

CHANGES IN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS
AS A RESULT OF FAMILY THERAPY

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The problem with which this study is concerned is whether pathogenic parental patterns which precipitate and maintain children's maladjustment can be ameliorated through family therapy. Specifically, this investigation focused on how parental attitudes and sons' perceptions of parental attitudes are altered by therapy.

A review of the parent-child relations research reveals repeated evidence of the association between faulty parental patterns and maladjustment in children. These parental patterns are roughly grouped in the research according to three predominant factors: Loving-Rejecting (LR), Casual-Demanding (CD), and Overt Attention (O). In this study, pre- and post-therapy measures of these factors were obtained on the Roe and Siegelman Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR).

Subjects for both experimental and control groups were composed of three sets of parents and their sons, ranging in age from ten to fourteen. The experimental parents participated in group therapy once a week for eight weeks. Their sons were in individual therapy twice a week for eight weeks. The control group received no treatment.

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It was hypothesized that (1) there would be a significant positive change between pre- and post-therapy parental attitudes as measured by the following ten subscales of the Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR) -- Protective, Demanding, Rejecting, Neglecting, Casual, Loving, Symbolic-Love Reward, Direct-Object Reward, Symbolic-Love Punishment, and Direct-Object Punishment; and (2) there would be a concomitant significant positive change on the same ten scales for scores of the sons' perceptions of their parents' attitudes.

Tests of differences between means (t) were computed for scores of sons' ratings of fathers and mothers, and fathers' and mothers' self ratings on the ten scales of the PCR. Mothers' scores on pre- and post-therapy measures did not differ significantly. Fathers showed a significant increase on only the Loving subscale.

Boys' ratings of parental attitudes showed significant changes but they were independent of the parents' ratings. Sons' ratings of mothers showed significant decreases on Neglecting and Rejecting subscales and a significant increase on the Direct-Object Punishment subscale. The sons' ratings of fathers decreased significantly on Protecting and Loving subscales of the PCR.

Therapy changed several attitudes of parents, particularly as their sons perceived them, while no change resulted for those who were not treated. Predominant changes occurred

in the behaviors categorized as Loving-Rejecting with fewer changes in Casual-Demanding and Overt Attention behaviors.

Due to the limitations necessarily inherent in the current study, it was suggested that further investigation of this vital subject would lend itself to broader interpretations of the findings.

CHANGES IN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS
AS A RESULT OF FAMILY THERAPY

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Parent-child relations research is replete with evidence that links pathogenic parental patterns and faulty adjustment in children. Although the list of resultant childhood pathology appears endless, some of the most frequent examples cited are delinquency, aggression, anxiety, lowered IQ scores, poor self-concept, and poor socialization. Because of the many extrafamilial variables which influence this parent-child interaction, a direct causal relationship between the two cannot be assumed. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable that treatment of parents as well as the child increases the probability of ameliorating the child's problem.

While the study of relationships between parental practices and behavioral maladjustment in the child is widespread, the study of the utilitarian approach to these functional relationships is sparse. In other words, there is a paucity of research dealing with the effects of family therapy on measures of attitudes parents and children have about one another.

Thus, in this study, an attempt was made to investigate whether pathogenic parental patterns which precipitate and maintain children's maladjustment could be ameliorated by

involving parents of problem children in group therapy and simultaneously involving the sons in individual therapy. Using three broad factors of parental behavior research to evaluate patterns of behavior, this study focused on the question: Can characteristic parental attitudes reflecting behavior in the parent-child relationship be changed through family therapy?

More specifically, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:

Hypothesis 1.-- There will be a significant positive change between pre and post therapy parental attitudes as measured by the following ten subscales of the Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR): Protective, Demanding, Rejecting, Neglecting, Casual, Loving, Symbolic-Love Reward, Direct-Object Reward, Symbolic-Love Punishment, and Direct-Object Punishment.

Hypothesis 2.-- There will be a concomitant significant positive change on the same ten subscales for scores of the sons' perceptions of their parents' attitudes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research in the realm of parent-child relations includes two basic types: (1) that relating objectively described parental behaviors and attitudes to child responses, and (2) that dealing with the child's perceptions of his parents from a phenomenological viewpoint. Hypothetical models of parental behavior are employed throughout both of these types of research.

One model utilizing a phenomenological approach is that of Roe and Siegelman (1963). The present study is based on this model which uses three factors for parental behavior: Loving-Rejecting (LR); Casual-Demanding (CD); and Overt Attention (O). These three factors can be found to varying degrees in most measures of parental behavior; however, they are not entirely distinct and separate. As Becker (1964) warns, these factor concepts, while derived from ^{empirical & observable} empirical analyses, are constructs created in the minds of man. There is a ^{lot} multitude of ^{variables} variables pertaining to the aspects of parental behavior. Factors certainly interact and overlap. The matter becomes further complicated by the lack of consistent and generally accepted definitions of these factors. It is only for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of parent-child

phenomena that a hypothetical model can be considered worthwhile.

The literature on parent-child relationships is reviewed in terms of these three dimensions. ^{Empirical relationships} Empirical relationships dealing with these concepts have been established between children's reports of parent behavior and the child's sex, social class, personality and behavior.

Research Pertaining to the Loving-Rejecting Dimension

Child rearing is a multidimensional process encompassing attitudes and practices which impinge on children and may govern their behavior and thinking. Factor analytic studies of this process reveal that perhaps the most pervasive parental attitude affecting children can be conceptualized along a loving, accepting versus hostile, rejecting dimension (Sears et al., 1957; Roe & Siegelman, 1963; Becker, 1964; Milton, 1958; Schaefer, 1959, 1965 a & b; Schluderman & Schluderman, 1970 a & b; Baldwin et al., 1945, 1949).

Maternal rejection may be exhibited by overt hostility or by a lack of interest and is attributed to a variety of causes. Kessler (1966) states that the ambivalent mother who vacillates between rejection and possessiveness subjects her child to total rejection. Another type of rejecting mother is one who fulfills the child's material and physical needs but is cold, rigid, and unable to care for the child emotionally. Some mothers are so immature and self-centered

or preoccupied with other problems that they too are rejecting.

Rejection may cause

defects in social relationships (i.e., autism), in perception of reality (i.e., psychosis), in cognitive development (i.e., mental retardation) or in conscience (i.e., psychopathic personality) (Kessler, 1966, p.432).

Delinquency has also been shown to relate to this dimension. Delinquent children reported rejecting and neglecting parents, particularly fathers (Medinns, 1967a). Rejecting and neglecting mothers were associated significantly more with maladaptive delinquents (unsocialized aggressives and runaways) than with adaptive (socialized) delinquents (Tsubouchi & Jenkins, 1969).

Aggression is also influenced by the loving-rejecting factor. General hostility and ^{punitive} punitiveness of both parents were related to aggressive behavior in the child. Rather than being submissive, the child showed a tendency to be dominant if the mother were hostile and ^{punitive} punitive (Becker et al., 1963). Hostile parents exhibited a ^{proclivity} proclivity to use power-assertive techniques of discipline which tended to encourage aggression in young children, resistance to authority, power assertion to other children, and externalized reactions to transgression (fear of punishment and projected hostility). Warm parents were inclined to use love-oriented techniques of discipline which tended to facilitate acceptance of self-responsibility, guilt and related internalized reactions to transgression.

Nonaggressive or cooperative social relations were also manifest in these children (Becker, 1964).

Extroversion-introversion tendencies were associated with loving versus rejecting parents. Anxious and introverted males reported rejecting fathers and mothers. Extroverted, low-anxious females noted loving fathers while introverted, highly anxious females reported rejecting fathers (Siegelman, 1965). Slater (1962) found that the Emotional Supportiveness and Warmth (ESW) scale of the Parental Role Pattern Questionnaire correlated negatively with ego-weakness and introversion. The cold, detached parent was clearly linked with social-withdrawal in the child.

Socially maladjusted children's parents were rated as more rejecting. Measures of attitudes toward parent figures were significantly correlated with four measures of peer group acceptance and were also significantly correlated with a measure of sociometric status. Cox (1962) concluded that a positive attitude toward the parent of the same sex was a necessary condition for the establishment of competent and warm relationships with peers.

Peck's study (1958) revealed that high ego strength was related to warmth in the family life. Ausubel et al. (1954) investigated perceptions of children with respect to acceptance-rejection and intrinsic-extrinsic valuation of parents. Perceptions of acceptance and intrinsic valuation were highly correlated. Girls saw themselves as significantly more

accepted and intrinsically valued than boys. Children with low ego strength thought their parents valued them extrinsically, i.e., in terms of what they could achieve rather than unconditionally. Measures of self-acceptance were negatively correlated with the Hostility-Rejection factor of the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) (Zuckerman & Oltean, 1959).

Various types of pathology in childhood were also related to this factor. Cold parental attitudes were diffusely associated with personality problems, conduct problems, and autism (Peterson et al., 1961). Parents of conduct problem children were found to be significantly more rejecting and hostile toward their children than parents of nonconduct problem children (Schulman et al., 1967). In Serot's study (1961), children evaluated as poorly personally adjusted reported parents as less accepting. Becker et al. (1963) found that personality problems in the child were more likely to be linked with moderate levels of parental hostility and physical punishment than with extremes. Maternal coldness was associated with the development of feeding problems, persistent enuresis, high aggression, disturbance of toilet training, and slowing of conscience development (Sears et al., 1957). The Hostility-Rejection factor of the PARI was highly correlated with MMPI scales which constitute the "psychotic triad" - Paranoia, Psychothenia, and Schizophrenia (Zuckerman & Oltean, 1959).

A study by Roe (1957) suggested some interesting connections between the loving-rejecting dimension and the child's choice of vocation. Children from rejecting homes may develop a strong defensive awareness of others and probably have aggressive tendencies which find socially acceptable expression in occupational terms; or, these children may strongly reject persons and turn defensively to nonpersons. Rejected and neglected children, according to the author, are likely to select vocations related to technology, science, or the outdoors.

The interaction of the sex of the child and the sex of the parent has also been found to be related to the love, acceptance versus hostile, rejection dimension. As contrasted to fathers, mothers are perceived as more loving and affectionate and as less ignoring and neglecting. Girls see fathers as more accepting than do boys (Droppleman et al., 1963; Siegelman, 1965).

Hurley (1967) found an inverse relationship between children's IQ scores and measures of parental acceptance-rejection. Medinnus (1967b) found that parental rejection was a causal factor in children's poor adjustment to grade school.

Socioeconomic status has also been shown to be related to the parental acceptance-rejection dimension (Sears et al., 1957). Roe and Siegelman (1963) found that this factor varied consistently with socioeconomic status, i.e., for both parents

it appeared that the higher the socioeconomic status the more loving the parents. Boys from middle class homes tended to see their parents as more competent, emotionally secure, accepting and interested in the child's performance than do lower-class boys. Social class differences in boys' perception of the parent were much greater with respect to the father than the mother (Rosen, 1964). The loving-rejecting factor was not associated with religious background (Roe & Siegelman, 1963).

Research Pertaining to the Casual-Demanding Dimension

A second finding which has emerged from the voluminous parent-child literature is a factor encompassing labels of casual-demanding (Roe & Siegelman, 1963), autonomy versus control (Schaefer et al., 1959), permissiveness (Roff, 1949), strictness or nonpermissiveness (Milton, 1958), democracy (Baldwin et al., 1945, 1949), and authoritarian control, punishment orientation and firm discipline (Nichols, 1962).

Consistent patterns of negative correlations were exhibited between the extent of parental control and both the degree of parental acceptance and the laxness of parental discipline (Armentrout, 1970). Fathers' permissiveness and disciplinary ineffectuality appeared to foster child conduct problems while harsh autocratic attitudes and lack of concern among fathers were related to personality problems in children. Mothers and fathers of children with adjustment problems were

described as less democratic than parents of children with no manifest problems (Peterson et al., 1959, 1961).

The casual-demanding parental factor was not found to be significantly associated with extroversion-introversion tendencies or anxiety; however, other relationships were found. Casual fathers were associated with responsiveness in sons and casual mothers with self-sufficient daughters. Demanding fathers tended to have shy sons with exacting tendencies. Demanding mothers were associated with suspicious sons. Trustful females reported demanding fathers (Siegelman, 1965).

Strict discipline was found to have no obvious personality advantages; on the other hand, permissiveness was significantly related to more initiative and independence, better socialization, less inner hostility, and a higher level of spontaneity and creativity (Watson, 1967). Children of dominating (strict) parents were courteous, obedient, and neat, but also shy, timid, withdrawing, docile and troubled. Submissive (permissive) parents' children tended to be more aggressive, disobedient, and exhibited more eating problems; however, they also were more self-confident, better at self-expression, freer, and more independent (Symonds, 1939). Baldwin et al. (1949) found that democratic and warm parents tended to have children who were socially outgoing, both in a hostile and friendly manner. These children were also found to be active in school and generally assertive.

Radke's (1946) measures of parental behavior include three scales relevant to the casual-demanding dimension. They are (1) philosophy of authority ranging from autocratic to democratic, (2) parental restriction ranging from strict to lax, and (3) severity of punishment ranging from severe to mild. Restrictive, autocratic, and severely punitive parents generally had children who were unstable emotionally, unpopular socially, argumentative, and relatively insensitive to praise and blame. Generally, children of restrictive parents were found to demonstrate inhibited, passive and socially withdrawing behaviors.

Delinquency has also been associated with the casual-demanding factor. Schaefer (1965a) reported that delinquents noted more lax parental discipline and extension of extreme autonomy. They saw their parents as controlling through guilt and excessively severe. Cass (1952) reported that delinquents and nondelinquents were clearly differentiated with respect to maternal control. In general, children who exhibited social maladjustment were those who reported higher maternal control. Mothers of delinquents scored low on their awareness of the child's needs and high on control.

Slater's model (1962) indicated a close association between parental strictness and child impulsiveness. Fathers' strictness (not restrictiveness) was associated with aggressive behavior in the child (Becker et al., 1963). Permissiveness for dependent behavior had no significant effect; however,

permissiveness for aggression was found to be fertile ground for continuing aggression. This restrictiveness versus permissiveness factor encompassed levels of restrictions as well as the degree of strictness in enforcement in the areas of neatness, orderliness, care of household furnishings, noise making, table manners, modesty, sex play, toilet training, obedience, and aggression toward peers, siblings and parents. The positive effects of maternal warmth and the negative effects of punishment and permissiveness were stressed (Sears et al., 1957).

General findings of an in-depth review of the literature revealed that restrictiveness--while fostering well-controlled socialized behavior--also promotes fearful, dependent and submissive behaviors, inhibited hostility, and a blunting of intellectual striving. On the other hand, permissiveness--while facilitating outgoing, social, assertive behaviors and intellectual strivings--also tends to lead to decreased persistence and increased aggressiveness. The interaction of restrictiveness versus permissiveness in warm and hostile contexts evidenced different consequences. Restrictiveness combined with hostility maximized self-aggression, social withdrawal, and manifestations of internal conflict. Permissiveness in a hostile context maximized aggressive, poorly controlled behavior (Becker, 1964).

In terms of achievement, a group of bright underachieving boys reported parents as more restrictive than achievers.

These same parents were also less positive, democratic and supportive and excessively punitive and severe (Morrow & Wilson, 1967). Bladwin et al. (1945) noted that democratic parents and their children tended to have higher IQ's than those described as nondemocratic or autocratic.

The interaction of the sex of the child and the sex of the parent is also important with respect to this dimension. Droppleman and Schaefer (1963) reported that the same sex parent was more controlling than the opposite sex parent. Their data suggested that the same sex parent used more direct methods of control than the opposite sex parent, but that mothers used more indirect methods of control. These indirect methods included control through guilt, intrusiveness, possessiveness, and protectiveness. This was true of mothers for both boys and girls.

Boys rated mothers as more powerful and demanding than fathers (Siegelman, 1965). However, Kagan (1956) found that boys and girls reported that fathers were less friendly and more dominant, punitive, and threatening than mothers. As he becomes older, the child increasingly views the same sex parent as more dominant and punitive.

The casual-demanding factor did not vary with religious background or socioeconomic group (Roe & Siegelman, 1963). Education, however, exhibited a high negative correlation with authoritarian control (Zuckerman & Oltean, 1959).

Research Pertaining to the Overt Attention Dimension

A third factor which has emerged from the research includes overt attention, concern, indulgence, overanxiety, and protectiveness (Roe & Siegelman, 1963; Roff, 1949; Schaefer, 1965b; Becker et al., 1959; Baldwin et al., 1945; and Champney, 1941). Although this factor is sometimes conceptualized as being diametrically opposed to rejection, Kessler (1966) sees overprotection as dynamically more closely related to rejection than to acceptance. She states that one pattern of maternal overprotection in which the mother exhibits excessive anxiety over possible danger, illness and injury to the child can often be interpreted as a reaction formation against unconscious hostility and rejection.

Kessler (1966) cites two types of maternal overprotection that have been distinguished in research. The controlling and dominating mother fosters submissiveness in her child while the indulgent mother encourages narcissistic, immature behavior in her child. Both are typified by excessive mother-child contact, infantilization, and hindrance of independent behavior. Maternal overprotection in various forms is linked to a resultant symbiotic relationship, obesity, feeding problems, school phobia, and learning difficulties.

Fathers of problem children tended toward extremes in regard to concern for their children. It was suggested that exaggerated concern for children and a tendency to shelter

them from day-to-day problems may contribute to the development of conduct disorders (Peterson et al., 1959). Goldin (1969) reported the finding that children with character problems other than neuroses had overprotecting mothers. Mothers' childbearing anxiety was positively correlated with aggressive behavior in the child (Becker et al., 1963).

Overprotective fathers were associated with low ego strength in sons. However, sociable females also noted protecting fathers (Siegelman, 1965b). Overpossessiveness was related to suppression of aggression, infantilization, fostering dependency, and suppression of sexuality (Schaefer & Bell, 1957). Baldwin et al. (1945) reported that children from indulgent homes were generally inactive, unaggressive, and socially unsuccessful.

Again delinquency has been associated with this dimension. Delinquent boys were found to have more possessive mothers than normal boys. Mothers of delinquents were also more protective and expressive of affection than delinquents' fathers. Normal boys' fathers were found to express affection and be protective significantly more than delinquents' fathers (Schaefer, 1965a).

Medinnus (1967b) had a somewhat unusual interpretation of the findings of his study. Parents of young children who were well adjusted in school scored significantly higher on general babying, general protectiveness, and child centeredness of home, i.e., dependency encouraging behavior. The author interprets these high ratings as indicative of parental

acceptance of the child. Excessive emphasis on encouraging independence actually may be an attempt to justify nonnurturant, nonsupporting behavior which reflects feelings of rejection.

Becker's (1964) hypothetical model for parental behavior includes anxious-emotional involvement versus calm-detachment as a subdivision of the autonomy-control dimension. The anxious pole is defined by high emotionality in relation to the child, babying, protectiveness, and solicitous for the child's welfare. Empirical data is not provided relating this bipolar dimension to disciplinary practices.

Roe and Siegelman (1963) view this as a unipolar factor representing "overt, obvious expression of interest in the child which may take the form of tangible, concrete rewards, or protective regulations, but is not necessarily affectionate" (p. 365).

Factor "0" was more characteristic of both parents in the Jewish group than in the Protestant group. This factor was found to be independent of socioeconomic level (Roe & Siegelman, 1963).

Summary of Review of Literature

Goldin (1969) offered several general conclusions resulting from his survey of parent-child research. In general, children see mothers as more loving and fathers as more punitive, but either parent may be perceived as controlling.

Regarding sex differences, Goldin found that boys view parents as less loving and more demanding and punitive than do girls. A third conclusion is that children from lower socioeconomic homes perceived their parents as less loving and possibly as more psychologically controlling. Finally, all deviant groups were more likely to note parents as rejecting. Delinquents, however, saw their parents as undercontrolling while maladjusted normals and child guidance clinic patients were more likely to report parents as overcontrolling and excessively demanding.

An important final note regarding parent-child relations concerns the relationship between parents' self reports and their child's adjustment. Cox (1970) found that the child's perception of the parent was more highly associated with his observable behaviors than with the parent's report of their own behavior. Serot and Teevan (1961) obtained significant statistical results to support the following hypotheses:

(1) a child's adjustment was associated with his perception of his relationship with his family; (2) his perception of this relationship was not related to his parent's perception of this same relationship; (3) the parent's perception of the relationship was not related to his child's adjustment. The relevancy of these findings to the current study should be noted because measures of parental behavior were obtained from the child as well as the parent.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Both experimental and control groups were composed of three sets of parents and three sons between the ages of ten and fourteen. The experimental group was selected because they sought consultation at the North Texas State University Center for Psychological Services. The three boys in the experimental group were in special education classes. Each had an IQ in the normal range or above although all were having scholastic difficulties. Each of the boys had behavioral problems but none was severely maladjusted. The boys' acceptance for treatment at the Center was conditional on their parents' participation in group therapy. The control group was selected on the basis of availability of those families most similar to the ages and sex of the experimental families.

Instrument

The instrument used was the Roe and Siegelman (1963) ✓
Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR). It

was devised to obtain a measure of the characteristic behavior of parents toward their young children, as experienced by the child. It has been used in studies of late adolescents and of adults who have filled it out with reference to

their own childhood. A form with slightly modified wording is now in use with children (p. 355).

In addition to the two questionnaires which the child fills out on his father and mother, there are two other forms that the mother and father complete regarding their own behavior toward the child. Each form has similar wording and consists of 130 items.

There are ten subtests of the PCR. Six subtests, composed of fifteen items each, measure parental behavior characterized as Loving, Protecting, Demanding, Rejecting, Neglecting, and Casual. These categories represent a theoretical model proposed by Roe (1957). Four subtests with ten items each measure behavior categorized as Symbolic-Love Reward, Direct-Object Reward, Symbolic-Love Punishment, and Direct-Object Punishment. The Reward-Punishment categories reflect the model espoused by Sears et al. (1957). Descriptions of these categories are found in the appendix.

Items composing the PCR were either adapted from the literature or constructed to fit the ten subdivisions. Judges assigned items to categories based on one of ten descriptions. All items included in the PCR were assigned to the same category by all of the judges. Roe and Siegelman (1963) report reliabilities of the ten subtests based on their Harvard sample range from .896 for the Father form, Loving scale, to .687 also on the Father form, Symbolic-Love Punishment scale. Mother form reliabilities range from .745 to .872.

PCR items refer to "specific behaviors, not attitudes, in order to reduce some of the difficulties deriving from the use of retrospective data" (p. 358). Five possible responses can be made for each item ranging from "very true" (five points) to "very untrue" (1 point).

Roe and Siegelman (1963) did a factor analysis for each of three sample groups. Three factors emerged: Loving-Rejecting (L-R), Casual-Demanding (C-D), and Overt Attention (O). Factor L-R was definitely bipolar with the highest positive loadings for Loving and Symbolic-Love Reward. The heaviest negative loadings were on Neglecting and Rejecting. The second factor, C-D, was not as clearly bipolar. The Casual scale had the high positive loading with the negative ones on Demanding, Symbolic-Love Punishment, and Direct-Object Punishment. Factor O appeared to be unipolar with heavy loadings on Protecting, Direct-Object Reward and, with mothers especially, Symbolic-Love Reward. Similarities of these factors to others found in the parent-child relations research have been noted previously.

Procedure

Group therapy was carried out by an experienced therapist with the experimental parents once a week, approximately two hours per session, for eight weeks. A pragmatic approach was taken to parent group therapy. Discussion was focused on current problems in the parent-child relationship. Although

the group sessions were informal and loosely structured, occasionally a specific topic was presented and discussed. No particular orientation was utilized; however, concepts from Thomas Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training were presented throughout therapy and the book was recommended though not required reading. The primary aim was to help the participants become more effective parents through the acquisition of certain therapeutic skills that would enable them to help their sons deal with problems more effectively. Self-examination of parental behavior, exploration of possible alternatives, discussion of consequences of such behavior on the child, acquisition of insight into the underlying reasons for their child's behavior, and improvement of parent-child communications were the fundamental aspects of the therapy sessions.

The boys in the experimental group met individually with their therapist twice a week. The control group received no treatment whatsoever.

Change scores were computed on pre and post therapy measures of ten scales of the Roe-Siegelman Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR). ✓

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Tests of differences between means (t) were computed for scores of sons' ratings of fathers and mothers, and fathers' and mothers' self ratings on the ten scales of the PCR. Pre- and post-therapy means and t scores for the experimental and control groups are shown in Tables I through IV. *were later + rechecked in front tables*

Tables I and II indicate a general negation of Hypothesis *inclusion assumption*

1. As noted, mothers' scores on pre- and post-therapy measures do not differ significantly. Fathers showed a significant change on only one of the ten PCR scales. This change was a significant increase (.05) on the Loving PCR scale. Thus, results indicate only a very minimal change in the parents' attitudes as a result of group therapy.

assumption Hypothesis 2, that the boys' scores would show a *accompanying* concomitant change, was not supported by the data. There were changes on the boys' ratings of the parents but these changes were independent of the parents' ratings. As noted in Table III, significant (.05) mean differences occurred on three PCR subscales for the sons' ratings of mothers: decreases on Rejecting and Neglecting scales and an increase on the Direct-Object Punishment scale.

On the boys' ratings of their fathers (see Table IV) two significant changes occurred. Differences at the .05 level were found on the PCR Protecting and Loving subscales.

TABLE I
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS ON PCR SCALES

| PCR Scales | Mothers-Experimental | | | Mothers-Control | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|------|-----------------|--------------|------|
| | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t |
| Protecting | 38.66 | 36.00 | 1.59 | 36.66 | 38.66 | .87 |
| Symbolic-love punishment | 27.33 | 25.00 | 1.75 | 21.33 | 25.33 | 1.11 |
| Rejecting | 26.33 | 26.00 | .20 | 24.66 | 25.00 | .23 |
| Casual | 39.00 | 41.66 | 1.31 | 41.33 | 41.33 | 0 |
| Symbolic-love reward | 37.00 | 38.66 | .99 | 38.00 | 40.66 | 1.51 |
| Demanding | 41.00 | 33.66 | 3.35 | 36.00 | 38.00 | .96 |
| Direct-object punishment | 31.00 | 28.00 | 2.61 | 20.33 | 22.00 | .53 |
| Loving | 62.33 | 63.66 | .27 | 67.00 | 66.33 | 1.97 |
| Neglecting | 23.00 | 24.00 | 1.72 | 21.00 | 25.33 | 2.01 |
| Direct-object reward | 32.00 | 34.00 | 1.16 | 30.33 | 27.33 | 1.30 |

TABLE II
 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF EXPERIMENTAL
 AND CONTROL GROUPS ON PCR SCALES

| PCR Scales | Fathers-Experimental | | | Fathers-Control | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-------|-----------------|--------------|------|
| | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t |
| Protecting | 36.33 | 40.66 | 2.13 | 43.00 | 40.66 | 1.61 |
| Symbolic-love punishment | 24.00 | 25.33 | .92 | 25.33 | 24.00 | 1.11 |
| Rejecting | 23.66 | 24.66 | .33 | 28.00 | 26.00 | 1.74 |
| Casual | 32.00 | 35.33 | 1.17 | 46.33 | 43.00 | 2.30 |
| Symbolic-love reward | 35.33 | 35.66 | .25 | 36.66 | 37.66 | .66 |
| Demanding | 35.33 | 36.33 | .58 | 40.00 | 37.66 | 1.61 |
| Direct-object punishment | 24.33 | 29.00 | 2.13 | 20.33 | 20.00 | .18 |
| Loving | 63.66 | 67.66 | 6.90* | 60.33 | 59.33 | 1.00 |
| Neglecting | 22.33 | 21.66 | .76 | 27.00 | 27.66 | .75 |
| Direct-object reward | 30.66 | 30.66 | 0 | 30.66 | 26.00 | 1.64 |

* $p < .05$.

TABLE III
 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF EXPERIMENTAL
 AND CONTROL GROUPS ON PCR SCALES

| PCR Scales | Sons' Ratings of Mothers-Experimental | | | Sons' Ratings of Mothers-Control | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t |
| Protecting | 49.00 | 45.33 | 1.41 | 45.33 | 46.33 | .43 |
| Symbolic-love punishment | 34.00 | 34.00 | 0 | 45.33 | 46.33 | .43 |
| Rejecting | 40.66 | 31.33 | 5.02* | 29.66 | 30.66 | .18 |
| Casual | 42.00 | 40.00 | 1.74 | 40.00 | 39.33 | .36 |
| Symbolic-love reward | 37.33 | 35.00 | .45 | 33.00 | 35.00 | 1.32 |
| Demanding | 47.00 | 46.33 | .46 | 50.00 | 51.00 | .38 |
| Direct-object punishment | 30.66 | 37.00 | 5.24* | 17.00 | 21.33 | .79 |
| Loving | 57.66 | 58.00 | .10 | 53.33 | 53.00 | .19 |
| Neglecting | 39.00 | 29.00 | 5.78* | 30.00 | 33.33 | .81 |
| Direct-object reward | 31.33 | 31.33 | 0 | 29.66 | 28.66 | .25 |

* $p < .05$.

TABLE IV
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS ON PCR SCALES

| PCR Scales | Sons' Ratings of Fathers-Experimental | | | Sons' Ratings of Fathers-Control | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t | Pre Therapy | Post Therapy | t |
| Protecting | 47.33 | 43.66 | 5.40* | 42.66 | 44.33 | .69 |
| Symbolic-love punishment | 32.66 | 30.33 | .48 | 23.33 | 21.67 | .58 |
| Rejecting | 36.00 | 31.00 | 3.29 | 31.66 | 30.00 | .64 |
| Casual | 39.00 | 41.66 | .50 | 45.66 | 44.00 | .56 |
| Symbolic-love reward | 34.66 | 36.00 | .49 | 33.66 | 33.66 | 0 |
| Demanding | 50.33 | 49.00 | .92 | 45.00 | 43.00 | .31 |
| Direct-object punishment | 30.33 | 31.33 | .48 | 22.00 | 20.66 | 1.52 |
| Loving | 61.33 | 53.00 | 6.22* | 54.33 | 59.33 | 1.99 |
| Neglecting | 35.33 | 30.33 | 1.01 | 32.66 | 28.33 | 1.32 |
| Direct-object reward | 33.66 | 30.66 | 1.20 | 23.00 | 23.33 | .23 |

* $p < .05$.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this study lend themselves to one general conclusion: therapy did affect the attitudes of parents, particularly as perceived by the sons, while no change occurred for those not exposed to therapy. Another overall observation to be noted is that therapy influenced those factors included in the Loving-Rejecting dimension more than either the Casual-Demanding or Overt Attention dimensions.

The absence of significant change for the mothers is noteworthy. The mothers' attendance in therapy was nearly 100% and thus they received more exposure to treatment than fathers. Nonetheless, these mothers' ratings of their own behavior did not change. The only possible exception is the indication (significant at the .10 level) that they became less demanding of their sons. According to the research of Peterson et al. (1959) personality problems of their clinic group of children were found to be relatively independent of maternal attitudes. If this is also true of the present group of mothers and sons in this study, then it would seem that maternal attitude change is not a necessary condition for the amelioration of the sons' maladjustment.

The fathers' ratings of themselves as increasing significantly (.05) on the Loving scale really can not be accepted unconditionally. Sons rated these fathers as decreasing significantly (.05) on the same scale. Several interpretations of this contradiction are relevant. Group therapy focused on heightening the parents' awareness of the importance of behavior described as loving. Fathers' increase on this scale could either indicate a superficial awareness of loving behavior or it could mean that these fathers acquired the rudimentary ^{basic} loving attitudes that could lead to this behavior. If the latter assumption is correct, then perhaps the duration of therapy in this study was too brief for loving behavior to ~~crystallize~~ ^{Show through}. Cox (1970) found that ~~extrafamilial~~ ^{parental} measures of the child's behavior were more highly associated with the child's perception of the parent than with the parent's own report. Fathers' reports correlated less than mothers' with these ~~extrafamilial~~ measures. But the child's own perception of the father was more highly related to observable child behavior than his perception of mother. Thus it seems that fathers more than mothers fail to perceive themselves as their children and independent observers do. Further, it appears that even though fathers may hold attitudes described as loving, these professed attitudes are not manifest in their behavior nor communicated to their children. Finally, as ~~Serot and Teevan~~ ^{Stark} (1961) reported, the child's adjustment was not associated with the parents' perception of their relationship. ^{Show}

The sons' ratings of parents obviously did not concur with the parents' self ratings. This reconfirms Serot and Teevan's (1961) ^{conclusion} hypothesis that the child's perception of his relationship is unrelated to his parent's perception of the same relationship.

Decreases on the Rejecting and Neglecting subscales for sons' ratings of mothers are in part encouraging. Pre therapy measures on these scales were considerably higher for mothers of the therapy group than for controls. The research is replete with examples of the detrimental consequences on the child of neglecting and rejecting mothering. Negative correlations have been cited between these behaviors and social adjustment, self-acceptance, IQ, extroversion, low aggression, and low-anxiety. Because the child's perception of his relationship with his parents is related to his adjustment (Serot & Teevan, 1961), the present data points to a possible improvement in these boys' adjustment. In general, however, mothers as contrasted to fathers are seen as more loving and less neglecting (Droppleman et al., 1963). Nonetheless, this decrease in the neglecting and rejecting attitudes of mothers as perceived by the sons is the most clearcut positive and desirable consequence of this therapy.

Sons rated mothers as significantly (.05) increasing on Direct-Object Punishment which includes "physical punishment, taking away play things, reducing allowance, denying promised trips,...." (Roe & Siegelman, 1963, p. 357). This finding is

somewhat puzzling and undesirable. Throughout therapy the mothers in particular expressed their increasing efforts to be consistent in their disciplinary techniques. Perhaps, in their attempt to be consistent and to carry through on rules and regulations they also increased this physical-material punishment. Negative consequences of this demanding, controlling maternal behavior have been cited. This finding directly contradicts Droppleman and Schaefer's (1963) study. Their results indicated that mothers used more indirect methods of control particularly with children of the opposite sex.

Sons rated fathers as significantly (.05) decreasing on Protecting and Loving subscales. This result lends itself to several interpretations. In therapy, fathers were encouraged to allow their sons to have more responsibility and autonomy so that they could become more directly accountable for their behavior. It was emphasized that paternal overprotection would eventually become debilitating as the boys matured and were confronted with decision-making. So, this finding might reflect an attitude in the fathers which would encourage growth and maturity in the sons.

Implications of the reduction in the Loving scale were discussed previously. Superficially it appears that the decrease of fathers' loving attitudes as perceived by the boys is undesirable. However, it could reflect an "opening up" process. Initially, these boys exhibited an inhibited

relationship with their fathers. Therapy may have allowed these boys to express themselves more freely, including feelings of hostility toward their fathers.

Siegelman's findings (1965b) seem relevant to the current study which reveals somewhat contradictory and unexpected results in parent/child and child/parent reports of one another. Siegelman stated that his study suggested the

...possibility that children may more readily recognize and report ambivalent parental treatments, including loving, punishing, and demanding. Adults, on the other hand, might describe parents or themselves as predominantly loving or rejecting, predominantly autonomous or controlling (p. 174).

Obviously certain aspects of this study limit its credibility. Its primary weakness is the small size of the sample. Because of this undesirable characteristic a great deal of change was required to make these measures significant. Research in a clinical setting is dictated by the demands of the practical situation. Variables are more difficult to control than in laboratory experiments. This study had to fit into the ongoing therapy at the Center for Psychological Services and thus it includes some of the experimental weaknesses often inherent in a clinical setting.

Thus, the examination of families in therapy and how the attitudes of each member toward the other change as a result of treatment may be somewhat limited in the current study. Obtained results cannot be interpreted as those that would be expected from the general family therapy population, although

they are considered to accurately reflect changes in this study's sample. Further exploration of the process of family therapy under more controlled conditions would lend itself to a broader interpretation of the findings.

APPENDIX

DESCRIPTION OF PCR CATEGORIES

Protective - This category includes parents who give the child's interests first priority. They are very indulgent, provide special privileges, are demonstratively affectionate, may be gushing. They select friends carefully, but will rarely let him visit other homes without them. They protect him from other children, from experiences in which he may suffer disappointment or discomfort or injury. They are highly intrusive and expect to know all about what he is thinking and experiencing. They reward dependency.

Demanding - Parents in this group set up high standards of accomplishment in particular areas, manners, school, etc. They impose strict regulations and demand unquestioning obedience to them, and they do not make exceptions. They expect the child to be busy at all times at some useful activity. They have high ^{unquestioning} punitiveness. They restrict friendships in accord with these standards. They do not try to find out what a child is thinking or feeling; they tell him what to think or feel.

Rejecting - Parents in this group follow the extremer patterns of the preceding group, but this becomes rejecting when their attitude is a rejection of the childishness of the

child. They may also reject him as an individual. They are cold and hostile, ^{and hostile} derogate him and make fun of him and his inadequacies and problems. They may frequently leave him alone and often will not permit other children in the house. They have no regard for the child's point of view. The regulations they establish are not for the sake of training the child, but for protecting the parent from his intrusions.

Neglecting - These parents pay little attention to the child, giving him a minimum of physical care and no affection. They forget promises made to him, forget things for him. They are cold, but are not derogatory nor hostile. ^{the parents are not} They leave him alone, but do not go out of their way to avoid him.

Casual - These parents pay more attention to the child and are mildly affectionate when they do. They will be responsive to him if they are not busy about something else. They do not think about him or plan for him very much, but take him as a part of the general situation. They don't worry much about him and make little definite effort to train him. They are easygoing, have few rules, and do not make much effort to enforce those they have.

Loving - These parents give the child warm and loving attention. They try to help him with projects that are important to him, but they are not intrusive. ^{or oppressive} They are more likely to reason with the child than to punish him, but they will punish him. They give praise, but not indiscriminately. They try specifically to help him through problems in the way

best for him. The child feels able to confide in them and to ask them for help. They invite his friends to the house and try to make things attractive for them. They encourage independence and are willing to let him take chances in order to grow towards it. Distinction between Loving and Casual categories can be difficult. A basic differentiating factor is the amount of thought given to the child's problems.

Symbolic-Love Reward - The parents using this kind of reward praise their children for approved behavior, give them special attention, and are affectionately demonstrative.

Direct-Object Reward - These include tangible rewards such as gifts of money or toys, special trips, or relief from chores.

Symbolic-Love Punishment - Such punishments include shaming the child before others, isolating him, and withdrawing love.

Direct-Object Punishment - These include physical punishment, taking away playthings, reducing allowance, denying promised trips, and so on.¹

¹From A. Roe & M. Siegelman. A parent-child relations questionnaire. Child Development, 1963, 34, p. 357.

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