, two distinct form of alignments--alliances and coalitions--were defined in the current study as follows:

An alliance is a relationship between two or more people based on mutual feelings of acknowledgment, appreciation, admiration, affection, empathy, respect, like and/or love for each other. Though there is a shared perception and expectation that certain basic physical and psychological needs (e.g., Murray, 1938) could be, are being, or will be gratified through the alliance, the relationship is not formed primarily to fulfill such needs. Instead, the relationship essentially develops from the mutual enjoyment and appreciation of the qualities, attributes, and characteristics of the other, and the pleasure derived from interacting with them. Being a direct response to the other, and

independent of some external person or entity, alliance relationships potentiate the inclusion of any aspect of the individuals' experiencing.

A coalition is a relationship between two or more people based on feelings of fear, ambivalence, conflict, anger, helplessness, and pain aroused by some person or entity external to the coalition relationship. The coalition is formed as a response to this external entity, which is thereby excluded, actively extruded, or in some way colluded against by the members forming the coalition. The relationship is based primarily on an attempt to fulfill physical/psychological needs and thereby assuage distress, rather than derived from a specific enjoyment of the other person. Being a direct reaction to some external factor, coalition relationships necessitate the exclusion or expulsion of some aspect of the individuals' experiencing.

It need be stressed here that, as in the case with any attempt at delineating complex phenomena, the above definitions do not purport to reflect directly the exact nature of alliances and coalitions as they actually occur in human relationships--as if these relationships took on such pure forms. It would seem obvious that an alliance at times would include some reaction to an external entity, and possibly at that moment involve a "collusion" against it. Similarly, coalitions certainly can include feelings of enjoyment and liking for the other person. The nature of the relationship

can fluctuate within context and situation. However, what is definitive here is the predominance of qualities that characterize the relationship--whether they be mutual appreciation and respect between individuals, or a using of the other to fulfill one's needs.

Empirical Evidence for the Relationship between Adjustment and Family Alignments

It was the central assumption of the current study that positive adjustment in children would be related to mutual alliances among family members, while poor adjustment in children would be associated with coalitions within the family. A more elaborate explication of the theoretical underpinnings for these associations can be found in Appendix N. The empirical evidence supporting these assumptions will be discussed here.

Coalitions as Related to Individual/Familial Pathology

Typical to tradition in psychological research, most of the studies examining the relationships between individual functioning and family environments was, and to a large extent still is, on family variables associated with pathology in one or more family members. Investigations focusing specifically on such pathology and family alignment patterns have consistently found an association between three main forms of coalitions--a lack of stable alignments, a parental coalition excluding the child, and a parent-child

coalition excluding the other parent--and psychosomatic, cognitive, and/or psychosocial dysfunction in one or more family members. These various forms of coalitions and their apparent effects will be discussed separately.

Lack of Stable Alignments

Haley (1959, 1962) was one of the first to note the difficulty some families with a schizophrenic have in forming stable alignments between members. He speculated that in such families members continually disqualified and disconfirmed each other's and their own behaviors for fear of taking a stand, and that such communication patterns made it very difficult to form stable alignments. Furthermore, he noted:

> Family members (of families with a schizophrenic) behave as if an alliance between two of them is inevitably a betrayal of the third person. They seem to have difficulty functioning in a two-person relationship, and as a result the separation of any one of the three from the others is a particular threat (Haley, 1959, p. 186).

Riskin (1963) corroborates: "In families with schizophrenic children, there is a rule, with quite specific exceptions, that there must be no coalitions (alignments) of any two members to the exclusion of a third" (p. 347).

To empirically explore these assumptions, Haley (1962) studied the ability to form and maintain alignments in 30 families having a schizophrenic member and 30 families who did not. Using a push-button interaction game specifically

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designed to evoke aligning behaviors, Haley found that the families with a schizophrenic had a significantly harder time than the "normal" families in forming and maintaining dyadic alignments, spending significantly less time in two-person interaction. Such significant differences in aligning behaviors were not found by Haley, however, in two later studies comparing alignment patterns in disturbed and normal families (Haley, 1963, 1967c).

Minuchin's (1967) description of "disengaged" families--wherein members seemed to be emotionally uninvolved and unaffected by each other--appears to be another example of an inability to form stable alignments. Interesting to note is that "enmeshed" families, in which individual boundaries were blurred and all members were strongly affected by whatever happened to the other, also had difficulty forming dyadic alignments. As in Haley's (1959) characterization of schizophrenic families, the difficulty here appeared to stem from the sense that any dyadic relationship would exclude some other members of the family and betray some other dyadic relationship.

Parental Coalitions Excluding the Child

A second coalition pattern frequently discussed in the literature involves the parents forming a coalition which scapegoats the child (e.g., Ackerman, 1958; Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark, 1973; Bowen, 1960; Haley, 1962, 1964; Satir, 1964; Vogel and Bell, 1960). Coalitions of this sort

apparently develop from the parents' inability to give to the child, due to their own esteem needs and lack of individuation (Satir, 1964); out of a need to have the child act out the parents' unconscious impulses (Johnson and Szurek, 1952); out of a loyalty to the parents' own family of origin (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark, 1973); and/or out of a need to "triangle" the child in order to stabilize the spouse relationship (Ackerman, 1958; Bowen, 1960; Counts, 1967; Silberberg, 1976; Vogel and Bell, 1960).

For example, in studying the interaction patterns of 30 families with hospitalized schizophrenics, 13 families having a hospitalized psychotic non-schizophrenic, and 26 "normal" families engaged in four interaction tasks (an unstructured coffee break, a twenty-questions game, a group Rorschach, and a discussion of the best/worst family experience), Wild (1977) found that the hospitalized schizophrenics were excluded from their parents relationship to a significantly greater and more hostile extent than the other groups. Exclusion was assessed using measures of who-speaks-to-whom, length of speech, and content of speech. The parental coalition, however, was "characterized more by mutual disappointment than by satisfaction or intimacy" (p. 69).

Parent-Child Coalitions Excluding the Other Parent

The most widely discussed coalition pattern observed in dysfunctional families involves a cross generational

parent-child coalition, what Haley (1967) termed the "perverse triangle," and White (1978) referred to as the "pathogenic triangle system" (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1976; Bowen, 1960; Cheek, 1964; Cheek and Anthony, 1970; Coleite, 1971; Doane, 1978; Fleck, et al., 1959; Fogarty, 1976; Haley, 1976; Lennard, et al., 1965; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Lidz, 1963, 1965; Minuchin, 1967; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Murrell, 1971; Satir, 1964; Schuham, 1970, White, 1978; Zuk, 1976). Indeed, the notion of a mother-son coalition against a passive father in the "schizophrenic family" is one of the pivotal dictums in the credo of family theory (e.g., Ackerman, 1958; Bowen, 1960; Lidz, 1963; Satir, 1964; Wynne, 1961).

Though this has been found to be the coalition form most common in families having a schizophrenic member (e.g., Bowen, 1960; Cheek and Anthony, 1970; Fleck, et al., 1959; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Lidz, 1963, 1965; Mishler and Waxler, 1968), such a pattern also has been found to distinguish "psychosomatogenic" families (those having a psychosomatic member) from normal controls (Meissner, 1966; Minuchin, 1976, 1978; Tiller, 1978; White, 1978); to characterize families having behavior disordered children and adolescents (Alexander, 1973; Coleite, 1971); to differentiate families with children having reading problems from those which did not (Morris, 1977; Stackhouse, 1973); to distinguish poorly functioning "normal" families

from adequately functioning ones (Lewis, et al., 1976; Mihalopoulous, 1971; Murrell, 1971; Russell, 1979); and adequately functioning families from those that are particularly "healthy" (Kleiman, 1976; Lewis, et al., 1976; Westley and Epstein, 1969) (for a further discussion of the characteristics of "healthy" families see Appendix M).

Thus Doane (1978), in her review of the literature on family alignment patterns concludes:

> There is much evidence to support the view that disturbed families are marked by a preponderance of parent-child coalitions and a corresponding weak parental coalition (alliance), as well as a conflicted marital relationship (p. 372).

Alliances as Related to Individual/Familial Health

That mutual alliance patterns are characteristic of "healthy" families is supported by several studies (e.g., Kleiman, 1976; Lewis, et al., 1976; Westley and Epstein, 1969). For example, in Lewis, et al.'s (1976) research which, as more fully described in Appendix M, contrasted families independently rated by four psychologists as being "healthy" with those rated "normal" and "dysfunctional," it was found that in comparison to the other family groups, healthy families exhibited a significantly greater amount of equal, flexible, and positive interactions among all family members--interaction patterns that would seem to typify mutual alliance formations. Such patterns were assessed through a microanalysis of the families' interactions using

Riskin and Faunce's (1970) system, including assessment of who-speaks-to-whom and positive/negative verbalizations.

In addition, Lewis and his colleagues (1976) found that the strength of the parental alliance and the lack of parent-child coalitions (as assessed by clinical observations of family interviews) not only differentiated healthy and normal families from dysfunctional ones, but furthermore distinguished healthy families from normal ones. These researchers typified the spouse relationship in optimal families in the following way:

> These marriages revealed a high degree of complimentarity. There was a "fit" between the parents' varying individual skills, pride in each other's assets, and no strong competitive pulls. As a consequence, there appeared to be little need for emotionally charged alliances (coalitions) with opposite sexed others, whether from outside the family or with one of the children (p. 210).

Similar results were found by Westley and Epstein (1969) in studying 20 "healthy," 36 "normal," and 20 "low adjusted" college undergraduates and their families. Here again, a positive spouse alliance differentiated healthy from both normal and low functioning undergraduates, with the authors observing "a direct relationship between the degree of emotional health found in the children and the degree to which the relationship between parents was positive" (p. 112).

Similarly, Kleiman (1976), in contrasting parental interactions of 20 "healthy" and 20 "normal" male adolescents whose competence was assessed by self report personality inventories, found that, "Effective parental coalitions (alliances) and generational boundaries are a differentiating factor in families of 'healthy' male adolescents when compared to the families of 'normal' male adolescents" (p. 4687-B).

The conclusions of the above investigators are corroborated by the research of Caputo (1963), Farina and Holzberg (1968), Murrell and Stachowiak (1976) and Solvberg and Blakar (1975), all of whom found less spouse conflict in families of normally adjusted children as compared to those with poorly functioning offsprings.

That the ability to form mutual alliances is associated with positive family functioning and high psychosocial adjustment in children would appear to be further supported by the myriad of studies which have found families with adequately competent members to be more balanced and flexible in their interactions with each other than those families having a disturbed member (e.g., Ferreira, et al., 1966; Ferreira and Winter, 1968; Haley, 1964; Herman and Jones, 1976; Leighton, et al., 1971; Lennard et al., 1965; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Mishler and Waxler, 1968, 1975; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967; Solvberg and Blakar, 1975; Winter and Ferreira, 1967, 1969). Interactional flexibility

and balance was measured in a variety of ways, including sequencing of who-follows-whom (e.g., Ferreira, et al., 1966; Haley, 1964); frequency of who-speaks-to-whom (e.g., Lennard, et al., 1965); predictability of speaker sequence (e.g., Mishler and Waxler, 1975); rates of triadic over dyadic interactions (e.g., Herman and Jones, 1976) (this in particular would seem to be indicative of the ability to form simultaneous alliances); and rates of speech frequency among family members (e.g., Leighton, et al., 1971; Lennard, et al., 1965; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967; Winter and Ferreira, 1967, 1969). The fact that these findings emphasized greater mutual interaction among all family members in normal as compared to dysfunctional families would point to a proclivity toward simultaneous alliance patterns in such families.

These findings also could be interpreted as supportive of Titchener's (1967) analysis of family development from an Eriksonian (Erikson, 1950) position, in which he states:

> The capacity to respond to at least two others simultaneously in a triadic communication system marks the beginning of the family experience for the growing individual. Prior to the acquisition of this capacity to differentiate and integrate responses to more than one other person, the experience with others are dyadic in form. There must be cases of arrest in development at this level of integration . . . for there are families that appear to be structured along dyadic lines (p. 49).

Thus, from this perspective, the inability to form simultaneous, mutual alliances would constitute a developmental delay deriving from familial issues of basic mistrust. Here again we return to the assumption that psychological safety--which is fundamentally synonymous with "basic trust" --is the quintessential state necessary for the ability to form mutual alliances. Coalitions, in contrast, arise from the experience of mistrust, that is, the experience of psychological dis-safety.

HYPOTHESES

From the theoretical positions and research findings previously discussed, the present investigator expected that competent psychosocial adjustment in the children of the present sample would be positively associated with familial interaction patterns exemplifying simultaneous, mutual alliances between all three family members. In contrast, poor psychosocial adjustment in the children would be positively related to familial interaction patterns reflecting parental or parent-child coalitions. More specifically, such a relationship between children's adjustment and family alignment patterns would be reflected in the current research in the following ways:

I. There would be a positive association between teacher ratings indicative of <u>high</u> psychosocial adjustment in a child and:

1) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child frequencies and ratios of Who-Speaks-To-Whom.
2) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child expressions and ratios of Aligning Verbalization.
3) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child involvement in mutual Activity.
4) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child being on the same Physical Plane.
5) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child Physical Proximity.
6) Amount and equalness of mother-father-child expressions and ratios of Physical Aligning.
7) Low Dispersion Scores between family dyads across the above categories.

II. There would be a positive association between teacher ratings indicative of low psychosocial adjustment in a child and:

1) Amount of mother-father-child expressions of Extruding Verbalization.
2) Amount of mother-father-child expressions of Physical Extruding.
3) High Dispersion Scores between family dyads for each of the above categories, whereby two family members would engage in these behaviors among themselves to a greater extent than with the third member.

METHOD

Subject Selection

The current investigation used the subject sample and data collected by Messé and Stollak (1976) for their study of the relationships between interpersonal perceptual style, children's adjustment, and family interaction patterns. Subjects for this study were recruited through the East Lansing, Michigan public school system. Kindergarten and first grade students were given letters describing the research project to take home to their parents. Included in the letters were stamped, addressed postcards, which the parents were requested to return if they were interested in possibly participating in the study for a $25 payment. Thirty-three two parent families of 4-9 year old children (14 females and 19 males) agreed to participate.

Sample Characteristics

General demographic information on the children and their families (age and sex of the subject; age and sex of his siblings; ages, occupations, and years of education of both parents) were obtained through a form completed by the parents (see Appendix A). The children (19 males, 14 females) ranged in age from 4-0 to 9-4 years old, with a

mean age of 7-3. Sixty per cent (20) of the children were first born, 15% (5) second born, and 15% (5) third born; the remaining three children were born fourth or fifth. The majority came from two child families (48%, 16), while 18% (6) had two siblings, 15% (5) had three siblings, five were only children, and one had four siblings. The children were living in two-parent, mostly "middle-class" urban families (Group II of the Hollingshead and Redlich (1958) Index), three of which were Black, with the mean education of the fathers being two years of college, and the mean education of the mothers being the completion of high school. The fathers worked in "blue collar" (45%) and "white collar" occupations, while most of the mothers were not employed outside of the home (Appendix E presents a more detailed summary of sample characteristics).

Procedure

Participating family triads (father, mother, and child) came to an office in the Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, where they were met by a researcher and his/her assistant. The Experimenters explained the tasks that the family would be involved in during the session, assuring their right to refuse to perform any task that they were not comfortable in doing. After signing a consent form for themselves and their children, the parents filled out some questionnaires while their child was with

the assistant in a playroom located elsewhere in the building.

The parents then engaged in activities related to assessing their interpersonal perceptual style (see Messé and Stollak, 1976, for details), which lasted for about an hour, before joining their child in the playroom. At this point the family was shown the videotaping equipment located behind the one-way mirrors which line one wall of the playroom. The researcher explained that the family would be asked to engage in several tasks as a group, and that they would be videotaped while doing so. These tasks, each lasting for 10 minutes, involved: (1) Free play; (2) Teaching the child the meaning of some proverb; (3) Orally composing stories to two picture cards; and (4) Discussing "some of the things that all of you disagree about at home."

The current research used the first two tasks the families engaged in to assess their alignment patterns, independently examining the relationships between criterion and predictor variables for each task. The Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb tasks were selected since they appeared to involve a useful contrast between a more spontaneous situation which potentially emphasized triadic family alignments, and a more structured situation which potentially would elicit a parental alignment in fulfilling what was asked.

Of relevance here is a research of Henggeler, Borduin, Rodnick, and Tavormina (1979) who studied 64 "well

adjusted" family triads using two unrevealed differences discussion tasks, in which the content of one focused on instrumental/external family issues (e.g., where to go on vacation), while the other involved expressive/internal issues (e.g., the biggest family problem). Though the task content did not effect measures of family affect or dominance, the instrumental/external task evoked significantly greater family conflict than the expressive/internal task. The researchers point out the potentially differing effects a task can have on family interactions, though other investigators have found such interaction patterns to be stable across experimental tasks (e.g., Drechsler and Shapiro, 1963; Haley, 1967; Jacob and Davis, 1973; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967). Perhaps the divergence here is due to the nature of the measures used in the different studies.

The specific instructions for the Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb tasks were as follows:

> Free Play--As you can see, this is a playroom and on this wall over here we have a one-way mirror. The one-way mirror allows us to observe and make videotapes of what happens in the room. During our time together now we will be doing several different kinds of things, and will be videotaping all of you as you do them. Later on we will be going back and looking at the videotapes in order to learn more about what families do when they are together. We're going to ask you to be involved in four different tasks for us, each one of which takes about 10 minutes to complete. We're pretty sure that all of them will be interesting and we hope that they'll be enjoyable and fun for you to do together.
>
> The first task is very simple, we're just interested in your playing together. During the next ten minutes we would like you to do whatever

you would like to do in here. I'm going to leave now and will return in ten minutes and we'll go on with the next task. Are there any questions? (The research assistant leaves the room.)

Teach-A-Proverb--Mr. and Mrs. _____, here are lists of proverbs (the research assistant hands one list to each parent) (see Appendix B for proverbs list). What we would like you to do is to select at least two proverbs from the list of ten, and teach them to _____ to your satisfaction. So first you should look at the list and decide which two proverbs you'd like to teach. Again, you can teach more if you wish. Maybe the best way to begin is just to select two now, and then if you wish to go back to teach other ones, you can select those that you might find interesting. We all know that parents and teachers often have different ways of helping children learn difficult things, such as proverbs and rules for living, and we're interested in finding out how you help your child learn something difficult. Are there any questions? I'll be back in ten minutes. (The research assistant leaves the room.)

Criterion Measures

Children's Psychosocial Adjustment

After obtaining permission from the parents, Messé and Stollak (1976) had research assistants distribute packets containing the inventories used to assess children's adjustment to the teachers of the children participating in their research. The measures used were the following:

1) An abridged form of the Children's Behavior Checklist (CBC) (Ferguson, et al., 1974) (see Appendix C), which yields cumulative scores of positive and dysfunctional adjustment, based on 27 items assessing positive (e.g., "makes friends quickly and easily") and 25 items assessing negative (e.g., "seems sad and unhappy") behaviors. For an

item to be counted in the cumulative score in the current study, it had to be designated as being "characteristic" of the child, rather than merely "applying."

2) An abridged version of the Besell-Palomare Rating Form (B-P) (Besell and Palomares, 1967) (see Appendix C), an inventory specifically designed to assess competent, pro-social behaviors in children. The B-P gives a single, global score of positive psychosocial adjustment derived from 10 items characteristic of competent child behaviors. There are five descriptions per item, ranging from the antithesis of the behavior to the optimal example of it (e.g., for "Flexibility" the range is from "Rigid. Very unresponsive to new information or demands. Cannot shift." to "Very flexible. Adapts readily and easily to new information and demands. Participation continues with undiminished interest.").

3) The Aggressiveness, Moodiness, and Learning Problems Behavior Rating Scale (AML) (Cowen, et al., 1975) (see Appendix C), an inventory designed to assess the degree of classroom maladjustment, yielding a single, global score of problem behaviors. Teachers rated the children on each of the 43 descriptive items (e.g., "disruptive in class") using a five point scale which ranged from "not a problem" to "very serious problem."

Since these measures of child adjustment significantly intercorrelated in the expected directions (see Appendix F), they were collapsed to form a single, composite score of

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child competence which was used in the data analyses.*

Predictor Measures

Family Alignment Patterns

Communications that align or disengage are made up of multifarious channels or components that define and delineate the nature, degree, intensity, and quality of the joining or separation. Thus, the content of the verbalization, the tone and inflection of voice, the facial and body positioning, posturing, and gesturing, the silences, interruptions, and yieldings all serve to punctuate and qualify the meaning of a communication. The current research assessed family alignments through the use of several of these channels of verbal and nonverbal communications that serve to join or separate. Specifically, these were the following six categories rated from videotapes of the families engaged in experimental tasks (see Appendix D for the coding manual):

1) Who-Speaks-To-Whom--This is the measure most frequently used to ascertain family alignment patterns (e.g.,

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*The composite score was calculated by the following formula: (25 (w/50 + x/27 - 25 (y/25 + z/225)) + 50; where w is the score obtained on the B-P, x is the score obtained on the CBC positive, y is the score obtained on the CBC negative, and z is the score obtained on the AML. It will be noticed that obtaining all the possible positive ratings and no negative ratings would result in a composite adjustment score of 100; receiving no positive ratings and the maximum negative ratings would result in a composite adjustment score of 0; while receiving equal positive and negative ratings would result in a composite adjustment score of 50.

Alexander, 1973; Lennard, et al., 1965; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Minuchin, et al., 1967; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Murrell, 1971; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b; Wild, 1977). In the current study, specific scores of Who-Speaks-To-Whom, total dyad verbal interchanges (e.g., totals of mother-to-son and son-to-mother interchanges), and ratios of the amount of speech between members (e.g., mother-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-mother) were assessed. The unit of measure was a full statement made by an individual to another--that is, all the words spoken by a person to a target person before someone else spoke.

2) Aligning and Extruding Verbalization--Several studies have not found distributions of Who-Speaks-To-Whom to differentiate dysfunctional from normal families (e.g., Ferreira, et al., 1966; Riskin and Faunce, 1970b. As Haley (1963), Jacob and Grounds (1978), and Wild (1977) stress, what is being said is as crucial to the determination of aligning and extruding communications as who it is being said to. That is, a mother's high rate of endearing, supportive verbalization to the father would have a very different meaning than an equally high rate of criticism and rebuke, though the Who-Speaks-To-Whom frequency score would be the same. In the current study, presence/absence of Aligning and Extruding Verbalization during each ten second interval, as well as ratios of Aligning to Extruding

Verbalization* is for each member (e.g., mother-to-child Aligning Verbalization divided by mother-to-child Extruding Verbalization), and across members (e.g., mother-to-child Aligning Verbalization divided by child-to-mother Aligning Verbalization) were scored both in terms of individual who-to-whom and cumulative dyad totals.

Aligning Verbalization was defined as any verbalization that expressed care, valuing, support, empathy, concern, warmeth, appreciation, admiration, enjoyment of, identification with, and a desire to maintain or increase contact with an other. Examples here were direct expressions of valuing and endearment (e.g., "I love you"; "you sweetie"); complimenting (e.g., "you're great"; "you did that very well"); agreement (e.g., "you're right"); showing concern ("I wouldn't want you to get hurt"); identifying with the other (e.g., "I have a shirt just like that"); seeking contact (e.g., "let's play checkers"). It was assumed that such verbalizations serve to, or at least attempt to, maintain or increase emotional contact and intimacy, and thereby join with an other.

Extruding Verbalization was defined as any verbalization that expressed devaluing, dislike, rejection, rebuke, disdain, lack of concern, hostility, resentment, disagreement, disidentification, and a wish to decrease contact with,

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*That is, the amount of Aligning Verbalization divided by the amount of Extruding Verbalization.

or separate from an other, or make contact in a hostile manner. Examples here were direct statements of dislike (e.g., "I hate you"); disdain (e.g., "you turkey"); criticism (e.g., "that's not the way to do it, stupid"); resentment (e.g., "you always get to do what you want"); disagreement (e.g., "you're wrong"); disidentification/differentiation (e.g., "I don't like ice cream as much as you do"); or a wish to decrease contact (e.g., "I don't want to sit next to you"). It was assumed that such statements serve to, or are attempts at, decreasing contact, separating from the other, and/or making contact in a hostile manner, possibly as a means of attenuating the degree of intimacy expressed. One could make a statement that was simultaneously aligning and extruding, e.g., "You never spend enough time with me," which would be scored both as aligning (since there is an implied wish for more contact) and extruding (since it is a criticism and implies a possible difference between the individuals in regards to desire and action).

3) Activity--Though rarely used as a formal measure of family alignments in past research, it would seem clear that one way of making contact with an other is through engaging in a mutual activity together. "Activity" was defined in the current study as mutual participation in a game or join enterprise (e.g., playing checkers, building something together, trying to fix something together, looking at toys together). Coders rated presence/absence of participation

in mutual activity during each ten second interval for all family dyads (mother-child, father-child, father-mother), as well as for family triads (mother-father-child playing together).

4) Physical Plane--This is a measure that has not been previously used as a formal means of assessing family alignments, though many of the clinical techniques used in family therapy--such as having the parents sit in chairs while the children sit on the couch--points to an acute awareness of the significance of this dimension as a means of forming alignments (e.g., Haley and Hoffman, 1967; Minuchin, 1967, 1974; Satir, 1964). "Physical Plane" in the current study was defined as either standing, sitting in chairs, or sitting/lying on the floor. Coders rated presence/absence of family dyads and triads being on the same physical plane when the videotape was stopped at each ten second interval. All members being on a different plane also was scored.

5) Physical Proximity--Though being used as a measure of "social distance" in studies of social development and social interaction (e.g., cross-cultural research), proximity has not been used to assess family alignments. Here again, however, the clinical literature is replete with examples of the use of physical proximity as a means to enjoin or disengage family members (e.g., Haley and Hoffman, 1967; Minuchin, 1967, 1974; Satir, 1964). The works of Ekman and Freisen (1968), Hall (1966), Mahl (1966), Scheflen (1964),

and others on the significance of nonverbal behavior, further indicate the importance of this dimension in communicating emotional closeness or distance. Physical promimity was measured in the current investigation using a four point rating scale scored for degree of closeness between each family dyad when the videotape was stopped at each ten second interval. Definitions for each point on the scale were as follows:

a) Being farther than ten feet away (roughly half of the room).

b) Being within five feet of each other (roughly one-fourth of the room).

c) Being within physical reach when one individual has his/her arm extended.

d) Being in direct physical contact (e.g., sitting with arm around the other person or sitting in someone's lap).

The higher the dyad's score, the higher the assumed movement toward aligning.

6) Physical Aligning and Extruding--As with verbalization, in which both structure and content are important, the quality of physical contact also is a crucial expression of joining or separation. Though some studies have assessed this dimension in relation to expression of affection in families (e.g., Lewis, et al., 1976), none have used it explicitly as a measure of family alignments. The current

research assessed presence/absence of Physical Aligning and Extruding between family dyads during each ten second interval, measuring both directionality of the behavior (e.g., father-to-son), and totals for each dyad (e.g., father-to-son and son-to-father). In addition, a ratio of Physical Aligning to Extruding was determined for individual members and between family dyads.

Physical Aligning was defined in the current study as any physical expression of care, valuing, warmth, affection, and a wish to increase contact with an other (e.g., kissing, hugging, stroking, holding hands, putting an arm around an other).

Physical Extruding was defined as an physical expression of dislike, hostility, anger, rejection, and aggression (e.g., hitting, pushing, biting, poking, pulling, throwing something in an attempt to physically hurt the other).

7) Dispersion Scores--Using a procedure similar to Murrell (1971), Dispersion Scores for each of the above categories, as well as a global Score summed across all the categories, were determined. The procedure, as exemplified by the global Dispersion Score, was as follows: Dyadic scores on the above six dimensions were summed, yielding a degree of alignment score for each dyad. The mean of these three scores was then derived and subtracted from each, thereby giving a deviation score. The square root of the sum of of the squares of the three deviation scores yielded a

single Dispersion Score for family alignments. A higher score indicated a greater unevenness between dyadic family alignments, and thus theoretically pointed to a greater occurrence of coalition patterns in the family, and a lesser degree of mutual alliances.

Training and Coding Procedure

Two sets of two raters each (rater teams D and E), and one set of three raters (which were divided into three, two-member teams (A, B, and C), were trained by the current E to code for the six alignment categories using practice videotapes of family interactions. Training involved several group meetings in which a scoring manual defining the categories and coding procedure (see Appendix D) was read aloud, discussed, and revised as needed. The raters kept their manuals to further familiarize themselves with the categories.

After coding practice videotapes as a group--thereby refining scoring criterias and procedures until consensual agreement was reached--each rater independently scored a videotape, with his/her rating being compared with the E who served as expert. Individual meetings with raters were used to clarify any further problems. An additional practice videotape was scored independently by each rater, with these scores being compared between raters, and with the E, thereby determin-inter-rater reliability using a Pearson r (see

Table 1). Rater reliability was periodically checked throughout the coding process, unbeknown to the raters.

Unaware of the hypotheses of the current investigation, or the adjustment of the children in the videotapes, the raters coded two seven minute segments of the 33 family interaction videotapes (though each task was to be of ten minute duration, some were terminated early; the first seven minutes of each task were coded in the current study since all families engaged in the two tasks for at least that duration of time). Ten second intervals were used in the coding, signaled by a "beep" that was dubbed into the videotapes.

Ratings were made by each rater individually viewing his/her assigned videotape, as well as by rater teams simultaneously observing and coding their assigned videotapes. In both situations ratings were made independently and without consultation. The current E operated the videotape equipment, stopping the tape at each ten second interval.

One set of three raters divided up into three, two-member rating teams (A, B, and C) to code the two verbal categories, viewing the videotape separately for each category. The other two sets of raters coded the four nonverbal categories (Physical Plane and Activity were coded simultaneously by one set of raters with the videotape frame "frozen" at each ten second interval, while the other set of raters simultaneously coded Physical Proximity and Physical

Aligning/Extruding--the former dimension being measured while the videotape was "frozen" at each ten second interval, and the latter being coded for presence/absence during each ten second interval). Raters' means for individual categories were used in the data analysis.

Reliability of the Alignment Variables

Table 1 presents the correlations of the scores of each rater team over the two family interaction tasks. The values are based on the scores of the seven raters, independently rating their assigned videotapes on their designated variables. Each rater was compared to his/her team member in deriving the intercoder reliability. Reliabilities for all the variables reached at least the $p < .01$ level and thus were deemed sufficient to be used in the subsequent analyses.

Table 1. Inter-rater reliability across the two family interaction tasks.

Variable	A	B	C	D	E
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	.91	.99	.94		
Aligning Verbalization	.84	.80	.85		
Extruding Verbalization	.84	.84	.81		
Activity				.97	
Physical Plane				.99	
Physical Proximity					.96
Physical Aligning					.95
Physical Extruding					.93

RESULTS

Analysis of the Data

The data were analyzed as follows:

1) Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were derived to examine relationships between the predictor and criterion measures, as well as relationships within the predictor and criterion measures themselves. Thus, the three measures of children's adjustment--the B-P, CBC (with its prosocial/problematic behavior subscores), and AML--were intercorrelated, and, having shown sufficient inter-relationships in the expected directions (see Appendix F), were collapsed to form a single composite score of adjustment (see description of criterion measures on the procedure section for computational formula). This composite score was correlated with the original predictor variables, and with new variables that were subsequently created from the originals, to further clarify possible associations between children's adjustment and alignment patterns. Since sex-of-child with males designated "1" and females "2" correlated $r = .45$; $p < .004$ with child adjustment, it was partialed out of all subsequent correlational analyses of the data. Furthermore, though age-of-child did not correlate with

child adjustment to a statistically significant extent (r=.17; N.S.), it too was controlled for to help discern the clearest relationships between child competence and the predictor variables.

2) The total sample of children were divided into "high" and "low" adjustment groups based on adjustment scores in the highest and lowest third of the sample. Thus 12 children whose composite adjustment scores ranged from 82-93 ($\bar{X}$=96.33) formed the "high" adjustment group, while 11 children with adjustment scores ranging 33-56 ($\bar{X}$ =45.82) made up the "low" adjustment group. Two-tailed *t*-tests were performed to discern whether there were significant differences between the two groups on the predictor variables. A sign test, and a chi square using Yates' correction were also performed to examine differences between groups in the patterns of predictor variables. Pearson product moment correlations--partialling out for sex and age of child--were performed separately for each group to explore the differences between interrelationships among predictor variables in the two groups.

3) Effects of sex-of-child were examined using a two-tailed *t*-test to assess if there were statistically significant differences on the predictor variables for families having a male or female child. Comparisons of the intercorrelations among predictor variables for each group also were performed.

Criterion Measures

Children's Psychosocial Adjustment

Appendix G shows the means, standard deviations, and ranges of the teacher ratings of the children's psychosocial adjustment in the current sample. Scores indicate that the sample was composed of children perceived by their teachers as exhibiting a diverse range of competence. Thus, composite adjustment scores ranged from 33 to 93 (0-100 possible; higher score indicative of positive adjustment), with a mean of 68.64.

Predictor Variables

Aligning and Extruding Behaviors

Appendix H presents the means, standard deviations, ranges, and frequencies of the measures of family alignment patterns on the two interaction tasks. Poor audio recording necessitated not coding Who-Speaks-To-Whom for one family, and Aligning and Extruding Verbalizations for two families. The appendix indicates that the families engaged in a wide range of aligning and extruding behaviors, though displaying very few expressions of Physical Aligning and Extruding. Variables whose frequencies of occurrence were less than five were not used in the data analyses, thus of the Physical Aligning and Extruding behaviors only mother-to-child and child-to-mother Physical Aligning and Physical Extruding behaviors for the Free Play task, child-to-father Physical

Extruding for this task, and mother-to-child, father-to-child, and child-to-father Physical Aligning behaviors on the Teach-A-Proverb task were related to the other variables. It is clear that parent-child verbal interchanges were far more frequent than parent-parent verbal exchanges in both tasks (e.g., the mean for mother-to-child Who-Speaks-To-Whom on the Free Play task was 29.40, the mean for father-to-child Who-Speaks-To-Whom on the Free Play task was 31.05, while the means for father-to-mother and mother-to-father Who-Speaks-To-Whom during Free Play were 7.00 and 6.29 respectively).

As predicted, the two tasks elicited different aligning and extruding behaviors from the family members. For example, both parents engaged in more aligning behaviors toward each other and their child during the Teach-A-Proverb task as compared with the Free Play task. Furthermore, in contrast to the Free Play situation, fathers spoke more to their children than mothers did during the Teach-A-Proverb task, perhaps taking on a more culturally prescribed "instrumental" leader role in this didactic exercise. The greater aligning between parents during the Teach-A-Proverb task is consistent with the original assumption that this activity would invoke greater parental cooperation in order to accomplish what was asked.

Children's Psychosocial Adjustment and Family Aligning and Extruding Behaviors

Coefficients of correlation between the composite score of children's psychosocial adjustment and measures of aligning and extruding behaviors on the two tasks--partialling out for sex and age of child--are presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Several interesting trends are evident. First, there was a consistent, positive association between children's aligning behaviors toward their fathers and high adjustment. For example, the frequency of child-speaking-to-father and child-to-father Aligning Verbalization, as well as the ratio of child-to-father Aligning to Extruding Verbalization,* positively correlated with child adjustment in both tasks (child-to-father Who-Speaks-To-Whom correlated r_s= .69; p <.001 and .42; p <.01 with adjustment in the Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb tasks respectively; child-to-father Aligning Verbalization correlated r_s=.52; p <.002 and .29; p <.06 with adjustment in both tasks respectively; ratio of child-to-father Aligning to Extruding Verbalization correlated r_s=.31; p <.05 and .26; p <.08 with adjustment in the two respective tasks).

Second, fathers' aligning behaviors toward their children also tended to positively relate with children's

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*That is, child-to-father Aligning Verbalization divided by child-to-father Extruding Verbalization.

Table 2. Correlations between child adjustment and aligning/extruding behaviors for task 1 (child sex/age partialled out).

Variable	M-C[1]	C-M	F-C	C-F	F-M	M-F
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	-.11	-.09	.55@@	.69@@@	-.02	.14
Aligning Verbalization	-.33**	-.09	.19	.52@@	.22	.18
Extruding Verbalization	-.16	-.13	.23	.30*	-.10	-.05
Activity	-.33**		.20		-.20	
Physical Plane	.22		-.22		-.14	
Physical Proximity	.28		.28		.11	
Physical Aligning	-.40***	-.26	—	—	—	—
Physical Extruding	-.18	-.20	—	.06	—	—
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom[2]	-.22		-.35**		-.33**	
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization[3]	-.33**	-.16	.02	.31*	.22	.32**
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members[4]	-.62@@@		.06		-.34**	
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members[5]	-.44@		-.01		.27	

--Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis.

[1]M-C indicates that the mother was the actor and the child the target, etc.

[2]For example, mother-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-mother

[3]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by M-C Extruding Verbalization.

[4]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by C-M Aligning Verbalization.

[5]For example, M-C Extruding Verbalization divided by C-M Extruding Verbalization.

*p<.05 @p<.007
**p<.04 @@p<.002
***p<.02 @@@p<.001

Table 3. Correlations between child adjustment and aligning/extruding behaviors for task 2 (child sex/age partialled out).

Variable	M-C[1]	C-M	F-C	C-F	F-M	M-F
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	.06	-.19	.51@@@	.42@	-.14	.04
Aligning Verbalization	-.06	-.15	.37***	.29	.33**	.24
Extruding Verbalization	-.15	-.07	-.02	.43@	-.08	.11
Physical Plane	.01		.32*		-.25	
Physical Proximity	.08		-.12		.07	
Physical Aligning	-.00	--	-.06	.30	--	--
Physical Extruding	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom[2]	.47@@		.01		-.44@@	
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization[3]	-.16	.02	.09	.26	.29	-.13
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members[4]	-.06		.33**		.08	
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members[5]	.18		.20		-.00	

--Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis.

[1]M-C indicates that the mother was the actor and the child the target, etc.

[2]For example, mother-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-mother.

[3]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by M-C Extruding Verbalization.

[4]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by C-M Aligning Verbalization.

[5]For example, M-C Extruding Verbalization divided by C-M Extruding Verbalization.

*p<.05 @p<.01
**p<.04 @@p<.007
***p<.03 @@@p<.002

Table 4. Correlations between child adjustment and triadic aligning/extruding behaviors (child sex/age partialled out).

Variable	Child Adjustment task 1	task 2
Activity: Father-Mother-Child	.22 (only coded in task 1)	
Physical Plane: Father-Mother-Child	.11	-.01
Physical Plane: Father-Mother-Child Separate	.08	-.02

adjustment. Thus, father-speaking-to-child positively correlated with child adjustment in both tasks (r_s=.52; p <.002 and .51; p <.002 respectively), while father-to-child Aligning Verbalization positively related to competence in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=.37; p <.03). The positive association between father-speaking-to-child and child competence probably is in part a function of the positive relationship between child-speaking-to-father and high adjustment, and the strong, positive correlation between child-speaking-to-father and father-speaking-to-child (r_s=.87; p <.001 and .88; p <.001 for the two tasks respectively). Nonetheless, the current findings show a strong, positive relationship between a high degree of father-to-child verbal interchange --one measure of an alignment--and child competence. Important to note is that the ratio of father-speaking-to-

child/child-speaking-to-father* negatively related to adjustment in the first task (r=-.35; p <.03), perhaps reflecting a situation in which the father verbally dominated his child.

A similar negative association was also found between child competence and the ratio of father-speaking-to-mother/mother-speaking-to-father in both tasks (rs=-.33; p <.04 and -.44; p <.007 for tasks 1 and 2 respectively). Here again the results might reflect a situation in which the husband is verbally dominating his wife. The importance of a balance in aligning behaviors between family members was also highlighted by the negative correlation on the Free Play task between adjustment and the ratio of father-to-mother/mother-to-father Aligning Verbalization** (r=-.34; p <.03). The singular measure of father-to-mother Aligning Verbalization, however, positively related to children's competence in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=.33; p <.04). Thus, in contrasting directions, the extent of father-to-mother verbal aligning and the evenness of balance between fathers' and mothers' aligning verbalizations to each other were significantly related to child adjustment in the current investigation.

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*That is, father-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-father.

**That is, father-to-mother Aligning Verbalization divided by mother-to-father Aligning Verbalization.

Mothers' aligning and extruding behaviors toward fathers significantly correlated with child adjustment in only one measure, that being the positive relationship between adjustment and the ratio of mother-to-father Aligning to Extruding Verbalization in the Free Play task (r=.32; p < .04).

Perhaps the most striking result was the consistent, negative relationship on the Free Play task between mothers' aligning behaviors toward their children and child adjustment. Thus, seven of the nine measures reflecting maternal aligning behaviors toward their children were negatively associated with child competence, five of these being statistically significant (i.e., mother-to-child Aligning Verbalization, r=-.33; p <.04; mother-child Activity, r=.33; p <.04; mother-to-child Physical Aligning, r=-.40; p <.02; ratio of mother-to-child Aligning to Extruding Verbalization, r=-.33; p <.04; and ratio of mother-to-child/child-to-mother Aligning Verbalization, r=-.62; p <.001).

These findings are in contrast to the initial prediction of a positive association between mother-to-child aligning and child adjustment, a discrepancy that will be examined in the Discussion section. However, the ratio of mother-to-child/child-to-mother Extruding Verbalization also negatively related to child adjustment in the Free Play task (r=-.44; p <.007) as hypothesized. The ratio of mother-speaking-to-child/child-speaking-to-mother in the Teach-A-Proverb task was the only mother-to-child variable that

positively related to child competence (r=.47; p <.004).

There were no strong, significant correlations between child adjustment and child-to-mother aligning and extruding behaviors. The trend, however, was in the negative direction for both aligning and extruding behaviors during the first task, with child-to-mother Physical Aligning having the strongest negative association to competence (r=-.26; p <.09).

It need be noted that 32% (15/47) and 21% (9/42) of the correlations were significant in Tables 2 and 3 respectively, thus the relationships here would appear not merely to be due to chance.

Children's Adjustment and Triadic Aligning and Extruding Behaviors

Measures of triadic family aligning and extruding behaviors--father-mother-child engaging in a mutual Activity, being on the same Physical Plane, or each being on a separate plane--correlated with child adjustment as presented in Table 4. As is shown, there were no statistically significant associations between these variables and child adjustment.

Children's Adjustment and Family Dispersion Scores

Dispersion scores reflecting the degree of unevenness of distribution between family dyads for each of the six aligning and extruding categories, as well as a global Dispersion Score summing across all six variables, were

computed and correlated with children's adjustment. As can be seen in Table 5, the trends are variegated, with some relationships being in the expected negative direction, though reaching only marginal statistical significance (e.g., Dispersion of Aligning Verbalization (r=-.23; p <.10); Dispersion of Physical Plane (r=-.26; p <.08); and Dispersion of Physical Aligning (r=-.27, p <.07); all on the Free Play task), while others were in contrast to the initial hypotheses. For example, greater unevenness of Who-Speaks-To-Whom positively related to child adjustment on both tasks (rs=.27; p <.07 and .35; p <.03 respectively), as did the global Dispersion Score during Free Play (r=.26; p <.08).

Table 5. Correlation between child adjustment and Dispersion Scores (child sex/age partialled out).

Variable	Child Adjustment task 1	task 2
Dispersion Score: Who-Speaks-To-Whom	.21	.35*
Aligning Verbalization	-.23	.04
Extruding Verbalization	-.14	-.13
Activity	.13	(only coded in task 1)
Physical Plane	-.26	.09
Physical Proximity	-.06	-.02
Physical Aligning	-.27	-.01
Physical Extruding	-.08	--
Total Dispersion	.26	.13

-- Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis.

* p <.03

A factor probably affecting these results was the large skewedness in the distribution of dyadic verbalizations due to the greater parent-to-child than parent-to-parent interchanges, as will be further explored in the Discussion section.

Comparisons between Families of "High" and "Low" Adjusted Children

To further examine possible relationships between children's psychosocial adjustment and family alignment patterns, those children rated in the highest and lowest third on competence in the current sample were compared on the various aligning and extruding dimensions. Twelve children were in the "high" adjustment group, having a mean composite adjustment score on a 0-100 scale (100 indicating maximum adjustment) of 86.33, with a standard deviation of 4.19, and a range of 82-93; 11 children were in the "low" adjustment group, with a mean of 45.82, standard deviation of 7.60, and range of 33-56. A t-test comparison between the mean adjustment scores of the two groups was statistically significant (t=-15.64; p <.001).

Appendix I presents means and t-ratios for the two groups on the aligning and extruding variables for the Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb tasks. Only two differences between groups reached statistical significance, these being the greater amounts of father-to-mother Aligning Verbalization and father-mother-child mutual Activity in families

having a "high" as compared to "low" adjusted child (ts= -2.29; p <.04 and -2.41; p <.03 respectively). Greater amounts of father-to-mother and mother-to-father Aligning Verbalization in the families of "high" adjusted versus "low" adjusted children were marginally significant during the second task (ts=-1.92; p <.07 and -1.77; p <.09 respectively), as was the ratio of mother-speaking-to-child/child-speaking-to-mother, with families of "healthy" children displaying more mother-to-child verbalization (t=-2.03; p <.06). Father-child Physical Proximity in families of "competent" children was greater to a marginally significant extent than in families of "low functioning" children during the first task (t=-2.01; p <.06). Though being few in number, and not over what would be expected by chance, these results were consistent with the initial assumption that families of competent children would engage in more aligning behaviors than those of poorly adjusted children.

The lack of more consistent, significant differences between groups is likely due to the relative homogeneity of the sample. Thus, though there was a significant difference between means of competence ratings for the two groups, all of the children were "normally" functioning individuals without any history of formal psychopathology or contact with mental health services.

Of still greater interest, however, are the dramatically divergent patterns of aligning and extruding behaviors

in the two groups, despite their relative homogeneity. For example, when examining the categories measuring father-child and mother-child alignments (i.e., Who-Speaks-To-Whom, Aligning Verbalization, Activity, Physical Plane, Proximity, and Physical Aligning), one notices that means for father-child alignments were greater in families of "healthy" children as compared to "poorly functioning" children for six out of the seven categories in the Free Play task, and six out of the eight measures in the Teach-A-Proverb task, a difference significant at the .02 level as determined by a sign test. In contrast, though not reaching statistical significance, means for mother-child alignment measures were greater for five out of the eight categories in both tasks in families having a "low" as compared to "high" adjusted child.

Furthermore, when comparing the incidences in which father-aligning-with-child were greater than mother-aligning-with-child (e.g., father-to-child Aligning Verbalization being greater than mother-to-child Aligning Verbalization), one finds that this occurred in four out of the seven aligning measures during the first task for families of "healthy" children, while occurring only once in families of "low functioning" children. Similarly, during the second task father-to-child aligning was greater than mother-to-child aligning in families of "competent" children for four of the eight measures, while only being so in two measures for

families of "low" adjusted children. These differences in patterns between the two groups were found to reach marginal statistical significance by a chi square using Yates' correction (3.74 at 1 d.f., where 3.84 is significant at the .05 level).

The data here seems to further highlight the pattern that emerged in correlating the children's adjustment score with aligning/extruding variables, whereby child competence was positively associated with father-to-child and child-to-father aligning behaviors, and negatively related with mother-to-child aligning behaviors. Thus, in the current sample, families which had "competent" children exhibited strong father-child alignments that were stronger than the mother-child alignments on the measures here used, while in families of "low" functioning children the opposite was true.

This pattern is made still more evident when contrasting the various ratio scores between family members on aligning and extruding behaviors in the two groups. Thus, while the absolute numerical differences between mean ratio scores of Who-Speaks-To-Whom, Aligning to Extruding Verbalization, and ratios of Aligning and Extruding Verbalization between family members were not significantly different for the two groups (see Tables 9 and 10), differences in what was indicated by each specific ratio were quite dramatic. For example, in regards to father-child alignments, the results show that child-to-father Aligning Verbalization was greater than child-

to-father Extruding Verbalization in families of "high" children (mean ratio 1.35), while child-to-father Extruding Verbalization was two times greater than Aligning Verbalization in families of "poorly" adjusted children during the Free Play task (mean ratio .51). Furthermore, the mean ratio of father-to-child/child-to-father Aligning Verbalization was greater in the families of "competent" than "low" functioning children, during the Teach-A-Proverb task (2.14 vs. 1.60).

The ratio of mother-to-child Aligning to Extruding Verbalization was greater for mothers of "poorly" adjusted children than for those of "competent" children in the Free Play task (5.02 vs. 3.10). In addition, the ratio of child-to-mother Aligning to Extruding Verbalization also was greater in "low" as opposed to "high" functioning children during both tasks, with "healthy" children in fact displaying greater Extruding than Aligning Verbalization toward their mothers in the Teach-A-Proverb task, while "poorly" functioning children exhibited greater Aligning than Extruding Verbalization (mean ratios .83 vs. 1.54). Mothers of "low" functioning children verbally aligned more than three times as much with their children than their children did with them in the Free Play task (mean ratio 3.26), while the situation was greatly reversed in families of "high" functioning children, with the children here engaging in more Aligning Verbalization toward their mothers than their

mothers did toward them (mean ratio .81). Furthermore, mothers of "low" adjustment children exhibited slightly more Extruding Verbalization toward their children than their children did toward them (mean ratio 1.04), while, conversely, "high" functioning children displayed nearly twice as much Extruding Verbalization toward their mothers than their mothers did toward them (mean ratio .53).

In regards to father-mother interactions, both fathers and mothers of "healthy" children spoke more often to each other in the Free Play task, and engaged in more Aligning Verbalization during both tasks, than spouses of "low" adjustment children. In addition, the spouses in the former group exhibited more Aligning than Extruding Verbalization toward each other in the Free Play task, while the reverse was true for spouses in the latter group. Thus, in families of "poorly" adjusted children, husbands and wives displayed greater amounts of Extruding than Aligning Verbalization toward each other. This was particularly true in regards to the wives, who engaged in four times as many Extruding than Aligning Verbalizations toward their husbands (mean ratio .25).

The trends here lend support to the initial prediction that there would be greater aligning between spouses in families of "competent" as compared to "poorly functioning" children, while spouses in this latter group would display more extruding than aligning behaviors toward each other.

Interesting to note is that these differences were not as evident in terms of absolute amounts of aligning and extruding behaviors, but rather in the ratios of these behaviors.

Summary of Results

The current findings revealed three distinct alignment patterns to be associated with children's psychosocial adjustment: (1) Strong child-to-father and father-to-child alignments positively related to child competence; (2) Strong father-to-mother and, to a lesser extent, mother-to-father alignments positively related to child competence; (3) Strong child-to-mother and, in particular, mother-to-child alignments negatively related to child competence. A synthesis of these three patterns into an interrelated systems model of family functioning will be explicated in the Discussion section.

Sex-of-Child, Child Competence and Family Alignment Patterns

The current sample was made up of 19 families having a male child, and 14 families having a female child. Means for the composite scores of psychosocial adjustment were 61.63 and 78.14 for the boys and girls respectively. Thus, the girls in the current sample were perceived by their teachers as exhibiting more prosocial, competent behaviors than the boys, a difference that was statistically significant using a t-test of mean comparisons (t=-3.06; p <.005).

As previously noted, a product moment correlation coefficient revealed that sex-of-child correlated $r=.45$; $p < .004$ with children's adjustment. That latency age girls were experienced by their teachers as being more competent than their male classmates was consistent with past research (e.g., Allen, 1977; Lauvenitis, 1976), presumably due to the socialized differences in sex-role behaviors for girls and boys.

To explore possible differences in alignment patterns of families having a girl or a boy, t-tests were performed on each of the aligning and extruding variables for both tasks (see Appendix J). There were three statistically significant differences between groups in the first task: (1) Fathers of girls exhibited greater ratios of father-speaking-to-daughter/daughter-speaking-to-father as compared with father-to-son/son-to-father verbalizations ($t=-2.31$; $p < .04$); (2) fathers of girls spoke proportionately more to their wives than their wives did to them, as compared with father-mother verbal interchanges in families having a male child ($t=-2.09$; $p < .05$); (3) fathers of girls expressed a greater proportion of Aligning than Extruding Verbalization toward their daughters, as compared with fathers toward their sons ($t=-2.17$; $p < .04$). Furthermore, in families having a female child, fathers and mothers tended to be more often on the same Physical Plane ($t=-1.80$; $p < .08$). (Since only 5% (3/57) of the correlations for task one in Appendix J were statistically significant, it is possible that the significance

here was simply due to chance).

In the Teach-A-Proverb task, fathers spoke to their sons significantly more than did fathers to their daughters (t=2.27; p <.03), with sons, in turn, speaking more to their fathers than did daughters (t=2.66; p <.01). Fathers of boys also expressed more Extruding Verbalizations toward their sons than did fathers toward their daughters (t=2.25; p <.03). In addition, the ratio of father-to-child Aligning to Extruding Verbalization was greater for fathers of boys than girls to a marginally significant extent (t=1.91; p <.07). (Again, since only 6% (3/51) of the correlations here were statistically significant, mere chance significance cannot be ruled out.)

More generally, it is apparent that fathers and sons tended to engage in more aligning behaviors than did fathers and daughters, while mother-daughter alignments were more evident than mothers and sons. Thus, father-son and son-father verbal interchanges and Aligning (as well as Extruding) Verbalization were greater than father-daughter and daughter-father interactions on these variables in both tasks, while interactions on these variables in the second task were greater for mothers and daughters as opposed to mothers and sons. In contrast, cross-sex parent-child aligning was more prevalent for engaging in an Activity.

There was some indication of greater father-mother aligning in families of girls as compared to family of boys,

as exemplified by the greater father-to-mother and mother-to-father Aligning Verbalization scores in both tasks, and greater ratios of father-to-mother Aligning to Extruding Verbalization in the Free Play task. This tendency was reversed, however, in the Teach-A-Proverb task, in which there were higher father-mother Activity score, and greater ratio of father-to-mother Aligning to Extruding Verbalization for families of boys rather than girls. Furthermore, families with daughters tended to engage in more mutual Activity than did families with sons. Dispersion Scores in the latter group were greater than in the former for five of the nine aligning and extruding measures on the first task, and for all these measures on the second task, indicating a tendency toward greater unevenness of dyadic interactions in families of boys than girls.

Turning to possible differences in the relationships between aligning and extruding variables and child competence, the following patterns were evident, as is presented in Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9:

First, fathers' aligning with children related to child competence to a greater degree for girls than for boys. For example, while father-speaking-to-child positively associated with child adjustment for both girls and boys in the Free Play task (r_s=.47; p <.04 and .46; p <.03 respectively), it was only significantly associated with girls psychosocial functioning in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=.58; p <.01).

Table 6. Correlations between child adjustment and aligning/extruding behaviors for families of boys and girls on task 1.

Variable	M-C[1]		C-M		F-C		C-F		F-M		M-F	
	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	-.31	.05	-.31	.07	.46**	.47**	.68@@@	.44	-.15	.30	.09	.36
Aligning Verbalization	-.39	-.30	-.08	-.11	.11	.56***	.66@@	.17	.15	.41	.20	.15
Extruding Verbalization	-.28	.19	-.22	.06	.37	-.09	.45**	.04	-.10	-.04	-.26	.43
Activity	.13	-.36			.13	.13			-.26	-.12		
Physical Plane	.16	.11			-.27	.07			-.30	-.05		
Physical Proximity	.40*	.11			.14	.45*			.35	-.00		
Physical Aligning	-.21	-.78@@@	-.15	-.44	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Physical Extruding	-.20	-.20	-.19	-.58***	--	--	-.03	.11	--	--	--	--
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom[2]	-.20	-.08			-.44**	-.61****			-.50***	-.09		

Table 6. (Continued)

Variable	M-C		C-M		F-C		C-F		F-M		M-F	
	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization[3]	-.36	-.40	-.25	.11	-.11	.24	.36	-.22	-.03	.58***	.33	.23
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members[4]	-.57@	-.24			-.08	.57***			-.42**	.13		
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members[5]	-.56@	.17			.26	-.30			.27	.27		

Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis.

[1]M-C indicates that the mother was the actor and the child the target, etc.

[2]For example, mother-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-mother.

[3]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by M-C Extruding Verbalization.

[4]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by C-M Aligning Verbalization.

[5]For example, M-C Extruding Verbalization divided by C-M Extruding Verbalization.

*p<.05
**p<.04
***p<.02
****p<.01

@p<.007
@@p<.002
@@@p<.001

Table 7. Correlations between child adjustment and aligning/extruding behaviors for families of boys and girls on task 2.

Variable	M-C[1]		C-M		F-C		C-F		F-M		M-F	
	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	-.13	.27	-.33	.08	.27	.58***	.25	.43	-.29	.06	-.16	.21
Aligning Verbalization	-.27	.28	-.33	.30	.38	.37	.30	.26	.30	.50*	.15	.47*
Extruding Verbalization	-.22	.18	.02	-.33	.02	.06	.44*	.16	-.14	-.06	-.02	.38
Physical Plane	-.05	.13			.33	-.26			-.15	.07		
Physical Proximity	-.27	.19			-.32	.00			-.27	-.13		
Physical Aligning	-.13	.35	--	--	-.17	.02	.21	.16	--	--	--	--
(Physical Extruding*)												
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom[2]	.46**	.40			-.21	.41			-.48**	-.38		
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization[3]	-.37	.31	-.08	.19	.04	.17	.19	.12	.27	.12	-.14	.13

Table 7. (Continued)

Variable	M-C		C-M		F-C		C-F		F-M		M-F	
	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl	boy	girl
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members[4]	-.26	.41			.28	.22			-.00	.14		
Ratio of Extruding Verbaliztion between family members[5]	.15	.16			.17	.09			-.02	-.03		

Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis.

[1]M-C indicates that the mother was the actor and the child the target, etc.

[2]For example, mother-speaking-to-child divided by child-speaking-to-mother.

[3]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by M-C Extruding Verbalization.

[4]For example, M-C Aligning Verbalization divided by C-M Aligning Verbalization.

[5]For example, M-C Extruding Verbalization divided by C-M Extruding Verbalization.

*p<.04
**p<.02
***p<.01

Table 8. Correlations between child adjustment and triadic aligning/extruding behaviors for families of boys and girls.

Variable	task 1		task 2	
	boy	girl	boy	girl
Activity: Father-Mother-Child	.16	.29	(only coded in task 1)	
Physical Plane: Father-Mother-Child	.36	-.00	.08	-.09
Physical Plane: Father-Mother-Child Separate	.01	-.36	-.07	.14

Table 9. Correlation between child adjustment and Dispersion Scores for families of boys and girls.

Variable	task 1		task 2	
	boy	girl	boy	girl
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	.19	-.06	.28	.31
Aligning Verbalization	-.12	-.53*	-.14	.37
Extruding Verbalization	-.17	.12	-.26	.28
Activity	.21	-.05	(only coded in task 1)	
Physical Plane	-.37	.11	.14	.02
Physical Proximity	-.09	.23	-.21	.12
Physical Aligning	-.14	-.70**	-.11	.01
Physical Extruding	-.15	-.01	—	—
Total Dispersion	.15	.51*	-.08	.40

—Frequency of occurrence insufficient for use in data analysis

*$p<.03$ **$p<.003$

Likewise, father-to-child Aligning Verbalization in the Free Play task only significantly related to girls' competence (r=.56; p <.02), while being marginally significant for both girls and boys in the Teach-A-Proverb task (rs=.37; p <.09 and .38; p <.07 respectively). In contrast, fathers' Extruding Verbalization toward their sons--but not their daughters --positively related to children's adjustment in the Free Play task (r=.37; p <.07). The ratio of father-speaking-to-child/child-speaking-to-father negatively correlated with adjustment in the first task for both girls and boys (rs= -.61; p <.01 and -.44; p <.03 respectively), while positively relating to girls' competence in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=.41; p <.07). Lastly, the ratio of father-to-child/child-to-father Aligning Verbalization was positively associated with girls' competence in the Free Play task (r=.75; p <.02).

Second, the strong positive association between children's aligning behaviors toward their fathers and child adjustment was more consistent for boys than girls in the first task, as reflected in the positive correlations between boys speaking to, and verbally aligning with, their fathers and child competence (rs=.68; p <.001 and .66; p <.002 respectively). The ratio of boys' Aligning to Extruding Verbalizations toward their fathers in task 1 also marginally correlated with psychological health (r=.36; p <.07). Interestingly, boys' Extruding Verbalization toward their fathers were also positively related to competence in both tasks

(r_s=.45; p <.04 and .44; p <.04 respectively). In contrast, marginally significant associations were found between child adjustment and amount of speaking-to-father for girls, but not boys, in the two tasks (r_s=.44; p <.06 and .43; p <.06 respectively).

Third, the negative relationship between child functioning and mothers' aligning behaviors toward their children was more consistent for boys than girls. Thus, mothers' speaking to their sons negatively correlated with adjustment to a marginal degree in the Free Play task (r=-.31; p <.10), as did their verbally aligning with them (r=-.39; p <.06). In addition, the ratio of mothers' Aligning to Extruding Verbalization toward their sons negatively related with adjustment to a marginal extent on both tasks (r_s=-.36; p <.07 and -.37; p <.06), and the ratio of mother-to-son/son-to-mother Aligning Verbalization also negatively correlated with adjustment in the Free Play task (r=-.57; p <.005). A strong negative association was found on this task between child adjustment and the ratio of mother-to-son/son-to-mother Extruding Verbalization (r=-.56; p <.007). Furthermore, there was a negative, though not statistically significant, relationship between adjustment and all but one of the eight mother-to-son aligning behaviors in the Teach-A-Proverb task--measures that positively related to girls' psychosocial competence, though again not to a statistically significant extent.

In contrast, mother-to-daughter aligning negatively related with adjustment to a greater degree than mother-to-son aligning on three measures, these being: (1) The ratio of mothers' Aligning to Extruding Verbalization toward their daughters in the Free Play task (r=-.40; p <.08); (2) Mother-daughter engaging in an Activity together (r=-.36; p <.10); and (3) Mothers' Physically Aligning with their daughters in the Free Play task (r=-.78; p <.001).

The only mother-aligning-with-child variables that positively associated with child adjustment were the ratio of mother-speaking-to-child/child-speaking-to-mother in the Teach-A-Proverb task for both girls and boys (rs=.40; p <.08 and .46; p <.02 respectively), and the ratio of mother-to-daughter/daughter-to-mother Aligning Verbalization in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=.41; p <.07).

Similar to the above trends, children's aligning behaviors toward mothers tend to be more negatively related with competence for boys than for girls, though none of the correlations reached statistical significance. Thus, all of the four variables explicitly measuring child-to-mother aligning behaviors in the Free Play task (i.e., Who-Speaks-To-Whom, Aligning Verbalization, Physical Aligning, and the ratio of Aligning to Extruding Verbalization), as well as the three variables assessing this dimension in the Teach-A-Proverb task (i.e., Who-Speaks-To-Whom, Aligning Verbalization, and the ratio of Aligning to Extruding Verbalization)

negatively related to child competence for boys, while only two of these measures did so for girls. In fact, daughter-to-mother aligning behaviors positively related to adjustment in the Teach-A-Proverb task, though not to a statistically significant degree. However, daughters' Physical Extruding behaviors toward their mothers did significantly negatively relate to adjustment in the Free Play task (r=-.58; p <.02).

In regards to the positive associations between child adjustment and father-mother aligning behaviors, such relationships were somewhat stronger in families of girls than boys. For example, in the former group fathers' Aligning Verbalization toward mothers positively related with competence in both tasks to a greater extent than in the latter families (r=.41; p <.07 vs. r=.15; N.S. and r=.50; p <.04 vs. r=.30; N.S. respectively). In addition, the ratio of fathers' Aligning to Extruding Verbalization toward mothers significantly related to child adjustment in the Free Play task for families having girls but not for families of boys (r=.58; p <.02 vs. r=-.03; N.S.). In contrast, the ratio of father-speaking-to-mother/mother-speaking-to-father was negatively associated with child adjustment in both tasks for boys (rs=-.50; p <.02 and -.48; p <.02), and marginally so for girls in the Teach-A-Proverb task (r=-.39; p <.09).

Likewise, the small positive association between mothers' aligning with fathers and child psychological health was more apparent in families of girls than boys. Thus,

mothers' Aligning Verbalization toward fathers in the Teach-A-Proverb task correlated with adjustment to a greater degree for girls than boys (r=.47; p <.04 vs. r=.15; N.S.). Noteworthy, mothers' Extruding Verbalization toward fathers also was positively related with child adjustment for families with girls (rs=.43; p <.06 and .38; p <.09), while being slightly negatively related to adjustment in families with boys during the Free Play task (r=-.26; N.S.).

It need be pointed out that the significant relationships here made up 14% (24/178) of the total correlations in Tables 6 and 7, and thus would seem not solely to be due to chance.

Lastly, there appeared to be a variegated pattern of relationships between child adjustment and Dispersion Scores in the current sample of families, with the predicted negative relationship being somewhat stronger for boys than girls (see Table 9). Thus, seven of the nine Dispersion Scores in the Free Play task, and five of the seven scores in the Teach-A-Proverb task were negatively related to competence for boys (though none were statistically signifi-cnat), whereas only five of these scores in the Free Play task were negatively related to competence in families of girls. All seven Dispersion measures were in fact positively associated with adjustment during the Teach-A-Proverb task for these latter families, though here again none of these relationships were statistically significant. However, though Total Dispersion Scores for both tasks in families

having girls positively related to adjustment (rs=.51; p <.03 and .40; p <.08 respectively), Dispersion of Aligning Verbalization and Physical Aligning for girls in the Free Play task was significantly negatively related to child adjustment (rs=-.53; p <.03 and -.70; p <.003 respectively). (The significant correlations here made up 9% (3/32) of the total in Table 9, thus being slightly more than expected by chance.)

Summary of the Differences for Sex-of-Child, Family Alignment Patterns, and Child Adjustment

The following differences in the relationship between child adjustment and alignment patterns in families of girls and boys were evident in the current results: (1) Stronger alignments were found between same-sex parent and child than for cross-sex parent-child dyads; (2) The positive relationship between child adjustment and fathers' aligning behaviors toward their children was somewhat stronger for father-daughter dyads than father-son; (3) The positive relationship between child competence and children's aligning behaviors toward their fathers was more consistent for boys than girls; (4) The negative relationship between adjustment and mother-child alignments was stronger for boys than girls; (5) The positive association between child adjustment and father-mother alignments tended to be more consistent for girls than for boys; (6) The predicted negative relationships between adjustment and Dispersion Scores were more often found

in families of boys than girls, though the two negative correlations that reached statistical significance were in families having girls.

Summary of Task Differences

It is clear from the results reported here that the Free Play and Teach-A-Proverb tasks tended to evoke different aligning/extruding behaviors between family members, with such behaviors in some instances having different relationships to child adjustment. The findings thus support Henggeler's et al. (1979) research, previously discussed, wherein the content of two unrevealed differences discussion tasks affected the interaction patterns among family members. More specifically, the differences between tasks in the current investigation were as follows: (1) Parents engaged in more aligning behaviors toward each other and their child in the Teach-A-Proverb task than the Free Play task; (2) Fathers spoke more to their children than mothers did during the Teach-A-Proverb task, while the reverse was true during the Free Play task; (3) There were more statistically significant relationships between mother-child aligning/extruding behaviors and child adjustment in the Free Play task as compared to the Teach-A-Proverb task, while the number of significant relationships between father-child aligning/extruding behaviors and child adjustment were the same for both tasks, though in some instances being different behaviors; father-mother aligning/extruding behaviors

significantly related to child adjustment in three instances during the Free Play task as compared to two in the Teach-A-Proverb task, with two of these significant relationships being in regards to different behaviors. Thus, it would appear that the Free Play situation, as compared with the Teach-A-Proverb task, provided a setting which elicited aligning/extruding behaviors among family members that were more evidently related to children's adjustment. In addition, the tasks appeared to provoke divergent socially prescribed role behaviors, with the mother being the "expressive leader," while the father was the "instrumental leader." Several points need be noted here.

First, it could well be that the specific areas of a child's psychological strengths or weaknesses affect his/her behaviors during certain tasks, thereby affecting all the family members' behaviors. For example, children having difficulties in the areas of interpersonal relating and impulse control, but having effective cognitive learning skills, would be expected to exhibit more problematic behaviors in the Free Play situation than during the teaching of a proverb. The reverse might be true for those children having learning difficulties while having good interpersonal skills. Indeed, most of the children in the current sample were functioning at a pre-operational cognitive level (Piaget, 1957) and had difficulty learning the proverbs--difficulties that varied across subjects and created

differing amounts of task evoked frustration and stress among members.

Furthermore, parents might be more or less comfortable in the different situations, some preferring the unstructured Free Play context while others feeling more confident in the adult teaching role demanded by the Teach-A-Proverb task. Such preferences also are likely to affect the transactions between family members. Thus, not only are such things as the cognitive capacities of the children and parents potential confounding factors in family interaction research, but the nature of the task can also be an important intervening variable--a variable that needs to be more extensively studied and carefully controlled for.

DISCUSSION

Relevance of Findings for Hypotheses

The current findings reflected a complex, yet seemingly coherent, pattern of relationships between children's psychosocial functioning and family alignment patterns. Indeed, the associations between criterion and predictor variables appeared to be far more intricate than initially postulated--in some instances being contrary to expectations. The first differentiation highlighted by the findings was the separate, often divergent, relationships between child competence and fathers' versus mothers' aligning and extruding behaviors, as well as the importance of the directionality of the behavior (e.g., father-to-child vs. child-to-father). Secondly, it became evident that these relationships were affected by the sex of the child. The first aspect will here be discussed, leaving the effects of sex-of-child on alignment patterns and adjustment to a later section.

The initial assumption that there would be a positive association between child competence and the amount of aligning behaviors between family members proved to be too

simplistic. This relationship indeed was found for some measures of fathers aligning with their children, fathers aligning with mothers, and, in particular, for children aligning with their fathers, yet this predicted association was strongly contradicted by the negative relationship between child adjustment and mothers' aligning behaviors toward their children. Similarly, the predicted negative relationship between child competence and extruding behaviors was not consistently supported, but in fact contradicted by the positive relationship between adjustment and children expressing Extruding Verbalization toward their fathers.

The pivotal assumption of a positive association between children's competence and the equalness of expression of aligning and extruding behaviors between family members--theoretically a means of measuring mutual alliances between family members as opposed to dyadic coalitions--was not strongly supported. Thus, greater unevenness between dyadic expression of Aligning Verbalization and Physical Alligning in families having girls during the first task, and unevenness of being on the same Physical Plane for families of boys in the first task, did relate significantly negatively to child competence. However, the amount of dispersion between family dyads across all of the measured behaviors summed together positively related to children's psychological health for girls. Several reasons could account for this.

First, it was clear from the large disparity in means for Who-Speaks-To-Whom--wherein parent-child interchanges far exceeded parent-parent exchanges--that parents in the current sample generally oriented their behaviors in the two tasks toward their children. This, as previously discussed, greatly skewed the distribution of dyadic verbalizations and the total Dispersion Score, possibly diffusing the relationship between unevenness of family alignments and child psychosocial functioning.

However, a more fundamental issue would appear to be involved here, and that is the difficulty in differentiating "pseudo-alliances"--what Lidz and his colleagues (1965) referred to as "pseudo-mutuality"--from mutual alliances as defined in the Introduction of the current investigation. Wynne, et al. (1958), as previously noted, and Lidz and his associates (1965) found that families with a schizophrenic often exhibited what appeared to be feigned agreement and harmony among members, expressing greater amounts of such behaviors than normal controls. Such findings have been corroborated by other researchers (e.g., Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b; Haley, 1959, 1962; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Riskin, 1963; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b). For example, Haley (1959, 1962) and Riskin (1963) found that families with a schizophrenic member had greater difficulty forming stable dyadic alignments than normal controls. These families instead tended to continually

shift alignments between family members in an apparent desperate attempt to avoid dyadic relationships which seemingly were experienced as inevitably excluding the third member. These researchers speculated that the proclivity for "pseudo" aligning in dysfunctional families derived from the pervasive lack of strong, underlying cohesiveness between family members, whereby an disagreement and/or disbalance in alignments was experienced as a potential total dissolution of the family.

From this perspective, mutual alignments in dysfunctional families are based on a shared fear of extrusion and abandonment--on a shared sense of psychological dis-safety--rather than a shared sense of security and bondedness. By the definitions previously delineated, such alignment patterns would more accurately be termed "mutual coalitions," in contrast to "mutual alliances."

The difficulty, of course, is to develop measures that would be able to discriminate between these two highly disparate forms of mutual aligning. Such measures would have to involve assessing the quality of the aligning and extruding behaviors, as well as the quantity. Thus, ratings of the intensity, in addition to frequency, of aligning and extruding behaviors would need to be derived. Furthermore, projective techniques--i.e., family Rorshach or TAT protocols scored for content and structure--might help discern the family's "unconscious" concerns which, theoretically, form

the substructure for the manifested alignment patterns. The current measures of aligning and extruding behaviors, though being more thorough than those used in previous research, would nonetheless seem to lack the precision necessary to make the fine differentiation between mutual coalitions and mutual alliances.

To summarize, one possible factor involved in the positive relationship between the low total Dispersion Score and poor psychosocial adjustment in the children in the current study may be the proclivity for poorly functioning families to form "mutual coalitions" for fear of excluding, or being excluded by, the other members. The measures used to assess alignments in the current research perhaps were not sensitive enough to discriminate such mutual coalitions from the mutual alliances purported to be characteristic of "healthy" families.

Yet another issue parallels this discussion, deriving from the tennet most central to the current investigation--that family and individual psychological health is quintessentially characterized by the ability to be separately together, having well defined, yet permeable, intra/interpersonal boundaries. Bowen (1966), from a theoretical perspective, and Minuchin (1974), in his clinical practice, have been the family theoreticians who have most adamantly stressed the importance of the differentiation of each individual within the family, as well as the differentiation of

family subgroups from one another. Thus, the ability on occasion to interact explicitly dyadically--not necessarily at the exclusion of other family members, but rather without their intrusion--is considered by these theorists to be paramount to healthy family functioning. In fact, many of Minuchin's (1974, 1980) therapy techniques in work with enmeshed families are specifically designed to assure dyadic transactions to occur without the intervention of other family members. Thus, the ability to interact dyadically--presumably alternating between family members--is in fact a characteristic of healthy family systems. That in two seven tasks the degree of dyadic interchanges were not as equally distributed among dyads in families of high functioning children perhaps merely reflected the former families ability to engage in dyadic alignments, cushioned by the security of their ongoing mutual relationships.

A further point must be noted here. It was initially hypothesized that verbal and physical extruding behaviors would be negatively associated with child adjustment, an assumption that was only partially supported by the current results. In contrast, however, child-to-father Extruding Verbalization positively related to competence in both tasks, and families of "healthy" children showed higher means on other extruding behaviors than families having "poorly" adjusted children (e.g., mother-to-father Extruding Verbalization in tasks 1 and 2). Perhaps this, too, reflects a

security within the familial relationships that allows for disagreement between members, and other behaviors that differentiate self from other. As was previously reviewed, healthy families exhibited an ability to openly express and negotiate differences between members (e.g., Lewis, et al., 1976). Indeed, to have labeled such behaviors "extruding" in the current research might have been a misnomer; instead, such behaviors more accurately might have been referred to as "differentiating" behaviors.

Again, the issue of intensity arises here, for it may well be--as the literature suggests--that dysfunctional families manifest greater amounts of behaviors that are hostile and truly extruding than competent families, being the only means possible to separate or, paradoxically, make contact in such systems (see review by Doane, 1978). A rating scale assessing the intensity of extruding behaviors might more accurately discriminate "extruding" from "differentiating" behaviors.

It is important to reiterate, however, that though exhibiting greater "differentiating" behaviors and greater dispersion between family dyads on some variables, families having competent children generally <u>did</u> engage in more mutually aligning behaviors than families having "low" functioning children (i.e., participating in significantly more mutual Activity together). Such results are consistent with the initial hypotheses of the current investigation, as well as previous research (e.g., Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b;

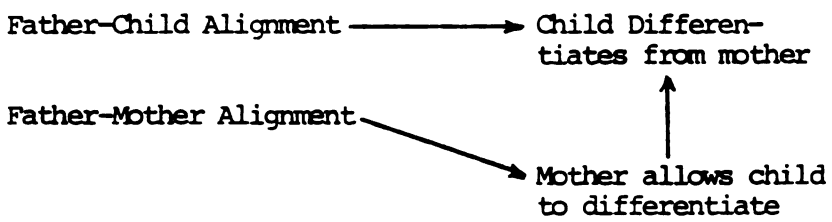
Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Murrell, 1971; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b, 1972). To further clarify the relationships thus far discussed, a systems model of "healthy" and "less optimal" family alignment patterns presently will be developed, as suggested by a synthesis of the current results.

Implications of Findings for Functional/Less Functional Family Alignment Patterns

The relatively consistent, contrasting patterns of family alignments exhibited by families with competent and less competent children in the current sample strongly suggest a model of functional/less functional family alignment patterns. As will become clear, the model is highly consistent with both dynamic and systems theories of child and family development. Stated most succinctly, the model is as follows:

Competent psychosocial functioning in latency age children would seem to involve three interrelated family alignment patterns, the first being a strong, reciprocal child-father alignment; the second being a strong father-mother alignment; and the third being an attenuation of the mother-child alignment, especially in regards to the mother's aligning behaviors toward the child. Though one can only speculate at the sequential directionality of the interrelationships between these patterns of alignments, it would seem plausible that an interplaying process evolves in healthy families during the latency period whereby a strong father-

mother alignment fulfills the psychoemotional need of the spouses and frees the mother to allow the child to differentiate from her. Concomitantly, father's aligning behaviors toward the child facilitate and interact with the child's aligning, or "identifying" (e.g., Freud, 1953), with the father, thereby fulfilling psychoemotional needs in both individuals, and aiding the child to individuate from the mother. Schematically the relationships are as follows:



Furthermore, as is stressed in the discussion of the importance of the parental alignment for children's identity and sex role development (see Appendix N), a strong father-mother alliance serves as an affirmation of the child's gender identity--since s/he observes the same-sex parent being valued by the other parent--as well as a model of competent intimacy behaviors exhibiting self/other care and respect. Living in a family system based on alliances, the child learns this as the basic form of relating.

Contrastingly, in families with poorly adjusted children the mother attempts to fulfill identity and intimacy needs through her relationship with the child, since these are not being met in her relationship with her husband. The

child, also not having a firm alignment with the father, remains in a "hostile-dependent" relationship with the mother. The "engulfing" mother-child relationship here becomes a comment upon, and function of, the mother-father relationship, being precisely what was defined in the Introduction as a coalition--that is, a relationship based on the arousal and attempted fulfillment of psychological safety needs. The child here observes a disvaluing of the same-sex parent by the other parent--potentially evoking concerns about his/her own gender identity--and only has a conflict laden relationship as a model for intimacy. Living in a family system which revolves around coalitionary relationships, the child learns this as being the central means of human relating.

Relevance of Findings for Theories of the Development of Child Competence

The model of family functioning suggested by the current findings clearly is consistent with one of the most widely held theories of child development, postulated by a diverse spectrum of psychological thought, from psychoanalytic to family systems (e.g., Bowen, 1966; Erikson, 1950; Freud, 1953; Jung, 1971; Minuchin, 1974; Neuman, 1976; Satir, 1974). Indeed, the findings support the fundamental assumption of neo-psychoanalytic theory that the latency age child differentiates from the mother through his/her "identification" with the father (e.g., Erikson, 1950). Explicating

this developmental process in more transpersonal terms from a Jungian perspective, Neuman (1976) writes:

> In our culture the necessary development by which the child emerges from the primal relationship (with the mother) to achieve greater independence corresponds to a transition from the psychological matriarchate in which the mother archetype is dominant to the psychological patriarchate in which the father archetype is dominant (p. 95).

Thus, as previously discussed in regards to the pathogenic effects of a mother-child coalition through the interference with identity and role formation, an alignment with the father would appear to be crucial for optimal psychosocial development in latency age children. Such an assumption is further supported by a growing body of literature exploring the importance of the father in child development (e.g., Blanchard and Biller, 1971; Hetherington, 1972; Lamb, 1976, 1979; Love and Kaswan, 1974; Lynn, 1974; St. Pierre, Stollak, Ferguson, and Messé, 1971; Volcani, 1980).

For example, St. Pierre, et al. (1971), in examining interaction patterns between parents and first or second grade boys rated as "normal" or "problem" children by their teachers, found that mothers' behaviors did not significantly differ across the two groups, while fathers of poorly adjusted boys exhibited more negative behaviors than did fathers of normal boys. Similarly, Volcani (1980) found that fathers' self reports of caregiving attitudes and practices were more highly related to latency age boys'

adjustment--as ascertained by teacher ratings--than did mothers' self reports of their caregiving attitudes and behaviors.

Interestingly, the current results point to the importance of a father-child alignment in the development of competence in girls, as well as boys. The process would seem to be similar to that delineated for boys, wherein father aligning with their daughters attenuates the mother-daughter bond, allowing the daughter to further differentiate from the mother. Thus, while the amount of mother-daughter interaction was consistently greater than father-daughter interchanges, daughters' competence positively related to fathers' aligning behavior toward them, while in some instances negatively related with mother-to-daughter aligning behaviors. Such results are corroborative of recent work examining the father's impact on the psychosocial development of girls (e.g., Hetherington, 1972; Lamb, Owen, and Chase-Lansdale, 1979). Hetherington, for example, found that father absence was predictive of poor adjustment in girls, though the effects were often not manifested until adolescence (such effects appeared much earlier for boys).

That strong father-mother alignments were positively related to children's competence is highly consistent with previous research and theory in this area (e.g., Ferguson and Allen, 1978; Haley, 1963; Kleiman, 1976; Lamb, 1976, 1979; Lewis, et al., 1976; Lidz, 1965; Minuchin, 1974; Satir,

1964; Westley and Epstein, 1969). For example, in studying child adjustment of 95 5-7 year old children as related to congruence of parental perception and marital satisfaction--assessed by self report inventories--Ferguson and Allen (1978) found a significant positive relationship between child adjustment and marital satisfaction. Such a positive association between child competence and parental alignment was also strongly found by Kleiman (1976), and Westley and Epstein (1969), previously discussed.

As was stressed in the review of the literature, a central tennet of family systems theory is that the spouse subsystem forms the nucleus of the family, influencing the perceptions, attitudes, values, behaviors, and intra/interpersonal relationships family members have to themselves, each other, and the external environment (e.g., Ackerman, 1958; Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1967; Bowen, 1966; Haley, 1967; Minuchin, 1974; Palazzdi, 1978; Satir, 1964). These theories view all symptomatology in the family--from psychosomatic disorders to poor school adjustment--as being a manifestation of a dysfunctional parental alignment, serving to gauge the degree of parental intimacy, and/or maintain parental identity and esteem. Thus, numerous researchers have found greater parental disharmony and conflict--in this sense a lack of positive parental aligning--in families having a member considered to be in psychological distress as compared with those deemed "normal" or "healthy" (e.g., Caputo,

1963; Doane, 1978; Farina and Holzberg, 1968; Ferguson and Allen, 1978; Gassner and Murray, 1969; McCord, McCord, and Howard, 1961; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967; Lewis, et al., 1976; Riskin and Faunce, 1972; Solvberg and Blakar, 1975; Vogel and Bell, 1960; Vogel and Lauterbach, 1965).

The current findings further highlighted the importance of a reciprocal balance between father-mother aligning behaviors in regards to child competence. Thus, fathers speaking to mothers to a greater extent than mothers to fathers--perhaps reflecting father dominance--negatively related to child adjustment to a significant extent in both tasks. Conversely, fathers verbally aligning with mothers to a greater degree than mothers with fathers--perhaps signifying an obsequious stance--also negatively related with competence to a significant extent in the Free Play task. Furthermore, mothers speaking to their children more than their children did to them in the Teach-A-Proverb task positively associated with children's psychological health. Such a situation perhaps occurred in spouse subsystems in which the mother was allowed equal status with the father in taking on a teaching role.

The interrelated effects of alignment patterns within the family as purported in the current investigation clearly is congruent with the assumptions postulated by family systems theory, particularly those theorists that have emphasized a developmental approach to the family (e.g.,

Barnhill and Longo, 1978; Du Vall, 1957; Hill, 1964; Hill and Hansen, 1960; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Minuchin, 1967; Rodgers, 1962; Solomon, 1973; Titchener, 1967). The position here is that individual developmental stages (e.g., Erikson, 1950; Freud, 1953) would be characterized more accurately as being familial developmental stages, in which certain concerns and tasks must be addressed and resolved.

The current sample consisted of children in the latency stage of development. This is an important phase for the family as a whole, involving the budding individuation of the child from the parents--and the parents from the child--as s/he turns greater attention toward the external world of school and peers (e.g., Erikson, 1950). As Solomon (1973) notes in regard to this stage:

> The family must move from the gratification and need-satisfaction involved in the basically dependent, pre-school child to a different parenting pattern based on the quasi-dependent relationships forced by the child's beginning socialization experience. In this sense parental expectations and demands of the child must allow for individuation and progressive independent functioning (p. 185).

Such individuation can only occur in a family milieu in which parental identity, esteem, and intimacy needs are being gratified through the spouses' alignment and other external involvements, rather than through their relationship with the child (e.g., Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1964). It would appear that the fathers of highly adjusted children in the current sample fostered the individuation of the child,

particularly in the differentiation from the mother toward the father in the transition to the external world.

While being remarkably congruent with past theory and research on family alignment patterns and children's adjustment, the current findings do suggest a need to modify one central assumption initially postulated in this study. Though families having "competent" childen did mutually align in some respects to a greater extent than families of "low" adjusted children, the proclivity for closer father-child than mother-child alignments in "healthy" families somewhat contradicts the assumption that health is related to mutual, nonexcluding alliances. It seems likely that during certain developmental phases specific dyadic alignments intensify while others wane. Such intensification may even involve the exclusion of the third member. What would seem crucial here is that the member that is being aligned with does not also exclude the third person, thereby forming a coalition. Thus, rather than there being a single, optimal pattern of family alignments which is universally related to children's psychosocial health, the type of alignment patterns most condusive to child competence would appear to be related to the developmental epoch the family is in, among other possible factors.

Methodological Considerations

Several factors would appear to attenuate the significance and generalizability of the current results. First, the artificiality of the laboratory setting, with the knowledge of being videotaped for future analyses, could have influenced the behaviors of the family members, who would thereby be on their "best behavior." Indeed, O'Rourke (1963), and Riskin and Faunce (1972) found that families behaved differently in the laboratory than in the home, displaying more socially desirable behaviors in the former setting. Thus, these researchers emphasize that caution must be taken in generalizing from findings of family interaction research conducted in a laboratory. Furthermore, the short duration of time and narrow range of activities in which the families engaged, provided a very united sample of behaviors with which to study family alignment patterns. Indeed, that significant results were found through assessing only two tasks of such short duration is quite remarkable.

Second, though teacher ratings of children's psychosocial functioning have been found to be highly accurate (e.g., Bower, 1969; Brownbridge and VanVleet, 1969; Cowen, Dorr, and Orged, 1971; Eisenberg, Landowne, Wilner, and Imber, 1962; Harth and Glavin, 1971; Lambert, 1967; Liem, Yellott, Cowen, Trost, and Izzo, 1969; Maes, 1966), it is clear that such a means of determining child competence is very limited, assessing only one facet of the child's life space (e.g.,

Volcani, 1980). Furthermore, since such measures are based on the teachers' perceptions of the children, they are susceptible to potential biases of the teachers' differing interpersonal perceptual styles (e.g., Messé, et al., 1979). More accurate assessment of children's functioning would be gleaned by using trained raters to code children's behaviors in a myriad of settings and situations.

A further constraint stems from one of the central assumptions of the current research, which is that the family is a single, unified, intricately balanced and inextricably interrelated organism, whose members' behaviors are a function of the system as a whole, Yet alignment patterns here were assessed only for family triads, without the participation of other family members. It would seem likely that alignment patterns might alter significantly if all family members had been present, with an entirely new mosaic of family constellations being displayed. In this regard, Haley (1967c) and Young (1976) found that "dysfunctional" family tetrad manifested an increase in pathological behaviors than when triads of these families were studied in interactional tasks, while "normal" families displayed greater support when the additional member was present. Thus, generalizing from family triadic interactions can be precarious.

In addition, it has been previously stressed that family alignment patterns and their effects on children's

adjustment are highly related to the developmental stage or stages--since families can be simultaneously in various stages (e.g., having an infant and an adolescent at the same time)--the family is in (e.g., Solomon, 1973; Titchener, 1967). As Hill (1964) cautions:

> Any research which seeks to generalize about families without taking into account the variation due to the stages of family development represented in the sample will have tremendous variance unaccounted for (p. 190).

Though the specific children involved in this study were generally between 5-7 years old, the families were not controlled for developmental stage per se, since some had infants while others had adolescents. Thus here, too, generalizability of the results is possibly weakened.

Lastly, the correlational analyses used in the current investigation do not clarify the directionality of effects. Clearly, children have a profound impact on their parents and the family environment (e.g., Bell and Harper, 1977; Lerner and Spanier, 1978; Thomas, Chess, and Birch, 1968), effects that have been studied far less than those of the parents on their children. It would seem probable that children's psychosocial competence influences the nature and quality of alignment patterns within the family, wherein a "healthy" child would more readily be aligned with by both parents and would not disrupt parental alignments through recalcitrant behaviors that demand constant attention and

disciplining. Studies having a larger subject pool to allow for multiple regression analysis, along with longitudinal designs that would permit cross-lagged panel and path analyses (e.g., Kenny, 1979) would help ascertain the directionality of causation.

Summarizing from what has been stated thus far, it is clear that the relationship between child adjustment and family alignment patterns involves a complex interplay between a myriad of variables. Thus, in regards to statements of "causation," it would seem most accurate to say that certain kinds of coalition or alliance patterns (e.g., cross-sexed or same-sexed parent-child alignments) in certain kinds of families (e.g., of certain SES, ethnic background, size, structure, parental caregiving styles), at certain familial developmental stages (e.g., the first child going to school or an adolescent preparing to leave the home), may be deleterious or beneficial to psychological functioning in certain children having certain characteristics (e.g., sex, temperament, biologically/experiencially shaped means of perceiving and responding to the environment), during certain individual developmental stages (e.g., latency, adolescence), living in a certain environment (e.g., the immediate social environment of the home, school, and neighborhood), within a larger social-cultural-historical context (e.g., Berkeley, California circa 1970 or Tucumcari, New Mexico circa 1958). These deleterious or beneficial effects on psychosocial

competence may be highly limited and context-situational specific or more global in nature.

Directions for Future Research

Though assessing alignment patterns from a wider range of perspectives than past research, the current investigation is still only a first step, given the complexity of the phenomenon. Numerous methodological improvements and areas for future exploration are suggested by this study, as will presently be discussed.

Gathering the Data Base

As previously noted, the validity of teacher ratings of children's psychosocial functioning is weakened by the limited domain of the child's behaviors that the teacher observes, as well as the potential biases of perceptual style (e.g., Messé, et al., 1979). To gain greater objectification and accuracy in determining children's adjustment would necessitate the use of trained raters who would assess the child across a multitude of situations and settings.

Similarly, to glean a more accurate sample of the family's alignment patterns home observations could be made. For example, the family's breakfast and dinner time interactions could be audio recorded for a one week period using a tape recorder with an authomatic timer that would be fastened under the table. To assess each members perceptions of the familial alignments, a self-report inventory, such as an

abridged version of Olson's (1979) Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales, could be administered. Such measures of perceived alignments could be related to children's functioning as well as to the observed alignment behaviors of the family members.

Refinement of Alignment Measures

It would seem apparent from the current research that distinguishing between family "alliances" and "coalitions" in a nonclinic population necessitates the measurement of highly subtle behaviors. Several means of refining the current measures to yield more precise assessment of alignment patterns are as follows:

1) Rating scales of the intensity of verbal and physical aligning/differentiating behaviors would increase the precision of measurement. Thus, stating "I love you and want to spend more time with you" might be a qualitatively different aligning expression than "I like chocolate too," though in the current coding system both would be scored with equal weight. Furthermore, whether aligning/differentiating behaviors are expressed directly (i.e. "Your're beautiful") or indirectly (i.e. "Isn't our daughter beautiful") --thereby effecting the intensity of impact--might highlight important differences in families' aligning styles. Therefore a coding for direct/indirect aligning/differentiating behaviors need be derived. Lastly, all aligning/differentiating behaviors were equally weighted in the current

investigation, yet it would seem apparent that different behaviors augment or attenuate the intensity of intimacy to varying degrees. That is, there would seem to be a hierarchy of degrees of aligning/differentiating behaviors, with direct physical contact and verbalization being the most intense means of expression, while being or not being on the same physical plane would be the least. It might be useful to devise a means of differentially weighting these behaviors.

2) Family interactions are a system of interdependent exchanges, wherein each behavior is both a response to a previous event, and a stimulus for behaviors that follow. Such transactions are exquisitely interbalanced like spheres in a mobile. To more fully assess this stream of interrelated exchanges, a sequential analysis of the ongoing process of behaviors need be made. For example, an aligning behavior from father to son followed by a differentiating behavior from mother to father might have a different significance than the reverse sequence. Indeed, except in the case of severely disturbed families, it might well be that what best distinguishes the differences in alignment patterns of optimal and less well functioning families is the sequence of aligning/differentiating behaviors rather than their frequency.

3) More specific evaluation of verbal mutual aligning could be derived by coding the frequency and duration of individuals speaking to other family members simultaneously,

and/or speaking of the family as a whole (e.g., "We're a great group"). Simpler still might be to code the frequency of individual and family usage of "we" as compared with "I" and "you" (e.g., Cheek and Anthony, 1970). In addition, a separate coding for verbalizations that simultaneously align with one family member while extruding another (e.g., "I want to play with you dad, not mom") might more explicitly measure coalition behaviors. The ratios of all of these behaviors within (e.g., father-to-child aligning behaviors divided by father-to-child extruding behavior) and between (e.g., father-to-child aligning behaviors divided by child-to-father aligning behaviors) family members and to other aligning and differentiating behaviors would appear to be important, given the significant relationships often found between child adjustment and ratios of alignment and differentiating behaviors within and between family members in the current research.

Populations Studied

To more fully understand the nature and effects of family alignment patterns it would be important to study aligning/differentiating behaviors between all family members rather than only family triads selected for age-of-child. Furthermore, to more clearly delineate alliance and coalition formations and their separate effects, it would be useful to study extreme groups, such as specific types of clinic and nonclinic families (e.g., families having a

schizophrenic, delinquent, or psychosomatic member), and/or families selected as being exceptionally competent or having an unusually well adjusted child (e.g., Leighton, et al., 1971; Lewis, et al., 1976). It would be expected that such groups would manifest more striking differences in their alignment patterns. It would be of further interest to explore alignment formations in various types of family structures, such as single parent, reconstituted, and foster families.

Other Related Questions and Methodological Approaches

A plethora of possible issues are suggested by the current study. First, the importance of the family's developmental stage in relation to alignment patterns and their effects has been emphasized on several occasions. Clearly, this relationship should be more fully examined, as for example by studying differences in alignment patterns of families during different developmental phases, and/or by longitudinally investigating changes in alignments as families progress through various developmental milestones.

Second, the nuclear family is a subsystem that interfaces an ever widening network of other social subsystems, such as the extended family, friends and neighbors, the schools, churches/synagogues, and other community organizations, the city, state, and national governmental agencies, and the culture/society as a whole (e.g., Speck and Attneave, 1973). The nature and effects of the family members'

alignments with these other subsystems--effects in regards to self, child, marital, and family functioning--are crucial areas for empirical exploration.

The relationship between family alignments and other areas of child functioning would be fruitful areas of research. For example, various dimensions of family life--such as caregiving behaviors and home environment--have been associated with children's cognitive functioning (e.g., Bayley and Schaefer, 1964; Caldwell and Richmond, 1967; Hess and Shipman, 1965; Honzik, 1967; Kagan and Moss, 1962; Radin, 1971, 1973; Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957). In addition, several studies have found that parent-child coalitions were related to poor reading performance in children (e.g., Morris, 1977; Stackhouse, 1973). Broader, more precise investigations of the relationships between family alignment patterns and various aspects of children's cognitive functioning would be important.

In addition, it will be recalled that the current sample originally was studied to examine the effects of parental interpersonal perceptual style (IPS) on parent-child interactions (Stollak, et al., 1977). Several significant relationships were found; for example, fathers being less negatively biased was associated with children's open expression of antagonistic behaviors toward their parents. A second study, reported in the same paper, found that fathers' IPS were associated with teacher and peer ratings

of children's adjustment, specifically that fathers of "problem" children were more negative perceivers than those of "normal" or "highly adjusted" children. One next step here would be to explore the relationship between IPS and family alignment patterns. Thus, do negative perceivers have more difficulty aligning with other members and exhibit more extruding behaviors; do they tend to form coalitions rather than alliances?

The subtle distinctions between "mutual alliances" and "mutual coalitions" perhaps could be better differentiated through the use of projective techniques such as family Rorschach (e.g., Wynne and Singer, 1963) or family TAT (e.g., Winter, Ferreira, and Olson, 1965) tasks. It would be expected that themes of isolation, abandonment, loss, and/or engulfment would be more frequent in the protocols of families exhibiting mutual coalitions than those engaged in mutual alliances (e.g., Rabin, 1968; Tomkins, 1943). Such a study would shed light on the larger issue of the relationship between the "intrapsychic" and interpersonal domain--how does the family's intrapsychic life relate to the interpersonal behaviors between its members?

To better ascertain causal links between family alignment patterns and children's competence, one would need to have a large enough sample size to allow for the use of multiple regression analysis to pinpoint more clearly the specific aligning/differentiating behaviors that best

predict child functioning. Furthermore, longitudinal designs which would permit the use of cross-lagged panel and path analyses (e.g., Kenny, 1979) would specify such relationships to a still more powerful extent.

The current investigation strongly suggests that any such causal chains would be highly complex indeed, necessitating the meticulous analyses of the separate effects of each parent in interaction with the sex of the child, the developmental stage the family is in, and the situational context within which the family is being studied. It is only then that we will better understand the exquisite, intricately choreographed dance of family alignments.

APPENDIX A

Parent Information Form

APPENDIX A

Parent Information Form

Code Number_____

Name_____Age____Telephone No._____

Present Address_____

Marital Status_____

Occupation_____Years in Occupation_____

Highest Level of Education Completed (circle one):

elementary grade: 1 2 3 4 5 6
junior high school: 7 8 9
high school: 10 11 12
college: 1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years degree granted
M.A. degree
Ph.D. degree
other degrees or certificates (e.g., M.D., D.D.S., D.O., law or high school certificates indicating completion of vocational training):

_____

Names and Ages of Children_____

_____

Children's Grades in School_____

_____

Other People in Household and Relationship to Children_____

_____

Note: Only this questionnaire will contain your name. The checklists you will complete will contain only the code number noted in the upper right-hand corner. This questionnaire will be removed and kept in a separate locked file and your answers will be kept completely confidential.

APPENDIX B

List of Proverbs

APPENDIX B

List of Proverbs

Look before you leap.

The early bird catches the worm.

He who hesitates is lost.

Don't cross your bridges 'til you come to them.

Don't count your chickens until they're hatched.

A stitch in time saves nine.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

APPENDIX C

Measures of Children's Psychosocial Adjustment

AML

Pupil_____ Date_____

Sex of Pupil___M___F___
(circle one)

Grade of Pupil_____

School_____

Teacher's Name_____

We would like you to indicate how often you have observed certain behaviors in the classroom of the child named above. To help you interpret the five rating points, brief descriptions are provided for each.

(1) Never—You have literally never observed this behavior in this child.

(2) Seldom—You have observed this behavior once or twice in the past three months.

(3) Moderate frequency—You have seen this behavior more often than once a month but less often than once a week.

(4) Often—You have seen the behavior more often than once a week but less often than daily.

(5) Most or all of the time—You have seen the behavior with great frequency, averaging once a day or more often.

Two things should be kept in mind while completing the AML: (a) Work rapidly and don't fret too much about making fine discriminations, (b) It is extremely important that your ratings realistically reflect problems that the child evidences. Please make your ratings reflect problems as you have perceived them.

Thank you for your attention.

Section I. Please rate every item on the following scale:

1. not a problem 3. moderate problem 5. very serious problem
2. very mild problem 4. serious problem

Child's Classroom Behavior:

___disruptive in class

___fidgety, hyperactive, can't stay in seat

___talks out of turn, disturbs others while they are working

___constantly seeks attention, "clowns around"

___overly aggressive to peers, (fights, is overbearing, belligerent)

___defiant, obstinate, stubborn

___impulsive, is unable to delay

___withdrawn

___shy, timid

___does not make friends

___over conforms to rules

___daydreams, is preoccupied, "off in another world"

___unable to express feelings

___anxious

___worried, frightened, tense

___depressed

___cries easily, pouts, sulks

___does not trust others

___shows other signs of "nervousness," specify:_____

___specific fears specify:_____

Other Behaviors:

___lacks self-confidence

___overly sensitive to criticism

___reacts poorly to disappointment

___depends too much on others

___pretends to be ill

___other, specify:_____

___poor grooming or personal hygiene

Child's Academic Performance:

___underachieving (not working up to potential)

___poorly motivated to achieve

___poor work habits

___difficulty following directions

___poor concentration, limited attention span

___motor coordination problem

___other, specify:_____

Child has specific academic problems in:

___reading___math___numbers

___writing___colors___concepts

___language skills problems,

specify:_____

_____

PLEASE RATE THIS PUPIL'S BEHAVIOR AS YOU HAVE OBSERVED AND EXPERIENCED IT: This Pupil--	Never (1)	Seldom (2)	Moderately Often (3)	Often (4)	Most or all of the time (5)
1. Gets into fights or quarrels with other students	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. Has to be coaxed or forced to work or play with other pupils	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. Is restless	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. Is unhappy or depressed	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. Disrupts class discipline	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. Becomes sick when faced with a difficult school problem or situation	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. Is obstinate	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. Feels hurt when criticized	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
9. Is impulsive	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
10. Is moody	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
11. Has difficulty learning	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Below, we have listed specific behavior and adaptation problems which may appear to you as interferring with this child's ability to profit from his/her school experience. Please rate every item in Section I on the following scale of problem severity:

1. not a problem
2. very mild problem
3. moderate problem
4. serious problem
5. very serious problem

Specific instructions are provided for Sections II and III.

Section II. From your experiences with this child, please check (✓) any of the following which you believe relate to the problems you have reported:

___separation or divorce of parents

___illness or death of a family member

___lack of educational stimulation in the home

___economic difficulties

___under family pressure to succeed

___family difficulties

Section III. From your experiences with this child, please check (✓) where she/he would lie on the following dimensions taking into account the direction of each item:

Know child well — Barely know child

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

Child seems easy to like — Child seems difficult to like

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

Child has significant school adjustment problems — Child has no school adjustment problems

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

B - P

Rating Scales

Name of Person Being Rated_____

Name of Rater_____

Date(s) Rated_____

AWARENESS OF SELF

The aware person (child or adult) knows how he or she feels, what he thinks, and what he is doing. Although he is conscious of himself, he is not self-conscious, insecure or embarrassed. This awareness does not produce anxiety. He accepts and can acknowledge how he really feels, thinks, and acts.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Very aware; always conscious of his feelings, wishes, fears, and the meaning of his behavior (positive or negative).
4			Most of the time aware, ready to acknowledge what he feels, thinks, and does. Only occasionally uses denial.
3			Often aware of his feelings, thoughts and behavior, and willing to recognize them as such. However, often reacts without awareness or uses denial.
2			Usually unconscious or unaware of himself; denies his real feelings and thoughts, and cannot recognize his own actions for what they are.
1			Unconscious; full of denial, completely unable to recognize his true feelings, thoughts, or behavior.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

CONSIDERATENESS

The considerate person cares about the well-being of others. He adjusts his behavior in ways that are thoughtful and beneficial to others.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Extremely considerate. Always thoughtful and spontaneously concerned with the other person's welfare.
4			Very considerate. Most of the time he is thoughtful and deals constructively with others.
3			Somewhat considerate, but sometimes inconsiderate about what is good for another person.
2			Seldom considers the well-being of other people. Only rarely takes into account what others may feel. Tends to be thoughtless, indifferent.
1			Rarely considers the other person. Tends to pursue his behavior no matter how it may affect the other person.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

EFFECTIVENESS

The effective person copes appropriately. He readily tries and is successful in his efforts to implement his own desires or to meet the external demands of the environment.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Very effective. Always deals appropriately and successfully with his inner needs and external demands. Always meets and responds effectively to a problem situation.
4			Mostly effective. Typically gets his needs met and handles challenge successfully.
3			Moderately effective. Often successful, but often fails to get his needs met or to cope with problems with success.
2			Mostly ineffective. But occasionally successful in his efforts.
1			Rarely succeeds in his efforts. Inadequate. Ineffective.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

FLEXIBILITY

The flexible person can shift his viewpoint or behavior in accordance with new information or new demands of the people. He is adaptive, but shifts because of conviction rather than because of passively submitting to persuasion. When changing he continues with the same degree of interest and involvement.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Very flexible. Adapts readily and easily to new information and demands. Participation continues with undiminished interest.
4			Very frequently flexible. Most of the time adapts although shows some tendency to persist even in the face of new information or new expectations.
3			Reasonably flexible, but often clings to his original viewpoint or behavior.
2			At times flexible, but usually unable to adapt to new information or demands.
1			Rigid. Very unresponsive to new information or demands. Cannot shift.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

INTERPERSONAL COMPREHENSION

This trait assesses the person's understanding of how one person's behavior causes approval or disapproval of that behavior in another person.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Very high comprehension. Person almost always recognizes the effect of any given behavior.
4			Usually comprehends what the second person's reaction will be to the first person's behavior.
3			Sometimes perceives the interpersonal effects, but just as often fails to comprehend how one person's behavior affects another person's attitude.
2			Seldom comprehends interpersonal interaction. Usually at a loss in being able to see how one person's behavior affects another person's reactions.
1			Virtually no comprehension of how a person's behavior causes attitudes in other people. Almost always fails to comprehend the interaction.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

SELF-CONFIDENCE

The confident person believes that he is able and behaves with a calm assured manner. He is self-assured and realistic when coping with new challenges.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Realistically very confident. Approaches challenge with assurance. Possible failure does not deter action.
4			Confident most of the time with realistic challenges. Only mild caution with unfamiliar tasks.
3			While often confident, in many instances is unsure of his ability to cope with realistic challenge.
2			Some degree of confidence with familiar things, but often expects to meet with failure with challenge.
1			Virtually no self-confidence. Unable or unwilling to try. Almost always behaves as though he expects to fail with new challenges.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

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1			Virtually no self-confidence. Unable or unwilling to try. Almost always behaves as though he expects to fail with new challenges.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS

The sensitive person is aware and concerned about the welfare of other people. He readily ascertains what the other person is feeling and what would be in their best interest.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Acutely aware and concerned about people's feelings and reactions.
4			Most of the time aware and concerned about how others are truly feeling and reacting.
3			Often aware and concerned, but in many instances seems unaware and relatively unconcerned about other people's feelings and reactions.
2			Usually unaware and disinterested in what other people are feeling, but can recognize what is going on in others when it is directly called to his attention.
1			Insensitive and unconcerned as to what is going on in and with other people. Deals with them as though they were devoid of feelings.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

TOLERANCE

The tolerant person recognizes and accepts individual differences. He accepts and gives full regard to others who have different feelings, thoughts, and reactions than his own. But he does not necessarily approve or yield to their influence.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Extremely tolerant. Understands and accepts differences as natural. Tolerates a very broad spectrum of feeling, thoughts, and behavior in others.
4			Reasonably tolerant about individual differences.
3			Mildly tolerant, but tends to not accept certain natural variations.
2			Usually intolerant. Tends to regard people who differ from him as being unacceptable, even wrong.
1			Very intolerant. His way of feeling, thinking, and reacting is the only way that he can accept. People who are different are completely unacceptable. Very narrow.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

SPONTANEITY

The spontaneous person is natural. His acceptance of himself is high and permits freedom of expression. He is uninhibited, but not dramatic or exhibitionistic.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Always highly spontaneous. Very natural and free in his expressions.
4			Very often spontaneous. Most of the time reacts freely and naturally, but on occasion is inhibited.
3			Usually spontaneous. While he frequently expresses himself naturally he is inhibited on many occasions.
2			Shows spontaneity on occasion, but more often inhibited, constricted, and stilted in his response.
1			Many strong inhibitions, very constricted. Almost never spontaneous; not natural.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

STABILITY

The stable person is emotionally balanced. He remains composed in the face of stressful events. He remains involved and does not find it necessary to shift his direction.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Very stable. Not easily upset by change or disappointment.
4			Usually stable. Accepts and adjusts well to changing circumstances, but occasionally loses his calmness and direction.
3			Moderately stable. Often retains his equilibrium, but rather easily upset and loses his direction.
2			Sometimes shows stability, calm and direction, but frequently is upset and loses his bearings when circumstances change.
1			Unstable. Shows little capacity to accommodate to change. Excitable or immobilized by new demands.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

EAGERNESS

The eager person likes to try new things or take on a new problem. He is eager to overcome, to engage, and to try to master a new problem.

F	W	S	RATING
5			Loves challenge; eager to try anthing that is new. Delights in testing his ability.
4			Frequently seeks out and meets new and challenging situations. Shows little hesitancy.
3			Often rises to a challenge that is presented to him, but does not seek out challenging situations of his own. Shows some hesitancy.
2			Tends to shy away from challenges much of the time, but will deal with them when encouraged.
1			Almost always shies away from challenge. Requires a great deal of encouragement, before he reluctantly tries.

ACTIONS JUSTIFYING RATING

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST FORM A

Name of child: _____ Age: ____ Date: _____

Name of person filling out checklist: _____

Relationship to child named above (mother, father, teacher, etc.): ____

This is a list of items describing many aspects of children's behavior—things that children do or ways they have been described by others. Not all of the items will apply to the particular child you are describing, but quite a few of them will. First, go through the list and put a checkmark (✓) in the first column by each item which applies to this child. If you feel that the item does not apply to the child, put a zero (0) in the first column.

After you have gone through the list, please go back through those items you have checked and put another checkmark (✓) in the second column opposite those that are now most characteristic of this child, that describe how he (she) is most of the time.

	Does this apply at all?	Is it characteristic?
1. Is happy when h/she does a "good job."		
2. Gets carried away by his/her feelings.		
3. Is tidy and neat, perhaps even a little bit fussy about it.		A
4. Can't wait - wants to have things immediately.		B
5. Is concerned about the feelings of adults.		A
6. Gets irritated or angry easily.		B
7. Feelings are apparent in his/her facial expression.		A
8. Plays with toys in a rough way.		B
9. Handles small objects skillfully.		A
10. Doesn't pay attention to what others say.		B

		Does this apply at all?	Is it characteristic?
11.	Activity is focused on a particular purpose, seems to accomplish what he/she sets out to do.	____	A
12.	Looks awkward when he/she moves around.	____	B
13.	Accepts new ideas without getting upset.	____	A
14.	Acts in ways that makes adults not like him/her.	____	B
15.	Shows pride in accomplishment.	____	A
16.	Appears stiff in walking or moving about.	____	B
17.	Seems comfortable in new situations.	____	A
18.	Has trouble finding the right words to say what he/she means.	____	B
19.	Wants very much to be approved of.	____	____
20.	Seems to do things just to get adults angry at him/her.	____	B
21.	Moves gracefully - well coordinated.	____	A
22.	Has a characteristic mannerism or nervous habit.	____	B
23.	Plays to win.	____	A
24.	Quickly loses interest in an activity.	____	B
25.	Does what persons ask him/her to do.	____	A
26.	Never gets excited about anything, even when you expected him/her to be pleased with something.	____	____
27.	Makes friends quickly and easily.	____	A
28.	Seems sad and unhappy.	____	B
29.	Self-confident.	____	A

		Does this apply at all?	Is it characteristic?
30.	Tends to go too far unless reminded of rules.		B
31.	Talks all the time.		A
32.	Often has to be reminded of what he/she can and can't do.		B
33.	Affectionate - enjoys being physically close to adults.		
34.	Threatens to hit or hurt others.		B
35.	Is able to stand up for himself/ herself.		A
36.	Seems out of touch with what is going on around him/her - off in his/her own world.		B
37.	Is polite and cooperative.		
38.	Has uncontrollable outbursts of tempter.		B
39.	Is easily embarrassed.		A
40.	Often breaks the rules in games.		B
41.	Is careful in explanation - precise.		A
42.	When told to do something he/she doesn't want to do, he/she becomes angry.		B
43.	Is curious about things.		A
44.	Plays aimlessly, doesn't seem to make or accomplish anything.		B
45.	Prefers competitive games.		A
46.	Seems selfish, always wants his/ her own way.		B
47.	Showed appreciation when others helped or did things for him/her.		A
48.	Seldom laughs or smiles.		

		Does this apply at all?	Is it characteristic?
49.	Energetic.	_____	A
50.	Doesn't seem to care about how he/she looks - often looks sloppy.	_____	B
51.	Asks sensible questions.	_____	A
52.	Blows up very easily when bothered.	_____	B
53.	Shows pleasure and involvement in most things he/she does.	_____	A
54.	Fidgety and restless.	_____	B
55.	Is competitive.	_____	A
56.	Acts as if adults are against him/her.	_____	B
57.	Pitches in when things have to be done.	_____	A
58.	Often seems angry for no particular reason, expresses it in many different ways.	_____	_____
59.	Quick and clever.	_____	A
60.	Aggressive and overpowering.	_____	_____
61.	Learns quickly.	_____	_____
62.	Bossy.	_____	A
63.	Likes to do things well.	_____	_____
64.	Tires easily in activities.	_____	_____

Scoring key: A = Positive Behavior

B = Negative Behavior

APPENDIX D

Family Alignments Coding Manual

APPENDIX D

Family Alignments
Coding Manual

Nature of the Research

The current research involves studying patterns of family alignments in father-mother-child triads. The focus is on the degree of emotional closeness between family members and how they balance this closeness among themselves while engaged in two 7 minute tasks (free play and teaching a proverb). The degree of emotional closeness will be assessed by rating the frequency of occurrence of 6 categories of behaviors (Who-Speaks-To-Whom; Aligning/Extruding Verbalizations; Activity; Physical Plane; Proximity; and Aligning/Extruding Physical Contact).

This coding manual will define these categories and explain the procedure for assessing them.

General Coding Procedure

Each rater team will be responsible for independently rating two categories. Rate each of these categories individually, that is, code the entire 7 minute task for one category, then rewind the tape and code the segment again for the other category before going on to code the second task.

Put the videotape code #, task # (1 for the free play, 2 for the teaching of proverbs), and your initials in the space provided on the coding sheet.

Start coding when you hear the first "beep" after the E on the video tape leaves the room, and continue until the last one (there are

42 "beeps" per task which coincide with the 42 unit boxes on your coding sheets).

Stop the tape at each 10 sec. "beep" to mark all codings not marked during the interval.

REMEMBER, YOU ALWAYS CAN STOP THE TAPE AND/OR REWIND IT AT ANY TIME IF YOU'RE NOT SURE ABOUT A CODING!!

Category Definitions

Who-Speaks-To-Whom: This is a frequency count of the number of times family members speak to each other (father-to-mother, mother-to-father; father-to-child, child-to-father; mother-to-child, child-to-mother). The unit of measure is a full statement made by an individual to an other--that is, all the words spoken by a person to the target person before someone else speaks, or before the person speaks to a different family member (a mere grunt of "uh-huh" constitutes a unit!). Place a slash (') in the appropriate box on the coding sheet (mother-father, mother-child; father-mother, father-child; child-father, child-mother) for each statement made by one member to an other.

Statements from one member to an other that are longer than 10 seconds and proceed into the next time interval are coded by another "'" being placed in the appropriate who-to-whom box on the coding sheet for every 10 sec. unit length (i.e. a statement from mother to father that lasted 30 sec. would be scored by "'''" being placed in the mother-father coding box).

Determination of who is speaking to whom is made by eye contact between members, content of speech, use of name, and other cues generally used to ascertain that someone is speaking to someone else. If it is not clear and obvious who the member is speaking to, DO NOT CODE THE STATEMENT. If the person is clearly speaking to both other members simultaneously, code a "'" in each of the members' coding box. Do not code laughter; do code all verbal interchanges that occur during fantasy play (i.e. child's puppet speaks to father's puppet is scored as child-father verbalization).

Category Definitions

Aligning/Extruding Verbalizations: This category is designed to measure the degree family members become emotionally closer or more distant through what they say to each other. The symbols, coded in the appropriate unit box on the coding sheet, are as follows:

Aligning Verbalization = +
Extruding Verbalization = -

Code only the presence/absence of the occurrence of these verbalizations ONCE per 10 sec. unit, though, of course, if both + and - Verbalizations occur in one 10 sec. interval you would code that each has occurred (i.e. the unit box on the coding sheet might look like this-- + -). Aligning/Extruding Verbalization simultaneously made to both other members is coded individually in each member's unit box. All Aligning/Extruding Verbalization occurring during fantasy play are coded based on who is verbally aligning/extruding with whom in the play (i.e. the father's puppet says, "You are a beautiful queen" to the mother's puppet would be scored father-mother Aligning Verbalization).

Aligning Verbalizations are any statements that attempt or serve to maintain or increase emotional contact and closeness with an other. They are any verbal expressions of care, valuing, support, empathy, concern, warmth, appreciation, admiration, agreement, enjoyment of, and desire to maintain or increase contact with an other. Such statements can either be made directly to an other, or indirectly through fantasy play or in speaking to one family member about the other (i.e. "What a great kid we've got"). Examples of + Verbalizations are as follows:

endearments - "You sweetie" "I love you"

compliments - "You're wonderful" "Good" (in response to something someone did) "You're father is a wonderful man" (coded mother-father + even though the mother is speaking to the child, since she is praising the father)

support/concern - "Are you ok?" "Let me help" "I don't want you to get hurt" "Awww" (as empathic response to other's displeasure)

agreement - (Note: code this as + only when a clear agreement with something that is directly related to the other person, i.e. a subjective attitude, opinion, value, desire, feeling, NOT when merely an agreement with an objective fact. The agreement here expresses the idea that the person is somehow like the other).

"I like ice cream" "Me too"
"I think we ought to play Bingo" "Ok"
"Beautiful day, huh?" "It sure is"
"Your father is right" (mother to child)

identification - "I'm wearing jeans just like yours" "Someday I'll be big like you" "We both hate pickles" "We're both kinda oaffy sometimes" (notice this is coded + even though it is slightly derogatory, since it serves to align the people together)

seeking contact/support - "Come here" "Sit on my lap" "Listen to me" "Will you play with me?" "Watch me" "Do you agree with me?" "I'll miss you"

Extruding Verbalizations are any statements that function to decrease emotional contact, to distance or separate oneself from an other, or make contact in a hostile manner. They include expressions of devaluing, dislike, disdain, rejection, disagreement, differences, rebuke, criticism, lack of support or concern, and/or a wish to decrease contact.

Examples are: "That's a stupid thing to do" "You turkey" "I don't want to sit next to you" "I hate you" "My way is better than yours" "I wouldn't wear slacks like yours" "Don't be silly" "You're wrong" "Come here" "No" "That kid of ours is driving me

bonkers" (father to mother) note that this would be scored both father-child—AND father-mother + since it serves to unify both parents around having something in common) "Your mother is wrong" "You never spend enough time with me" (scored both--(since it is a criticism and statement that one experiences the situation different than the other) AND + (since there is a request for more contact))

Category Definitions

Physical Plane: Defined as either standing, sitting in chairs, or being on the floor (whether kneeling, squatting, lying, etc.). If one person is in another's lap or being held then score as plane; if person is positioned on some other object in the room (i.e. the heater radiator) then score as different plane. Stop the tape at the 10 sec. "beep" and place an "+" in the appropriate unit box (mother-child, father-child, father-mother, father-mother-child, father/mother/child (indicating none are on the same plane)), depending on which family members on are on the same plane. Place a "/" in all the other unit boxes that do not designate the correct plane arrangement (thus there will always be one, and only one, "+" per 10 sec. unit). If a member is stopped in the middle of moving, code to the plane they are moving towards if they are 3/4ths or more of the way changed (i.e. a member is 3/4ths out of his/her chair and thus coded as if standing). If you cannot see a member, code on plane last seen.

Activity: Defined as any mutual participation in a joint enterprise such as a game fantasy play, building something, fixing something, playing music together. The members have to be obviously, actively involved

together out of an apparent desire to make contact with one another. Actively exploring objects/toys together, where both or all 3 members are clearly mutually involved is scored as Activity. Mutually talking and planning to fulfill a task requested by the E does NOT constitute being engaged in an Activity together. Stop the tape at the 10 sec. "beep" and place an "+" in the appropriate unit box to indicate the presence of members being dyadically or triadically engaged in an Activity together. Place a "/" in all other boxes, or in all the boxes if members are not engaged in an Activity together.

Physical Proximity: This is a measure of emotional closeness between family members based on their physical distance from each other. Stop the tape at each 10 sec. "beep" and place the appropriate rating # for each family dyad (mother-child, father-child, father-mother). Ratings are as follows:

1 = (FARTHEST) Members are at least an outstretched legs length from each other—that is, they could touch only if both stretched out their legs (about 10 feet from each other).

2 = Members could touch if one had his/her legs outstretched (about 5 feet).

3 = Members could touch if one had his/her arms outstretched (about 2 feet).

4 = (CLOSEST) Direct physical contact with another member; half of the body touching (i.e. sitting side by side with arms around each other; sitting in lap; hugging); or face within 6" of the other's face.

Physical Aligning/Extruding: This is a measure of family members' emotional closeness based on the quality of physical contact. Rate the presence/absence of physical Aligning/Extruding ONCE per 10 second unit

(if both types of contact occur in one 10 sec. period, then there would be two codings in the unit box--one for Aligning and one for Extruding). Physical Aligning/Extruding made to both other members is coded individually on each member's unit box. All physical Aligning/Extruding behaviors occurring during fantasy play are coded based on who is physically aligning/extruding with whom on the play (e.g., the child's puppet hugs the mother's puppet would be scored child-mother Physical Aligning). The symbols are:

Physical Aligning = +
Physical Extruding = -

Physical Aligning is any physical expression of warmth, affection, care, valuing, and increasing emotional contact. Examples are hugging, kissing, stroking, physically helping an other (i.e. holding them up; tying shoe), blowing a kiss.

Physical Extruding is any physical expression of hostility, aggression, disvaluing, rejection, emotionally distancing. Examples are hitting, kicking, biting, pulling, pushing, throwing, sticking tongue out, shooting at an other, tripping, and any other means of physically/emotionally hurting an other, and/or expressing a difference between them in a physical manner (i.e yanking an object from them).

APPENDIX E

Sample Characteristics

APPENDIX E

Sample Characteristics

Age, Distribution by Sex	Males	Females	Total n
1) 4 years 0 mos.-5 years 0 mos.	2	0	2
2) 5 years 1 mos.-6 years 0 mos.	0	3	3
3) 6 years 1 mos.-7 years 0 mos.	5	3	8
4) 7 years 1 mos.-8 years 0 mos.	7	6	13
5) 8 years 1 mos.-9 years 0 mos.	2	2	4
6) 9 years 1 mos.-9 years 6 mos.	3	0	3

Number of Siblings and Birth Order	Total n
1) Only child	5
2) One sibling (younger)	13
3) One sibling (older)	3
4) Two siblings (younger)	2
5) Two siblings (older)	3
6) Two siblings (middle child)	1
7) Three siblings or more	6

Parents' Level of Education	Mother (n)	Father (n)
1) 4-6 years of school	1	0
2) 7-9 years of school	0	2
3) 10-12 years of school	15	9
4) 13-14 years of school	14	11
5) 15-16 years of school	3	9
6) 17 years of school	0	2

Parents' Level of Occupation[1]	Mother (n)	Father (n)*
0) Unemployed	2	1
I) Professional	0	3
II) Business or Managerial	3	11
III) Administrative, Technical, or Clerical	0	1
IV) Semi-skilled or Skilled Manual Worker	8	6
V) Unskilled Manual Worker	0	9
VI) Housewife	18	0
VII) College Student (full-time)	2	1

*Missing one case

[1]Adapted from Hollingshead and Redlich (1958).

APPENDIX F

Correlations between Teacher Ratings of Children's Adjustment

APPENDIX F

Correlations between teacher ratings of children's adjustment.

	CBC Positive	CBC Negative	AML
B-P	.75	-.71	-.92
CBC Positive		-.48	-.75
CBC Negative			.80

APPENDIX G

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Teacher Ratings of Children's Adjustment

APPENDIX G

Means, standard deviations, and ranges
of teacher ratings of children's adjustment.

Inventory	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range
B-P[1]	34.93	10.33	12-50
CBC Positive[2]	12.28	6.45	1-23
CBC Negative[3]	3.38	5.10	0-19
AML[4]	55.46	45.74	0-134
Composite Score[5]	68.64	18.48	33-93

[1]10-50 possible, higher score signifies positive adjustment.

[2]0-27 possible, higher score signifies positive adjustment.

[3]0-25 possible, higher score signifies negative adjustment.

[4]45-225 possible, higher score signifies negative adjustment.

[5]0-100 possible, higher score signifies positive adjustment.

APPENDIX H

Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Frequencies of Family Aligning/Extruding Behaviors on Tasks 1 and 2

APPENDIX Ha

Means, standard deviations, ranges, and frequencies of family aligning/extruding behaviors on task 1.

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency	
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:					
Mother-Child	33.30	15.13	3-84.5	32	(missing
Child-Mother	22.31	13.58	1-75.5	32	one case)
Father-Child	31.89	13.46	6-70	32	
Child-Father	22.55	10.84	1-48	32	
Father-Mother	9.25	5.66	1-22	32	
Mother-Father	9.44	5.01	2-19.5	32	
Aligning Verbalization:					
Mother-Child	3.60	3.03	0-13	29	(missing
Child-Mother	2.79	2.98	0-15	28	two cases)
Father-Child	3.26	2.35	0-9.5	29	
Child-Father	1.71	1.55	0-6.0	24	
Father-Mother	2.40	2.34	0-10	25	
Mother-Father	2.10	1.85	0-6.5	27	
Extruding Verbalization:					
Mother-Child	.95	1.04	0-4	22	(missing
Child-Mother	1.11	1.37	0-5	19	two cases)
Father-Child	1.31	1.46	0-5	21	
Child-Father	1.23	1.52	0-6	21	
Father-Mother	.89	1.11	0-3.5	17	
Mother-Father	.82	1.35	0-4.5	12	
Activity[1]:					
Mother-Child	5.89	8.23	0-39	26	
Father-Child	8.46	11.27	0-39	28	
Father-Mother	1.12	2.68	0-14.5	15	
Father-Mother-Child	14.05	13.30	0-42	17	

APPENDIX Ha

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency
Physical Plane[2]:				
Mother-Child	6.68	10.29	0-38	20
Father-Child	4.49	9.32	0-41	21
Father-Mother	17.58	14.70	0-41	30
Father-Mother-Child	10.61	13.61	0-39	24
Father-Mother-Child Separate	2.65	4.13	0-17.5	20
Physical Proximity[3]:				
Mother-Child	103.11	22.22	47.5-135.5	33
Father-Child	101.20	19.56	55.5-127	33
Father-Mother	91.83	23.94	46.5-142	33
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	.58	1.33	0-5	8
Child-Mother	.30	.91	0-5	7
Father-Child	.18	.57	0-2.5	4
Child-Father	.06	.24	0-1	2
Father-Mother	.02	.09	0-.5	1
Mother-Father	.02	.09	0-.5	1
Physical Extruding:				
Mother-Child	.17	.50	0-2.5	5
Child-Mother	.67	1.94	0-10.5	9
Father-Child	.32	1.31	0-7	3
Child-Father	.45	1.25	0-5.5	5
Father-Mother	0	0	0	0
Mother-Father	.03	.17	0-1	1
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	1.65	.80	0-4.56	Not Applicable
F-C/C-F	1.60	.99	0-6	
F-M/M-F	.94	.41	0-1.80	

APPENDIX Ha

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	3.12	5.43	0-26	Not Applicable
Child-Mother	1.31	2.17	0-10	
Father-Child	1.68	1.87	0-8	
Child-Father	1.25	2.35	0-12	
Father-Mother	1.27	2.24	0-9	
Mother-Father	.69	2.32	0-13	
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	1.75	2.44	0-13	Not Applicable
F-C/C-F	1.41	1.53	0-6.33	
F-M/M-F	1.12	1.32	0-6	
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.62	.95	0-4	Not Applicable
F-C/F-C	.79	1.84	0-10	
F-M/M-F	.45	.96	0-5	
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	37.28	20.63	0-108.46	Not Applicable
Aligning Verbalization	3.53	2.90	0-13.68	
Extruding Verbalization	2.10	1.72	0-6.98	
Activity	9.81	9.17	0-31.84	
Physical Plane	17.49	11.35	1.41-33.48	
Physical Proximity	25.67	12.69	4.95-60.52	
Physical Aligning	.83	1.61	0-7.38	
Physical Extruding	1.01	2.31	0-9.90	
Total Dispersion	446.80	79.76	253.27-586.93	

[1]0-42 possible.

[2]0-42 possible.

[3]0-168 possible.

APPENDIX Hb

Means, standard deviations, ranges, and frequencies of family aligning/extruding behaviors on task 2.

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
Mother-Child	29.40	10.42	12-50	33
Child-Mother	17.26	8.15	3.5-34.5	33
Father-Child	31.05	14.96	1-67.5	33
Child-Father	19.80	13.55	0-56	32
Father-Mother	6.29	4.91	0-26	32
Mother-Father	7.00	4.53	1-21	33
Aligning Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	4.39	2.90	0-12	30
Child-Mother	2.27	2.25	0-7	22
Father-Child	3.69	2.88	0-13.5	29
Child-Father	1.60	1.78	0-7.5	22
Father-Mother	4.03	2.77	0-10.5	29
Mother-Father	4.00	2.54	0-11	29
Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.79	2.53	0-10.5	18
Child-Mother	.47	.66	0-2	13
Father-Child	1.31	1.18	0-4.5	21
Child-Father	.55	.64	0-2	16
Father-Mother	.61	1.00	0-3	12
Mother-Father	.89	1.08	0-3.5	17
Physical Plane[1]:				
Mother-Child	2.36	7.98	0-42	8
Father-Child	1.83	7.52	0-42	6
Father-Mother	6.12	11.54	0-41	19
Father-Mother Child	28.20	16.67	0-42	27
Father-Mother-Child Separate	3.35	10.45	0-42	7

APPENDIX Hb

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency
Physical Proximity[2]:				
Mother-Child	109.65	26.40	43-154	33
Father-Child	98.03	30.66	42-146	33
Father-Mother	99.72	23.36	42-150.5	33
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	2.65	4.50	0-23.5	19
Child-Mother	.36	1.20	0-5.5	4
Father-Child	1.15	2.85	0-13.5	10
Child-Father	.68	2.04	0-10	7
Father-Mother	0	0	0	0
Mother-Father	0	0	0	0
Physical Extruding:				
Mother-Child	.38	2.09	0-12	2
Child-Mother	.14	.46	0-2	3
Father-Child	.05	.19	0-1	2
Child-Father	.03	.12	0-.5	2
Father-Mother	.02	.09	0-.5	1
Mother-Father	0	0	0	0
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	1.94	.80	1.10-5.14	Not Applicable
F-C/C-F	1.78	.77	0-4.23	
F-M/M-F	.91	.44	0-2.00	
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.68	2.64	0-10	Not Applicable
Child-Mother	1.27	2.81	0-14	
Father-Child	1.30	1.53	0-6.75	
Child-Father	1.06	1.91	0-7.5	
Father-Mother	1.49	3.23	0-15	
Mother-Father	1.95	2.96	0-11	

APPENDIX Hb

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Range	Frequency
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	1.61	1.88	0-7	Not Applicable
F-C/C-F	1.74	2.94	0-16	
F-M/M-F	1.01	.93	0-4.25	
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.84	1.70	0-6	Not Applicable
F-C/C-F	.65	1.06	0-5	
F-M/M-F	.39	.81	0-3	
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	38.30	16.35	4.95-82.30	Not Applicable
Aligning Verbalization	4.66	3.35	0-12.05	
Extruding Verbalization	1.98	1.63	0-6.01	
Physical Plane	10.35	16.10	0-59.40	
Physical Proximity	41.86	98.11	0-324.04	
Physical Aligning	3.15	4.30	0-19.19	
Physical Extruding	.47	1.99	0-11.43	
Total Dispersion	385.02	83.50	241.85-563.37	

[1] 0-42

[2] 0-168

APPENDIX I

Means, T Ratios, and P Values Comparing Families of "High"/"Low" Adjusted Children on Tasks 1 and 2

APPENDIX Ia

Means, t ratios, and p values comparing families of "high"/"low" adjusted children for task 1.

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
Mother-Child	30.77	31.32	.11	.91
Child-Mother	18.73	22.95	1.08	.29
Father-Child	37.05	25.77	-1.84	.08
Child-Father	26.36	18.36	-1.71	.11
Father-Mother	10.77	9.23	- .60	.56
Mother-Father	11.45	8.73	-1.30	.21
Aligning Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	3.55	4.64	.77	.45
Child-Mother	2.65	3.18	.37	.71
Father-Child	4.10	3.14	- .90	.38
Child-Father	2.05	1.05	-1.51	.15
Father-Mother	3.50	1.59	-2.29	.04
Mother-Father	2.80	1.64	-1.41	.18
Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.05	1.09	.09	.93
Child-Mother	.75	1.45	1.18	.26
Father-Child	1.40	1.05	- .59	.56
Child-Father	1.55	.95	- .83	.42
Father-Mother	1.00	1.18	.33	.74
Mother-Father	1.35	.82	- .77	.45
Activity:				
Mother-Child	9.17	5.27	- .85	.40
Father-Child	4.75	6.86	.58	.57
Father-Mother	.38	2.00	1.23	.25
Father-Mother-Child	18.13	7.23	-2.41	.03

APPENDIX Ia

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Physical Plane:				
Mother-Child	10.33	6.00	- .94	.36
Father-Child	2.75	7.14	.96	.36
Father-Mother	15.00	14.77	- .04	.97
Father-Mother-Child	12.63	10.05	- .44	.67
Father-Mother-Child Separate	1.29	4.05	1.52	.16
Physical Proximity:				
Mother-Child	111.04	95.95	-1.72	.11
Father-Child	107.83	90.73	-2.01	.06
Father-Mother	91.29	81.82	- .92	.37
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	.21	1.00	1.42	.18
Child-Mother*	.13	.23	.67	.51
Physical Extruding:				
Child-Mother*	.08	1.45	1.40	.19
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	1.65	1.60	- .14	.89
F-C/C-F	1.39	1.77	.82	.43
F-M/M-F	.82	1.00	1.04	.31
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	3.10	5.02	.71	.49
Child-Mother	1.25	1.74	.46	.65
Father-Child	1.78	1.25	- .69	.50
Child-Father	1.35	.51	- .84	.42
Father-Mother	2.46	.78	-1.67	.11
Mother-Father	1.52	.25	-1.16	.27

APPENDIX Ia

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.81	3.26	2.16	.05
F-C/C-F	1.60	1.53	- .09	.93
F-M/M-F	.90	1.45	.90	.38
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.53	1.04	1.12	.28
F-C/C-F	.31	.42	.45	.66
F-M/M-F	.65	.32	- .76	.46
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	34.94	32.56	- .31	.76
Aligning Verbalization	3.04	4.58	1.10	.29
Extruding Verbalization	1.78	2.44	.90	.38
Activity	10.49	9.13	- .35	.73
Physical Plane	17.08	17.08	.00	1.00
Physical Proximity	26.69	27.37	.12	.90
Physical Aligning	.41	1.02	1.19	.26
Physical Extruding	.79	1.45	.59	.56
Total Dispersion	467.52	407.20	-1.77	.09

*Frequency of occurrence of other Physical Aligning/Extruding variables insufficient for use in data analysis.

APPENDIX Ib

Means, t ratios, and p values comparing families of "high"/"low" adjusted children for task 2.

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
Mother-Child	29.33	27.36	- .51	.62
Child-Mother	16.25	17.82	.49	.62
Father-Child	33.63	29.36	- .71	.49
Child-Father	20.71	19.18	- .30	.77
Father-Mother	4.79	7.45	1.20	.25
Mother-Father	5.63	7.18	.88	.39
Aligning Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	4.65	.18	- .33	.74
Child-Mother	1.85	2.23	.40	.69
Father-Child	4.30	3.18	-1.10	.29
Child-Father	1.85	1.18	- .95	.36
Father-Mother	5.20	2.95	-1.92	.07
Mother-Father	5.20	3.18	-1.77	.09
Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.45	2.32	.73	.47
Child-Mother	.40	.59	.64	.53
Father-Child	1.00	1.64	1.21	.24
Child-Father	.75	.45	- .96	.35
Father-Mother	.30	.55	.65	.53
Mother-Father	1.00	.73	- .60	.56
Physical Plane:				
Mother-Child	2.08	.91	- .67	.51
Father-Child	3.83	.23	-1.04	.32
Father-Mother	5.08	7.81	.52	.61
Father-Mother-Child	25.75	28.50	.37	.72
Father-Mother-Child Separate	5.25	4.14	- .21	.84

APPENDIX Ib

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Physical Proximity:				
Mother-Child	106.25	111.09	.47	.65
Father-Child	86.38	105.68	1.64	.12
Father-Mother	96.71	98.64	.20	.85
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	1.75	4.45	1.24	.24
Father-Child	.42	2.27	1.31	.22
Child-Father*	.67	.27	- .70	.49
(Physical Extruding*)				
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	2.09	1.60	-2.03	.06
F-C/C-F	1.93	1.58	-1.02	.32
F-M/M-F	.82	1.11	1.54	.14
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.98	2.05	.05	.96
Child-Mother	.83	1.54	.53	.60
Father-Child	1.10	1.53	.80	.43
Child-Father	.91	.95	.06	.95
Father-Mother	.60	.36	- .43	.67
Mother-Father	1.19	1.80	.48	.63
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	1.55	2.02	.53	.60
F-C/C-F	2.14	1.60	- .38	.71
F-M/M-F	.95	.95	.01	.99

APPENDIX Ib

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ High	$\bar{X}$ Low	t	p
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.88	.48	- .65	.52
F-C/C-F	.53	.73	.39	.71
F-M/M-F	.25	.16	- .41	.69
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	40.58	33.89	-1.10	.28
Aligning Verbalization	4.23	4.34	.08	.93
Extruding Verbalization	1.82	2.16	.49	.63
Physical Plane	8.58	6.22	- .49	.63
Physical Proximity	28.82	71.60	.83	.42
Physical Aligning (Physical Extruding*)	1.65	4.51	1.45	.17
Total Dispersion	367.77	390.23	.67	.51

*Frequency of occurrence of other Physical Aligning and of all Physical Extruding variables insufficient for use in data analysis.

APPENDIX J

Means, T Ratios, and P Values Comparing Families of Boys and Girls on Tasks 1 and 2

APPENDIX Ja

Means, t ratios, and p values comparing families of boys and girls for task 1.

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	$\bar{X}$ girl	t	p
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
Mother-Child	28.58	37.07	-1.53	.14
Child-Mother	20.78	24.29	- .67	.51
Father-Child	32.06	31.68	.08	.94
Child-Father	24.78	19.68	1.36	.18
Father-Mother	8.42	10.32	- .92	.37
Mother-Father	9.17	9.79	- .33	.74
Aligning Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	3.24	4.04	- .70	.49
Child-Mother	2.26	3.43	-1.14	.27
Father-Child	3.35	3.14	.26	.80
Child-Father	1.91	1.46	.81	.42
Father-Mother	1.82	3.11	-1.48	.16
Mother-Father	1.71	2.57	-1.32	.20
Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	.91	1.00	- .23	.82
Child-Mother	1.26	.93	.69	.50
Father-Child	1.41	1.18	.44	.66
Child-Father	1.24	1.21	.04	.97
Father-Mother	.91	.86	.14	.89
Mother-Father	.68	1.00	- .64	.53
Activity:				
Mother-Child	5.97	5.79	.07	.95
Father-Child	7.84	9.29	- .37	.72
Father-Mother	1.29	.89	.46	.65
Father-Mother-Child	11.79	17.12	-1.16	.26

APPENDIX Ja

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	$\bar{X}$ girl	t	p
Physical Plane:				
Mother-Child	7.00	6.25	.20	.84
Father-Child	5.53	3.07	.80	.43
Father-Mother	13.66	22.89	-1.80	.08
Father-Mother-Child	12.32	8.29	.86	.40
Father-Mother-Child Separate	3.50	1.50	1.54	.14
Physical Proximity:				
Mother-Child	103.26	102.89	.05	.96
Father-Child	99.50	104.07	- .72	.48
Father-Mother	92.50	90.93	.18	.86
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	.42	.79	- .71	.49
Child-Mother*	.18	.46	- .76	.46
Physical Extruding:				
Child-Mother*	1.00	.21	1.34	.20
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	1.53	1.82	-1.10	.28
F-C/C-F	1.25	2.08	-2.31	.04
F-M/M-F	.82	1.11	-2.09	.05
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	2.07	4.53	-1.17	.26
Child-Mother	1.09	1.60	- .67	.51
Father-Child	1.07	2.52	-2.17	.04
Child-Father	1.52	.89	.83	.42
Father-Mother	.70	2.05	-1.59	.13
Mother-Father	.93	.37	.78	.44

APPENDIX Ja

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	girl	t	p
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	2.17	1.18	1.32	.20
F-C/C-F	1.42	1.40	.05	.96
F-M/M-F	1.16	1.06	.22	.83
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.69	.53	.48	.63
F-C/C-F	.65	.99	- .46	.65
F-M/M-F	.55	.31	.80	.43
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	35.16	40.17	- .67	.51
Aligning Verbalization	3.25	3.90	- .62	.54
Extruding Verbalization	2.20	1.96	.39	.70
Activity	10.29	9.15	.37	.72
Physical Plane	15.22	20.56	-1.34	.19
Physical Proximity	25.83	25.44	.09	.93
Physical Aligning	.62	1.11	- .79	.44
Physical Extruding	1.14	.82	.41	.69
Total Dispersion	196.68	191.76	.28	.78

*Frequency of occurrence of other Physical Aligning/Extruding variables insufficient for use in data analysis.

APPENDIX Jb

Means, t ratios, and p values comparing families of boys and girls for task 2.

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	$\bar{X}$ girl	t	p
Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
Mother-Child	28.03	31.29	- .83	.41
Child-Mother	16.00	18.96	-1.00	.33
Father-Child	35.55	24.93	2.27	.03
Child-Father	24.47	13.46	2.66	.01
Father-Mother	6.63	5.82	.48	.63
Mother-Father	7.55	6.25	.85	.40
Aligning Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	4.12	4.71	- .55	.59
Child-Mother	2.12	2.46	- .43	.67
Father-Child	4.12	3.18	.92	.37
Child-Father	1.65	1.54	.17	.87
Father-Mother	3.65	4.50	- .82	.42
Mother-Father	3.85	4.18	- .34	.74
Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	2.29	1.18	1.30	.21
Child-Mother	.44	.50	- .24	.81
Father-Child	1.71	.82	2.25	.03
Child-Father	.62	.46	.68	.50
Father-Mother	.44	.82	-1.04	.31
Mother-Father	.74	1.07	- .84	.41
Physical Plane:				
Mother-Child	2.84	1.71	.43	.67
Father-Child	2.45	1.00	.61	.55
Father-Mother	6.81	5.18	.41	.68
Father-Mother-Child	27.47	29.18	- .29	.77
Father-Mother-Child Separate	2.45	4.57	- .55	.59

APPENDIX Jb

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	$\bar{X}$ girl	t	p
Physical Proximity:				
Mother-Child	112.84	105.32	.75	.46
Father-Child	99.34	96.25	.28	.78
Father-Mother	98.87	100.89	- .23	.82
Physical Aligning:				
Mother-Child	3.26	1.82	1.02	.32
Father-Child	1.76	.32	1.68	.11
Child-Father*	1.00	.25	1.21	.24
(Physical Extruding*)				
Ratio of Who-Speaks-To-Whom:				
M-C/C-M	2.07	1.77	1.17	.25
F-C/C-F	1.60	2.01	-1.40	.18
F-M/M-F	.91	.91	- .03	.97
Ratio of Aligning/ Extruding Verbalization:				
Mother-Child	1.53	1.89	- .37	.71
Child-Mother	1.19	1.38	- .20	.84
Father-Child	1.70	.75	1.91	.07
Child-Father	1.13	.96	.25	.80
Father-Mother	1.73	1.15	.56	.58
Mother-Father	1.96	1.95	.01	.99
Ratio of Aligning Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	1.70	1.50	.31	.76
F-C/C-F	2.34	.93	1.56	.13
F-M/M-F	.97	1.06	- .26	.80

APPENDIX Jb

(continued)

Variable	$\bar{X}$ boy	$\bar{X}$ girl	t	p
Ratio of Extruding Verbalization between family members:				
M-C/C-M	.95	.69	.44	.67
F-C/C-F	.76	.50	.74	.47
F-M/M-F	.17	.69	-1.63	.12
Dispersion Score:				
Who-Speaks-To-Whom	40.22	35.70	.83	.41
Aligning Verbalization	4.47	4.93	- .38	.71
Extruding Verbalization	2.02	1.93	.17	.87
Physical Plane	12.33	7.67	.89	.38
Physical Proximity	55.89	22.82	1.11	.28
Physical Aligning (Physical Extruding*)	3.78	2.29	1.10	.28
Total Dispersion	401.29	362.93	1.37	.18

*Frequency of occurrence of other Physical Aligning and of all Physical Extruding variables insufficient for use in data analysis.

APPENDIX K

Guiding Assumptions

APPENDIX K

Guiding Assumptions

Four assumptions serve as a foundation for the current investigation. The first two are truths held to be self-evident, these being that, (1) all human beings initially develop in the context of a family, and, (2) family life has a profound effect on the subsequent development of the individual. Though perhaps disagreeing as to the nature and degree of this effect, it would appear that all schools of psychological thought--be they social learning or psychoanalytic, behavioral or humanistic--in general would agree with these two premises.

The third assumption is that the maintenance of optimal psychological proximity that is, the augmentation and attenuation of the intensity of intimacy--is one of the central dimensions of all human interaction (e.g., Bowen, 1966; Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1969; Karpel, 1976; Kernberg, 1976). This monitoring of self-other boundary through the continual gauging of the degree of psychological contact is of particular importance in families, being a key determinant of family alignment patterns (e.g., Bowen, 1966; Minuchin, 1974).

The fourth assumption pivotal to the current research is the indisputably unprovable tenet that human beings are basically "good." That is, given a context which is physically and psychologically safe (Stollak, 1978) (and often in situations that are not so characterized), human beings will display kindness, benevolence, empathy and altruism, both toward themselves and others.[1] Furthermore, irrespective of the

circumstances, individuals are fundamentally motivated by a will toward growth, persisting to this end through whatever means available, including psychopathology and even death (Jung, 1971; Laing, 1969). Thus, as the rose knows no other than to strive toward its blooming, so humankind knows no other than to strive toward the actualization of its possibility. It is engrained in the biology of the organism (Jung, 1971; Wilson, 1975).

To carry the analogy further, if the individual is the rose, then the family environment is the garden, and the family caregivers are the gardeners whose responsibility it is to provide a fertile soil, proper irrigation, and appropriate lighting. Family therapists and theoreticians here would serve as agronomists of the soul, whose expertise involves helping the crops to flourish and the land to bloom.

APPENDIX L

Characteristics Distinguishing "Dysfunctional" from "Normal" Families

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Characteristics Distinguishing "Dysfunctional" from "Normal" Families

Communication Style

Bateson and his colleagues, from their initial research on communication patterns in schizophrenic families, derived their well known theory of the "double bind" (Bateson, et al., 1956). It was noticed that members in these families--particularly the parents--communicated in such a way so that messages on one communication level were directly contradicted by a message on another communication level. Symptomatology, it was hypothesized, was a desperate means of attempting to escape the field or somehow comply with both messages.

Wynne and Singer (1963), in a thorough analysis of communication patterns of schizophrenic families engaged in a conjoint Rorschach task, discovered specific types of "communication deviances" that differentiated such families from normal controls. For example, these families exhibited a high degree of "unclarity" and "fragmentation" in the communication between family members.

Other researchers have generally corroborated the works of Bateson et al. (1956) and Wynne and Singer (1963), finding that members of dysfunctional families tend not to listen to each other; not to speak directly to each other; not to finish sentences or put a closure to the topic at hand (e.g., Ferreira and Winter, 1968; Friedman and Friedman, 1970; Goldstein, et al., 1968; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; McPherson, et al., 1973; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; O'Connor

and Stachowiak, 1971; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b).

Affective Environment

Most research assessing the affective environment of dysfunctional families has characterized it as being generally more negative, hostile, nonsupportive, and less harmonious than that of normal families (Alexander, 1973; Caputo, 1963; Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b; Doane, 1978; Farina and Dunham, 1963; Friedman and Friedman, 1970; Leighton, Stollak and Ferguson, 1971; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; McPherson, 1970; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b, 1972; Schuham, 1970; Schulman, et al., 1962). There are generally less humor, levity and laughter, and more disagreements and "irresolvable conflict," particularly between the spouses (Caputo, 1963; Doane, 1978; Farina and Holzberg, 1968; Lewis, et al., 1976; Murrell and Stachowiak, 1967; Riskin and Faunce, 1972; Solvberg and Blakar, 1975).

Wynne and his colleagues (1958), however, found that schizophrenic families often exhibited a "psuedo-mutuality"—a feigned agreement and harmony among members theoretically necessitated by the fragility of the family structure. Indeed, several researchers have found dysfunctional families to display greater amounts of agreement than normal controls (Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b). Thus, on the specific dimension of agreement/disagreement, disturbed families appear to be at either extreme. However, in terms of the overall feeling tone of the group, dysfunctional families consistently seem more disharmonious than normal families, with a high prevalence of animosity between family members.

In noting another characteristic of the affective environment in dysfunctional families, Minuchin (1967; 1974) points out the rigidity in regards to the type and intensity of feelings allowed in such families, for example only permitting the expression of extreme anger without allowing any expression of sadness. Satir (1964) further comments on this, observing that in such families the expression of specific feelings seem to be delegated to certain family members. Beavers (1977) and Lewis, et al. (1976) have also found evidence to support this point.

Structure

Bowen (1960), in his early observations of the families of hospitalized schizophrenics, noted the frequent role confusion and reversal between the husbands and wives in these families. Thus, the mother would be the dominant, aggressive member of the family, while the father withdrew into passive compliancy. Lidz, et al. (1965) also pointed to this as being a salient characteristic of such families. Other researchers who have assessed this dimension have concurred (Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b; Coe, 1969; Farina, 1960, Farina and Dunham, 1963; Leighton, et al., 1971; Odom, 1971; Riskin and Faunce, 1972). However, Caputo (1963) and Haley (1967c) did not find such role reversals when studying parental dominance in normal and disturbed families. Thus, as with any of the characteristics seeming to differentiate various types of families, research findings must be viewed as suggestive rather than definitive.

More central for Bowen was the observation that members of schizophrenic families seemed to lack clearly defined interpersonal boundaries that delineated themselves from each other. The diffuse, amorphous

distinctions between individuals in these families led Bowen to postulate the concept of an "undifferentiated family ego mass" (Bowen, 1966). The construct describes the inextricable web of psychoemotional ties between family members governing the extent to which members have an effect upon each other.

Such intertwined relationships typified families that Minuchin and his associates (1967) termed "enmeshed," when comparing the interactional patterns of low income families having an institutionalized delinquent adolescent with normal controls. They, too, were struck by the lack of separation and individuation between family members in such cases, and the extent to which one member's thoughts, feelings, and actions impacted the entire group. Minuchin, et al. also found the antithesis of such family enmeshment in some of the other families studied. These families--referred to as being "disengaged"--were characterized by rigid impermeable interpersonal boundaries, which resulted in an apparent lack of emotional connectedness between members, who were surprisingly unresponsive to each other's needs and predicaments.

The degree of psychoemotional connectedness within a family and the permeability of intra/interpersonal boundaries between family members, is indeed a central dimension of family structure, having been explored by numerous theoreticians of family process. Thus, what Bowen (1966) referred to as the continuum between "emotional divorce" and an "undifferentiated family ego mass," and Minuchin et al. (1967) termed "disengagement"-"enmeshment," Hess and Handel (1959) labeled "connectedness"-"separateness"; Olson (1979) called "high connectedness"-"low connectedness"; Reiss (1971) described as "consensus sensitive"-

"interpersonal distance sensitive"; Rosenblatt (1976) named "togetherness"-"apartness"; Stierlin (1974) explained as "centripetal binding"-"centrifugal expelling"; and Wynne, et al. (1958) conceived as "pseudo-mutuality"-"pseudo-hostility." Kantor and Lehr's (1975) discussion of "bounding," Lidz's et al (1957) description of "schisms" and "skews," and Vogel and Bell's (1960) elucidation of "scapegoating," all examine this same dimension.

The centrality of this concept lies in the fact that the process of all human development perhaps could be conceived as involving a continuous vacillation and balancing between two bi-polar states--that of complete merger with other, and that of total severance from other. This is a process ardently addressed by Psychoanalytic and Neo-Psychoanalytic thought (e.g., Freud, 1953; Fenichel, 1945; Horney, 1950; Klein, 1932); by Analytic Psychology (e.g., Jung, 1971; Neuman, 1976); and by Object Relations Theory (e.g., Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1969; Kernberg, 1976). As Karpel (1976) notes, "The process of individuation from fusion (is) a universal developmental and existential struggle and . . . a fundamental organizing principle of human growth" (p. 67). It is the pivotal dilemma of the human condition; an issue of particular difficulty for disturbed families.

From this perspective, family dysfunction would seem to involve a failure of individuation, that is, a failure for members to be separate, unique individuals, with their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences, while also maintaining a shared sense of communality and interrelatedness. Such a dysfunction entails a disturbance of intrapersonal, interpersonal, intrasystem (i.e., between family subsystems) and intersystem

(i.e., the family in relation to the outside world) boundary formation and management, whereby self-other boundaries are either too diffuse and amorphous, or too rigid and impermeable. Imperative to note is that enmeshment and disengagement are derivations of the same phenomenon, being desperate, ineffective attempts at solving the arduous enigma of selfhood. We are all voyagers that must navigate between the perilous abode of Scylla—self obliteration by abandonment and isolation—and Charybdis —self annihilation by engulfment. Thus, family dysfunction at its basis involves an impairment in the ability for family members to be separately together.

It is important to note here that the "normal" families in most of the research cited above were defined as such simply by the fact that no member had sought psychological help. Clearly, such a broad criterion for normalcy potentiates a wide spectrum of possible functioning. In light of having such a heterogeneous control sample, the significant differences found between these and "clinic" families becomes more convincing.

APPENDIX M

Characteristics of "Healthy" Families

APPENDIX M

Characteristics of "Healthy" Families

Psychological health in the individual, as exemplified by a high degree of intra/interpersonal skills that involve the ability to masterfully respond to and act upon the internal/external environment, has been a concept explored by a relatively small group of theorists (Allport, 1960; Besell and Palomares, 1970; Foote and Cottrell, 1955; Jahoda, 1958; Lindemann, 1955; Maslow, 1962; Stollak, 1978; White, (1959). The concept is even more nascent in the area of family studies. Thus, as has previously been noted, the vast majority of family research has focused on the characteristics of family dysfunction rather than health.

Perhaps the most thorough step in the latter direction, however, was initiated by Lewis and his colleagues in their six year, systems oriented research project at Timberlan (Beavers, 1977; Lewis, et al., 1976). In this project, four psychologists independently rated families on a global health rating, selecting the six "healthiest" families out of the thirty-three that volunteered, for a more exacting analysis of dimensions that would distinguish the two groups. Both sets of families were also compared with sixty clinic families. All groups engaged in videotaped interaction tasks that were independently assessed by two sets of coders. Global rating scales of such variables as family structure, affect, autonomy, and task efficiency, as well as frequency counts of who-speaks-to-whom, agreement/disagreement, and number of interruptions were used to discern relevant factors. In addition, each family was seen by two experienced therapists for two, ninety-minute interviews.

These interviews were scored on a clinical basis, observing such aspects as affiliativeness, spontaneity, and openness of communication.

Though discovering "there is no single thread which, by itself, predicts the upper levels of health" (Lewis, et al., 1976, p. 149), optimal families were characterized by: (1) A high degree of support, empathy, and affiliativeness; (2) Clear, direct, open communication between all family members, along with the ability to negotiate differences effectively; (3) Well delineated role differentiation, with power hierarchically distributed by age—the parents here displaying a strong, though egalitarian, leadership; (4) An ability to adapt flexibly to change (what Speer (1970) referred to as "morphogenisis"), while maintaining a firm sense of group identity ("morphostasis"); (5) A pervasive sense of optimism and hope.[2]

Lewis and his cohorts further stressed the ability of healthy families to maintain a sense of "we-ness" while concomitantly encouraging individual autonomy and respecting individual differences and divergent viewpoints among family members. It would appear that such families had mastered the dilemma of being separately together, creating a milieu that, to use Kafka's (1971) phrase, "educates for differentiation."[3]

Most relevant for the present investigation is Lewis' et al. finding that individual and familial adjustment is highly associated with patterns of alliances and coalitions among family members. More specifically, high child, parent, and family competency was found to be positively related to a strong, stable parental alliance that was clearly differentiated from, yet permeable to, other familial subsystems--particularly those of the children. Thus Lewis, et al., typify the optimal

family as having "a firm parental coalition (alliance) without evidence of competing parent-child coalitions" (p. 202). This factor not only significantly discriminated normal from disturbed families, but it also distinguished healthy from normal families.

The strong relationship between psychosocial adjustment and family alliance/coalition patterns--wherein high adjustment is associated with flexible parental alliances and low adjustment with various forms of coalitions--has been consistently found throughout much of the family interaction research. Thus, studies contrasting varying degrees and types of dysfunctional families (Coleite, 1971; McPherson, et al., 1973; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Wild, 1977), studies comparing dysfunctional and normal families (Bowen, 1960; Caputo, 1963; Cheek, 1964, 1965a, 1965b; Cheek and Anthony, 1970; Fleck, 1960, 1976; Haley, 1959, 1962, 1964; Lennard, et al., 1965; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Lidz, et al., 1963, 1965; McLean, 1972; Minuchin, 1967; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; O'Connor and Stachowiak, 1971; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b, 1972; Schuham, 1970; Wild, 1971; Wynne, 1961), as well as studies comparing normal and healthy families (Kleiman, 1976; Lewis, et al., 1976; Murrell, 1971; Odom, et al., 1971; Russell, 1979; Westley and Epstein, 1969) have all noted this relationship.

APPENDIX N

Toward a Phenomenology of Alignments

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Toward a Phenomenology of Alignments

Possible Origins and Bases for Alignments

Few living organisms are able to provide for their physiological needs independently during the early stages of their development. One of the most fundamental mechanisms apparently biologically engrained to aid in survival during this period of vulnerability is the neonates "drive" to orient and seek contact with a mothering figure, and for such a figure, in turn, to provide the neonate with those things necessary to sustain life and promote growth (e.g., Bowlby, 1969; Lorenz, 1967). Human beings would seem to be no exception.

Indeed, Bowlby (1969) likens attachment behavior in human infants to the imprinting response in sub-human mammals. The term "imprinting" here is used to describe an innate, highly integrated system of behaviors activated by a specific stimulus (the attachment-figure), having a specific goal (maintenance of physical proximity with the attachment-figure), and predictable outcome (engaging in behaviors that maintain such proximity and contact). Such a behavioral system in humans has been developed and maintained due to its preservatory adaptiveness, originally functioning, according to Bowlby, as protection from predators, as well as a means of obtaining sustenance and protection from the environment. Such primitive attachment behaviors fit the rudimentary characteristics of what is currently defined as aligning behaviors, and thus infant-mother attachment perhaps could be a biologically based substrate and prototype for the later development of alignments.

From a more purely psychological perspective, the basis of the proclivity for identification and alignment-with-other is elucidated by Psychoanalytic and Object Relation theories in postulating that the early development of self involves a process of "narcissistic identification"—that is, assuming the other to be like the self and vice versa (e.g., Fairbairn, 1952; Freud, 1953; Guntrip, 1969; Kernberg, 1976; Mahler, 1975). Furthermore, it would appear that Piaget's (1957) observations of the infant's "drive" toward imitation, as well as the Social Learning theorists' concept of modeling (e.g., Bandura, 1969; Dollard and Miller, 1950), also could be interpreted as prototypic signs of a "will toward aligning," for here, too, we see the desire to be like other, and thereby joined. In more global terms, Maslow (1962) has spoken of "Love and Belongingness Needs"—needs also explicated by Erikson (1950)—which again would appear to involve the "drive" to align. Thus, it would be interesting to explore further i.e. possibility that the propensity to align is innately engrained in the "biological equipment" of the human organism, serving a basic preservatory function in our adaptation to life (e.g., Bowlby, 1969; Wilson, 1975).

Further clarification of the bases for alignments can be found in the sociological research on small group interaction and the process of identification and groups formation (Cartwright and Harary, 1956; Davis, 1963; Durkheim, 1947; Heider, 1946, 1958; Homans, 1950; Festinger, 1957; Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954; Simmel, 1950). Giving sociological credence to the adage "birds of a feather flock together," investigators of small group process found that the sense of joining between two or more individuals was related to the degree of mutually perceived similarities

among them. These perceived similarities, having what Heider (1958) referred to as "unit forcing characteristics," could involve an infinite number of mutually shared attributes and characteristics, e.g., attitudes, beliefs, affects, needs, interests, experiences, capacities, activities, physical characteristics, tastes, objects, and most anything else that two people could have in common. The strength of an "alliance"—here defined as the joining together in some activity in pursuit of a common goal—from this perspective is related to the sum of all the attributes perceived to be held in common, in proportion to all those perceived as divergent. Clearly, such a mathematical formulation of the perceived degree of alignment in all likelihood does not directly match the experiential reality of it, though such formulations have proven quite accurate in predicting small group behavior within a laboratory setting (e.g., Caplow, 1956; Mills, 1953, 1954; Vinacke and Arkoff, 1957), as well as family behavior in such circumstances (Alexander, 1973).

The Nature of the Phenomenon:

I. Small Group Theories

Simmel (1950), the eminent sociologist, was one of the earliest to point out "an elementary differentiating tendency in the threesome; namely, segregation into a pair, and an other" (Mills, 1953, p. 351). Simmel further speculated that small differences in "power," "activity," and other characteristics of the members influenced the formation and persistence of such "coalitions." Several sociologists in the early 1950's attempted to find empirical evidence for these observations, by studying coalition formation in ad hoc triadic interactions (e.g. Caplow,

1956; Mills, 1953, 1954; Vinacke and Arkoff, 1957).

Mills (1953), for example, had college students who were grouped into triads make up TAT stories, scoring their interactions using Bales' (1950) system to derive coalition patterns. As predicted by Simmel, the two most active members formed a "solidary Alliance" (coalition), while the least active member was "relatively isolated." This pattern appeared to solidify over time, becoming increasingly rigid and polarized. Interestingly, when the two most active members did not form a reciprocal relationship and were competing for control, both attempted to align with the third member, creating a highly unstable situation of shifting coalitions.

In a later study, Mills (1954) found similar results while using college students who were alternately manipulated into a coalition/isolation position during a group discussion task. Coalition patterns were found to be more rigid when the isolated member was "insecure" (as determined by a pre-test TAT assessment). In this situation, the insecure member would become defensive and further isolate him/herself rather than any joining gestures toward the two aligned members.

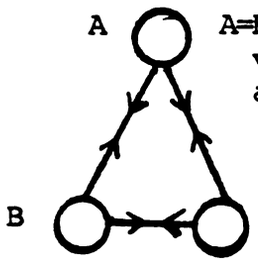
Caplow (1956) expanded on Mills' work, differentiating types of possible triadic relationships based on varying distributions of individual "power" between members. He further speculated on the probabilities of coalitions being formed in each case. He prefaced his predictions with several assumptions: (1) Members in a triad can differ in "strength" (the ability to influence each other and/or an outcome); stronger individuals can, and will, seek to control other; (2) Each member of a triad seeks control over the other two; control over two

others is preferred, though control over one is preferred to none; (3) Strength is additive, that is, the strength of a coalition is equal to the sum of the strengths of the two members.

From these assumptions Caplow delineated six types of triadic situations, and the likelihood of coalitions being formed in each. In a Type I situation, all members (A, B, and C) have equal power, each thus trying to form a coalition with another wherein they can share equal strength and be stronger than the isolated third member. In a Type II triad, member A is stronger than B and C, while B and C are equal and in combination stronger than A. Here B and C are likely to form a coalition against A. Type III involves A and B being equal in strength, with C being weaker. Caplow suggests that in this situation A and B will be competing for a coalition with C to gain power over the other one. In Type IV, A is stronger than B and C combined, thus no coalition is likely to be formed since nothing is to be overtly gained. Type V is a situation where no two members are equal, but a combination of any two is stronger than the third. Here there will be a variety of possible coalition formations, with the strongest two members vying to align with the third. The last case, Type VI, is one in which A is stronger than B, who is stronger than C, with A being stronger than B and C combined. Here again there will be little reason for coalitioning since nothing is to be gained in terms of power.

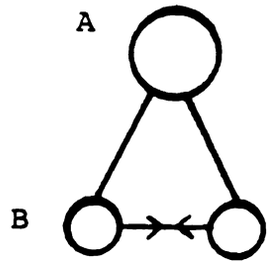
To clarify these patterns and the likelihood of which members will form a coalition in each situation, the various types of triads will here be diagramed: (arrows indicate a movement toward forming a coalition).

Type I



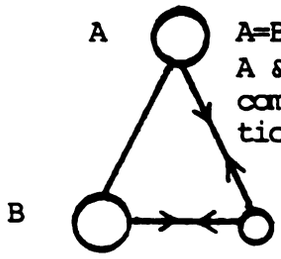
A=B=C
various coalitions likely

Type II



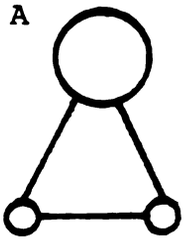
A > B; B=C;
A < B+C
BC coalition likely

Type III



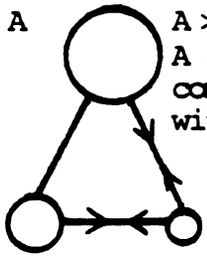
A=B; B > C
A & B likely to compete for coalition with C

Type IV



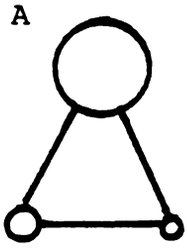
A > B+C; B=C
no coalitions likely

Type V



A > B > C; A < B+C
A & B likely to compete for coalition with C

Type VI



A > B > C; A > B+C
no coalitions likely

Vincake and Arkoff (1957) attempted to empirically test Caplow's (1956) formulations using thirty groups of undergraduate triads. Each triad played a dice game in which the Experimenter could regulate the members' relative strengths by determining how many multiples of the dice thrown each member was allowed (e.g., A being allowed to multiply his/her roll by 4, B by 2, and C by 1, thereby creating a Type VI situation wherein A > B > C and A > B+C). The findings generally confirmed Caplow's predictions as to when and which types of coalitions would be formed. The authors further noted that, "as the games continued, each member of this alliance (coalition) became increasingly reluctant to make overtures or entertain offers from the third member of the triad, since to do so would, as each openly expressed it, invite his ally to do likewise, with the result that security would be disrupted. . . . The third member of the triad attempted to break the alliance (coalition), even to the extent of offering to form a coalition when he drew the unbeatable position in Type IV or VI, but to no avail" (p. 414). The description here certainly would seem to fit one type of coalition pattern found in some dysfunctional families.

Two points need be made. First, as Haley (1962), Lennard and Bernstein (1969), Strodbeck (1954) and others have stressed, families are very different from ad hoc groups, since there are strong emotional, historical, and experiential ties between members. Thus, generalizing from ad hoc group behavior to families is likely to be very precarious. Indeed, Strodtbeck (1954) found family triads did <u>not</u> strictly fit Mills' (1953) predicted patterns of coalition behavior, instead showing less of a tendency to form dyadic coalitions against a third member (these

were nonclinic families). (On the other hand, Alexander (1973), in specifically studying the applicability of small group theory to families, found that such theories in fact were highly predictive of family behavior.)

Second, Simmel's (1950), Mills' (1953), and Caplow's (1956) formulations all imply a human propensity (drive?) for domination—that is, a desire to have control and power over others. It was argued throughout the current investigation that such behaviors are elicited in situations where the individual feels "psychologically unsafe" (Stollak, 1978). To reiterate the fourth assumption stated in the introduction of the present work, human beings are presumed to exhibit optimal intra/interpersonal behaviors when they feel psychologically safe—when they feel that their thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and experiencing of self, other, and environment are validated and valued by others (Stollak, 1978). It was postulated in the current study that healthy families foster this sense of psychological safety among their members, and thus one would not expect to find the patterns explicated by the above theoreticians in these families (note Strodbeck's (1954) findings).

It was further proposed in the current investigation that the degree of dysfunction in a family is an expression of the degree that the family environment is not experienced as psychologically safe by its members. Thus one would expect to find coalition patterns similar to those described by Caplow (1956) in dysfunctional families. Here the model would seem to fit quite well, for in such families "power issues" indeed appear to prevail, playing a major role in the formation of the coalition patterns that these families exhibit (see reviews by Beckman-

Brindley and Tavormina (1978) and Olson, et al. (1975)).

Thus, by changing Caplow's (1956) designations of "A," "B," and "C" to "Father," "Mother," and "Child," one perhaps could characterize the various family coalition patterns described in the family theory literature. For example, Haley's (1959, 1962) supposition that dysfunctional families are unable to form strong alignments, and instead form ever shifting, highly unstable coalitions between members, might reflect a Type I situation. This would imply that the "power" between members is equal, with the child being as influencial as the parents—a condition some researchers have observed in disturbed families (e.g., Haley, 1959, 1962; Minuchin, et al., 1967). Bowen's (1960), Lidz's, et al. (1963), and others' (e.g., Ackerman, 1958; Satir, 1964; Wynne, 1961) well known description of the mother-son coalition against a withdrawn father in the "schizophrenic family," would seem to fit a Type II situation. The mother's coalition with the son here presumably would derive from her concern that the father was in fact more powerful than her. Type III and V patterns might reflect the more "neurotic" families described by Satir (1964) and others (e.g., Beavers, 1977; Tiller, 1978), wherein spouses have relatively equal "power," yet are not fulfilling each others' psychoemotional needs. Both parents thus turn to the child to meet these needs, thereby competing to form a coalition with him/her. The child here is also used as a means of expressing anger toward the ungratifying spouse.

Having thus far reviewed some of the early sociological theories and research on triadic interaction patterns, a discussion of the major family theorists who have written on the subject will be given at this

point. The theories reviewed essentially speculate on the possible factors motivating the formation of coalitions, leaving out the possible factors involved in the development of alliances. Thus, after summarizing these theories on coalitions, the present investigator will explicate his own assumptions on the nature of alliances and coalitions. Though different theories will be outlined here, it should be made clear that the various factors discussed are not assumed to be mutually exclusive, but instead are likely to be interrelated and interactive.

II. Family Systems Theories

Coalitions as Deriving from Esteem Issues

Virginia Satir (1964), in a fashion reminiscent of Sullivan (1953) and Kohut (1978), bases her theory of human relationships on the need for esteem. Intra/interpersonal health, from her perspective, is equated with a strong sense of self worth, while intra/interpersonal discord is assumed to arise from a lowered sense of esteem. Thus, low self worth--particularly between the marital dyad--is interpreted to be the sin qua non for family dysfunction, leading to inappropriate cross-generational coalitions. Since both parents lack a strong sense of self esteem and do not help to foster this in the other, each turns to the children to "satisfy their unmet needs in the marital relationship" (Satir, 1964, p. 58). A parent-child coalition is thus formed in an attempt to gratify parental esteem needs.

The child, in turn, is continually pulled between the two parents, not being able to align, or not align, with either parent for fear of losing one or both of them. Psychoemotional pathology is the likely outcome, being an "SOS about his parents' pain and the resulting family

imbalance" (Satir, 1964, p. 2). As previously noted, this situation resembles Caplow's Type III and V coalition patterns, wherein two conflicted members compete to form a coalition with the third so as to gain power over the other and not feel isolated.

Coalitions as Deriving from Power Issues

Of the recent family theorists, Haley (1963) probably has most thoroughly elucidated the dimension of power in human interaction. Steeped in the ideas of Bateson (1958), Jackson (1965), Watzlawick (1964), and others of the "Palo Alto group," Haley views "power" as the ability to define one's relationship with another. He furthermore stresses that all human communication involves a meta-level that defines the nature of the relationship. In a manner similar to the sociologists previously discussed, Haley assumes that all human beings seek to have control over this ability to define one's relationships with others.

Individual, marital, and familial dysfunction here are viewed as involving a conflict over who will be allowed to define the relationship. Coalitions, from this perspective, are interpreted as being a means of attempting to gain such power. In a similar vein to Caplow (1956), Haley assumes power to be cumulative, and that family members--particularly the spouses--are covertly competing to form coalitions so as not to be left powerless and isolated. However, the members' disqualifying and disconfirming behaviors, stemming from a fear of taking a stand, result in these families having great difficulties in forming such coalitions. The triadic pattern manifested here would appear to be similar to Caplow's (1956) Type I situation.

In a later article, Haley (1967d) describes the proclivity in disturbed families for the parents to form a coalition which scapegoats the child. This is a situation not predicted by Caplow (1956), unless one assumes that the parents here experience the child to be more powerful than either of them, and thus unite against him/her as would be expected in a Type II case. A Type II pattern is explicitly referred to in Haley's (1967d) description of the "perverse triangle," which involves a cross-generational coalition against the other parent. Such triangles could also reflect Type III or V circumstances.

That the concepts of power and coalitions are often seen to be highly related is made clear by the fact that many researchers have used the same measures to assess both (e.g., Caputo, 1963; Mishler and Waxler, 1968; Riskin and Faunce, 1970a, 1970b, 1972)--a practice that Jacob and Grounds (1978) lament.

Coalitions as Deriving from Identity Issues

"Identification and confirmation of self . . . is one of the singularly important functions of human interaction" (Mead, 1934, p. 56). Mead here is noting an existential fact later developed by Sullivan (1953) into an entire school of psychology. Goffman (1959), Szaz (1961), and others have evolved this concept further from a sociological perspective, examining the intricate relationship between the personal and social self--that is, the degree to which intrapersonal identity derives from interpersonal social roles. Buber (1970) has eloquently explored this process from the perspective of philosophy.

Minuchin (1967; 1974) bases much of his understanding of family interaction on this issue of identity. Thus, he writes, "The family imprints its members with selfhood . . . (being) the matrix of identity" (Minuchin, et al., 1967, p. 47). Identity is more explicitly developed, according to Minuchin, through one's involvement in different family subsystems.* Thus, in experiencing oneself in different role relationships through the participation in different family subgroups (i.e. a boy's being simultaneously part of the children's subsystem, the male's subsystem, and the older siblings' subsystem), one's individual sense of self differentiates and evolves. Minuchin (1967) writes: "The subsystem organization of a family provides valuable training in the process of maintaining the differentiated 'I am' while exercising interpersonal skills at different levels" (p. 53).

What is the fundamental disturbance in dysfunctional families, Minuchin (1967) proposes, is the spouses' poorly developed sense of identity, which necessitates the formation and perpetuation of certain coalitions to define oneself. Thus, spouses "attempt to resolve the primary problem of defining a basic self-identity through the role of parent" (p. 220). A coalition with the children, or a specific child, is formed, therefore, in which the offsprings must remain in the role of children in order to fulfill the parents' identity needs.

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*The terms "subsystem" and "subgroup" is used interchangeably in the current study to denote a grouping of two or more family members based on certain shared characteristics, attributes, and/or role functions (i.e., parental subsystem based on role; child subgroup based on age).

Coalitions as Deriving from Boundary Management Issues

Bowen (1960, 1966), like Minuchin (1976), also places identify at the center of his conceptualization of family dynamics. His emphasis, however, is explicitly on the struggle for individuals to emancipate from the entwined psychoemotional bonds within their family of origin—what he refers to as the "undifferentiated family ego mass." The process here involves the universal struggle between merger and isolation previously discussed. Bowen's focus in on the mechanisms individuals and families use to maintain a balance between these two states —how individuals manage their boundaries to maintain a comfortable psychological distance between self and other. This subjectively perceived optimal distance greatly varies between individuals, and is dependent upon person, time, and context.[4]

A major way of gauging psychological distance between two individuals, according to Bowen, is through the use of a third entity, whether it be an activity, an ideology, a concern, or, more often, another person. It is through this "triangling" process (Bowen, 1976) that the intensity of intimacy can be managed. Here the third entity is used both as a means of bringing the dyad closer together—through the shared focusing on an object of mutual interest—and/or as a way of increasing distance by diverting attention off of the dyad an onto the external entity. Bowen (1966) summarizes: "The basic building block of any emotional system is the 'triangle.' When emotional tension in a two-person system exceeds a certain level, it 'triangles' a third person, permitting the tension to shift about within the triangle" (p. 368).

Such triangling involves the formation of coalitions, and thus, from this perspective, coalitions serve to control the intensity of ego fusion within the family ego mass, particularly between the spouses. Therefore, when the degree of intimacy between spouses is too great, one spouse can form a coalition with a child and thereby increase the psychoemotional distance with the other spouse. Similarly, when emotional relatedness is too weak, the spouses can form a coalition against the child, thereby creating a mutual source of connectedness. The child in this way becomes the monitor of parental difficulties along the "closeness-distance axis" (Hoffman, 1976), modulating the intensity of parental contact.

That coalitions serve to manage interpersonal boundaries, particularly as a means of increasing a sense of being joined, is stressed by O'Connor and Stachowiak (1971). Coalitions here are theorized to be "a frantic attempt by family members to recreate cohesion and solidarity by forming coalitions in any manner that might gain control, assuming an earlier failure of the initial parental dyad to generate a cohesive total group" (p. 241).

Coalitions and Alliances as Deriving from Psychological Safety Issues

Building on the theories of Maslow (1962) and Rogers (1961), Stollak (1978) has proposed that optimal human functioning occurs when one feels "psychologically safe"--when one perceives that his/her thoughts, feelings, and experiencing of the intra/interpersonal environment are validated and valued by others. Concomitantly, psychopathology is here interpreted to derive from a state of psychological dis-safety,

and that issues of esteem, power, identity, or boundary management, all involve the more fundamental issue of psychological safety. Thus, what would seem to be common and quintessential to all familial dysfunction is the failure to foster and maintain an environment that is experienced as psychologically safe by its members.

Coalitions, from this perspective, can be understood as deriving from a sense of psychological dis-safety--whether it be manifested in terms of esteem, power, identity, and/or boundary issues--and as being an attempt to assuage the resultant angst and duress. By their very nature, however, coalitions only perpetuate and exacerbate the sense of psychological dis-safety, for all family members are left in a precarious state of shifting allegiances, ever being the betrayer or the betrayed (Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark, 1973), and never knowing when they will be the isolated member.

Alliances, in contrast, would appear to arise in a context of psychological safety. Being, by definition, relationships based on feelings of enjoyment and respect between two or more people, and explicitly not involving the exclusion, extrusion, or alignment against a third person or entity, alliances are not an expression of psychological deficit--whether this be a lack of "esteem," "power," "identity," and/or "boundary" that is being aroused in reaction to some external entity. Instead, alliances are simply an expression of a desire for relatedness with an other due to an appreciation for his/her qualities, attributes, and characteristics. Thus, alliances do not involve "triangling" (Bowen, 1976) in the sense of forming and perpetuating a relationship based on colluding against some external other. They are a direct

exploration, celebration, and confirmation of the uniqueness of each individual, what Buber (1970) referred to as an "I-Thou" relationship. Similar to Fromm's (1956) description of love, alliances are created out of an admiration for the other, rather than a need for the other to fulfill some longing in oneself.[5]

Possible Explanations for the Pathogenic Effects of Coalitions

Coalitions can be postulated as being pathogenic for individual and family functioning from a diversity of perspectives, be they psychoanalytic or social learning theories. The focus of the present discussion will be specifically on the detrimental effects on children's psychosocial adjustment.

Conflict Arousal

As Haley (1967), Satir (1964), and others have noted, a parent-child coalition necessitates that the child be placed in a perpetual state of conflict, since he/she constantly is being pulled between the two parents. The child is not able to side with either parent for fear of losing the other, and yet cannot choose not to side for fear of losing both parents. Goldstein, Freud and Solnit's (1973) comments, though addressed to the possible consequences of divorce on children—where demands for coalitions against the other parent are likely to be more overt—are pertinent here:

> Children have difficulty in relating positively to, profiting from, and maintaining the contact with two psychological parents who are not in positive contact with each other. Loyalty conflicts are common and normal under such conditions and may have devastating consequences by destroying the child's relationship to both parents (p. 38).

One soon realizes, as Haley (1967) points out, that the Oedipal complex--the raison d' etre for all neurotic behavior, according to psychoanalytic thought (e.g., Freud, 1953; Fenichel, 1945)--actually involves a cross-generational parent-child coalition. Thus, the guilt, "castration anxiety," fear of abandonment, and other conflicts presumably evoked by the Oedipal situation and accounting for symptomatology, would appear to be aroused by a real or imagined parent-child coalition. Furthermore, such feelings would be excerbated by the parent's seductive behaviors toward the child, which collude with the child's unconscious impulses while not supplanting the development of his/her super-ego--a component of the psyche highly dependent on parental behaviors. In this regard, Lidz and Fleck (1967) write: "Parents who are irreconcilable in reality can give rise to irreconcilable introjects that create varying degrees of intrapsychic conflict and even of splitting of the personality with alternative 'ego' and 'superego' formations suited to each parent" (p. 44).

Lidz and Fleck's observation could be expanded from an object-relation perspective, leading to the speculation that a parent-child coalition, which by necessity reflects the lack of a parental alliance, would truncate the crucial development of internal object constellations (e.g., Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1969; Kernberg, 1976; Mahler, 1975). Thus, coalitions are pathogenic since, according to object relation theory, the child introjects his/her relationship with the parents, as well as his/her perception of the parents' relationship to each other, and thereby forms and develops internalized object representations which define oneself and determine one's perceptions and reactions to the

world (e.g., Kernberg, 1976; Mahler, 1975). A disruption in the external relationships, results in a disruptions at the internal level, which theoretically leads to dysfunctional psychosocial adjustment.

Interference with Identity and Role Formation

A pivotal assumption of most schools of psychological thought is that sex and role identity development is crucially influenced by the parent-child relationship (e.g., Bandura, 1969; Dollard and Miller, 1950; Freud, 1953; Kernberg, 1976; Satir, 1964; Stollak, 1978). Through identification with (e.g., Freud, 1953), and/or modeling after (e.g., Bandura, 1969; Dollard and Miller, 1950), the same sexed parent—in addition to observing how the parents interact with each other—the child forms his/her sense of sexual/role identity. In relating this to family alignments, Lennard and Bernstein (1969) write: "Role learning occurs . . . both through participation in a family subsystem and also through observing the operation of other family subsystems. Deficits in communication between mother and father . . . lessen a child's opportunity to learn or to internalize the respective role status involved" (p. 102).

The importance of positive parental relations for identity formation and self valuing discussed by Satir (1964), is further stressed by Lidz and Fleck (1967), who state, "The essential identification of the child with the parent of the same sex provides self-esteem only if the object of identification is acceptable to the other parent who should be a basic object choice of the child" (p. 44). To this Boszormenyi-Nagy (1967) adds, "In order to become a man, the boy must establish a role position in opposition to the mother, and not find a role in

imitiation of the father alone" (p. 69).

It becomes clear that a cross-sexed parent-child coalition, formed as a reaction to a poor parental alliance, thwarts the development of a strong sex-role identity by inhibiting the child's identification with the same-sexed parent, since such an identification would be a betrayal of the coalition with the other parent. Furthermore, there would be a devaluing of one's sex, generated by the internalization of the cross-sexed parent's negative reaction toward his/her spouse.

Coalitions disrupt identity development in a more general way, by confining the child to a set role that fulfills parental needs. As previously discussed, Minuchin (1967) has emphasized this fact in his analysis of the role of the family sybsystems in the development of the individual. Here involvement in different family subgroups is explicated as being crucial for identity formation and the acquisition of intra/interpersonal skills. Minuchin further points out that, "Interpersonal skills achieved in these subsystems is predicated on the subsystem's freedom from interference by other subsystems" (1974, p. 54).

Taking an Eriksonian (Erikson, 1950) developmental perspective of families, Titchener (1967) writes in this regard:

> The family's major contribution to ego epigenisis is toward a crucial organization of ego functions. This stage in development depends upon modes of perceiving others in relation to the self, upon perceiving others in relation to others, and finally upon the delineation of the self and others. These accomplishments can only be completed in the network of family relations and only in a family that has at least partially resolved the issue of basic trust vs. basic mistrust . . . permitting higher forms of relating than dyadic (p. 103).

Since coalitions, by their very nature, preclude the existence of a diverse, flexible alliance network between all family members that is necessary for optimal ego/self development, they severly hinder such identity formation and the acquisition of ego skills.

Though taking a very different position on the development of the individual, Jungian thought is also relevant to understanding the possible deleterious effects of coalitions, particularly those involving a mother-child exclusion of the father (Jung, 1971; Neuman, 1976). Central here is the assumption that development follows certain archetypal stages, with the mother initially bringing the infant physically and psychologically into the world, while the father brings the child into the society (Neuman, 1976). This transition is crucial, for it is the relationship with the father that pulls the child from the potential engulfment of the womb, mirroring the intrapsychic emergence of the ego from the all-encompassing Self. In this way, a mother-child coalition dangerously threatens the burgeoning forth of the child's ego, by heightening the pull toward the mother/Self, while stultifying the formation of an alliance with the father necessary for the liberation of ego. In a similar vein, Kernberg (1976), Leowald (1951), Mahler (1975), and others have also stressed the importance of the child-father relationship for intrapsychic/interpersonal development from an object relation standpoint.

Pertinent to note here is the research of Kellam (1977) and his colleagues who studied the relationship between adjustment and the combination of adults present in the home using a sample of several thousand latency age children. There was found to be a significant positive

association between high child adjustment and the presence of the biological father, or some other adult, in the home, whereas maladjustment was most strongly related to mothers rearing a child alone. Certainly there are a myriad of possible extraneous variables that could confound any conclusions drawn from these results, nonetheless the findings would appear to support the importance of the father's presence in the home, an importance emphasized by Hamilton (1977), Lamb (1976, 1979), and Stein (1977) in their recent examinations of the subject.

Coalitions as Entropic Systems

Coalitions would seem to be dysfunctional from a more general systems theory viewpoint--from the fundamental tennet that entropy increases in relation to a systems impermeability to external input (Ashby, 1960; Buckley, 1968; Gray, et al., 1969; Miller, 1969; Von Bertalanffy, 1968). As Hoffman (1975) notes, "A system too much connected with itself will not be able to follow a path of trial and error and accumulate adaptations in a short amount of time" (p. 466). Without free exchange of information across subsystem boundaries, "deviation-amplifying processes" (Hoffman, 1971) are likely to ensue, whereby maladaptive responding between system components (e.g., members in a coaltiion) increases. Coalitions involve such boundary rigidification which limits information exchange between individuals, family subsystems, and the outside world, and thereby stultify flexible adaptiveness.

III. Possible Explanations for the Salutary Effects of Alliances

In contrast to coalitions, alliances are based on a respect and valuing of the integrity and uniqueness of the individuals in the

relationship. They are quintessentially a celebration and cultivation of self, and thereby foster esteem, autonomy, and individuation. Though the literature has ubiquitously stressed the importance of a positive spouse alliance and the lack of a parent-child coalition for the development and maintenance of psychoemotional health in the child (e.g., Beavers, 1977; Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1967; Bowen, 1976; Haley, 1967; Lennard and Bernstein, 1969; Lewis, et al., 1976; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1964), the present investigator again would like to emphasize his observation that health in family is characterized more specifically by the ability for family members to form mutual, simultaneous alliances among themselves. Such relationships are appropriately differentiated in terms of age and role in the family, and are not based on a response to an other who is excluded or extruded from the subgroup.

In this way, the child is allowed to experience a variety of roles and functions in different family subsystems, thereby fostering a sense of identity and enhancing intra/interpersonal skills (Minuchin, 1967). Furthermore, the child's sexual identity is validated through observing the parents' valuing of each other (Leonnard and Bernstein, 1969; Lidz and Fleck, 1967; Satir, 1964), as well as through their direct valuing of him or her. Observance of positive parental behaviors also increases ego skills via modeling (Bandura, 1969; Dollard and Miller, 1950).

FOOTNOTES

[1]Recently, Edward O. Wilson (1975), the controversial sociobiologist who has explored this subject from a biological perspective, has argued that such behaviors serve a preservatory function and thus are genetically predisposed. Hoffman (1975) has argued along similar lines, speaking of an ornate empathic distress response.

[2]The results of Lewis' et al. research here are corroborative of the most of the studies previously cited which used "normal" controls broadly defined as not having a member who has sought psychological help. It may be that much of the variance that distinguished this group from dysfunctional families, and many of the behaviors that were found to typify their interaction patterns, could be accounted for by the few highly competent families that inadvertently took part in these studies.

[3]Noteworthy here is that caregiver behaviors hypothesized by Stollak (1978) as being conducive to the development and maintenance of competence in children would appear to augment this individuation process. Thus, in clarifying and validating the child's thoughts, feelings, and experiencing, while expressing one's own, the caregiver is highlighting differences between the child and him/herself while valuing the uniqueness of both.

[4]Feldman (1979) has discussed the issue of the fear of intimacy, delineating five possible reasons for this fear, these being: (1) a fear of merger; (2) a fear of being exposed and rejected for one's flaws; (3) a fear of attack, either due to intimacy having been associated with an early distressful environment or Oedipal fears; (4) a fear of abandonment, whereby in gaining one object the person fears the loss of the other object (i.e. in gaining mother, one fears losing father); (5) a fear of one's own destructive impulses and the ensuing loss of the object.

[5]It could be argued here that admiration for an other always involves recognition of, and/or striving toward, some repressed aspect of the self (e.g., Jung, 1971)--indeed, alliances are based at least in part on some mutually perceived commonality and identification. However true this may be, such relatedness does not derive from a deficit motivation (i.e. a fear that one will perish if they are not like the other), but rather from an actualization motivation (i.e., the striving to be more of what one is (Jung, 1971; Maslow, 1962)). Clearly, we have moved into the realm of philosophy here, a realm surfeit with equivocalities and exceptions.

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