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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN TWO-CHILD FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Twenty-six intact, upper-class families with only two children ages seven through fourteen, responded to questionnaires designed to compare conflict management strategies within and across families. All family members participated. The purpose of this research was to determine if children modeled conflict management strategies that parents used either with each other or with them. While the results suggested that children do model strategies that their parents used with them particularly, as opposed to those that spouses used with each other, children used Direct Physical Aggression with siblings, and their parents did not report using it at all. Couples primarily used Reasoning, Withdrawal, and Denial of Privileges to manage spouse conflict. They used these same strategies to manage parent-child conflict, but in addition parents used Verbal Aggression with their children. In resolving sibling-sibling conflict, children also used these strategies as well as Direct Physical Aggression which they neither observed in the family, nor experienced directly. Although some modeling was evident, and children were more similar to their fathers than to their mothers, conflict management strategies used by adults and children depended on the individuals involved and the context.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

It is important to understand how families manage conflict in order to make interventions clinically when strategies are dysfunctional within the family system. It is not yet fully known how children acquire conflict management strategies although parents clearly have a strong influence.

The purpose of this research is to answer the following questions: Do parents and children have common conflict issues? Do children model strategies that they observe their parents using with each other to manage marital conflict? Do children model strategies that their parents use with them during parent-child conflict?

It is hoped that the answers to these questions will help elucidate how children acquire conflict management strategies. Comparisons are made of strategies used within families.

Rationale/Framework

Conflict theory (Barry, 1970; Sprey, 1971, 1979; Straus, 1974, 1979a; and Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980), and Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1974; Bandura and Huston, 1961; Bandura and Walters

1963; and Maccoby, 1961), together provide a framework for understanding how families manage conflict. Conflict as a process is defined as ". . . a confrontation between individuals, or groups, over scarce resources, controversial means, incompatible goals, or combinations of these" (Sprey, 1979, p. 134). Within families there may be unequal resources, different goals, and a variety of means for attaining such goals, all of which may lead to intrafamily conflict. Because of these characteristics, conflict within the family may be viewed as a natural aspect of family interaction. Social Learning theory, which postulates that children learn in part by example, provides a framework in which to examine the extent to which children model conflict management styles used by their parents.

Conflict theory views conflict not only as a natural aspect of daily living, but as a constructive force. According to Coser (1956):

Conflict is not always dysfunctional for the relationship within which it occurs; often conflict is necessary to maintain such a relationship. Without ways to vent hostility toward each other, and to express dissent, group members might feel completely crushed and might react by withdrawal. By setting free pent-up feelings of hostility, conflicts serve to maintain a relationship (pp. 47-48).

Conflict within the family is not necessarily a negative force that creates disequilibrium among its members. If families do not express their divergent views and feelings including hostility, the relationships are likely to become increasingly distant. By permitting expression of conflicting views and emotions, relationships within the family may be strengthened. Charney (1974) noted that conflict can generate energy which can be turned back into the family in a creative

manner. Conflict within the family may be seen as a constructive force when it is dealt with directly.

Conflict theory assumes that as humans, we are by nature self-oriented. Members of families will look out for their best interests and seek to have their own needs met first (Sprey, 1979). Because of this, there will be conflicts of interest within families. The inability to cope with such conflicts suggests a lack of strength and stability within the family. At the same time, the more intimate the group, the more its members seek to suppress rather than express negative feelings (Coser, 1956). Acknowledging the existence of conflict within the family and expressing one's self-interest, albeit a difficult task, may be effective in strengthening the family.

Conflict theory makes an important distinction between conflicts that are resolved, and those that are managed. Conflicts are resolved only if a solution is found that is permanent. Such a solution within a family often necessitates a fundamental structural change within the family system. A structural change within a family, for example, might involve a member of the family moving out. A resolved conflict will not recur. Conflict management, on the other hand, assumes that situations creating conflict will repeat themselves and will continue. Such conflicts will be ongoing due to the "underlying competitive structure of the family" (Sprey, 1979, p. 135), and therefore no permanent solutions will be found. Conflicts of this nature are managed. An example of such a conflict would be a child being sent to his/her room as a punishment for talking back to a parent. Such a situation will be managed as it will likely continue over a period of

time. The conflicts described in the research are likely to be repeated and therefore managed as opposed to resolved.

Borrowing from Rapoport, Sprey (1979) developed a "taxonomy of marital and family conflicts," which is applicable to this research. He described conflicts as endogenous or exogenous, symmetrical or asymmetrical, and dyadic or nondyadic. The conflicts described in this research are endogenous, symmetrical and asymmetrical, and dyadic. Endogenous conflicts within a family are those that occur within the pre-existing family system where rules for managing conflicts are either implicitly or explicitly known or stated. Conflicts are considered symmetrical if all parties involved have equal resources. As applied to families, conflicts between parents are theoretically symmetrical because parents have equal resources within the family unit. Conflicts between children and their parents on the other hand are considered asymmetrical because children do not have the same resources as their parents. Lastly, all family relationships described in this research are dyadic.

Sprey differentiated between instrumental and structural issues. Instrumental issues are those which can be managed through bargaining and negotiation because they do not require a basic structural change in the system. They are essentially "issue-oriented" as opposed to "relationship-oriented." Structural issues require a basic change in the family system, such as a divorce or the adoption of a child. The issues considered in this research were instrumental.

Finally, Sprey distinguished conflicts as either gamelike or warlike. Whereas warlike conflicts are designed "to eliminate the enemy and make further conflicts unnecessary" (p. 141), gamelike

conflicts "are not supposed to have consequences that exceed their own duration" (p. 141). It is expected that gamelike conflicts will be repeated. The situations in this research were designed to be gamelike conflicts.

In sum, Conflict theory assumes that conflict is a natural aspect of human interaction. Further, relationships within the family can be both strengthened and stabilized if individual members are willing to engage in disputes. The more frequent type of dispute within the family involves ongoing instrumental issues. Social Learning theory provides a framework in which to examine the effects of modeling on conflict management strategies used by children. These strategies may be modeled after those used by husbands and wives with each other, those that parents use with their children, or some combination of both.

Social Learning theory assumes that children learn by example through direct observation (Bandura, 1974). Thus the family provides a training ground where children have the opportunity to learn and acquire skills for conflict management. Rothbaum (1976) investigated imitative decision making under conditions where the child was led to believe that either his/her parents had made a decision, or strangers had made a decision. These children, ages 7, 10, and 14, were much more likely to imitate a decision made by a parent model than one made by a stranger model. These results suggest that children identify with parents rather than with strangers, and are thus more likely to match parental behavior.

There have been many different terms applied to matching behavior including "imitation," "modeling," "identification," "social

facilitation," "incorporation," etc. Specific theoreticians chose different terms for matching behavior depending on the process involved. Parson (1951), for example, called matching behavior identification if a "generalized cathectic attachment" was present, and if it was absent, she called this behavior imitation. Kohlberg (1963) used the term imitation for matching behavior which occurred in the presence of the model, and identification for such behavior that occurred in the absence of the model. There is little agreement on the definitions of these terms.

A behavioral definition of modeling has been chosen for this research. Modeling is defined as ". . . the motoric or verbal performance of specific acts or sounds that are like those previously performed by a model" (Yando, Seitz, and Zigler, 1978, p. 4). Further, a distinction between imitation and identification is not made according to Social Learning theory. Bandura (1974) stated, ". . . the phenomena ordinarily subsumed under the label of imitation and identification are designated modeling" (p. 5). The term "modeling" therefore includes both imitation and identification.

Social Learning theory postulates four modeling effects including an observational learning effect, a social facilitation effect, an inhibitory effect, and a disinhibitory effect. There are also four sub-processes which govern the acquisition and performance of modeling phenomena. The first of these is attention. The observer must, "attend to, recognize, and differentiate the features of the model's responses" (Bandura, 1967, p. 136). Several variables influence the attending process including the physical characteristics of the model, his/her

competence, social power, etc., all of which relate to potential reinforcements. Often models with such characteristics have a history of being reinforced for displaying specific behaviors.

In order to model behavior, observers must not only attend to the act, but they must also retain it. Retention of an act is accomplished through overt or covert rehearsal, and symbolic coding. The latter involves two representational systems, one visual and one verbal. Once the act is retained, two other subprocesses are necessary for performance. The first is the capacity for motor reproduction, namely that the observer must have the physical capacity to model an act. The second necessary subprocess is motivation. The extent to which one will be motivated depends on three types of reinforcement which facilitate imitation. These three different types of reinforcement are external reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, and self-reinforcement. Social Learning theory assumes that external reinforcement is not a necessary condition for the acquisition and performance of a response.

Conflict theory, which assumes that conflict is a natural part of human interaction and can be a constructive force, and Social Learning theory together provide a framework for investigating conflict management strategies in families. Social Learning theory as applied to this research postulates that children will learn conflict management styles by observing intrafamily models.

Definition of Basic Terms

Conflict: ". . . a confrontation between individuals, or groups, over scarce resources, controversial means, incompatible goals, or combinations of these" (Sprey, 1979, p. 134).

Conflict Management Strategies: means used by individuals to cope with the current conflict. It is not assumed that the conflicts in this study will be permanently resolved.

Reasoning: "The use of rational discussion, argument and reasoning--an intellectual approach to the dispute . . ." (Straus, 1979c, p. 77).

Verbal Aggression: a verbal response intended to psychologically hurt the recipient. Verbal aggression includes teasing, ridiculing, making others feel guilty, name calling, threatening others, and hurting another person's feelings in order to coerce.

Direct Physical Aggression: a physical attack on another person, using one's body or external objects. Direct physical aggression includes grabbing, hitting, kicking, and taking away with the intent of physically hurting another person.

Displaced Physical Aggression: throwing, smashing or breaking an object versus an assault on a person.

Denial of Privilege: preventing a person from possessing an object or participating in a desired activity. This includes isolating a person in his/her room.

Withdrawal: ignoring a situation, keeping feelings inside, being silent with the intent of not participating in the conflict. This also includes leaving the field.

Conflict Issues/Situations:

Issues: issues are instrumental in that it is assumed that they can be managed without a basic change in the structure of the family.

Situations: situations are considered "gamelike" in that such conflicts are "not supposed to exceed their own duration" (Sprey, 1979, p. 141). The situations designed for the questionnaire focus on issues which do not necessarily generate conflict but which have that potential. These fairly common situations focus on the following six issues:

Time: one party values punctuality while the other does not.

Power: one party attempts to exercise his will/authority in order to coerce the other party. This is essentially getting one's way as the merits of the situation are equivocal.

Material Possession: two parties want to possess the same object at the same time.

Responsibility: one party wishes another party to carry out a previously committed obligation.

Interruption of Activity: one party is involved in an activity which the other party interrupts.

Moral: two parties who have opposing views of a standard of conduct which is culturally and socially sanctioned by the majority.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on modeling and conflict management as they relate to families. Issues which generate conflict within families and strategies used to manage conflict between husbands and wives, parents and children, and siblings will be reviewed.

Modeling

Support for the notion that children do model aspects of their behavior after their parents comes from several different sources. These include studies on non-parent modeling, parent-related modeling, and studies assessing the influence of parents vs. peers on behavior. These studies generally support the idea that children attend to certain aspects of models, including parents, and when the situation is appropriate they perform amalgams of the model's behavior.

Non-parent related modeling. Exposure to film mediated aggression and real life models behaving in an aggressive manner significantly increases the level of aggression in the observers. Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1961, 1963a), found that children exposed to these conditions generalized their responses to new settings where the model was not present, and that they became virtual "carbon copies" of the models. Exposure to these models facilitated verbal and physical aggression, partly by the implicit sanctioning of such behavior. The greatest

amount of verbal aggression occurred when the model was of the same sex as the child, and the greatest amount of physical aggression, for both boys and girls, occurred when the model was male. In another study of film-mediated aggression where a parent was physically punishing a child, the aggressive responses in doll play were significantly higher for children exposed to that condition as opposed to the non-punitive condition (Fairchild and Erwin, 1977).

Several theories have been used to explain why a child imitates certain aspects of the model's behavior. In one such study, the Status Envy theory, the Power theory, and the Secondary Reinforcement theory were compared (Bandura, Ross, and Ross, 1963b). The results suggested that children identified with the source of rewarding power. This may partly account for cross-sex imitation within families. While boys and girls may choose the same sex parent as a model (Kagan and Lemkin, 1960), and boys may show a father imitation preference and girls a mother imitation preference (Duhamel and Biller, 1969), cross-sex imitation exists as well.

When individuals are exposed to a variety of models, they may select one or more of them as primary sources of behavior; but rarely do they confine their imitation to a single source, nor do they reproduce all of the characteristics of the preferred model. . . . Within a given family even same sex siblings may thus develop unlike personality characters as a result of imitating different combinations of parental and sibling attributes (Bandura, 1974, pp. 37-38).

Siblings as well as parents may serve as models for each other. Siblings at times may be seen as "sources of rewarding power."

Parent related modeling. The antecedents of aggression and other behaviors in children are often traced to aspects of parent-child and

husband-wife interaction. The punitiveness and permissiveness as well as the power assertive techniques of parents, affect the child as do the personality characteristics of parents such as the hostility in the husband-wife relationship.

A strong relationship exists between parent punishment for aggression and aggression by children in school as rated by peers (Eron, Walder, Laigo, and Lefkowitz, 1963). Boys were generally more aggressive than girls, and girls were generally less punished than boys. Boys were most aggressive when their mothers were either low or high punishers of aggression. Parents who seldom punished aggression in the home implicitly sanctioned such behavior. High punishment in the home by either parent was consistently associated with high aggression in school for both boys and girls. Sears, Whiting, Nowlis, and Sears (1953), found that boys from highly punitive homes were high in aggression at school, but that girls who had high and low punitive parents were less aggressive in school than girls of moderately punitive parents. These results are more consistent for boys than for girls.

When the degree of parental punishment was combined with parental permissiveness, the expression of aggression increased for both sexes (Sears, Maccoby, and Levine, 1957). The highest level of aggression was found in children, regardless of sex, whose mothers were most punitive and most permissive. In this study older children were more aggressive towards their parents than were younger children who were more aggressive towards their siblings. Mothers who physically punished their children for being physically aggressive towards them and

who at the same time were permissive in allowing physical aggression between siblings and neighborhood children, had highly aggressive children who observed a model sanctioning and demonstrating that behavior.

In one of the few longitudinal studies involving high punishment and high permissiveness, Sears (1961) found that boys at ages five and 12 and girls at age five, were again high on aggression if high punishment and high permissiveness were characteristic in the home. Additionally, he found that girls at age 12 were punished less frequently, and while these homes were still permissive, the expression of aggression decreased for these girls.

Denial of privilege also appears to be related to aggression in children, particularly boys. While parents who used a great deal of verbal aggression with each other and with their children had children who did the same with parents and peers, these same children had parents who restricted or denied privileges as a discipline technique. This technique was not used with non-aggressive or inhibited children (Bandura and Walters, 1959; and Bandura, 1960). Glueck and Glueck (1950) noted that parents of delinquent children used physical punishment whereas parents of non-delinquent boys used extensive reasoning. Physical punishment, verbal aggression and denial of privilege all appear to contribute to aggression in children.

Children who had power-assertive mothers were more likely to use power assertive techniques in attempting to influence peers (Hoffman and Saltzstein, 1960). Becker, Peterson, Luria, Shoemaker, and Hellmea (1962) noted that the level of aggression in children may be

related to both parents, and that husbands and wives may have similar characteristics. In this study parents who were high in hostility, restrictiveness and sex anxiety tended to come in pairs. The hostility of both parents and their use of physical punishment related to aggressive behavior in their children. Aggressive behavior in boys was linearly related to the level of aggression in both parents, both at home and in school. For girls the relationship was more complicated. Girls whose mothers were high or low punishers were less aggressive in school than moderately punished girls. These results were also found in an earlier study by Sears, Whiting, Nowlis, and Sears (1953). Additionally though, the Becker et al. study found a linear relationship between aggression levels of girls at home and the degree to which they were punished physically by their mothers. The girls' aggression traits at home and in school were linearly related to their fathers' hostility and use of physical punishment. It is clear that the modeling phenomenon is a complicated one with many variables including the sex of the child and the sex of the model.

Becker (1964) investigated the effects of love-oriented vs. power-assertive techniques. The former included praise, reasoning, threatened loss of love relationships, isolating the child, withdrawing love and sharing disappointments. The latter included physical punishment, yelling, shouting forceful commands, and verbal threats. Love-oriented techniques were used by warm parents, and power-assertive techniques were used by hostile parents. The results were not surprising. Children whose parents were warm and used love-oriented techniques were responsible and experienced guilt and other

related internalized reactions to wrongdoings. Children of power-assertive parents were aggressive as young children, resistant to authority, used power-assertive techniques with other children, and had externalized reactions to transgressions. While the findings of this study support the notion that children do model themselves after their parents, it is significant because it is one of the few studies that investigated the effects of non-aggressive disciplinary techniques used by parents.

A number of studies have investigated the similarity between parents and children on personality factors. Butcher (1966) found that moderately aggressive boys were more similar to their parents on personality factors than were either high or low aggressive boys. Boys who were high in aggression tended to be more similar to their fathers, and boys low in aggressive behavior were more similar to their mothers. Peck and Everson (1975) compared patients and non-patients to their parents and found that the offspring of both groups most resembled a combination of both parents, followed by the parent of the same sex and then the parent of the opposite sex. Males also resembled their mothers more than females resembled their fathers.

Gassner and Murray (1969) investigated dominance and conflict patterns in 30 neurotic and 30 normal children of both sexes. They found more hostile interaction between parents of neurotic children, but more importantly, they found that children had problems in the same areas that the husbands and wives had problems. The conflict areas were the same for both children and their parents, suggesting that children do model aspects of behavior after their parents. Overall,

Henry and Woodward (1974) noted that ". . . patterns of marital interactions are the result, at least in part, of the relationships and expectations learned in childhood through observation of parental interaction" (p. 449). Conflicts and strategies for managing them appear to be passed from one generation to another, at least in part, by parental example.

Peers vs. parents as models. While it is clear that early in life parents are the primary models for children, it is unclear when and to what extent children model themselves after peers, and which peers are most likely to be modeled. Hicks (1965) found that children of both sexes viewing aggression by a peer-male model, a peer-female model, and an adult male model, had the highest level of aggression when the model was a peer-male. Cohn (1971), studying fourth and sixth grade males, found that peers influenced the styles of behavioral expressions of aggression and that the parents influenced the content.

Emmerich (1978) studied peer vs. parent influence in ninth and twelfth graders. Ninth grade boys chose parent approved alternatives more often than did ninth grade girls and twelfth grade boys who chose more peer approved alternatives. But children in both grades chose both alternatives frequently, suggesting that they were influenced by parents and peers. Floyd and South (1972) found that peer orientation increased with age in grades six through ten. By the tenth grade peer orientation leveled off for boys, and by the same grade, peer orientation for girls was reduced slightly from previous years. While

there is evidence that peers become more significant as models with increasing age, particularly around adolescence, parents remain significant models.

Conflict Management and the Family

Two recent studies investigated the relationship between conflict resolution strategies used by husbands and wives with each other, those used by parents with their children, and those used by their children when interacting with siblings. As a rule these studies have only gathered data from one parent and one child, and their major focus has been on violence in the family. Nevertheless, they are relevant here.

Steinmetz (1977) investigated within family conflict resolution in 57 families. Thirty percent of the husbands and 2% of the wives were upper-class as defined by income and education, and 21% of the husbands and 26% of the wives were upper-middle-class. Some interesting generalizations can be made from this research. Family conflicts and resolution methods were tied to the family life cycle. Conflicts and how they were resolved depended to a certain extent on the age of the child, although consistent patterns of conflict resolution were found within families. Methods that couples used with each other when in conflict were very similar to the ones they used in disciplining their children. In turn, their children employed conflict resolution strategies that they had either observed or experienced directly. Further, these patterns remained fairly stable over three generations.

Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) investigated family

violence in 2,143 families. The demographic characteristics of this sample were similar to the census data for the population of the United States, with the exception of the fact that all families were intact. No children were interviewed in this research, and only one spouse participated, although 960 of these were men. While this study focused more on family violence, the results generally confirmed the earlier study by Steinmetz (1977). The more an individual experienced direct physical punishment as a child from his parents, the higher the rate of violence in his own marriage some 15 years later. Those who experienced most physical punishment as teenagers had spouse abuse rates that were four times as high as those who as teenagers were not hit by their parents. When there was no violence between the parents but when they did hit a teenager, these sons and daughters had twice the rate of spouse abuse as those teenagers who hadn't been hit. The highest rates of spouse abuse were found in adults who had been hit as teenagers and who had observed spouse abuse in their parent families. It is also interesting to note that the more parents had hit their children, the higher the likelihood that the child would severely attack a sibling. Clearly these results support the notion that these ". . . children imitate the models of behavior acted out by adults who are important in their lives" (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980, p. 102).

Husband-wife conflict. Areas of conflict between spouses center around the children and money and, to a lesser extent, housekeeping, sex, and social issues (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

Steinmetz (1977) found that conflict generally fell into two categories: idiosyncratic "day to day living" conflicts, such as getting a child to pick up his room, and major conflicts, including the discipline of children, particularly adolescents, problems with in-laws, the strain of pregnancy, and changes in sex-roles which were not mutually shared by both partners. The idiosyncratic conflicts were similar to the instrumental conflicts noted by Sprey (1979).

Subjects in the Steinmetz study recorded all conflicts occurring during a one-week period and, in addition, reported conflicts and strategies ever employed during marriage. During the one-week period, no family recorded any physical violence. The conflicts were resolved in the following ways: discussion, 52%; hollering, arguing, screaming, 26%; threats, 11%; ignoring, 6.5%, and compromise, 4.3%. The percentages refer to the percent of use of a specific strategy during that one-week period. Strategies that were used one or more times during the marriage, i.e., ever used, looked somewhat different. These percentages were as follows: discussion, 98%; hollering, arguing, screaming, 93%; throwing things, 51%; pushing, shoving, grabbing, 31%; hitting spouse with hand, 22%; and hitting spouse with something hard, 12%. These figures certainly suggest more use of physical means of conflict resolution than are apparent in the one-week period.

Straus (1974) found that among parents of college freshmen, 16% of the parents reported physical violence against a spouse in the previous year. He also believed that the high use of reasoning and intellectualization significantly decreased the amount of physical

aggression. Two other studies did not confirm this. First, Straus (1979) investigated the Catharsis theory. According to this theory, a high use of verbal aggression should divert energy from physical aggression. However, Straus found the opposite to be true: the higher the verbal aggression, the higher the physical aggression. They appeared to go hand in hand. In the second study already mentioned, Straus et al. (1980) found that couples who used the most reasoning had the highest levels of conflict and the highest percent of violence in the previous year. That neither verbal aggression nor extensive use of reasoning decreased the amount of physical violence was surprising and contradicted the Catharsis hypothesis.

Parent-child conflict. Steinmetz (1977) reported that parent-child conflicts were essentially power struggles, and this has been previously reported in this paper. These struggles centered around chores, responsibilities, spending money, hours, etc. Parent-child conflicts decreased with age from 8.3 per week for children eight and under, to 5.07 per week for children 14 and over. Children aged nine through 13 had an average of 6.2 per week. Mothers had four times as many conflicts with their children as fathers. While parents in this study found assertion, threat, compromise, and restriction of privilege the most successful conflict resolution strategies, they often used yelling and screaming as well. For young children (eight or younger), they used threats and restriction of privilege, for adolescent children (9-13 years old) they used yelling and screaming, and for the teenager (14 years of age or older), they used discussion,

threats, and withdrawal of privileges. It is of note that physical punishments decreased with age. Gelles (1980), though, found that 31.8% of the parents he studied pushed, shoved, or grabbed during the last year when interacting with their children. Further, 58.2% of those parents who participated in the research slapped or spanked a child during the previous year. Straus (1979a) found that parents who used verbal aggression with their children had child abuse rates six times greater than parents who did not use verbal aggression with their children. Since yelling and screaming are not uncommon, it is not clear to what extent verbal aggression and physical aggression are associated.

Sibling-sibling conflict. Steinmetz (1977) reported that sibling conflicts occurred in her sample on an average of 2.28 times per family for the one week of recording. This may well be an underestimate. Younger children fought over possession of toys, adolescents over personal space, and teenagers over responsibilities, obligations, and social awareness. Parents used more physical interventions when intervening between young children, as well as restrictions of privileges. With adolescent children there was a decline of physical means and an increase in verbal means. When breaking up teenage sibling conflicts, parents apparently used all means but fewer verbal means than with adolescents. In this study, it was an interesting assumption that parents settled sibling conflicts as opposed to siblings handling their own conflicts.

Straus et al. (1980) found that sibling violence occurred more

frequently than either parent-child or husband-wife violence. Further, the older the child, the lower the rate of sibling violence, and boys, regardless of age, were more violent toward their sibs than were girls. Girls used slightly more verbal aggression than physical aggression, and more of the former than boys used. Sibling conflict, not surprisingly, decreased some with age. Eighty-seven percent of children ages five through nine had hit their sibling(s) in the previous year and 76% of children ages 10 through 14 had done so. The most serious violence occurred between boy-boy sibships, followed by mixed sibships, and then all-girl sibships.

Summary. In studies involving non-parent related modeling, children who observed film mediated aggression rather quickly imitated the aggressive model's behavior when given an opportunity. The model was seen as implicitly sanctioning such behavior. Within families, physical punishment on the part of parents was associated with physically aggressive behavior in their children. Parents who were both highly punitive and highly permissive had the most aggressive children. Verbal aggression and restriction of privilege as disciplinary techniques also contributed to aggressive behavior in children. While parents who used reasoning with their children often had appropriately behaved children, the effects of extensive use of reasoning were equivocal. It may or may not serve to reduce verbal and physical aggression in families.

There were consistent patterns of conflict management within families, and strategies used by parents appeared to have direct long

term effects on children. Parents who used power-assertive techniques had children who did the same, and the converse was true of parents who used love-oriented techniques. While peers had an increasing influence on children's behavior from about sixth grade through tenth grade, parents remained significant models also during that time.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Subjects

A national organization was chosen as the target population because it was known to have an upper-class membership as defined by income. Due to guaranteed confidentiality, this organization is not identified. All subjects were members of two-child, intact families having children ages seven to 14. One member of each family belonged to the selected organization. Although a personal interview would have been preferred, the data were collected by mail because of limited resources.

Subject selection. Initially the heads of local chapters in four southeastern and three northeastern cities were contacted by mail and/or telephone, and a request was made for either access to membership records or a list of families who met the criteria for participation. Accompanying this letter were the following: a brief description of the study, information on the confidential nature of the results, a description of the procedure for collecting data, an informed consent form which would be sent to each participating family, a demographic form, and samples of the questionnaires (Appendix A).

The heads of three of the four local chapters in the southeast responded initially that they were unable to participate because their records were confidential. However, after personal contact was made by

a third party knowing both the investigator and the head of one of those chapters, the head of that chapter agreed to send a list of families who met the research criteria. The head of the other chapter that agreed to participate knew the investigator and allowed her direct access to the membership files.

The three local chapters in the northeast all agreed to participate with certain conditions. One chapter permitted a member of the author's family, who was also a member of the target organization, to telephone prospective families after compiling a list of families who met the research criteria. The remaining two chapters in the northeast allowed a request for volunteer families to be printed in their monthly newspaper.

Response rates. An estimated 10% of the membership in each chapter met the research criteria. In the two southeastern chapters 36 families were eligible to participate in the study. In the one northeastern city where members were contacted initially by telephone, 40 families met the criteria and 17 agreed by phone to participate. In the two remaining northeastern chapters that allowed a request for volunteers, an estimated 350 families were eligible and only one family responded. Thus an estimated 426 families met the research criteria for this study. After meeting the various stipulations of the local chapters, the author was permitted direct contact with 54 families or 12.7% of eligible families (see Table 1).

Solicitation procedures. The 54 families that met the research criteria were sent introductory letters requesting their participation

TABLE 1
RESPONSE RATE OF FAMILIES WHO
MET THE RESEARCH CRITERIA

	Estimated No. of Eligible Families	No. and Percent of Families Who Agreed to Participate	No. and Percent of Families Who Completed Questionnaires
Northeastern cities (3)	390	15 (4%)	14 (3.6%)
Southeastern cities (2)	36	15 (42%)	12 (33%)
Total	426	30 (7%)	26 (6%)

(Appendix A). This letter explained why they were selected, how much time was required of each family member to fill out a questionnaire, and that one person would need to compile a brief demographic form (Appendix A). The significance of "informed consent" was explained, and all potential participants were assured of the confidential nature of the data. Families were also informed that they might withdraw from the study at any time. All introductory letters were sent after the first of January, 1981, and enclosed was a reply postcard on which families were asked to indicate their willingness to participate, and to identify the birthdates and sexes of their two children.

Participation rate. Twenty-one of the 54 families solicited did not return the postcards; three families did but declined to participate. Thus 30 of the 54 families agreed to participate. These 30 families were sent a packet containing a brief demographic form, an informed consent form, questionnaires for each family member (Appendix A), and a return stamped, addressed envelope. A penned note on the demographic form thanked the families in advance for their participation, and assured them that they would receive a summary copy of the results.

Nine families out of 30 did not respond within a month and were sent follow-up letters which resulted in six more responses. Data from one of these families were excluded because the questionnaires were incomplete. Therefore 26 families participated in this research which was conducted between January 1, 1981 and July 1, 1981.

The highest actual participation rate (45%) was in the city

where the investigator was known to members of the local chapter, followed by the city where a family member was known to the chapter (35%), and where initial telephone contact was made. The local chapter with a mutual contact yielded a 5% response rate, and cities with no personal contacts yielded no participant families who completed all questionnaires. Thus, out of an estimated 426 eligible families, 26 or 6% actually participated, and the rate of participation was positively associated with the degree of personal contact (see Table 2).

Development of Questionnaires

Preliminary versions of the questionnaires were developed in the summer of 1976 after a review of the literature failed to yield any such instruments that were appropriate for both parents and their children. After pilot work, the questionnaires were modified to their final forms.

Literature review. The literature was reviewed to determine which issues or situations generated conflict between children, and between parents or adults and children. Strategies used to manage such conflicts were also reviewed. In the early literature, several issues were noted as having the potential to stimulate conflict between children. These issues included demanding an object, threatening gestures, possession of materials, intrusion of space, interruption of activity, physical attack, and social awareness (Dawe, 1934; Jersild and Markey, 1935; and Muste and Sharp, 1947). More recently noted issues included possession of materials, personal space, responsibilities, obligations, and social awareness (Steinmetz, 1977).

TABLE 2
PARTICIPATION RATE BY AFFILIATION

Chapter	Percent of Eligible Families Who Completed Questionnaires
Author known	45
Relative known	35
Co-chairperson known	5
Author unknown	0

Conflict issues between children and adults most often centered around power issues and the child's unwillingness to comply with adult requests (Muste and Sharp, 1947; and Steinmetz, 1977). These were instrumental issues which occurred daily and included parents requesting children to do chores around the house, to be on time for school and for bed, to pick up their clothing, etc. Another issue that arose periodically with children had to do with the rightness or wrongness of behavior such as taking a piece of candy from the store.

Abstracting from the literature, six issues were chosen to be included in the questionnaire. These six issues were Material Possession, Time, Power, Interruption of Activity, Responsibility, and Moral issues. While these issues have the potential to generate conflict between children, and between adults and children, they were also used in the questionnaire as having the potential to generate conflict between spouses. They were used in this way so that conflict management strategies within specific issues could be compared. While the issues were the same, the examples of such issues were different for spouses and children.

The literature focuses on how parents/adults manage child-child conflict as opposed to how children manage their own conflict. Parents have been found to use several different means to cope with parent-child and child-child conflict. With younger children, parents used physical force, coaxing, diversion of attention, and ignoring (Goodenough, 1931). As children matured, parents used more scolding, threatening, bribery, appeal to emotions, isolation, reasoning, denial

of privilege, retaliation, and anticipated shame (Goodenough, 1931; and Sears, Maccoby, and Levine, 1957).

More recently, Steinmetz (1977) described strategies used within families to settle husband-wife, parent-child, and sibling-sibling conflict. These strategies were very similar to those noted in the earlier literature. Common strategies included verbal aggression, threat, compromise, discussion, ignoring, restriction of privilege, and physical force.

To some extent social class was found to be related to strategies used within families. Lower-class parents used physical means of discipline more often than middle and upper-class families. The latter used more reasoning, discussion, isolation, guilt arousing appeals, threats of loss of love, and generally more psychological punishment (Allinsmith, 1960; Becker, 1964; Bronfenbrenner, 1958; and Kinlock, 1970). According to Goode (1974), middle and upper-class families have more power, prestige, and money, which affords such families the opportunity to diffuse direct physical aggression. These families theoretically have more resources to divert or cope with intrafamily conflict. Further, these parents were found to be in touch with popular books on child rearing, and were more apt to try and practice strategies suggested by the purported experts. For these reasons, it was hypothesized that such families would be more inclined to use reasoning than lower-class families (Kohn, 1963; and White, 1957).

Based on the literature survey, five strategies were chosen as representative of family conflict management strategies. These were

Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, Direct Physical Aggression, Denial of Privilege, and Withdrawal. Displaced Physical Aggression was added as the sixth strategy because it was thought that upper-class families would be more likely to use that strategy, or to acknowledge using it as opposed to acknowledging use of Direct Physical Aggression. In terms of their value systems, throwing a magazine across the room might be more acceptable than hitting a child, or more readily reported. Six issues (situations) were also abstracted from the literature which have the potential to generate intrafamily conflict. These six issues were Time, Power, Material Possession, Responsibility, Interruption of Activity, and Moral issues. Thus these six strategies and six issues were used as a foundation on which the questionnaires were prepared.

Structure of the questionnaires. In order to be able to investigate the problems posed in this research, instruments were designed around the previously noted six strategies and six issues (situations). Both the parent forms and the child forms contained the identical issues and strategies. Six common situational examples of each issue were generated for each dyad within the two child family. Situational examples of the issues, and examples of the strategies were parallel for parents and children, and were age appropriate.

The questionnaires designed for wives and husbands were the same except the language was modified to reflect the sex of the spouse. The parents' form included the same six issues and six strategies under each issue, repeated three times for each dyad within the family. The first set of six issues related to the husband-wife dyad, the second set

related to the parent-older child dyad, and the third set to the parent-younger child dyad. Thus, for example, the issue of Time was repeated three times. The first situational example of this issue involved a spouse coming home late when earlier they both had been due at a party. The second situational example involved the older child being late for school, and the third situational example involved the younger child being late going someplace because he/she hadn't finished getting dressed.

Under each issue, six examples of each of the six strategies were listed. For example, under the time issue involving father and younger child, the following examples of strategies were listed: helped him/her get dressed and explained the need for being on time (Reasoning), threatened to leave him/her home (Verbal Aggression), spanked him/her (Direct Physical Aggression), threw the car keys on the floor (Displaced Physical Aggression), grounded him/her for that afternoon (Denial of Privilege), and lastly, waited patiently and didn't say anything (Withdrawal). Thus, for each parent there were six situational examples per dyad yielding a total of 18 situations with different examples of the same six strategies repeated for each situation. The children's questionnaire involved 12 situations with the same set of six situations repeated twice, once for sibling-sibling interaction, and once for sibling-peer interaction. The questionnaires were designed in order to investigate how parents and children manage conflict in parallel situations.

Instructions. The instructions for the questionnaires asked that each family member record the number of times each of the specific examples of issues (situations) or similar situations had occurred during the previous year. This was requested in order to determine if the examples of situations were representative of family conflict issues. Within each situation, each family member was then asked to state how many times during the last year a specific strategy was used in that specific situation. These predesigned statements reflected the use of the six different strategies. The instructions allowed the subjects to record more than one strategy within each situation.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in two different ways. First of all, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data across families. These statistics describe issues and strategies across all families. Secondly, the Wilcoxon Match-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test for related samples was used to analyze within family data. This test yields information on the significant differences between related groups. For example, using the Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test, it is possible to determine if husbands/fathers use more or less Reasoning with their wives than their older children use when interacting with their younger siblings. As this test yields both magnitude and direction, if there are significant differences, it is possible to determine, as in this example, who uses more Reasoning, and how much more Reasoning that person uses. If there are no significant differences between fathers' use of Reasoning and older children's use of

Reasoning, then it is possible to say that both use approximately the same amount of Reasoning. Because this test applies to related samples, all fathers, as per this example, were matched with their older children.

Originally it was anticipated that a Spearman Rank Order correlation technique would be appropriate. It was not possible to use this technique because too many ranks were tied. Using the previous example again, but in terms of the Spearman rank correlation, for husbands/fathers using Reasoning with their wives, there were six sets of tied ranks or 76.5% of the ranks were tied. For older children three sets of ranks were tied making 69% of the ranks tied. The effect of tied ranks is to reduce the sum of squares and to inflate the value of the correlation coefficient. Because of this, which is a particular problem for relatively small N's, i.e., $N=8$, the Spearman rank correlation technique was inappropriate for this sample.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section includes a description of the demographic characteristics of participating families, an analysis of the issues and conflict management strategies across all families, and an analysis of strategies within families.

Sample

The subjects were members of 26 intact, upper-class families. As specified in the criterion for participation, each family had only two children aged seven to 14. Table 3 summarizes the occupational status of all husbands and wives. All husbands worked full-time at either the managerial or professional level, while 62% of the wives were full-time homemakers. Of the remaining 38% of the wives, 31% worked full-time and 7% part-time outside of the home.

Table 4 shows combined family income. Three-fourths of the families had incomes of \$40,000 per year or more, and 62% had incomes of \$50,000 or more annually. Two families were not willing to disclose their incomes. According to the most recent U.S. Census information, 7.2% of White families had incomes of \$50,000 or more annually. Thus, according to family income, families participating in the research met the upper-class criteria.

Table 5 presents the ages of wives, husbands, and children. The average age of wives and husbands was in the mid to late thirties.

TABLE 3
OCCUPATIONS: HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Husbands	Number	Wives	Number
Executive	7	Business	3*
Attorney	6	Teacher	2*
Business	3	Attorney	1
Academic	3	Grantsman	1
Physician	2	Tennis Coach	1
Sales Manager	2	Bookkeeper	1
Counseling	2	Medical Secretary	1
Landscape Architect	1	Homemaker	16
Total	26	Total	26

*One was employed part-time.

TABLE 4
FAMILY INCOME

Income	Number of Families
\$20,000 - 24,999	1
25,000 - 29,999	2
30,000 - 34,999	1
35,000 - 39,999	0
40,000 - 44,999	2
45,000 - 49,999	2
50,000 or over	16
Not specified	2
Total	26

TABLE 5
MEAN AGE AND RANGE

Family Members	Mean Age	Range
Husbands	38.8	34.0 - 48.0
Wives	37.0	34.0 - 40.0
First Borns	12.5	10.2 - 14.2
Second Borns	10.0	7.5 - 12.3
Male children	11.5	7.5 14.0
Female children	11.1	8.5 - 14.2

Couples had been married 12-17 years with an average of 14 years. First born children averaged 12.5 years while second borns averaged 10 years of age. The mean for all children combined was a little over 11 years of age.

As can be seen from Table 6, the majority of sibling constellations were female-female. The remaining sibling constellations were evenly distributed. The majority of children in the study were female. Sixty-two percent of older and younger children were female, and 38% were male.

Issues Across Families

In order to view conflict management strategies used by family members in context, it is important to note the frequency and type of conflict within families. Some issues may be more intense than others. It is also important to know which conflicts are more frequently reported for specific dyads in order to compare conflict areas and dyads. Husband-wife issues may or may not be similar to parent-child issues and/or sibling-sibling issues.

Table 7 presents the range of issues reported for each dyad. For example, at least one wife reported zero Time conflict issues with her husband, while another wife reported that Time was an issue 50 times during the previous year. This was the highest frequency reported by any wife. Thus the range in this example is 0-50.

The frequencies reported in Table 7 are adjusted frequencies and include 25 rather than 26 individuals per dyad. Because of the highly skewed nature of the data, the extreme upper figure in the range has

TABLE 6
SIBLING CONSTELLATIONS

Birth Order	Number of Pairs	Percent of Siblings
Female-female	11	42.31
Male-female	5	19.23
Female-male	5	19.23
Male-male	5	19.23
Total	26	100.00

TABLE 7
ISSUES x DYADS: ADJUSTED FREQUENCY AND RANGE FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR^a

Issue	W→H ^b	H→W	M→OC	F→OC	M→YC	F→YC	OC→YC	YC→OC	OC→P	YC→P
Time	Frequency 76 0-50	16 0-10	451 0-300	240 0-40	414 0-250	255 0-25	277 0-50	345 0-100	137 0-50	74 0-55
Power	Frequency 59 0-12	77 0-10	283 0-20	125 0-20	465 0-100	275 0-250	464 1-52	318 3-200	248 0-75	236 0-80
Material Possession	Frequency 295 0-365	462 0-100	54 0-12	60 0-50	132 0-25	98 0-40	392 0-200	371 0-263	159 0-30	112 0-30
Responsibility	Frequency 34 0-15	51 0-6	461 0-200	237 0-50	887 0-365	707 0-365	281 0-99	211 0-30	67 0-85	75 0-20
Interruption of Activity	Frequency 107 0-100	318 0-150	587 0-100	139 0-25	73 0-15	47 0-11	480 0-365	427 0-365	325 0-200	419 0-100
Moral	Frequency 1 0-5	4 0-2	23 0-5	10 0-3	5 0-2	6 0-4	15 0-25	6 0-4	3 0-10	6 0-4
Total	572	928	1859	811	1976	1388	1909	1678	939	922
T = 12,982										

^aThe adjusted frequency excludes the extreme figure at the upper end of the range. This figure may be added to the adjusted frequency in order to get the actual frequency reported by all 26 individuals responding for that dyad. The first number of each dyad reports his/her issues with the other member of that dyad. Twenty-five wives reported 76 Time issues with husbands, and 26 wives reported 126 such issues.

^bW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer.

been excluded from the total reported frequencies. Thus, for the same Time issue previously mentioned, the adjusted frequency reported by 25 wives is 76. The actual total frequency can be reconstructed by adding the higher figure in the range to 76. Twenty-six wives reported an actual total frequency of 126 issues involving Time. The adjusted frequency was reported in order to give a more representative picture of the frequencies reported. Some family members reported no conflicts, while others reported conflicts as occurring every day during the previous year.

All members of the 26 participant families reported a total frequency of 18,469 conflicts during the previous year. After the frequency was adjusted by excluding the upper figure in the ranges for all dyads x issues, 12,982 conflicts were reported by 25 members of each dyad, or an average of 519 conflicts per family per year. Thus families averaged 1.4 conflicts per family per day for the previous year, or almost 10 conflicts per family per week. The highest number of conflicts reported for the previous year were between siblings (3,587), followed by parents interacting with the younger child (3,364), and parents interacting with the older child (2,670). Siblings combined reported 1,861 conflicts with peers, and the fewest reported conflicts were between husbands and wives combined (1,500). In terms of dyads, the highest number of conflicts were reported for the mother-younger child dyad and for the older child-younger child dyad, while the least number of conflicts were reported for the father-older child dyad and between spouses.

Husband-wife conflict issues. Table 8 presents the frequency ranks within each dyad. For both husbands and wives, Material Possession and Interruption of Activity, respectively, were the number one and number two ranked issues. As can be seen from Table 9, which reports the percent of issues within each dyad, 81% of wives' issues with husbands centered on Material Possession and Interruption of Activity, while 84% of husbands' issues with wives centered on the same. The remaining issues were relatively infrequently reported by wives and husbands. It is of note though that although Time was infrequently reported as an issue, wives reported it five times more frequently than did husbands. Overall, husbands reported 50% more conflicts with wives than wives reported with husbands.

Parent-child conflict issues. As can be seen in Tables 7 and 8, both parents had the greatest number of conflicts with the younger child and over the identical issues: (1) Responsibility, (2) Power, and (3) Time. Table 9 shows that 90% of mothers' issues and 89% of fathers' issues with the younger child focused on these three issues. The remaining issues, Material Possession, Interruption of Activity, and Moral accounted for 10% of mothers' and 11% of fathers' conflict issues with the younger child. Both parents perceived similar conflict areas with the younger child, although mothers reported one and a half times as many conflicts as did fathers.

The picture between the parents and the older child is a little more complicated. Tables 7 and 8 illustrate that both parents identified the same issues but in a different order. Mothers reported: (1)

TABLE 8

ISSUES x DYADS: RANK WITHIN DYADS

Issue	W-->H ^a	H-->W	M-->OC	F-->OC	M-->YC	F-->YC	OC-->YC	OC-->P	YC-->P
Time	3	5	3	1	3	3	5	3	4
Power	4	3	4	4	2	2	2	4	2
Material Possession	1	1	5	5	4	4	3	2	3
Responsibility	5	4	2	2	1	1	4	5	4
Interruption of Activity	2	2	1	3	5	5	1	1	1
Moral	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

^aW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports his/her issues with the other member of the dyad.

TABLE 9

PERCENT OF ISSUES WITHIN DYADS^a

Issue	W→H ^b	H→W	M→OC	F→OC	M→YC	F→YC	OC→YC	YV→OC	OC→P	YC→P
Time	13	2	24	30	21	18	15	21	15	8
Power	10	8	15	15	24	20	24	19	26	26
Material Possession	52	50	3	7	7	7	21	22	17	12
Responsibility	6	5	25	29	45	51	15	13	7	8
Interruption of Activity	19	34	32	17	4	3	25	25	35	45
Moral	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1

^aThe percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number, and are based on the adjusted frequency.

^bW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports his/her issues with the other member of the dyad.

Interruption of Activity, (2) Responsibility, and (3) Time, in that order, while fathers reported Interruption of Activity and Time in the reverse order. Table 9 shows 81% of the Mother-Older Child conflicts focused on these three areas whereas 76% of Father-Older Child issues focused on the same areas. Power, which was the fourth ranked issue for both parents, accounted for 15% of the remaining issues for mothers and for fathers. Material Possession and Moral issues ranked fifth and sixth, respectively, and accounted for the remaining percentages. Mothers reported twice as many conflicts with the older child as did fathers.

Sibling-sibling, sibling-peer conflict issues. As was noted previously, the greatest number of reported conflicts was between siblings. In terms of issues, the most frequently reported issue between either siblings or siblings and peers was Interruption of Activity. For older children interacting with either younger children or peers, Power and Material Possession, in that order, were ranked two and three, as can be seen in Table 8. These three issues accounted for 70% of the reported conflicts between older and younger children as reported by the older child, while they accounted for 78% of the conflicts between older children and peers. Responsibility and Time accounted for the remaining conflict issues within each dyad. Moral issues were rarely reported. It is noteworthy that issues focusing on Responsibility occurred four times more frequently between the older child and his or her sibling than between the older child and peers. Overall, older children reported twice as many conflicts with their siblings as with their peers.

As perceived by younger children interacting with their siblings, Tables 7 and 8, pages 42 and 45, show that Interruption of Activity was the most frequently reported issue between siblings, and between siblings and peers. When involved with their siblings, younger children reported Material Possession, Time, and Power as the second, third, and fourth ranked issues in terms of frequency. The first four ranked issues accounted for 87% of all conflict issues reported by younger children when interacting with their siblings. When interacting with peers, the ranking of conflict issues was different. Younger children ranked Power and Material Possession as second and third, respectively. The three top ranked issues accounted for 83% of the total younger child-peer issues. Time and Responsibility accounted for the remaining percent of issues.

Summary of conflict issues. The greatest number of reported conflicts were between siblings and between mothers and fathers and their younger child. The least number of reported conflicts were between siblings and peers, and between husbands and wives. Mothers and fathers had more conflict with their younger child than with their older child, and the greatest number of conflicts reported of all were reported by mothers interacting with their younger child, followed by the older child interacting with his or her younger sibling. These data suggest that the younger child is involved in the most intra-family conflicts. Husbands reported one and a half times as many conflicts with wives as wives reported with husbands, and children

reported approximately twice as many sibling conflicts as sibling-peer conflicts.

In terms of conflict areas, Interruption of Activity was a critical issue for all dyads except the mother/father-younger child dyads. One half of the dyads, mother/father-younger child, older child-younger child/peer, and younger child-peer, ranked Power as the second most frequent issue. Material Possession was an issue between spouses, siblings, and siblings and peers, and Responsibility was a parent-child issue. Thus there appears to be an overlap of conflict areas for spouses/parents, and children.

Conflict Management Strategies Across Families

Conflict management strategies are presented in a number of different ways. First, the adjusted frequency of strategies (computed in the same way as adjusted frequency of issues) is reported for all dyads across all families. Secondly, a summary of strategies used one or more times across all families is presented, and thirdly, an analysis of the data within families is summarized. This last analysis illustrates the magnitude and direction of differences between strategies used by children and those used by their parents.

Table 10 illustrates the adjusted frequencies for all strategies. Thus, 25 wives reported 472 instances of Time being an issue with their husbands being late. Twenty-six wives reported 837 such issues. Table 11 shows the ranks within dyads for all 10 dyads. Looking at Tables 10 and 11 we can see that the predominant strategy across families was Reasoning which accounted for 38% of all strategies reported; Verbal

TABLE 10
STRATEGIES x DYADS: ADJUSTED FREQUENCY AND RANGE FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR^a

Issue	W→H ^b	H→W	M→OC	F→OC	M→OC	F→YC	OC→YC	YC→OC	OC→P	YC→P
Reasoning	Frequency Range 472 0-365	553 0-100	1127 0-200	495 0-25	981 0-200	676 0-150	495 0-200	464 0-200	461 0-50	323 0-50
Verbal Aggression	Frequency Range 39 0-20	40 0-15	595 0-75	251 0-25	530 0-100	307 0-65	447 0-365	817 0-365	122 0-30	219 0-69
Direct Physical Aggression	Frequency Range 0 0	0 0-1	26 0-50	5 0-10	83 0-50	70 0-150	348 0-365	279 0-40	21 0-3	52 0-20
Displaced Physical Aggression	Frequency Range 13 0-5	2 0-2	105 0-200	0 0-1	69 0-50	16 0-5	110 0-42	199 0-90	7 0-4	7 0-20
Denial of Privilege	Frequency Range 49 0-15	103 0-60	51 0-15	46 0-18	563 0-100	243 0-150	284 0-15	549 0-365	47 0-200	93 0-20
Withdrawal	Frequency 128	261	371	121	285	140	381	434	446	526
Total	701	959	2275	918	2511	1452	2065	2742	1104	1220
T = 15,947										

^aThe adjusted frequency excludes the extreme figure at the upper end of the range. This figure may be added to the adjusted frequency in order to get the actual frequency reported by all 26 individuals responding for that dyad. The first member of each dyad reports strategies used with the other member of that dyad. Twenty-five wives reported 472 Reasoning strategies and 26 wives reported 837 such strategies.

^bW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports his/her strategies with the other member of the dyad.

TABLE 11
STRATEGIES x DYADS: RANKS WITHIN DYADS

Issue	W→H ^a	H→W	M→OC	F→OC	M→YC	F→YC	OC→YC	OC→P	YC→OC	YC→P	Overall Ranks
Reasoning	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Verbal Aggression	4	4	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	3	2
Direct Physical Aggression	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Displaced Physical Aggression	5	5	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Denial of Privilege	3	3	5	4	2	3	5	4	2	4	4
Withdrawal	2	2	3	3	4	4	3	2	4	1	3

^aW=Wife, H=Husband, M= Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports his/her strategies with the other member of the dyad.

Aggression was the second ranked strategy and accounted for 21% of all strategies used; and Verbal Aggression was used by all dyads except the husband-wife dyad where it was rarely reported. Withdrawal accounted for 19% of total strategies employed, and was used most by siblings with peers, and least by parents interacting with their children. Denial of Privilege was used most by parents dealing with the younger child and by the younger child interacting with the older sibling. This strategy was used least by parent-older child dyads, and the older child-peer dyad. Denial of Privilege ranked fourth and accounted for 13% of the strategies reported, and Direct Physical Aggression ranked fifth and accounted for 6% of the strategies noted. This strategy was used mainly between siblings. Displaced Physical Aggression was used occasionally by siblings to manage their conflicts and by mothers interacting with the older child, and accounted for the remaining 3% of total strategies reported.

Husband-wife conflict management strategies. Husbands and wives used the identical strategies in the same order to manage their conflict. They used the following in order: Reasoning, Withdrawal, Denial of Privilege, Verbal Aggression, Displaced Physical Aggression, and Direct Physical Aggression. Reasoning and Withdrawal accounted for 85% of the strategies used by each, as can be seen in Table 12. Wives used proportionately more Reasoning with husbands than the reverse, and husbands used proportionately more Withdrawal with wives than the opposite. The remaining strategies were infrequently reported.

TABLE 12

PERCENT OF STRATEGIES WITHIN DYADS^a

Issue	W-->H ^b	H-->W	M-->OC	F-->OC	M-->YC	F-->YC	OC-->YC	YC-->OC	OC-->P	YC-->P
Reasoning	67	58	50	54	39	47	24	17	42	26
Verbal Aggression	6	4	26	27	21	21	22	30	11	18
Direct Physical Aggression	0	0	1	1	3	5	17	10	2	4
Displaced Physical Aggression	2	0	5	0	3	1	5	7	1	1
Denial of Privilege	7	11	2	5	22	17	14	20	4	8
Withdrawal	18	27	16	13	11	10	18	16	40	43

^aThe percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

^bW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports his/her issues with the other member of the dyad.

Parent-child conflict management strategies. Both parents reported using three strategies almost exclusively when interacting with the older child. These strategies were in order: Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Withdrawal. These three strategies accounted for 92% of mothers' and 94% of father's strategies. Mothers used twice as many strategies with their older child as did fathers but they also had twice as many conflicts with their older child than did their husbands.

When interacting with the younger child, parents used the same strategies that they used with the older child with the addition of Denial of Privilege. When involved with the younger child, the order was slightly different. Mothers used Reasoning followed by Denial of Privilege, Verbal Aggression, and, lastly, Withdrawal. For fathers, Denial of Privilege came third, and Verbal Aggression second. Fathers used, proportionately, slightly more Reasoning with the younger child than did mothers. Direct Physical Aggression and Displaced Physical Aggression were rarely reported by parents.

Sibling-sibling, sibling-peer conflict management strategies. When older children were interacting with their younger siblings, they reported using a variety of strategies with approximately equal frequency. Table 12 illustrates that older children reported using five strategies ranging from 24% of the total strategies down to 14% of the total strategies. Thus no one strategy was outstanding. They used the following in order: Reasoning (24%), Verbal Aggression (22%), Withdrawal (18%), Direct Physical Aggression (17%), and Denial of Privilege (14%). Displaced Physical Aggression was rarely used and

accounted for the remaining 5 percent of total strategies reported by older child interacting with the younger sibling.

The younger child reported using four main strategies when dealing with his older sibling, and reported many more conflicts with his older sibling than the reverse. Younger children reported using Verbal Aggression (30%), Denial of Privilege (20%), Reasoning (17%), and Withdrawal (16%). Direct Physical Aggression and Displaced Physical Aggression accounted for 10% and 7%, respectively, of the remaining strategies.

When managing conflict with peers, both older and younger children reported using three strategies almost exclusively. While they reported the same three strategies, the order was different. Older children used Reasoning (43%), Withdrawal (40%), and Verbal Aggression (11%), while younger children used Withdrawal (43%), Reasoning (26%), and then Verbal Aggression (18%). It is of note that both siblings used Withdrawal extensively when interacting with peers. The remaining three strategies were used infrequently.

Strategies Used One or More Times Across All Families.

Analyzing the data in terms of the percent of subjects using a strategy one or more times across situations and within dyads yields information similar to the adjusted frequency data. While there were 18 out of 60 differences noted, in no case did the ranks change such that they were no longer in the top ranks of the most frequently used strategies.

Tables 13 and 14 illustrate that one change occurred among the overall ranks. Verbal Aggression moved to third place while Withdrawal

TABLE 13

STRATEGIES x DYADS: PERCENT OF SUBJECTS USING A SPECIFIC STRATEGY ONE OR MORE TIMES
ACROSS ISSUES AND WITHIN DYADS

Issue	W→H ^a	H→W	M→OC	F→OC	M→YC	F→YC	OC→YC	OC→P	YC→P	$\bar{X}$
Reasoning	55	47	68	51	63	52	65	51	60	52
Verbal Aggression	12	9	32	27	30	23	44	39	24	17
Direct Physical Aggression	0	1	3	2	10	5	31	35	8	8
Displaced Physical Aggression	5	2	7	1	6	5	13	24	5	3
Denial of Privilege	15	17	12	10	21	18	38	38	12	19
Withdrawal	32	26	35	12	34	16	56	47	52	51

^aW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, F=Father, OC=Older Child, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. The first member of each dyad reports using a specific strategy one or more times with the other member of the dyad.

TABLE 14

STRATEGIES x DYADS: RANKS OF PERCENTS OF SUBJECTS USING A SPECIFIC STRATEGY ONE OR MORE TIMES
ACROSS ISSUES AND WITHIN DYADS

Issue	W--	H ^a	H--	W	M--	OC	F--	OC	M--	YC	F--	YC	OC--	YC	YC--	OC	OC--	P	YC--	P	Overall Ranks
Reasoning	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Verbal Aggression	4		4	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3
Direct Physical Aggression	6		6	6	5	5	5	5.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Displaced Physical Aggression	5		5	5	5.5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Denial of Privilege	3		3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Withdrawal	2		2	2	2	3	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

^aW=Wife, H=Husband, M=Mother, OC=Older Child, F=Father, YC=Younger Child, P=Peer. Ranks are for the first member of each dyad who reports using a specific strategy one or more times with the other member of the dyad.

moved to the second rank position. Thus Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Withdrawal remained in the top three ranks, and the three remaining ranks stayed the same. There were no rank changes for husbands and wives, fathers interacting with older or younger children, and older children interacting with peers. Of the remaining five dyads, only two had rank changes that differed by more than one rank. According to the adjusted frequency ranks in Table 14, mothers dealing with younger children yielded a second place rank for Denial of Privilege and a fourth place rank for Withdrawal. These two ranks were reversed when the data were analyzed differently by the method described. These identical changes were noted for the younger child interacting with the older sibling. In addition, two other changes were noted for the younger child-older child dyad. For adjusted frequency, younger children yielded a rank of one for Verbal Aggression, and three for Reasoning. These ranks were also reversed when the data were analyzed by this different method. All of the most frequently used conflict management strategies remained in the top ranks when compared to the ranks of percent of subjects using a specific strategy one or more times across issues and within dyads.

Table 15 shows the mean percent of subjects using a specific strategy one or more times across dyads and within specific issues. This table is presented in order to illustrate the variability of behavior within specific situations. As can be seen from Table 15, the mean percent of subjects using a specific strategy across dyads varies according to the issue. The highest mean percent of subjects used the following strategies one or more times under the following

TABLE 15

STRATEGIES x ISSUES: $\bar{X}$ PERCENT OF SUBJECTS USING A SPECIFIC STRATEGY
ONE OR MORE TIMES ACROSS DYADS AND WITHIN SPECIFIC ISSUES

Issue	Reasoning	Verbal	Displaced		
			Aggression	Physical	Denial of
			Aggression	Aggression	Privilege
					Withdrawal
Time	65	45	9	9	10
Power	79	23	11	9	24
Material Possession	60	21	9	12	28
Responsibility	60	27	8	5	34
Interruption of Activity	62	33	22	7	18
Moral	13	6	3	4	4
Total $\bar{X}$	56	26	10	7	20
					37

conditions: Reasoning (79%), when the issue was Power, Verbal Aggression (45%), when the issue was Time, Direct Physical Aggression (22%), with the Interruption of Activity issue, Displaced Physical Aggression (12%), when the issue was Material Possession, and Denial of Privilege (34%), and Withdrawal (49%), when the issue was Responsibility. There was fairly wide variation within strategies depending on the issue, suggesting that conflict management behavior is to some extent situation specific.

The previous analyses across families suggest that children do model strategies that they observe their parents using with each other and/or that they experience directly. Parents reported using Reasoning and Withdrawal with each other and with their children, and they used Denial of Privilege with each other and with their younger child. While they did not report using Verbal Aggression to manage inter-spouse conflict, they did report its use for managing parent-child conflict. Their children reported using it fairly extensively for sibling-sibling conflict, along with Reasoning, Withdrawal, and to a lesser extent Denial of Privilege. Thus, children do appear to model aspects of their parents' conflict management styles. These tentative conclusions are based on all husbands, wives, and children across families.

Conflict Management Strategies Within Families

In order to further investigate the extent to which children model their parents, a within family analysis was performed using the Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks test for related samples. This

test yields magnitude and direction of differences. The matched-pairs for this test consisted of the following nine combinations: strategies husbands used with their wives were compared to strategies their wives used with them (one combination); strategies couples used with each other were compared to strategies their children used with each other (four combinations); and strategies parents used with their children were compared to the strategies their children used with each other (four combinations). The last four combinations, for example, compared strategies mothers and fathers, respectively, used with their older children, to strategies that their older children used with their younger siblings, and strategies used with younger children were also compared to strategies younger children used with their older siblings. In the group comparisons, all spouses were paired with each other, all parents were paired with their own children, and all older children were paired with their younger siblings. The most frequently reported issue for each combination was used to compare strategies used within families.

The results of the Wilcoxon tests may be found in Tables 16-24 in Appendix B. The same six strategies were compared for each of the nine combinations of dyads, yielding 54 tests. Sixty-three percent of these tests showed that there were no significant differences between the various combinations suggesting a high degree of similarity between parents and their children. The remaining 37 percent showed significant differences. For the most part, these differences appear to relate to the developmental stages of the individuals involved. For example, wives used more reasoning with their husbands than their younger

children used with their siblings. From a developmental viewpoint this would be expected.

Table 16 (Appendix B), which compares strategies wives and husbands used with each other, illustrates that there were no significant differences found for husbands and wives interacting. Both used Reasoning, Withdrawal, and Denial of Privilege to mediate their couple conflicts. Tables 17-20 (Appendix B) show that when comparing the husband-wife dyads to the sibling-sibling dyads, some significant differences were noted. Wives used more Reasoning and Withdrawal with their husbands than younger children used with their siblings; husbands used more Reasoning with their wives than either siblings used with the other; and children used significantly more Verbal Aggression and Direct Physical Aggression with their siblings than their parents used with each other. No other significant differences were found.

Tables 21-24 (Appendix B), which compare the parent-child dyads to the sibling-sibling dyads, reveal the following significant differences: mothers used more Reasoning with their older children than their older children used with their younger siblings; mothers used more Reasoning, Denial of Privilege, and Withdrawal with their younger children than their younger children used with their siblings; and both children used significantly more Direct Physical Aggression with each other than their parents used with them. No other differences were significant.

In terms of similarities, where no significant differences were found, wives used about the same amount of Reasoning with their husbands as their older children used with their siblings, and both children used

about the same amount of Reasoning with each other as their fathers used with them. Generally, children used Withdrawal with each other to the same extent that spouses used it with each other and that parents used it with their children.

An exception was that younger children used significantly less Withdrawal with their older siblings than their mothers used either with younger children or with their husbands. Younger children were also exceptions because they used less Denial of Privileges with their siblings than their mothers used with them. Otherwise children used the same amount of Denial of Privilege as their parents used with them and with each other. Regardless of the dyadic combination, Displaced Physical Aggression was infrequently reported.

Looking at the individual dyads, one sees that both children are very similar to their fathers in the extent to which they used the same strategies with each other as their fathers used with them with the exception of Direct Physical Aggression. Children are less similar to their mothers, although they used the same amount of Verbal Aggression with each other as both of their parents used with them. The most significant difference between children and their parents was that children used Direct Physical Aggression while their parents by and large did not.

Summary

Summarizing strategies across families, husbands and wives used the identical strategies with each other in the same order. They mainly used Reasoning, Withdrawal, and Denial of Privilege. When interacting with the older child, both parents used Reasoning, Verbal Aggression,

and Withdrawal, in that order. While couples used Denial of Privilege with each other, they did not report using it with their older child. Parents used the same strategies with their younger child, although the order was different. Mothers used Reasoning, Denial of Privilege, Verbal Aggression, and Withdrawal, in that order, while fathers reported using more Verbal Aggression than Denial of Privilege. Thus parents used the same strategies with their younger child as they used with each other, with the exception of Verbal Aggression, which they did not use with each other but which they did use with both children.

Older children interacting with their siblings generally used more of all strategies than anyone else. They used the same strategies that their parents used with them as well as Denial of Privilege, which they observed their parents using with their younger sibling, and with each other. In addition, older children used Direct Physical Aggression which they neither observed nor experienced directly.

When involved with peers, older children primarily used Reasoning and Withdrawal as well as some Verbal Aggression. They used considerably more Reasoning and Withdrawal with their peers than they did with their siblings, and much more Direct Physical Aggression with their siblings than with their peers.

Younger children used Verbal Aggression, Denial of Privilege, Reasoning, and Withdrawal when interacting with their older siblings. All of these conflict management strategies they either experienced directly or observed in the spouse dyad. Younger children used a little over half as much Direct Physical Aggression as their siblings used with

them, and almost twice as much Verbal Aggression as their siblings used with them. When interacting with peers, younger children looked like their older siblings, and used Withdrawal and Reasoning extensively with some Verbal Aggression. Both siblings interacted differently with peers than they did with each other.

The analysis of within family data generally confirmed the results found across families. Children tended to use the same conflict management strategies that their parents used with them, and, to a lesser extent, strategies that their parents used with each other. There was an overlap of strategies used by spouses and those that parents used with their children. One notable difference was that parents did not report using Verbal Aggression with each other, although they did report using it with their children. In turn, their children reported using it extensively to manage sibling conflict. The most striking result was that children reported using Direct Physical Aggression significantly more than they apparently either experienced it directly from their parents or than they apparently observed it in the home under any circumstances. With this exception, both children used the same strategies to manage sibling-sibling conflict as their fathers used to manage parent-child conflict with no significant differences noted between the actual frequencies of the five remaining strategies.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The original purpose of this research was to determine if children involved in sibling-sibling conflict modeled strategies that their parents used either with each other to manage marital conflict, or with their children to manage parent-child conflict. The assumption made was that children learn conflict management strategies by observing how their parents deal with conflict (modeling). It was found, however, that the situation was not as simple as suggested by the modeling approach. Conflict management strategies differed depending on the participants in the conflict. In this discussion, an attempt will be made to put the results into a coherent framework, and to evaluate critically the modeling construct.

The discussion will first focus on the frequency of issues as reported by husbands and wives interacting with each other, parents interacting with their children, and their children interacting with each other. The discussion will then focus on conflict management strategies reported by husbands/fathers, wives/mothers, and siblings. Research implications will be discussed including theory and future research, as will the implications of this study for clinical practice.

Conflict Issues

Conflict issues reported by parents and children were often the same. Husbands and wives reported Material Possession and Interruption

of Activity as creating the most marital conflict, while the issues focusing on Power, Time, Responsibility, and Moral issues were rarely noted as creating conflict between spouses. Mothers and fathers independently reported the identical three issues related to their interaction with the older child, and an identical but different set of three issues pertaining to the younger child. Parents noted Interruption of Activity, Responsibility, and Time as conflict issues with the older child, whereas they reported Responsibility, Power, and Time as the most frequent conflict issues relating to the younger child. With the exception of Moral issues, children interacting with their siblings reported all issues as occurring fairly frequently.

It is apparent from these findings that husbands and wives are very similar in their perceptions of marital conflict. It is also evident that as parents they perceive the same types of issues as creating parent-child conflict. Thus couples/parents appear to have similar perceptions of issues that create intrafamily conflict. Children concur on issues which create sibling-sibling conflict also suggesting common perceptions. Accordingly, adults in families and children in families agree on their respective conflict issues.

As well as perceiving issues in common, individuals across both generations reported two conflict issues frequently. Material Possession and Interruption of Activity were reported by adults and by children as frequently occurring problems generating conflict. Thus some adult conflict issues are also child conflict issues. This last finding is consistent with earlier research where parents and children reported common issues generating conflict. Although the process is not clear, some

conflict issues within families exist across generations (Gassner and Murray, 1969; Overall, Henry, and Woodward, 1974; Peck and Everson, 1975).

Some conflict issues pertain only to particular dyads. For example, parents discriminate among issues as they relate to the older and to the younger child: Power is an issue between parents and the younger child but not the older child, while Interruption of Activity is an issue only with the older child. This evidence suggests that parents are aware of the different developmental stages of their children. It is also of note that Steinmetz (1977) found that Power as a parent-child issue decreased in reported frequency as the child grew older. This same trend appears to be present in this study, as Power issues with the older child were reported considerably less frequently by either parent.

While parents and children often reported the same conflict issues, the frequencies of such issues sometimes varied depending on the individual reporting the frequency of the conflict. For example, mothers reported twice as many conflicts with their children as did fathers, and children reported twice as many conflicts with their siblings as with their extrafamilial peers. The most obvious explanation for these findings is that mothers spend more time with their children than fathers do, and siblings the ages of children in this study spend more time together than with extrafamilial peers. Sibling rivalry may also account for an increased number of conflicts between siblings.

The highest frequency of reported conflicts was between siblings, followed by parents interacting with the younger child.

Siblings reported 2.3 conflicts per week with each other which is consistent with data on siblings in the same age groups as reported by Steinmetz (1977). The younger children in this study appeared to be involved in the most number of conflicts in the family. The least number of conflicts were reported between spouses.

In terms of the reported number of conflicts between spouses, it is likely that the actual frequency has been under-reported. While it may have been difficult to recall accurately such conflicts over the past year, it is more likely that these couples value the absence of conflict and at the same time have a desire to "look good."

Conflict Management Strategies

The conflict management strategies used by family members were analyzed in two ways. First, the total frequencies for each strategy as reported by husbands/fathers, wives/mothers, and children (siblings) were gathered. From these data it was possible to determine how many times each strategy was used by all husbands for example. Continuing with this example, husbands' strategies were then ranked according to the total frequency. Thus when husbands reported using certain strategies when interacting with their wives, it was possible to tell which strategies husbands used most to least frequently. These data are called "across family" data.

The second way in which the data were analyzed is called a "within family" analysis. It is called this because the statistical method involved pairing members of the same families. For example, strategies used by husbands interacting with their wives were compared

to strategies that their older children used with their younger siblings. It was possible then to determine the significant differences between conflict management strategies used by older children and their own fathers, and it was also possible to know who used more of a specific strategy.

Across family analysis. Reasoning and Withdrawal were the two conflict management strategies common to all dyads. Although the reported frequencies varied, these two strategies were often used by adults and by children. Husbands and wives used Reasoning and Withdrawal most of the time (about 85%) and they both reported some use of Denial of Privilege. The other three strategies, Verbal Aggression, Displaced Physical Aggression, and Direct Physical Aggression were rarely reported.

Reasoning has been found to be a characteristic conflict resolution strategy used by upper-class families (Allinsmith, 1960; Becker, 1964; and Kinlock, 1970). The strategy of Withdrawal has also been reported in the literature but for a sample stratified by social class. Steinmetz (1977), whose sample consisted of 51% upper-upper-middle-class families, found that for resolving marital conflict, Reasoning was used 50% of the time, and Verbal Aggression and Withdrawal were each used 25% of the time. Although Verbal Aggression was defined similarly in both studies, in this current research, upper-class couples rarely reported using Verbal Aggression to manage husband-wife conflict. They did report using Reasoning considerably more than 50% of the time. It is again

possible that Verbal Aggression was used more frequently but that it was not reported because of "social desirability."

These findings about upper-class couples are consistent with earlier research. Straus (1974) found that a high use of reasoning correlated with a low level of physical aggression. In this current study only one husband reported using Direct Physical Aggression one time with his wife. Steinmetz (1977) further found that as the educational level of the couples increased concurrently with their social class, discussion was used more frequently, and verbal and physical aggression declined as a means to resolve marital conflict. Thus the high use of Reasoning and the absence of Verbal and Direct Physical Aggression to manage marital conflict is not surprising for the upper-class couples studied. Although Withdrawal suggests an avoidance of conflict issues, it is a strategy used by the upper-class, but it is not by any means an exclusively upper-class strategy.

Both parents employed the identical three strategies with the older child and the identical four strategies with the younger child. Parents used Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, and Withdrawal with the older child, and in addition to those three strategies, parents used Denial of Privilege with the younger child. Mothers and fathers appear to be alike in the ways in which they discipline their children. They use a common set of strategies for the older child and another common set of strategies for the younger child. Siblings also appear to behave alike when they are managing conflict with extrafamilial peers. Both siblings used three strategies primarily to manage sibling-peer conflict. They were Reasoning, Withdrawal, and Verbal Aggression. These strategies

were the same three strategies used by parents to manage parent-child conflict.

So far there are some noteworthy differences. Spouses did not use Verbal Aggression with each other, but they did use it with their children. Parents also discriminated between the older and the younger child, and used Denial of Privilege extensively with the younger child but rarely with the older child.

Children, on the other hand, used a wider array of strategies than did their parents. Both older and younger children reported using Direct Physical Aggression with each other although they rarely used it with extrafamilial peers. While there were half as many sibling-peer conflicts as there were sibling-sibling conflicts, children reported using Reasoning somewhat less than twice as often with peers, and they used Withdrawal more than twice as often with peers as with their siblings.

The results up to this point suggest that adult and child family members discriminate among relationships and contexts. These results are consistent with Mischel's (1968) concept of behavioral specificity. Behavior appears not to be consistent across all relationships and situations, but rather to vary depending on the individuals involved as well as the conflict issues. Spouses do not use Verbal Aggression with each other although they do use it with their children. Parents use a slightly different set of strategies with their younger child than they do with their older child. Children use more of all strategies than do their parents, and they use significantly more Direct Physical Aggression during sibling-sibling conflict than they do during sibling-peer conflict. The adult family members rarely report using Direct

Physical Aggression, either with each other, or with their children. Thus while there are conflict management strategies common to all dyads, some strategies are peculiar to certain dyads.

Looking at these results in terms of the modeling approach, children do use strategies with each other that their parents use with them directly, but children use other strategies additionally. At this point it is possible to conclude that children appear to model some strategies that they observe their parents using with each other (Reasoning and Withdrawal), that they appear to model strategies that their parents use with them (Reasoning, Withdrawal, Verbal Aggression), and that they use one strategy (Direct Physical Aggression) that does not fit into the modeling construct at all.

In order to investigate further the modeling hypothesis, the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed-Rank tests were used to determine if there were any significant differences between specific dyadic combinations within families. The significant differences in these tests relate to the actual differences between reported frequencies. In these tests husbands were paired with their own wives, parents were paired with their own children, and siblings were paired with their own siblings. The Wilcoxon tests yielded significant group differences for related samples. While the previous across family discussion has been based on all husbands, wives, and children, the "within family" data are based on matched pairs, e.g., husbands-wives, mothers-older child, within the same families.

Within family analysis. The within family analysis involved tests for significant differences between the three basic dyads taken two at a time. Strategies husbands used with their wives and those that their wives used with them were compared. The strategies that husbands and wives respectively used with each other were then compared to the strategies that each of their children used with their siblings. Lastly, strategies that mothers and fathers respectively used to manage parent-child conflict were compared to strategies that their children used to manage their sibling-sibling conflict. In sum, sets of husband-wife and parent-child strategies were compared to strategies that the older children used with their younger siblings and that their younger siblings used with their older siblings.

The results of the Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks tests (Appendix B) add information to the previous data. No significant differences were found between spouses. Husbands and wives respectively used all strategies with similar frequency. When comparing the husband-wife dyads to the sibling dyads, however, some significant differences were found. Children used more Verbal Aggression and Direct Physical Aggression with each other than their parents used with each other to manage spouse conflict. In contrast, both children and couples used the same amounts of Denial of Privilege and Displaced Physical Aggression. Older children used Withdrawal with their siblings to the same extent that their parents used it with each other. Older children also used Reasoning with their siblings to the same extent that their mothers used it with their husbands. Younger children used the Withdrawal strategy

with the same frequency that fathers used it with their wives.

Support for the modeling hypothesis is equivocal based on the results discussed up to this point. Children appear to pattern some conflict management strategies after strategies their parents use to manage marital conflict, but children also use strategies not used by the spouse dyad, namely Verbal and Direct Physical Aggression.

Looking at the strategies used by parents to manage parent-child conflict as compared to strategies siblings use with each other to manage their conflict, the most striking difference is that children use significantly more Direct Physical Aggression with each other than their parents report using during parent-child conflict.

The most interesting result which came out of this comparison (parent-child vs. sibling-sibling) was that both children used all but one strategy with about the same frequency that their fathers used these strategies with them to manage parent-child conflict. The use of Direct Physical Aggression by fathers was the one exception as fathers did not use this strategy with their children and it was used by their children interacting with siblings. There were no significant differences between the following strategies used by fathers and their children: Reasoning, Verbal Aggression, Withdrawal, Denial of Privilege, and Displaced Physical Aggression. Thus with the exception of Direct Physical Aggression, both children appear to pattern their conflict management strategies after their fathers.

The mother's influence seems stronger with the older child. Mothers and their older children both used Verbal Aggression, Withdrawal, Denial of Privilege, and Displaced Physical Aggression with

about the same frequency. Mothers and their younger children, on the other hand, were similar only in that they both used the Verbal Aggression and Displaced Physical Aggression to a comparable extent. Mothers, as well as fathers, did not report using physical aggression with their children.

The concept of canalization may be helpful here in explaining why children in this study used Direct Physical Aggression with each other although they apparently neither observed it nor experienced it directly from their parents. Canalization refers to the process whereby a wide array of behaviors present early in life are narrowed down to a smaller number of behaviors as the child grows older and eventually becomes an adult. This process in part takes place through socialization, and is affected by various factors in the environment.

In this study the concept of canalization is useful in explaining why parents do not use Direct Physical Aggression with their children, and why children do use it with each other. Through canalization the strategy of Direct Physical Aggression has been eliminated from the parents' behavioral repertoire likely through sublimation, but it is still present in the behavioral repertoires of children. It has been eliminated from the parents' repertoire because it was not found to be an effective means of having one's goals met.

Research Implications

Theory. The results of this study suggest that in these upper-class families there was a premium on reasoning and discussion. To a lesser extent, family members also used Withdrawal in conflict

situations. Conflict Theory is based on the assumption that conflict generates energy and adds stability and enrichment to family life (Coser, 1956; Sprey, 1979). Further, Conflict Theory assumes that conflict is an inevitable and necessary part of human interaction and that the more intimate the group, the greater the conflict. It would be expected, therefore, that the family as an intimate group would exhibit considerable conflict. Some of these assumptions appear to have been confirmed while others were not.

That families used reasoning/discussion extensively suggests that conflicts were viewed as having a positive valance and as having the potential to strengthen the family. On the other hand, the fairly extensive use of Withdrawal by all family members suggests that conflict was to be avoided or not dealt with directly, particularly if reasoning or discussion failed. It is also possible that issues were not instrumental (Sprey, 1979), but rather symbolic or structural, particularly those arising between spouses. Families also appear to have attached a negative valance to conflict by their underestimate of actual numbers of conflicts. From a theoretical point of view, further investigation is necessary in order to determine how actual conflict within families fits the theoretical assumptions of conflict theory.

The assumptions of Social Learning theory were validated to a limited extent in this study. While children do model an amalgam of strategies used by parents, conflict management strategies appear to be person and situation specific. Such strategies are not consistent across all situations and individuals. Further, there is no isomorphic relationship between strategies used by adults and by children.

Children do appear to pattern some of their conflict management strategies after those that their parents use with them, but at least one strategy appears unique to children. Thus from a theoretical point of view, the results of this study appear to be more consistent with Mischel's (1968) concept of behavioral specificity.

Further research. It is clear from this research that the modeling approach is not sufficient to explain how children acquire conflict management strategies. In order to understand better how children learn these strategies, it is necessary to have more information about the families being studied. For example, time spent by parents with their children, the extent to which children have other caretakers, the proximity of the extended family, and the spouses' positions in their respective families, all could have some bearing on the type of family conflict as well as conflict management styles. This additional information could be useful in more fully understanding how children manage conflict.

The role of the father in the development of the children's approach to conflict management warrants further investigation. Fathers likely spend less time with their children than mothers do, but the results of this study suggest that within the sphere of conflict management they exert a stronger influence than mothers do. Why this is so merits further research.

The majority of children in this research (62%) were female, and as a group, all children were more similar to their fathers than their mothers in how they managed sibling-sibling conflict. One possible explanation which can account for cross-sex imitation is that children identify with the source of rewarding power (Bandura, Ross and Ross,

1963b). Because of the relatively small sample size, it was not possible in this study to investigate sex differences if there were any. This information would be useful in understanding the family dynamics related to conflict management. Do boys and girls use different or similar strategies? Have the changing sex roles affected how children manage conflict? The questions have yet to be answered.

Lastly, there is no research to date on the long term psychological effects of the Reasoning and Withdrawal strategies. The effects of withdrawing from conflict may have implications for family dynamics, current as well as future. Extensive use of withdrawal possibly drains energy from the family system. If conflict were dealt with directly, more energy could be accessible for constructive use by family members.

Methodological implications. There are inherent limitations in self-report data, including accurate recall over the previous year. For this reason families could be asked to record conflicts occurring during a one-week period, four times a year. These conflicts could be recorded as they occurred or a questionnaire could be used periodically during a year. This procedure could reduce "social desirability," and would supply test-retest data.

Another approach to investigating conflict management strategies would be to use video tape recordings of families solving a problem or participating in a game in a laboratory setting. While ideally one would want to observe families in their homes, a laboratory setting would likely be more acceptable to participants.

A longitudinal research project that continued to gather data from all family members would help clarify the processes involved in family conflict management. One possible way to gather such data would be to study a small number of families intensely. This type of approach would be useful in determining what changes take place across different developmental periods for both children and their parents.

Implications for Clinical Practice

The extensive use of Reasoning and Withdrawal by subjects in this study may have implications for clinical practice. Rather than being intimate, stable families, it is possible that these families or parents are avoiding conflict in an attempt to maintain the homeostasis within the family. In fact what they may be doing is weakening relationships within the family. A therapeutic task then would be to foster open conflict within a therapeutic context. The eventual consequences of such an exercise could be to strengthen family relationships. More fundamentally, the value placed on conflict could be altered so that conflict was valued as a natural and inevitable aspect of human interaction.

It would be possible to train children, couples, and families in conflict management. Such a training program would focus on identification of problem areas and an exploration of existing conflict management strategies within a structured therapeutic setting. Such an experience could serve to strengthen the participants. Programs could be offered for recently married couples and for families who are not necessarily in crisis. Another option is to have such programs within the school

setting. This would allow children to explore conflict issues and strategies in a non-threatening environment. These programs are suggested as preventive measures that could serve as adjuncts to avoiding future crises.

Children and their parents appear to have some common problem areas, and to handle some conflicts similarly. These results suggest that when children are first seen in psychiatric or psychological settings for evaluation and for psychotherapy, the parents should be seen as well. This notion confirms the Child Guidance model where children and their parents are seen by separate therapists. Another option is family therapy where parents and children are seen together. Because of similar conflict management styles and problem areas, children will progress more rapidly if the parents are included in the therapeutic process.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if children involved in sibling-sibling conflict modeled strategies that their parents used either with each other or with them. Data were gathered from all family members.

The results of this study suggest that conflict management strategies are most similar to strategies that parents used with their children, particularly the father. On the other hand, children used Direct Physical Aggression to manage sibling-sibling conflict and this strategy was not reported by parents interacting either with each other, or with their children. The modeling hypothesis then was not

sufficient to explain why children reported using some strategies not used by their parents.

All family members reported using Reasoning and Withdrawal frequently. In spite of this, strategies used for conflict management were person and situation specific. Certain strategies were used depending on the individuals involved in the conflict as well as the conflict issue. Parents, for example, did not use Verbal Aggression with each other, but they did use it with their children. Children used Direct Physical Aggression with their siblings, but rarely used it with extrafamilial peers. Children used this strategy most when the issue involved Interruption of Activity.

In conclusion, parents and children in upper-class families have some common conflict issues, while others are unique to the individuals involved. Children do model some strategies they observe their parents using with each other, but they model more strategies that their parents use with them, particularly their fathers. While there is support for the modeling hypothesis, conflict management behavior for both adults and children, appears to depend on the context and on the individuals involved.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
College of Liberal Arts
Department of Psychology

KNOXVILLE, TN 37916

(615) 974-2531

Project : Conflict Management Strategies in Two-Child Families

I am a graduate student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Tennessee, and I am currently doing an internship at Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston. I would like to request your voluntary participation in my doctoral dissertation research. My research population consists of professional upper-middle and upper class families. I am specifically interested in all families who have two children between and including ages eight and thirteen. Participation in this research will take no longer than thirty minutes for each family member.

Should you be willing to participate in this study, I would like to send you a packet containing a brief demographic form, questionnaires for each member of your family (four), and an "informed consent" form. A return self-addressed envelop will also be enclosed.

The "informed consent" form which you will be asked to sign has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee of the Department of Psychology whose function is to promote the ethical conduct of research with human subjects. You may be assured that all the data will be kept confidential. "Confidential" in this case means that no published report of the project will contain information which can be used to identify participants. Collected data will be coded so that your name will not appear on the questionnaire. If at any time any member of your family no longer wishes to participate, he/she is free to withdraw. If after participating you decide you do not want your family included in this study, again you are free to withdraw.

I very much hope that you will be willing to participate in this research. If you and your family agree, I would appreciate your returning the self-addressed enclosed post card, Thank you very much for your time.

Sarah W. Penegar

Sarah W. Penegar, doctoral candidate
Department of Psychology

Home address: 18 Fernald Drive, Apt. # 21
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Approved:

William H. Calhoun

William H. Calhoun, Ph.D.
Department Head
Department of Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT

I would like to request your participation in my doctoral dissertation research. I will be asking you to fill out a questionnaire designed to look at how members of two-child families resolve conflict.

All the data collected will be kept strictly confidential. "Confidential" in this case means that no published report of the project will contain information which can be used to identify participants. Collected data will be coded so that your name will not appear on the questionnaire. Should you desire feedback, you may request that your name appear on the questionnaire, although it will still not appear in any published report of the project. The coding system I have devised insures your protection.

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION

I understand that this research by Sarah W. Penegar is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and that it is under faculty supervision. I have read the above description and understand that it is a truthful representation of this project. I consent to participate in this project with the understanding that my consent may be withdrawn at any time. Assuming the same above mentioned stipulations, I also consent to the participation of my minor children. I agree to read this informed consent form and the instructions out loud to my children. I also agree to have someone else present, such as my spouse, who will also sign this form as the auditor-witness.

Sarah W. Penegar, doctoral candidate
Department of Psychology

William H. Calhoun, Ph.D., Chairman
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tenn. 37916

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Auditor-Witness to Oral
Presentation

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your spouse's age? _____
3. How long have you been married? _____
4. Have you been married before? Yes _____ No _____
5. Has your spouse been married before? Yes _____ No _____
6. Is your first child a male _____ a female _____?
Second child? male _____ female _____
7. What is the birthdate of your first child? _____
8. What is the birthdate of your second child? _____
9. What is your occupational title (indicate title only)?

10. What is your spouse's occupational title? _____
11. Combining both of your incomes, which of the following brackets applies?
 - less than 14,999 _____
 - 15,000 - 19,999 _____
 - 20,000 - 24,999 _____
 - 25,000 - 29,999 _____
 - 30,000 - 34,999 _____
 - 35,000 - 39,999 _____
 - 40,000 - 44,999 _____
 - 45,000 - 49,999 _____
 - more than 50,000 _____

12. This form has been filled out by husband _____ wife _____?

CHILDREN'S FORM

Arguing and fighting are natural happenings within all families. Parents and children often disagree as do brothers and sisters. On the following pages there are a number of different situations which sometimes start fights. There are also a number of different ways in which we handle such situations.

INSTRUCTIONS

I would like to know two things:

1. How many times during the last year have you experienced this or a similar situation?
2. How many times during the last year did you try to settle the situation by the ways mentioned?

IF YOU DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY, PLEASE GUESS!

Sometimes we try to handle situations in more than one way. So if a situation happened 10 times during the last year, you might have tried one way 3 times, another way 6 times, and still another way 4 times.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

There was only one helping of ice cream left in the freezer and both you and your brother/sister wanted it for dessert. No. of times this might have happened 10 This means that this might have happened 10 times in the past year.

3 let him/her have it so there wouldn't be a fight (did or might have
done this 3 times
in the past year)

6 shared it so we both had a little (did or might have done this
6 times in the past year)

4 both had something other than ice cream (did or might have done
this 4 times in the past
year)

Coded Questionnaire for Children*

1. You and your brother/sister were late going someplace and your brother/sister wouldn't hurry. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Time

_____ went to see if you could help him/her (R)
 _____ called him/her a dummy (VA)
 _____ punched him/her (Direct PA)
 _____ threw something on the floor (Displaced PA)
 _____ prevented him/her from sitting by the car window (DP)
 _____ just waited even though you were mad

2. Your brother/sister wanted to play one game and you wanted to play another. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Power

_____ played his/her game without discussion (W)
 _____ talked together and tried to agree on which game to play first (R)
 _____ threatened to never play with him/her again (VA)
 _____ gave him/her a hard kick (Direct PA)
 _____ messed up his/her game (Displaced PA)
 _____ refused to play any game with him/her (DP)

3. It was bedtime and your brother/sister had something you wanted very badly and wouldn't give it to you. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Material Possession

_____ refused to let him/her use something of yours when he/she asks (DP)
 _____ acted like you really didn't care (W)
 _____ tried to exchange something of yours for what she had (R)
 _____ called him/her a hog (VA)

_____ pushed him/her on the floor (Direct PA)
 _____ slammed the door to his/her room (Displaced PA)

4. The dishwasher needed to be emptied and you thought it was your brother's/sister's turn. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Responsibility

_____ threw a dish on the floor (Displaced PA)
 _____ didn't let him/her have any of your candy (DP)
 _____ emptied the dishwasher anyway so you wouldn't have a fight (W)
 _____ tried to explain to him/her why you thought it was his/her turn (R)
 _____ called him/her a whimp (VA)
 _____ shoved him/her into the door (Direct PA)

5. You were watching TV and your brother/sister came in and turned the channel to a different program. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Interruption of Activity

_____ pushed him/her out of the way and got your program back (Direct PA)
 _____ threw a magazine on the floor (Displaced PA)
 _____ stopped him/her from watching TV at all (Direct PA)
 _____ didn't do anything so you wouldn't have a fight (W)
 _____ talked about taking turns watching your favorite programs (R)
 _____ called him/her a brat (VA)

6. Your brother/sister had stolen some candy from a neighbor's house. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Moral

_____ threatened to call the police (VA)
 _____ hit him/her with your fist (Direct PA)
 _____ smashed the candy into pieces (Displaced PA)
 _____ ate the candy yourself (DP)

- _____ ignored what he/she had done (W)
- _____ talked with him/her about returning the candy (R)
7. You and your friend were late for the movies and your friend wouldn't hurry. No. of times this might have happened _____
Issue:Time
- _____ talked with him/her to see if you could help him/her hurry (R)
- _____ yelled at him/her for being late (VA)
- _____ gave him/her a kick (Direct PA)
- _____ slammed the door hard (Displaced PA)
- _____ went to the movie without him/her (DP)
- _____ didn't say anything (W)
8. Your friend wanted to play inside and you wanted to play outside. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Power.
- _____ played outside anyway (W)
- _____ talked together about taking turns (R)
- _____ called him/her a selfish meany (VA)
- _____ shoved him/her into the door (Direct PA)
- _____ threw his/her coat out the door (Displaced PA)
- _____ refused to play with him/her (DP)
9. You were playing a game with your friend and he/she had the ball and wouldn't give it to you. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Material Possession
- _____ refused to play with him/her again (DP)
- _____ ignored it and just didn't play the game (W)
- _____ talked with him/her about sharing the ball (R)
- _____ called him/her a ball hog (VA)
- _____ pushed him/her onto the ground (Direct PA)
- _____ threw a stick across the yard (Displaced PA)

10. Your teacher asked you and your friend to clean up the classroom and your friend wouldn't help. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Responsibility

_____ threw a notebook on the floor (Displaced PA)
 _____ refused to play with him/her after school (DP)
 _____ cleaned up the room by yourself (W)
 _____ tried to coax him/her into helping you (R)
 _____ called him/her a spoiled brat (VA)
 _____ gave him a punch (Direct PA)

11. You were trying to do your work at school and your friend at the next desk kept bothering you. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Interruption of Activity

_____ slapped him/her on the arm (Direct PA)
 _____ crumpled up a paper and threw it down (Displaced PA)
 _____ didn't let him/her borrow anything of yours next time he/she asked (DP)
 _____ tried to do your work without saying anything (W)
 _____ talked with him/her about how both of you needed to do your work (R)
 _____ called him a pest (VA)

12. You knew your friend had stolen a bag of potato chips from the store. No. of times this might have happened _____ Issue:Moral

_____ threatened to tell the store owner (VA)
 _____ gave him/her a punch (Direct PA)
 _____ took the bag of potato chips and stepped on it (Displaced PA)
 _____ didn't let him/her have any chips when he/she was at your house (DP)

_____ pretended you didn't know what he/she did
so you wouldn't have a fight (W)

_____ talked with him/her about why stealing was
wrong (R)

*The language of the questionnaires was adjusted depending on the
sex of the child and the sex of his/her sibling.

R=Reasoning, VA=Verbal Aggression, PA=Physical Aggression, DP=Denial of
Privilege

Parent's Form

Conflict is an inevitable part of belonging to a family. We all engage in arguments and disputes, and we handle them in different ways. On the following pages there are a number of different situations as well as a number of different ways such situations might be handled.

INSTRUCTIONS

I would like to know two things:

1. How many times in the last year have you experienced this or a similar situation?
2. How many times during the last year did you try to settle the situation by the ways mentioned?

IF YOU DON'T REMEMBER, PLEASE GUESS!

In the process of handling different situations, we often use more than one strategy. Therefore although a situation has only occurred 10 times during the last year, you may have tried to handle it in more than one way. Because of this, the total number of strategies may well add up to more than the number of times something happened.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE:

There was only one portion of ice cream left in the freezer and both you and your spouse wanted it for dessert. No. of times 5 (This or something similar happened 5 times during the last year.)

3 let him/her have it so there wouldn't be an argument (did or might have done this 3 times in the last year)

1 shared it so we both had a little (did or might have done this
once in the last year)

4 both had something other than ice cream (did or might have done
this 4 times in the last year)

Coded Questionnaire for Parents*

1. Your spouse told you he'd/she'd be home at six o'clock as you were both due at a party at six-thirty. He/she didn't get home until seven o'clock. No. of times _____ (Issue: Time)

_____ shared your feelings and listened to his/her reasons (R)

_____ yelled at him/her for being late (VA)

_____ slapped him/her (Direct PA)

_____ threw a magazine on the floor when you saw him/her (Displaced PA)

_____ refused to go to the party (DP)

_____ just didn't say anything (W)

2. You wanted to go to a certain movie and your spouse wanted to go to another movie. No. of times _____ (Issue: Power)

_____ go where he/she wanted to go rather than argue (W)

_____ discussed together the pros and cons of each movie (R)

_____ told him/her that he/she was a very selfish person (VA)

_____ got so angry you kicked him/her (Direct PA)

_____ smashed a coffee cup (Displaced PA)

_____ told him/her that you wouldn't go to any movie (DP)

3. You and your spouse independently decided to get the newspaper to read at the same time. No. of times _____ (Issue: Material Possession)

_____ didn't let your spouse have the paper until you were through (DP)

_____ allowed your spouse to have the paper without discussion (W)

_____ talked about how you might share the paper (R)

- _____ called him/her a paper hog (VA)
- _____ hit him/her (Direct PA)
- _____ threw the paper on the floor (Displaced PA)

4. You very much wanted to go to an important meeting the same evening as your child's last ball game. Your spouse said you had to go to the game. No. of times _____ (Issue: Responsibility)

- _____ slammed the door in his/her face (Displaced PA)
- _____ went to your own meeting (DP)
- _____ when to your child's game without discussion (W)
- _____ shared each other's points of view (R)
- _____ accused him/her of making you feel guilty (VA)
- _____ shoved him/her out of the way (Direct PA)

5. You were sitting down watching the evening news after a hard day. Your spouse came in and said he/she wanted to have dinner right away. No. of times _____ (Issue: Interruption of Activity)

- _____ pushed him/her out of the way (Direct PA)
- _____ threw something across the room (Displaced PA)
- _____ refused to have dinner before the news was over (DP)
- _____ had dinner even though you wanted to watch the news (W)
- _____ negotiated to see if you could reach a compromise (R)
- _____ yelled at your spouse and told him/her to get out (VA)

6. Your spouse came home and told you that he/she had made a dent in a parked car and hadn't left a note. No. of times _____ (Issue: Moral)

- _____ told him/her that he/she was unethical (VA)
- _____ slapped him/her with your hand (Direct PA)
- _____ threw your glass across the room (Displaced PA)
- _____ hid the car keys for a day or two (DP)

_____ kept your feelings inside (W)

_____ talked together to get a better understanding of what happened (R)

7. Your older child was late for school and you told him/her to hurry because it was important to be on time. He/she continued to dawdle. No. of times _____ (Issue: Time)

_____ talked with him/her about the need for punctuality (R)

_____ yelled at him/her for being late (VA)

_____ spanked him/her (Direct PA)

_____ threw a magazine on the floor (Displaced PA)

_____ grounded him/her when he/she came home from school (DP)

_____ didn't say anything (W)

8. You were at the drugstore and your older child wanted a comic book which you didn't want him/her to have. No. of times _____ (Issue: Power)

_____ let him/her have it anyway (W)

_____ discussed with him/her why you don't want him/her to have one (R)

_____ called him/her a spoiled brat (VA)

_____ spanked him/her there (Direct PA)

_____ left the store and slammed the door hard (Displaced PA)

_____ made him/her stay in the car while you shopped the next time (DP)

9. You found your older child playing your records which you didn't allow him/her to do. No. of times _____ (Issue: Material Possession)

_____ didn't allow him/her to use the stereo for a week (DP)

_____ left him/her alone (W)

- _____ explained why you didn't want him/her playing your records (R)
- _____ yelled at him/her (VA)
- _____ slapped him/her across the face (Direct PA)
- _____ slammed the record cover on the floor (Displaced PA)

10. Your older child was responsible for emptying the dishwasher. You asked him/her to do it and he/she said he'd/she'd do it later (as usual). No. of times _____ (Issue: Responsibility)

- _____ threw a dish on the counter (Displaced PA)
- _____ sent him/her to his/her room (DP)
- _____ emptied it yourself (W)
- _____ coaxed him/her into doing it together with you (R)
- _____ called him/her a lazy no good (VA)
- _____ grabbed him/her by the neck and forced him/her to do it (Direct PA)

11. You were talking on the phone and your older child kept interrupting you. No. of times _____ (Issue: Interruption of Activity)

- _____ slapped him/her across the mouth while you were talking (Direct PA)
- _____ slammed the door so you could have some privacy (Displaced PA)
- _____ sent him/her to his/her room (DP)
- _____ ignored him/her (W)
- _____ stopped talking and told him/her that you'd be through shortly (R)
- _____ told him/her to shut up (VA)

12. You found out that your older child had gone in your wallet and taken two dollars without your permission. No. of times _____ (Issue: Moral)

- _____ told him/her that good children never did such things (VA)

- _____ spanked him/her hard (Direct PA)
- _____ threw your wallet across the room (Displaced PA)
- _____ didn't give him/her any allowance for a month (DP)
- _____ let him/her keep the money (W)
- _____ tried to find out why he/she couldn't ask for the money (R)

13. You were late going someplace and your younger child wouldn't finish getting dressed. No. of times _____ (Issue: Time)

- _____ helped him/her get dressed and explained the need for being on time (R)
- _____ threatened to leave him/her home (VA)
- _____ spanked him/her (Direct PA)
- _____ threw the car keys on the floor (Displaced PA)
- _____ grounded him/her for that afternoon (DP)
- _____ waited patiently and didn't say anything (W)

14. You were at dinner and your younger child wouldn't eat his/her meal because he/she didn't like the menu. No. of times _____ (Issue: Power)

- _____ you left the dinner table without saying anything (W)
- _____ talked with him/her about why he/she didn't like the menu (R)
- _____ made him/her feel guilty about not eating your good food (VA)
- _____ physically forced him to eat his dinner (Direct PA)
- _____ threw your napkin on the floor (Displaced PA)
- _____ didn't allow him/her to have dessert for a week (DP)

15. You needed to use your fountain pen and you discovered that your younger child was using it to draw pictures. No. of times _____ (Issue: Material Possession)

- _____ sent him/her to his/her room (DP)

- _____ let him/her use it anyway (W)
- _____ talked with him/her about how fragile a fountain pen is (R)
- _____ told him/her that he/she was a pest (VA)
- _____ grabbed him/her by the arm and took the pen forcibly (Direct PA)
- _____ slammed your hand hard on the table (Displaced PA)

16. Your younger child's room looked like a disaster area and he/she wouldn't clean it up. No. of times _____ (Issue: Responsibility)

- _____ stepped on one of his/her toys (Displaced PA)
- _____ didn't allow him/her to go outside until his/her room was clean (DP)
- _____ shut the door so you didn't have to look at it (W)
- _____ talked with him/her about the merits of a clean room (R)
- _____ called him/her a slob (VA)
- _____ pushed him/her out of the way hard (Direct PA)

17. You were having a meeting at your house and your younger child kept interrupting. No. of times _____ (Issue: Interruption of Activity)

- _____ swatted him/her on the bottom (Direct PA)
- _____ slammed your coffee cup down in disgust (Displaced PA)
- _____ took the child's favorite toy away for a week (DP)
- _____ ignored him/her (W)
- _____ helped him/her to find something else to do during the meeting (R)
- _____ called him/her a pest (VA)

18. You returned from shopping and discovered that your younger child had taken a candy bar from the market. No. of times _____ (Issue: Moral)

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| _____ called him/her a thief | (VA) |
| _____ slapped his/her hands hard | (Direct PA) |
| _____ broke the candy bar in two and threw it in the trash | (Displaced PA) |
| _____ didn't allow the child to have any candy for two weeks | (DP) |
| _____ ignored what he/she did | (W) |
| _____ talked with him/her and helped him/her return the candy | (R) |

*The language of the questionnaire was adjusted depending on the sex of the spouse.

R=Reasoning, VA=Verbal Aggression, PA=Physical Aggression, DP= Denial of Privilege

APPENDIX B

TABLE 16

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES THAT HUSBANDS AND WIVES USE WITH EACH OTHER

	No. of Pairs	No. of Husbands Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	24	12 (50%)	131.5	61
Verbal Aggression	6	--	--	--
Direct Physical Aggression	0	--	--	--
Displaced Physical Aggression	4	--	--	--
Denial of Privilege	11	7 (64%)	21.5	5
Withdrawal	16	7 (44%)	65.0	20

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

TABLE 17

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
WIVES USE WITH THEIR HUSBANDS TO STRATEGIES OLDER
CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Older Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	24	5 (21%)	76.5	61
Verbal Aggression	19	19 (100%)	00.0	32*
Direct Physical Aggression	23	23 (100%)	00.0	55*
Displaced Physical Aggression	5	--	--	--
Denial of Privilege	8	5 (63%)	14.5	0
Withdrawal	15	8 (53%)	56.5	16

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 18

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
WIVES USE WITH THEIR HUSBANDS TO STRATEGIES YOUNGER
CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR OLDER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Younger Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	24	5 (21%)	50.0	61*
Verbal Aggression	19	19 (100%)	00.0	32*
Direct Physical Aggression	21	21 (100%)	00.0	43*
Displaced Physical Aggression	5	--	--	--
Denial of Privilege	14	11 (79%)	22.0	13
Withdrawal	11	1 (90%)	3.0	5*

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 19

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
HUSBANDS USE WITH THEIR WIVES TO STRATEGIES OLDER
CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Older Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	22	5 (23%)	45.5	49*
Verbal Aggression	18	18 (100%)	00.0	28*
Direct Physical Aggression	23	23 (100%)	00.0	55*
Displaced Physical Aggression	4	--	--	--
Denial of Privilege	12	6 (50%)	34.5	7
Withdrawal	15	7 (47%)	56.0	16

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 20

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
HUSBANDS USE WITH THEIR WIVES TO STRATEGIES YOUNGER
CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR OLDER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Younger Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	25	5 (20%)	37.0	68*
Verbal Aggression	19	19 (100%)	00.0	32*
Direct Physical Aggression	21	21 (100%)	00.0	43*
Displaced Physical Aggression	4	--	--	--
Denial of Privilege	15	11 (73%)	27.0	16
Withdrawal	8	1 (13%)	1.5	0

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 21

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
MOTHERS USE WITH THEIR OLDER CHILDREN TO STRATEGIES
THEIR OLDER CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Older Children Using < of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	24	4 (17%)	53.5	61*
Verbal Aggression	19	16 (84%)	43.0	32
Direct Physical Aggression	23	23 (100%)	00.0	55*
Displaced Physical Aggression	8	3 (38%)	9.0	0
Denial of Privilege	7	6 (86%)	2.0	0
Withdrawal	14	6 (43%)	27.0	13

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 22

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
MOTHERS USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER CHILDREN TO STRATEGIES
YOUNGER CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR OLDER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Younger Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	23	4 (17%)	42.5	55*
Verbal Aggression	21	16 (76%)	64.0	43
Direct Physical Aggression	21	21 (100%)	00.0	43*
Displaced Physical Aggression	8	4 (50%)	14.0	0
Denial of Privilege	22	3 (14%)	35.0	49*
Withdrawal	17	1 (6%)	4.5	23*

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 23

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
FATHERS USE WITH THEIR OLDER CHILDREN TO STRATEGIES
OLDER CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Older Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	23	8 (35%)	117.5	55
Verbal Aggression	21	15 (71%)	52.0	43
Direct Physical Aggression	23	20 (87%)	21.5	55*
Displaced Physical Aggression	7	3 (43%)	12.0	0
Denial of Privilege	9	5 (56%)	23.5	2
Withdrawal	16	7 (44%)	52.0	20

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

TABLE 24

WILCOXON MATCHED-PAIRS SIGNED-RANKS TESTS^a: COMPARISON OF STRATEGIES
FATHERS USE WITH THEIR YOUNGER CHILDREN TO STRATEGIES
THEIR YOUNGER CHILDREN USE WITH THEIR OLDER SIBLINGS

	No. of Pairs	No. of Younger Children Using > of a Strategy	Wilcoxon T	Critical Value
Reasoning	21	8 (38%)	86.5	43
Verbal Aggression	20	12 (60%)	64.5	38
Direct Physical Aggression	21	21 (100%)	00.0	43*
Displaced Physical Aggression	9	6 (67%)	9.0	2
Denial of Privilege	19	7 (37%)	58.0	32
Withdrawal	22	18 (82%)	55.5	49

^aAll tests were two-tailed.

*p < .01

VITA

Sarah Willard Penegar was born on January 29, 1940 in New York City. She grew up in New Haven, Connecticut where she graduated from the Foote School. In 1957 she graduated from St. Margaret's Episcopal School, Waterbury, Connecticut. After attending Bennett Junior College, Millbrook, New York, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in August, 1966, with a major in Psychology and a minor in English.

In September, 1976, Ms. Penegar enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology at The University of Tennessee. While a graduate student, she was employed part-time as a psychological associate at the Lakeshore Mental Health Institute, and at Overlook Mental Health Center, both in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Following the completion of her course work in August, 1980, Ms. Penegar took a Clinical Psychology Internship at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston, Massachusetts, where she had a one-year appointment to the Harvard Medical School Faculty as a Clinical Fellow in Psychology. She graduated in June, 1982, after having completed the internship and all requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Ms. Penegar has done extensive volunteer work in the mental health field and is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.