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PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR
IN HIGH- AND LOW-AUTONOMY COLLEGE STUDENTS

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PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR IN HIGH- AND LOW-AUTONOMY COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

Sally W. Haithman

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR
IN HIGH- AND LOW-AUTONOMY COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

Sally W. Haithman

Based on theories of aversive maternal control, and Lidz's (1965) concepts of family skew and schism, it was hypothesized that perceived parental Dominance and Submission would interact with sex of the subject in differentiation failure or success. It was further hypothesized that persons who were less autonomous would perceive their parents as more Hostile and Dominant than would more autonomous persons. Using self-ratings from Benjamin's (1979) Chart of Social Behavior, groups of relatively more and less autonomous college students were identified.

Neither hypothesis was confirmed. However, an interaction was found between mothers' Affiliation and sex of the subject. Males describing themselves as less autonomous, and females describing themselves as more autonomous, perceived their mothers as being more Friendly. Between-group differences in variance also suggested that the groups varied in the character of their perceptions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. John Hurley for his patient assistance with numerous revisions of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to clarify the nature of students' perceptions of their parents, and the relationship of these perceptions to success in the individuation process. College students are in a transition period from adolescence to adulthood, in which previously untested perceptions about self and others are being subjected to scrutiny in the "real world". Some find that their approach to new events allows them to assimilate and learn from their experiences, while others find themselves trapped within old perceptions of the world which become increasingly inaccurate and maladaptive.

Benjamin(1979) has described individuation success or failure in terms of interpersonal perceptions. It was proposed that these perceptions are largely determined by interactions with parents and significant others, in two ways. First, previous interpersonal experience creates similar expectations for other situations. Benjamin also proposed that parental behavior is introjected, thereby creating either a self-sustaining or self-destructive internal environment. Persons who individuate successfully were found to have two characteristics: an accepting, friendly attitude toward themselves, and faith in their ability to exist independently. The opposite was true for persons who were less successful. They were

found to be hostile towards themselves and others, and permitted themselves to be controlled by others.

Much of Benjamin's theory is based on observations of extreme differentiation failure, or schizophrenia. Benjamin's subjects were found to perceive their parents as both hostile and dominant, and also as engaging in confusing double-bind control tactics. It is not known whether normal college students who are relatively low in autonomy have similar perceptions of their parents.

The present study will apply Benjamin's theory to a normal student sample, in order to determine if the same relationship exists outside of psychiatric populations. In addition, the study will test hypotheses based on Lidz et al.'s concept of skewed and schismatic families. Lidz et al. hypothesized that the relative dominance or submission of each parent interacts with the sex of the child in determining his/her eventual ability to differentiate from the family. This theory was also developed based on observations of schizophrenics, and the present study will test its applicability to other populations.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

I. Differentiation Failure as Described on the Chart of Social Behavior

Before describing differentiation failure it is necessary to discuss the concepts underlying Benjamin's (1979) Chart of Social Behavior. This instrument is based on the assumption that interpersonal behavior can be classified along two dimensions: Affiliation and Autonomy. In this respect it is similar to models proposed by other researchers (Leary, 1957; Schaefer, 1959; Carson, 1969).

Earlier models have arranged behaviors in circular fashion around vertical and horizontal axes representing, respectively, the Dominance-Submission and Love-Hate dimensions.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The proportions of Dominance or Submission and Love or Hate present in a given behavior can be determined by its position on the circle. For example, managerial, responsible behavior falls close to the Dominant end of the vertical axis. Dominance decreases as we move downward around the circle, until we find the behavior "following orders" near the Submissive end of the axis. Since the Dominance-Submission and Love-Hate dimensions are orthogonal, behaviors which fall near the horizontal axis (such as seeking friendship or hostile

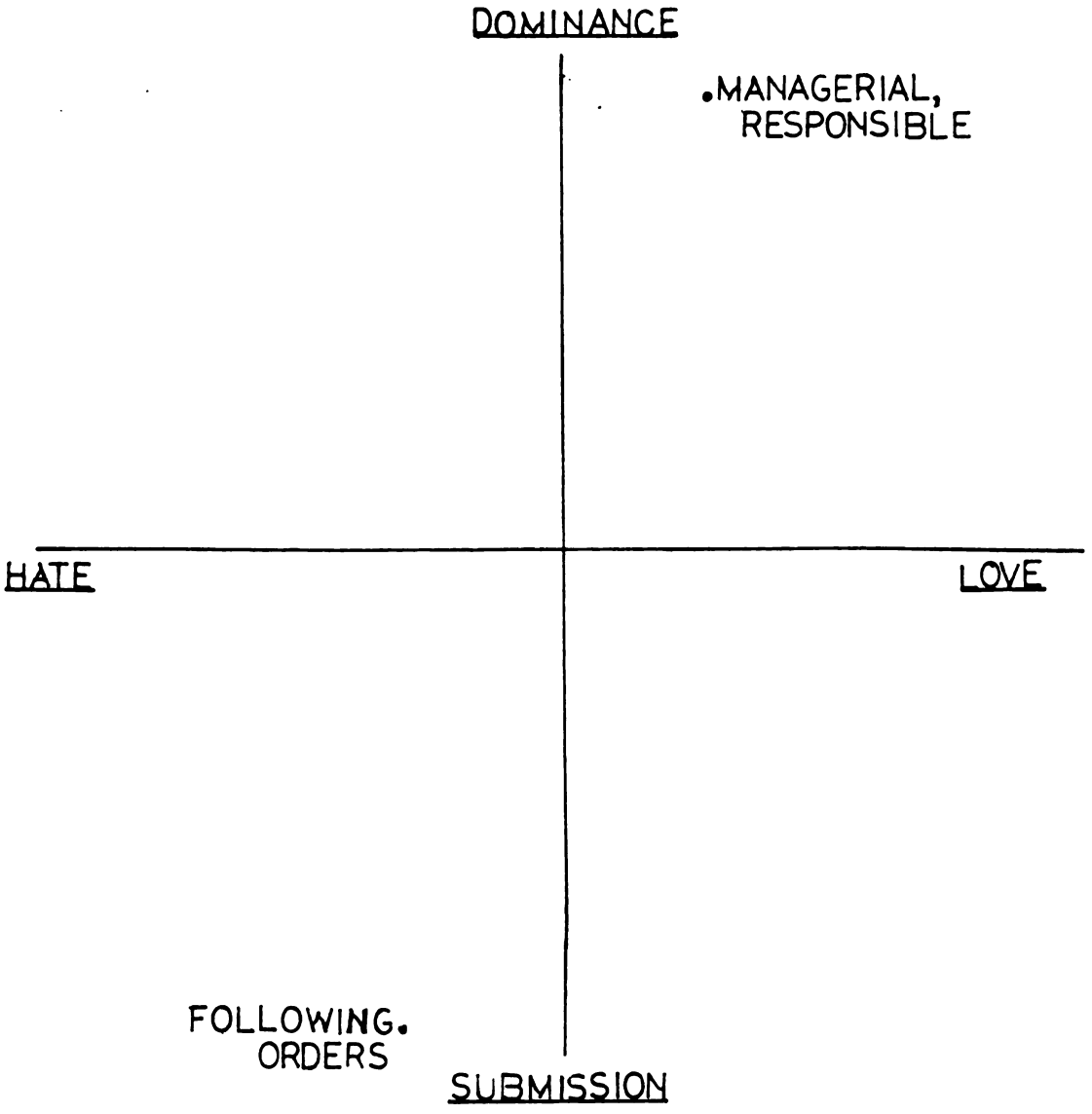


FIGURE I. TWO DIMENSIONS OF INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR

attack) are assumed to contain no elements of Dominance or Submission. Behaviors containing various proportions of the four basic qualities are ordered between the ends of the axes.

Another important concept in describing interpersonal behavior is complementarity. In early models, Dominant behavior was assumed to stimulate a response containing a similar proportion of Submissiveness. Along the Love-Hate dimension, behavior is assumed to stimulate a response from the same end of the continuum.

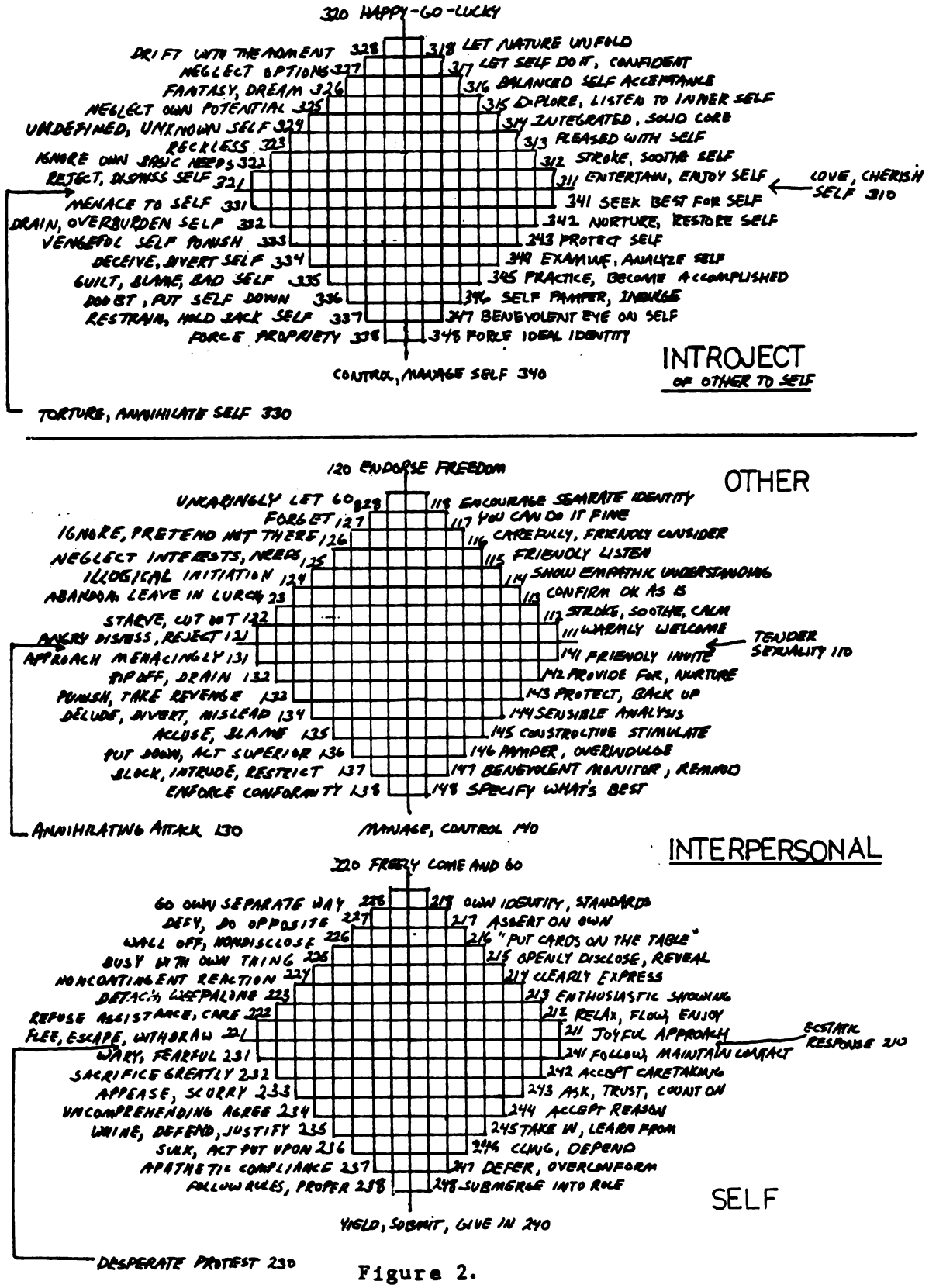
Benjamin's model replaces Dominance and Submission with the Autonomy dimension, on the grounds that persons who are compelled to dominate others have no more freedom than those who are dominated. In addition, it incorporates three planes representing active initiating (or Parentlike), passive responding (or Childlike), and introjected behaviors. The Introject plane represents the subject's attitudes toward him/herself, and the characteristic mode of relating to others. A complete diagram of the Social Behavior Chart is seen in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

In addition, behavior is placed on one of several surfaces. Surface 1, Introject, has only one plane representing the self. The other surfaces each contain two planes, representing Parentlike and Childlike behaviors. There are three of these surfaces, as shown in Figure 3.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Figure 2. Complete Chart of Social Behavior


320 HAPPY-GO-LUCKY
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NEGLECT OWN POTENTIAL 325
UNDEFINED, UNKNOWN SELF 324
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DECEIVE, DIVERT SELF 334
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RESTRAIN, HOLD BACK SELF 337
FORCE PROPRIETY 338
318 LET NATURE UNFOLD
317 LET SELF DO IT, CONFIDENT
316 BALANCED SELF ACCEPTANCE
315 EXPLORE, LISTEN TO INNER SELF
314 INTEGRATED, SOLID CORE
313 PLEASED WITH SELF
312 STROKE, SOOTHE SELF
311 ENTERTAIN, ENJOY SELF
LOVE, CHERISH SELF 310
341 SEEK BEST FOR SELF
342 NURTURE, RESTORE SELF
343 PROTECT SELF
344 EXAMINE, ANALYZE SELF
345 PRACTICE, BECOME ACCOMPLISHED
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CONTROL, MANAGE SELF 340
INTROJECT
OF OTHER TO SELF
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OTHER
UNCARINGLY LET GO 128
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IGNORE, PRETEND NOT THERE 126
NEGLECT INTERESTS, NEEDS 125
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117 YOU CAN DO IT FINE
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MANAGE, CONTROL 140
INTERPERSONAL
220 FREELY COME AND GO
GO OWN SEPARATE WAY 228
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WALL OFF, NONDISCLOSE 226
BUSY WITH OWN THING 225
NONCONTINGENT REACTION 224
DETACH, DISPLAY 223
REFUSE ASSISTANCE, CARE 222
FLEE, ESCAPE, WITHDRAW 221
WARY, FEARFUL 231
SACRIFICE GREATLY 232
APPEASE, SCURRY 233
UNCOMPREHENDING AGREE 234
WHINE, DEFEND, JUSTIFY 235
SULK, ACT PUT UPON 236
APATHETIC COMPLIANCE 237
FOLLOW RULES, PROPER 238
218 OWN IDENTITY, STANDARDS
217 ASSERT ON OWN
216 "PUT CARDS ON THE TABLE"
215 OPENLY DISCLOSE, REVEAL
214 CLEARLY EXPRESS
213 ENTHUSIASTIC SHOWING
212 RELAX, FLOW, ENJOY
211 JOYFUL APPROACH
ECSTATIC RESPONSE 210
241 FOLLOW, MAINTAIN CONTACT
242 ACCEPT CARETAKING
243 ASK, TRUST, COUNT ON
244 ACCEPT REASON
245 TAKE IN, LEARN FROM
246 CLING, DEPEND
247 DEFER, OVERCONFORM
248 SUBMERGE INTO ROLE
YIELD, SUBMIT, GIVE IN 240
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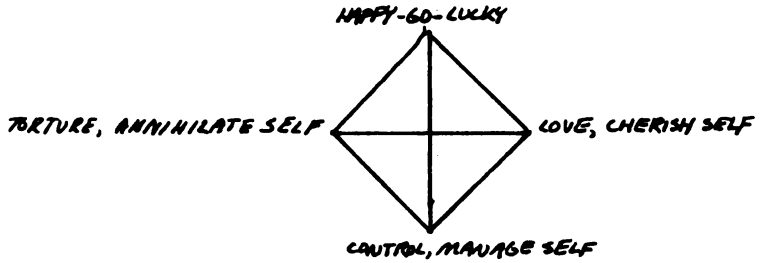
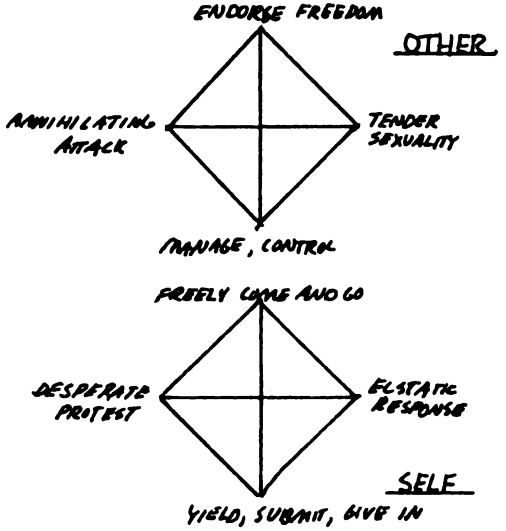
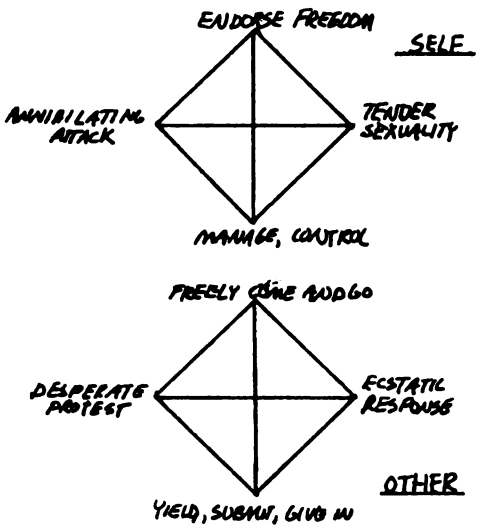
Figure 2.



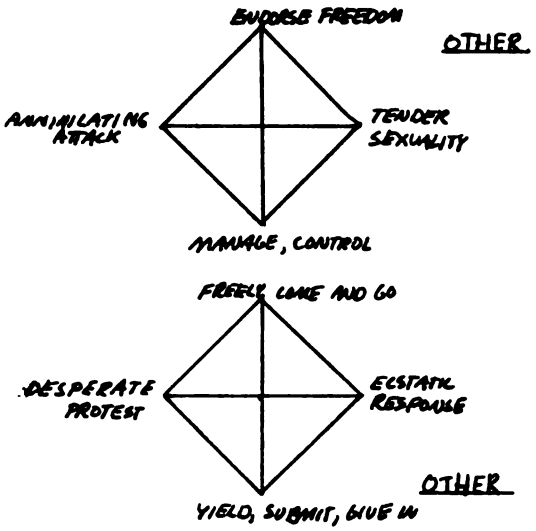
SURFACE 1, INTROJECT OF OTHER TO SELF



SURFACE 2.
OTHER ACTS, SELF RESPONDS



SURFACE 3.
SELF ACTS, OTHER RESPONDS



SURFACE 4.
OTHER #1 ACTS,
OTHER #2 RESPONDS

FIGURE 3. SURFACES OF CHART OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

To rate interpersonal behavior, subjects complete a behavioral checklist. The list is comprised of behaviors from each point on the perimeter of the chart; subjects rate each of these for frequency and/or intensity on a scale of 0 (completely false) to 100 (completely true). Based on the subject's ratings, it is possible to compute Affiliation and Autonomy scores, which estimate the subject's overall behavior in the relationships being rated. In this study, these two scores will form the basis for hypothesis testing. Some scores on individual tracks (or behaviors between the axes) will also be examined.

According to this model, persons with some degree of differentiation failure should have a behavioral average falling within the lower half of the chart. In Benjamin's observations of schizophrenics, the behavioral average was within the Hostile-Submissive quadrant. Complementary behavior was also evidenced by the parents, placing their behavioral average within the Hostile-Dominant quadrant. These subjects also had a Hostile-Submissive introject, reflecting internalization of the parents' hostile, demanding attitudes.

Benjamin stated that hostile parental control may also exist in the form of a double bind. In this case parental behavior would come from two quadrants: Hostile-Dominant and Friendly-Dominant. Benjamin viewed this as evidence supporting the entrapment hypothesis, in which she proposes that the children of schizogenic families are "held captive under the guise of love". Stated in terms of the circumplex model, this means that the parents engage in Friendly-Dominant behavior, but only unless the child complies with their demands. Hostile-Dominant behavior is always

present as a threat if the child tries to make independent decisions.

II. Validity of Benjamin's Measure

Internal consistency of the Social Behavior Chart was found to be high for normal subjects (Benjamin, 1974). Autocorrelations among points on the circle were large and positive for adjacent points, zero for orthogonal pairs, and large and negative for pairs of opposites. Internal consistency was also thought to mean that descriptions would be consistent over time.

Internal consistency was often lower for psychiatric populations (.81 vs. .97). This was thought to represent the conflictual and ambivalent nature of their relationships. High, positive correlations between pairs of opposites were frequently present. This finding is valuable because it demonstrates that conflictual relationships are as accurately portrayed as uniformly positive or negative ones. It also means that double bind relationships can be represented on the chart. The subject's inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the conflicts does not affect their accurate description by this method. These data are based on an earlier version of the measure. In a 1979 article, Benjamin states that the version used in the present study has greater reliability, although no details are given.

III. Research Supporting the Entrapment Hypothesis

A basic condition in the development of differentiation failure is the presence of a hostile, domineering approach to childrearing in at least one parent. Early research in this area has focused mainly on the mother, although some hypotheses about the father's role have also been advanced. Some of these studies have employed circumplex models similar to Benjamin's. Others, while not employing this model directly, have produced results in the same direction.

The concept of hostile parental control originated in work with the families of schizophrenics (Bateson, Jackson, Haley & Weakland, 1956), which led to the development of double bind communication theory. According to double bind theory, the child is exposed to contradictory communication from the mother. The mother overtly maintains an attitude of love and protectiveness, while her behavior covertly communicates rejection and domination. The child learns to perceive the world as dangerous and incomprehensible, and him/herself as incompetent and unable to cope with it.

Elements of hostile control and hostile dependence are evident in this theory, although it was not originally described in these terms. It was also hypothesized that the father could participate in this process, either by behaving in the same way as the mother, or by openly disagreeing with her. In the second case, the double bind is created when the child is always rejected by one parent for pleasing the other.

The existence of aversive double bind control in schizogenic families was also documented by Laing and Esterson (1965). These researchers described the process of "mystification", in which

the identified patient begins to feel that he/she has no control over his/her behavior, and no identity apart from the family. At this point, the person also begins to experience his/her own affect as external, in the form of hallucinations or paranoid delusions. Without exception, parents of these persons were found to engage in hostile control, which they attempted to disguise by bizarre distortions in perception and communication.

More recently, aversive control has been separated into two classifications: binding and expelling (Stierlin, 1978). In the binding mode, the identified patient is bound to the family by regressive gratification and demands for total loyalty, usually in combination with disordered communication. The expelling mode is described as complete, overt rejection, which forces the child into precocious autonomy. The expelling mode is viewed as potentially less damaging. If the child does not succumb to total emotional deprivation, he/she is at least free to develop corrective relationships outside the family. This is not true of the binding mode, since the child in this family lives by a set of rules which makes forming relationships difficult, if not impossible.

Heilbrun (1973) found that normal adolescents with adjustment problems came from similar family environments. Using an interpersonal circumplex measure (Schaefer & Bell, 1958), Heilbrun identified college students who perceived their mothers as hostile and controlling. These students were found to have deficiencies in social skills and cognitive functioning. In addition, types of aversive control similar to Stierlin's binding and expelling modes were described. In one of Heilbrun's styles the mother maintained control by open rejection and criticism. In the other, control was of a double bind,

guilt-inducing nature.

There is some evidence suggesting that the aversive control element is the same in "normal" and schizophrenic disorders. The difference may lie in the presence or absence of communication disorder. Stierlin (1978) and Lidz (1978) have hypothesized that communication disorder (in the form of abnormal rules for interaction) is the factor which determines how fully a child will be able to separate from the pathogenic family system.

Benjamin (1979) included hostile parental control among the conditions necessary for psychosis (or complete differentiation failure) to occur. The necessary conditions are:

1. Irrational, double-binding parental control;
2. Symbiotic fusion;
3. Implicit sexual bonding;
4. Introjection of parental attacks on self-esteem;
5. Learned helplessness and dependency;
6. Experience of vicious retaliation by the parents.

Benjamin also pointed out that the child interacts with the outside world as well as with the family. While the family has a powerful influence on the quality of other relationships, intervention by a benevolent teacher, friend, or other person may still promote normal individuation. In Benjamin's conceptualization, differentiation failure exists along a continuum, with severity linked to the number of pathogenic factors.

The present study will attempt to replicate Benjamin's findings about aversive parental control, the first of the necessary conditions for differentiation failure. Given that this will be done using a

normal student sample, it can be expected that not all of the other necessary conditions will occur. These would also require extensive testing and observation of the students' families, which are beyond the scope of the present study.

No hypotheses will be tested concerning conditions 2 through 6. It is hypothesized that students who are less autonomous will perceive their parents as more Hostile and more Dominant.

IV. PARENTAL DOMINANCE AND SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO DIFFERENTIATION FAILURE

As described in the last section, aversive control inhibits the child's individuation from the family. Within this framework, the relative dominance or submission of each parent also plays a part in determining individuation success or failure. Overall, research evidence suggests that the child is especially vulnerable to differentiation failure if his/her opposite-sex parent is dominant in the parents' relationship.

There is some disagreement on this point, but this may be due to the confounding effect of social class in some studies. Parental dominance and submission seem to have the greatest importance in middle-class families, where more emphasis is placed on acquiring traditional sex-role behaviors. But there is some indication that parental Autonomy has some influence beyond the learning of traditional sex roles.

A major theory in this area was developed by Lidz, Fleck and Cornelison (1956). According to the theory there are two types of schizogenic families: schismatic and skewed. In schismatic

families there is open disagreement, with each parent trying to undermine the other's authority and personal worth. Usually the father holds a dominant position, while the mother tends to be the degraded underdog.

Children in these circumstances have a number of alternatives, all of which are harmful to psychological development. One possibility is for the child to become a go-between, and try to stop the conflict by satisfying both parents' unmet needs. Another is for the child to attempt to widen the gap between the parents, in order to win one parent's affection for him/herself. The parental conflicts may also at times create a double bind situation, in which one parent is always displeased.

Lidz et al. believed that this situation led to the internalization of two disparate objects, causing the child to experience perpetual inner conflict. In addition to the child's real distress, becoming ill was also thought to serve a function for the other family members by diverting their attention away from their own problems, maintaining the image of a stable family.

The other type of discord was termed "family skew". In these families one parent (usually the mother) is clearly dominant, and the other is clearly submissive. The mother often engages in bizarre and intrusive childrearing practices, while the father does little or nothing to prevent it. Family life is often arranged to accomodate the mother's eccentricities. In both types of families disordered communication was thought to be necessary for schizophrenia to develop.

Lidz et al. hypothesized that one way these families create psychosis is by interfering with normal sex role identification.

The researchers held that male children must have a strong father, who will break the initial mother-child symbiosis and encourage aggressive "masculine" traits. It was believed that females must be able to accept a passive, receptive role. To accomplish this the mother must provide a warm, accepting role model, and the father must be a suitable love object.

Therefore skewed families were thought to be more pathogenic for male children, and schismatic for females. The demeaned, low status position of mothers in schismatic families, combined with fathers' confusing mixture of seductiveness and disparagement, makes the female role unacceptable. In skewed families the weak, passive fathers do not "rescue" their sons. They remain tied to their mothers rather than becoming independent.

Recent research tends to confirm Lidz' hypothesis, although the results are inconclusive. The father's role remains relatively unexplored, although there is abundant data concerning the mother's influence upon interpersonal style. There is also a scarcity of research concerning parental Dominance and Submission as they influence the child's individuation. However, some inferences may be drawn from studies of the father alone.

Study of the father's role is complicated by several factors. Fatherless families are likely to be worse off financially than motherless families, and subject to increased stress on this ground alone. In addition, if the father is present, his usual role as family breadwinner undoubtedly influences his interpersonal behavior within the family. It is virtually impossible to study the father's influence separately from socio-cultural factors. There is also

a scarcity of research on the father's contribution to differentiation failure, which makes it necessary to draw conclusions based on other types of psychological disturbance.

Hunt and Hunt (1977) introduced social class as a factor in their study of father-absent girls. It was hypothesized that father-absent middle-class girls would be better off, in terms of assertiveness and autonomy, than father-absent lower-class girls. The explanation given for this was that since middle-class fathers have a high enough income to support their families by themselves, there is more chance for traditional sex role behaviors to exist. Middle-class girls from intact families are therefore more likely to observe their mothers in submissive, traditional female roles. This was thought to be less true for lower-class girls, who often observe their mothers as family breadwinners, closer to their fathers in status.

The findings of this study are confounded by a tendency for Black subjects to be concentrated in the lower class, and White subjects in the middle and upper classes. However it was found that father-absent White (and middle-class?) subjects achieved better grades in school than father-present White subjects. This was not true for father-absent Black subjects, who showed only a tendency to date more frequently than father-present Black subjects. In this study, father absence had little or no impact when economic factors were taken into account. This finding tends to refute the hypothesis that both parents interact in determining the psychological adjustment of their female children.

However it is possible that closer examination of subjects'

personality characteristics would reveal differences not detected by measuring school achievement. In addition, it appears that while father absence is not harmful to girls' development, the presence of a hostile, domineering father definitely is. Shaw (1977) observed that young women complaining of "interpersonal difficulties" all had some conflict with their fathers. In all cases the fathers had rejected or denied their daughters' developing sexuality. Women with more severe difficulties described their fathers as critical and humiliating.

Shaw concluded that since the father provides his daughter's first contact with men, his approval is crucial in the daughter's acceptance of her femininity. Other findings may have some bearing on the nature of the father's influence. It was found that women who were able to resolve their problems in short-term therapy had conflicts mainly with their fathers. Those requiring longer therapy had conflicts with both parents, and viewed their mothers as demanding, dependent and unreliable. This seems to support Lidz et al.'s hypothesis that parental interaction is an important contributor to severe psychological disorder. It is not known whether the same pathogenic dyad exists in the backgrounds of better-adjusted college students.

Green (1976) discussed the father's role in relation to daughters. and also concluded that the father influences daughters' self-esteem and acceptance of femininity. Again, a cruel or domineering father was considered to be worse than no father at all. Green also corroborated the findings of Hunt and Hunt (1977), stating that father-absent girls may have a greater chance to become independent

and assertive. Small (1979) has also found that the father's presence can be worse than his absence. Psychopathology was measured in terms of a discrepancy between real and ideal self, in adolescent girls. Father-present disturbed girls showed an even greater discrepancy than a comparable group of father-absent girls.

For males, it is also clear that a bad father is worse than no father at all. The difficulty lies in deciding which paternal behaviors are harmful. Green (1976, p.93) noted that sons of distant, abusive or domineering fathers had numerous problems. Among these were impulsivity, overaggressiveness, and low self-esteem. On the other hand, sons of passive, childlike fathers have also been found to have increased psychological problems and anxiety (Goldstein, 1977).

The main consequence of father-absence for males seems to be a less successful heterosexual adjustment. Green (1976, p.80) proposed that this may be due to lack of opportunity to observe their fathers and mothers together. One other characteristic of father-absent males was described, which was a tendency towards intuitive, non-logical thinking rather than analytical detachment. Mead and Rekers (1979) also described father-absent boys as more effeminate, and having greater difficulty with sexual adjustment. These researchers also found that father absence affects sexual adjustment in females, but to a lesser extent.

In summary, the father's influence cannot be studied based on father-absence research alone. There appears to be greater potential for both psychological health and disturbance in children when both parents are present and interacting. For females an overly dominant father seems to be most harmful, while fathers of males

apparently can be harmful if they do not strike a balance between dominance and submission. The father's influence in normal families seems to be mainly upon sexual adjustment, for both males and females.

Research on father absence is often confounded by socio-cultural factors. This is true in studies of middle-class families, where "normal" sex role behaviors for women (submissiveness and dependency) might be considered somewhat maladaptive. Father absence appears to reduce this negative socialization, and this may lead to erroneous conclusions about the father's contribution to personality development.

The other case in which economic factors may confound results is extreme poverty. In studies of extreme lower-class families (Kellam, Ensminger & Turner, 1977; Adams & Horovitz, 1980) it was found that father absence was less important than the families' economic security as a predictor of childrens' psychological well-being. In families where father absence caused extreme financial hardship, it is quite possible that any alternative produced better adjustment, whether this meant living with a father or any significant other. However, there may have been differences which were obscured by, or seemed less important than, the struggle for basic survival.

In light of the conflicting conclusions concerning fathers' influence upon their sons' psychological well-being, and the possible confounding effects of social class, no specific hypotheses will be formulated concerning Autonomy within the parental dyad and the students' success at individuation. These factors will be measured and examined for possible differences.

METHODS

I Data Collection

Subjects were 48 male (X_{age} 19.85) and 48 female (X_{age} 19.41) undergraduates, who received course credit for participating in the study. Six male and five female subjects were from Lansing Community College; the rest were from Michigan State University. Data were collected during the summer and fall terms of 1980.

Subjects who arrived for testing completed a form providing demographic data (age, sex, parents' occupations and parents' education). They then received copies of the Benjamin questionnaire, which were completed at home and returned the following week. No instructions were given on how to answer the questions, other than those included with the questionnaire.

More data were obtained than were actually used. Data on subjects' behavior toward others, and others' behavior toward the subject were obtained, but only the latter were used. Approximately 5% of the questionnaires were discarded due to subject errors in completing them. About twice as many females as males signed for the study, and data were collected until a sufficiently large male sample was obtained. Female data were then discarded at random. For both males and females, 47 of 48 subjects were from intact families, with both parents present at least through childhood

II. Data Analysis

Data analysis was a 2 x 2 multivariate ANOVA, with Sex and Interpersonal Style as dependent variables. Interpersonal Style was determined using scores from the Introject plane, which represents the subject's overall approach to others and him/herself.

Nearly all subjects placed within the right half of the Introject chart, as shown in Figure 4. The sample as a whole also fell slightly on the Submissive side of the Autonomy axis. The sample was found to be slightly more friendly than a student sample previously tested by Benjamin (Note 1): $\overline{X} = 107.52$ vs. Benjamin's 97.50. Male students in the present study were more Autonomous ($\overline{X} = 9.29$ vs -10.00) and females less Autonomous ($\overline{X} = -23.02$ vs. -15.00) than Benjamin's sample. Two Interpersonal Style groups were identified: High and Low Autonomy.

Insert Figure 4 about here

It can also be seen that all subjects were relatively friendly, and that the main difference between Interpersonal Style groups was in Autonomy. This means that conclusions based on these data will probably hold more true for Autonomy than for Affiliation. However, Autonomy may be the more important dimension in the study of differentiation from the family.

Since each student was rated along two dimensions, it was not feasible to use a median split to separate High and Low Autonomy groups. Instead, Low Autonomy was defined as the 24 subjects of

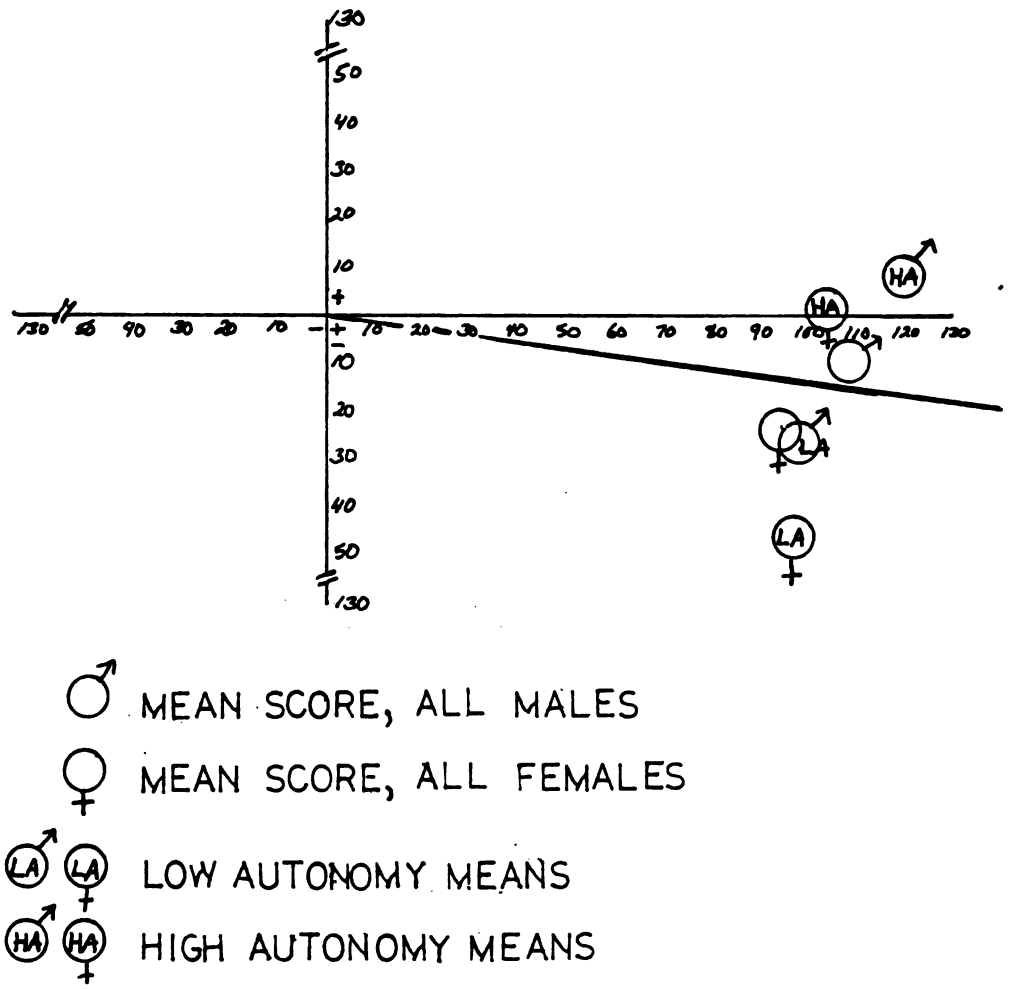


FIGURE 4. MEAN SCORES ON INTROJECT PLANE

each sex falling closest to the lower vertical axis. This resulted in a dividing line which was slightly slanted, and close to the horizontal axis,as shown in Figure 4. Autonomy and Affiliation did not prove to be significantly correlated ($r = .0007$). It therefore seemed necessary to divide subjects based on both scores, rather than discarding the Affiliation scores altogether.

Dependent variables were measured as follows:

1. Mother's Affiliation and Autonomy Toward Subject (MS Affiliation, MS Autonomy) were taken from Surface 2. This surface describes the mother's behavior toward the subject, as perceived by the subject.

2. Father's Affiliation and Autonomy Toward Subject (FS Affiliation, FS Autonomy) were also taken from Surface 2 scores.

3. Mother's and Father's Consistency of Behavior (MS Consistency, FS Consistency) are measures of how regularly a parent's behavior toward the subject occurs in the same quadrant. This score is produced based on autocorrelations between points around the circumference. Positive values indicate that behavior is consistent, since correlations between adjacent points are high. Zero values indicate unpredictablility, while negative vaules indicate contradictory, bouble bind behavior.

4. Mother's Autonomy Toward Father, Father's Toward Mother (MF Autonomy, FM Autonomy)--These scores are taken from Surface 4 of the chart, which shows the subject's perception of the parents' behavior towards each other, and their responses to each other.

5. Mother's Affiliation Toward Father, Father's Toward Mother (MF Affiliation, FM Affiliation) scores are also taken from Surface 4.

6. Mother's and Father's Control (M Control, F Control)

were computed using scores from Surface 4, and reflect complementarity along the Autonomy dimension. Control scores are the percentage of behaviors in the lower half of the chart which are endorsed by both parents.

A weighted sum of Dominant or Submissive behavior is computed for both planes of Surface 4, for both parents. For example, assume that the mother receives three endorsements in the lower half of the chart on the Parent plane, as illustrated in Figure 5.

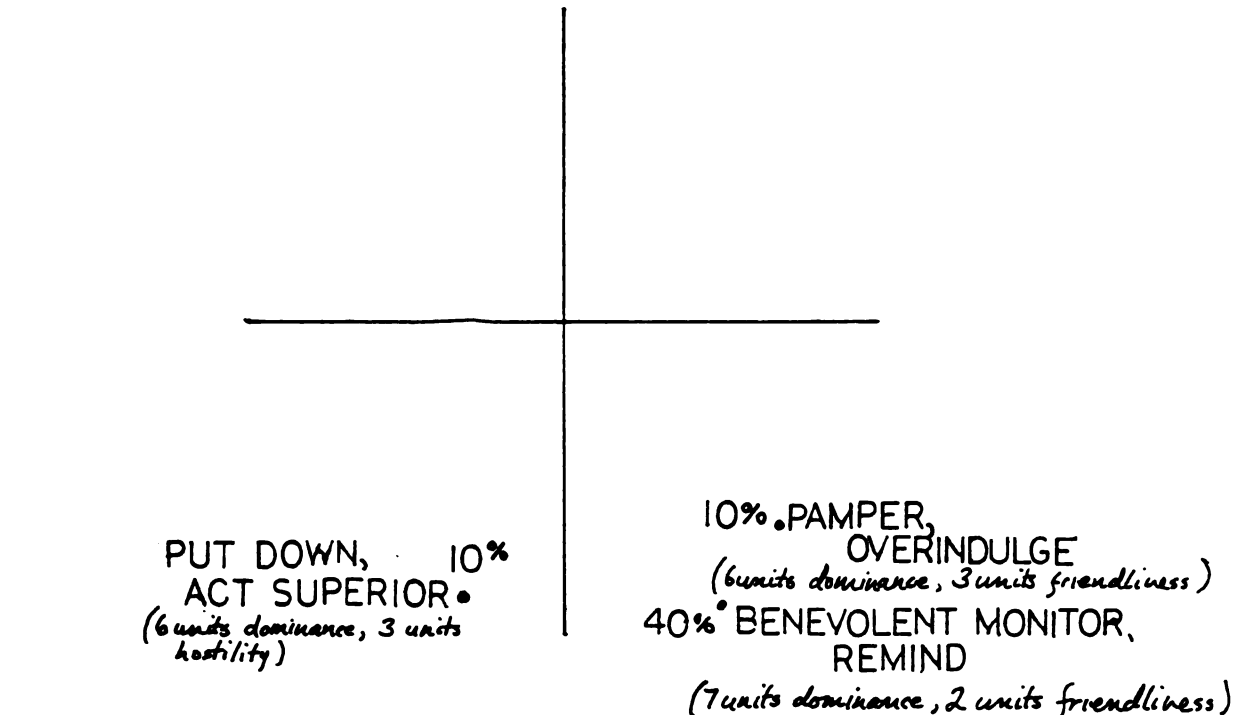
Insert Figure 5 about here

The mother's Control score would therefore be [(.1 x 6)+(.4 x 7)+(.1 x 6)], or 4. As shown in Figure 5, the father has received two endorsements in the lower half of the Child plane, representing his response to the mother. His Submission score is [(.1 x 6)+(.1 x 8)], or 1.4. $\frac{1.4}{4.0}$ equals .35, and this is the M Control score. It indicates that approximately 35 percent of the mother's Dominant behaviors receive a complementary Submissive response.

F Control was computed using ratings from the father's Parent and the mother's Child plane scores. Since subjects did not consider one parent's Dominance when rating the other's Submission, it was possible for a parent's Control score score to exceed 1.0.

7. Social Class was computed according to Hollinghead's (note 2) Two-Factor Index. Information about the head of household's education and occupation are combined to yield a social class score, with possible scores between 11 and 77. Smaller numbers indicate higher social class.

Both education and occupation are placed in one of seven



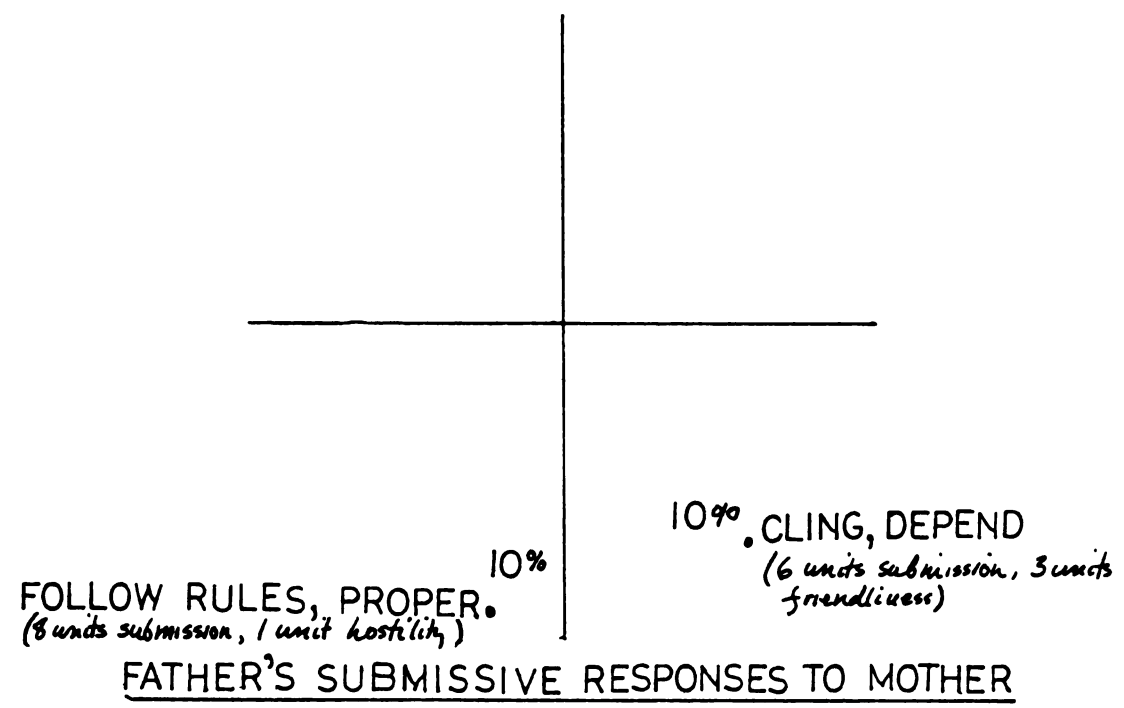


FIGURE 5. EXAMPLE FOR COMPUTATION OF M CONTROL

possible categories. The education category number is multiplied by 4, and occupation by 7. The two products are added to produce the final score. In all cases, the social class score was based on data from the parent designated head of household by the subject.

RESULTS

A preliminary examination of the data revealed significant correlations between many of the dependent variables, as shown in Table 1. Figure 6 depicts the intercorrelations of dependent variables in diagrammatic form, and also illustrates clusters of variables which have the strongest relationships.

Insert Table 1 about here

Insert Figure 6 about here

Not surprisingly, students perceived their parents as behaving similarly toward their spouses and their children. In addition, subjects viewed their parents as tending to have partners who were more similar to themselves along the Affiliation than along the Autonomy dimension. It is also interesting to note that these inter-dimensional correlations (MS Affiliation vs. MS Autonomy, $r = .05$; FS Affiliation vs. FS Autonomy, $r = .11$, etc.) were generally not statistically significant. This finding supports the assumption

Table 1. Intercorrelations of Dependent Variables

	SEX	AGE	SOCLASS	MS AFFIL	MS AUTO	FS AFFIL	FS AUTO
SEX	--	-09	-03	15	-11	18	07
AGE	-09	--	08	-05	-07	00	06
SOCLASS	-03	08	--	-12	-07	-23[c]	00
MS AFFIL	15	-05	-12	--	05	59[a]	11
MS AUTO	-11	-07	-07	05	--	-08	29[b]
FS AFFIL	18	00	-23[c]	59[a]	-08	--	11
FS AUTO	07	06	00	11	29[b]	11	--
MS CONSIST	19	-17	-10	62[a]	-04	48[a]	14
FS CONSIST	15	11	-13	38[a]	-12	55[a]	04
MF AFFIL	10	04	-19	65[a]	-04	48[a]	14
MF AUTO	-04	-19	-05	23[c]	33[b]	03	13
FM AFFIL	12	-05	-26[b]	50[a]	-04	86[a]	02
FM AUTO	23[c]	-05	-06	15	13	22[c]	52[a]
M CONTROL	07	-05	05	00	-03	-33[a]	19
F CONTROL	03	-09	21[c]	00	10	-32[b]	35[a]

Decimal points omitted

[a] $p \leq .001$

[b] $p \leq .01$

[c] $p \leq .05$

Table 1., continued

MS CONSIST	FS CONSIST	MF AFFIL	MF AUTO	FM AFFIL	FM AUTO	M CONTROL	F CONTROL
20	15	10	-04	12	23[c]	07	03
-17	11	-05	-19	-05	-05	05	-09
-10	-13	-19	-04	-26[b]	-06	05	21[c]
62[a]	38[a]	65[a]	23[c]	50[a]	15	00	01
-04	-12	-04	33[b]	-04	13	-03	10
48[a]	55[a]	53[a]	03	86[a]	22[c]	-33[a]	-32[b]
14	07	-03	13	02	52[a]	19	35[a]
--	35[a]	46[a]	03	47[a]	17	-14	-03
35[a]	--	38[a]	-02	46[a]	06	18	06
19	38[a]	--	32[b]	60[a]	11	-32[b]	-19
-12	-02	32[b]	--	07	23[c]	-04	03
46[a]	46[a]	60[a]	07	--	13	-34[a]	-32[b]
17	06	11	23[c]	13	--	-05	11
-14	02	-32[b]	-04	-34[a]	-05	--	46[a]
-03	06	-19	04	-32	11	46[a]	--

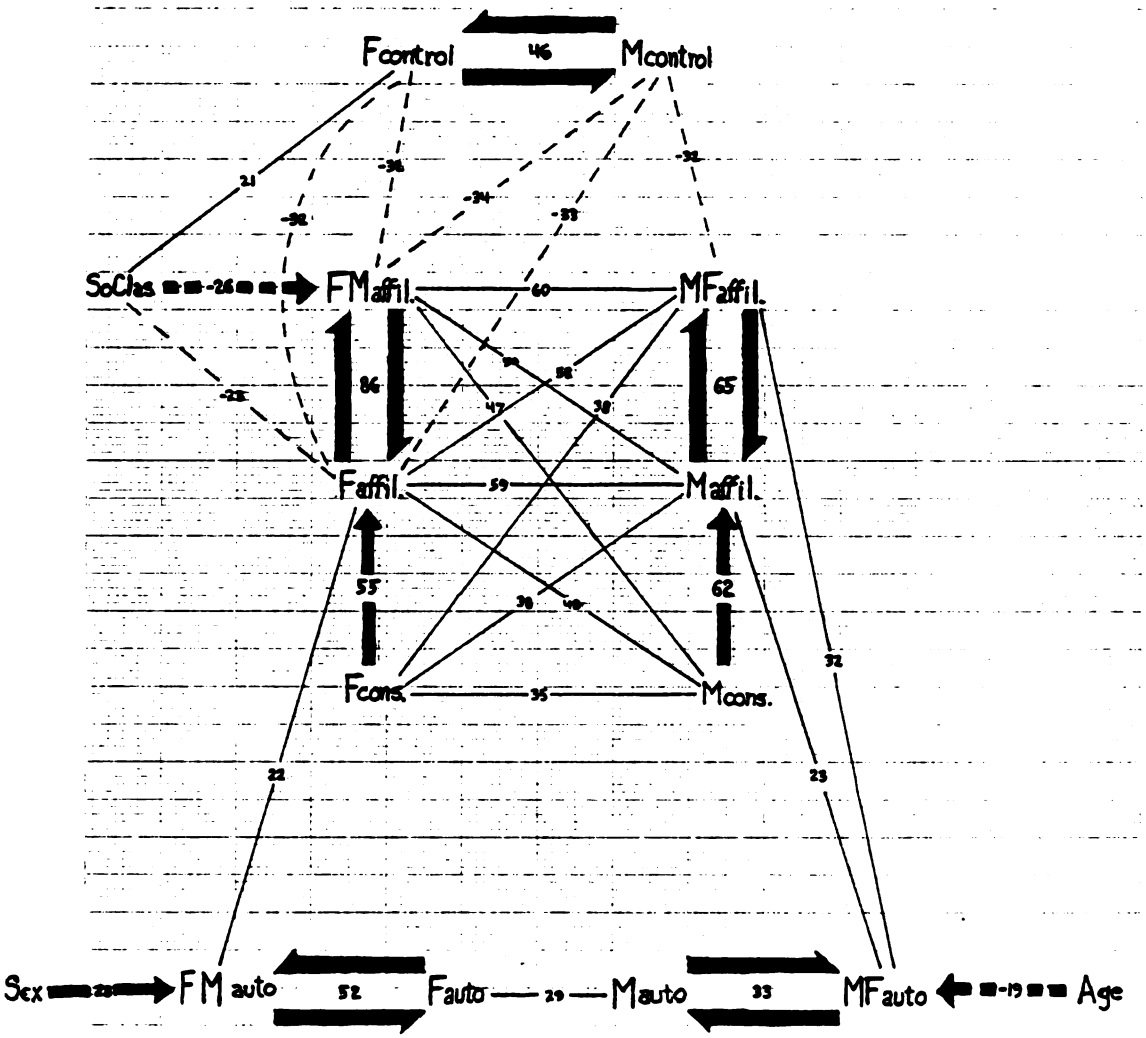


Figure 6. Cluster Diagram of Intercorrelations

Thick arrows show typal linkages (McQuitty, 1957). Double bonds identify cluster cores. Additional linkages that reached statistical significance are shown by lighter lines. Most correlations were positive, but inverse correlations are depicted by broken or dashed lines.

that these are the orthogonal basics of behavior.

The group means and standard deviations for dependent variables are presented in Table 2. The test for significant differences was a multivariate ANOVA, which was performed in stages due to the numerous significant correlations among the dependent variables. MANOVA was selected to control for the fact that several observations were made for each subject. The observations are therefore not independent, and are not suitable for repeated univariate F-tests. Univariate F-tests were used to determine which dependent variables were responsible for significant multivariate effects.

Insert Table 2 about here

The first stage of the analysis revealed a significant interaction effect between Sex and Interpersonal Style upon subjects' perceptions of their mothers. Univariate F-tests showed that this effect was due to variation in MS Affiliation. Neither Sex nor Interpersonal Style had a significant effect separately.

Table 3. Multivariate Tests of Significance, MS Affiliation and MS Autonomy

Effect	Wilks' Λ	Approximate F	Hypothesis DF	Error DF	Signif. F
Interaction	.92	3.96	2	91	.02
Sex	.97	1.37	2	91	.26
Interpersonal Style	1.00	.57	2	91	.61

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations (in parentheses) of Dependent Variables

INTERPERSONAL STYLE

VARIABLE	Low Autonomy		High Autonomy	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Social Class	26.71 (19.43)	26.04 (17.19)	35.13 (14.63)	32.37 (20.01)
MS Affiliation	129.88 (45.84)	113.84 (83.03)	91.17 (74.90)	139.63 (37.64)
MS Autonomy	-7.54 (35.83)	-24.44 (35.05)	-11.30 (30.08)	-9.13 (30.35)
FS Affiliation	99.45 (84.70)	110.76 (91.95)	59.91 (85.86)	107.29 (73.87)
FS Autonomy	-2.83 (28.33)	-14.24 (39.26)	-23.26 (37.62)	-1.96 (36.11)
MS Consistency	0.95 (0.08)	0.87 (0.31)	0.77 (0.34)	0.97 (0.03)
FS Consistency	0.82 (0.33)	0.86 (0.27)	0.64 (0.47)	0.80 (0.31)
MF Affiliation	141.83 (54.69)	120.68 (75.87)	93.17 (80.07)	154.42 (94.61)
MF Autonomy	0.92 (24.96)	-7.32 (25.26)	1.65 (22.91)	5.79 (22.92)
FM Affiliation	128.75 (87.50)	125.88 (87.00)	78.57 (89.53)	128.63 (76.35)
FM Autonomy	-7.75 (31.47)	-6.76 (33.42)	-12.35 (28.83)	7.13 (41.42)
F Control	1.08 (1.18)	0.92 (1.00)	0.75 (0.62)	1.13 (1.08)
M Control	0.78 (0.48)	1.81 (7.34)	1.15 (2.18)	0.94 (0.65)

All N's = 24

Table 4. Univariate F-Tests, MS Affiliation and MS Autonomy (DF 1, 92)

Variable	SS Between	SS Within	MS Between	MS Within	F	Signif. F
MS Affiliation	24929.1	369814.9	24929.1	4019.7	6.20	.02
MS Autonomy	2181.9	100113.6	2181.9	1088.2	2.01	.16

In the next step, FS Affiliation and FS Autonomy were introduced as dependent variables, with MS Affiliation and MS Autonomy as covariates. FS Affiliation and FS Autonomy did not vary significantly between groups, beyond their correlation with the mother's behavior.

Table 5. Multivariate Tests of Significance, FS Affiliation and FS Autonomy

Effect	Wilks' Λ	Approximate F	Hypothesis DF	Error DF	Signif. F
Interaction	.96	1.62	2	89	.20
Sex	.98	.94	2	89	.40
Interpersonal Style	.98	.79	2	89	.48

The remaining dependent variables (MF and FM Affiliation and Autonomy, MS and FS Consistency, M and F Control, and Social Class) were then introduced, with the preceding dependent variables as covariates. MANOVA did not reveal any significant effects, although MF Affiliation reached significance in univariate F-tests. This may well have been a false rejection of the null hypothesis, since F-tests are not reliable in the absence of significant multivariate effects.

Table 6. Multivariate Tests of Significance, MF and FM Affiliation and Autonomy, MS and FS Consistency, and M and F Control

Effect	Wilks' Λ	Approximate F	Hypothesis DF	Error DF	Signif. F
Interaction	.88	1.35	8	81	.23
Sex	.97	.33	8	81	.95
Interpersonal Style	.94	.60	8	81	.77

DISCUSSION

The correlations between the perceived Affiliation ($r = .59$) and Autonomy ($r = .29$) of mothers and fathers toward the subject has implications for one of Benjamin's hypotheses concerning differentiation failure. Benjamin stated that a child may be "rescued" from differentiation failure if he/she has one healthy parent. The may be possible in theory. But these data suggest that relatively few pairs of one pathogenic and one normal parent would be found. This is particularly true of Affiliation; only 12 of 96 subjects placed one parent on the Hostile side of the Social Behavior Chart, and the other on the Friendly side. It should be emphasized that these conclusions are based only on the subjects' perceptions of their parents, and might, therefore, be entirely different if the entire family were observed.

Benjamin also stated that double binding, inconsistent behavior

must be present along with aversive parental control to cause differentiation failure. This is another theory which may be difficult to test in practice. There were substantial correlations between Affiliation and consistency of behavior for both mothers ($r = .62$) and fathers ($r = .55$). This suggests that inconsistency may be an outgrowth of a hostile orientation, rather than a separate dimension of interpersonal behavior.

It may also be difficult to ascertain which parent has more power in the marital relationship. The correlation of .46 between variables M Control and F Control (intended to measure power-taking) shows a substantial positive linkage where a negative correlation was expected. Apparently controlling behavior by one parent does not always produce a submissive response by the other. Or at least there may not be a static distribution of power in the parental relationship.

Since power-taking increases simultaneously for both parents, there may be two marital styles for sharing power, rather than a clear division into dominant and submissive roles. In one style the parents would function independently. In the other, the parents might take turns trying to control each other, with the result that neither is autonomous.

It should be noted that these variables concern only perceived interpersonal behavior within the parental dyad. It is possible that one parent might have more power than the other when measured by different standards. For example, one parent might be a scapegoat for the other, and appear submissive even though engaging in his/her own control maneuvers. There might also be a difference in social power, such as

a successful executive married to a "mere housewife". The definition of power should be taken into account when applying these findings to Lidz et al.'s concepts of family skew and schism. In view of the positive correlation ($r = .46$) between maternal and paternal Control, it may be useful to characterize entire families as either power-taking or independent.

F Control is also linked slightly and inversely ($r = .21$) to social class (high social class score indicates low social class). This shows a tendency for lower-class fathers to engage in more power-taking behavior. These fathers were also viewed as less friendly toward their wives and children. This is in disagreement with the hypothesis that middle-class fathers are more likely to play a dominant role in the family than lower-class fathers. However, the same points regarding the definition of power may be relevant here.

Tests for homogeneity of variance were performed for all dependent variables. The results of these tests suggest that there may have been some difference in the character of subjects' perceptions, although the group means did not differ significantly. Table 7 shows Cochran's C and Bartlett-Box F statistics for variables having significant differences in variance.

Table 7. Univariate Tests for Homogeneity of Variance

Variable	Cochran's C	Bartlett-Box F
MS Affiliation	.43 P=.02	6.10 P=.00
MS Consistency	.53 P=.00	36.87 P=.00
M Control	.78 P=.00	38.48 P=.00
F Consistency	.44 P=.01	2.62 P=.05
F Control	.35 P=.18	3.11 P=.03

The most remarkable differences occurred for M Consistency, M Control, and M Affiliation. For all three variables there appears to be an interaction effect between Sex and Interpersonal Style. Males in the High Autonomy group perceived their mothers as less consistent, less friendly, and more controlling (see Table 2), and demonstrated greater variance in their perceptions.

Variance in the Low Autonomy group was significantly smaller. Low Autonomy males also perceived their mothers as more friendly, more consistent, and less controlling. One explanation for this might be that Low Autonomy males felt a need to deny negative feelings toward their mothers, and tended to report an idealized version of them. This seems intuitively more acceptable than an interpretation that increased maternal friendliness and consistency leads to poorer adjustment in sons. However, this would require further testing to confirm.

The reverse was true for female subjects. In this case it was the High Autonomy group which had a combination of small variance and more positive perceptions. For females, an idealized perception appears to be an asset, if these data do in fact represent an idealized perception. It is possible to speculate from this that males must be able to perceive their mothers realistically to become psychologically healthy, while females benefit more from the presence of an ideal female role model.

An interaction effect also occurred for F Control. For this variable it is High Autonomy sons and Low Autonomy daughters who may have more idealized perceptions. This is consistent with the hypothesis that the same-sex parent serves as an ideal role model, while the opposite-sex parent must be perceived realistically.

However there appears to be no similar effect for the variance of F Consistency, and no significant effect was present for FS Affiliation. This suggests that the effect for father perceptions is not as strong. Or the father may be important mainly as he is perceived as behaving toward the mother, rather than as a primary determiner of interpersonal style.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall these findings added little to our knowledge of the family dynamics behind successful individuation in college students. This does not mean that family dynamics are unimportant. Nor does it mean that the mother has sole responsibility for the child's personality development, although only the mother's behavior emerged as to be significant in this study. Perhaps few pathogenic mothers exist within healthy families, as indicated by the substantial positive intercorrelations between students' perceptions of both parents.

It is also likely that family dynamics are important in more subtle ways that were missed by the present approach of measuring basic interpersonal orientation. This sample is probably at least fairly representative of the college student population, and it is unlikely that significant results would be obtained by replication of the present study.

These data suggest that the character of perceptions varies between groups more than did the actual ratings. This conclusion is mainly speculative, based on differences in variance. In cases where variance is smaller, this may signify a more rigid, less reality-oriented perception of the parent involved. In these cases the subjects appear to be saying "Mother was always good to me", as opposed to "Mother was not always perfect, but she was usually O.K."

If this is true, Low Autonomy subjects may tend to idealize their perceptions of the opposite-sex parent, while High Autonomy subjects tend to idealize the same-sex parent. This is consistent with the Lidz theory discussed earlier: that male children show greater psychopathology in skewed families, while schismatic families have such effects on females. If an idealized perception of the same-sex parent promotes normal individuation, perceiving that parent as a devalued scapegoat would do much to prevent it.

At the same time these data appear incongruent with numerous findings that linked aversive maternal control with differentiation failure. The present male subjects who described themselves most favorably also described their mothers as somewhat less friendly. It is possible that this is due to the nature of the questionnaire, which relies entirely on the subjects' self-reports. It is therefore only as accurate as the subjects are honest, and it is quite possible that less well-adjusted subjects made an attempt to conceal family difficulties. It is also possible that this was due to the subjects' own unawareness or denial of family problems, rather than to a conscious effort to appear well-adjusted.

It should be emphasized that these conclusions (apart from those concerning MS Affiliation) are based solely upon significant differences in variance. They require confirmation by further research, directed toward clarifying the nature of subjects' perceptions, as well as some external verification. A more extensive study of family interactions, with ratings made by outside observers, would be helpful in this regard.

Along with observer ratings, it would also be helpful to clarify what is meant by parental dominance and submission. For example, is it most meaningful to define this in terms of one parent obeying the other? This definition was used in the present study, and no significant results were obtained. The researchers cited earlier have observed something unusual in the parental relationships, but it may well be something more complex than obedience.

Thus, they may have observed one parent repeatedly discounting the other's feelings and perceptions without necessarily demanding obedience or subservience. In extreme cases the parents may have attempted to force each other into imaginary, need-determined roles, by psychotic distortion if necessary. In a way this is the ultimate in hostile domination; pretending the other person does not exist. However this might easily be missed or distorted by interpersonal ratings of dominance and submission. Much of the research cited was based on clinical observations that something was wrong, but quantifying this may be a difficult task.

A study combining interpersonal ratings with some type of intrapersonal data might also shed some light on the relationships in question. The present findings suggest that persons who describe

themselves as relatively low in Autonomy may have a more rigid, idealized perception of their opposite-sex parents. Perhaps a study of ego defenses might help clarify this, by revealing the degree of flexible, reality-oriented functioning present in each of the four groups. This might also by useful in studying possible differences between Low Autonomy perceptions of the opposite-sex parent, and High Autonomy perceptions of the same-sex parent. Both of these might be idealized, but it is likely that some differences exist.

One methodological change would also be helpful in future studies of interpersonal style. This would be selection of more extreme groups of well and poorly-adjusted persons. While it seems unlikely that differentiation failure is an all-or-nothing phenomenon, between-group differences might be more pronounced if more extreme groups were included. It is unlikely that significant differences in these data were camouflaged by unequal within-group variances, since analysis of variance is robust with respect to heterogeneity of variance.

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