SIBLING RIVALRY:

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The research is an investigation of sibling rivalry and its socialization. Eighty mothers of two, three and four-child families were interviewed and 189 of their children tested by means of a specially constructed Children's Test. The test provides a matrix of the child's attitude to and involvement with all family members. The mother's interview data indicate the extent to which the mother differentiates between her children, her perception of sibling relationships and her general orientation to key socialization issues.

The first part of the thesis, sets out the 'demographic' data on maternal preference and sibling relationships. Patterns of maternal preference were observed in two and three-child families, but not in four-child families. The analysis of sibling attitudes indicated that positive and negative sibling affect is related to ordinal position and sibling status.

The second part, focusses on socialization issues. The socialization style of the mother was conceptualized as either personal or positional and operationalized by means of a specially constructed scale. This personal-positional factor was closely related to the mother's handling of key socialization issues and, more specifically, to her attitude to and handling of sibling rivalry. When the children of personal mothers are compared with those of positional mothers, different amounts of reported jealousy are found, but the direction of the influence varies with family size. The effect of a personal or positional socialization seems to be to lessen or heighten the significance of structural influences in the family.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In general, studies of family life have focussed on the mother-child relationship, almost to the complete exclusion of other family members. Recent writers (Danziger, 1970; Goslin, 1969) have criticized the prevailing dyadic paradigm arguing for a systems approach to family research; an approach that considers any dyadic relationship in the context of the total constellation of relationships. Danziger, for instance, argues very strongly for a consideration of the father's role and influence when interpreting mother-child relationships and their effects. He cites as an example the work of Ancona (1970) in which the effect of father absence on the male child differs according to the nature of the relationship between mother and father - between husband and wife.

> "In so far as the socialization of the child takes place in the nuclear family, it forms part of a structured and bounded system. The effect of gross change like maternal employment or father absence will therefore remain unpredictable unless we possess additional information that enables us to assess the relevant transformations in the family system." (Danziger, 1970, p.13)

Another prevalent assumption in family life research that has also been strongly questioned is the assumption that the direction of effects in socialization is always downward; i.e. from parent to child. This vertical emphasis in family research assumes that the parents are the sole possessors of power and influence within the family and the child is the passive in the face of that power; as the parents consciously or subconsciously direct so the child becomes. The parent acts by loving or by punishing, and the child responds accordingly. He develops a

strong conscience, becomes achieving, anxious, more masculine/more feminine.... depending on the behaviour, attitudes and values of his parents. This tabula rasa image of the child has come under increasing attack. Recent research on children as young as three weeks indicates that parental behaviour is in its turn reciprocally influenced by the qualities and behaviour of the child (Moss, 1967; Bell, 1971). The parent-child relationship is thus given a dynamic aspect in which the qualities of the mother and the child mesh; their reciprocal interactions are in a state of constant adjustment as each reinforces the other. Thus indulgence or punitiveness is not a quality inherent in the mother but is called out by a particular child and his behaviour. It is also a function of the situation, one component of which is any other family relations mother and child engage in, e.g. husband-wife relationship, or the relationship between siblings. This accounts for transformations in the mother's behaviour over time, and also the different response that the mother may have to different children. The family situation has its own inner dynamism and, as the parents and children change, both as a result of maturation and increased external involvement, so the balance within the family is adjusted. Examples of such changes are school involvement, work, puberty....and, of course, the addition of new family members.

When the family is viewed as a system, all members are engaged in two kinds of relationship: vertical-across the generations from parent to children; and horizontal-within the generation, husband to wife, and each child to his sibling. Only a few studies have considered the role of siblings in the social development of the child and those that have, have concentrated on its presumed outcomes or effects. As fathers have been 'the forgotten men' of socialization studies, the influence of siblings has been equally neglected. The presumed effects are comprehensively considered in Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970) which reviews much of

the work in the field of sibling influences and attempts a synthesis. The relationship between siblings has none the less remained a largely unresearched area. Commenting on the lack of empirical research in the area, D.P. Irish (1964) notes:

> "The interactions between and among children in the home - the horizontal relationship within the younger generation itself - seems to have been given relatively little heed. An examination of the research literature for the decades since World War I provide very few examples of empirical studies focussed primarily on sibling relations."

The situation has changed little since 1964, and in 1974, Hope Leichter wrote in a very similar vein:

> "Experience with siblings is virtually universal; even only children often have spouses with siblings or end up the parents of more than one child. Yet much of the research on child rearing and parental influence on children either omits considerations of siblings altogether, or holds sibling composition 'constant', or gives it minor attention. In effect, there has been little study of the process by which siblings influence each other." (p.192)

In view of the fact that most children are reared with brothers and/or sisters; that a large part of the child's life at home is spent in the presence of these siblings; that these relationships may be the most acrimonious or the most rewarding of an individual's life, the lack of research is surprising. Research indicates the relationships between siblings in childhood influence adult behaviour in such matters as choice of spouse and marital adjustment (Toman, 1961; Noonan, 1973). Other studies indicate sibling influences on such factors as achievement (Schacter, 1963; Chittenden, Foan, Zweil and Smith, 1968); anxiety

(among others Schacter, 1959; Sampson and Hancock, 1967); conformity (Becker and Carroll, 1962; Schmuck, 1963); and sex role preference (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1964).

Bank and Kahn (1975) note that there is a cultural bias in the study of the family by American and European social scientists. This is reflected in the concentration of research effort on the romantic relationship between the marital pair, and its tangible outcome - the children. In other societies in which the sibling relationship is more important than the marital relationship, sibling relationships and especially the control of sibling rivalry are important themes of social and cultural organization (Paul, 1950). In American society, Cummings and Scheidner (1961) report that there are occasions in an individual's life in which the sibling relationship assumes more significance than that with the spouse. Bossard and Boll (1954), in their study of large families, found that sibling relationships were frequently more important than the parent-child relationship as a source of security.

The parent-child relationship is thought to be of paramount importance to the social and emotional development of the child, since parent and child are in close, intense and intensive interaction for almost two decades. By the same reasoning, since siblings have an equally emotional and enduring relationship with each other, it is reasonable to assume that they have equally powerful influences on each other.

The relationships between children within the family - between siblings - are important for several reasons; the typical family consists of more than one child and it is therefore important to delineate some of the important aspects of sibling interaction and their relationship to other factors of family life. It has already been suggested that the sibling relationship can be one of the most formative influences in the development of the child; so the ways in which sibling forces

are operant in different family types and with what effects is of more than passing interest to students of the family. Bowerman and Dobash (1974) suggest that the experience of sibling relationships may affect the child's attitude to family living in general. If the daily contact between siblings is harmonious or acrimonious, the fact that it is a frequent and regular occurrence means that it is a pervasive and powerful influence on the child. If the relationships between children are pleasant or unpleasant they may strongly affect the child's feelings about family life.

Sibling Interactions

A child within the nuclear family is typically engaged in three types of relationship: with his parents, his siblings and, for all but the very youngest of children, with his peers. Each of these relationships has different qualities and characteristics and involves the child in different types of learning and interaction. The parent-child relationship is high in affect and unequal in power; the sibling relationship is also high in affect (both achieved and ascribed) but more equal in power; the peer relationship is unequal in power and variable in its affect with friendship being equal in power and high in affect. Peer group relationships are not completely equal in power, because in such groups status-based differences relating to age and sex exist; however, in a same-sex, same-age friendship group, although there are still variations in the personal power of the individuals in the group, such power is probably achieved.

The equality of power in the sibling relationship offers to the child an arena in which to practice the interpersonal skills that will later be applied to the wider world of the peer group. It provides

the child with a half-way house between the family and the outside world. Not only does the sibling experience in itself provide a forum for learning but since children are privy to the world of childhood, that parents see only from the other side of 'the generation gap', they possess knowledge to which parents do not have access. That knowledge can be transmitted directly between siblings, as, for example, an elder child schooling his younger sibling in the correct dress, mode of speech, attitude, etc., to adopt when entering a new school; or indirectly by providing a model for the sibling to emulate. Contact with older/younger siblings and with opposite sex siblings provides a means of learning about each of these groups. That such learning takes place and is utilized is evidenced in the work of Koch (1957) showing how friendship patterns at school, mirror the child's relationships with siblings. Toman (1961) further suggests that marital relationships and their success are also influenced by these sibling experiences.

Older children may also act as educators (in the formal sense of the word) to their younger siblings. Dunkin (1966) found that a large number of children who entered school already able to read had been taught at home by their older siblings - often while playing 'School' in which they took the role of the pupil and their siblings that of teacher. On a slightly more exalted level, Bertrand Russell (1967) recalls in his biography how his elder brother undertook to teach him Euclidean geometry at the age of eleven, the beginnings of a life-long interest! Older siblings especially may also mediate peer group attitudes and values to the child, that may conflict with or further endorse those transmitted by the parents (Leichter, 1974). They may also be responsible for mediating parental attitudes and behaviour within the family; siblings challenge and stimulate each other directly and utilize one another in working out self-definitions (Davis and Northway, 1957).

The sibling group offers to the child the opportunity for participating in a miniature social system on a more or less equal footing with other members of that group, in contrast to the relationship with the parent in which the child has only a little direct power and influence. Although vis à vis the parent each child individually may have low power, by acting in coalition siblings together may form an effective countervailing power to that of the parents. Bossard and Boll (1956) reported that siblings were often seen as being fairer than the parents; and that sharing the world of childhood they often have a more accurate perception of the rights and wrongs of certain situations and childhood problems. The possibility of acting co-operatively to achieve a joint goal, or to redress - with only altruistic motives - the wrong done to another sibling either by a parent or by someone outside the family, is a manifestation of the sibling relationship as a social system in itself. It is self-regulating, developing its own rituals patterns of behaviour, principles of co-operation and justice. Although within the family the relationship between siblings may be monitored by the parents, since much of the contact between siblings is outside of parental scrutiny, the relationship develops its own system of checks and balances. Older children learn that the power they exert by virtue of their greater physical and social stature carries with it a responsibility to care for and protect the younger child. The younger child, subjected to the attempted domination by the older sibling, may develop more devious and machiavellian strategies to obtain his desired ends (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1968). Boys with sisters and girls with brothers have the opportunity to learn something about the opposite sex, an opportunity not vouchsafed to children with same sex siblings (Koch, 1956; Brim, 1958).

In clinical literature the parent-child relationship is often taken as a template for future relationship with authority. The derivation

of this notion is clear: with our parents we learn basic attitudes to authority, and this early learning is extremely difficult to eradicate and will therefore tinge all future relationships with authority (with father-figures). By the same reasoning, therefore, with our siblings we learn how to handle relationships with our peers: with members of the opposite sex and of the same sex; we learn how to handle emotions of competition and jealousy, of sharing and trusting; how to fight and defend one's rights, how to make up and repair broken relationships. With his siblings, the child competes for parental attention or love; and with the same siblings he forms a coalition as a countervailing force against the greater power of adults. Siblings may act co-operatively or act against each other. It is between siblings within the framework of the family that notions of interpersonal equality and justice are first elaborated.

It has already been suggested that the quality of the relationship between siblings may colour the child's attitude not only to his siblings but to family life in general. What applies to the children applies also to the parents; if the emotional tone of the household is affected by sibling rivalries and conflicts, then the parents become involved and have to take action. Exactly what kind of attitude and action to take may spawn further argument, this time between the parents. Parents may side with different children in the conflict and in this way the area of tension and friction is extended.

Sibling Research

In clinical psychology sibling relationships have received rather more attention, although more often introduced as an explanatory concept than empirically researched. Alfred Adler was one of the first psychologists to consider the influence of position in the family and sex of siblings

on personality development (Adler, 1928, 1959). In the same psychoanalytic framework other clinical research was undertaken by Levy (1936, 1939) and J. and Z. Henry (1942) in cross-cultural settings, and in a child-guidance setting (M. Sewall, 1930). This research offers few general guidelines for the analysis of sibling rivalry among normal children in seemingly well-adjusted families. It deals with families in which jealousy has become a problem, not with the successful management of that feeling in non-problem families.

In the vocabulary of the psychotherapist, 'sibling rivalry' is a very important concept, only slightly less significant than the 'Oedipus complex' to which it is related. Despite the theoretical popularity of sibling jealousy, there is very little thorough investigation of the concept; there is no thorough consideration of its antecedents and its effects. No comprehensive coverage of sibling relations per se exists, neither in clinical literature where sibling rivalry is an important theme, nor in the traditional family studies in sociology and psychology. As a review of the literature reveals, there are existing studies in tangential areas; for example, the studies that relate ordinal position, sex of the child and sex of the sibling, to such factors as anxiety, adjustment to adults and to peers, and achievement. These studies indicate the 'what' of family and sibling structure rather than the 'how' (Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith, 1970). Because most of the existing research is peripheral, there is no general review of the literature. Where these tangential findings impinge on the research their significance is indicated in the consideration of the results.

In this research the emphasis will be on the issues of the relationships that siblings have with each other and the ways it is influenced by the relationships that siblings have with their parents. The number and the type of sibling that a child has directly influences his access

to parental affection and attention. Sibling status - a child's position in the sibling group, is therefore an 'ecological variable' offering different degrees of access to desired resources depending on the child's position, sex, and sex of siblings. The issue of sibling rivalry and conflict may be a major source of disruption within the family and require a great deal of socialization effort by the parents. How and with what effects this takes place is the subject matter of the latter part of the research.

The Theoretical Background

The initial and most basic model for the research is an exchange model of family behaviour. This model was selected for its usefulness in highlighting sibling rivalry and related areas. In sociology and social psychology, exchange theory is systematically outlined by Blau (1964), Homans (1966) and Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Briefly, all these theoretical formulations attempt to explain social behaviour in terms of rewards exchanged and costs incurred in interaction. The individual attempts to maximize rewards and to minimize costs, thus obtaining a favourable outcome. Outcomes are evaluated against a comparison level. This is an important concept in considering sibling rivalry. Comparison level is influenced by past experience in this and similar relationships; judgements of what others like himself are receiving in comparable situations and perceptions of the outcomes available in alternative situations. Equilibrium is said to occur when the distribution of rewards and costs within the group is satisfactory to all members.

For the child - especially the young child for whom peer group affiliations are weak - the family is a completely closed system, a total institution. No other source of reward is available, other than in the family. There may be sources of satisfaction other than the parents within the home, for example, a grandparent, but for most families this is not a reality.[1] Thus, the main mediators of rewards to the child are the parents; the child is forced to interact within the family if he wishes to receive the rewards available there. The only alternative available is to withdraw, according to some radical psychiatrists into some forms of mental illness (Laing, 1965).

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[1] The Newsons (1970) report that 10% of their sample of 700 families had an additional adult in the home.

When the general assumptions of exchange theory are translated into a more specific set of assumptions about the family, we assume that:

1. Parents and children are in possession of certain resources that are scarce. These resources are used as rewards for others. The reward power of parents is limited, as time energy, attention and material resources are limited. The resources of both parents and children are primarily affective, although they may be operationalized in material or temporal terms. If a parent loves a child he spends time, energy, and money on that child. Love is primarily a qualitative thing, it is not measured in itself by material things or in a quantitative way. However, a child who feels that he is less well regarded than his sibling may express it in very strong terms by saying that he is not loved, or in slightly weaker terms by alleging preferential treatment of his sibling. The power of family members is first and foremost affective power. In normal families we are concerned not with outright rejection of any one child, not with the presence or absence of love, but with degrees of feelings. Thus, although it may be true that love cannot be counted, the routine, run-of-the-mill everyday interactions, which are minor indicators of feelings, can be counted. This is what a child does when he persistently complains that another child gets more attention, more affection, more 'things' than he does.

According to the general theory of exchange, the family is an ideal arena for close and detailed comparison of what another is getting.

> "With the triad and larger groups, status comparisons may be quite important, for it becomes possible for two (or more) persons to be receiving much the same kinds of rewards or cost cutting from a third person. The prime example of course is that of sibling rivalry." (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959, p.61)

2. The resources are asymmetrically distributed, the parents have the greater power of reward since they are rewarding in themselves and can mediate other rewards to the child. Even if the resources are not asymmetrically distributed, the capacity to utilize these resources differs between parents and their children. Most studies have tended to minimize the countervailing power of the child, but whilst admitting this power, the manipulation of affectual resources is easier for parents than for children. This is because parents can separate emotion and action far more easily than the child can. The effectiveness of love withdrawal as a strategy of control, is due to the fear that love is <u>really</u> withdrawn from the child: because of the inability to separate his own feelings and actions the child experiences the <u>appearance</u> of love withdrawal not simply as a strategy but as an <u>actuality</u>. As the child increases his own emotional control he is more able to utilize his own affective power, and he may also realize that love withdrawal is a strategy of control. The interpretation the child places on the mother's actions is dependent on the total relationship in which they are both involved, and it highlights the danger of considering any behaviour outside of the context of the total relationship.

3. The resources that the parents have are to be distributed according to some systems of rules. These rules legitimize the allocation:

> "Individuals subject to a powerful fate control, restricted to one another in their contacts and denied opportunities for covert consumption of rewards become extremely concerned about how they stand in comparison with their fellows." (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959, p.227)

This concern requires that the allocation be legitimized. Thus recipients of rewards will assess their rewards according to various criteria, the

most important of which is comparison with others of equal status, viz. their siblings. The system of rules the parents work with may or may not be acceptable to the children. If the rules of distribution are not acceptable, this gives rise to tensions between parent and child(ren) and between siblings. The conflict within the family between the siblings is potentially very disruptive, for the child has no access to equivalent rewards elsewhere.

The mother allocates resources according to some more or less coherent system. If the child accepts the basis of the distribution and the mother is more or less consistent in her behaviour, then comparative calm may prevail. Difficulties arise when the system of the mother is either not adhered to by the mother, i.e. she breaks her own rules, or the child is operating according to a different set of rules. The so-called comparison level reflects what the child thinks he ought to be receiving. Sibling rivalry arises from the child's concept of distributive justice (i.e. his notion of what he ought to receive) and his actual allocation.(i.e. what he is receiving). His notion of distributive justice may be learned directly from his parents and it is outraged by the fact that the parents are not practising what they are preaching. It may also stem from outside the family from the wider culture (for example, the child may learn from his peers at school that others are treated according to a different set of rules), and it is transformed into sibling rivalry by invidious comparison with his siblings (his comparison level).

Conflict can be said to be almost inherent in the family. It arises because of the clash between two strongly held norms that govern family behaviour, or, more specifically, parental behaviour. The first of these is the Complete Equality Norm. The main orientation governing parent-child relationships in most normal families is that of completely

equal love or affection for each child. The love for each child in the family is the same, although the liking and preference of the mother may vary according to special circumstances or special qualities of the child. This nice distinction is very important in theory although its operational aspects are difficult to envisage. Differences in temperament and personality elicit different responses that may vary with the child's age and stage of development. The Complete Equality Norm is culturally prescribed; in other cultures preferences are officially sanctioned. Male children are preferred to female children; the first born to subsequent children - the first born male, that is. In our culture, too, there is a weak preference for male children, and a feeling that the youngest child occupies a special place in the mother's affections. However, 'weaknesses' apart, the general prevailing norm is one of equality.

Coexistent with the Complete Equality Norm are a whole set of values and beliefs that take the individual as the main focus for concern. The personal characteristics and state of the child are very important to the mother when dealing with her child. Current child-rearing and educational theory stresses the uniqueness of each individual child; stresses that there can be no standard mode of treatment since there is no standard child, and the aim of upbringing is to accentuate the individuality of the child - 'to let him become himself'. Thus the Complete Equality Norm says they are the same and the Individualistic Norm stresses that they be treated differently.

The mother is thus sensitized to individual states and qualities. These qualities elicit a response from the mother and some are preferred to others. The commitment to love equally may be difficult to demonstrate when one child is more difficult, another more sympathetic and more attractive, from the point of view of the mother. (The child may not seem so to others outside of the family). Thus the mother is walking a tightrope.

She has to balance the equality of affect against the 'inequality' of the children and strike some kind of a balance. How does this affect the child? The child's notions of fairness, equality and similar concepts are derived from the mother. The ambivalences that the mother experiences in this area will also be transmitted to the child.

4. Primarily the child also adopts the standards of equal affection and involvement. Problems arise from three sources: (i) where the children are not identical, identical treatment is therefore impossible. The mother then has to establish that the treatment, though different is equivalent and therefore equal, i.e. the mother has to legitimize differences and apparent inequalities. The distribution of these resources has to be justified and the legitimation may not be acceptable to the child. (ii) the legitimation may be acceptable, but the mother may fail to put her theory into practice. Her behaviour may be inconsistent and erratic. (iii) she may also choose a system of legitimation that is difficult to understand in practice. These points will be elaborated later, when two different models of legitimization are outlined.

This research is concerned with the differential allocations of parental resources, and the strategies that are adopted to ameliorate tensions arising from unequal allocation. The actual process of allocation, i.e. what a child does receive, is a function of the child's own attributes, as well as the parent's notion of distributive justice as it is reflected in their socialization practice and beliefs. Though parents are committed to the general theory of complete equality of treatment/affection between children, they simultaneously confess to "soft spots", to preferences, or greater ease with one child than with others. What this highlights is the inherent weakness in the theory of equal allocation, for equal

feeling are not the order of the day.[1] Even though we may recognize that the mother's concern is equally for all children, this is not necessarily put into practice with such meticulousness that the "it's not fair" is forever silenced. The personal preference of parents is not permitted in terms of democratic equal-share ideology of family affection; it leads to claims of "favouritism" - it leads to sibling rivalry. As children differ in sex and age, they also differ in their personal characteristics, in their needs, motives and dispositions. Any of these qualities or characteristics might become the basis for a special closeness between parent and child. These personal differences may also call forth differential treatment, differences which are more difficult to justify for they also have implications about personal worth. A child who feels that his personal qualities are judged deficient in some way, feels greater loss of self-esteem than if he occupied a low status role.

Despite the fact that the parents may be committed to a view of complete parity of affection and are reluctant to show any inequalities or differentiation in treatment, the different attributes of the child may lead the mother to preferential treatment of one. Here her own policy of complete equality and impartiality may be undermined by the fact that one child is easier to get along with, temperamentally more attractive to her, of an age that she finds appealing, a longed-for boy in a family of girls or vice versa. All of these factors modify the mother's behaviour, causing her to treat each child in a different manner. How this differential treatment is interpreted by the child's siblings then becomes a key issue. If the sibling feels that the mother is

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[1] "Are parents meant to love their children equally? This question worries a lot of conscientious parents because they suspect that in some ways they don't" (Spock, 1969, p.36)

consistently showing partiality to one, then the seeds of envy and jealousy have been sown.

To recap: the child-rearing ideology of the parents will be in terms firstly of equal love and affection for their off-spring. Beyond that the mother, faced with children of different ages, sex, ordinal position, and temperament, will discriminate and differentiate. The differentiation between the children and equality of affection for them, have to be balanced, and "unequal equality" achieved. The basis on which this is operated will vary between families and we hypothesize that these variations will be related to the production and resolution of rivalry in the family. The next section outlines two models of family socialization ideology and practice and suggests ways in which these either modify or exacerbate sibling rivalry.

Socialization Style

The forces of rivalry are mediated through two types of family, which we shall call the personal and the positional, and it seems likely that parental notions of distributive justice are differently exemplified in these family types. The personal/positional distinction is based on a classification by Professor B. Bernstein (1971), of the Sociological Research Unit, at the Institute of Education (University of London). The families are distinguished according to the strength of boundary maintaining procedures in the group. Where boundary maintaining procedures are strong, i.e. the positional family, differentiation of family members is in terms of clear-cut unambiguous definitions of status, and socialization is with reference to status attributes.

> "The boundaries between statuses are strong and the social identities of members very much a function of their age, sex and age-related status." (Bernstein, 1971, p.210)

In personal families, status attributes are still relevant, but boundary maintaining procedures are weak or flexible, and differentiation is based more on the differences between persons. Individual attributes, states and intentions become very relevant to the assessment of behaviour and the socialization of the child. All families take into account both positional and personal attributes of members, but the two families differ in the emphasis they place on these attributes. The following examples are taken from the pilot surveys: the former in each set is positional, the latter personal.

(i) 'Now that he is eight, he can stay up longer' as opposed to 'He can go out alone when he is more responsible'.

(ii) 'I think that all little girls like to teach their brothers' as opposed to 'I don't believe in boys' toys and girls' toys, if John wants to play with dolls I wouldn't comment on it'.

(iii) 'I told him he shouldn't speak to his father like that' as opposed to 'You know it irritates Daddy when you do that'.

We would also expect the positional mother to have a strong clear-cut and generalized child-rearing ideology. The personal mother may have an equally strong ideology but it is less clear-cut and more individualized. These notions are considered in more detail later (see Chapter 6).

Positional and personal families would probably handle sibling rivalry rather differently. We would hypothesize that the positional family is more successful at creating non-comparability; that by presenting and reinforcing clearly defined roles, the parents are limiting the tendency of siblings to compare themselves with each other. In such families the child will be able to recognize a privilege system and the rules that govern its working (for example, the seven-year-old will know that when he is nine he will get the same amount of pocket money his nine-

year-old brother is getting now). Stronger boundaries will produce a stronger sense of property and territory, and these factors will be very relevant in any dispute.

On the other hand, it seems likely that the personal family will have greater difficulty in creating equity, since the assessment and interpretation of particular attributes is such an uncertain and ambiguous process (for example, in the instances quoted above, how is the child's 'responsibility' to be assessed?). Thus the awarding of privileges may appear more arbitrary and produce more contention than in positional families. The fact that boundaries are weakly defined suggests that we can expect poorly defined property and territory notions and property and territory become a focus of contention. In personally oriented families, the main focus is on internal states of the individual and rules do not exist independently of the individual or particular situations. Since there are no rules implicit in the environment, a new situation or confrontation may call forth a different interpretation and response. Essentially, we are asking the questions - does the extent, expression and range of rivalry vary between these two family types? and, what steps do positional and personal mothers take to minimize the disruptive effects of rivalry?

The personal-positional distinction is also incorporated into the methodology of the research. The concepts are used as the basis of the coding frame that is used to interpret the mothers' open-ended interview data. In the final chapter the usefulness of the exchange model and the concepts of personal and positional orientation will be assessed.

Definitions

There are three very closely related concepts, all of which have relevance to this study. They are jealousy, envy and rivalry. All three have different meanings and significance, but they are occasionally confused in everyday understanding.

Jealous is defined by the shorter Oxford English Dictionary as "troubled by the belief, suspicion or fear that the good that one desires to gain or keep for oneself has been or may be diverted to another". Thus the state of jealousy requires that at least three people be involved: the giver and the two (or more) possible recipients.

Envy by comparison needs a minimum of two persons and is defined as "mortification and ill-will occasioned by contemplation of another's superior advantage".

The negative affect that characterizes both envy and jealousy is not an essential part of rivalry. A rival is "one who is in pursuit of the same object as another; one who strives to equal or outdo another in any respect".

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have set out the basic theoretical presuppositions that have guided the project, and we have attempted to translate these into research propositions. Specifically, the research aims are: first to demonstrate the patterns of parental preference and sibling rivalry within the family. Two models of family ideology and practice were suggested - the personal and positional family. The second aim of the research is to consider the effect of these family styles on the extent and manifestation of rivalry. In view of the dearth of material in this field, we are also concerned to create and test methods by which

family interactions can be adequately and validly assessed. Final assessment of the research, therefore, will be focussed on both the substantive findings and also the usefulness and validity of the methods used to reach these conclusions.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 1 an outline was given of the theoretical basis of the research, and it was suggested that because of the dearth of empirical material directly concerned with sibling relationships, especially rivalry, the main intention is to provide a 'general map of the area, rather than a precise street guide'. This approach will be validated in so far as it is heuristically useful, illuminating and a springboard for future research. The number of 'possibly relevant' variables in family research is legion, and it is impossible to control rigorously for the effects of all of them. Typically psychologically-oriented researchers have attempted to deal with one or two of these variables, often ignoring the influence of others. In this research a more holistic approach to family behaviour has been chosen rather than test a few neatly operationalized very specific hypotheses. The aim of the research is insight and illumination rather than incontrovertible 'proof'. Where the accepted methods of establishing the statistical validity of statements can be applied, they have been, but on occasions what we consider to be interesting relationships have been inferred although they cannot be statistically verified.

Hugh Lytton (1971), in a methodological review of parent-child interaction studies, notes that:

> "Psychology in its historical development has probably skipped too rapidly the essential step of descriptive normative studies of its subjects' behavioural repertoire. (....) Ecological methods, implying less rigorous control, represent in fact the most appropriate strategy for such basic research, the most relevant case in point for us being parents' and children's reciprocal interactions." (p.665)

The fact that a methodologically"tight" approach to sibling rivalry has not been chosen does not mean that the research is of a purely speculative nature. Where statistical tests can be applied they have been, and where the data may weakly indicate a relationship, this finding has been cross-referenced to others in related fields. Thus, a finding that is 'weak' in this research may be bolstered by corroborative data in other more specific pieces of research.

The general theoretical ideals are mirrored in the methodology of the research. In this case data is collected from three sources, viz. the mother, the father, and the children. Each method of data collection is considered in more detail later, but the guiding principle behind the research instruments is the desire for "objective subjectivity", i.e. a desire to keep where possible the spontaneous responses and reactions of family members and, at the same time, to have responses that are standardized and comparable. Thus the mother's interview is semi-structured and is analysed by using the coding frame developed by Jenny Cook-Gumperz (1973). In this flexible coding frame, the mother's own explanations, rationales and other qualifications, can be captured. The 'free' personal-subjective view of the mother is contained in a flexible coding scheme, which makes comparisons possible. Likewise in the children's test (see Chapter 3), the child constructs his own family, allocates feelings freely to members but in such a way that interpersonal comparison is possible.

Chapter 1 indicated that a systems approach is highly desirable in the area of family life research. But despite the fact that data was collected from <u>both</u> parents, due to the pressures of time only the mother's data has been analysed. The role of the father in the family has rarely been comprehensively reviewed or investigated. Various studies have indicated that increased home-centredness means increased paternal involvements (Newsons, 1970). It has also been suggested that there

is increasing role desegregation between husband and wife (Bronfenbrenner, 1961), and this is leading to the increasing involvement of the father in domains previously in the sole charge of the mother, viz. housework and children. Many of these tendencies are assumed, they have not been empirically documented.

The very tentative indications from this research suggest that the role of the father within the family is rather complex and not at all obvious. For example, within the children's test, there is evidence that the children's perception of the mother's involvement in the family is fairly constant across the whole range of the sample families. There were definite trends in the perception of maternal preference. For paternal preference no such trends are manifest; nor is there obvious evidence that the father's role is parallel to, or complementary with, that of the mother. An explanation is offered in terms of the clearly understood role prescriptions for the mother within the family, and the changing, more ambiguous position of the father. Repeating the stipulations already made about the importance of taking the whole family network and the dearth of material in this area, future research in this area is likely to yield very interesting results.[1]

To sum up: working with a fairly loosely constructed model, in which we hope to map the general area of sibling interactions, we have adopted methods to match. We have tried to use methods that retain as far as possible the authentic 'flavour' of the material, and at the same time structure the data in such a way that legitimate comparisons can be made.

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[1] The data from the personal-positional scale indicates that each parent may have quite different perspectives on some aspects of child-rearing (see Chapter 6).

THE SAMPLE

The sample was originally contacted by courtesy of Professor B. Bernstein of the Institute of Education, University of London. As part of a large-scale enquiry into Language and Educability, working and middle-class mothers had been interviewed and Professor Bernstein agreed to make available the names and addresses of the middle-class families in the sample. There were 116 families in total, all of whom had at least one child of about eleven years.

The mothers were contacted by letter and asked if they would agree to participate in a research project which was concerned with relationships within the family. The letter was kept deliberately vague, so as not to bias in any way the subsequent interview responses. The sample was restricted to two, three and four-child families. The initial response was as follows: 70 families agreed to participate; 23 families refused or were unsuitable because their families were one-child or consisted of more than four children; 23 families could not be traced.

During the interview period nine other families were lost for a variety of reasons. The final sample consisted of 61 families which was considered rather small in view of the large number of relevant variables. The sample was therefore supplemented by asking mothers randomly selected from the sample of sixty-one to nominate other families with between two and four children, one of whom was about eleven years old. In this way another nineteen families were recruited to the sample, making a final sample size of eighty.[1]

The families selected were all from the middle-class. This was deliberate policy on the part of the researcher. The rationales behind it were two: (a) to minimize the effect of social class as a variable,

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[1] One tape was found to be inaudible and the final sample size is therefore seventy-nine mothers.

and (b) in line with the original aim of interviewing all family members, it was felt that it was unlikely that many working-class fathers would be willing to be interviewed. The criterion of social class adopted by the researchers at the Sociological Research Unit was an amalgam of educational and occupational factors of both the mother and the father, using the Hall-Jones scale to measure occupational prestige (Hall-Jones, 1951). The index has three components: (i) the rating of the father's present occupation; (ii) the rating of the mother's highest ever occupation (the mother's occupation at the time of the interview may have been determined by domestic circumstances rather than by the mother's occupational potential or her previous occupational attainment); (iii) the mother's educational attainment. These three factors were put together to give an index of social class more subtle than the usual measures of occupational prestige. Thus, although not all the members of the present sample are middle-class when judged purely by the occupational status of the father, when other considerations are taken into account, the sample can be considered as homogenous. Table 2.1 sets out the social class distribution of the present sample as grouped by occupation.

Table 2.1

Social Class of Sample Families

Social Class*:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No info.
Frequency	20	23	18	9	6	0	0	3

*The classes are grouped according to the Hall-Jones Scale of Occupational Prestige for Males

The Hall-Jones scale Class 5 is divided into two sections, 5(a) and 5(b). 5(a) refers to routine grades of non-manual work and 5(b) to skilled manual work. For the purposes of dividing the sample according to traditional manual/non-manual criterion, group 5(a), routine non-manual

has been included in Class 4. If the scale is now grouped according to manual/non-manual grouping the figures are:

Table 2.2

Non-manual	Manual	No info.	Total
70	6	3	79

The original Sociological Research Unit sample was contacted through the primary schools in what were predominantly working or middle-class areas. The sample for this research are residents of a South London suburb which is mainly middle-class and is said to be a typical well-defined suburban community which has voted solidly Conservative since 1945.

The eighty families had two hundred and twenty-three children between them of whom 189 completed test profiles. The ages of the children who were tested ranged from seven to sixteen years old. When the sample of eighty mothers is subdivided, there are thirty-four two-child families, twenty-nine three-child families and seventeen four-child families. These are small samples and, when further subdivided, are even smaller, and the findings from these samples must therefore be accepted with some reservations as to their general applicability. On the other hand, with such small samples, the differences between two sample means must be quite marked, for a significant difference to be recorded.

Similarly for the children tested, there are sufficient numbers for adequate and valid comparisons between the sexes and ordinal positions. When further subdivided by family size and sibling composition, cell sizes become very small and therefore the general applicability of the results must be qualified.

The need for breaking down the sample into more and more controlled sub-samples is to ascertain the influence of the whole range of variables

operating on the child in the family. The multiplicity of variables creates another difficulty in this research. With the large number of variables operating in any particular case, the number of possible explanations is increased, any one finding therefore can be interpreted in several ways. At this stage in family research, there is no general theory from which specific hypotheses can be derived and specific findings interpreted, and we are therefore in the situation of plotting relationships, without being able to offer a definitive interpretation of findings.

Table 2.3

Sample Characteristics

Number of mothers interviewed	80
Number of fathers interviewed	63
Number of children	223
Number of children tested	189

Sample Characteristics of Children Tested

Table 2.4

Sex and Family Size

	Sex			
Family Size	N	M	F	Total
2-child	34	32	35	67
3-child	29	40	32	72
4-child	17	21	29	50
Total	80	93	96	189

Table 2.5

Ordinal Position

	I	II	III	IV	Total
2-child	34	33	-	-	67
3-child	25	27	18	-	70*
4-child	15	14	14	7	50

*excluding twins

Table 2.6

Age Distribution

Age	(months)	Male	Female	Total
5-7	(60-83)	2	2	4
7-9	(84-107)	14	16	30
9-11	(108-131)	15	16	31
11-13	(132-155)	46	40	86
13-15	(156-179)	10	15	25
15+	(180 -)	6	7	13
Total		93	96	189

THE INTERVIEW

Of all the areas of research, research into family life is one of the most fraught from the methodological point of view. Many studies have shown the consistent and persistent biasing of maternal reports in the direction of cultural stereotypes. The image of the happy family is one of the most potent in modern society and any failure to live up to that image rebounds on the parents, particularly on the mother. Ever since Freud the sins of the children have been visited on the parents, and when reporting negative behaviours of their children mothers are therefore very conscious that the report reflects back on them.

> "Stripped of all elaboration, mother's interview responses represent self description by extremely ego involved reporters." (Yarrow, 1963, p.217)

Hence the finding of bias in maternal reports is widespread (Yarrow, 1963; Chamberlain, 1969). This is particularly true when the mother is giving a retrospective report; the passage of time dims the memory and what memory cannot provide imagination elaborates, an elaboration that is often in a direction that is socially desirable. Reports of current beliefs and practices are more accurate and reliable. Reliability studies have shown that there are wide discrepancies between the report of the same mother at different times (Mednick and Schaffer, 1967); of the same mother with a different interviewer and in different areas (Haggard, Brekstad and Skard, 1960). When data is obtained from more than one source, there is again a lack of consonance (Eron, Banta, Waldter and Laulicht, 1961).

Several ways have been suggested to improve the reliability of the mother's report. According to Chamberlain (1969), if the mother is asked for a statement on current beliefs and practices, then the reports reach a satisfactory level of validity and reliability. When parents are asked to describe rather than interpret, reliability and validity measures have been satisfactory. Hoffman (1960) recommended that researchers concentrate on eliciting detailed reports of recent events. The focussing on details can lead to fragmentation of the event described, weakening its Gestalt properties. This can divest the event of much of its emotional tone, producing more revealing, less defensive and, therefore, more accurate, recall. Yarrow (1963) likewise stresses the greater reliability of description over interpretation, and also suggests that, as a check on the maternal report, the researchers should systematically seek out information from different sources, noting areas of concordance and discordance.

As far as the validity of interviews is concerned, this will vary even within the test depending on the sensitivity of the area probed, to that particular mother. Bearing in mind these stipulations, we have tried, where possible, to take at least one other check on the mother's interview data; generally corroborative or negating data is available from the children's test.

The interview with the mother consisted of a semi-structured interview which lasted approximately one to one-and-a-half hours. The interview schedule consisted of a list of set questions and included, where necessary, a probe to elicit the desired information. The interviewers were instructed to stick to the wording on the questionnaire as far as possible and, where probing was allowed, they were instructed as to the precise wording. On some questions which were designed to lead the mother in and out of certain areas, the interviewers were given more leeway and told to rephrase the questions in whatever way they felt was suitable. The mothers' responses were in most cases not coded at the time; however, some obviously closed questions, such as whether or not the mother worked, were coded at the time on the interview schedule. The whole interview, which took approximately one hour, was taped, and subsequent coding was done from the tape. In this way we were able to work out a coding system based upon the mother's own response, rather than the pre-ordained categories of the researcher. It also meant that a more sophisticated and complex coding scheme could be worked out.

The Interviewers

The interviewers were both female, both without children, and both considerably younger than the mothers they were interviewing. As such they appeared to the mothers as unthreatening - in that they themselves were thought unlikely to have any strong sentiments about questions of bringing up children. Their comparative youth allowed the mother to take up a knowledgeable role and to expand on her own theories and practices.

In line with the original theoretical outline, data was collected in the following areas:

The first section concerned 'demographic' information about the family; information such as sex and age of the children; then home and school activities; the family's social class and its social mobility; the mother's working and social life.

The interviewer then moved the mother into a consideration of individual children within the family and her perception of those children. The reaction of the mother to the individual qualities and personal traits of her children is clearly one of the most important factors in the child's perceptionof favouritism - especially if this is coupled with a strong emphasis on equal evaluation of all children in the family. The questions therefore were designed to ascertain the extent to which the mother differentiates between her children and how the differential attributes of each, be they personal or positional, are evaluated. Does this indicate a preference for one child? And can it be linked with rivalrous feelings from others?

Also within this section we considered the range of emotional expression allowed by the mother to her children; this indicates both positive and negative affects but primarily the latter. The attitude of the mother to such questions may influence the mother's own report of rivalry and may also be reflected in the emotional style of the children, as manifest in their test profiles.

The notion of personal and positional orientation in socialization matters is part of a wider concept of boundary definition in social relationships. The notion of boundary definition has a physical as well as a psychological component. Where the boundaries between statuses and persons are strong, the boundaries between space, time and property may also be strong and clearly differentiated. Thus, in such families

we would expect a clear division of property, of time and of space, and sharply defined and clearly understood rules appertaining to these matters. In the third section of the questionnaire, the arrangement of the environment within the home and the expectations of rules governing that environment are considered.

Allied to these matters, the mother is then asked specifically about the importance she places on certain positional attributes. These attributes are those of sex, ordinal position, age, and sex and age relations.

Thus far in the interview we have information on the mother's attitude to certain child characteristics and forms of behaviour, the meaning these characteristics have for her, but as yet we have no information on how these factors are made relevant in the resolution of family problems, particularly those of sibling relationships. To tap this aspect of parental control, the mother is given a set of hypothetical situations, and asked what she would do, if she were confronted with such a situation. In this way we can identify the communication and control system within the family.

The final brief section is concerned with the mother's own background, both social and personal. An item of interest here is the fact that there appear to be rather more first-born among the sample of mothers than one would expect: 42 of the 79 mothers (53%) were first-born. This finding, though not statistically tested in any way, is similar to the finding that first-born volunteer more often for psychological experiments (Cappa and Dittes, 1962; Eisenman, 1965; Suedfeld, 1964; Varela, 1964).

A copy of the mother's questionnaire is given in Appendix A.

THE PERSONAL-POSITIONAL SCALE

Since the issue of personal versus positional orientation to socialization matters is so important in dividing families, the information obtained from the interview was supplemented by a scale designed to measure the mother's boundary-maintaining orientation. The scale consists of a fixed choice situation. The mother is given a card with two statements on it - one personal in flavour, one positional, and asked to ring the one with which she most agrees. There are thirty-one statements in all, covering her general orientation to socialization matters, attitudes to questions of property, territory and time, and attitudes to status characteristics such as sex, age and position. These are given at the end of the thesis in Appendix B, which sets out the list of items given to the mother. In the subsequent analysis, the original 32 items are factor analysed and a purer scale of fifteen items is used to differentiate the sample.

NOTATION

Throughout the research, a particular notation is used to denote the sex, ordinal position and sibling status of any child in the study. Sex is denoted by the initials M or F, for male and female respectively. Where ordinal position is a variable Roman numerals are used, i.e. I = first-born, II = second-born, etc.

Family type is related as per birth order. Thus there are three family types in which there are two boys and one girl (MMF, MFM and FMM); or there are two types of opposite sex two-child families (MF and FM), depending on whether or not the first born child is male (MF) or female (FM).

When referring to a particular child in the family, that child is denoted by having his ordinal position indicated: the elder of two boys

is denoted M_1M; any reference to the younger brother of this dyad is MM_2. In the four-child family, FFM_3M refers to the third-born boy who has two older sisters and one younger brother.

Within the two-child families in the sample there are eight possible sibling positions:

Table 2.7

Sibling Position in Two-Child Families (N = 34)

Sex of S	Ord. Posn.	Sex of Sib.	Notation	No.
M	I	M	M_1M	6
M	I	F	M_1F	10
M	II	M	MM_2	6
M	II	F	FM_2	10
F	I	M	F_1M	10
F	I	F	F_1F	8
F	II	M	MF_2	10
F	II	F	FF_2	7

There are enough children in each category to make sibling status comparisons possible within two-child families. Within three-child families there are eight possible family types and twenty-four sibling positions. The frequency with which each family type occurs is set out below:

Three-Child Family Types (N = 29)	No.
MMM	5
FFF	2
MFM	6
FMF	3
MMF	6
FFM	3
FMM	3
MFF	1

Not all of the children within each three-child family have been tested: in thirteen families only two of the three children have been tested and in one family only one child has been tested. The reasons are that the children are either too young to understand and complete the test, or, less commonly, they are older and no longer living at home. The low cell frequencies mean that no comparison between different sibling positions is possible in the three-child family. The same reasoning applies even more strongly to the four-child family where data on sibling status can indicate only the weakest of relationships because of low cell sizes. The children's test is outlined in Chapter 3.

SUMMARY

As far as possible research methods have been adopted that are consonant with the general theoretical position. We have tried to use methods that are compatible with a holistic exploratory model of sibling and family relationships, retaining the spontaneity of response and allowing quantitative analysis at the same time.

Chapter 3

THE CHILDREN'S TEST

Increasingly research into the mother-child dyad indicates that the attribution of power only to the parent is mistaken; like any other relationship, that between mother and child is two-way, being dependent on the characteristics and behaviour of both actors. The power of the child, his ability to modify and change parental behaviour - if not to control it - is attested to by parents and empirically demonstrated in experimental situations (Rheingold, 1969; Moss, 1967; Bell, 1971). The direction of effects is not always downward, from the powerful parent to the powerless child, but as in other relationships consists of tensions resolved by negotiations.

The attribution of power only to the parent is reflected in family-life research design and methods. Information is generally obtained from the mother and her interpretations of the child's behaviour and its significance form the basic data from which conclusions about the child and the mother-child relationship are drawn. The 'child's eye view' of the matter which may differ significantly from that of the mother is seldom solicited. Apart from the fact that the mother may misinterpret the effects of her behaviour upon the child (Loevinger, 1959), various writers have shown the unreliability of maternal reports, especially if they are given retrospectively (Haggard, Brekstad and Skard, 1960; Yarrow, 1963; Mednick and Schaffer, 1967). A mother reporting her own behaviour and its presumed influence on the child, is likely to play down certain aspects and give the interviewer a somewhat rose-coloured version of her own behaviour. This is not to suggest that the mother deliberately lies (she may do so), but simply that by exaggerating certain aspects of her behaviour and omitting references to others, she gives a

biased report. The mother is a very ego involved reporter, subject to strong cultural pressures to be what counts as a 'good mother', a situation that is not conducive to a high level of objectivity. In so far as the behaviour of the child also reflects upon herself, she may also conceal certain facts about the child's behaviour and feelings.

This points up the need for information from other sources to act as a reliability check on the mother's report and the need for a first-hand report of the effects of the mother's behaviour on the child - i.e. a report from the child. In reporting his feelings the child may also "colour" or deny certain feelings and actions, since pressures to be a 'good child' are equally operative, but the feelings (of denial) are the child's own and, as such, have value. Very few studies have considered in any systematic way the child's perceptions and responses to members of his family, either as a dependent variable or as a check on the mother's report. The reason probably relates to the difficulties of interviewing children about their emotions and feelings (Yarrow, 1960), for children, especially young children, do not have the vocabulary to undertake a detailed examination of their own and other people's emotional states; some feelings may be too difficult to voice, for others they may simply lack the means of expressing themselves. For these reasons any direct questioning or interviewing is not feasible, and it would also be difficult to sustain the child's interest for the amount of time needed to elicit the required information. If the child's perceptions are considered to be worth-while data, some alternative form of data gathering is needed.

A test was therefore needed to plot the matrix of emotional involvement of the child with his family. Such a test also acts as a reliability check on the mother's report of the same events. Not only do mothers bias their reports in the direction of culturally approved stereotypes,

but they are also differentially sensitive to rivalry and other motivational states. To one mother teasing may be the partial expression of deep-seated conflict between her children, whereas to another it may be interpreted as good wholesome fun. Maternal reports therefore reveal the interpretations of the mother rather than the child's own experience.

Since we are considering family relationships as a system, the reactions of the child to his sibling are viewed in the light of his perception of other family members, their behaviour and feelings. The most obvious link of this kind lies in the assumed link between the mother's preference or favouring of one child, and the jealousy that this may engender in that child's sibling. In a similar way an Oedipal situation would be described by the child's positive reactions to his mother, plus a perception of the mother's strong sexualized feelings for the father, which generates a hostility (or possibly an ambivalence) on the part of the child towards his father - a classical Oedipal syndrome. The child's eye view therefore of all members of the family is a vital ingredient when interpreting his/her reactions to any one member.

The requirements were for a test that could be given to children from the age of six to sixteen and would maintain their interest for a fair amount of time. The test should also indicate in a straightforward way the feelings of the child to each family member, and his perception of their feelings towards himself and other family members, i.e. a matrix of perceptions and feelings within each family. Since the test was to be administered to a large number of children, it should be in a form that allowed easy quantitative analysis. The test profiles of the children should be standardized and comparable.[1]

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[1] Although the research provides us with the child's eye view of the mother, the categories in which the information is construed are necessarily those of the researcher.

The most suitable clinical test available was the Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test (1957) which allows the child to construct his own view of his family and makes the data available in a form that the researcher can treat quantitively. The Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test was devised primarily for use in the clinical situation, and was conceived as "an objective technique for exploring emotional attitudes in children".

The Family Relations Test material is designed to give a concrete representation of the child's family. It consists of 20 cardboard figures, representing people of various ages, shapes and sizes, sufficiently stereotyped to stand for members of any child's family, yet ambiguous enough to become under suggestion any specific family. The figures range from a grandmother to perambulated baby, and for these the child is able to create his own significant circle, including a figure for self. In addition to the family members, another important figure is incorporated into the test; whereas other figures are pictured facing the subject, this figure faces away from the test subject and stands for 'nobody'. It is used to accommodate items that do not apply to anyone in the family. Each of the figures is attached to a box-like base which has a slit in the top.

The interviewer asks the child to take a cardboard figure to represent his father, mother and siblings, and anyone else living in the family. These are then set up in a semi-circle facing the child. To this group the interviewer then adds 'Mr Nobody'.

In addition, there is a set of item cards, each bearing a generalized statement (e.g. "This person in the family is very nice"; "I can feel very cross with this particular person"), and the child is asked to allocate each item card to the person in his family whom he thinks it best fits. The allocation is made by "posting" the card into the appropriate figure/box.

The child has two alternatives other than to make a direct allocation: he may either assign an item to more than one person at the same time (multiple choice) or he may place it into a residual category (the 'nobody' box), indicating that the item does not apply to anyone in his family.

The Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test items cover a range of feeling, both to and from the child. It consists of 100 item cards grouped into three general sections:

(1) Outgoing feelings from the child to other family members. These are further sub-divided into positive and negative feelings to those family members; the positive and negative feelings are sub-grouped according to the intensity of the feeling into mild and strong emotions. Examples of each category are given below.

i. Outgoing positive - mild: 'This person in the family is very nice to play with'.

ii. Outgoing positive - strong or sexualized: 'I sometimes wish that I could sleep in the same bed with this person'.

iii. Negative outgoing - mild: 'This person in the family is sometimes quick-tempered'.

iv. Negative outgoing - strong: 'Sometimes I would like to kill this person in the family'.

(2) Incoming feelings, statements that reveal the child's perception of the way others in the family relate to him/her. They are also sub-grouped in the same way as the outgoing feelings. Examples are:

i. Incoming positive - mild: 'This person in the family is kind to me'.

ii. Incoming positive - strong or sexualized: 'This person in the family likes to kiss me'.

iii. Negative incoming - mild: 'This person in the family sometimes tells me off'.

iv. Incoming negative - strong or hostile: 'This person in the family makes me feel unhappy'.

(3) Maternal over-protection and maternal and paternal over-indulgence. Example: 'This is the person in the family mother pays too much attention to'.

When the child has constructed his family, the interviewer reads to him the statement on the card and asks the child to post the item to a family member. Older children read the cards themselves. They are presented in random order, except that the interviewer always starts and completes the test with two non-threatening positive items. The child allocates all test items and the distribution of these items is then plotted on a test sheet by the tester; this profile gives a picture of the extent and direction of the child's emotional involvements.

The Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted using the Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test. The pilot sample consisted of 28 middle-class children, aged approximately between eight and twelve. All came from families of four or less and in most cases at least one of their siblings was also tested. The results of the pilot indicated that although the format was suitable, there were several aspects of the test that made it unsuitable for the particular needs of this project.

With regard to content, certain of the Bene-Anthony items were emotionally loaded to such an extent that they aroused extreme anxieties in the children and proved too difficult to cope with. This is particularly true of the sexualized and hostile items, a very high proportion of which were placed in the 'nobody' category. In the clinical situation in which the child is familiar with the interviewer and in which inhibitions have been broken down, the test can be successfully applied. However, in a non-clinical situation, faced with an unfamiliar interviewer, the children were very guarded in their response to items arousing strong emotions, and such items failed to serve a discriminatory function (i.e. to

be allocated to a particular family member). The Bene-Anthony is grounded in psychoanalytic theory and the test is intended for use in the clinical situation; it fails to work in a more 'normal situation' in which the expression of love and hate are more muted.

In one other area there was a short-coming of the Bene-Anthony test. The items are not specifically directed at 'tapping' any particular area of family interaction. The items are very general in their application. Since the particular concern of this research project is the investigation of sibling relationships, there was a need for test items that were more focussed in their application, and which would give more detailed information about the nature of child-child relationships.

However, since the format of the Family Relations Test is suitable, it was decided to retain the general format and to create a set of new item cards which were more suitable to the sample and more focussed on the issues of the research. Items were selected that had relevance to a wider age range and the language was brought into line with that of the sample group; where some of the Bene-Anthony items had a stiff, formal and slightly repetitive sound, the new items had a more idiomatic and spontaneous wording. It was hoped that in this way the test appeared less as a test and more as a game. Items that included value terms, such as 'This is the person in the family father pays too much attention to' and '...mother makes too big a fuss about' were seen as requiring complex value judgements on the part of the child and therefore were considered too difficult to handle easily. In the piloting stage several children hesitated over items with value terms in them, saying, for example, "Well, my mother makes a fuss of so-and-so, but not too big a fuss". Such items were therefore excluded and, as far as possible, all statements were simple and straight-forward, could be easily understood and therefore easily allocated. All the revisions were designed to make the test

interesting, easy to handle and to allow a spontaneous and, it is hoped, unguarded response.

A major factor in the decision not to use the original Family Relations Test was the need to have data on areas of family interaction of particular relevance to the problem of sibling rivalry. Items were introduced to pinpoint dimensions that have a bearing on the dynamics of rivalry, especially those appertaining to the distribution of scarce resources within the family. These areas of particular interest are the child's perception of parental favouritism or preference, and the comparative element in rivalry. Six items were therefore introduced relating to maternal and paternal preference; and to get a measure of the comparative element seven items were composed and incorporated into the test. Other aspects of sibling tensions are also important but are not necessarily linked to rivalry. Children who spend a great deal of time together may exhibit negative attitudes to each other that are the outcome of spending a great deal of time together, rather than indicating hostility of a more deep-seated nature. These items are referred to a 'sibling friction' as opposed to the more chronic and deeply felt emotions of jealousy that are assessed by the comparative section.

In order to balance out the somewhat negative content of the test, more positive items were included. These split into three sections, taking the form of dependability, e.g. "This person in the family never lets you down"; and sharing, e.g. "This person in the family doesn't try to get more than anyone else'; and, finally, general positive items, e.g. "I really enjoy talking to this person". These latter items were designed to be placed at the beginning and end of the test in order to lead the child in and out of the test without arousing anxieties.

The new test items were then piloted with a small group of middle-class children and those that elicited a high 'nobody' response were eliminated, and the remaining items that served a clear discriminatory

function were retained. Thus in its final form the test has the same general format as the Family Relations Test; the child constructs his family and allocates item cards to them. The item cards, however, are completely new being designed to meet the specific requirements of the sample and the research aims. The total number of new items is 59 and the test takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. A complete list of items is given in Table 3.1. The test is presented in the form of a game and administered to each child individually. To older children, the interviewer stated that they were writing a book about how children felt about their families, and solicited their help.

When the test has been completed, the interviewer makes a record of the item allocations and a pattern or profile emerges of where these "cluster". This allows a measure to be taken of the child's total involvement with each of his family members (a quantitative measure) and of the direction of that involvement, i.e. whether positive or negative (a qualitative measure). The extent to which the child has used the 'nobody' category or multiple-choice, as distinct from allocations to one person ("committals') may be used as a measure of the child's guardedness or inhibition. The advantages of the test lie in the fact that the child is not asked to verbalize analytically his many complex and often conflicting feelings for his family 'on the spot'. This is likely to be outside the inclinations and abilities of most of the younger children. The child is expected to commit himself to a choice of pre-selected emotional attitudes; the item is fixed but the placement is free. Thus the profiles of different children are directly comparable. The 'feeling' thrust into the figures immediately vanishes from sight leaving no incriminating trace. There is no visible reminder to the child of the distribution of love and hate, and consequently there may be less guilt to interfere with the freedom of expression. A sample profile is appended at the end of the chapter.

Table 3.1

Children's Test

Maternal Preference

00 This person is Mother's favourite

01 Mother pays a lot of attention to this person

02 Mother tends to take this person's side in an argument

03 Mother spoils this person a bit

04 Mother doesn't seem to see this person's faults

05 Mother has a soft spot for this person

Paternal Preference

06 This person is Father's favourite

07 Father pays a lot of attention to this person

08 Father tends to take this person's part if there is an argument

09 Father rather spoils this person

10 Father seems not to see this person's faults

11 Father has rather a soft spot for this person

Outgoing Positive Feelings

12 This is the person I go to when I'm unhappy

13 This person has the nicest ways of the family

14 I think this person deserves a nice present

15 This person is very kind-hearted

16 This person is very nice indeed

17 I wish I could be like this person in the family

18 I get on well with this person

19 I feel happy with this person

Outgoing Negative Feelings

20 Sometimes I get a bit fed up with this person

21 This person gets on my nerves a bit

Table 3.1 (cont.)

Outgoing Negative Feelings (cont.)

22 I don't get on very well with this person

23 Sometimes I want to do things just to annoy this person

24 This person can make me feel very angry

25 This person can really upset me

26 I can feel very cross with this particular person

27 At times I feel like hitting this person

Friction Items

28 I think this person is rather bossy

29 This person tries to get me into trouble

30 This person picks on me

31 This person tries to make me look silly

32 This person disturbs me when I'm getting on with something

33 This person takes my things without asking

34 This person tries to make me lose my temper

Comparative Items

35 This person gets more than their fair share

36 This person thinks they're better than me

37 This person gets away with things

38 This person is a show-off

39 This person can always get what they want

40 This person always has their own way

41 I'm a bit jealous of this person

Dependability

42 This person sticks up for me

43 This person never lets you down

44 This person always finds time to help me

45 I know I can rely on this person

46 This person listens to what I have to say

Table 3.1 (cont.)

Sharing

47 This person always tries hard to be fair

48 This person doesn't try to get more than anyone else

49 This person lets me join in with them

50 This person shares things with me

51 This person doesn't always try to win

Additional Positives

52 This is the person I spend most time with

53 This is the person I play with most of all

54 I'd like to spend more time with this person

55 I like to help this person

56 I enjoy talking to this person

57 This is the person I tell my secrets to

58 I really like this person

59 I like to share my things with this person

The test was given individually to each child within the sample families (N = 189); the profiles could then be compared within the families to see if there is evidence for a family style; between individuals grouped according to structural variables such as sex, age, ordinal position, etc., to ascertain the significance of demographic factors; between families to correlate where possible with the mother's socialization style; and, finally, to act as a reliability check on the mother's report.

Reliability

None of the usual methods for assessing the reliability of a test is suitable for the Children's Test. The test-retest method is unsuitable, for if the test is administered after a short time the memory of the original allocations will influence the retest score. If the test is readministered

after a longer time, then the child and the family may have undergone transformations and comparisons of first and second test scores are therefore invalid.

The split-half method is not suitable either, since the test items are not homogeneous and the number of choices a child can make for each item varies from case to case. Following the procedure adopted by Bene-Anthony for assessing the reliability of the Family Relations Test, the following modification of the split-half method was used.

Apart from the sections dealing with maternal and paternal preference, the test basically divides into two sections: one dealing with positive items (N = 26) and the other with negative affects (N = 22). Each of these items can be allocated to 'nobody', Mother, Father, Self or siblings, and, where applicable, to others in the family.

Dealing with the positive and negative items separately, separate reliability coefficients were obtained for each family member by dividing the scores by odd and even, regarding each score as if it were the result of a separate test. Within each score two sub-scores were computed where the score to that person reached or exceeded six. Thus for each subject with more than six allocations in the positive section of the test, we have two separate scores for positive to mother, to father and to the highest scoring sibling. Positive scores to other siblings in the family were too low to warrant computation. Within the negative section, since very few negative items are allocated to the parents, only the scores to the highest and second highest scoring sibling have been computed. The results are set out in Table 3.2. To correct for halving the length of the test, the Spearman Brown prophesy formula was applied (Maxwell, 1970).

Table 3.2

Correlations between odd and even numbered items per person
(where allocations to that person ≥ 6)

POSITIVE	N	r.	Corrected r.
Mother	80	.75	.86
Father	76	.67	.80
Sibling	50	.71	.83

NEGATIVE	N	r.	Corrected r.
First-born sibling	78	.65	.79
Second-born	74	.62	.765

Correlation coefficients indicate that the test is reliable.

Validity

The issue of validity is equally thorny when dealing with a test that measures not only conscious feelings but also unconscious sentiments; not only fact but also fantasy, and not only direct expression but also defensive and guarded expression. How is such a test to be validated? Cronbach and Meehl (1955) point out that in the case of tests whose validity cannot be established in the usual manner, construct validity has to be established. By constructs they refer to the postulated attributes of people which are assumed to be reflected in their test performance. Such constructs are implicitly defined by the network of associations in which they occur and evidence for their validity collects as the research proceeds and the construct becomes more securely tied to more and more observables and to other constructs.

Attempts to establish the validity of the Children's Test are made from a variety of angles. The methods and the results of the investigations are set out below.

A COMPARISON WITH MOTHER'S REPORT

Both the Children's Test and the mother's interview make a direct report on favouritism and on sibling jealousy. So each acts as a check on the other and, in the following section, we consider to what extent there is agreement between mother and the children in the family on these issues. The results are set out by family size.

Two-Child Families

There is general agreement on the ordinal position of the favourite, with a strong statement from the mother in favour of the second child, and a weaker statement from the children (see Chapter 4). Is there also agreement within individual families?

We considered the two-child families in which the mother specified a "soft spot" (Question 39), and the self choices of their children. There are nine such families and the scores of both children in these families are presented in Table 3.3. The children's scores are derived from the maternal preference section of the test.

Table 3.3

Degree of Agreement between Mother and Child Reports

	Mat. Pref.	to self
Ord. Pos.	0-2	3+
I	8	1
II	4	5

The scores of the first-born are in exact agreement with that of their mother, i.e. the eight who are not favoured give themselves low scores and the one for whom the mother does have a "soft spot" reflects this in a high score to self. Of the eight second-born the mother favours, all but three indicate this in their score. Bearing in mind

that the self category is very seldom used, then this result is very significant, indicating that there is valid reporting in the children's test, and that the maternal interview data is substantiated from another family source (72% agreement). Where the mother reports a favourite, the child named as favourite is accurate in his report. Do the siblings of these children also report the parental preference accurately? Similarly, if the mother reports that she has no special preference (no "soft spot"), or that she has a soft spot for both, is there also agreement among the children that this is so?

The method of measuring the degree of agreement is set out below.

1. If the mother reports a soft spot for one child, and that child gets two or more preference items, than his or her siblings, the reports are said to be in agreement.

2. If the mother reports 'none', then the reports of the child, of their own preference score and that of their sibling, should be within one item of each other.

3. If the mother reports 'both', each child allocates the same number of items plus or minus one to self and to his sibling.

The criteria for 'none' and 'both' are therefore the same.

Example:

Sample No.	Sib. Status	Mat. Pref.		Total
		Self	Sib.	
13	M1	1	1	1
	F2	0	0	1
19	M1	4	3	5
	F2	0	1	3
210	M1	1	5	1
	M2	0	0	5

In these cases, if the mother had stated none, then five of the six children would agree with their mothers. The exception is 210.M1. All others give scores that are the same or within one point of their sibling.

M1 gives five items to his sister and one only to himself. He therefore perceives her as the favourite. His sister, by contrast, is in complete agreement that their mother has no soft spot.

Results

Where the mother specifies "soft spot" for one child (N = 9 families), in two cases both children agreed with her. In five cases only one child agreed with Mother, and in two cases both disagreed. That is, nine children agreed and nine disagreed. Out of eleven families where Mother reports no "soft spot", in nine cases both children agreed with her, and in two cases one child disagreed. That is, out of twenty-two children, twenty were in agreement with their mother. There were thirteen families in which the mother stated that she had a soft spot for both. In four families both children agreed; in eight families one child agreed and the other disagreed and in one family both children disagreed. On this measure, fifteen children were in agreement with their mothers and ten disagreed.[1]

What, then, is the degree of overall agreement between mother and children in two-child families?

Table 3.4

Summary of Mother-Child Agreement on Favouritism: Two-Child Families

Mother states	No. of children	
	agreeing	disagreeing
One	9	9
Both	15	10
None	20	2
Total	44	21

[1] The number of children in the thirteen families is 25, not 26, because one child has no test profile.

Thus, the overall degree of agreement between mothers and their children is 67%. This high degree of consonance between the two sources suggests that considerable reliance can be placed on the data. These results are very encouraging in that they validate the children's test and substantiate the interview data of the mother. Bearing in mind the use of defensive and fantasy strategies that might be expected on a test of this nature, the degree and accuracy of the reporting is very high indeed.

On the issue of the mother's preference, the mother is reporting her own experience and the children are reporting their perception of the mother's feeling.

With the question of 'jealousy', the situation is reversed. Here the children are reporting the first-hand experience and the mother is reporting her perception of the matter. Is there the same degree of agreement on the question of jealousy as there was in the matter of favouritism? What is the extent of agreement between mothers and children on the question of jealousy?

We considered the allocations made by the children cited as jealous, on item 41 on the Children's Test, viz. 'I sometimes feel jealous of this person'. Ten first-born children were cited and only one gives this item to his sibling; eight give it to 'nobody' and one to mother. The second-born (non-jealous) siblings of these reputedly jealous children allocate this item to their sibling (the jealous child) more often! Of the four second-born, who are named as jealous by their mother, only one gives this item to his sibling. This means that of the fourteen children, only two are in agreement with their mother; by far the majority of them claim to experience no jealousy - not even 'sometimes'.

It is possible, although unlikely, that the mother would claim that there is jealousy where none exists. It is far more likely that

the feeling exists but that the children are too inhibited to admit it and therefore allocate such items into the 'nobody' category. In view of the fact that most of the children cited as jealous are first-born, and in view of the evidence presented later in this chapter that the first-born are more likely than other children to make defensive allocations, then the likelihood of misreporting on the mother's part is decreased. In respect of this particular issue, greater reliance may be placed on the report of the mother than of the child.

In eight families the mother claims that both of the children are jealous. On item 41, four of the sixteen children involved allocated the card to their siblings (all second-born); the remaining twelve all made a 'nobody' choice. There are eleven mothers who state that there is no jealousy between their children and in this case there is a high degree of agreement between mother and children: eighteen children agree with their mother and make a 'nobody' allocation of item 41 on the Childrens Test, three children make an allocation to their sibling, and one to the mother herself. Table 3.5 sets out the total degree of agreement between mother and children on the question of jealousy.

Table 3.5

Summary of Mother-Child Agreement on Jealousy:

Two-Child Families

Mother states	No. of Children		
	N	agreeing	disagreeing
One	14	2	12
Both	8	4	12
None	11	18	3
Total	33	24	27

Thus the total extent of agreement is 47% between mother and children in the matter of jealousy. Most of the disagreement between mother and children stems from the situation in which the mother makes a statement that one or both of her children are jealous; in this case the children claim that they do not experience jealousy, and their report appears to be of a defensive nature. Most of the children reporting no jealousy when their mother thinks them jealous are first-born, and it is clear from an analysis of the 'nobody' allocations that the first-born are more inhibited and defensive than later born (see page).

Three-Child Families

In the Children's Test there is evidence that the youngest child was the mother's favourite (Chapter 4) and the middle child was the most jealous, especially the middle girl (Chapter 5). In general, for the three-child family these results are confirmed from the mother's interview data. Are they also confirmed from the individual data? That is, if a mother states that the third child is her favourite, do the children in that family concur? The table below sets out the results for all three-child families.

Table 3.6

Summary of Mother-Child Agreement on Favouritism:

Three-Child Families

Mother states	No. of Families	No. of Children		Total*
		Agreeing	Disagreeing	
One	15	25	10	35
All	9	18	4	22
None	5	10	4	14
Total	29	53	18	71

*The totals do not add up to three times the number of families because some of the children in the families did not complete the test.

In all, then, 53 children agree with their mothers and 18 disagree. This represents an overall agreement of 75%, which is very high reinforcing the validation findings from two-child families.

Is there the same degree of consonance between mother and children when there is reporting of jealousy? When the mother names the child as jealous, does that child make a statement to the same effect when allocating item 41 of the Children's Test? Table 3.7 sets out the extent of the mother-child agreement in the case of a report of jealousy.

Table 3.7

Summary of Mother-Child Agreement on Jealousy:

Three-Child Families

Mother states	N.	Children's report		
		Agree	Disagree	No inf.
One child	15	4	11*	-
Two or more	7	6	8	7
None	7	14	5	2
Total	29	24	24	9

*Only the allocations on Qn. 41 of the children named as jealous

The extent of the agreement in three-child families is slightly higher than that in two-child families at 50%. Again, the degree of agreement is lowest when one child is specified and highest when there is said to be no jealousy.

Four-Child Families

Within the three-child family there is a very clear general statement that the mother favours the youngest child. Examination of the pattern of favouritism within the four-child family reveals no such trend however, indicating that the finding in the three-child family is not due to any bias in the favouritism items, which, stressing the nurturant aspects of the mother's role, will therefore tend to produce a higher tendency to allocate favouritism items to youngest children. Within the four-child family, there is a general spread of maternal preference throughout the whole family. When mother and children reports are compared to check the degree of concordance, the results are as set out in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Summary of Mother-Child Agreement on Favouritism:

Four-Child Families

Mother states	N.	Children's report		
		Agree	Disagree	No inf.
One child	7	3	17	7
Two or more	3	5	5	2
None	5	16	0	4
Total	15	24	22	13

This represents an agreement of 52% between the reports of mother and child. This is high considering the variety of mechanisms both conscious and unconscious that may operate on the child's part to distort the results. This result is lower than that in two and three-child families, because, as the number of children's reports considered increases, the possibility that distortion and error may creep into the report of any one child also increases.

The comparison for the report of jealousy is set out in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

Comparison of Mother-Child Agreement on Jealousy:

Four-Child Families

Mother states	N.	Children's reports		
		Agree	Disagree	No inf.
One child	4	1	3	-
Two or more	5	6	5	8
None	6	16	4	2
Total	15	23	12	10

This represents the highest degree of agreement on jealousy at 66%.

What is the total degree of agreement between mother and children in the two areas of favouritism and jealousy? Table 3.10 sets out the degree of agreement for the total sample.

Table 3.10

Comparison of Mother-Child Agreement on Favouritism:

All Families

Mother states	N.	Children's reports		
		Agree	Disagree	No inf.
One child	31	37	36	7
More than one	25	38	19	3
None	21	46	6	4
Total	77	121	61	14

This represents an overall agreement of 66.5%. The extent of the agreement varies according to the report of the mother, being lowest for the case in which she names one child (50.6%), intermediate in the case of more than one child being cited (66.6%), and highest in the case of no 'soft spot' (88.4%). These results indicate that where the mother makes a statement of preference, the children do not concur in all cases. It is likely that the suspicion that the mother has a favourite provokes a defensive reaction in other children in the family, and most especially in the parent-oriented first-born. When the mother states that she has a 'soft spot' for one of her children, in many cases the other children in the family make allocations to 'nobody'. The allocations to 'nobody' may also be a reflection of the socialization behaviours of the mother; that is, the mother may admit having a 'soft spot', but as a general practice she transmits to the children the belief that they are all equally valued. Her 'soft spot', therefore, may be concealed and not apparent to the other children in the family. The hypothesis that certain items produce a defensive reaction and this is more likely to be evoked in some children rather than others is considered later in this chapter, and supporting evidence is offered for this hypothesis.

If the issue of favouritism elicits defensive reactions on the part of the children, does the more sensitive issue of jealousy also reflect the same patterns? The overall picture for the question of jealousy is set out in the following table.

Table 3.11

Comparison of Mother-Child Agreements on Jealousy:

All Families

Mother states	N.	Children's reports		
		Agree	Disagree	No inf.
One child	33	7	26	0
More than one	20	16	25	13
None	24	48	12	5
Total	77	71	63	18

The overall extent of agreement is 53% and, again, varies depending on the nature of the mother's statement. When the mother alleges that one of her children is jealous, the extent of agreement is only 21%; if the mother claims that more than one child is jealous, then there is a higher degree of agreement (39%) and, finally, where the mother states that none of her children are jealous, there is an overall degree of agreement in 80% of cases. This reveals that there is a high degree of denial on a highly charged issue such as favouritism and jealousy. The use of defensive strategies on a test that probes highly personal and sensitive issues of family life is to be expected. It remains to be seen if the use of such defensive strategies is systematically related to other variables such as sex and ordinal position. If the use of denial strategies can be identified as being a part of the psychological style of particular types of children, then the difficulty of interpreting the results of the test, the question of whose report to accept when mother and children are of divergent opinions, can be dealt with.

If the relationship between test variables and other structural variables - between dependent and independent variables - can be established in accordance with findings from similar studies, then the construct validity of the test will be further consolidated. In seeking to account for the low degree of agreement where the mother names one child as jealous, we have suggested that the failure of the child to agree is due to inhibition or denial. This issue is dealt with in the next section.

B USE OF NOBODY CATEGORY

Within the Children's Test, the Nobody category is reserved for those items that do not apply to any family member, or items that do apply to a family member but which the child is too inhibited to allocate. Thus a Nobody allocation is either a direct statement of fact or a denial stratagem. If the use of Nobody is a sign of guardedness or inhibition, we would expect variations between children in the extent to which they utilize this category, since there is evidence that some kinds of children are more inhibited than others.

Proportionately more first-born children are cited as being jealous and we would hypothesize that the first-born is more likely to reveal test inhibition and, therefore, to have a higher use of Nobody. Likewise, we would expect that girls, being more inhibited, would have a higher use of Nobody than boys.

These hypotheses are in line with the work of Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957), MacFarlane, Allen and Honzik (1954), Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith (1964), suggesting that the first-born are more prone to be anxious, especially when confronting a test situation. Being more anxious, the first-born are therefore more likely to allocate the sensitive and disturbing items into the emotionally safe category of Nobody. On a similar theme, conformity studies also indicate that first-borns and girls are

more conforming in test situations (Carrigan and Julian, 1966; Becker and Carroll, 1962). When confronting a strange interviewer the first-born and girls (we hypothesize) are more likely to present to the interviewer an image of a happy family life, in conformity with the prevailing cultural ideal. Tables 3.12 and 3.13 set out the results for the total use of the Nobody category, comparing boys and girls and first-born and later-born children. The data is grouped into high and low categories, depending on the extent to which the Nobody category is used. The dividing line between the categories is the sample median. Analysis by chi-square test with Yates correction for low expected frequencies where necessary.

Table 3.12

Total Use of Nobody X Sex

		Use of Nobody: Nos. of subjects			
Family Size	Sex	Low	High	chi-sq.	p.
All families	Male	55	42	11.126	< .001
	Female	29	63		
2-child	Male	24	12	5.302	< .05
	Female	11	20		
3-child	Male	21	12	5.849	< .02
	Female	13	27		
4-child	Male	10	18	.338	not sig.
	Female	5	16		

As predicted, girls display more inhibition than boys throughout the whole test, as indicated by a higher use of Nobody. The relationship is statistically supported in two and three-child families, but not in four-child families. The hypothesis that first-borns would tend to use Nobody more than later-born children is also substantiated.

Table 3.13

Total Use of Nobody for Different Ordinal Positions:

All Families

	Use of Nobody (Nos. of subjects)				
	0-9	10-19	20-29	29 -	Total
First born	3	33	28	9	73
Later born	29	40	37	8	114
Total	32	73	65	17	187

chi-sq. = 14.822 on 3 d.f. $p = < .01$

When the relationship is further analysed by family size, first and later-borns have a significantly different pattern only in four-child families ($p = < .02$). In two and three-child families the groups do not significantly differ in their use of Nobody.

The findings indicate that the use of the Nobody category can be considered as a measure of guardedness or inhibition and they are in line with existing research into sex and ordinal position effects. The breakdown by family size introduces the proviso that the results are modified by family size; thus sex differences do not apply in four-child families, whereas ordinal position effects are maintained only in the four-child families. These differences are held in mind when interpreting the test results, and data relative to the use of Nobody on different sections of the test is given before the results are outlined.

C PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There is one other factor in the psychological style of the first-born that can also be used to establish construct validity. It has frequently been established that the first-born is more parent-oriented - and generally more adult-oriented (Koch, 1955) than later-born children. Specifically, Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg and Houston (1968), testing 40 male children from two-child families aged from five to eleven years with a modified version of the Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test, found that the first-born placed more items in parent boxes than their later-born siblings.

As an indicator of the validity of the Children's Test, the hypothesis that the first-born would show more parent involvement was tested. Analysis was by t-test for independent samples (Blalock, 1960). Table 3.14 reveals that the first-born have higher involvement with their parents on all positive measures, on negative outgoing, and on total involvement.

Table 3.14

Involvement with Parents:

Comparison of first and later-born children

Variable	First-born	Later-born	p. < (one-tailed)*
Pos. to parents	7.3	6.5	.05
Neg. to parents	1.1	0.7	.05
Dep'cy to parents	4.9	3.7	.001
Sharing to parents	2.7	2.0	.01
Pos. and neg.	8.4	7.2	.01
Total involvement	16.9	13.6	.001

* direction predicted

These results indicate the greater parent involvement of the first-born.

To summarize, the findings relating to sex and ordinal position are in accord with the already accumulated evidence on these subjects. These two general themes are important contributions to the construct validity of the test. Several other findings throughout the research will further consolidate the test (see data on sibling status effects, friction scores and other aspects of the children's test behaviour as reported in Chapter 4). The findings on inhibition offer a means of interpreting favouritism and jealousy scores with greater confidence, when the reports of the mother and the children are at odds. In some circumstances, it will allow more credence to be given to the reports of the mother rather than the children; for example, in the case of the mother reporting one child as jealous.

In general, taking conflicting considerations into account, the Children's Test offers a reasonably valid measure of the emotional profiles of the children in the sample. When combined with reports on the same issues from other sources - the mother and the other children in the family - we obtain a picture of family interaction that can be taken as a valid and reliable one.

SAMPLE NO:

EXAMPLE OF :

CHILDREN'S TEST

SCORING SHEET ** (20.4.64)

ame: JOHN Age: 7:10 Sex: M

ame, Age, Sex of Siblings: 1. ANN (11:6 F)

MARY (9:1 F) 3. -

thers in Family: 1. F's. Mother 2. - 3. -

		N	F	M	S	SIBLINGS 1	SIBLINGS 2	SIBLINGS 3	OTHERS 1	OTHERS 2	OTHERS 3	
	00						✓					00
ernal	01						✓					01
ference	02	✓										02
	03						✓					03
	04						✓					04
	05					✓	✓					05
AL		1				1	5					
	06	✓										06
	07	✓										07
ernal	08	✓										08
ference	09					✓						09
	10					✓						10
	11	✓										11
AL		4				2						
	12			✓								12
	13			✓								13
	14					✓						14
going	15		✓	✓			✓					15
tive	16		✓	✓								16
ings	17			✓								17
	18			✓								18
	19			✓								19
L			2	7		1	1					
	20						✓					20
	21		✓				✓					21
	22		✓									22
going	23						✓					23
tive	24		✓									24
ings	25					✓						25
	26	✓										26
	27						✓					27
L		1	3			1	4					

is profile is not an actual profile of a sample family.

		N	F	M	S	SIBLINGS			OTHERS			
						1	2	3	1	2	3	
	28					✓						28
	29					✓						29
ction	30					✓						30
	31					✓						31
	32		✓									32
	33						✓					33
	34					✓						34
AL			1			5	1					
	35					✓						35
	36						✓					36
	37						✓					37
parative	38	✓										38
	39						✓					39
	40						✓					40
	41	✓										41
AL		2				1	4					
	42			✓		✓						42
	43			✓			✓					43
	44			✓								44
endability	45			✓								45
	46						✓					46
AL				4		1	2					
	47	✓										47
	48			✓								48
	49	✓										49
ring	50					✓						50
	51						✓					51
L		2		1		1	1					
	52	✓										52
	53					✓						53
	54		✓									54
	55		✓									55
	56					✓						56
	57			✓								57
	58			✓								58
	59					✓						59
L		1	2	2		3						

Chapter 4

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

Social relationships within and without the family are often contrasted. As opposed to the extra familial world in which the achievements or achieved status of the individual is his most important feature, in the family these considerations are supposedly irrelevant. Within the family the child is loved and rewarded for what he *is* rather than for what he *does*.

> "Basically, the thing that makes each child secure in the family is the feeling that his parents love him and accept him for himself, whether he is boy or girl, smart or dull, handsome or homely." (Spock, 1969, p.313)

Parents are enjoined by the cultural norms governing their behaviour to feel and express equal affection and regard for their children and not show any partiality or evidence of preferring one child to another. The children are to be loved equally, as the children of their parents; they do not have to earn that love or to achieve it in any way; it is ascribed to them, it is theirs simply because they are the children of their parents. This at least is the prevailing ideology for family relationships. Often in reality a child is prized by his parents because of his achieved status outside of the home, e.g. school attainments. Middle-class mothers are very comparative in regard to the attributes of their children as compared to other children. Thus children are evaluated not only in comparison with their siblings but also *vis à vis* other children outside of the family.

The behaviour of the parents is also governed by another norm that is in many ways potentially contradictory. In a society dominated by individualism, parents likewise are enjoined to treat their children

as individuals and to be sensitive to their varying needs and abilities. No child is like any other child - not even within the same family - and the aim of the conscientious parent is to recognize and accentuate that individuality. Thus, although all the children are to be loved the same, they are not necessarily to be treated the same way. They are to be treated differently according to their special and different needs. The mother and father have to recognize the different attributes of each of their children and to respond to them in the appropriate manner. In recognizing differences the mother will also respond to these differences and the attributes of one child may be preferred to the attributes of the others. What these attributes are may vary from mother to mother, although there may be some widespread preferences, for example, mother-son favouritism as predicted by psychoanalytic theory. The awareness of and differential reaction to the unique qualities of the child may lead the parent into an apparent partiality for one of the children over the others. This may in turn generate sibling rivalry among the other children and become one of the main sources of contention within the family.

It may not appear problematic to the parents who may reconcile the two aspects by saying that 'I love them both the same but (sometimes) I like one more than the others'.

This nice distinction may be conceptually very clear to the mother but it may be difficult for the child to understand in practice. This dilemma can be seen in the quote that follows, from the mother of two children, a boy and a girl:

> "She often says to me 'you don't spend as much time with me as you do with Paul'.....He tends to be more fun and I fall into the trap of spending more time with him and I know she kind of times it. I spend five minutes with him and two with her."

When the mother consistently 'falls into the trap' of spending more time with one, or of being more indulgent or lenient to that child, then the

accusation of favouritism may arise. In charging the mother with 'favouritism', the child is claiming that the mother has a preference for one child over his sibling. This accusation can be very disruptive and the handling of the discontent that results may involve a great deal of family effort and emotional energy.

Several factors may offset the tensions resulting from parental favouritism. There may be a balancing between the generations in the two-child family; the mother may favour one of the children and the father the other. These links may exist across a wide number of families, for example, a general mother-son and father-daughter favouritism would be expected if psychoanalytic theorists are to be believed. An alternative hypothesis is that fathers may take more interest in the first-born and mothers in second-born children; or, alternatively, the ordinal position effects may be modified by sex, in which case the father may show favouritism to the first-born male but not to the first-born female. These very general hypotheses are about the structure of family relations within the two-child family; within the three-child family the situation is different again. Here the two-two balance is not feasible and some other structural variations may appear.

Within the family the child's position creates an environment which offers differential access to parents and to the rewards they can mediate. But position is not the only relevant ecological variable, for the effects of birth order are also influenced by the sex of the child, family size, the age and sex of his siblings, all of which are important environmental influences.

The family context gives the child his/her 'filial value' (Krout, 1939). As the only child becomes the elder child and then the eldest, at each stage his changed position calls forth a different response from his parents. The new response depends on the age and sex of the new addition

to the family. Sears (1959) suggested that ordinal position be treated as an ecological variable, since the relevant point about position was that it elicited a different set of reactions from other family members and therefore presents each child with a different learning environment. Sufficient evidence has now accumulated to demonstrate that ordinal position can be further broken down depending on the age and sex of others in the sibling constellation. Thus, for example, there are marked psychological differences between the younger sister of a brother (MF_2) and the younger sister of a sister (FF_2) (Koch, 1956; Altus, 1966).

Since on one level the treatment each child receives in the family is a function of the total family structure, in this chapter all references to parent-child relationships are set out as per family size and, where possible, sibling status effects are considered.

There is increasing evidence of sibling status effects on such matters as achievement (Altus, 1966; Sampson, 1962), cognitive functioning (Koch, 1954), masculinity and femininity (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1964), sex role identification (Brim, 1958), and various other areas. To interpret these findings, two types of intermediary hypotheses are advanced: the first centres on horizontal relationships between siblings and emphasizes direct learning from, and competition with, siblings. The second has a wider family referent and considers the different types and kinds of parental attention available to different sibling positions. In this chapter the latter type of relationship is under review and the issues of differential parental warmth towards children in different sibling positions is considered.

Although there are many a priori assumptions about parental attitudes to children of different sex, age or position, only a few studies have directly investigated this aspect of family behaviour. Krout (1939) asked 19-year-old subjects for their retrospective accounts of parental

favouritism and discipline. The subjects came from families of various sizes and sibling structures. This study is subject to the usual caveats concerning retrospective reporting. Lasko (1954), in a longitudinal study of the attitudes of mothers to their first and second-born children when the children were of the same age, reported differences in maternal warmth to each ordinal position, with the mother showing more warmth and indulgence to the second-born. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) found that the mother's attitude to children subsequent to the first was a function of the age and sex of the existing children. Mothers were most enthusiastic about their pregnancy if they already had only daughters rather than only sons, and least enthusiastic if they already had one child of each sex. This attitude persisted after the birth and mothers were relatively cold to second-born sons if they already had a son, but not so to daughters, if they already had one daughter.

Some researchers have reported differences in socialization dependent on the sex of the parent and of the child. Typically each parent is reported to be more indulgent of the child of the opposite sex and more restrictive and punitive towards the child of the same sex (Winch, 1962; Rothbart and Maccoby, 1966). These reports parallel the psychoanalytic concepts of Oedipal attraction between the generations. Others have reported ordinal position differences in maternal warmth and behaviour. Lasko (1954) reported the mother as warmer towards the second-born; Hilton (1967), in an experimental situation, found that the mothers of first-born children were more interfering, extreme and inconsistent towards them when compared with mothers and their second-born.

Rothbart (1971), in an analysis of mother-child interaction in an experimental situation, noted interaction effects between ordinal position and sex. The mother was more lenient and less critical of the first-born boy and the second-born girl. The explanation Rothbart offers

has a psychoanalytic connotation: she suggests that the mother feels a special attraction to the first-born boy and is rivalrous with the first-born girl. This leaves the second-born boy with fewer expressions of approval and the second-born girl with more expressions of approval than the first.

The widespread finding that the first-born is more jealous (Sewall, 1930; Ross, 1931; Koch, 1955) may be a function both of the first-born's dethronement and the continued favouring of the second-born. Koch's report (1955), that the first-born with a younger opposite sex sibling is particularly jealous, again suggests an interaction effect between ordinal position, sex of child, and sex of sibling.

Differences in behaviour do not necessarily signify a difference in parental warmth, although they are often taken as indicators of such. This chapter sets out the results of the mother's interview when questioned directly about her attitudes both positive and negative to her children. As corroboration, the results of the children's test are also reported to gauge the extent of the agreement between mother and children.

MATERNAL PREFERENCE

HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

Two-Child Families

Maternal preference: (a) Mother's report

Four questions are included in the mother's interview that relate to the mother's feeling towards her children; they are:

(22) With which child does the mother get on best?

(28) Which child can twist her round his/her little finger?

(39) For whom does the mother have a 'soft spot'?

(41) If another child is jealous, of which child are they jealous?

(Question number in parentheses)

The mother has the possibility of answering 'both' or 'none', or of citing a particular child. It is assumed that the more a child is named, the greater the mother's partiality for that child. The responses of the mother to these four questions are summed. If the mother names the same child three times in answer to these questions, then that child gets a score of three; if one, then he gets one. The scores for each sex or ordinal position can then be compared. This is a rather crude measure since probably not all the questions are of equal value in tapping the mother's feelings; it is, however, a better guide than using one question only.

In so far as the attitude of the mother to the children is governed by the norm of equal affection, to ask for differences in feeling is to touch on a 'taboo' subject. Of the total sample of 79 mothers, 16 (20%) claimed to have no 'soft spot' (Question 39); 25 (35%) stated 'both' or 'all' and 37 (48%) named a particular child. The possibility that there is some under-reporting of preferences therefore has to be borne in mind.

I. The first hypothesis to be tested was that mothers will be more positive towards male than towards female children. This belief in cross sex affect is strongly rooted in psychoanalytic theory (the Oedipus complex) and empirically Rothbart and Maccoby (1966) have established that parents are more indulgent to opposite sex children. In Krout's research (1939), there are four favoured positions in two-child families, three of which are occupied by male children. Where mothers have a child of each sex, the male child is preferred.

To test the hypothesis of cross sex favouritism, only the reports of the twenty mothers with a child of each sex were considered. There were no statistically significant differences between the mean allocations to boys (1.1) and girls (0.9) and the hypothesis was therefore rejected.

II. Following Lasko's findings (1954), that the mother is warmer to the second-born, the hypothesis that second-born children are more positively regarded by their mothers was tested. This hypothesis is also given some weak support from the greater reported jealousy of the first-born (Sewall, 1930; Ross, 1931; Koch, 1955), assuming that what the first-born are jealous of is the favoured position of the younger sibling.

The hypothesis that mothers would be more positive towards their second-born was confirmed. The data was analysed by Wilcoxon Test for Correlated Samples (McCall, 1970), and the difference was significant at $p < .005$ level. (The mean score to the first-born was 0.34 and to the second-born 1.36.)

III. Many researchers in the field of sibling studies have reported interaction effects between sex of subject, sex of sibling and ordinal position. Further consideration of ordinal position effects suggests the hypothesis that the second-born in an opposite sex dyad elicits a more positive response from the mother than a second-born in a same sex dyad, i.e. that sex differences enhance ordinal position differences. Koch (1955) reported that the first-born were particularly jealous if the younger sibling was of the opposite sex. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) found that the mother was particularly warm to the second-born boy if the first was a girl. Freedman, Freedman and Whelpton (1960), in a study of attitudes to fertility, emphasize the cultural importance of having one child of each sex.

In this context, it is also hypothesized that the second-born male with an older sister (FM_2) will be a particular favourite of his mother. This is reported by Sears et al (1957), Rosenberg (1965), and Koch (1955), who also reported that his older sister is very concerned with parental alignments and issues of favouritism.

Table 4.1 sets out the mean allocations from the mother to each child in the two-child families.

Table 4.1

Mother's Positive Perceptions X Sibling Status:

Two-Child Families

Dyad	N	I-born	II-born
MM	12	0.5	1.0
FF	16	0.25	1.25
MF	10	0.22	1.4
FM	10	0.4	1.8
Same sex	28	0.357	1.142
Opposite sex	40	0.315	1.63

Analysis

Although the mean allocations from the mother to each sibling are set out in Table 4.1, the mean scores are not used in the statistical calculations. They are presented only for information since the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance cannot be met, and t-test cannot be used to test the significance of the difference between group means.

A one-tailed sign test is used (Maxwell, 1961; Robson, 1973) to calculate the probability that the allocations to the second-born exceed the allocations to the first-born, more often than could be attributed to chance. Throughout the research, one-tailed statistical tests are used when the direction of the difference is predicted. In cases where many means are compared and where the direction is not predicted, two-tailed tests are utilized.

The results indicate that the preference for the second-born is most marked if the elder child is of the opposite sex. A one-tailed sign test comparing the allocations to the first and second-born in opposite sex dyads, was significant at $p < .001$ level. The difference in the same sex dyads did not reach the necessary level of statistical significance. Further analysis within each dyad revealed that the difference in favour of the second-born remained statistically significant in each opposite sex dyad ($p < .03$), whereas there were no statistically significant differences in either same sex dyad.

When we examine the replies to the question about the mother's 'soft spot' (Qn.39), of the nine families in which the mother admits to a 'soft spot' for one child, seven of the nine are opposite sex dyads (35% of such families) and two are same sex dyads (14.3%). Five of the seven opposite sex dyads specified are FM. This data matches with that from the mother's report on all positive feelings and the children's test data.

Maternal preference: (b) Children's report

Within the Children's Test, there are six items that relate to perceived maternal preference. It is, therefore, possible to match the direct report of the mother with complementary data from each child. Hypotheses are put forward which match exactly those investigated on the mother's interview responses. Before considering to whom each child allocated the maternal preference items, the extent to which the Nobody category was utilized is reviewed to see if there are any differences between the sexes and between different ordinal positions.

Table 4.2 is a frequency table for use of Nobody in the maternal preference section of the test; the results are set out here for the total sample. The overall distribution is approximately symmetrical about the central value of 3; the minimum allocation score is zero

indicating that all preference items were allocated to a family member, and the maximum is 6, indicating that all items were placed in the Nobody category. A chi-square test for 'goodness of fit' (with Yates correction), indicated that the distribution is approximately normal and variations within the group could therefore be identified.

Table 4.2

Maternal Preference, Frequency Distribution of Use of 'Nobody'

No. of N Allocation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
No. of subjects	23	22	35	33	29	28	19	189
% of sample	12.17	11.64	18.51	17.46	15.34	14.81	10.05	100

chi sq. = 7.72 on 6 d.f. $p < .3$ Not significant

For the total sample of children, there are differences between the sexes in their use of Nobody, and also between the first and last born. Table 4.3 sets out the scores.

Table 4.3

Maternal Preference and Use of 'Nobody': All Families

	Use of Nobody (nos. of subjects)				
	Low 0-1	Med. 2-4	High 5-8	Chi sq.	p <
Male	22	55	16	6.227	.05
Female	23	42	31		
First born	10	43	21	6.218	.05
Last born	33	54	26		

Most of the differences between boys and girls is in the medium and high categories. Both have equal low use of the Nobody category. When sex and ordinal position are considered together, the differences between the sexes only applies to the first born ($p < .05$). First-born girls have very low and very high Nobody use, whereas first-born boys 'peak' in the medium category. This is a rather odd result on the face of it, for it discounts the notion that girls are generally more inhibited than males. Some are, but some others are less inhibited than males, and the reason probably relates to family size and sibling composition. A recurrent finding throughout this research is that girls are more affected by their siblings than boys, but the direction of the effect is related to family size and more precisely to sibling structure. There are no differences in the pattern of scores of later-born girls and later-born boys.

Turning now to the effect of ordinal position on the frequency of allocations to the Nobody category, whereas the difference between the sexes was in the low and the high categories, the difference between first and later-born lies in the medium and low categories. Later-born children are more than twice as likely to give only one or no allocations to Nobody, as are first-born. In only ten cases do the first-born allocate all (or all but one) of the maternal preference items. These items, with their implied criticism of the parents, are often avoided by the rather inhibited and parent-oriented first-born. The younger later-born children, who are less parent directed, do not share their siblings inhibitions and express their feelings more freely.

Within the two-child families, chi-square 'goodness of fit' test indicates that the distribution of Nobody scores in two-child families is also approximately normal. The distribution is set out in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Maternal Preference and Use of 'Nobody': Two-Child Families

No. of N. Allocations	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
No. of Subjects	6	7	14	15	7	7	11	67

$X^2 = 10.41$ with 6 d.f. $p < .2$ not significant

The mean scores on use of Nobody can then be compared for each sex, ordinal position, and sibling status.

Are there any differences between boys and girls and the first and second-born in their tendency to utilize the Nobody category? The mean scores are set out in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Maternal Preference and Use of Nobody: Two-Child Families

(N = 34)

Dyad	N	I-born	N	II-born
MM	6	2.8	6	2.2
MF	10	3.4	10	3.6
FF	8	4.0	7	4.0
FM	10	2.5	10	2.4
All	34	3.2	33	3.1

Sex	N	Same sex dyad	N	Opp. sex dyad	All
Male	12	2.5	20	2.9	2.7
Female	15	4.0	20	3.05	3.5

This table indicates that scores are most similar within each dyad, rather than across the dyads and between those in the same ordinal position or sex. Only the all male dyad shows a slight difference in mean use of Nobody; a difference that is not statistically significant. There is no difference between the first and second-born in the two-child families in their use of Nobody, but girls use Nobody more than boys ($t = 1.9$; $p < .05$, one-tailed). Girls with sisters have a very high use of Nobody in the maternal preference section, giving an average of four out of six items into the Nobody category, but this is not significantly different from scores of girls with brothers.

Use of the Self Category in the Maternal Preference Section

As well as being allocated to Nobody or to a family member, the items of the Children's Test can also be given by the subject to his or her self. Do children often see themselves as the preferred child? On the whole, there is a very low use of the Self in the maternal and paternal preference section.

Of the total sample, 41% of the children never use self at all in the maternal preference section. The score in the paternal preference section is 49%; 30% and 26% gave one item to self on maternal and paternal preference respectively, making a total of 71% and 75% who gave no items or one item only to self on these sections. For this reason, no tests were undertaken which relied solely on the use of the Self Category. In some cases self choices are used in conjunction with other data.

The hypotheses concerning the children's allocations of maternal preference items are given below, with the results of the statistical analysis.

I. Girls with brothers will tend to see them as preferred by their mothers. This is the 'child's eye view' of the cross sex preference

and may also reflect a higher premium placed on having a male child in a patriarchal society.

Comparison of the mean preference scores to self and from sibling, of the twenty boys and twenty girls in cross sex dyads, does not support the hypothesis that boys are more favoured by their mothers. Girls have a slightly higher mean score (3.1) than boys (2.65). A t-test of the difference between means was not significant.

However, when girls with brothers are compared with girls with sisters, an interesting cross sex effect is apparent. Table 4.6 sets out the differences between children in the same and opposite sex dyads, in the allocations that they make to their siblings.

Table 4.6

Mean Maternal Preference Score to Sibling in Same and Cross Sex Dyads

Sex of S.	Sex of Sib.	N.	$\bar{x}$ to sib.	p (one-tailed)
Male	Male	12	1.33	not sig.
Male	Female	20	1.65	
Female	Female	14	0.733	.05*
Female	Male	20	1.75	

*t = 1.71 with 33 d.f. p (one-tailed) < .05

The table suggests that whereas there are no differences in the allocations to siblings of boys with brothers and those with sisters; girls with brothers are more likely to think their siblings favoured than are girls with sisters.

II. First-born children will see their younger siblings as preferred, since they are reported more jealous and insistent on their rights (Koch, 1955).

The hypothesis that the first-born are more likely to see their younger siblings as favoured is not statistically upheld. There is a slight but non-significant tendency for the first-born to give more allocations than they received (1.63 as opposed to 1.03).

III. The first-born in a cross sex dyad will see the second-born as more preferred than the first-born in a same sex dyad, and especially that the older sister of a younger brother (F_1M) will see her younger brother as highly favoured.

Within the same and opposite sex dyads the mean scores to siblings are set out in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Mean Maternal Preference Score to Sibling:

Two-Child Families Sex Dyads

Dyad	I-born	II-born
MM	1.83	0.83
MF	1.7	1.2
FF	0.87	0.5
FM	2.1	1.6
All	1.6	1.03
Same sex	1.35	0.66
Opp. sex	1.9	1.4

Although the first-born in opposite sex dyads allocate more items to their siblings (1.9) than do first-born in same sex dyads (1.35), the difference is not statistically significantly different. The second-born in opposite sex dyads also allocate more favouritism items than do second-born in same sex dyads (1.4 to 0.66, difference not significant).

DISCUSSION

Contrary to the tenets of psychoanalytic theory, there is no evidence from this research of a special relationship between mother and son. There is, in fact, slight evidence from the children that the girl is more favoured, although this is not statistically supported. Research from other sources suggests that in socialization behaviour at least, there is a cross sex effect with mothers being more indulgent of their sons (Rothbart and Maccoby, 1966; Winch, 1962). Matching this (American) evidence with the results of the present research and therefore assuming no general cultural differences, it would appear that differences in behaviour are not necessary indicators of differences in feeling. The mother does not act less punitively towards her son because she feels warmer towards him. This finding is similar to Lasko's report (1954) that in socialization behaviour and principles, the mother was consistent over time and to each (same sex) child, but there were differences in warmth to each child depending on ordinal position.

If the differences in behaviour do not indicate a difference in feeling, what do they signify? There is a complementarity of behaviour between parents depending on the sex of the child. If the mother is harsh, the father is more indulgent and vice versa. It is possible that the mother, perceiving the relationship between father and son (between two males) as being based on power and control, 'balances' this by a greater indulgence of the son. Conversely, expecting the father to be more indulgent of a daughter, as would be expected from cultural

stereotypes, she exerts greater control of the daughter. This model of family relationships resembles the model of family interaction put forward by Parsons and Bales (1947) who suggest that balance is achieved within the family by role specialization. The mother's role is predominantly socio-emotional, being mainly concerned with feelings and emotional expression and functionally directed to the maintenance of family harmony. The father's role is predominantly instrumental, focussing on power and control in the family and on external matters. The complementarity of roles is necessary to family equilibrium. It is possible, however, that the roles played by each parent are not ipso facto role characteristics, but are to a large extent a function of situational demands, of which the sex of the child and the general cultural constraints governing parent-child relationships and intersex relationships generally, are highly relevant.

Although there is no evidence of cross sex favouritism, a cross sex effect is apparent in the scores of girls with brothers compared with girls who have a sister. The family of two girls is reported to be very harmonious (Koch, 1956; Bowerman and Dobash, 1974), and there is a very low perception of maternal favouritism in this family type. The younger sister (FF_2) is reported by Koch to be one of the most feminine of all females in two-child families at six; her sister, too, (F_1F) scores high on feminine role characteristics. This would suggest that both of them may be denying preferential feelings. Also, according to Koch, these girls have a fairly good relationship with each other; although it is also reported that the younger sister enjoys a special relationship with the mother while the older girl is closer to her father (Koch, 1956). Rothbart (1966) also reports that the mother is more indulgent and less critical of FF_2 compared with F_1F. If this situation prevails at eleven, i.e. that FF_2 is favoured by the mother, there is no evidence

for it in the Children's Test. There is a slight, but not statistically significant, difference between the allocations the mother makes to the girls, in this dyad; she gives slightly more positive choices to FF_2 (differences not significant), nor does the mother's report of the father's 'soft spot' suggest that he has a weakness for the first-born (F_1F). Since, in the two-child family, sibling sex characteristics are assimilated (Brim, 1958), the family of two girls is highly feminine. This enhanced femininity is reflected in harmonic family/sibling relationships (role-consonant behaviour for girls) and in high denial on 'taboo' topics in the Children's Test. Both of these traits are reflected in allocations to sibling on the Maternal Reference section.

By contrast, the girl with a brother gives him a high maternal preference score, especially if he is a younger brother. The score of the girl with a brother is similar to that of the boys in the sample. The effect of having a brother is to 'masculinize' the profile of the girl; for boys there is no parallel effect. This finding, of the greater effect of brothers on sisters than vice versa, is widely reported in sibling studies (Koch, 1955; Brim, 1958; Schoonover, 1959; Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1964) and, in general, reflects the greater tendency of females to emulate male models than conversely (Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963).

The most assertive and aggressive of the girls as measured by the Children's Test scores, and the girl who least uses the Nobody category to conceal her feelings, is the girl with a younger brother (F_1M). This girl is found on Koch's data to be very concerned with her relationship with her mother, jealous and competitive. In the Children's Apperception Test, she shows a concern with mother and child relationships of both a positive and a negative character, and with accounts of favouritism (Koch, 1960). In her interview she expresses the view that

she would like to change places with her younger brother, whom she sees as getting more attention and cuddling than she does. She quarrels with him a great deal. On the maternal preference section she allocates more items to him than any other child in the two-child families. This allocation matches precisely that from the mother, who gives FM_2 the highest positive score, of all children in two-child families.

The finding that the mother is warmer to the second-born is in direct agreement with the report of Lasko (1954) and Hilton (1967). Studies of the mother's descriptions of first and second-born children (Dean, quoted Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1970), reveals a picture of an anxious and dependent first-born and a more relaxed and sociable second child. The subsequent displacement of the first-born may enhance difficulties with him/her and the comparatively more relaxed relationship with the second-born may be a more rewarding experience for the mother and a situation of mutual reinforcement between mother and second-born is established. The positive aspects of the relationship with the second-born may be further accentuated if the first-born reacts to his dethronement by negative attention-seeking behaviour.

Most of the difference in the mother's attitude to first and second-born children is due to the high regard the mother reports for the second child in an opposite sex dyad. This interaction between ordinal position and sibling status is also found in the work of Koch (1955), who reported that although the first-born were more jealous and insistent on their rights, the first-born in a cross sex sibling group were most markedly so. Sears et al (1957) reported the mother's attitude to the pre-school boy who was second born was warmer if the first was a girl; no similar effects were reported for girls. Koch (1956) also reports this boy as mother-indulged and 'babied'. There is no equivalent report for MF_2, the younger sister of a brother.

The higher score of the second-born in the opposite sex dyad (FM_2 and MF_2) lends some support to the general thesis that the more the mother can differentiate between her children, the more able she is to have and to admit her preference. It appears that when there is a class difference between the children, the mother finds it easier to admit (to the interviewer) and to express (to the child) a preference. If the children are of the same sex, then an admission that she prefers one is seen as an indication of personal favouritism, whereas if there is a sex difference then it is a preference for a class, and therefore more acceptable. In a similar vein, Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970) argue that same sex siblings are more threatening to each other because they are together more, often have similar interests, and are compared more; by contrast, opposite sex siblings are less threatening and more stimulating since conflict over a class difference is less upsetting than over more unique personal characteristics. Likewise, the fact that the children are demonstrably different may lead the mother to treat them more differently than the children feel is justified and this unjustified behaviour may be seen as favouritism. The mother can justify differences by reference to differences in sex, and armed with this excuse may indulge the preferred (younger) child. When children are of the same sex, the mother feels more pressure to treat them in a similar or even identical fashion.

Koch (1955) suggested that displacement by a younger opposite sex sibling, with its implied rejection of the sex identity of the elder child, makes the first-born in an opposite sex dyad doubly jealous. The effect is apparent not only in the reports of jealousy, but at age six years cross sex siblings are both more stressful and more stimulating than same sex siblings, and the effects are especially marked for the first-born. The dispossession of the first-born is enhanced by the fact that his rival is of the opposite sex. If he reacts negatively

and jealously, then the second will appear easier by contrast and the sex difference will make the first and second seem even more different.

Since there is a premium on having one child of each sex (Freedman, Freedman and Whelpton, 1960), then the satisfaction experienced at the birth of a second opposite sex child may lead to a continued prizing of this child. In a patriarchal society this effect will be accentuated if the second-born is a male. Koch reports this boy to be the least jealous, the most mother-oriented of the boys, the most "sissyish" and indulged. His sister is highly jealous and concerned with issues of favouritism (1955) and in this research gives him the highest of all maternal preference scores.

Within the two-child family, there is a failure of the children's reports to confirm unequivocally the reports of the mother. The mother's preferences are quite clearly stated but none of the hypotheses relating to the Children's Test reach the necessary level of statistical significance. There are two possible reasons why this should be so; first, the children are 'denying' the facts by placing a high number of maternal preference items in Nobody. The first-born less favoured children would be expected to do this more than the second-born. However, examination of the use of the Nobody category shows that this is not so since the mean allocations to Nobody is the same for each member of each dyad (see Table 4.5). An alternative hypothesis is that although the mother has a preference she quite effectively conceals the more obvious manifestations from the children; she probably states that there are no favourites and what is being reported by the children, therefore, is successful socialization techniques! This is probably more likely in the two-child family in which the situation is more of a zero-sum game (where 'I win - you lose' or 'You win - I lose' is the outcome of the game). Where this situation applies, the mother is probably very careful to avoid showing any favouritism.

In conclusion, therefore, what is reported in the two-child family demonstrates the interaction effects of sex and ordinal position, in determining which child is closer to the mother. In Chapter 5 the same effect will be apparent in the reporting and expression of jealousy in the two-child family.

Three-Child Families

Maternal preference: (a) Mother's report

Within the two-child family, the mother expresses a greater warmth towards the second-born, especially in the cross sex dyad. Is the fondness for the youngest also found in the three-child family? There is evidence that suggests that the mother's closeness to the youngest might be even greater in the three-child family. The Newsons (1970) report that in larger families there is a conscious prolongation of the childhood of the youngest, who is more 'babied' and indulged as a result. Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) report that mothers said they were more indulgent of later-born children in larger size families (but not in the two-child family). There is very little direct research into the three-child family, although there are certain structural pressures in the triad that make it of particular interest (Simmel, 1950; Caplow, 1968).

Within the three-child family, there is the likelihood of a coalition forming among the children, on either a longstanding or a temporary basis. This situation of two against one makes the three-child family possibly more unstable than any other size. As far as the general issue of parental favouritism is concerned, it suggests that the mother may find it easier to express (to the child and in the interview situation to the interviewer) a special regard for one of the children, since it is possible to make a distinction between 'youngest' and 'older', where older entails two and youngest is then a 'justifiable' choice.

I. The hypothesis that the mother will allocate more positive items to the youngest in the three-child family was tested. Taking for each mother the highest number of choices given to one of her three children, that child was then designated 'mother's favourite'. If the mother gives an equal number of allocation to two children, then each child is allocated one-half. If all three children have the same score, then that family is considered to have no favourites and is dropped from the analysis.

Table 4.8

Mother's Positive Choice X Ordinal Position

	I	II	III	Total
Mother's choice:	4	8	16	28*

*1 family with three equal allocations

Analysis: chi-square (with Yates correction for 1 d.f. case) = 8.05; $p < .01$

The results reveal that the mother is closer to the third-born in three-child families.

II. Using the same method, the choices to male and female children were compared, in the twenty-two families that had at least one child of each sex. Twelve choices were made to male children and ten to female which is approximately thirty per cent of each category, and suggests that there is no sex preference on the mother's part.

Looking at the question relating to 'soft spot', one first-born child was chosen (3% of F.B.); five second-born children (17%) and nine third-born (31%). In the three-child families, twice as many male children are specified as female children, i.e. ten males and five females.

This is 25% of males in three-child families and 15% of females. The slight advantage of males over females in the favoured group is not due to the higher number of youngest males for there are equal numbers in this group (N = 9). This may reflect the favoured position of a male with two sisters (Rosenberg, 1965; Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957).

Maternal preference: (b) Children's report

Within the three-child family, there are no differences between the sexes, nor between different ordinal positions, in their use of Nobody.

In the three-child families, the total of self allocations and allocations received from siblings are added together to form a single score for each child in the family. The median for the families was then calculated and the sample divided according to the total preference allocations received. Chi-square tests (with Yates corrections) were then utilized on the resulting tables.

I. The youngest in a three-child family is seen as preferred by the mother.

There were twenty-seven three-child families; of these, there were fifteen in which all three children were tested and twelve in which two out of three children were tested. The results for three-profile and two-profile families are presented separately in the following table and then the two are added together.

Table 4.9

Maternal Preference Scores X Ordinal Position:

Three-Child Families

A. Families in which all three children have been tested (N = 15)

(median = 2.0)

No. of allocations	I	II	III	Total
Low (0 - 2.0)	11	8	4	23
High (2.0 - 6.0)	4	7	11	22
	15	15	15	45

chi-square = 6.85 with 2 d.f; $p < .02$

B. Families in which two out of three children have been tested (N = 12)

No. of allocations	I	II	III	Total
Low (0 - 2.0)	8	7	2	17
High (2.5 - 6.0)	4	5	10	19
	12	12	12	36

chi-square = 6.11 with 2 d.f; $p < .05$

C. Totals for all families (N = 27)

No. of allocations	I	II	III	Total
Low (0 - 2.0)	19	15	6	40
High (2.0 - 6.0)	8	12	21	41
	27	27	27	81

chi-square = 13.04 with 2 d.f; $p < .01$

The same type of analysis was performed to test the hypothesis that children in mixed sex families would see male children as preferred to female. There was no difference in the mean allocation made to male and female children.

DISCUSSION

As in the two-child family, there is evidence of an ordinal position effect on the mother's preference but no evidence of a sex effect. The finding that the mother is more positive to the youngest is reported by both the mother and the children in the family; in contrast with the two-child family in which the report of the mother was not confirmed by the children.

Within the two-child families, there was a positive report of maternal preference only in those families in which there was clear role distinction; i.e. in the families with one child of each sex. Where the children were very similar in status - same sex and generally close in age - the mother and children denied any preferential feelings. In the three-child family, an age based role structure emerges with an eldest, middle and youngest child. To the eldest goes status and responsibility; the middle child is in a rather difficult position unless he/she is of a different sex, in which case sex serves as a differentiating factor; the youngest is frequently seen as the 'baby' of the family and, as the Newsons (1970) report, the parents may consciously prolong his/her childhood. A quote from one of the mothers in the sample illustrates the importance of distinct familial roles.

> "I think it's important for a child to have a special position in the family and whatever that position happens to be, I think it's up to the parents to (recognize it? accentuate it? P.C.) um.... John is likely to say: 'Well, I'm the eldest'; well, then Michael can say, 'Well, I'm Mummy's baby', or 'I'm special

because I'm the baby'. And Liz can turn around and say, 'Well, I'm special because I'm the only girl'."

Sears et al (1957) reported mothers as indulgent of the youngest in the family, only in families of more than two children. Mothers with only two children are possibly reluctant to express a preference for one, with its implied rejection of the other. As for the reporting of maternal favouritism, it is probably easier for both mother and children to name one child as preferred with the implication that two are less preferred; in the two-child family when one child is chosen the implication that the other one is not preferred is less palatable. Further, for the children, they may feel that the youngest child has 'diplomatic immunity' (Bene-Anthony, 1957) and as the baby of the family may legitimately be spoiled.

The general point seems to have been established in both two and three-child families, that where there are class or status differences between the children, the mother and children are more likely to claim that maternal preference exists. The attribution of value to a class is presumably less threatening than claiming greater personal value for one child.

It is possible that the finding in favour of the youngest may be a test artifact reflecting the nurturant aspect of the mother's role, as indicated in maternal preference items. If this is the case, then the finding for the youngest child should be seen in the four-child family. The evidence from the four-child family does not reveal a maternal preference for the youngest. The finding in the three-child family, therefore, is a function of the structure of parent-child relationships in the three-child family and not due to test factors.

If the relationship between mother and child becomes easier with each new addition to the family, then the relationship the mother has with the third child must be very relaxed and mutually reinforcing.

Four-Child Families

Maternal preference: (a) Mother's report

There is no evidence in four-child families of the same preference for the youngest seen in the three-child family. Using the same criteria of favouritism as in the three-child analysis, the results are as set out in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Mother's Positive Choice X Ordinal Position

(N = 17)

	I	II	III	IV	None	Total
Mother's choice:	4	5	3	3	2	17

When the scores for boys and girls in the fourteen families with children of each sex are compared, there are no differences in the choices mothers give to each.

There were six families in which there are three children of one sex and only one child of the opposite sex. The concept of 'filial value' (Krout, 1939), suggests that the child's filial value is increased if he is the sole member of one sex in a family composed of opposite sex children. "The filial value of any individual to his parents is in inverse proportion to the number of the same sex in the family"(Krout, 1939, p.27). Such a child has a status monopoly by virtue of his/her exclusive position and has strong claims for special treatment. Consideration of the data reveals that in two families the mother has a 'soft spot' (Question 39) for the singleton, but in the other four families there was no evidence of a particular partiality for this single sex child.

Maternal preference: (b) Children's report

On the use of Nobody, there were no differences between girls and boys in the four-child families, but the first-born uses Nobody more than later-born in the four-child family ($p < .02$).

Summing the allocations that children make to themselves and those they receive from their siblings, for each family a 'favourite' (scoring more than the rest) emerges. The distribution of favourites according to ordinal position is set out in Table 4.11 and reveals no differences between various ordinal positions.

Table 4.11

Maternal Preference Score X Ordinal Position

	I	II	III	IV	None	Total
Highest scoring sib.	2	4	1	4	4	15*

*Two families in which only two of the four children have completed the Children's Test are not included.

There are eleven families with children of each sex; in three of these families boys had the highest maternal preference score and in eight families a girl had the highest scores. This represents roughly 10% of all boys in these families, and 21% of girls.

DISCUSSION

Unlike the two-child and three-child family, in which a role structure based on sex and position is apparent as a major determinant of the mother's stated preference, there is no intrinsic role-based preference apparent in the four-child family. It is possible that the move from three to four children signifies a radical change in the basic organization of the family, with a move from status-based differentiation to the more personality-based differentiation Bossard and Boll (1955) describe as typical of the larger family.

Since the reaction to personality-based differences is more variable than the reaction to roles, there is less consistency across the four-child families than across the smaller families. That sex is not a relevant differentiating variable in the four-child family has already been established in the total use of Nobody. The differences for the total sample between boys and girls were significant at $p < .001$. This difference is significant in two and three-child families, but disappears in the four-child family. Conversely, ordinal position differences in involvement with parents are not sustained in two and three-child families, but remain significant in the four-child family. Sex differences seem to lose their importance and the only remaining structural difference is that between the first-born and later-born children.

PATERNAL PREFERENCE

The fact that the family is a small intensively interacting group with strong boundaries makes the role of every family member important to the understanding of the total group's functioning. The preferences of the father are therefore also relevant to sibling relationships and their repercussions. If the father has a preference that 'balances' that of the mother's - as in a cross-sex match in two-child families - then the rivalry may be ameliorated. If the preferences coincide, then the sibling tensions may be accentuated.

There is a direct report from the children on perceived paternal preference and also a report from the mother on the 'soft spot' of her husband. The mother's report is given in Table 4.12 and 4.13.

Table 4.12

Father's 'soft spot' (report from mother) for each sex

Family size	N.	Male	Female	Both/All	None	No inf.
2-child	33	6	8	4	15	0
3-child	29	5	7	1	13	3
4-child	17	5	5	1	3	3

The table reveals no evidence of a cross-sex preference although other researchers have indicated that the father is more indulgent towards the girl (Rothbart & Maccoby, 1966; Winch, 1962; Bronfenbrenner, 1961).

The mother's report suggests that like herself the father has a soft spot for the youngest in each family size. The tendency is only weak in the two-child family but fairly clear in three and four-child families.

Table 4.13

Father's 'soft spot' (report from mother) for each ordinal position

Family size	N.	I	II	III	IV	All	None	No inf.
2-child	33	6	8	-	-	4	15	0
3-child	29	0	4	9	-	1	13	2
4-child	17	1	0	3	6	2	5	0

Table 4.13 reveals that preference for the father is similar to the mothers in the two and three-child family, but tends more towards the youngest in the four-child family. In the following section, these 'second-hand' reports are compared with the first-hand reports from the children.

Paternal preference: Children's report

The use of Nobody varies between different family sizes with differences between the sexes in the three and four-child families, but not in the two-child families. There are no differences in the responses between the first and later-born, for any family size.

The overall use of Nobody in the paternal preference section is very similar to that in the maternal preference section. The frequency table 4.14 sets out the distribution, which reveals that fathers and mothers are as likely as each other to have preferences, though which child is preferred may vary.

Table 4.14

No. of times Nobody used	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Maternal preference	23	22	35	33	29	28	19	189
Paternal preference	21	26	31	36	33	21	21	189

Despite the overall similarity in the use of Nobody, the differences apparent in the maternal preference section between the sexes and between first and later-born children do not appear when father's preferences are considered. Table 4.15 sets out the differences between the sexes, for the total sample.

Table 4.15

Paternal Preference, Use of Nobody X Sex: All families

		Use of Nobody				
Family Size	Sex	Low	Medium	High	Chi-sq.	p <
All families	Male	26	53	14	5.512	N/S
	Female	21	47	28		
2-child	Male	9	19	4	4.404	N/S
	Female	8	15	12		
3-child	Male	15	17	8	9.651	.01
	Female	2	21	9		
4-child	Male	2	17	2	9.251	.01
	Female	11	11	7		

There are differences between boys and girls in three and four-child families. In the three-child family the difference is in the predicted direction, with girls showing higher use of Nobody. In the four-child family, however, the difference is not completely in the predicted direction, since eleven girls have low use of Nobody. The difference reinforces the comments already made about the lesser importance of sex as an influence on behaviour, in the four-child family.

HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

I. For the two-child families the overall distribution of preference choices is similar to that in the maternal preference section. There is no evidence, however, that the father has a preference for the second-born, in either the same sex or in opposite-sex dyads. Mean scores of each dyad member to his/her sibling are set out in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Mean Paternal Preference Score to Sibling
2-child Families

Dyad	N.	I	II
MM	12	1.3	1.3
MF	20	1.7	0.9
FF	14	1.1	1.2
FM	20	1.2	1.7
same sex	26	1.2	1.1
opp. sex	40	1.4	1.3

Scores in the same-sex dyads are the same; in the opposite-sex dyads, although the difference is not statistically significant, girls receive more allocations than their brothers (1.7 compared to 1.05).

Table 4.17

Mean Paternal Preference Score to Sibling

	Male	Female
same sex	1.3	1.1
opp. sex	1.05	1.7

This slightly higher preference score for girls in opposite-sex families assumes more possible significance when compared with the higher choice given to girls in the three-child family.

II. In the three-child families, whilst there is no evidence of an ordinal position preference (as the mother suggests), there is a sex preference. Fathers are seen by their children as preferring girls rather than boys.

Analysis: The sample median was 2.5 allocations and the scores of boys and girls in cross sex families were classified high and low accordingly. The data was then fitted into a two by two table and analyzed by chi-square test, with Yates correction for the one degree freedom case.

Table 4.18

Paternal Preference X Sex: 3-child Families

(N = 20)

Pref. score	Male	Female	Total
Low	20	10	30
High	13	17	30
	33	27	60

chi-sq. = 4.26 with 1 d.f. $p < .05$

A t-test on the same data (after a chi-square test for 'goodness of fit', chi-square = 8.00 with 5 d.f.), showed that the mean paternal preference for boys (1.95) was different from that for girls (2.71). The probability level is less than .02 on a one-tailed test, $t = 2.00$, with 58 d.f. Both the chi-square and the t-test were undertaken on twenty families with at least one child of each sex.

III. In the four-child families there is no evidence of a preference for any ordinal position. Using the criteria of a 'net' favourite on self and sibling allocations, as in the maternal preference section, thirteen children were perceived by themselves and other family members as preferred by their father. The ordinal position distribution of these thirteen is:

I	II	III	IV
3	1	2	5

indicating a slight but not significant leaning towards the youngest. Eleven mixed sex families had a 'net' favourite, six of whom were male and five female. There is, therefore, no evidence for cross-sex affect between father and daughters in the four-child family.

DISCUSSION

The preference of the father in the two-child family is far less marked than that of the mother. (The mother reports that 50% of their husbands have no 'soft spot' for any particular child.) In the remaining families in which he is seen as having a special relationship with one child, there are no sex or ordinal position differences in these preferences. Nor do the children perceive their fathers as having particular favourites, although girls in cross-sex dyads get higher scores than their brothers (difference not significant). Two items of interest emerge although they are not statistically supported: one, that both girls in the two-girl family give each other more paternal preference allocations than maternal preference allocations, possibly suggesting that there is less inhibition in reporting paternal preference. The girl with a younger brother, who gives him the highest maternal preference score, gives her brother a much lower paternal preference score.

The three-child family is the only one in which there is a clear statement of paternal preference, and this is a cross-sex preference

which is reported by the children but not by the mother. The mother reports a slight ordinal position effect, which parallels her own preference for the youngest.

There are twenty families with children of both sexes; in thirteen there is an only girl and in seven an only boy. Closer consideration indicates that these 'single' children score higher on paternal preference than their siblings, and than same-sex children in other three-child families. The same trend is not evident in the maternal preference section (see Table 4.19).

Table 4.19

Maternal and Paternal Preference to 'Singletons': 3-child Families

Family type	Pat. Pref. N.	Pat. Pref. subject's pref. score	Mat. Pref. N.*	Mat. Pref. subject's pref. score
'only' girl (with)	13	2.9	14	2.2
Two brothers	26	1.8	28	2.5
'only' boy (with)	7	2.4	6	2.8
two sisters	14	2.0	12	3.0

* number of families considered in maternal preference section differs, because where all children have same score family omitted from analysis.

Looking at the paternal preference allocations,

the only girl (F_1MM, MF_2M, MMF_3) scores significantly higher than her two brothers on preference allocations ($t = 2.14$, with 37 d.f.; $p < .025$ (one-tailed)). She also scores significantly more than girls with one brother and one sister (FMF, MFF, FFM) ($t = 1.94$, with 21 d.f.; $p < .05$ (one-tailed)). The only boy, however, does not score significantly more than his two sisters, nor more than the boy with a brother and a sister.

For the mother, the 'only' children in three-child families score less than their siblings, although the differences are very slight, and without statistical significance.

For the mother, the most relevant role characteristic in the three-child family is ordinal position (age?), for fathers it is sex. Girls are seen by their siblings to be their father's favourite, especially if they have two brothers. Two possible explanations are available: the first relates primarily to the girl's sex and perceives this link as an Oedipal one. This, however, raises the question of why the same pattern does not appear in families of other sizes? Although there is no definite evidence there is a hint that a similar relationship may exist in the two-child cross-sex families, where F_1M and MF_2 both receive high scores from their brothers. No such evidence is apparent in the four-child families. Bronfenbrenner (1961) notes that in an American context "in the sphere of affection and protectiveness (..) the tendency to be especially warm and solicitous with girls is more pronounced among fathers than among mothers" (p.123). Similarly, the father will experience less 'disciplinary friction' with a girl, since the disciplining of girls is generally undertaken by mother, fathers having more to do with the disciplining of boys (Straus, 1967; Bronfenbrenner, 1961).

The second explanation is that the father sides with the 'odd man out', and in so doing balances the coalition between the same-sex children. Caplow (1968) reported that a three-child family often develops a sibling pattern of two and one; the two joining forces generally do so on the basis of similarity, the most usual basis being sex. So, the two factors of (a) father's closer relationship to a girl, and (b) siding with the odd one out in the sibling group, may work in conjunction, so that only girls score higher than their brothers, but a single boy does not get a much higher score than his sisters.

For the children, it is probably easier to report that the father favours the single-sex child, rather than a child of the same sex as oneself, since the latter may carry with it implications of personal unworthiness, not present when another class of child is chosen, i.e. opposite sex.

The filial value of a child according to Krout (1939) is enhanced by uniqueness in the family group, but this affect only seems to be applicable to fathers. There is no evidence that the mother has a special regard for the single sex child in a three-child family. It is possible that since the mother is with the children more often and has more control over everyday matters, she strives harder to be impartial and equitable in her behaviour. The degree of her success is measured in the very few sharp favouritism patterns evident from the children's reports.

The four-child family reveals no ordinal or sex preferences. The same general remarks that applied to the maternal preference section are also relevant to this section. As family size increases beyond three the basic role structure and organization of the family is modified.

MOTHER'S NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS

A mother's relationships with her children are not consistently harmonious, nor does she always get along equally well with each of them. The second part of this chapter is concerned with the more negative and difficult relationships the mother may have with any one of her children.

The data on the mother's negative perceptions came from her answers to four questions. The questions were: which child

(22b) do you have difficulty with?

(29) is demanding?

(31) is temperamental?

(41) is jealous of his/her sibling?

The question numbers are in parentheses.

The mother has the possibility of replying 'all' or 'none', or of naming one or more children.

The first review of the data indicated that these questions were far more complex than they had first appeared on the surface. Although mothers had no difficulty giving straightforward answers to the more positive questions, the answers to the four questions relating to negative affects were so bounded with qualifications and provisos that in many cases the meaning of the question was altered and then a different question was answered. This can be seen in (22b) which relates to difficulty the mother may experience with a particular child. Since the answers may then not be directly comparable, these questions are considered separately, unlike the positive perception questions.

1. The question, "With which child do you have difficulty?" was interpreted in two different ways: one referred to the difficulties the mother experienced in her <u>interaction</u> with the child, i.e. their clashes of temperament or personality; this was the intended meaning. The other refers to her <u>concern about</u> the child, for example, difficulty in school or in making friends.

The two different possible interpretations were separately coded. Most mothers interpreted the question as it had been intended, i.e. a difficult relationship. Nine mothers took the question to mean 'concern about' the child. Table 4.20 sets out the answers: the most difficult child is the first by a very slight edge.

Table 4.20

Question 22b "Difficult" X Ordinal Position

	Ordinal Position						
Mother's reply	I	II	III	IV	All	None	No inf.
No	28	22	4	1	5	12	6
Percentage of each ord. pos.	37.8	30.0	12.5	14.2	-	-	-

When this table is broken down by family size, there are more first-born in two-child families cited as difficult, and slightly more middle children in three-child families.

2. The second question of the four negative perception questions is "Which child is the most demanding?" The assumption behind the question is that the child who 'demands' is dissatisfied with the existing distribution of resources. He feels himself deserving of more than he is getting and is therefore more demanding. Table 4.21 sets out the replies for all mothers in the sample; percentages refer to the percentage specified from each ordinal position. Thus 24 per cent of first-born are named as "demanding".

Table 4.21

Question 29 "Demanding" X Ordinal Position

	Ordinal position						
Mother's reply	I	II	III	IV	None	All	No inf.
No	18	23	16	5	6	10	1
Percentage of each ord. pos.	24.0	31.0	50.0	71.0	-	-	-

There are several ways in which a child can be demanding. Three mothers stated that the child was physically demanding; nine referred to emotional demands and thirty-three made general reference to demands that were made on their time, energy and resources. Other mothers simply answered the question, without stating what they understood the question to mean.

The reasons for the child's demands were various, but most fell into two groups: personal or individual reasons and those that offered status or positional reasons. Twenty-seven mothers gave personal reasons and most of these referred to the temperament of the child or the difficulty the child had in some personal relationship, either with parents or siblings. Twenty-five mothers offered status reasons, the most important of these being the fact that younger children were around the house all day and were constantly demanding of time and energy. This is reflected in the fact that the lower the ordinal position of the child, the higher the percentage regarded as demanding. So, it appears that in at least half of the cases where the mother cites a child as 'demanding', it is not necessarily a negative reaction on her part.

3. The third of the negative perception questions asks if any of the children are temperamental. The whole question is predicated on the

assumption that the mother 'understands' the notion of temperament. Not all mothers do and this is reflected in the fact that this question elicited the response 'none' more often than any other (28%).

The ambiguity of these questions, which was not apparent at the piloting stage, is the prime reason these results, when considered together, fail to yield consistent results. The most important of these questions is that relating to 'jealousy' and this is covered independently in the next chapter.

The responses to the negative perception questions illustrates very clearly that although questions can be standardized, meanings cannot. Given a sensitive issue, when questioned directly, the respondent may restate the question in a less threatening form and then proceed to answer the newly formulated question. Often the interviewer cannot restate the question for fear of shattering the interview rapport that has been built up. This is even more likely since the respondents who restructure sensitive issues are likely to be the most guarded and defensive subjects.

The advantage of a semi-structured as opposed to a closed interview schedule is that it allows some rephrasing of the question by the interviewer; by taping the subjects' replies, some changes in question meaning become apparent, and can be allowed for in the analysis if necessary.

Bearing in mind all the qualifications, the negative perceptions of the mother are presented for each family size. Results are only indicative of general tendencies; there is no statistical analysis.

Two-child Families

There were no differences at all related to sex, ordinal position nor to sibling status in two-child families. The table for sib-status is set out below.

Table 4.22

Mother's Negative Allocations X Sib-Status

Dyad	N.	I	II
MM	12	1.16	0.83
FF	15	0.75	1.125
MF	20	1.1	1.1
FM	20	1.6	0.8
All	67	1.15	0.963

One score of interest is the highest score, that of F_1M, whose brother gets the highest positive score from their mother. This girl has the highest comparative score of all the girls in two-child families; only the very masculine and competitive MM_2 gets a higher score. Although this girl is very challenged and stimulated by her younger brother, she is nonetheless in conflict and competition with him (Koch, 1956). Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1965) report that this dyad has the highest scores on the clinical measures of conflict (MMPI) and is referred to as a creative-clinical dyad. All the reports on this dyad so far endorse this view.

Three-child Families

The mean score for each ordinal position is 1.2 allocations to the first-born; 1.5 to the middle-born; and 0.7 to the youngest. Bearing in mind that most of the score to the youngest is in answer to the question about demanding behaviour and is not therefore a negative evaluation, this low score coincides with the data on the youngest child presented to date. The difficult position of the middle-child has already been referred to and the fact that this child gets the highest score (although by a very small margin) gives a very slight support to the argument.

Although there is only a little work in this area, what there is tends to suggest that the position of the middle-born in a three-child family is a rather difficult one. All the research relating to middle-born children have negative implications. They show more negative attention getting (Gewirtz, 1948), are most changeable (Brock and Becker, 1965), are less often given affectionate nicknames by their parents (Clausen, 1966), and are least popular (Sells and Roff, 1963). These responses, according to Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970), are most often the outcome of neglect or harsh treatment. There is, however, no direct evidence that this is so.

Looking a little further into the incidence of more negative perceptions in the three-child families, those children who received three or more negative items from their mother were considered separately. There were fourteen such children in thirteen families, of whom five were first-born and eight were second-born. (This is 17% of all first-born children and 27% of all second-born.) Of the thirteen families, five of these have first and second children of the same sex. All of the first-born children who were particularly difficult have second-born siblings of the same sex, i.e. they belong to family type M_1M (M/F) or F_1F (F/M). Of the eight second-born who are problems, all three girls in this category have an older and a younger brother, i.e. they are MF_2M. Of the five problem middle boys, two have opposite-sex older siblings and three of the same sex; three have opposite-sex younger siblings and two have same-sex younger siblings. Any conclusions from this data can only be of the most tentative nature, but it might be hypothesized that the first-born experiences difficulty if he/she is followed by a same-sex sibling and then another. For the second-born boys, no general theme is apparent, but the girl 'sandwiched' between two boys may have difficulties.

Four-child Families

Within the four-child families, there are no patterns or trends. The mother does not report more difficulties with boys than with girls nor with any particular ordinal position.

In conclusion, therefore, although the data from the negative perception questions is rather doubtful, it gives very slight endorsement to some of the other findings of sibling studies. In two-child families the girl with a younger brother gets a high negative score as might be expected from existing research in the two-child family (Koch, 1955, 1956) and Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1965). In the three-child family there was a suggestion that the middle-child had a difficult position; this is in line with all other findings on the middle-child, including the data presented in this research (see Chapter 5). Also, within the three-child family, there was a suggestion that the sibling constellation might be a significant influence on the development of problems in either the first or second-born. A similar finding is reported by Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith (1964) who found that sex role identification was similarly affected by the sibling constellation.

Chapter 5

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Most of the research into sibling behaviour has concentrated on the effects of variations in sibling position, sex and age-spacing, with only little direct attention being paid to the character of the sibling relationship in itself. This chapter deals with the children's reports of their positive and negative feelings towards their siblings. Since reports are available from all the children in the family, a check can be made on the extent to which feelings are reciprocated.

One of the few empirical studies in the area of sibling affect is that of Bowerman & Dobash (1974), who studied patterns of sibling affect in a sample of 8,000 subjects. They found very high levels of positive affect between siblings, with 65% of siblings reporting that they felt 'close' to their siblings. Much lower levels of negative sibling affect were recorded: 10% claimed that they were 'not particularly close' and 3% said 'not at all close'. The level of positive affect to sibling, compares with 71% who stated that they were close to their mother and 61% close to their father. This information was gathered by means of a questionnaire, which asked the subject how close he was to his sibling and classified the answer into five categories, ranging from 'very close' to 'not at all close'. If these results are compared with those obtained from the Children's Test, in which subjects allocate an item either to a parent or to a sibling (the option of multiple choice is seldom taken up), in this sample much lower levels of positive sibling affect are recorded. Parents receive most of the positive affect and siblings most of the negative affect. Although this forced choice probably distorts slightly the type of involvement with both parents and siblings, by underestimating the amount of negative

affect to one and positive affect to the others, nonetheless it offers a clear picture of to whom the child reports most positive or most negative affect.

Children in the same family spend a great deal of time together. John & Elizabeth Newson (1970) report that 57% of their sample four-year-olds played with their siblings 'often' (most days), 24% 'sometimes', and only 19% 'never'. With this degree of contact it is very likely that the children will work a modus vivendi, which is often determined by the age and sex of the siblings. Koch (1955, 1956) reveals that emotional and personality traits of six-year-olds are systematically related to sibling differences. The intermediary hypotheses generally refer to the amount and type of contact between siblings. Koch speculates that same-sex siblings are more likely to play together and this seems to have a rather depressing effect on the development of the younger child, who constantly plays an inferior role to his/her older sibling. This effect may be seen, for example, in the better adjustment of MM_2 at wider age-spacing (Koch 1956), for at wider age-spacing the second-born boy probably has a circle of his own and is less overshadowed by his older brother. Likewise, at middle age-spacing (2 - 4 years), FF_2 were "clearly outclassed by their siblings and were hangers-on in the siblings play group scoring less in self confidence and more in indirection than their older siblings" (Koch, 1956, p.416). By contrast, the second-born with an opposite-sex sibling seem to benefit from their position, in that they are stimulated by the presence of an older opposite-sex sibling without being depressed by the constant contact and comparison with them.

> "It seems not unlikely that a sibling of the same sex is more threatening and/or less stimulating than one of the opposite sex. Children of the same sex have more overlapping and hence

more competing interests, are thrown into each other's company, are compared with each other more frequently and find it difficult to line up for support each with a different parent." (Koch, 1955, p.41)

It is a general finding in social psychology that propinquity and similarity breed liking (Zajonc, 1968; Byrne, 1961) and from this it would be expected that like-sex siblings and siblings close in age will show more positive feelings towards each other. The 'likeness' of siblings is also enhanced depending on the general context in which siblings find themselves. In this respect, siblings outside of the home might be expected to show more cohesiveness and less competition than within the home setting, since outside the home others may classify family members together and intra-family differences are minimized. Often older children are charged with the care of younger siblings when outside of the home and in this care-taking capacity they are likely either by example or by direct teaching to socialize their younger siblings into the appropriate peer group behaviour. After all, the younger child is a member of the same family and, therefore, likely to be judged in that capacity; the elder child may, therefore, take steps to see that the younger sibling does not tarnish his image.[1]

Although within the family siblings may be in conflict with each other for various privileges and favours available in the home, outside of the home they may be lumped together by others as members of the same group, and each may be judged by the standing of the other. The fact that to an outgroup all siblings are members of the same ingroup may make their behaviour to each other outside of the home more cohesive

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[1] Mrs. Gloria Carter Spann, sister of the 1976 Democratic Party Presidential candidate, Jimmy Carter, recalls: "The day I started school, he asked me not to tell anybody I was his sister because I didn't talk right: I had been raised out there in the country around the black children and I talked like they did". (Newsweek, July 19th, 1976)

and friendly. Many mothers reported that children who were quarrelsome and competitive at home would defend each other vigorously if threatened outside of the home.

Because of the frequent contact between siblings, a system of mutual rights and obligations develops which operates between siblings and to govern their relationships with parents. With the parents a system of privileges, often age-graded, exists: Allison Davis (1941) points out that when the system is breached in favour of one child, then this is taken to be a mark of personal favour. By the same token it is resented by the other siblings who then pressure the parents into abiding by the rules they have set up. Anna Freud describes the mechanisms by which this comes into being:

> "The child's first approach to the idea of justice is made during these developments of the brother-sister relationship, when the claim to be favoured oneself is changed to the demand that no one should be favoured...i.e. there should be equal rights for everybody." (1951, p.164)

When the system is consistently breached in favour of one child, then the other children are likely to feel jealous, and their feelings of resentment of unfair treatment may draw them together.

In Chapter 1, an outline was given of the forces within the family likely to produce sibling rivalry. This discussion focussed on the conflict that arises between siblings when competing for the same limited resources. There are other factors that are likely to be involved in sibling conflicts that have not yet been outlined. According to Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg (1968), siblings adopt different power strategies depending on their sibling status. Thus, as a whole, the first-born are more likely to use direct power strategies, such as bossing, commanding, hitting; the second-born are more likely to use indirect methods, like pleading, whining, and attacking property. To a certain extent these

methods are modified by sex of the subject and also sex of sibling; so that while the second-born use more indirect influence methods, the second-born boy with an older sister (FM_2) uses more direct power tactics than she does, probably because he has the best chance of all second-borns of succeeding with these methods, and overthrowing his sister.

Looking behind these results, it appears that the methods adopted by siblings relate to the bases of power within the sibling group, of which there are probably two major ones: viz. ordinal position and sex.[1] Ordinal position is perhaps the more important of the two with its related attributes of superior physical and mental competence. In both human and animal groups those who are larger in size and ability generally exercise dominance in order to assure themselves of a greater share of the available rewards. In most conflicts between siblings, therefore, assuming no outside interference, the older sibling will generally be triumphant. The significance of ordinal position will be lessened when the children are close in age and the ability differential is therefore diminished, or if the later-born child has a marked superiority either in physical stature or mental capacity, and is not willing to accept the domination of the elder. Generally, however, lacking 'full frontal power', later-born children are more likely to use indirect influence methods, typical examples being: attacking property, reasoning and pleading (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1968).

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[1] Other factors may be important sources of power in individual families such as high status outside the family or special talent, for example. The (apparently) low power strategy of reasoning or making the sibling feel obligated, may be more effective where children are socialized into personalized relationships, than the (apparently) high power tactic of attacking or hitting which may be severely sanctioned in such families. Therefore, to equate direct and overt power with high power and more indirect or covert power with low power minimizes the effect of context which may determine which tactics are more or less effective/powerful.

Not only do older children capitalize on their age-related attributes to exercise direct control of their younger siblings, they are often the recipients of delegated power from the parents, and this further reinforces them in their use of direct power tactics. The parent-delegated power is easily assumed by the first-born who more closely model after their parents than later-born children, and slip easily into parent surrogate roles, even when choosing occupations in later life (Sutton-Smith, Roberts & Rosenberg, 1964).

The sibling-power results of Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg are obtained directly from the children themselves and are consensual reports; i.e. when a child states that he uses a particular strategy to get his sibling to do as he/she wants, that sibling concurs. What this study considers is the type of influence tactic used, but not its effectiveness nor the frequency with which it is elicited, although both of these factors may be more significant influences in the sibling relationship in the longer term. Some types of power may be more effective in some contexts, or types of family.

The second base of power - sex - is slightly more tricky ground on which to speculate without stereotyping. Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg's work cited above confirms the cultural stereotype: as expected, boys and girls use different influence tactics with their siblings, with sex of sibling a further confounding variable. Boys use attack and offensive tactics (i.e. direct use of interpersonal power) and girls use more indirect methods, such as reasoning, defense, making the sibling feel obligated. There is an obvious parallel here with the first and later-born sibling relationship.

Is type of influence tactic related to effectiveness? Do the more direct methods of the first-born, and of males, assure them of more real influence than the less overt methods of girls and second-born children?

Not necessarily so, but the more direct methods imply recognized (though not necessarily stated) power backing, either delegated as from the parents, or because 'might is right', (the law of the jungle) or by implication from the wider cultural setting in which males have more power than females. The more indirect methods are dependent on interpersonal negotiation, seen clearly, for example, in the use of reasoning or making the sibling feel obligated. In the latter case, if the sibling is sufficiently well understood, these methods may be extremely effective, but overall it is more likely that direct methods are more successful. Some family settings may also enhance the effectiveness of indirect power tactics.

If boys are presented with models indicating that the use of direct power is appropriate to their sex (and from media models this is frequently physical power), they are likewise actively encouraged to resist the domination attempts of others, especially females. Similar pressures scarcely exist for girls. Generalizing therefore to the family boys will be more likely than girls to resist the power attempts of others especially females, and in the sibling relationship boys are more likely to resist the domination attempts of their siblings; if younger to directly confront their sibling and most especially if the older sibling is female. The high incidence of quarrelling in the MM dyad and particularly in the FM dyad (Koch 1960) offers some support for this hypothesis.

If males are subtly encouraged to assert themselves, by force if necessary, the socialization of girls still predominantly emphasizes home-making and the maintenance of good family relationships as an integral part of the feminine role (Women's Lib. notwithstanding). Although this may not be transmitted to the child in so many words, the choice of books, toys, available female models, all reinforce the stereotype.[1]

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[1] The extent to which traditional female attributes are emphasized may vary within different sub-cultures, and in different family types. It may be that some families are more responsive to social change and the impact of current changes in the family will have most marked effects on the girls in these families (see Chapter 7).

Girls would therefore be expected to 'back off' more readily than boys when there is conflict within the family. Though saying that good family relationships and their maintenance are role consonant states for females, it does not follow that girls do not get involved in even violent confrontations both with parents and with siblings, but the theshold for such activities may be higher for girls than for boys and the incidence of such occurrence is therefore lessened. From the methodological point of view, it is also probable that when doing the Children's Test, girls are more susceptible to social desirability effects.

When there is only one basis for power, as there is in single-sex families, then other things being equal, a stable hierarchical relationship will develop in the sibling group. Because males are more likely to be in conflict with each other and such behaviour if not culturally approved is at least tolerated, then attempts to unsettle the older sibling will be most likely in the all male family. We have already noted the high rate of quarrelling in this family type. The two girl family by contrast is very harmonious (Koch 1956, 1960).

Where there are children of both sexes then difficulties may arise. If the two criteria of power are coincident as in the case of the older boy and younger girl, then the power relationship should be quite stable. In the family with an older girl and a younger boy, a certain amount of conflict might be expected. The powerful first-born is undermined by her sex and may therefore be overthrown by her brother who is weak as a second-born, but strong as a male. Age-spacing is probably a critical factor in this relationship, with greater friction the closer the ages.

In the previous section the general cultural content of sex roles and their likely outcomes have been set out. In reality the specific performance of sex roles and the general prescriptive elements will diverge to a greater or lesser degree, and in many families conscious

efforts may be made to minimize the influence of sex typing.[1] Two family factors are important in the realization and performance of sex roles: one, the direct socialization by the parents and, second, the models available within the family, and in this chapter we will consider specifically the influence of sibling models. In her work with six-year-old children from two-child families, Helen Koch found that such factors as 'primary mental' abilities (1954), personality traits (1955), emotional attitudes (1956), and friendships (1957), showed significant relationships to the child's sibling position. These data were collected from teacher ratings of six-year-olds, and in a re-analysis of the same data Brim (1958) suggests that in the sibling relationship there is a certain degree of role assimilation. Thus boys with sisters show more 'feminine' characteristics than boys with brothers, and similarly girls with brothers are rated as having more 'masculine' characteristics than girls with sisters. These effects are most marked for the younger (less powerful members) of the sibling dyad: MM_2 and MF_2; findings which are compatible with the general hypothesis that in role playing situations the less powerful members are more likely to adopt role characteristics of the stronger than vice versa.

The categories 'masculine' and 'feminine' are derived from a re-interpretation of the teacher ratings given to Koch. The ratings are classified by four judges according to the pertinence of each trait to the masculine or feminine role. The conception of the characteristics of the sex roles was based on empirical studies and on the major theoretical

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[1] The more subtle deep-seated indicators of gender are very difficult for parents to consciously modify, and may run counter to their overtly expressed intentions. For example, while strongly stressing equal educational opportunity for both sexes, parents may on a deeper personality level reinforce dependent behaviour in girls which then acts as a brake on their aspirations and achievements.

treatment of such differences by Parsons (1955). The Parsonian distinction revolves around the twin concepts of instrumental and expressive behaviours as typical of male and female sex roles and in Brim's study each teacher rating was classified according to the extent to which it pertained to the instrumental or expressive category. Thus 'tenacity' and 'competitiveness' are rated as instrumental, while 'responds to sympathy and approval from adults' and 'cheerfulness' are predominantly expressive.

The results indicated that in cross-sex dyads there is an assimilation of the sex linked characteristics of the sibling, particularly marked for the younger sibling. Brim suggests that one of the factors that influences the degree of sex role assimilation by siblings is the extent to which parents assist children in differentiating their sex roles. If it is the policy of the parents to minimize sex role differences, then we would expect even greater sex role assimilation in these families than in families in which sex role differences are sharply accentuated. The possibility that families vary in their attitude to sex role differences is taken up and considered in more detail in Chapter 7.

These findings are restricted to two-child families and in larger families other factors may come into play. In three or four-child families parents may actively assist the solitary-sex child in differentiating sex roles, or in a four-child family consisting of two children of each sex, the same siblings may pair off by sex, thus minimizing cross-sex effects.

The assimilation of cross-sex characteristics by children in opposite sex family groups (and the reinforcement of sex characteristics in same-sex dyads) suggests that children will vary in their attitude to their siblings depending on the sex of that sibling. There is empirical evidence that this is the case from the work of Bowerman and Dobash (1974), Cahn (1952), Koch (1955, 1956, 1960), Bigner (1971).

Girls, and to a lesser extent boys with female siblings, may show more concern about family relationships and sibling relationships than boys. Boys (and siblings who assimilate the more masculine and aggressive traits of boys) may reveal a more negative picture of the sibling relationship. These effects may vary further with ordinal position variations and age-spacing.

Summary

1. Empirically, there is evidence that sex of subject and sex of sibling have significant effects on (a) reported affect towards siblings; (b) power and influence tactics siblings use in interaction with each other; (c) various personality and cognitive traits; (d) measures of masculinity and femininity as assessed on an instrumental-expressive axis.

2. Theoretically, in line with general cultural stereotypes, boys will be expected to show more direct and overt aggression than girls (Sears, 1951; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1968) and girls will show more concern with domestic and emotional issues, i.e. boys and girls will manifest different attitudes to family life.

3. In this research, allocations made by the children on the Children's Test will show the effects of these influences. More directly aggressive subjects will have less inhibitions about allocating hostile items to their siblings. Similarly, subjects concerned with the maintenance of family harmony will allocate fewer negative and more positive items to their siblings.

4. However, sex-linked influences are not due solely to subject and sibling interactions, they are also socialized directly by the parents. These effects are not considered in this chapter but are dealt with in some detail in Chapter 7. Most of the discussion and empirical work has been restricted to two-child families; what research there is suggests that different mechanisms may be at work in larger families.

CHILDREN'S TEST RESULTS

To assess the direction and type of affect within the family, four sections of the Children's Test are considered. They are the positive items, negative, friction and comparative sections. The latter two sections are specifically geared to relate to sibling rivalry and tensions. Specifically the friction items are aimed at gauging the tensions and conflicts that arise between siblings as the inevitable outcome of spending time together, e.g. 'This person disturbs me when I am getting on with something'. The comparative items to measure jealousy; a feeling that arises between peers when one seems to be getting more than he deserves and the feeling on the part of the other that he is 'losing out', or receiving less than his fair share, e.g. 'This person can always get what they want'. In many families these two feelings are frequently confounded since the child may experience both conflict with, and jealousy of, his sibling.

Use of Nobody (total sample N = 189)

1. Positive: there are no differences between boys and girls; nor between the first and later-born in the extent to which they utilize the Nobody category on this section of the test.

2. Negative: there are no sex differences; but chi-square test indicated that the first-born were more likely to give negative items to Nobody than later-born children (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

Negative Feelings, Use of Nobody X Ordinal Position

	Use of Nobody		
	Low	High	Total
First-born	53	21	74
Later-born	95	18	113

Chi-square = 3.867 on 1 d.f.; $p = < .05$

3. Friction. As Table 5.2 reveals, there are sex differences in the use of Nobody in all family sizes except the four-child.

Table 5.2

Friction, Use of Nobody X Sex

		Use of Nobody			
Family Size	Sex	Low	High	Chi-sq.	p. <
All families	Male	53	38	7.248	.01
	female	36	60		
2-child	male	23	9	6.774	.01
	female	13	22		
3-child	male	19	19	6.624	.02
	female	11	21		
4-child	male	11	10	0.233	N/S
	female	12	17		

When first and later-born children are compared, there are differences for the total sample ($p = < .05$) but these differences are not maintained within each family size. The reason there is little difference between the first-born and later-born in this section, is possibly because the items are of a factual rather than an emotional nature, for example 'This person tries to make me look silly', or 'This person disturbs me when I am getting on with something', and as such are almost equally likely to be allocated by first as by later-born children.

4. Comparative. Table 5.3 indicates the extent of the differences between the sexes in using Nobody in the Comparative section; as in some other sections of the test, girls use Nobody more than boys. When the data is further broken down by family size, the differences are maintained only in three-child families.

Table 5.3

Comparative Use of Nobody X Sex

Family Size	Sex	Use of Nobody: Low	Use of Nobody: High	Chi-sq.	p. <
All families	male	51	40	8.022	.01
	female	34	62		
2-child	male	19	13	2.480	N/S
	female	13	22		
3-child	male	22	16	6.391	.02
	female	8	24		
4-child	male	10	11	.008	N/S
	female	13	16		

5. Ordinal position. There are differences that relate to ordinal position, first-borns using Nobody more than later-borns. When the differences are considered in different family sizes they reach significance only in the four-child family (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4

Comparative Use of Nobody X Ordinal Position

Family Size	Ord. Posn.	Use of Nobody: Low	Use of Nobody: High	Chi-sq.	p. <
All families	F-B	26	48	5.264	.02
	L-B	59	54		
2-child	F-B	14	20	.724	N/S
	L-B	18	15		
3-child	F-B	10	15	.012	N/S
	L-B	20	25		
4-child	F-B	2	13	7.423	.01
	L-B	21	14		

In sum: there are sex differences in the use of Nobody on all three negative indices, but these differences are maintained only in the three-child family on friction and comparative, and the two-child family on friction measures only. In the four-child family, there are no sex differences in the use of Nobody on these sections of the test, but in four-child families there are ordinal position differences on the comparative section. There are no ordinal position differences in two or three-child families.

That these sex and ordinal position differences are differently manifest in each family size, further reinforces the need to consider the results of the Children's Test according to size of family. What these tables suggest is that sex is an important discriminating variable in three-child families but not in the four-child family, where ordinal position is perhaps more significant.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS IN TWO-CHILD FAMILIES

Table 5.5 sets out the scores to highlight the effects of sex and ordinal position in two-child families (N = 33).

Table 5.5

Mean Scores to Sibling on Positive, Negative, Friction & Comparative

Subject	N.	Sib.	Pos.	Neg.	Fric.	Comp.
M	32	M & F	0.68***	5.0	4.0***	3.6***
F	34	M & F	1.9	4.0	2.3	2.0
I	33	M & F	1.4	4.4	2.8	2.0
II	33	M & F	1.2	4.9	3.5	2.4
M & F	26	s/sex	2.1***	4.4	2.2*	1.9
M & F	40	o/sex	0.8	5.1	3.6	2.5
M	12	M	0.8	4.9	4.1	2.8
M	20	F	0.6	5.0	4.0	2.3
F	14	F	3.2***	3.9***	1.43***	1.0*
F	20	M	0.9	5.3	3.1	2.65
I	13	s/sex	2.4**	3.7	2.1*	2.45
I	20	o/sex	0.7	4.9	3.5	2.5
II	13	s/sex	1.84	4.4	3.3	2.3
II	20	o/sex	0.85	5.3	3.65	2.45

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .02$ *** $p < .01$

Analysis: t-test (two-tailed) after chi-square "goodness of fit" test on all measures. Chi-square is significantly different on positive measures ($p < .05$), but since the t-test is robust for departures from normality (Robson, 1973), t-tests have been done on the positive scores.

Results

Reading down the table the following relationships are apparent.

1. Sex. Girls are more positive to their siblings than boys ($p < .01$). This finding echoes that of Bowerman and Dobash (1974) in which more girls than boys claimed to be closer to their siblings. Girls also score significantly less on the friction and comparative sections than boys ($p < .01$), but not significantly less on the negative section. Since the negative section is more general in its scope than the friction and comparative sections which are specifically geared to sibling inter-

actions, the reported difference is in sibling attitudes rather than a more general avoidance of negatively-tinged issues.

2. Ordinal position. There are no statistically significant differences between the scores of the first and second-born on any of the four measures. This is a rather surprising finding in that we had expected more friction items would be allocated by the second-born, since they are at the receiving end of the first-borns' bossiness and general domineering behaviour (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1968). Subsequent analysis, however, indicates that sibling status effects run counter to expected ordinal position effects in some cases (i.e. MF).

3. Same-sex Opposite sex. As expected, same-sex dyads are more positive to each other than opposite-sex dyads ($p < .01$), and report less friction ($p < .05$). This is in line with the general finding that similarity breeds liking (Byrne, 1961) and specific sibling study findings. In Bowerman and Dobash's survey (1974), subjects with same sex siblings reported themselves as closer to their siblings than did those with cross-sex siblings. In a sociometric test (Cahn, 1952) same-sex siblings reported themselves as closer to each other than opposite-sex siblings. Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg and Houston (1968), using an adapted form of the Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test, also found that same-sex siblings (male) showed more involvement of both a positive and negative nature with each other than did boys with sisters.

3(a). Same-sex Opposite sex: male. When males with sisters are compared with those with brothers, the findings of Sutton-Smith et al quoted above are not corroborated. The scores of the boys in the MM dyad do not differ in any respect from that of M_1F and FM_2.

3(b). Same-sex Opposite sex: female. The clearest differences in this table are those between girls with a brother and those with a sister. There are statistically significant differences on all four measures;

girls with sisters are more positive to their siblings ($p < .01$), reveal less negative feelings towards them ($p < .01$), less friction ($p < .01$), and show slightly less jealousy ($p < .05$), than girls with a brother. This finding is as predicted in the introduction to this section and is in line with empirical findings of Koch (1955) who reports that the two girls have harmonious relationships and as a dyad have the lowest incidence of reported quarrelling (Koch 1960). In Bowerman and Dobash's survey (1974), 75% of girls with a sister reported themselves as close to their sibling, compared with 64% of the total sample. In later life the good relationships between sisters are often maintained; Cummings and Schneider (1961), in their review of American kinship patterns, report that the sister-sister relationship is one of the most enduring, rivalling at times that between husband and wife.

Girls with a brother, by contrast, are more likely to report that their mother favours him (Chapter 4). Opposite-sex dyads are named 'creative-conflict' by Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970), because of the high incidence of both conflict and creativity in these families. Findings here are therefore consonant with previous research.

4(a). Same-sex Opposite sex: first-born. The first-born in the same-sex dyad report themselves as more positive ($p < .02$), and as experiencing less sibling friction ($p < .05$), than the first-born in an opposite-sex dyad. The differences are in the expected direction and in keeping with what has already been said about the same and opposite-sex dyads. The fact that there is no difference between the comparative scores is surprising in view of the fact that Koch (1955) found that first-born in opposite-sex dyads were particularly jealous and the mother's report (Chapter 4) shows a preference for the second-born in cross-sex dyads.

4(b). Same-sex Opposite sex: second born. There are no statistically significant differences between the younger members of the same and

cross-sex dyads on any of the measures. In her analysis, Helen Koch (1955), found that although the first-born in an opposite-sex dyad was more jealous and competitive than second-borns, in the same-sex dyad the opposite applies and the second-born is more jealous and competitive; this, she claims, is due to the greater contact of the second-born same-sex sibling with his/her older and generally more successful sibling. This possibly boosts the negative scores of second-born children in same-sex dyads, so that they are only slightly less than the scores of the second-born in the more generally conflictful opposite-sex families.

Discussion

The clearest findings in this table relate to sex of subject and sex of sibling. Girls predictably report more positive attitudes to their siblings than do boys, although whether this reflects a difference in attitude and behaviour or is simply a test factor, it is not possible to say. Since girls are probably socialized into more positive family attitudes, they may 'really' feel more positive to their siblings, and may also be more susceptible to social desirability factors when doing the Children's Test and therefore report a more glowing picture of their sibling relationships.

A factor possibly more important than sex of subject is sex of sibling, although this factor operates only on girls. Boys with a brother have scores almost identical to those of boys with a sister. For girls, however, sex of sibling is a critical factor; girls with sisters are more positive and less negative on all measures than are girls with a brother. Reverting to the introductory discussion, girls may model themselves on their brothers more than vice versa, since they see their brothers as having more direct power, possibly utilizing that power more effectively, and since their brothers appear to be favoured by their parents, especially if younger, they may copy those masculine

behaviours that seem to find favour with their parents. There is also less sanction on girls copying boys ('a tomboy') than vice versa ('effeminate' or a 'cissy'). In an experimental situation on imitative behaviour, Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) noted a 'differential readiness of boys and girls to imitate behaviour exhibited by an opposite sex model...boys show a definite preference for the masculine role, whereas ambivalence and masculine role preference are widespread among girls'. In the same experiment, where female models appeared to have high reward power and males to be recipients of that power, many children reinterpreted the power relationship to make it consonant with the wider cultural stereotype in which males have power (i.e. allocate resources) and females are the recipients of the resources.

The same tendency of girls to be more influenced by their brothers than vice versa is also found in the work of Brim (1958). Girls with a brother, both older and younger, were rated by their teachers as having more 'masculine traits' than girls with a sister. The effects are particularly marked for the younger members of the two-child family (i.e. MF_2 compared with FF_2). For boys the same effect applies but it is marked only for the younger member of the dyad (i.e. FM_2 as compared with MM_2). Similarly, Bigner (1972), in a study of sibling influences on the sex role preference of second-born children, found MM_2 to be more 'masculine' than FM_2 ($p< .001$) and FF_2 more 'feminine' than MF_2 ($p< .01$), and that in general males had more influence on their younger siblings sex role preference than did females.

The method of investigation was by use of a semi-projective test; the results of Bigner's work confirmed the general hypothesis that siblings have a marked influence on the subject's sex role preference. It is also consonant with work indicating that sex role preference is more variable for girls than for boys, and girls are therefore more susceptible to influence affecting their sex role preference.

The greater influence of boys on their female siblings is a recurrent finding in sibling studies. In terms of sibling effects, Koch (1954) found that subjects with brothers were superior to subjects with sisters on verbal meaning and quantitative tests, but findings were restricted to the two to four-year age gap. Schoonover (1959) found that siblings with brothers were better on language, literature, social science and arithmetic tests and, more generally, Altus (1966) found that more girls with older brothers attended college than girls with older sisters.

How do these influences operate in the family setting? In the sibling relationship? And in the Children's Test as a measure of the sibling relationship? In terms of the sex role assimilation hypothesis advanced previously, girls with brothers acquire more aggressive traits from them. If the allocation of a negative item to a sibling is seen as an act of aggression, albeit a minor one, then these girls will have higher negative scores. By contrast, girls with sisters, if they are more 'femininized' by each other, will reveal more concern about maintaining good sibling relationships; or at the very least of presenting an image to the interviewer that is congruent with an ideal of the 'happy family'.

If girls with brothers are less inhibited about expressing their aggression directly (i.e. in a more masculine fashion) then we would expect more overt conflict in these sibling dyads and less inhibition about expressing that animosity to the interviewer. In contrast to the all female dyad, the scores of girls with brothers will reveal a more conflictful picture of sibling relationships, a picture that approximates more to that generally given by boys. This line of inquiry is explored in more detail in the next section.

The first analysis of sibling relationships reveals no clear ordinal position effects, although the first-born in same-sex dyads appear to be more positive and experience less friction than first-born in opposite-

sex dyads. Since these effects are possibly due to concealed sex effects, which are apparently more important, discussion of ordinal position effects is deferred, until the influence of sex can be separated out.

Table 5.6

Mean Scores to Sibling on Positive, Negative, Friction and Comparative Differences according to Sex, Ordinal Position and Sex of Sibling

Subject Description				Mean Score to Sibling			
Sex	Ord. Pos.	Sib. Sex	N.	Pos.	Neg.	Fric.	Comp.
M	I	M	6	0.5***	5.0***	3.3***	2.0
F	I	F	7	3.9	2.7	1.0	1.0
M	I	F	10	0.8	4.8	3.6	2.2
F	I	M	10	0.8	5.1	3.4	2.9
M	II	M	6	1.2	4.8	4.8**	3.7***
F	II	F	7	2.4	4.0	1.9	1.0
M	II	F	10	0.4	5.2	4.4	2.5
F	II	M	10	1.3	5.2	2.9	2.4

** $p < .02$ (two-tailed) *** $p < .01$

Ordinal Position effects in same and cross-sex dyads

1. The table makes it clear that the first-born girl with a younger sister (F_1F) is more positive than any other first-born child, indicating that the difference in Table 5.5 between first-born in same and opposite-sex dyads was almost entirely due to the contribution of this girl. The score of M_1M is almost identical to that of the first-born in the opposite-sex dyads.

There are sharp differences on three of the four measures; the exception is the comparative score where the difference between means is not significant. There are two possible explanations of this rather low score: a study by Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1965) of sex role identification and anxiety, found that M_1M was above average in

levels of anxiety at age six and eleven, and is the most conforming of males. His anxiety and conformity suggest that when confronted with a touchy subject his reaction may be defensive, hence the low comparative score. Alternatively, there are certain reasons for believing that M_1M does not experience the jealousy often attributed to the first-born. In Koch's work (1955) he has a low jealousy rating (lower than all other first-borns), and Rothbart (1971) reports that in an experimental situation the mother is more positive to him than to his younger brother. She argues that the first-born male has a special place in his mother's affections and is not easily displaced by a younger same-sex sibling. Moving ahead a little, there is some indication that the latter explanation is more plausible, since MM_2 has the highest comparative score of all children in two-child families.

2. When the elder members of the opposite-sex dyads are compared, i.e. M_1F and F_1M, the scores are very similar in every respect, and moreover very close to the score of the first-born male with a younger brother (M_1M). This further endorses the finding that the effect of a brother is to move the score of F_1M so that it is indistinguishable from that of the first-born boys (i.e. to 'masculinize' it).

3. Of the second-born, the boy in the same-sex dyad (MM_2) has a score significantly different from that of the girl in the same-sex dyad on two counts, friction ($p< .02$) and comparative ($p< .01$). This is in line with all that has been said about the comparative harmony of the two-girl family, and the competitiveness and quarrelsomeness of the two-boy sibling group.

On the friction count, both first-borns are said to be bossy and to use direct power tactics (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1968) and as such are likely to be given high friction allocations by their younger siblings. However, the frequency with which such tactics are employed

may vary with sex and first-born boys may use them more with their siblings than first-born girls. Other evidence supports the notion that the amount of aggression actually employed by first-born boys and girls to their younger same-sex siblings, may vary (Sears, 1951). It can be argued that the younger boy with an older brother, who is likely to be more aggressive and assertive, will resist his power attempts and conflict ensues. This dyad has the highest incidence of quarrelling (Koch, 1960). By contrast the two-girl family has the lowest quarrelling score, suggesting that the first-born girl may seldom resort to direct power attempts, or that her power attempts are complied with.

The other area of difference is the comparative or jealousy score. Koch (1955) found that first-borns in opposite-sex dyads were more likely to be rated as jealous by the teachers than the second-borns, but in the same-sex dyads the relationship was reversed and the second-born was more likely to be rated as jealous. Work by Rothbart (1971) suggests that this may vary according to the sex of the children. In an experimental setting, in which mothers and their first and second-born children were involved in problem-solving situations, mothers showed more 'intrusiveness' with first-borns than with second-born children (aged five-years), with differences according to the sex of the first-born. Mothers were 'supportive and cautious in directing their boys but more demanding, exacting and intrusive towards their first-born girls'. Rothbart's explanation has psychoanalytic overtones; she suggests that the Oedipal link between mother and first-born son, makes her temper her pressure on this boy but for the first-born girls no such tempering exists. This may mean that the second-born boy with an older brother (MM_2) has fewer expressions of approval from his mother. Sears et al (1957) report that mother is colder towards the second-born boy, if she already has a son. By contrast, the second-born girl with an older sister does not experience the rivalry

her mother is reported to feel towards her older sister (Rothbart, 1967, quoted Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1970). Further, Koch (1955) reported that her mother favours her whilst her father is closer to her older sister.

4. Junior members of opposite sex dyads differ only on their friction score ($p < .05$, one-tailed direction predicted) where FM_2 has a higher score than MF_2. F_1M is characterized by Koch (1955) as aggressive and assertive and she probably takes up a mother-surrogate role vis à vis her younger brother, and is bossy and domineering. He probably resents this (as a male) and directly confronts her using similar power tactics and since he has a good chance of overthrowing her, probably the best of all second-borns, the confrontation is acrid and prolonged.[1] In Koch's work (1960), this boy has the highest quarrelling score. In terms of the model outlined in the introduction, where sex and ordinal position are bases for sibling power, this dyad is unstable; she has ordinal-position power and he the power associated with sex, so the power struggle may be protracted. In the other opposite-sex dyad, the two criteria are consonant; the older boy has more power, and hence the friction score is low since the power relationship is stable.

Table 5.7 holds sex and ordinal position constant, and compares the effects of like and opposite-sex siblings, on sibling affect.

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[1] These statements are subject to modification depending on age-spacing and differences in personality. A very strong first-born girl may easily resist the challenge of the younger boy, and similarly a younger sibling with a very strong personality may easily overcome the age-based power of the first-born.

Table 5.7

Mean Scores to Same and Opposite Sex Sibling

on Positive, Negative, Friction and Comparative

Subject				Mean Score to Sibling			
Sex	Ord. Pos.	Sib. sex	N.	Pos.	Neg.	Fric.	Comp.
M	I	M	6	0.5	5.0	3.3	2.0
M	I	F	10	0.8	4.8	3.6	2.2
F	I	F	8	3.9**	2.75**	1.0**	1.0**
F	I	M	10	0.6	5.1	3.4	2.9
M	II	M	6	1.2	4.8	4.8	3.7
M	II	F	10	0.4	5.2	4.4	2.5
F	II	F	7	2.4	4.0	1.9	1.0
F	II	M	10	1.3	5.2	2.9	2.4

** $p < .02$ (two-tailed)

1. First-born boys appear to be unaffected in their attitudes to their sibling by the sex of that sibling.

2. First-born girls, however, are strongly affected by the sex of their younger sibling, and there are significant differences on every sibling-related measure.

3. There are no significant differences between second-born males in their attitudes to their older sibling. One score of interest is the comparative score, where the younger brother of a brother appears to be more jealous: this level of difference might possibly be significant in larger samples.

4. Second-born girls with brothers are less positive and more generally negative to them, but the differences do not reach the necessary level of significance. These sample sizes are very low and it is possible that the differences may prove significant with a larger population.

Note that second-born boys score higher than any other group on the friction measures, indicating that they react more to the domination attempts of their older siblings as suggested in the introductory section.

In the following table, the scores of each dyad are considered:

Table 5.8

Mean Score to Sibling on Positive, Negative, Friction and Comparative in each Dyad

Sex	Ord. Pos.	Sib. Sex	N.	Pos.	Neg.	Fric.	Comp.
M	I	M	6	0.5	5.0	3.3	2.0*
M	II	M	6	1.2	4.8	4.8	3.7
M	I	F	10	0.8	4.8	3.6	2.2
F	II	M	10	1.3	5.2	2.9	2.4
F	I	F	8	3.9	2.75	1.0	1.0
F	II	F	7	2.4	4.0	1.9	1.0
F	I	M	10	0.6	5.1	3.4	2.9
M	II	F	10	0.4	5.2	4.4	2.5

* $p < .05$

1. The only significant difference in the score of children within the same dyads is that between the elder and younger brother in the all-male dyad, where the comparative score of the younger boy is significantly higher. Incidentally, this boy is also more positive and shows more friction, suggesting that he might have an overall greater involvement with his brother than vice-versa.

2. The scores in the older boy/younger girl dyad are generally similar; she is slightly more positive to him and he is the only one of the first-borns whose friction score is higher than that of the younger sibling.[1]

3. The two-girl family has the highest positive scores, and the lowest scores on all other measures. The first-born girl most markedly so.

4. There are three factors of interest in the score of the FM dyad: one, the positive and negative scores are almost identical, suggesting a general similarity of sibling attitudes; two, he, along with the other second-born boy feels strongly the interference of an older sibling as indicated by high friction allocation; and, three, the girl has the second highest comparative score, suggesting that she is jealous of her younger brother, who is her mother's favourite (Chapter 4).

[1] If subjects are ranked according to the frequency with which they report that their sibling is victorious in a quarrel, the distribution is: FF_2, MF_2, M_1F, FM_2, M_1M, MF_2, F_1M, F_1F (Koch, 1960). M_1F is the only first-born who does not seem to be able to get the better of his sibling, a result in exact agreement with his friction score on this test.

These scores are test representations of sibling attitudes. Three of the four measures can be considered as negative or hostile in nature and as such their allocation might be considered as an aggressive act. Therefore, where the inhibitions on aggression are higher we would expect that the scores on these three measures would be lower. Similarly, they are concerned with family and emotional relationships, and as such they might elicit a different response set from girls and boys because of their differential socialization in this area.

Both these test factors may well have a corollary in the real situation; a taboo or inhibition on aggression may operate both in the test context and extrapolating beyond this into the home. Likewise a more positively biassed response on this test, may reflect a strong concern to create good relationships in the family setting. In respect of aggression, we would expect differences between the first and later-born (Sears, 1951; Goodenough & Leahy, 1927), and between boys and girls (Sears, 1951). In terms of family concern, girls would be expected to be more affected. Both sex and ordinal position effects are further modified by sex of sibling.

The influence of sex, ordinal position and sex of sibling on the sibling affect are considered in more detail in the next section of the chapter.

I FIRST-BORN GIRLS

Sears (1951), in a study of aggression in children, found that first-born girls showed hardly any aggression at all and that all boys manifest more aggression than the girls, indicating that the responses are sex-typed. It might be argued that the doll play setting, with its close resemblance to the domestic setting, inhibits the expression of direct aggression in girls, and that in another setting girls might

manifest more direct aggression. The definition of aggression as purely physical (hitting) or perhaps crude verbal attacks, may minimize the amount of female aggression. If aggression is defined as an act intended to hurt or injure another in some way, then its manifestations will be many and varied. Girls, with their superior verbal abilities during childhood and their greater social (and emotional?) competency, may give vent to their aggression through more covert and insidious means. Means that are dependent on knowing the adversaries' weak spot, and capitalizing on that knowledge. In this sense teasing and making fun of another may be more hurtful than physical aggression. It may also be more successful, when utilized between brother and sister, since there may be a taboo imposed by the parents on the boy hitting the girl and so the boy's means of retaliation are restricted.

Similarly girls may solicit the help of others in aggressing, that is, they may call in parents, teachers or other sympathetic adults to fight their battles for them ('He hit me'; 'he took my book'; meaning 'Now you punish him'.) The very devious may even provoke a quarrel and instigate an attack so as to invoke the wrath of the adult avenger! On a less insidious level, and a similar theme, girls show more 'pro-social aggression' than boys. They are more inclined to invoke the rules being broken and the punishment attached.

Since statements about aggression in children are often referring to physical aggression, which is usually the only type of aggression visible to the outsider, sex differences in this respect should be treated with some reservations.

It is apparent from the research here that it is only first-born girls with sisters who show very little sibling-directed aggression; first-born girls with younger brothers have similar scores to first-born boys. Sex of sibling is therefore of critical importance in determining the attitude of the first-born girl to her sibling; it is more

important to first-born girls than to any other children in two-child families.

If first-born girls are more positive and less hostile to their siblings when female, what are the precise factors that lie behind this result? In all respects except sex of sibling the girl with a brother and the girl with a younger sister are the same. As first-born females, both will have been subject to similar regimen from their parents. Both will have experienced more restrictions on aggression than later-born children and than boys. As first-borns they are both equally likely to be parent-oriented and dependent and as girls they will have been socialized into typical female concerns of family and domestic issues. Research also indicates that until the age of ten or so the sex preference of girls is more variable than that of boys (i.e. in their pre-teen years girls are more likely to show preference for masculine activities and concerns - a cross-sex preference. Boys, by contrast, show own-sex preference very early and are constant in that preference.*) and girls are therefore more susceptible to the influence of male models than vice versa.

As first-borns, both are usually displaced, but most importantly, they are displaced in one case by a male sibling and in the other by a female sibling. This difference has a critical effect, both on their attitude to that sibling and in terms of their general development.

A. First-born girls with a younger male sibling (F_1M)

If the second child is a brother, he belongs to a sex with a higher status in society; he is favoured by their mother; he is encouraged to display a different repertoire of behaviour to his older sister, a repertoire that seems to be more effective in achieving its ends. Since he has potentially higher power (in society) and more real power vis à vis their mother, and his overt expression of aggression may be intrinsically more attractive, he provides a model well worth emulating.

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* Bigner, 1972

Hence the indications in the test that she matches his masculine aggression and has a score that is almost identical to the first-born males in the sample.

In Koch's work (1955), this girl appears to be very stimulated by her younger male sibling and scores very high on teacher-rated positive characteristics. She is said to be enthusiastic, curious, cheerful, ambitious and tenacious. She also scores high on negative characteristics, such as jealousy, competitiveness, quarrelling and aggression. In projective tests she shows a preoccupation with the mother-child relationship and believes that her mother favours her younger brother; she is also reported to quarrel with him a great deal. Koch's finding with regard to the relationship between these children is confirmed in the reports of the girl. She is correct in believing that her mother favours her younger brother and, as a result, has a relatively high jealousy score (the second highest). Since she appears to be jealous of his favoured position in the family (and possibly his favoured position in society), has ordinal position power, and a masculine model for direct expression of aggression, she is likely to make her feelings apparent through direct power attempts over him. As a male in a favoured position, it is very likely that he will retaliate, hence the conflict in this dyad (Koch, 1960).

B. First-born girls with a younger female sibling (F_1F)

If the second-born child is a girl, then she has no special advantage because of sex. The elder child's superiority as elder is therefore confirmed. As a first-born girl she may be drawn into a mothering role (Koch, 1955; Cicirelli, 1976), an activity which further reinforces her higher status and aligns her with her powerful parents. Since her sister will also be socialized into domestic and emotional concerns, a surface harmony may become the norm between these two girls. The

first-born girl is more likely to be bossy and more directive, but unlike the younger brother, the younger sister is more likely to comply with the power attempts, although some signs of the incipient rebellion may be seen in the less positive and more negative allocations of this girl compared with her older sister.

The second-born girl is reported by some researchers to be favoured by their mother (Koch, 1955; Rothbart, 1967), and there is a weak (non-significant) indication of this in the mother's report. If she is displaced in her mother's favour, F_1F is not displaced from her higher status in the sibling position. She is the girl most likely to be victorious in any quarrels (Koch, 1960), and as a first-born daughter imbued with a sense of responsibility (Bossard & Boll, 1954). Any jealousy she feels is likely to be concealed since this girl curbs her aggression and has a high identification with her mother and therefore with her mother's family and domestic concerns.

Age-gap and differences in personality and ability may modify or completely alter these general schema.

II FIRST-BORN BOYS

First-born boys in many senses have the same experiences as first-born girls and develop some of the same personality traits. They are subject to the parenting of new parents, generally made anxious by this situation and are more parent-oriented and dependent as a result.

As first-borns their aggression is more curtailed although as boys they are probably allowed to give vent to their aggression more openly than are girls. As first-born males they are likely to have a high status both in their families and to a slight extent in the society as a whole.

C. First-born boys with a younger brother (M_1M)

At six, this boy is characterized by Koch (1955) as competitive, quarrelsome, teasing and insistent on his rights. He also alleges that his mother favours his younger brother. Rothbart's work suggests that although his mother shows signs of 'anxious intrusiveness' towards him in a problem-solving situation, she is less critical of him than is the mother of a first-born girl. And she further suggests that the mother feels a special attachment to the first male child and does not easily transfer her affections to a subsequent male. Bowerman and Dobash (1974) report that M_1Ms see themselves as closer to their siblings than their siblings are to them, and with age there is a marked decrease in positive feeling between these boys.

In the maternal section of this research there is no clear evidence that the mother favours MM_2, although the high score on the comparative section given by MM_2 suggests that it is the younger and not the older brother who is jealous. These findings are in line with the speculations of Rothbart that the mother retains her closeness to the first-born and also corroborative of Bowerman and Dobash's findings that M_1M is the more positive (or less negative) to their sibling. (M_1Ms allocate fewer friction and comparative items than their brothers.) For M_1M

the advent of a new sibling is threatening only on account of any characteristics the new boy has *qua* individual. Depending on age-spacing and talent the dominance of the first-born is confirmed. If the second-born boy is closer to the mother however (and the evidence here is mixed) the more parent-oriented first-born may react by more domineering behaviour towards the younger boy, re-emphasizing his general status in response to lack of status in his mother's eyes. Sex-typed aggressive and assertive behaviour on the part of the first-born male will be matched by similar behaviour on the part of the younger brother, hence the high incidence of quarrelling among these boys.

Jealousy and envy may be twin themes in the relationship between these two boys. If the mother switches her attention from the first-born to the second-born male, then the displaced first-born may experience *jealousy* of his younger sibling, who now occupies pride of place in his mother's affections. However, two same-sex siblings almost inevitably will be compared and will compare themselves; *ceteris paribus* the older boy will have superior talents (age-related) and may flaunt these abilities. The younger boy may be *envious* of the talents of the elder and the fact that he will later acquire those same talents is of little comfort since his older brother will then have moved on to some other higher level.

In the maternal interview, the mother reports herself as slightly closer to MM_2; the difference is not statistically significant, and the difference between the scores of M_1M and MM_2 is less than between any other first and second-born. On the comparative section, MM_2 has a significantly higher score than his older brother, suggesting that perhaps he is the one who feels most jealous. This would endorse the speculations of Rothbart, that the younger brother of a brother is favoured by their mother. They do, however, run counter to Koch's findings that M_1Ms think that their mothers favour their younger sibling. In this research, M_1Ms also think that their

mothers favour MM_2, and the mother herself reports a more positive relationship with MM_2. (Neither difference is statistically significant - see Chapter 4.)

D. First-born boys with a younger sister (M_1F)

According to the hypothesis set out at the beginning of the chapter, the first-born boy with a younger sister has his status 'doubly' emphasized; both as male and as the first-born. However, the evidence from the preference section suggests that the younger girl is favoured by their mother, but this does not appear to affect the comparative score of the older boy. This is rather difficult to explain on the face of it, but it may be that the first-born male is so secure in his worldly status that the greater indulgence of the mother towards his younger sister is not seen as a sign of special privilege but as typical treatment of a girl or a younger sibling, i.e. the behaviour of the mother is not because she prefers the younger girl but because she is younger and she is a girl!

This boy has one unusual score, he allocates more items to his younger sister on the friction section than she does to him. In all other dyads it is the second-born who has the higher friction score. It is difficult to interpret this result (which is not statistically significant) but it may be that since a younger sister is less easily absorbed into the play of an older brother her presence is seen as more of an interference, than any other second-born. Where children are of the same sex, their interests and concerns are likely to be similar and they can play together quite easily; a younger brother can be more easily assimilated into the games of his older sister (e.g. 'house' or 'school') than a younger sister of a brother can be drawn into male pursuits.

In Koch's work (1960), this boy sees his sister as victorious in their quarrels more often than any other first-born. She endorses this viewpoint.

The explanation may be that he is severely restricted in the type of aggressive tactics that he can utilize towards her because of her sex. In Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg's work on sibling power (1968) this boy was not as clearly characterized as other first-borns as using high-power strategies. MF_2 by contrast, both siblings agree, is likely to scratch and pinch ($p< .001$), ask parents for help ($p< .05$), complain to parent ($p< .001$), cry, pout and sulk ($p< .01$), all of them with great effectiveness since she is more often the victor. Though whilst apparently less powerful than he (as a girl and as the younger child) she is nonetheless using her power more effectively. She can call on powerful allies (parents) because she appears to be weak, and can use physical aggression (scratching and pinching) where her older brother cannot. This is a clear vindication of the view that the more obvious types of power strategy are not necessarily the most effective.

III SECOND-BORN GIRLS

Second-born children do not have the experience of being the only child relating solely to anxious and concerned parents, and subsequently displaced by another child. As a result they are generally less parent and adult-oriented, less anxiously reared. These differences have effects on the typical personality traits of the first and later-born children.[1]

Later-born children are found to be more aggressive, possibly because the aggression of the first-born is generally directed at the

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[1] Question 21 asks the mother to describe her children and in two-child families a typical characterization is the anxious, introverted first-born and the more relaxed and extroverted second-born child. This is similar to the findings of Dean (quoted Lasko, 1954) that the first child was described as more worried, sensitive and more dependent on adults, while the second was more affectionate, independent and physically aggressive towards peers.

parents and is therefore more stringently controlled, whereas the aggression of the second-born is often aimed at the older sibling and is tolerated more by the parents.

Second-born children are confronted with two possible models whereas the first have only one. Second-born children can model themselves after both their parents and their siblings and sibling influences act more powerfully on the personality of the second-born than the first (Brim, 1958). In terms of attitude to the sibling as expressed in the Children's Test, second-born girls are more affected by the sex of their sibling although the differences are not significant[1], nor are they as marked as the differences between the first-born girls.

E. Second-born girls with an older sister (FF_2)

The girl with an older sister receives very strong feminine influences in her family, from both her mother and her elder sister. The elder sister may adopt a 'mothering' role towards her which may have a slightly 'smothering' effect. Depending on age-spacing she is drawn into her sister's orbit and may constantly play an inferior role to her older sister and this has a slightly depressing effect on the younger girl (when age-spacing is 2-4 years) (Koch, 1956).

There is a slight (but non-significant) indication that she is the favourite of her mother and this finding agrees with the American research of Rothbart (1967) and Koch (1955). Koch also reports that the father tends to favour her older sister. On these ratings she is less positive and more negative and gives more friction items than her older sister, suggesting that she is less happy with the relationship than her older sister. Although there are differences on every other measure, the comparative scores are the same, suggesting that although the younger girl is dominated more by her older sister, she has little reason to be jealous of her (since she is more indulged by their mother?).

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[1] It is possible that the differences might reach the level of statistical significance in larger samples.

F. Second-born girls with an older brother (MF_2)

This girl does not have the congruity of models as does the second-born girl with a sister. She models after both her mother and her older brother (Brim, 1958). This has a strong effect on her personality. She is rated the most interested in creative occupations of all girls in two-child families (Sutton-Smith et al, 1964), the more achieving (Altus, 1966; Douglas, 1964) than FF_2; is more often rated a 'tomboy' (Koch, 1956), and teacher-rated as quarrelsome, tenacious, competitive and popular (Koch, 1955).

These characteristics are generally assumed to be the result of assimilating some of the masculine qualities of her brother (i.e. independent, aggressive, achieving and athletic). The girl with an older brother is the most 'masculine' of all girls in two-child families at six, as rated by her teacher (Koch, 1956), and has the most 'masculine' self report of all girls at eleven and nineteen (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1965). The view of sex role development implicit in these descriptions of certain behaviours as typically masculine or feminine, stems from the notion that 'sex role development involves the acquisition of a variety of structurally differentiated repertoires throughout the development period. The modal sequence for a boy is to acquire the beginning of the affective-humanistic repertoire at his mother's knee during the first five years, the athletic-aggressive repertoire from his peers during the next ten years, and the entrepreneurial-managerial repertoire from his teachers thereafter. Analogously the girl acquires in turn the affective-humanistic, the nurturant-domestic and the feminine-glamorous repertoires.' (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1970, p.149)

Within this model the girl with an older brother appears more 'masculine' by her own rating (1965), and by her interest in entrepreneurial activities (Sutton-Smith, Roberts & Rosenberg, 1964).

As second-born in an opposite-sex dyad, she is reported to be favoured by her mother, but if she is indulged this does not apparently represent a threat to the superiority of her older brother as the first-born male. However, should she be close in age and more vigorous and challenging to her older brother, then this creates possibly the most threatening situation faced by first-borns, since this boy stands to be undermined by a younger sibling and by a girl and doubly dethroned!

IV SECOND-BORN BOYS

There is almost an inherent contradiction in the term 'second-born boy', since second-born implies low status and boy implies higher status. How this contradiction reconciles itself is dependent to a large extent on the sex of the older sibling. The fact that both second-born boys have the highest friction scores hints at the resistance they may put up against accepting their lower status in the pecking order and the 'pecking' of their older siblings. In Koch's study (1960) the two dyads with younger male siblings, i.e. MM and FM, have the two highest quarrelling scores.

G. Second-born boys with an older brother

Sears et al (1957) reported that the mother's attitude to the birth of a new child was a function of the existing family configuration. Mothers who had a boy were less enthusiastic about their pregnancy than mothers who had girls. As a consequence, mothers appeared to be less warm to their second-born sons, if they already had a boy. (The same effects are not observable for a boy who follows a girl, nor for a girl who is second-born.)

The younger brother is faced with an elder male sibling after whom he models very strongly: hence the characterization of this boy

as the most 'masculine' of boys (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1970). Since both boys are likely to have sex-linked competitive behaviours strongly developed, and depending on age-spacing, they are likely to spend more time together as same-sex siblings do, their relationship is marked by competition and quarrelling.

The greater skill of the first-born means that he is likely to be the more successful member of the pair, in terms of physical and mental competency (depending on age-spacing and individual abilities). His more domineering behaviour elicits a high friction score from MM_2 and the possibility that he is closer to their mother elicits a high comparative score from MM_2. (The only one that is significantly different from his siblings' comparative score.) We have already suggested that since the evidence on maternal preference is mixed, both in this research and elsewhere, this score might represent a measure of envy on the part of the younger boy rather than jealousy, or possibly an amalgam of the two feelings.

H. Second-born boys with an older sister (FM_2)

This boy had the highest preference score from the mother and his sister has the second highest jealousy score. All of the characterizations of the boy with an older sister suggest that he is spoiled and indulged by his mother. This has rather negative effects on his personality. In Koch's research he is said to be quarrelsome, exhibitionistic, withdrawn and depressive (1955), compared to boys with older brother he is less achieving.

This boy has a very close relationship with his mother who indicates that she is rather indulgent of him; as a male he is inclined to resent the attempts at domination by his older and jealous sister, and meets her aggression with equally forthright responses. Therefore they are inclined to quarrel rather a lot. Compared to the boy with an older

brother he gives a low comparative score to his sister. This endorses the view presented by the mother and sister that he is the favoured child in the family.

This is an interesting dyad, in that the apparently less favoured position of the older girl vis à vis her mother has beneficial effects on the development of this girl, who on Koch's ratings at six scored highest on all positive characteristics (also on jealousy and competitiveness). For the younger boy, however, the reverse seems to apply. His favoured position in the family encourages in him the development of characteristics ill-suited to the world of school and childhood.

> 'FM$_2$ is characterized as withdrawn and depressive rather than outgoing and enthusiastic.... He is rated as low on gregariousness and friendliness and yet is seen as quarrelsome, exhibitionistic, selfish and uncooperative with his peers, as well as given to teasing. He is rated as a cissy, not tenacious, not ambitious, not competitive and not insistent on his rights.' (Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg, 1970, p.147)

The favoured position of this boy seems to foster a strong sense of self-esteem in these boys according to Rosenberg (1965), who goes on to hypothesize that such is the self-esteem that parental warmth fosters in him, that he is relatively impervious to the usual desires for social participation, leadership and academic success.

These images of two-child sibling groups are necessarily oversimplified: but taking the introductory hypotheses concerning age and sex-linked power, the results of the maternal preference section, and empirical evidence from various other sources on sibling affect and power, they offer plausible interpretations of the sibling interactions within two-child families. One important structural variable has not been considered in any detailed way, and that is the precise effects

of age-spacing, although its possible significance has been indicated at several points in the discussion. The other set of variables are impossible to include in such an analysis since they relate to individual variations within the families; variations in talent, special status both within and outside the home, special links and relationships within the family, etc. These individual variations may upset, modify, or reverse the tendencies outlined previously. The significance of the upset can be predicted in some cases, as in the case of the older boy and younger girl, where the threat possibly posed by a younger female sibling can be seen in terms of the model as doubly threatening to the position of the older boy.

Many of the relationships between siblings have been related to the effects of sex role assimilation between siblings. The extent of sex role assimilation in itself is a variable and one of the factors influencing the degree of sex role assimilation is the emphasis laid by parents on sex roles and their discrimination. If parents assist children in determining what is appropriate sex-linked behaviour, then the amount of sex role assimilation will be limited. A great deal of space has been given to two-child family relationships because of the significant amount of research among two-child families which has to be matched with the results here. The increase in family size from two to three-child families complicates the picture enormously and introduces a whole new set of variables and with four children the picture is complicated even further.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS IN THREE-CHILD FAMILIES

In three-child families there are different structural pressures operating in the sibling group. The possibility of cross-generational matching - one parent to one child - is ruled out, because this leaves one child out in the cold. Within the sibling group, there will be two children of like sex and one child of opposite sex. Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith (1964) have shown how sex role identification is affected by family size and sibling constellation. In the two-child family, children assimilate some of the sex-linked role characteristics of their sibling (Koch, 1955, 1956; Brim, 1958, Rosenberg & Sutton-Smith, 1964, Bigner, 1972), so that the boy with a sister scores higher on clinical measures of femininity than does the boy with a brother. In the three-child family, however, the pattern is reversed; the boy with two sisters does not show increased femininity, but increased masculinity. This the authors refer to as 'counteractive phenomena' and suggest that boys with too much feminine influence within the family, resist the assimilation of feminine characteristics and counteract it in some way. They conclude, 'that increasing the siblings beyond the two-child family dramatically alters the family structure and the contribution of ordinal position to personality development' (Rosenberg & Sutton-Smith, 1964, p.318).

Simmel (1950) pointed out that there are special characteristics to the triad, and it is often likely to devolve into two against one. Caplow (1968), in a study of 50 three-child families, found that in 23 of the families all three of the children agreed that there was a sibling coalition. In 21 of these coalitions the siblings were of the same sex and often close in age. Caplow concludes that siblings team up on the basis of likeness and similarity, the most common basis being sex.

Within the three-child family there are three possible and recognized ordinal positions, each with its special advantages. The eldest generally have the superior status of being the first and most competent members of the sibling group. They may often be given special responsibilities to care for and oversee the younger children in loco parentis. This delegated power and their greater general ability reinforces the stature of the first-born. The youngest child in a three-child family is often regarded as the 'baby' of the family and is indulged (Sears et al, 1957; Lasko, 1954). In Chapter 4 the special regard that the mother has for the youngest was clearly demonstrated and was also recognized by the other children. The middle child may have a rather difficult position unless he/she can successfully challenge the eldest for supremacy in the sibling group. Most of the research relating to the middle child has negative connotations. In some families the middle child may occupy a special position because of sex difference and there is some evidence that the father may take a special interest in the single-sex child (see Chapter 4). By sheer dint of personality, others may overcome the difficulties endemic in their ordinal position.

In the work of Sears et al (1957) the middle child had more household chores to do and even when family size was held constant this relationship persists. He was praised less often for good behaviour compared with the youngest child. The mother also reported that the middle and youngest quarrelled with their siblings more. She placed more restrictions on the aggression of the middle and youngest child towards their siblings, and she was more tolerant of sibling-directed aggression in the eldest child.

Table 5.9

Scores on Positive, Negative, Friction and Comparative by Sex and Ordinal Position

Subject			Mean Score to Sibling			
Sex	Ord. Pos.	N.	Pos.	Neg.	Fric.	Comp.
M	All	38	2.8	5.5	4.5*	3.4***
F	All	32	2.9	6.0	3.5	2.2
-	I	25	2.8	5.0*	3.9	2.3
-	II	27	2.7	6.0	3.9	3.5**
-	III	18	2.9	6.2	4.8*	2.6
M	I	14	2.6	4.9	4.2	3.0
M	II	15	2.9	6.0	4.1	3.8
M	III	9	2.8	5.5	5.2*	3.3
F	I	11	3.1	5.1	2.5**	1.5
F	II	12	2.6	5.9	3.7	3.2**
F	III	9	2.9	7.0*	4.4	1.9

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .02$ *** $p < .01$

Table 5.9 sets out the results on four measures for children in three-child families. Analysis is t-test (two-tailed) on adjacent pairs after chi-square 'goodness of fit'.

1. Sex. Boys show more friction towards their siblings ($p < .05$) and express more jealousy ($p < .01$) than do girls. This is in line with the results from two-child families which revealed a more positive attitude to siblings among girls than among boys.

2. Ordinal Position. There are no ordinal position differences on the positive measures, the mean scores are practically identical. On the negative score the more inhibited first-born score less than do both younger siblings ($p < .05$), which is in agreement with evidence given so far on the greater inhibition of the first-born. The score of the third-born on friction measures is interesting, since it reveals the disadvantages of being the youngest. As the youngest and most vulnerable member of the sibling group this child is probably subject

to the domination and power attempts of older siblings and the reaction to this is reflected in a high friction score. Being at the bottom of the sibling pecking order can be a rather uncomfortable position, for the youngest probably has to put up with a certain amount of ordering about and bossing by the older children. So, if the position of youngest has its advantages vis à vis the mother, it has certain disadvantages vis à vis older siblings. That the third child is favoured by his mother and, therefore, not likely to be jealous, can be seen in the comparative scores of the three ordinal positions. The youngest and the first have similar scores, both significantly different from the middle child ($p < .02$).

The difficulties faced by the middle child have already been sketched and in Chapter 4 the mother reported that the middle-born were more likely than any other position to be 'difficult'. There is only a little research that is concerned with the middle child, but most of it has negative associations. They show more negative attention getting (Gewirtz, 1948), are most changeable (Brock & Becker, 1965), are less often given affectionate nicknames by their parents (Clausen, 1966), and are least popular (Sells & Roff, 1963).

It is not possible to say of whom the middle child is most likely to be jealous, and it may indeed be a mixture of two feelings, both measured by the comparative section: a feeling of envy of the superior advantages and skills of the first-born and jealousy of the special relationship between the mother and the youngest. The direction of feelings is considered in Tables 5.10 and 5.11

3(a) Sex - Ordinal Position. The scores of boys in different ordinal positions show no differences on comparative scores; the middle-born child has the highest score but the difference is not significant. All three boys have quite a high comparative score and no one ordinal

position stands out. On friction the weaker position of the youngest is again apparent ($p < .05$). Boys who are youngest in a family of three may experience and report greater friction with their siblings than youngest girls, because they may resist the attempts to dominate them by their older siblings; third-born girls may be more amenable in this respect.

3(b) Among the girls the third child is more negative than the other two ordinal positions ($p < .05$), the first child reveals less friction ($p < .02$), and the middle-born child appears as the most jealous ($p < .02$). The difficulty that exists with the interpretation of these results lies in the fact that the sibling constellation of each ordinal position occupant is unknown. Some of these results can be understood without knowledge of the sibling group to which the child belongs; for example, the first-born girl probably experiences less friction because by virtue of her sex and ordinal position she is likely to take on a proxy maternal role towards her younger siblings (Cicirelli, 1976). She may elicit a high friction score in others but she herself is unlikely to be in direct conflict with her younger siblings. Why should the middle girl be more jealous (relative to other girls) than the middle boy? The intermediary variable may be the sibling composition of the families of these girls. Six of the twelve middle-born girls are 'sandwiched' between two boys, whereas only three of the fifteen middle boys are in the equivalent position. If sibling constellation is the relevant factor in explaining the difficult position of the middle-born girl, far larger samples will be required for the careful elaboration of the principles at work in three-child families. Why are girls apparently affected more than boys? Do middle-born boys have more success at challenging their older siblings for their supremacy of position? Is this particularly true if the first-born is female?

To indicate, although weakly, some of the possible effects of sibling constellation, Table 5.10 and 5.11 set out the scores given by boys and girls in each ordinal position to male and female siblings. The cell sizes are in many cases too small for statistical analysis and all statements are therefore tentative.

Table 5.10

Allocations of Friction and Comparative Items to Siblings

Three-Child Families

MALES

Subject	N.	Sibling: Ord. Pos.	Sex	N.	Friction		Comp.
I	(14)	II	M	(7)	2.6	3.0	2.1
			F	(7)		2.1	1.0
		III	M	(5)	1.7	1.9	1.6
			F	(9)		1.4	1.6
II	(15)	I	M	(9)	2.6	2.7	1.9
			F	(6)		2.5	1.7
		III	M	(7)	1.5	1.4	1.3
			F	(8)		1.6	2.6
III	(9)	I	M	(6)	3.2	3.5	1.8
			F	(3)		2.7	2.0
		II	M	(4)	2.0	2.2	3.2
			F	(5)		1.8	0.2

1. For the first-born male, the second-born elicits more friction than the youngest, and a second-born male more than the second female. As a general rule it would be expected that the siblings who are closest to each other in age would report more friction with each other, since they are probably more often in contact with each other. For the same reason conflict between same-sex siblings should therefore be higher. (This is the case for males but as Table 5.11 reveals, not for females.) In two-child families, the first-born males report equal friction with both younger male siblings and younger female siblings, and M_1F is more irritated by his younger sister than she is by him. (An unusual report for first-born children.) In three-child families, a second-born female sibling seems to be less irksome to her older brother than a second-born male; the addition of a third child seems to lessen the powers of the second-born girl to irritate her older brother. Perhaps with the addition of a baby to the family the second girl is encouraged to deflect her attentions from her older brother and to take up a maternal role vis à vis the new baby. The second-born male also elicits a high comparative score, reinforcing the report of the mother (see Chapter 4) that where the first and second are of the same sex the first is more likely to be thought 'difficult', or jealous.

2. The second-born boy also gives a higher friction score to the more powerful first-born, but unlike the first-born does not appear to differentiate between male and female first-born siblings. This result is remarkably similar to the two-child family patterns: boys in the second-born position allocate higher friction scores to their older sibling, regardless of the sex of that sibling. For the second-born boy the domination of an older sibling is irksome, whatever the sex of that sibling. For the first-born boy (in the three-child family) only a second-born male sibling is a real threat. On the comparative side, the most marked score is that to third-born girls; it is possible

that if the second-born male is in turn displaced by a younger opposite-sex siblings, he reacts as the first-born in two-child families reacts when displaced by an opposite-sex sibling and scores higher on jealousy.

3. The third-born boys give the highest friction scores to their siblings, again a reaction to their lowly position in the pecking order. Like the first-born males they also react more vigorously to a male than to a female sibling on friction counts. On the comparative measure the second-born male gets the highest score from the youngest, but since there are only four boys in this category, the statement is very tentatively made.

The allocations made by girls to their siblings are set out in Table 5.11, and in some respects parallel those of the boys. (see Table over page)

1. For the first-born girls as for boys, there is more friction experienced with the second-born. However, same-sex second-born siblings do not elicit more friction for girls, but a male sibling elicits more friction from all girls in three-child families.[1] Similarly, in the two-child families, the girl with a younger brother (F_1M) has the highest friction score of all girls. It is frequently reported in sibling studies that male siblings appear to be more stimulating than female siblings, and if the friction items are a measure of daily tensions between siblings, there seem to be more conflicts between children and their male siblings than between children and their female siblings.

2. For the second-born girls, the high friction score given to them by the first-born is reciprocated. The comparative allocations are distributed more or less equally among both first and third-child, which makes it difficult to interpret the high comparative score of the middle girl. To elucidate this result further, would require some insight

[1] The second-born is an exception, giving more friction items to younger sisters.

into the effects of sibling status on these middle-born girls. The sample sizes here are too small to afford such an insight.

Table 5.11

Allocations of Friction and Comparative Items to Siblings

Three-Child Families

FEMALES

Subject	N.	Sibling: Ord. Pos.	Sex	N.	Friction			Comp.
I	(11)	II	M	(6)	1.7	2.0	1.0	1.2
			F	(5)		1.4		0.8
		III	M	(6)	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.3
			F	(5)		0.6		1.0
II	(12)	I	M	(7)	2.3	2.7	1.3	1.4
			F	(5)		1.8		1.2
		III	M	(9)	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.8
			F	(3)		2.3		1.6
III	(9)	I	M	(5)	1.4	1.6	0.3	0.4
			F	(4)		1.2		0.3
		II	M	(6)	3.0	3.5	1.5	1.8
			F	(3)		2.0		1.0

3. The third-born girl reacts most strongly on both counts to the second-born boy, to whom she gives a high friction and a quite high comparative score. Since the comparison group of second-born females consists of only three children, the likelihood that this finding will have more general applicability is dubious.

Summary

Although the results are very tentative, the direction of the allocation of friction and comparative items suggests: (1) with exceptions, a male sibling seems to attract more friction items than a female sibling; (2) the clearest exception (and this is found also in two-child families) is that of the second-born boy, who does not seem to differentiate between a male and a female sibling and allocates equal friction items to them.

Although the middle-child appears to be more jealous, especially the middle-born girl, the direction of her allocations does not hint at the forces behind this feeling. The comparative items go equally to the first and third child. This is most probably because the relevant consideration must be the total family constellation. The relationship, for example, of a first-born boy to his younger brother will probably vary considerably depending on whether that second brother is followed by a sister or by another brother. On a similar theme, Rosenberg & Sutton-Smith (1964) found that anxiety in children was closely related to their position in different sibling compositions. Thus a boy with one younger brother is high in anxiety, but with two younger brothers is low in anxiety. A boy with one younger sister is low in anxiety, but with two younger sisters he becomes high on anxiety. Similar findings are reported for girls. Because of the low cell frequencies in this research, it is not possible to compare the position of children in the same ordinal position and of the same sex, in families of different types.

The data presented here show three characteristic patterns for each ordinal position. The first-born has low negative scores, a finding in keeping with the more controlled and inhibited picture of the first child. The second, particularly the second-born girl, scores highest on the comparative section of the test. This is in agreement with

the report of the mother that this child is more difficult

and also matches other evidence indicating that the position of the middle-born child generally has rather more disadvantages than advantages. In Chapter 3 the clear statement that the youngest was the mother's favourite was made. In this chapter we can see that although the youngest may stand in a privileged position in relation to the mother, in the sibling group he may have a rather lowly position and become butt of many power attempts by the other two children. Third-born boys, in particular, seem to react against this domination.

Looking more closely at the direction of the friction and comparative allocations, it appears that the first and second-born are more likely to report conflict with each other than with the third, and that for almost all children a male sibling is more likely to elicit a friction reaction than a female sibling. The failure to find clear trends to explain the high comparative score of the middle girl suggests that sibling constellation might be the relevant intervening variable.

SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS IN FOUR-CHILD FAMILIES

If a little is known about family relationships in three-child families, nothing seems to be known about the structure of relationships in the four-child family. Sometimes, second, third and fourth child are grouped together under the rubric 'later born'; sometimes second and third are lumped together under the classification 'intermediate', both categories probably concealing more than they reveal. Two separate strands of evidence to date suggest that the four-child family differs fundamentally from smaller families. On the use of Nobody, distinctions that applied in the two and three-child family failed to reach significance in the four-child family. These are mostly differences relating to sex. The second piece of evidence comes

from the report on maternal preference, where there were no patterns of favouritism evident in the four-child family.

The two-child family may be differentiated on the basis of sex and age/ordinal position. In the three-child family there is a clear ordinal position distinction that the mother makes relevant, and possibly for the father a sex distinction. The suggestion has already been made, that the increase in family size from three to four may signal a radical change in the structure of relationships within the family; the essence of the shift being a change from role or status-based differentiation to a more individualized differentiation, on the lines set out by Bossard & Boll (1955) in their study of personality roles in the large family. Although Bossard & Boll confined themselves to studying families of six or more children, the family of four may embody some of the same trends.

Within the four-child family there are eight kinds of male first-born child, depending on the type of family constellation he heads (and similarly eight types of second, third and youngest child). It is apparent, therefore, that to have any kind of a check on ordinal position or sibling status effects would require an extremely large sample. Within the sibling group children may have a variety of models both of their same-sex and of the opposite sex. Two girls and two boys will, all other things being equal, probably group together on the basis of sex; with three children of one sex and one 'singleton', a coalition may form between the same-sex siblings isolating the single-sex child. To create and maintain an identity, independent of sex or ordinal position, is likely to be one of the main concerns of children in larger families. Krout's (1939) concept of 'filial value' would suggest that the singleton might have a special position in such families, although there was no evidence that this was the case, in the matter of maternal favouritism.

The scores of each sex and ordinal position are set out in Table 5.12:

Table 5.12

Allocations of Friction and Comparative Items to Siblings

Four-Child Families

Sex	Ord. Pos.	N.	Mean Allocs. to Sib. Fric.	Comp.
M	All	21	5.5	3.9
F	All	29	4.6	3.7
-	I	15	4.2	2.4
-	II	14	5.3	4.0
-	III	14	5.3	4.8
-	IV	7	4.1	3.8
M	I	6	4.8	3.0
M	II	5	5.0	3.2
M	III	7	5.8	5.4
M	IV	3	3.3	2.7
F	I	9	3.8	2.0
F	II	9	5.4	4.4
F	III	7	4.7	4.3
F	IV	4	4.7	4.7

1. As on other measures on the Children's Test, there are no differences between the friction and comparative scores of boys and girls in four-child families. If the sex assimilation hypothesis holds in families of four, then the variety of models available for any child to choose from means that sharp sex differences are minimized, and unlike girls in two and three-child families, girls in four-child families are not more positive to their siblings than boys.

2. Middle-borns (i.e. second and third-born children) score slightly higher on friction than the first and the youngest. On the comparative measures the first-born has a low score, and the third-born a rather high score. The low score of the first-born contrasts with the rather similar scores of the three later-born children, suggesting that in

four-child families the first-born retains a profile similar to that of other first-borns, but later-borns are variously affected by their sibling status. In all three family sizes, the first-born share the experience of having been very close to the parents, of probably having been somewhat anxiously cared for, and then of having been displaced by a younger sibling. This tends to make the first-borns dependent and adult-oriented, developing personality traits that endure as the sibling constellation changes. So in the four-child family on such measures as Use of Nobody and Involvement with Parents, when other differences fade, the distinction between the first-born and later-born children is retained.

The highest score, that of the third-born, may be due to the fact that these are the children who have most recently been displaced. They are mostly quite young children (only seven of their younger siblings are old enough to be able to complete the test), and therefore still closely tied to their mother with only weak peer group affiliations.

3. Among the boys there is an increasing gradient of friction to the third-born and then a low score from the fourth. (Since there are only three fourth-born boys, this score is not considered.) The increase in friction with the move down the pecking order is predictable. On the comparative measures, the third-born boy has a very high score (5.4 from a possible total of 7). The reasons are probably as set out in the previous paragraph: viz. the close emotional bond that still exists towards the mother and the most recent experience of displacement.

4. Among the girls only the first-born have a characteristically low score. Among the other three ordinal positions there are no differences.

Within the four-child family the possibility of clearly defined structural roles diminishes, and other more individually-based differences come to the fore (Bossard & Boll, 1956). There is no way in this research that these differences can be captured and their clarification requires larger samples and more clinical investigations.

To a large extent, the premises behind this research assume that the relationship that children have to their parents and particularly their mother, is of fundamental importance when interpreting the relationship that they have with each other. Although this may apply to two and three-child families, it may be of far less importance in the four-child family. Here the sibling group may develop a cohesion of its own, and rivalries and jealousies in the group may exist independently of the parents and their actions. Bossard & Boll (1954) found that in interviews with members of large families (six or more children), their sense of emotional security stemmed more from their siblings than from their parents. Older siblings took on parental roles and responsibilities and were rewarded by receiving the affection that in smaller families generally goes to the parents. The family of four is not, by the standards used by Bossard & Boll, a large family, but it may contain some of the same influences and forces. Since the possibility of taking up ordinal position roles, like middle, eldest or youngest, does not exhaust all the possibilities in four-child families where there would be two middle children[1], other differences are created. These may be individually-based differences, and only the first-born

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[1] Even in the three-child family, the position of the middle child is clearly defined only in one sense - that it is between the eldest and youngest. The eldest and youngest have implicit role prescriptions in their position (be responsible; to be spoiled/indulged), but not so the middle child. The implicit role prescriptions are present in the cultural stereotypes for each ordinal position.

with his unique experience of having had his parents to himself, retains a similarity to other first-borns.

AGE-SPACING

It is clear that one of the most relevant factors in discriminating between children, is on the basis of their age. The further apart the children are in years, the greater the difference in treatment, and the less the tendency to compare with each other. Similarly, the closer the children are in age the more similarly they will be treated; twins should be treated exactly the same and any marked differences would require some kind of explanation. In a situation in which macro-differences are diminished, micro-differences between individuals may become more prominent. In this case, though twins should be treated exactly alike in theory, both the children themselves and/or their parents may strive to create differences and these micro-differences legitimize variations in their treatment. In their work on the large families, Bossard & Boll found recognizable personality types emerged in almost every large family, and what is more interesting that every person had a different personality role. If there was already one studious type in the family, it was unlikely that subsequent siblings would become the same type. There is a grey area in age-spacing where the children are similar enough for some purposes and different enough for others; this lies between two and four years. In Helen Koch's data, although there were clear ordinal and sex effects, the most marked effects are those that are attributable to age-spacing. The two to four-year age gap heightens all other effects at six years. Subsequent work by Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg (1970) indicates that these effects have a lasting influence.

The hypotheses that there would be more friction, jealousy and general negative affect at the two to four-year age-spacing than at greater or lesser age-spacing, were tested. The total amount of negative interaction was also calculated and the two groups compared. The results are set out in Table 5.13:

Table 5.13

Negative Affects at Different Age-Spacing

All Children: N = 189

Mean Allocation to Sib.

Age-Spacing in months	Fric.	Comp.	Neg. out.	Total Neg.
Between 24 - 47	2.2	1.8	3.3	7.3
-23 and 48+	2.0	1.4	2.6	6.0
p<	N/S	.01	.05	.01

The hypothesis is confirmed for all measures except friction.

The age-spacing of two to four years is critical because the children are close enough in age to play together and to be generally treated in a similar fashion; at the same time they are sufficiently different in age for one to be more powerful, more physically and intellectually able and therefore to overshadow the younger. Also, at this age-spacing, the younger child may by dint of talent and ability threaten the status-based superiority of the first-born, thereby upsetting what the first-born may regard as his natural supremacy in the sibling group. (Several examples of this are given in Chapter 7.)

There is a possibility that this result merely reflects the greater general involvement of siblings two to four years apart. To check on this, a similar comparison is made of the positive items.

Table 5.14

Positive Affects at Different Age-Spacing

All Children: N = 189

Mean Allocations to Sib.

Age-Spacing in months	Pos. out.	Dependency	Sharing	Total Pos.
Between 24 - 47	1.2	0.6	1.3	3.0
-23 and 48+	1.4	0.6	1.2	3.2

None of these means is significantly different, suggesting that the greater negative involvement is not part of a more general involvement.

SUMMARY

1. In two-child families, sex of sibling is an important factor influencing the attitudes of girls to their siblings. The effects are most pronounced for the first-born.
2. In two-child families, sex of sibling is not an important factor for boys; with the exception that second-born boys with older brothers are more likely to give them a high comparative score.
3. In three-child families there are recognizable characteristics for each ordinal position: (i) the first-born appears to be more inhibited; (ii) the middle, especially girls, to be more jealous; and (iii) the youngest, especially boys, to allocate high friction scores to their siblings - a reaction to the bossing and domineering of their older siblings.
4. In two and three-child families, girls are generally more positive to their siblings than boys; the same effects are not seen in four-child families.
5. Overall males seem to elicit more friction from their siblings than females. Exceptions are the second-born boys, whose friction

is mostly with the first-born and regardless of the sex of the older sibling.

6. There are no clear indications of sibling interactions in four-child families, suggesting that different principles may be operating here. Only the first-born in four-child families retains a profile similar to other first-borns.

7. At the intermediate age-space of two to four years, there is more negative affect between siblings (with the exception of friction) than at lesser or wider age-spacings. There is no similar pattern for positive affects.

FOOTNOTE

As a check on the children's report of jealousy, there is also a report from the mother on the same subject.

Within the two-child family, two-thirds of the mothers reported that there was jealousy and fourteen specified a jealous child; ten children specified were first-born and four second-born. Eight mothers said that both their children were jealous and eleven said 'none'. Chi-square test with Yates correction on those specified as jealous was significant at $p < .05$ level, indicating that the mother was more likely to think the first-born child jealous.

Although this complements neatly the mother's report of favouritism, it does not match up with the direct reporting of the first-born themselves. They are, in fact, less likely than the second-born to allocate comparative items to their siblings, and referring back to the data on inhibition and the use of Nobody (Chapter 3), it may be inferred that the first-born are denying their jealousy.

The mother also reports that twelve of the fourteen 'jealous' children are from opposite sex dyads in which the second-born got

significantly higher preference choices. Referring to the Children's Test reports, it is apparent that although the first-born in opposite sex dyads allocate more negative and friction items to their younger siblings, they do not allocate more comparative items.

Within the three-child family, there is a slightly higher reporting of jealousy with twenty-two of the twenty-nine mothers reporting some kind of jealousy. The following table sets out the distribution of the mothers' replies.

Table 5.15

Mother's Answer to Question about Jealousy

Three-Child Families: N = 29

	Child's ord. pos.				
	I	II	III	All	None
N.*	14	12	1	1	7
% age	48	41	3	3	24

* number exceeds 29 since some mothers named two children

There are no differences between the percentages of boys and girls cited, but of the nineteen families in which only one child is said to be jealous, all are first or second-born. Twelve belong to families in which the first and second are same-sex (75% of such families) and seven to families in which the first and second are opposite-sex (54% of such families.

Within the four-child family, there are no clear patterns in the mothers' statements about jealousy, no sex-linked or ordinal position-linked effects.