Power and dependence in families members' perceptions.

David Robertson
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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RECUE
POWER AND DEPENDENCE IN FAMILIES: MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS

by

C

David Robertson

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the School of Social Work
in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Social Work at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1980
RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe power relationships as they exist in single-parent black families where an adolescent had been attending a day treatment program. The process related to the establishment of power in family relationships had been ignored by most of the previous literature. It was believed that information concerning characteristics of this process as reported by a sample of eight adolescents and their parents might help clinicians better understand family relationships.

The classification for this research was quantitative descriptive. The research design selected to achieve the purpose of the study was a cross-sectional survey design.

The research instruments included a case review schedule, an interview schedule, and a projective drawing test. The case review schedule provided descriptive data concerning the parameters of the population. The interview schedule was designed by the writer to reveal information about variables predicted to be related to the power process.

The five variables included: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange. These variables were derived from the premises of social exchange theory. This theoretical framework proposes that power is established in family relation-
ships when a member supplies a valued resource to another. Every family member has resources that other members require. This mutual need creates a power dependence relationship between family members.

The third instrument utilized by the researcher was a Kinetic Family Drawing Test (Burns and Kaufman, 1972). This test was used as a supplementary source of information. The distance between family members depicted in the drawing provided an approximation of the relative closeness of family members. This test was administered to the adolescents only.

Although the associations predicted by the hypotheses were not supported, the following associations were found to be significant: mutual dependence and satisfaction; mutual dependence and family stability; mutual dependence and family instability; satisfaction and rules of exchange. The significant relationships discovered were, for the most part, paradoxical to what was expected. These relationships may be described as follows:

1. Mutual dependence exists in the sample families characterized by both stable and unstable family relationships
2. As mutual dependence increases, satisfaction of members decreases
3. As the number of rules of exchange increases, satisfaction of members also increases.

Recommendations for the day treatment agency and for
future research were made based on the findings of the study. The agency was encouraged to initiate a family treatment focus, to provide parent support groups, and to present alternative strategies for parenting that is rule-focused.

Suggestions for future research included: investigating factors influencing perceptions of adolescents and parents; maintaining adolescents as reporters of power in families; conducting a comparison of power process in one- and two-parent families; and maintaining the use of the social exchange framework with future studies of family relationships.

The researcher concludes that the data generated within the social exchange framework have provided useful information concerning the dynamics of power and dependence in families.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Mae Harman for the support and encouragement she extended to me during the past year. I particularly appreciated the conscientious manner and commitment that she demonstrated toward this research project. I also wish to thank the remaining two members of the committee, Dr. James Clarke and Dr. Robert Whitehurst, for their comments and suggestions throughout the development of this study.

Special thanks are extended to Todd Graham, Dave Mayo, and the families of the Adolescent Day Treatment Program for their assistance and cooperation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Through the researcher's prior clinical experience with adolescents and their families, it has become increasingly apparent that a relationship of power and dependence frequently exists in family relationships. To this writer, recognition of the myriad of influences existing between family members is central to an understanding of power in the context of family relationships. This understanding is imperative for any therapist who endeavours to bring about change in total family systems.

Studies on power in family relationships have predominantly been conducted in samples of two-parent families. Although topics for this research often include terms such as "family" and "power," few studies graduate beyond an analysis of the relative conjugal power. Social scientists who have attempted to include children in the family power research have incorporated the children as additional sources of information concerning the power distribution amongst the parents (Elder, 1962; Hess and Torney, 1962; and Bowerman and Elder, 1969). Power of children in families is a phenomenon which the present writer believes also warrants consideration.

Salvador Minuchin (1974), suggests that influence
is exerted on family members by the universal and idiosyncratic rules that operate within families. As a family-oriented practitioner, this researcher was most interested in studying the more subtle aspects of power governed by the idiosyncratic rules. These influences would include the mutual expectations each family member negotiates explicitly and implicitly.

While working toward completion of a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Windsor, the researcher had the privilege of completing a practicum placement at the Adolescent Day Treatment Program of Wayne County Children's Center, Detroit, Michigan. Adolescent Day Treatment is a combined therapeutic and educational program for adolescents experiencing any combination of academic, emotional, or behavioural difficulties that are beyond the resources of the regular school system. In the course of the practicum, the writer decided that a sample of families drawn from these clients might provide interesting material for a study of power relationships.

In light of the considerations described above, this research will describe characteristics of power and dependence in relationships within a population of single-parent black families where an adolescent is attending Adolescent Day Treatment. A sample of families was drawn from a total population of 15 families. A social exchange theoretical framework as proposed by Homans (1961) and Blau (1964) will be utilized in formulating the description of family power.
Social exchange theory contends that interactions between people involve exchanges of goods or resources that each person contributes to another (Homans, 1961; Emerson, 1962; Blau, 1964; and Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978). In this way, every person has control over some resources that another family member depends upon. The actual level of power is determined by the skills or qualities the person possesses as well as by the level of need of the other person. Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina (1978) suggest that these power-dependence relationships in families are not static, but vary over time as the needs and resources vary from one situation to another.

Research on family power relying on social exchange theory is not new. The review of the literature reveals that Safilios-Rothschild (1970), Oppong (1970), and Fox (1973) have utilized this framework to broaden some of the earlier conceptualizations concerning power relationships and the possible resources exchanged. However, few researchers have actually employed the social exchange theory to detect the less obvious influential aspects of reciprocal or complementary relationships such as those occurring in families.

The general research question being explored is: "Where are the ties of mutual dependence?" The two hypotheses tested within this study are:

1. As members' perceived satisfaction decreases, family instability will increase
2. The more family members view the rules of the exchange as similar, the greater the stability within the interactions.

The following research study will be concerned with locating mutual dependent relationships and assessing the rule structure operating within these family relationships. In keeping with the focus of a family systems orientation, the study will concentrate on the process related to power and dependence rather than attempting to identify a typical power holder or to delineate a typical power structure in the sample single-parent families.

The researcher surveyed the sample with the use of a self-constructed case review schedule (Appendix I) and interview schedule (Appendices III and IV). An existing projective test known as the Kinetic Family Drawing Test, described in Chapter III, was also administered to the adolescents as an additional source of information.

The results, although contrary to what was predicted by the hypotheses, do reveal interesting trends concerning satisfaction, stability, rules of exchange and mutual dependence within the relationships of the sample families. The implications of these results are discussed in terms of their relevance for future program development and research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of the literature for this research project was completed from two perspectives. First, various definitions and methodologies employed in the measurement of family power by the major studies of the past twenty years were reviewed. This portion of the review provided the researcher with an understanding of the complexities involved in the measurement and description of family power relationships. Second, the researcher reviewed literature related to social exchange theory, the theoretical framework within which the process related to power and dependence in family relationships will be described in this research project.

Measurement of Family Power

Definitions

In reviewing the literature, it became clear to the researcher that power in family relationships is a multidimensional phenomenon. This is partly evidenced by the general lack of consensus amongst the definitions employed to operationalize the construct of power.
Straus' (1964) and Mishel and Waxler (1968) define power as "the ability to influence or control other persons' behaviour" (Safilios-Rothschild, 1978, p. 539). Emerson describes power as being "... the amount of resistance on the part of B which can be potentially overcome by A" (1962, p. 32). Blood and Wolfe (1960) define power in terms of decision-making in eight areas of family life. These areas include: (1) what job the husband should take, (2) which car to purchase, (3) whether to buy life insurance, (4) where to go on vacation, (5) what house or apartment to take, (6) whether or not the wife should go to work, (7) what doctor to have, and (8) how much money should be spent on food each week.

In addition to the inconsistency in definitions created by the previous researchers of power, a variety of methodologies have also been utilized to measure and describe power in families.

Methodologies

The existing theories of family power structures have most often discussed the dynamics of the relative distribution of conjugal power without consideration of the possible influences of other family members. The widely-replicated study by Blood and Wolfe (1960) measures the relative conjugal decision-making power from the reports based solely on the wife's perspective. These researchers found that occupation, income, education, race, and length
of time married had a significant influence on the reports. Control over important family resources also affected to whom the wives attributed the power.

The assumption underlying studies which depend solely on the report of one family member is that this member's report is representative of the other members' perceptions of power in their family. In an attempt to avoid the limitations of relying solely on one family member's report, researchers began asking both husbands and wives to report on family decision-making. However, when both husbands and wives were interviewed, discrepancies were reported between the husbands' and wives' perceptions (Safilios-Rothschild, 1969; Heer, 1962).

Herbst (1952) advocated the belief that children are the most appropriate reporters of family matters such as the power structure. Cultural and social prescriptions are assumed to have a less biasing effect on children's reports of power than on those of their parents. In contrast, Heer refutes this contention, stating that:

... the child's perception of the decisions his parents make may be rather incomplete and one-sided. He may have a clear concept of decisions affecting himself but a rather inadequate perception of the decision-making process in areas remote from his concern.  

(Heer, 1963, p. 134)

Hess and Torney (1962) also found variations in adolescent response patterns of their perceptions of family authority. Variables such as sex, age, and religious affiliation accounted for a portion of the variance. King
(1967) found that black adolescents more frequently reported the same-sex parent as more involved in decision-making than did white adolescents. The one common finding of these studies was that a democratic decision-making pattern was most frequently reported throughout.

In many of these studies, an implicit belief prevailed that the power of children in family decision-making could be ignored. A study which did address the possibility that children possess some power was presented by Strodtbeck (1958). Strodtbeck's study combined observation and self-report data. In this study, the power of an adolescent son was just as high as that of his mother.

Survey Versus Observation: Controversy Over Methodologies

Exactly how should power within the family be studied? Most of the research previously reviewed in this chapter has attempted to measure family power by either survey or observational means. Proponents of the observational method have suggested that power be researched solely from observations made in the family's home or in a laboratory.

An outgrowth of the controversy over methodologies has been a resurgence of comparative studies. The implicit assumption underlying these studies is that both survey and observational methods tap the same dimensions of power.

Kenkel (1963), one of the earliest researchers in this area, investigated the relationship of a self-report
measure of expected influence with the actual influence in a joint family decision. The results revealed disagreement between the two sources. Extending his investigation, Kenkel explored the relationship between husbands' and wives' perceived roles and the roles they actually played in family decision-making sessions. No significant relationship was found between the perceived roles elicited by questionnaire and the real roles observed. Other comparative studies by Hill (1965) and Levinger (1963) have produced similar inconsistencies.

In an attempt to explain the controversy between self-report and behavioural methods, Sprey (1972), suggests that:

Family power structure is a theoretical concept, not an empirical fact. Its relation to the real world of the family thus lies in its potential to make sense of that which we observe: the ongoing processes of decision making, bargaining, and the negotiations between its members.

(Sprey, 1972, p. 236)

This conceptualization by Sprey implicitly proposes that research might do well to shift its focus from the power of individuals to that of the powering processes by family members. As Sprey indicates:

This process, since it is orderly, is essentially a manifestation of structuring, and follows its own laws of organization. It is these laws, not just the static power structure, that determine the outcome of any given decision making, bargaining, or negotiating event.

(Sprey, 1972, p. 236)

Safilios-Rothschild proposes a similar shift in focus:
... it seems that theories about power structure will not become more sophisticated and valid, until the methodology of power structure studies improves considerably to include the detailed study of all aspects of power and from the point of view of all contributing family members as well as the study of underlying differential degrees of affective involvement of one family member in the other as important variables.

(Safilios-Rothschild, 1970, p. 549)

These comments by Sprey and Safilios-Rothschild are reflective of the basic premises of family systems theory. Bowen, a family systems theorist, describes this underlying premise in the following statement:

Systems theory assumes all important people in the family play a part in the way family members function in relation to one another and in the way the system finally erupts. ... The family is a system in that a change in the functioning of one family member is automatically followed by a compensatory change in another family member.

(Bowen, 1973, p. 20)

More recent research has investigated power from a resource-exchange perspective (Safilios-Rothschild, 1976; Richmond, 1976). Rather than attempting to identify a stable power holder within families, these studies investigate the interaction between family members as exchanges of goods or resources.

Commenting on these resource-exchange studies, Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina state:

While each has emphasized the importance of individual contributions to a relationship, they have neglected to examine the very process of that relationship, which is a continual, reciprocal exchange among all members.

(Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978, p. 430)

An alternative theoretical focus used by this researcher is social exchange theory. It is the writer's
belief that this theoretical framework will enable him to view family power as an interactional rule-focussed phenomenon, thereby avoiding the limitations associated with research based solely on resources. From this perspective, research questions shift from "Who is the power holder?" to an investigation of the ties of mutual dependence amongst the family members.

**Development of Social Exchange Theory**

One of the earliest publications which attempted to demonstrate the explanatory value of exchange theory as applied to social behaviour was that of George Homans (1958). He felt that the task of social scientists was to demonstrate how the propositions of operant psychology could be used to describe interaction amongst people. Consequently, terms such as reward and punishment were included in the early social exchange literature. The basis of Homans's view was that human interaction was determined by the reinforcemen that individuals give to one another (Homans, in Demerath and Marwell, 1976).

According to Homans, social exchanges are based on one of the following five propositions:

I. If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus-situation has been the occasion on which a man's activity has been rewarded, then the more similar the present stimulus-situation is to the past one, the more likely he is to emit the activity, or some similar activity, now.

II. The more often within a given period of time a man's activity rewards the activity of another, the more often the other will emit the activity.
III. The more valuable to a man a unit of the activity another gives him, the more often he will emit activity rewarded by the activity of the other.

IV. The more often a man has in the recent past received a rewarding activity from another, the less valuable any further unit of that activity becomes to him.

V. The more to a man's disadvantage the rule of distributive justice fails of realization, the more likely he is to display the emotional behaviour we call anger.

(Homans, in Hamblin and Kunkel, 1977, pp. 31-32)

In the first proposition, the person's ability to discriminate is determined by factors such as his formal education, his everyday experiences, his reading and verbal skills. Homans suggests that the discrimination can be consciously or unconsciously determined (Homans, 1961, pp. 53-56).

Proposition two implies that if person B emits activity to person A, person A will emit a response in proportion to B's initial activity. In this situation, B's initial activity is the determiner or stimulus for A's response. A frequency of activities between persons is established.

Proposition three provides information about the rate of exchange between two people's activities. This proposition reveals the economic aspect of relationships. We would assume in a balanced relationship that the value a person places on help is equal to another person's value of approval.

Proposition four suggests that there can be too much of a good thing insofar as once a person has received all the rewarding activity he can utilize or acknowledge,
then it loses its value to the person. In psychological terms, the person has become satiated. In a sense, proposition four puts a limit on the usefulness of proposition two.

Proposition five suggests that when the exchanges are unbalanced and one member feels he is not getting a fair return for his activities, anger or a sense of dissatisfaction follow. If this occurs, one can assume the interacting members will either renegotiate their positions, or seek the interaction elsewhere.

Within the family context, Blau, a social exchange theorist, suggests that the rewards most often exchanged are intrinsic in nature. Blau further states that:

If the devotion of a person and his readiness to benefit another without expecting any specific repayments are exploited by that other to gain extrinsic advantages for himself, a serious strain is introduced into the relationship. Although there is no quid pro quo of explicit services in these intimate relations of intrinsic significance, each participant does expect his devotion to the other to be rewarded by the other's enduring commitment to the association. (Blau, 1967, p. 36)

The obligations created in these exchange relationships remain unspecified. The discharge of the unspecified obligations has been referred to as the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960).

The social exchange relationship is influenced by several factors. These influences include the social context, the prevailing rate of exchange, and the prior exchange relations (Blau, 1967).

Homans's rule of distributive justice (1961) is
paralleled by Blau's concept of rate of exchange (1967). An individual's level of satisfaction depends on the fact that the individual's expectations are not disappointed. If these expectations are not met, or the individual's standards of justice are violated, dissatisfaction and anger will be evidenced (Blau, 1967; p. 157).

Social exchange can be viewed as a process whereby dependence and power are simultaneously established in social relations. The constant reciprocal exchange creates power over and dependence on the other.

Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina incorporate the propositions of Homans and Blau in their discussion concerning family power (1978). First, individuals who exchange valuable resources will feel rewarded and family relationships will tend toward stability. Second, when the exchanges are perceived as fair or equitable, family members will tend to be satisfied. Third, where exchanges are rewarding and satisfactory, the exchanges will tend to be high volume, and the interactions between members will be close. This situation results in family stability. Fourth, where the exchanges are unrewarding and inequitable, high volume exchanges will create family instability. Fifth, when relationships are unstable, family members may attempt to restore an equilibrium by means of balancing tactics. These power balancing tactics include the formation of coalitions, devaluation of others' resources, withdrawal, becoming more demanding, and attempts to control family.
status rewards (Emerson, 1962).

From these premises identified by Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina (1978), this researcher identifies and discusses the bivariate relationships amongst the following five variables: satisfaction, rules of exchange, mutual dependence, stability, instability. Power, defined in Chapter III as influence between persons, is assumed to be the outcome of the mutual dependence in the family relationships. Mutual dependence is anticipated to be related to the remaining four predictor variables, namely: satisfaction, rules of exchange, family stability and family instability.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has presented some of the major family power studies of the last two decades. These studies have employed a variety of methodological approaches in their attempts to measure power. Although numerous studies of power have been undertaken, few have integrated the findings of earlier studies. The writer believes this reflects the multidimensional aspects of the power construct.

Social exchange theory is presented as a framework within which family power can be analyzed and described. The researcher traces the evolution of this framework, and discusses its applications in related studies. From the theoretical propositions of social exchange theory, the
writer identifies variables believed to be related to family power. These will be incorporated into specific, testable hypotheses, designed to reflect characteristics of the process related to power and dependence within family relationships.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe power relationships as they exist in single-parent black families where a child has been attending the Adolescent Day Treatment Program (A.D.T.) of the Wayne County Children's Center, Detroit, Michigan.

The concepts and subsequent variables related to power relationships are based on the social exchange theory of social interaction. The relationship between these variables will be quantitatively presented so that the descriptions will reflect characteristics about the population under study. Williamson et al. state: "In descriptive research the focus is on describing the sample or the population from which the sample was drawn" (1977, p. 404).

Concepts

Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina (1978), Turk and Bell (1972), and other social scientists have concluded that the present confusion revealed in research related to the construct of power is due in part to the absence of the inadequacy of conceptual definitions. The subsequent translation of these concepts into measurable human acts has
reflected these shortcomings.

The construct of power in this research project is defined as:

... all kinds of influence between persons or groups, including those exercised in exchange transactions, where one induces others to accede to his wishes by rewarding them for doing so.

(Blau, 1964, p. 115)

Power is established in a relationship where one person supplies services or resources to another in need of those resources. If the resource is not readily available elsewhere, then a power-dependence relationship is created. The greater the need an individual has for a resource that another individual possesses, the more power the individual with the resources is likely to have. The level of power is also determined by an individual's own qualities, skills and possessions.

Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina describe this relationship between power and dependence as follows:

Each person "pays" a certain price in resources brought in order to acquire certain goods as needs met. In this way, both power and dependence are integral parts of every exchange as a person continually experiences both power over, and dependence on, the other.

(Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978, p. 430)

It is the intention of the writer to now identify and define the concepts related to the construct of power as it has been defined above. As noted, most of the definitions that follow have been borrowed from social exchange theory. The basis of this theoretical approach as identified by George Homans is that human interaction is determined by the reinforcement that individuals give to one
another (in Demerath and Marwell, 1976).

Similarly, Blau states that social exchange:

... refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others.  
(Blau, 1964, p. 91)

The reader will notice from the above statements that the focus of the framework will be on the reciprocal process and rule structure as they relate to power relationships within families.

As mentioned in Chapter II, power is assumed by this researcher to be the outcome of the mutual dependence associated with family relationships. Mutual dependence is anticipated to be dependently related to the remaining four concepts or variables: satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange.

Mutual dependence is defined as the situation created when two individuals are dependent upon one another for certain valued resources. These resources are perceived by the individuals as necessary to help them achieve individual needs or goals (Emerson, 1962). Emerson states:

... these ties of mutual dependence imply that each party is in a position, to some degree, to grant or deny, facilitate or hinder, the other's gratification.  
(Emerson, 1962, p. 32)

Satisfaction is defined as a feeling-state accompanying the attainment of rewards which are perceived by the individual as fair or equitable in light of the investment made (Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978). Conversely, family instability is defined as the state within which
family members differ on the value of resources and the acceptable pattern for an exchange.

The final concept to be defined is rules of exchange. These rules are defined by the researcher as the expectations individuals create and implicitly agree upon for the resources exchanged in their relationships with each other. One such rule will be that the exchanges be equitable for those persons involved. Other similar rules particular to the relationship may also operate.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The general research question related to this study of family power is: "Where are the ties of mutual dependence?"

The two testable hypotheses which have been derived from this question are as follows:

1. As members' perceived satisfaction decreases, family instability will increase

2. The more family members view the rules of the exchange as similar, the greater the stability within the interactions.

Operationalizing the Variables

According to Williamson et al., the process of arriving at a measure for a variable is referred to as the operationalization process (Williamson et al., 1977). The authors also suggest that the same variable may be measured
in quite different ways when used in different research projects.

Selltiz et al. outline the following two evaluative criteria for the definitions:

Definitions ought to: 1) assign empirical and logical meaning to concepts in an explicit and precise way; and 2) assign meaning to concepts so the indicators of the concepts relate to indicators of other concepts in ways that are predicted by theory. (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 40).

The researcher will operationalize the following concepts for purposes of measurement: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability and instability, and rules of exchange. Using definitions outlined above, the researcher will now link these concepts with measurable indicators in behavioural terms.

Mutual dependence will be considered to exist in relationships where two individuals report the same relationship as satisfactory and worthwhile. In a relationship of mutual dependence, the individuals will report similar perceptions of the rules governing their exchanges.

Satisfaction will be regarded as being present to varying degrees under the following conditions: when other family members are reported as being helpful to the subject and the subject is seen as helpful to other family members; and when the interpersonal distances between family members are revealed by the adolescent as falling somewhere between the intimate and casual-personal zones that Hall has identified (Hall, 1961). Hall's distance zones represent different levels of intimacy of exchange and are entered as a
function of relative closeness and satisfaction related to that relationship.

Family stability will be evident if relationships among family members are reported as satisfactory and rewarding. The relationship may be described as rewarding if the resources are similarly and positively valued.

Family instability, on the other hand, is a state in which the family equilibrium is off-balance. The family in this state employs power-balancing tactics such as coalitions, devaluing resources of others, withdrawing from interactions, becoming more demanding or power-assertive, or finding allies outside of the family. These tactics are initiated to restore an equilibrated system. Equilibrium or homeostasis in a single-parent family is defined as the balance of relations between parent and child and, where applicable, between child and sibling, etc. (Ackerman, 1958).

Rules of the exchange will be measured by the subjects' perceptions of the conditions of their exchange relationship. The tentative conditions recorded as indicative of the exchange rules are:

1. The exchanges should be equitable for those persons involved

2. If one individual supplies a resource to another, the supplier can expect adequate reciprocation (Gouldner, 1960, p. 176).


Assumptions

Tripodi states that a researcher in the process of formulating a research problem should make a statement about the major assumptions relating to the selection of variables, definition of concepts, and measurement procedures (Tripodi, 1970).

The researcher makes a number of assumptions within this study. The first assumption is that the population variables other than age, sex, and birth order of the adolescent; and race, socio-economic status, and size of the family, are assumed to have little effect on the outcome of the study. Secondly, the writer assumes family members will be satisfied if their exchanges are equitable. The third assumption made by the researcher is that individuals who exchange valuable resources will feel rewarded, and a stable family relationship will be apparent. The fourth assumption related to this study is that if a family member is generally dissatisfied with the benefits he or she is receiving from the family, that individual will display a power-balancing tactic such as those presented on page 22. The fifth assumption is that power can be measured indirectly by measuring variables that the social exchange theory suggests are related to the construct. The sixth assumption is that if family conflict is occurring within this population of families, the adolescent attending A.D.T. program and his or her parent would be the most active power-negotiating members in their families.
Research Design

Selltiz et al. state that:

A basic condition necessary to support a hypothesis that one variable influences another is that the two must vary together in the way specified by the hypothesis.

(Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 121)

As outlined in the section under the heading Purpose, the intentions of this research project are to describe the association amongst variables as they relate to the construct of power in single-parent black families where an adolescent has been attending the Adolescent Day Treatment Program.

The classification for this research is a quantitative descriptive study. The actual research design selected by the writer to meet the above purpose is a cross-sectional survey design. Williamson et al. outline the capabilities of the cross-sectional design in this way:

In a cross-sectional design, the data are collected at one point in time. This category of designs is most appropriate for making inferences about the characteristics of the population from which the sample is drawn, and inferences about the relationships between variables at that point in time at which the data were collected.

(Williamson et al., 1977, p. 137)

The fact that the researcher cannot exert the degree of control required by true experimental designs does not prevent this investigation of the construct of power. This cross-sectional design is capable of making inferences about relationships among variables at the expense of the certainty that true experimental designs offer.
As seen in the literature review of power studies, a single independent variable is not identifiable. Selltiz et al. suggest that under these circumstances, researchers will search for classes of events or characteristics from the past that relate to the phenomenon of interest (Selltiz et al., 1976).

The conceptual causal factors identified in the hypotheses of this study have been translated from the behaviour patterns of characteristics associated with power relationships in families.

**Sampling Procedure**

Selltiz et al. indicate that smaller-scale surveys may be more feasible for studies in which the researcher desires more time with fewer respondents. This design permits the researcher to use measurement devices not possible in larger surveys (Selltiz et al., 1976).

The research population in this study consists of 15 single-parent black families, each of whose total family income does not exceed $10,000 annually. These families have a boy or girl between the ages of 12 and 16 attending the Adolescent Day Treatment Program. The children have been referred to A.D.T. for learning and/or behavioural problems.

The Adolescent Day Treatment Program of Wayne County Children's Center is a day school program for adolescents who are no longer functioning in the regular Detroit school
system and who live within the geographical boundaries of Wayne County.

The writer selected this population to study for several reasons. Firstly, the construct of power had seldom been studied in family types other than intact families. The second factor affecting the choice of this population was that the researcher was able to gain access to this population as a result of his practicum placement at the Wayne County Children's Center. In light of these considerations, the writer has chosen to study power relationships in single-parent black families whose adolescent (male or female) is attending A.D.T.

The sample chosen for this study is a probability sample. Selltiz et al. suggest that a probability sample facilitates generalization of the data (Selltiz et al., 1976).

The researcher initially selected a stratified random sampling method based on the sex of the adolescent for selecting the families. A complete listing of all population elements was made from the case files of A.D.T. The researcher then stratified the population according to males and females. Once the two strata of 11 male and four female adolescents had been identified, a simple random sample of four families from each stratum was selected. The unavailability of three of the female adolescents forced the researcher to abandon a comparison based on sex differences. Subjects were randomly selected from the remaining seven
male adolescents. The resulting sample was comprised of eight adolescents, of which only one was female. The method of selecting these eight families is that referred to by Williamson et al. as the "picking a name from a hat" technique (Williamson et al., 1977, p. 113).

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher began the data collection with a case review schedule (see Appendix I) of all active A.D.T. client files. In so doing, the researcher was able to identify the population of interest and to complete the stratified random and simple random sampling, as well as to acquire descriptive data such as: sex, age, family socio-economic level, and family members.

The second aspect of the data collection process involved sending a letter (Appendix II) to each family of the sample requesting their assistance with the research project. The researcher's practicum supervisor at A.D.T. had consented to the use of agency letterhead for this letter.

The third part of the data collection involved the administration of an existing projective drawing test to the adolescent. This projective test is known as the Kinetic Family Drawing Test—alternatively referred to as K-F-D (Burns and Kaufman, 1970, p. 19). It was assumed that this test would reveal characteristics such as closeness of relationships, mutual ties, etc. The subjective interpretive aspects of the scoring related to the K-F-D test were not
incorporated into this study.

While the child was completing K-F-D, the parent was interviewed by the researcher with the use of a structured interview schedule A (see Appendix IV). Upon completion of this interview, the adolescent was also interviewed according to a similar schedule B (see Appendix V).

The writer identifies several considerations regarding how access was made to the sample. The first consideration was the agency's interest in having information about the population being researched. A study such as this, which requires parental involvement, was viewed by the agency as a potentially positive experience for the parent and for the adolescent.

Careful attention was given to assuring prospective families that coding steps would be used to maintain their anonymity, and that the information from them could indirectly assist A.D.T. staff working with their sons or daughters. The introductory letter also described how much time the interview would take. Follow-up telephone calls confirmed appointment times for the sample families.

Past experience pretesting K-F-D with clients of A.D.T. suggested some individuals might be more willing to co-operate with the task if a monetary exchange of one dollar for a K-F-D picture was implemented.

The writer took several steps to prevent or reduce any contaminating effects. After the initial introductions and statement of the study's purpose, the mother and the
adolescent were separated and administered the data collection instruments.

The adolescent, in a room apart from the parent, was requested to sit at a table on which a sheet of white, 21.3 x 27.6 cm paper and a number two pencil were placed. The adolescent was instructed to:

... draw a picture of everyone in your family, including you doing something. Try to draw whole people, not cartoons or stick people. Remember, make everyone doing something—some kind of action.

(Burns and Kaufman, 1970, pp. 19-20)

After explaining the requirements of the K-F-D test, the researcher left the adolescent alone until the drawing was completed. Before the adolescent left the K-F-D situation, he/she was asked to identify each individual drawn and to describe the activity or action in which they were involved.

The expected time allocated for the drawing was 10 to 20 minutes, based on pretests of K-F-D. During this time, the writer returned to the parent to explain and administer the interview schedule, and to record the parent's responses.

The researcher chose two structured interview schedules A and B to facilitate the quantitative analysis to be carried out later in this project.

**Instruments**

The three instruments used in this research study included a case review schedule, a structured interview
schedule, and a Kinetic Family Drawing projective test. The reader will recall that the focus of the research was to make distinctions between the variables according to degrees. Selltiz et al. indicate that when measurements to degrees are necessary, distinctions of degree must be introduced into the measuring instruments (Selltiz et al., 1976).

The case review schedule, as mentioned under data collection procedures, consisted of open-ended questions. The descriptive data attained by this instrument became the basis from which the parameters of the population were established and the selection of the sample was made.

The interview schedules A and B used for this research project consisted of 16 structured questions and one open-ended question each. The questions were constructed by the researcher to generate data amenable to statistical analysis on the previously operationalized variables: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange.

According to Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina:

While the content (resources, observable behaviours) fills in the contextual variables, it cannot comment on the rules that govern the interaction—hence these rules must become the basic unit of analysis, especially as modified by the specific context, of a given interaction.

( Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978, p. 433)

Structured questions "... lend themselves more readily to statistical analysis than do open-ended questions" (Williamson et al., 1977, p. 145). These writers
also caution, however, that this type of question sometimes inappropriately forces respondents to select answers from irrelevant and predetermined pigeonholes. Thus, an open-ended question was included to permit additional spontaneous comments. The researcher selected questions which, for the most part, form scales based on the subjects' responses to statements regarding family power relationships.

Selltiz et al. suggest that individuals are placed on scales for a variety of reasons:

In some instances, there was a goal to reduce the complexity of the data to calculate a single score that represented several variables. In other instances, investigators may have wished to test a hypothesis that several variables actually measured a single, underlying concept so that they might be said to go together on the same "dimension" of a concept. Finally, the goal may have been to reduce the error in measurements and thereby to increase the reliability of the final measures that were used in analysis. (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 401)

The researcher viewed this study as having similar requirements to those addressed in the above reasons for uses of scales.

In an attempt to detect respondent falsification and the systematic error in the subjects' responses, the researcher constructed the case review schedule and schedules A and B, such that they included statements or questions which were alternately stated twice at random locations throughout.

No information is available regarding the validity or reliability of this interview schedule. The researcher must concede that until extensive application of this inter-
view schedule is made, a potential source of measurement error is present.

Williamson et al. state that:

Even when questionnaire-inspired attitudes do not reflect either the "true feelings" that lie deep in a person's soul, or the way that person would act if such an imaginary, hypothetical situation ever did actually present itself, they are often worth studying in their own right.

(Williamson et al., 1977, p. 75)

It was with this consideration in mind that the writer included the Kinetic Family Drawing projective test in the battery of instruments.

Kinetic Family Drawings have been gathered by scientists for approximately the last 25 years. These drawings are believed by Burns et al. to have been most helpful in understanding troubled children and their families. These scientists believe that to understand children, it is necessary to give the children tasks such as drawing, which involves movement or kinetic action. This form of expression is believed to tap the spontaneous aspects of the child's psycho-social make-up more effectively than is possible through conventional verbal means.

This type of test, like other similar projective tests, is simple to administer, non-threatening, and often more effective than other techniques are, because it is not affected by language or cultural differences.

Questions of reliability and validity have been the common criticism of these tests. More recent reports suggest, however, that research is now at a high enough level
of sophistication that human figure drawings may be used as diagnostic instruments.

The Kinetic Family Drawing test is designed to reveal information in the following five areas: Characteristics of the individual K-F-D figures; Style; Symbols; Actions of individual figures; and the K-F-D Grid. It is understood by the writer that the information potentially revealed by the K-F-D test is more detailed than that actually required by the hypotheses of this research study. Consequently, for the purposes of this study, the analysis will be limited to the interpersonal distances in millimetres as these are revealed in the K-F-D Grid.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has stated the purpose of the research and the concepts: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange as they relate to the construct of power. The research question and related hypotheses were outlined and operationalized. The assumptions were stated such that the selection of variables was qualified. A cross-sectional research design was outlined. This design became the road map permitting descriptions about the variables in a way that the hypotheses required. This design does not possess the same control over the variables as does the true experimental design.

Various sources of potential error were identified:
1) the internal validity of the interview schedules, since pretest information was not available, and 2) possible respondent falsifying.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data were analyzed manually as well as by computer, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Nie, Brent, and Hull, 1970). Reference is made to Kendall's Coefficient of Rank Correlation; otherwise referred to as Kendall Tau, in this analysis (Kendall, 1970).

This chapter begins with a presentation of sample characteristics that are considered typical of the total population. This is followed by an analysis of the data related to the original research question and hypotheses. The writer presents possible explanations concerning the associations or lack of associations evidenced by the research data. The data considered by the researcher to be less amenable to analysis by computer are also summarized in this chapter.

Population/Sample

Characteristics of the single-parent black families who participated in this research project are discussed and illustrated in this section of the study.

Table 1 is a chart describing the frequency of
families by the age and sex of the adolescent. The identified adolescents range in age from 12 to 15 years, and are predominantly male. The total population of interest to the researcher contained four female adolescents. The unavailability of these families prevented the analysis from being included in this research project. This will be considered as one limitation of the study.

TABLE 1
FAMILIES BY AGE AND SEX
OF ADOLESCENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the frequency of the parents' ages in the sample families. The high extremes in the table reflect the ages of the two adoptive single-parent grandmothers.
Table 2
PARENTS' AGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>31-36</th>
<th>37-42</th>
<th>43-48</th>
<th>49-54</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTHER</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRANDMOTHER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 provides the central location and standard deviation of the age-related frequencies. The age distribution for the adolescents can be described as relatively symmetrical. The age distribution for the parents reflects a distribution that is positively skewed.

Table 3
COMPARISON OF PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' AGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>MEDIAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADOLESCENTS</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>1.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the eight sample families have an annual income of less than $5,999.99. One-half of the sample families rely on public assistance as their major source of income. The sample of adolescents is most frequently represented as oldest children within their families. The
mean number of children per family is 3.875.

**Research Question and Hypotheses**

In this study of family power relationships, the original research question the writer set out to answer was: "Where are the ties of mutual dependence?" It was believed that a relationship of mutual dependence was most likely to exist in families where both the parent and the adolescent perceived their relationship as satisfactory, where they had similar perceptions about the rules of their exchanges, and where the family's relationships were relatively stable. The social exchange framework suggested that power in family relationships was dependent upon the degree of mutual dependence or reciprocity between members.

The ordinal nature of the summated scales used in 13 of the 17 questions prompted the researcher to apply nonparametric statistics of ranks to the data (Ferguson, 1976). The writer began by intercorrelating the five variables reflected by the 13 questionnaire items. The questions believed to reflect the variables include: mutual dependence by question 7; satisfaction by questions 3, 6, 15; rules of exchange by questions 4, 11; family stability by questions 1, 5, 10; and family instability by questions 8, 13, 14, 16.

Kendall coefficients of rank correlation were computed for the five variables: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules
of exchange. These correlations are presented in Table 4. For the purposes of this study, a significance level of \( p \leq 0.05 \) was set.

Referring to this study's original research question, the coefficients in Table 4 indicate that satisfaction, family instability, and family stability are the variables most significantly associated with mutual dependence.

Table 4 reveals that rules of exchange, although not directly related to mutual dependence, are significantly related to satisfaction. From these associations, the writer suggests that mutual dependence occurs in families characterized by both stable and unstable relationships. The inverse relationship reflected in Table 4 between satisfaction and mutual dependence suggests that as mutual dependence increases, satisfaction decreases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>MUTUAL DEPENDENCE</th>
<th>SATISFACTION</th>
<th>RULES OF EXCHANGE</th>
<th>FAMILY STABILITY</th>
<th>FAMILY INSTABILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUTUAL DEPENDENCE</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.5791*</td>
<td>-.4454</td>
<td>.5237*</td>
<td>.6186*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATISFACTION</td>
<td>-.5791*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.5417*</td>
<td>-.0408</td>
<td>-.3086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULES OF EXCHANGE</td>
<td>-.4454</td>
<td>.5417*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.0816</td>
<td>-.1543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY STABILITY</td>
<td>.5237*</td>
<td>.0408</td>
<td>.0816</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.5669*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY INSTABILITY</td>
<td>.6186*</td>
<td>-.3086</td>
<td>-.1543</td>
<td>.5669*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*significant at .05
The first hypothesis states: "As members' perceived satisfaction decreases, family instability will increase." To test this hypothesis, family rankings on satisfaction were correlated with rankings on family instability. The Kendall Tau coefficient presented in Table 4, page 40, was not found to be statistically significant; consequently, the predicted association between satisfaction and family instability was not demonstrated. The negative value of the coefficient \(-0.3086\), although not statistically significant at a .05 level, does imply that an inverse relationship between satisfaction and family instability may potentially exist.

The second hypothesis predicts that: "The more family members view the rules of exchange as similar, the greater the stability within the interactions." This was tested by comparing the adolescents' perceptions of the rules of exchange with those of the parents.

Comparison of the median, range, and variance are presented in Table 5. The table reveals that the adolescents tend to perceive more rules associated with family exchanges than do their parents. Kendall Tau correlation was computed for the perceptions of the adolescent with those of the parent. The Tau coefficient, \(-0.4167\), was not large enough to be regarded as statistically significant. The null hypothesis, that no difference exists between the adolescents' and parents' perceptions about the rules of exchange, was rejected.
TABLE 5
PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' RULES OF EXCHANGE SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>RULES OF EXCHANGE SCORES n = 8 pairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>6.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOLESCENT</td>
<td>8.167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

significance .092; r not significant

A correlation between the combined adolescent and parent scores on rules of exchange and family stability is presented in Table 4, page 40, as .0816. This Tau coefficient is not large enough to be regarded as statistically significant. Therefore, the association as predicted in the second hypothesis was not supported.

It is apparent from this analysis that, although the relationships as predicted by the hypotheses were not supported, the research question has been answered. The relationships discovered amongst the variables are for the most part paradoxical to what was expected.

One unexpected relationship concerning the research question can be seen in Table 4, page 40, between the variables mutual dependence and satisfaction. Originally, the researcher had expected a positive correlation between the two variables. However, the results indicated that as mutual dependence increased in the sample families, their satisfaction decreased. One explanation for this relation-
ship, taken from the social exchange literature, suggests that if the exchanges are high in volume and are perceived as inequitable, family members will tend to be dissatisfied, and instability will characterize the family relationships (Beckman-Brindley and Tavormina, 1978). This unexpected association might also indicate that mutual dependence exists between family members out of necessity rather than through self-determination.

A second unexpected relationship was found existing amongst mutual dependence and family stability/instability. The literature reviewed predicted that as mutual dependence increased, family stability would also increase. The results indicated, however, that mutual dependence in the sample families existed in both stable and unstable relationships. At first glance, this would appear contradictory. The finding that mutual dependence also exists in unstable relationships suggests that the loyalty existing in family relationships is little affected by stability or instability. The researcher speculates that a third, as yet undetermined, variable may be responsible for this apparent contradiction.

A final explanation concerning these unexpected relationships, that the writer has readily admitted, is the possibility that the questions in the interview schedule failed to clearly differentiate between the variables.

Several explanations may account for the inability of the data collected to support the stated hypotheses de-
rived from the literature reviewed. First and perhaps most evident is the fact that few analytical statistics apply to small sample research where N ≤ 10, even though the present study's sample represented .53 of the total population. Second, sufficient research on power and dependence has not been done with this type of family. The writer speculates that mutual dependence within these single-parent families may be something quite different from mutual dependence in an intact family. Third, statistics concerning the reliability and validity of the interview schedule are not forthcoming from the present research. It is only assumed at this point that the closed, scaled questions of the questionnaires do provide a valid measurement of the variables related to power-dependence relationships. Finally, the writer believes that part of the difficulty in identifying statistically significant relationships amongst the five variables may be reflective of the general incongruence of the adolescents' perceptions as compared to those of the parents. These incongruencies will be reported in Table 6 through Table 8.

The writer believes that the parents' generally lower scores on satisfaction, rules of exchange, and family stability may reflect their reactions to being single parents. Table 6 describes the central location, dispersion and variance for the parents' and adolescents' perceptions of satisfaction. The adolescents on the average reported a greater level of satisfaction associated with family
relationships than did the parents. However, the adolescents' reports were more varied than the reports of the parents.

**TABLE 6**

PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' SATISFACTION SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>SATISFACTION</th>
<th>n = 8 pairs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td>8.000</td>
<td>5.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOLESCENT</td>
<td>9.500</td>
<td>8.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central location, dispersion and variance for the family members' scores on rules of exchange are presented in Table 5, page 42. The median for the parents' scores reflects that they generally perceive fewer rules than the adolescents report.

Table 7 illustrates the central location, dispersion and variance for the members' reports of family stability. The adolescents on average reported a greater amount of stability within family relationships than did the parents. The parents' reports were more varied than those of the adolescents.
**TABLE 7**

**PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' FAMILY STABILITY SCORES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>STABILITY</th>
<th>MEDIAN</th>
<th>RANGE</th>
<th>VARIANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.500</td>
<td>9.000</td>
<td>11.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOLESCENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.500</td>
<td>8.000</td>
<td>7.929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family members' perceptions of family instability are compared in Table 8. The parents generally reported family relationships as being more unstable than did the adolescents. Once again, the reports of the parents were considerably more varied than reports by the adolescents.

**TABLE 8**

**PARENTS' AND ADOLESCENTS' FAMILY INSTABILITY SCORES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER</th>
<th>INSTABILITY</th>
<th>MEDIAN</th>
<th>RANGE</th>
<th>VARIANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.500</td>
<td>14.000</td>
<td>26.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOLESCENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.500</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>17.696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lack of statistically significant support for the relationships predicted by the hypotheses may simply reflect the fact that no association exists between the variables: mutual dependence and rules of exchange; satisfaction and family instability; and rules of exchange with
family stability.

**Supplementary Data**

The results of the Kinetic Family Drawing Test completed by the adolescents is summarized in Table 9. As mentioned in Chapter III, Hall suggests that the interpersonal distance between members reflects different levels of intimacy of exchange (Hall, 1961).

In four cases (1, 3, 7, 8), the actual interpersonal distance between the adolescent, the parent, and the most favoured family member is the same. In one instance (case 2), the most favoured family relationship for the adolescent was reported and illustrated in the Kinetic Family Drawing Test (K-F-D) as occurring with someone other than the parent. The remaining two cases, 6 and 4, appear to be illustrated in the K-F-D without association to the questionnaire report of the most favoured family member. Case 5 was excluded from this analysis. The adolescent in this case did not illustrate himself in his family drawing.

**Table 9**

INTERPERSONAL DISTANCES

REVEALED IN KINETIC FAMILY DRAWINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTANCE IN MM</th>
<th>ADOLESCENT 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO PARENT</td>
<td>125 45 70</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO MOST FAVOURED MEMBER</td>
<td>125 117 70</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final question of the questionnaire administered to the parents and the adolescents was open-ended. The question invited the subjects to discuss any other aspects of influencing occurring in family relationships. The parents' comments are summarized under the following areas: comments ventilating feelings of frustration and helplessness; comments documenting the many alternatives already attempted to better relate to their adolescent; and comments which describe the methods they employ to demonstrate approval.

Parents in one-half of the sample families wanted to clearly establish that they felt they had tried everything within their resources to be "good" parents. These responses may indicate that good parenting is culturally prescribed as a priority.

In three of the eight cases, the parents chose to ventilate feelings about their discomfort as parents. In most of these families, the parents are home-bound, meeting the needs of their children. The amount of personal contact with significant others apart from the immediate family is limited. The researcher suggests this is one explanation for the need evidenced by some parents to express their feelings during the interview. The limited social contact experienced by some of these parents may be a source of increased frustration and perceived helplessness.

The comments by the adolescents in response to the same open-ended question may be summarized as follows:
comments stating that family relationships were fine; and comments describing conflict with siblings.

The adolescents did not perceive family relationships to be as unstable as did the parents. The writer suggests that some of the adolescents' comments may have reflected a defensive use of denial. A second explanation might be that in several families, the adolescent has established an influential family role, and is quite content with the existing power-dependence relationships.

Summary

In summary, the population used in this study consisted of eight single-parent black families. The 53% sample was similar in composition to the total population with respect to the following characteristics. The adolescents identified ranged in age from 12 to 15 years. Seven of the eight adolescents were male. The main source of income for one-half of the families was public assistance. The parents' mean age was 38.5 years. Frequently, the adolescent was the eldest child of the family.

The research question was partly answered insofar as three of the four variables were found to be significantly associated with mutual dependence. The subsequent bivariate relationships predicted by the hypotheses were not found to be statistically significant. A number of possible explanations for the absence of significance amongst the associations was presented. Finally, the data related to
the projective drawing tests and the final open-ended question were summarized and presented as a descriptive analysis.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Considering the multitude of influences existing in family relationships, the researcher set out to describe power as a dynamic characteristic of ongoing relationships. Most of the prior studies reviewed by the writer examine power or decision-making in two-parent families. These studies usually assume that children possess little if any power in family relationships; consequently, the children are often ignored by researchers.

The more recent literature confirms prior beliefs that family power studies ought to focus on the process related to power rather than outcome power as presented in the form of structures or typologies. The literature related to social exchange theory suggests that power and dependence occur together in all reciprocal social relationships. From this perspective, a person's level of power in a relationship is determined by the skills or qualities that person possesses, as well as by the other person's level of need.

On the basis of these considerations, a quantitative descriptive study was undertaken in a sample drawn from a population of single-parent black families, where an adolescent had been attending a day treatment program. The
adolescent and the parent were interviewed by means of a 17-item interview schedule designed by the researcher to reflect five variables thought to be related to power dependence relationships. The writer also administered a projective drawing test to the adolescents as a supplementary source of data.

The data revealed few significant associations between the variables mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange. The significant relationships discovered were, for the most part, paradoxical to what was expected. These relationships are as follows:

1. Mutual dependence exists in the sample families characterized by both stable and unstable family relationships

2. As mutual dependence increases, satisfaction of members decreases

3. As the number of rules of exchange increases, satisfaction of members also increases.

Although the hypotheses were not readily supported by the data, general trends can be extrapolated from the results. These trends are summarized as follows:

1. There was a trend for satisfaction to be negatively related to family instability

2. There was a trend for the adolescents to perceive more rules associated with family exchanges than did their parents
3. The adolescents tended to report a greater level of satisfaction associated with family relationships than did the parents.

4. The adolescents tended to report a greater amount of stability within family relationships than did the parents.

5. The parents conversely reported family relationships to be more unstable than reported by the adolescents.

6. As reported in the interview schedule and illustrated in the Kinetic Family Drawing Test, the parent was the most-favoured family member for one-half of the sample of adolescents.

7. One-half of the sample parents felt they had explored all of the alternatives they had available to them to realign their relationship with their adolescent.

Limitations of the Study

The inability of the data to support the predicted relationships of the hypotheses and the research question as prescribed by social exchange theory may be due to the limitations of the methodology. The first weakness is related to the small sample size of eight families. Had a larger sample of families been available, more confidence could be placed in the study's findings. Few analytical statistics are applicable to small sample research. Most of the tests of significance at a .05 level are inaccessible to data generated from small samples. In addition, the un-
equal representation of male and female adolescents in the sample prevented the researcher from making an analysis of sex differences characterizing power dependence relationships.

Second, the narrow population parameters prohibit generalizing the findings of the study beyond the single-parent black families being serviced by the Adolescent Day Treatment Program.

The third limitation concerns the study's instruments. The researcher felt that a pretest with this limited population would jeopardize the final sample size. The researcher chose not to pretest with another population, believing an outside population would not be matched closely enough to the characteristics of this particular population. Since the interview schedule was designed by the researcher without a pretest, information concerning its validity and reliability is not available. Until this instrument receives additional applications, such information will remain speculative.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the writer will make recommendations related to the following two areas: program development of the agency, and future family power research.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the parents in the study more often reported family relationships as un-
stable. Furthermore, these parents reported they had exhausted the alternatives for coping with their adolescent.

Considering the eagerness of the parents to openly express concerns related to family relationships, it appears to this writer that this single-parent population has an acute need to discuss and explore options that will restore their hope in their family unit. The writer does not suggest that this need is unique to single-parent families, but it may be exacerbated by the absence of a parent or spouse.

In the past, there has been a tendency for day treatment facilities to concentrate their efforts on the identified client; in this case, the adolescent. However, in this study's findings, it is the parent who is actually expressing the greater need for help. The subsequent question that must be addressed is: "How can the parents be helped to cope with their roles in the family?"

In light of the findings, and in response to the preceding question, the researcher recommends that the Adolescent Day Treatment Program extend its program to further engage the entire family for ongoing intervention and treatment.

The writer suggests that treatment take the form of regularly scheduled family therapy sessions for all families with an identified adolescent in the program. The means of engaging these families will admittedly pose a challenge for clinicians. The constraints with which these families live
do not facilitate their availability for traditional, office-centred, day-scheduled therapy sessions.

It is also recommended that additional support groups be provided for the parents. The writer believes such groups might furnish the parents with an opportunity to ventilate feelings and share information concerning alternatives for coping as parents. The agency may find it necessary to provide transportation and child care for parents wishing to participate in the support group.

The significant association evidenced between rules of exchange and satisfaction in this research project implies that rules are a prerequisite for satisfaction. The writer is confident that many of the parents would benefit from a parenting program that is rule-focused, and which advocates logical consequences for family members.

The writer maintains that further research of single-parent black families where an adolescent is displaying similar problems is required to achieve a better understanding of the dynamics or influences underpinning these family relationships.

The differing perceptions by adolescents and parents concerning satisfaction, stability, and rules of exchange associated with family relationships indicate to this writer that further research might attempt to identify factors accounting for the contrasting reports. Future researchers are also encouraged to include children as reporters and potential sources of influence in family relationships.
The writer also recommends that future research compare power relationships between single- and two-parent families. Such a study would provide information concerning the structural effects that the presence of a second parent presents to family processes.

Similar research would also benefit from maintaining an analytical framework such as social exchange theory. This framework provides not only predictions about the process related to power, but also furnishes the researcher with a greater understanding of the issues common to all family functioning.

Should future research elect to utilize a similar interview schedule to that of this project, the writer recommends the questions be subjected to an item analysis such as that prescribed by a Likert-type scale (Sellitz et al., 1976). This analysis would provide the researcher with greater confidence concerning the internal validity of the interview schedule.

**Conclusion**

This project was initiated with a perceived need to gain additional knowledge about power and dependence associated with single-parent black families where an adolescent had been identified as having educational and behavioural problems. Although several limitations were evidenced in this study, the researcher believes that the data generated within the social exchange framework have
provided useful information concerning the family dynamics of power and dependence within the population of interest.
APPENDIX I

Case Review Schedule
Case Review Schedule

Date: / / 

File #: 

Client name: ____________________________ (surname first) Birthdate: / / 

Sex: ___ Race: ___________________________ Phone: 

Address: _____________________________ (number) _____________________________ (street) _____________________________ (city) 

Parent or guardian: ________________________________ 

Date of guardianship: / / 

Prior relationship to adolescent: 

People living in home: Sex: Age: Relationship to adolescent: 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

Approximate annual household income: 

Summary statement re: reason for referral to A.D.T.: 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

_________________________ 

Intake date: / / 

Psychiatric diagnosis: 

_________________________ 

Psychological evaluation: 

_________________________
APPENDIX II

Introductory Letter
February 5, 1980

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to request the involvement of you and your child in a study project being held at Adolescent Day Treatment. The purpose of the study is to become familiar with family relationships of students attending A.D.T. To accomplish this task, you and your child will be asked to respond to questions about relationships in your family. The time involved in completing the questions will be one hour or less, and your answers will be kept confidential.

An appointment has been set for you and your child on __________ at ___ p.m. at Adolescent Day Treatment, 18100 Meyers Road. If this time is inconvenient for you, or you would like more information, please call me at __________.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated. The success of this study and the continued success of our service to you and your family depends on your interest.

Sincerely,

Dave Robertson
M.S.W. (intern)

________________________

Dave Mayo
Clinical Supervisor, A.D.T.
APPENDIX III

Interview Schedule A

(Parents)
Interview Schedule A

Introduction

This interview schedule was developed to measure the evidence of the specified variables: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange. This schedule is administered by the researcher to the parent or guardian in the sample families.

Subjects are reassured that it is not possible to identify them from their responses after a coding procedure is completed.

A.D.T. file #: ______ Code #: ______ Date: / / 

Name: ___________________________ Sex: __

Relationship to adolescent: ___________________________

People living in home: Sex: Age: Relationship to adolescent:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

1. Generally speaking, everyone in your family is willing to help each other out with problems as they come up. Do you . . .

___ strongly agree
___ agree
___ unsure
___ disagree
___ strongly disagree

2. In your family, with which person do you most look forward to spending your time?

___ son/grandson, age: ___
___ daughter/granddaughter, age: ___
___ other (explain): ___
3. Which of the following words best describes your feelings about the fairness of your relationship with the other family members?
   ___ very satisfactory
   ___ satisfactory
   ___ unsure
   ___ poor
   ___ not satisfactory

4. When someone in your family is encouraging in a warm and friendly way, you usually feel obliged to be helpful to them in some way. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

5. Generally speaking, you and your child (A.D.T. adolescent) have a fair and worthwhile relationship, worthwhile in the sense that you don't think you could have this kind of relationship with anyone else. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

6. If you help your child (A.D.T. adolescent) with something around the house, you usually expect something in return from him/her later. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

7. Your child (A.D.T. adolescent) is the most helpful person to you of the people living in your house. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

8. Generally speaking, you usually talk about personal problems or needs with friends outside of the family. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
9. With whom in your family do you have the most difficulty getting along?
   ____ son/grandson, age: ___
   ____ daughter/granddaughter, age: ___
   ____ other (explain): __________

10. Often you feel that your child (A.D.T. adolescent) is unfair about what he/she expects from you. Do you.
    ____ strongly agree
    ____ agree
    ____ unsure
    ____ disagree
    ____ strongly disagree

11. If you are helpful to someone in your family, you have the right to expect help from that person sometime in the future. Do you . . .
    ____ strongly agree
    ____ agree
    ____ unsure
    ____ disagree
    ____ strongly disagree

12. With whom in your family does your child (A.D.T. adolescent) spend most of his/her time?
    ____ you (mother/grandmother/etc.)
    ____ brother, age: ___
    ____ sister, age: ___
    ____ other (explain): __________

13. Often you get the feeling that other family members are ganging up on you and no one, or hardly anyone, is on your side. Do you . . .
    ____ strongly agree
    ____ agree
    ____ unsure
    ____ disagree
    ____ strongly disagree

14. Lately you've had to come on stronger to get anyone in your family to listen to you. Do you . . .
    ____ strongly agree
    ____ agree
    ____ unsure
    ____ disagree
    ____ strongly disagree.
15. Often you think that perhaps you are giving more of yourself to this family than you are getting in return. Do you...

___ strongly agree
___ agree
___ unsure
___ disagree
___ strongly disagree

16. Sometimes you have wondered if anyone in your family is even able to help you when you do need them. Do you...

___ strongly agree
___ agree
___ unsure
___ disagree
___ strongly disagree

17. What additional information can you give about how the people in your family influence one another?
APPENDIX IV

Interview Schedule B
(Adolescents)
Interview Schedule B

Introduction

This interview schedule was developed to measure the evidence of the specified variables: mutual dependence, satisfaction, family stability, family instability, and rules of exchange. This schedule is administered by the researcher to each adolescent attending A.D.T. and belonging to the sample families.

Subjects are reassured that it is not possible to identify them from their responses after a coding procedure is completed.

A.D.T. file #: _____ Code #: _____ Date: / / /

Name of adolescent: ____________________________ Sex: __

1. Generally speaking, everyone in your family is willing to help each other out with problems as they come up. Do you . . .

   _____ strongly agree
   _____ agree
   _____ unsure
   _____ disagree
   _____ strongly disagree

2. In your family, with which person do you most look forward to spending your time?

   _____ mother/grandmother etc.
   _____ brother, age: ___
   _____ sister, age: ___
   _____ other, (explain): __________

3. Which of the following words best describes your feelings about the fairness of your relationship with the other family members?

   _____ very satisfactory
   _____ satisfactory
   _____ unsure
   _____ poor
   _____ not satisfactory

4. When someone in your family is encouraging in a warm and friendly way, you usually feel obliged to be helpful to them in some way. Do you . . .

   _____ strongly agree
   _____ agree
   _____ unsure
   _____ disagree
   _____ strongly disagree
5. Generally speaking, you and your mother/grandmother etc. have a fair and worthwhile relationship; worthwhile in the sense that you don't think you could have this kind of relationship with anyone else. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

6. If you help your mother/grandmother etc., with something around the house, you usually expect something in return from her/him later. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

7. Your mother/grandmother etc. is the most helpful person to you of the people living in your house. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

8. Generally speaking, you usually talk about personal problems or needs with friends outside of the family. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

9. With whom in your family do you have the most difficulty getting along?
   ___ mother/grandmother etc.
   ___ brother, age: ___
   ___ sister, age: ___
   ___ other (explain): ___

10. Often you feel that your mother/grandmother etc. is unfair about what she/he expects from you. Do you...
    ___ strongly agree
    ___ agree
    ___ unsure
    ___ disagree
    ___ strongly disagree
11. If you are helpful to someone in your family, you have the right to expect help from that person sometime in the future. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

12. With whom in your family does your mother/grandmother etc. spend most of her/his time?
   ___ you
   ___ brother, age: ___
   ___ sister, age: ___
   ___ other (explain): ________

13. Often you get the feeling that other family members are ganging up on you and no one, or hardly anyone, is on your side. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

14. Lately you've had to come on stronger to get anyone in your family to listen to you. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

15. Often you think that perhaps you are giving more of yourself to this family than you are getting in return. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree

16. Sometimes you have wondered if anyone in your family is even able to help you when you do need them. Do you...
   ___ strongly agree
   ___ agree
   ___ unsure
   ___ disagree
   ___ strongly disagree
17. What additional information can you give about how the people in your family influence one another?
APPENDIX V

Interview Schedule Record Sheet
**Interview Schedule Record Sheet**

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<tr>
<th>Concept/Variable</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2* 7 9* 12*</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Satisfaction</td>
<td>3 6 15Δ</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family Stability</td>
<td>1 5 10Δ</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Family Instability</td>
<td>8Δ 13Δ 14Δ 16Δ</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rules of Exchange</td>
<td>4 11</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Scoring Key**

* items are not scored

Δ items are scored 1 2 3 4 5

other items are scored 5 4 3 2 1
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Periodicals


Unpublished material

VITA AUCTORIS

David Robertson was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on February 5, 1952. He attended Buena Vista and Greystone Heights elementary schools and Evan Hardy Collegiate secondary school in Saskatoon. Upon graduation in 1969, he was employed as a salesperson for a locally-owned manufacturing and supply business. In December, 1972, he married Sheila Curtis. Their son Jason was born in February, 1975. Later that same year, David enrolled at the University of Regina as a part-time external student in the faculty of Social Work, and began employment as a crisis intervention counsellor for the Community Aid Centre in Saskatoon. In June, 1977, he left Community Aid to finish his studies as a full-time student. He graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work degree from the University of Regina in May, 1979. From April to August, 1979, David was employed as the co-ordinator for Sun Star House of Saskatoon, a residential treatment facility for teenage girls. In September of that year, he enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at the University of Windsor. He expects to graduate in October, 1980.