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INTERACTION IN FOSTER FAMILIES: AN APPLICATION OF THE CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS

by

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The Purpose of This Study

The family in contemporary urban society is under severe strain and in need of support from other social institutions (Shapiro, 1976). Among the variety of supporting institutions which have been developed in this country during the last century are those which provide children with complete care away from home whenever the family can no longer fulfill its normal childrearing function. The number of children (foster children) cared for in this manner is between 350,000 (National Center for Social Statistics, 1973) and 500,000 (National Commission on Children in Need of Parent, 1979). The latter is at best a raw estimate. "The commission could not determine the number of such children with precision since many state child welfare agencies do not maintain complete records and admit they do not know how many children are in their charge" (National Commission, 1979).

Approximately three-fourths of the foster children in America are in foster family care (Pike, Downs, Emlen, Downs and Case, 1977). By and large, these families receive no special training as parents and the screening process is minimal (Jones, 1975; National Commission, 1979). This is particularly distressing due to the fact that placing

an additional child in the home is a significant stress and causes disruption to the existing transactional patterns (Wilkes, 1974). When the finding that mental illness, child behavior, and neglect or abuse account for over 50% of the problems that necessitate placement (Jenkins & Norman, 1972), is considered, it becomes obvious that appropriate screening and training of foster parents is necessary.

"The ultimate objectives of foster family care should be the promotion of healthy personality development of the child who otherwise lacks adequate parental care and who cannot remain in his/her home. It should provide approximation to a normal family than other types of substitute care, and be particularly adapted to meet the child's normal developmental needs in a family centered society" (Child Welfare, 1967, p. 6). At this time the social service system of America has no formalized way of determining the family or personal characteristics that attribute to meeting the foster "child's normal developmental needs." Dinnage and Pringle (1967, p. 30) in their comprehensive review of the research in foster care note that "the measuring and assessment devices used to assess 'successful' fostering and adjustments among foster children have, generally speaking, been rather crude and unsophisticated."

The complexity of the variables which impinge on the "success" or "failure" of the foster care situation,

in regard to the child, contributes to the difficulty of making such assessments (Passmark, 1979). The developmental history, age, and characteristics of the child; the nature of his/her relationship with his/her parents; reasons for placement; and the quality of attention from caseworkers and other professionals, in addition to the characteristics of the foster family, all combine to make a large variety of dynamic foster care situations. Research investigations have seldom been able to account for the simultaneous contribution of even a few of these influences which help to shape the adjustment of children in foster care (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978).

Fanshel & Shinn (1978) recommend that foster parents should be selected from among those who have qualities such as those described in the Child Welfare League of America's Standards for Foster Family Care Services.

They should be persons who:

a. are able to give affection and care to a child in order to meet his needs;

b. have the capacity to be giving without expectations of immediate returns;

c. are able to maintain meaningful relationships, free from chronic severe conflict, with members of their own families and with persons outside the family;

d. give evidence of flexibility and modifiability in their expectations, attitudes, and behavior in relation to the needs and problems of children and ability to use help when it is needed to meet problems of family living.

e. have the ability to accept the child's relationship with his/her parents and with the agency, without any marked tendency to be over-possessive (Fanshel & Shinn, 1978) (my emphases).

In essence, these standards for foster family care exhort foster families to have the ability to be adaptable in new or different circumstances (see "d" above), and have the ability to maintain bonds of cohesion both in and out of family relationships (see "c" above). Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) have developed a model of family interaction which is presented and organized around these two basic dimensions, adaptability and cohesion. These investigators found it possible to place the primary concepts that are widely reported as being essential by family sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, small group theorists and family theorists on a continuum of these two dimensions. In an effort to integrate concepts from these various fields, the authors found that certain family types could be identified if these two dimensions were placed horizontally and vertically on an orthogonal axis, which formed their "Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems" (Olson, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979).

The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the relationship between these family interactional variables of family adaptability and family cohesion with overall life satisfaction and a rating of successful fostering parenting. A description of foster families, a description of optimal functioning families, and a description and discussion of the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems and the two dimensions of family adaptability and family cohesion, along with their respective subcomponents will follow. The proposed study presents testable hypotheses involving foster families; including foster parents, foster children and natural children. The proposed methodology will serve to obtain self-report data from these foster families and subjective data regarding these foster families from foster care social workers.

Review of the Literature on Foster Parenting

Until recently, the literature regarding foster families and foster children has been primarily rooted in the non-empirical, strictly observational and descriptive format. Less than twenty years ago Fanshel (1966, p. 4) noted "One searches in vain in the literature of child welfare practioners for well-conceived theoretical formulations about the nature of foster parenthood. What one does find is a few reports of studies of limited scope along with a good deal of thoughtful reflection by caseworkers on the character and problems of foster parents." Since that time, a more precise

perspective on foster families has been emerging, as empirical investigation have been undertaken. Following the exhortations of Fanshel (1960), numerous investigators have followed his lead in an effort to better understand the foster care system: George (1970), Jenkins and Norman (1972), Petersen and Pierce (1974), Aldridge and Cautley (1976), Rowe (1976) and Frank (1980), just to name a few.

Throughout both the descriptive and the empirical literature, a major focus is placed on the foster mother. Foster mothers are described as the family decision makers and as women with a need to mother not only many children but their husbands as well (Fanshel, 1966). Charney (1955, p. 167) makes the flat statement, "Foster mothers tend to be the dominant members of their families." Markey and Noble (1936) in a study of 35 foster homes found the foster mother to be more "masculine" than the foster father in a large number of instances. However, studies that attempt to determine the dominant parent in foster families primarily rely on foster care social workers' perceptions of the parental relationship. Due to the nature of the foster parenting situation, the foster father may be much less accessable to the social worker. Other factors may also attribute to foster mothers being seen as the dominant person in the family. Jones (1975) studied 56 British foster homes who were no longer fostering. When asked "Why did you decide

to foster parent?", 30% of the ex-foster fathers gave their main reason as being "good for wife." None of the ex-foster mothers said "good for husband." Over half of these ex-foster mothers described their reasons for starting to foster as a way of satisfying their own families' needs. The implication here is that these mothers can "get a job" (through fostering) and satisfy some of their needs at the same time. These fathers may indeed view fostering as the wife's job and subsequently appear to be less involved.

The early literature often suggests questionable motivations for foster parenting. Glickman (1957, p. 181) notes that "it is often found that foster mothers who like to control and direct in their need to give and to keep busy, to meet their underlying tresses, find that children in their natural helplessness lend themselves well to filling such needs." To date empirical evidence regarding foster parents "true" motivations for assuming such a task are unclear. Based on Josselyn's (1952) experience, reasons given by foster parents often make underlying motives. In some instances, the choice may be determined almost entirely by a narcisistic or neurotic need, or defense measures of maintaining psychiatric equilibrium. For example, a mother may be unable to cope with the interpsychic distance that becomes evident between her and her husband following the launching of their last biological child and thus requests to have other children to parent so her psychic and physical

energies are directed toward an "appropriate" and "noble" source, foster children.

It is unrealistic to expect to find many foster parents entirely free from neurotic motivations and needs since the seeking of a foster child is usually, to some degree, the family's way of solving a conscious or unconscious problem" (Klein & Overstreet, 1956, p. 9-10). Sayles (1936) identified three motives for foster parenting:

1. Search for fulfillment in an object of devotion, or of a response that they have failed to obtain elsewhere, or of an opportunity to shape to their own design some young, malleable personality;
2. Seeking and satisfaction in helping a child to discover his/her own gifts and essential desires and in getting him/her started on the road to self-fulfillment;
3. Satisfying a "strong parental bent."

Whatever the motivation, the foster mother is of primary focus from the very beginning of the fostering process. The foster parent application process is even more rigerous for foster mothers than it is for foster fathers (Cautley & Lichstein, 1974). Investigators also focus on the foster mother when attempting to identify variables that distinguish "successful" fostering from "unsuccessful" fostering (Shaprio, 1976). The empirical

literature regarding the characteristics of both foster mothers and foster fathers is divided in this manner: successful vs. unsuccessful foster parenting. This literature will be reviewed later, following a description of the foster children that are placed in care.

Placement of a child in foster care can be due to situations ranging from mental or physical illness to abandonment or desertion. In an investigation of 390 families involving 533 foster children in New York City, Jenkins and Norman (1972) found that over 50% of the foster placements were made due to mental illness of the child caring person (22%), child behavior (16%) or neglect or abuse (14%). Seventy seven percent had primarily been taken care of by their mothers. Seventy three percent of these foster children had been separated from their fathers for longer than one month prior to their placement. Most of the parents of these foster children were in their 20's and 30's and the majority had not completed the 10th grade. "For most households, poverty is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for placement. It is the marginal family, whose characteristics and social circumstances are such that it cannot sustain further stress, which utilizes the placement system as a last resort when its own fragile supports break down" (Jenkins & Norman, 1972, p. 19).

It is often a child's physical illness that is the stress that forces a family to seek foster family assistance.

Swire and Kayaler (1977) report this to be the case in their study of 668 foster children. They had these children, ages 1 thru 15, screened through pediatric clinics who administered physical examinations. Their findings were somewhat staggering. Seventy four percent of these foster children showed some form of physical abnormality. Even more staggering in the finding that 45% were found to have at least one chronic condition and 37% had conditions that required referral for specialty treatment. They also concluded that only 4% (of a school-age sub-group of 179 foster children) were unimpaired mentally. Although one-time cross-sectional investigation of this type tends to be biased in the direction of severe pathology (Fanshel, 1971), it nevertheless remains that those children who enter the foster care system have significant medical and psychiatric problems that not only the social service agency but also foster parents must meet. While the state and federal governments provide monetary resources through the social service agency that helps to meet many of these needs, physical and emotional support is also needed by the foster family as well as the natural family.

Probably the most in depth research conducted on foster parents, foster children and the natural parents of these foster children was conducted by Fanshel and Shinn (1978). These investigators conducted a 5 year longitudinal study of 624 foster children in foster family care in New

York City. The reasons for placement of this sample were similar to those of Jenkins and Norman (1972), with more than 45% of foster placements being due to mental illness of the child-rearing person (21.9%), neglect or abuse of child (14.6%) and behavior of child (11.7%). The primary purpose of this study however was to determine the effect of the foster family on these foster children. At three intervals during their placement, these foster children were tested across numerous variables. They averaged in the 90 to 100 I.Q. range at the time of placement. They were generally lower in verbal than performance scores. Extended tenure in care was not associated with loss of I.Q. on the whole. On the contrary, the evidence from this sample suggests that some children's mental performance benefits from foster care while others deteriorate. After 2½ years in care white children tended to decline in verbal I.Q. while blacks tended to show increase in I.Q. throughout care. However, I.Q. change was not a significant predictor of change in school performance for the 5 year span.

In this extensive study, Fanshel and Shinn (1978) further report that foster-children tend to show somewhat problematic behavior with passage of time in foster care, particularly those who enter at age 6 or older. However, those children who were placed in foster homes that were

perceived by social workers as providing an intellectually stimulating environment were likewise as showing positive behavioral changes during the 5 year time span studied.

Anastasi (1978) highly correlates self-concept with intellectual functioning. This seems to be a plausable explanation for the above cited findings. These intellectually stimulating environments may not only encourage behavioral change but also enhance the foster child's self-concept. From all indications, numerous foster children are especially in need of enhanced self-concepts. In a research study that investigated the foster placement system of 2 rural communities, 2 urban communities, 2 metropolitan areas and 2 big cities, Maas and Engler (1959) reported findings for some communities demonstrating that as many as 60% of the children studied showed evidence of confused self-concepts. Comparing their sample of foster children with their sample of adopted children these investigators stated "The child in foster care was much more likely to exhibit some psychological disturbance, although these symptoms did not appear more frequently at the time of our study than they had appeared at the intake of both these groups" (Maas & Engler, 1959, p. 453-54).

Rather than attempting to determine the degree of psychological disturbance, Sherman, Neuman and Shyne (1973) attempted, among other things, to identify foster children's

"total well-being." Their sample included 413 foster children in the state of Rhode Island. In attempting to attain this measure of "total well-being," these investigators asked the foster childrens foster care caseworkers to respond to a question that read, "To what extent does this child have the physical, intellectual, emotional and social abilities and resources to weather his life situations?" A scoring system was used with seven scale positions ranging from 0 for "extremely low" to 6 for "extremely high" with the "about average" position having a score of 3. The sample foster children showed a mean score of 2.73, somewhat under the midpoint or average score of 3. One difficulty with interpreting this finding is that the reference group is unknown. The question is whether the reference groups are natural children or other foster children? Therefore, other reserachers have difficulty in interpreting this data.

Shernan et al. (1973) interpreted this data in light of the findings that Weinstein (1959) reported following his development and research on this scale. Weinstein (1959) found that the group of foster children who clearly identified with their biological parents as their parents had a mean score of 3.29. While those who identified with their foster parents as their "parents," scored a mean of 2.50. Those foster children with "mixed" identification had a mean score of 2.19. Even though this original sample was too small to draw generalizations from, the preliminary indications are that efforts should be made to enable foster children to maintain their identification with their

biological parents. However this rating of social workers is interpreted, the picture that immerges is that at best, the average foster child is likely to be below average not only on the scale of "total well-being, but also on factors such as I.Q., behavior, and physical and emotional development.

All these factors associated with foster children in general makes them appear as a highly vulnerable group. The foster parents that assume this role are often provided with little assistance from the biological parents in performing their challenging job.

The homes from which foster children come are typically families that are headed by mothers. This fact has been reported by numerous authors. Jenkins and Norman (1972) in their large New York sample report 46% of the families from which foster children came were headed by mother only. This figure included 36% never married, 7% divorced, 3% widowed mothers, and of the 54% who reported being married, 36% were not living with their husbands. Sherman et. al. (1973) report similar findings from their sample of 413 foster children. Only 24% of these foster children came from intact families (both mother and father living in the home). With British samples George (1970) found only 25% of the legitimate foster children had parents who were living together at the time of placement and the proportion is obviously lower when illegitimate children are taken

into account. Parker (1966) found an equally small proportion, only 20% of the natural parents living together at the time of foster placement.

Family structure, by itself, is not a sufficient determinant of adequate parenting. However, Kellam et. al. (1977) report that children of single mothers unsupported by others (i.e. grandmother, boyfriend, etc.) have lower levels of mental health than those with traditional family structure.

Though not broken down by family structure, several studies document minimal contact of biological parents with their child during foster placement (Jenkins & Norman, 1972; Shapiro, 1976; Fanshel & Shinn, 1978). "The number of parental visits to children in placement cannot always be assumed to be a direct reflection of parental concern, since there may be interfering factors affecting their frequency" (Jenkins & Norman, 1972, p. 241). Such things as agency policy, distance from the placement home, hostile parent-child relationship or threatening parent-foster parent relationship may discourage or make visitations impossible. Even with these limitations, however, and recognizing that the line between "didn't want to" and "couldn't" visit may be a thin one, the fact remains that biological parent involvement decreases drastically following foster placement. Jenkins and Norman (1972) with a sample of 297 natural mothers and 137 natural fathers with foster children in

care report 11% of the mothers and 10% of the fathers did not see their child at all during placement, while 21% and 16% only saw their child once a month, respectively. These figures may jump to more "eye opening" levels when the 11% of mothers and 34% of fathers, whose number of visits were not ascertainable, are added. Twenty seven percent of the mothers had never visited their foster child in Sherman et. al's. 1973 study while 20% made contact less than once a month.

In Shapiro's (1976) longitudinal study, she reports 5% of the foster children had no contact at all with their families and "a large majority" had minimal contact during the first year. Seventeen percent of the mothers and fathers were described as occasionally or rarely visiting during this first year, with 13% of the mothers and 22% of the fathers never visiting. The proportion of children having no contact with their families at all rose sharply over the middle years of this study and peak at 29% during the 5th year.

Fanshel and Shinn's (1978) similar longitudinal study reports even more discouraging findings. They state, "At the end of 5 years, 57% of the children still in care were not being visited. Behind this figure may well exist acute feelings of pain for the children involved" (p. 110). These investigators found a strong association between the frequency of parental visiting and the discharge of children

from foster care. During the first year the children whose parents visited at least "frequently" were almost twice as likely to be discharged eventually as those not visited at all or only minimally. Sixty six percent of the children whose parents never visited during the first year of their placement and 54% of those visited "minimally" were still in foster care 5 years later. In contrast, 31% of the children whose parents visited on a frequent but irregular basis and 27% of those whose parents visited on all occasions permitted by the agency were still in care at the end of the 5 years.

The picture of natural parents' involvement in their childrens' lives following foster placement does indeed become clearer with the above information. A large portion of foster children appear to be, in essence, "deserted" by their natural parents following foster placement. It is yet to be determined whether an emotional desertion may in fact take place prior to foster placement. Even if this is an unfounded assumption, the fact remains that when children are placed in foster care a large majority have at least one mitigating circumstance that makes their chances for returning to their biological family at best minimal and often impossible.

Numerous investigators have reported that it is certain characteristics and strengths of the foster family that determine the chances of the foster childs returning

to his/her biological family (George, 1970; Cautley & Aldridge, 1975; Aldridge & Cautley, 1976; Rowe, 1976; and Shaprio, 1976). A look at the foster family follows.

The foster family must not only cope with the stresses that any average family faces, but must also deal with:

1. Disruption of the family equilibrium following a foster placement or separation;
2. Coping with the foster child in transition from his/her natural family to the foster family;
3. Dealing with the "alien" social service agency that has responsibility for the foster child and the foster family; and
4. Harboring unrealistic expectations about what is going to be accomplished by the foster placement (Wilkes, 1974).

Families develop an equilibrium in their functioning so that there are family patterns of activity, relationships, decision making and problem solving. Bain (1978) cites numerous studies that show evidence that times of transition for a family are times of increased stress. "Stress of any type tends to disrupt the equilibrium and by and large, the greater the stress, the greater the disruption. An additional child in the home is a significant stress and always causes disruption in the existing transactional patterns" (Wilkes, 1974, p. 374). In the foster care

situation, not only is the foster family in disequilibrium but the natural family's equilibrium is altered and the foster childs ties are in a state of flux. "When a foster child is placed in foster care, he/she is unavoidably wrenched from his biological parents. No matter how benign the foster family, both the child and his biological parents react to and profoundly experience the rupture of their mutual family ties" (Colon, 1978, p. 296). The foster family must have the strength to not only deal with their state of disequilibrium but also with the especially precarious situation of the foster child. This may take exceptional emotional strength, especially from the foster parents. If the foster child "can reproduce in the foster home a duplicate of the way they were treated in their original home, they are able to feel that they are in control of what is happening to them and so are masters of their fate. They do this by trying unwittingly to manipulate the foster parents' feelings and behavior into a mold that fits their memory of how their own parents had acted toward them" (Littner, 1978, p. 5).

The ability of the foster parents to develop close relationships with foster children can challenge the need of the child to establish old familiar patterns. At the same time, the foster parent is in a double bind situation. "On the one hand foster parents want to develop a close relationship with the child.... On the other hand, they

feel threatened by the knowledge that this relationship may be interrupted or terminated, and that they will be hurt by the loss of the child. This concern may be intensified if they have not yet resolved separation feelings from their own childhood. Because of this fear, some foster parents cannot invest themselves in the child as much as they would like" (Littner, 1978, p. 9).

The background of foster parents has been found to be an important variable regarding other issues in foster care also. Fanshel (1978) has suggested that knowledge about the social characteristics of foster parents would be useful in the recruitment of foster parents. In his study of 101 foster families in Pittsburg-Allegeheny County area of Pennsylvania, Fanshel (1962) reported that 73% were white and almost all fell between the ages of 31 and 60. Over three-fifth of the subjects had two or fewer children of their own, with two-thirds of the families with own children reporting that all these children were still living at home. Nearly 40% of the couples had been married at least 24 years. The majority of the foster mothers had been reared in families in which there were six or more children. The education level of the foster mothers was below that of the average population and few were employed.

The foster fathers in Fanshel's sample also tended to come from large families. Forty percent had not gone

beyond a grade school education and only 12% had attended college. They were predominately employed in blue collar occupations and stably employed. The median income for these foster families about $500 above the average American family at that time.

In a sample about the same size as Fanshels, Jaffee (1970) compared two different social agency's foster parents in Seattle for social characteristics. Jaffee found the majority of foster parent ranging in age from 30 to 54; about 80% were protestant; over 50% of the males held blue collar jobs; and 96% of the families had an income between $6,000 and $20,000 in 1968.

Probably the most recent study concerning social characteristics of foster parents, Petersen and Pierce (1974) report similar findings. Seventy five foster parents in Black Hawk County, Iowa were surveyed with the following findings: the majority were raised in large families (4 or more children) within Iowa by their biological parents; 65% had been married 16 or more years; 19% of the mothers and 9% of the fathers had been divorced; the mean number of own children (including adopted) per foster family was 3.14 and the mean living at home was 2.14; educational attainment beyond high school was relatively rare, especially the mothers; and average incomes closely approximated that of the average family of that area.

From the data presented above, foster families do not differ markedly from the general population. Likewise,

one might expect that they vary little from the general population in their parenting style.

Typically parents aren't rated by an outside source as to their "success or failure" as parents. The criteria for "success or failure" for the general public is usually the outcome of the child. Determining "success or failure" of foster parents is somewhat more complicated and is generally determined by foster care social workers. A limited number of studies have attempted to identify the characteristics of foster parents that attribute to "successful" fostering.

Social class is one of the criteria that foster care social workers take into account prior to placing a foster child. This is to be assured the family is capable of meeting the child's basic needs. There is contradictory evidence, however, as to its relation to successful foster care. Parker (1966) reports that the lower classes are slightly more successful than higher-socioeconomic (SES) groups, while Cautley et. al. (1975) found the higher SES group to be more successful. Numerous studies have found no relation between class and performance (Trasler, 1960; George, 1970; and Kraus, 1971). Rowe (1976), while finding no relation between SES and successful parenting, did find that foster parents with a combination of high SES and high verbal I.Q. tend to show more acceptance of the foster child. Rowe also reports a strong relation bewteen acceptance

of the foster child and successful parenting. "It appears correct to conclude that the social roles imposed on foster parents by their socioeconomic status do not comprise values and attitudes, nor do they generate traits that are relevant to foster care, with one caveat. There may be minimal levels of literacy and intelligence required for foster parenting" (Rowe, 1976, p. 512).

There is considerable evidence linking foster parents attitudes with their success at fostering. Fanshel (1966) found that the better foster mothers (as rated by social workers) are more understanding of the child's behavior, as aware of her own needs, and as capable of meeting the child's emotional needs. Similarly, Cautley et. al. (1966) found good foster parents to be considerate of the child's needs and show skill in dealing with problem children. Rowe (1976) concludes from his study that parental attitudes are related to successful foster parenting. On the other hand, authoritarian attitudes are associated with poor foster care, as is extreme religious devotion (Cautley et. al., 1966; Cautley & Aldridge, 1975). The latter may be due to "legalistic" parenting styles traditionally associated with extreme religious devotion, while foster children traditionally come from parents with quite the opposite parenting style. Thus over conflict may result.

Other predictors of successful foster parenting are as follows:

1. Experience of foster mother with having other children stay in her home;

2. The foster father reporting that he and his wife make major decisions together;
3. The foster father's flexibility (i.e. extent to which he has changed because of his experiences with children) and his self-awareness; and
4. The foster mother's "differentiation in regard to her own children" (i.e. seeing them as distinct individuals) (Cautley & Aldridge, 1975).

Rowe, (1976) found the number of siblings, number of natural children, foster mother's preference for number of children, and sex and age of foster child to be unrelated to successful foster parenting.

One of the most controversial means of predicting successful foster parenting is the use of the foster parent's age. As expected, it is the age of the foster mother that has been related to foster care outcome. Trasler (1960) and Parker (1966) found that foster mothers aged forty or over were more successful than younger foster mothers though in both studies the difference was almost but not quite significant. Etri (1959) and George (1970) report foster mothers under the age of forty to be more successful than older foster mothers but again the difference was almost, but not quite significant. Murphy (1964) and Rowe (1976) found no significant association between outcome and the foster mother's age. Weinstein (1959) did attempt to

assess success on this factor but did find that children with younger foster mothers (45 or under) identify with them more than do children with older foster mothers. His explanation for this finding was that younger foster mothers tend to structure the placement situations in terms of adoption rather than boardinghome care. Therefore, the implicit assumption as to the type of placement may affect the outcome of the placement.

In the lone study of foster father's age and successful foster parenting, George (1970) reports that foster fathers were on the average 5 years older than foster mothers so the dividing line for them was somewhat higher. Younger foster fathers were significantly more successful than older foster fathers.

All these findings regarding age and successful foster parenting are made much more difficult to interpret due to the fact that younger foster mothers take care of younger children, but this is not always the case. Thus to clear the picture, the age of children in care must be controlled. This has not been done to date. The same problem exists when attempting to interpret the finding that foster parents with less than one year experience and those without biological children are more successful. Parker's (1966) findings suggest, rather, that more experienced foster parents with biological children are most successful. Again age of foster children needs to be controlled.

All these studies attempting to find characteristics conducive to successful foster parenting have used foster care social workers' subjective criteria for success, except for Fanshel (1966) who used the Parent Attitude Research Instrument. Shapiro (1976), in an effort to become more specific than "successful vs. unsuccessful" foster parenting, asked foster care social workers to share their concern and praise of foster parents. Foster parents were rated 4 times during the 5 year longitudinal study. The most common form of praise was for warmth, concern and "extra" attention given the child. This was a pattern that was consistent across the 5 year span. From the second assessment on, the next most common positive factor seen in the foster homes was the treatment of the foster child as "one of the family."

The limitation that was most often mentioned on the first evaluation was the foster mother's ability to care for only specific types of children: infants, children in need of temporary care, those free of emotional disturbance, etc. Second most frequent were complaints about rigidity and excessive demands for conformity. From the second evaluation to the end of the 5 year study the dominant reason for social worker doubts about foster homes centered on the foster mother's inability to strike the desired balance between permissiveness and control. This was the case in over one-third of the 100 cases

reviewed in content analysis. These parents were described as either too strict, rigid, or punitive, or at the other extreme, too permissive, unable to discipline, overprotective or overindulgent. During the middle two evaluations the majority of the mothers were described as overly permissive but at the last evaluation the two extremes were described with equal frequency.

Shapiro (1976), as alluded to earlier, points out that these are problems that may be no different from that of other parents. But besides being under the foster care agency and the social worker's scrutiny, foster families necessarily function differently from the "average" family of America. "The foster family differs from the modern nuclear family in that the foster family is an open system, whereas the nuclear family is semiclosed" (Eastman, 1979, p. 564). Fanshel (1966, p. 15) describes the "openness" of the foster family system this way:

> "The modern urban middle-class family has been characteristically described as a compact nuclear group enclosed in a tight circle. The interdependence of the family members is often so intense that the children are not adequately prepared to leave the unit when they mature into young adulthood. At the same time anybody who is not a member of the nuclear family is forbidden entrance, including grandma. By way of contrast; the foster family is open to complete strangers - the foster children coming under its care, as well as the casework staff, the natural parents of children, the adoptive parents and so on. This openness is more characteristic of folk-type societies than the modern industrial societies."

By definition, the foster family must be willing to allow non-related children in their home for at least

temporary placement. This obviously complicates boundary maintenance. "Viewing the family as a boundary-maintaining system suggests that it is partially closed, semi-autonomous, and when coping with internal issues may seem to exclude the world from its affairs" (Hill, 1971, p. 8). Although the modern nuclear family meets this definition, the foster family does not. Its ambiguity of boundaries and willingness to allow foster children and agency personnel into the family system clearly indicate this. "A system is open if its boundaries are not well defined or have breaks that enable the system to interact with the environment" (Banathy, 1973, p. 8). Thus, it is well founded to identify the foster family as an open system.

A certain degree of openness is necessary if a system is to prosper, but too much openness can be detrimental (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). "A totally open system...implies totally unstable, unpredictable and random input and output. This means the absence of specified and stated requirements, demands, constraints, resources, and other factors that define what a system is" (Banathy, 1973, p. 8-9). "The ambiguity that results from too much openness may be a major cause of foster home dissatisfaction and dissolution. Many foster parents may choose not to accept the uncertainty inherent to the situation" (Eastman, 1979, p. 565).

Foster families, as open systems, often find it difficult to know how fully to integrate a child into the

family system. "Separateness and connectedness are the underlying conditions of a family's life...a basic family process is the effort to achieve a satisfactory pattern of seperateness and connectedness" (Handel, 1967, p. 529). This balance is especially difficult in the foster family due to the ever present awareness that the relationship with the foster child can be severed with little notice (Littner, 1978). "The longer a component (child) stays with a system,...the stronger appears its deterministic clutch on him" (Monane, 1967, p. 144).

While exact figures are lacking, indications are that the average length of time a child spends in the foster family care system is upwards of three years. In that time, the average number of placements per child is slightly more than two (National Commission, 1979). This means that the foster child must adjust to different family systems. As mentioned earlier adding or subtracting a child from the home is a significant stress and always causes disruption in the existing transactional patterns (Wilkes, 1974). Adequate coping with these stresses and disruptions call for a foster family system to be able to undergo change and transition while not changing so rapidly that it cannot tolerate the stress (Eastman, 1979). "Sudden change in a system's components...may tear the system apart (Monane, 1967, p. 144). The early changes affect the system much more significantly than do later

ones, that is, the arrival of the first child is more traumatic than the ones that follow (Eastman, 1979).

Although these necessary changes cause stress, "this does not mean that change should be avoided, stress is concomitant to both growth and breakdown; what is important is to identify the limits within which health and normality can exist and beyond which pathology is likely" (Bain, 1978, p. 680). "The equilibrium of the foster family may be disrupted, but the re-equilibrium may produce more openness and awareness in the family members. The experience with a child in transition may allow the family to begin to be less threatened by the transitory quality of life itself (Wilkes, 1974, p. 378).

To remain viable as a foster family system, each foster family must have a certain degree of stability and unity. At the same time, the foster family must have the ability to change allowing for adaptability and flexibility within the system (Eastman, 1979) (my emphases). "The type of social system that functions most effectively appears to be one in which rules both define interaction patterns to establish some degree of stability, and at the same time, provide procedures for changing patterns to maintain flexibility" (Miller, Nunnaly, & Wackman, 1976, p. 23).

What follows is a description and discussion of the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems which has

identified the dimensions of adaptability and cohesion as primary processes in the family system.

Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems

In an attempt to form a systematic description of the functioning of marital and family systems, Olson, Sprenkle and Russel developed the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (1979). These investigators report numerous concepts being reported as being essential in family and group process from an array of different scientific fields. These include family sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, small group theorists, and family theorists. The common thread that ran through the variously defined concepts were that of adaptability and cohesion. This integration into two primary dimensions enabled Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) to form them into a circumplex model. Adaptability and cohesion were placed horizontally and vertically on an orthogonal axis, thus providing a means to visually place families and couples at a number of different levels in this model.

For a better understanding of the identified dimensions they will be described individually.

Family Cohesion Dimension

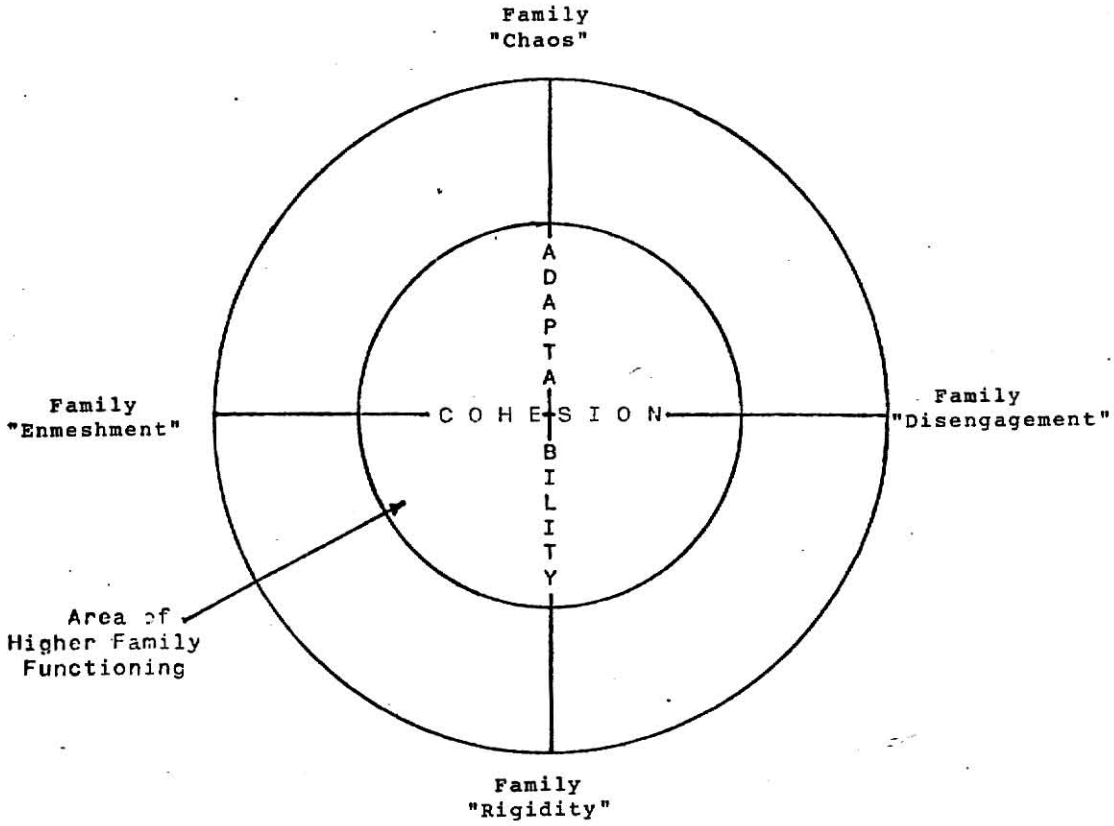
Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979), p. 5) have defined

family cohesion as "the emotional bonding members have with one another and the degree of individual autonomy a person experiences in the family system." These investigators theorize that a balanced degree of family cohesion is the most conducive to effective family functioning and to optimal individual development. However, they identify the extremes of this dimension as unconducive to effective family functioning or individual development. At one of these extremes, enmeshment, "there is an overidentification with the family that results in extreme bonding and limited individual autonomy." (Olson, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979, p. 5). On the other extreme, disengagement, or low cohesion, there is "low bonding and high autonomy from the family." (Olson, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979, p. 6). They further suggest that the more balanced families on the cohesion dimension (who are plotted in the mid-range area) (see Figure I), will be most effective in dealing with situational stress and developmental change.

The two extremes of the cohesion dimension are much like the separateness and connectedness identified by Hess and Handle (1950). Stierlin (1974) identified and equated centripetal force with that of connectedness or togetherness. Centripetal force pulls family members toward one another into an intellectual and emotional oneness. The Circumplex Model identifies this state as enmeshment. In contrast, centrifugal force pulls family members away from the family

FIGURE I:

CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS



system. The Circumplex Model characterizes this state as disengagement.

These extremes allow for a broad range of family functions within its end points. One pathological extreme that has been suggested to be associated with extreme enmeshment is the development of schizophrenia (Wynne, Ryckoff, Day & Hirsh, 1958). Cohen, Caparulo and Shaywitz (1976) report the development of autism in children may be due to family disengagement. Earlier in this proposal, it was noted that foster families often experience conflict as to how to incorporate the foster child into their family system, knowing he/she may be removed at any time. This ambiguity may indeed hinder foster families from functioning at a moderate level on this dimension.

The importance of moderate cohesion in families has been further highlighted by clinicians as they report on their observations of extreme clinic populations. Extreme enmeshment in family cohesion is very similar to the shared delusional experience reported by Fleck and Lidz (1958), to Bowen's (1966) description of the "undifferentiated family ego mass," to the extraordinary mutual "involvement" noted by Scott and Askworth (1967), and to the description of "pseudomutuality" and the "rubber fence" which surrounds schizophrenic family members presented by Wynne (1958). While these are admittedly clinically derived concepts that lack empirical support, the fact

remains that certain family pathologies are being described by clinicians with common but unsystemmatized concepts.

Nine indicators of the levels within the family cohesion dimension are listed in Table I. Descriptive conditions for each of the nine indicators are listed under the four headings of either disengaged, separated, connected or enmeshed families.

Family Adaptability Dimension

"The ability of a marital/family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress" is the definition provided for family adaptability by Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979). Basically, this dimension focuses on the ability of the marital and family system to change as its developmental and situational contexts change. As with cohesion, these authors theorize that those family systems who display the most problematic behavior will be functioning at the extremes of the adaptability dimension. These extremes are identified as rigid, or highly resistant to change, and chaotic, or excessively open to change (see Figure I). They further theorize that optimally functioning family systems will exhibit a balanced degree of adaptability. The balanced functioning family system is identified to be structured or

Table 1: FAMILY COHESION DIMENSION: INTER-RELATED CONCEPTS

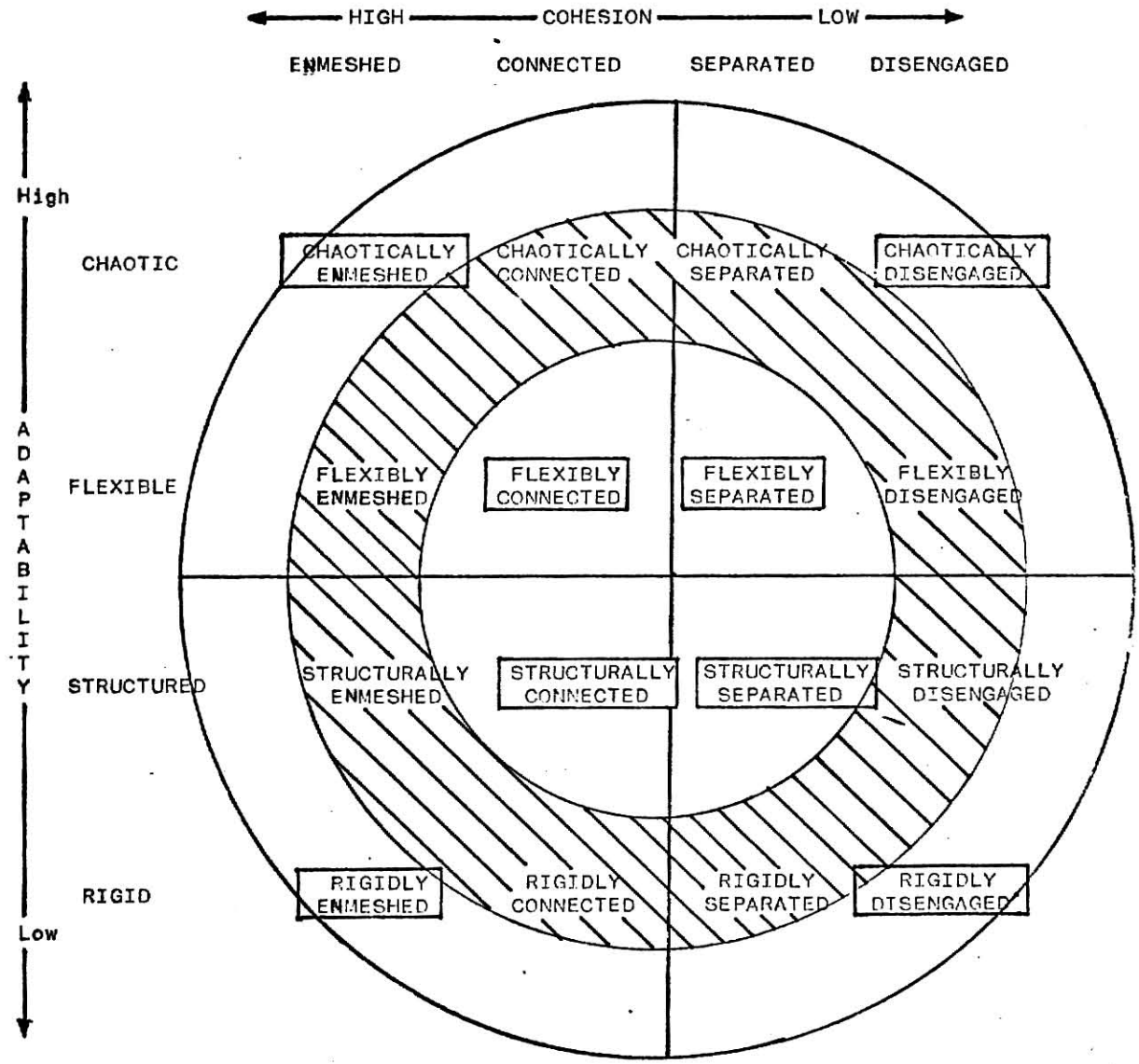
EMOTIONAL BONDING	DISENGAGED (Very Low)	SEPERATED (Low to Moderate)	CONNECTED (Moderate to High)	ENMESHED (Very High)
Independence	High independence of family members.	Moderate independence of family members.	Moderate dependence of family members.	High Dependence of family members.
Family Boundaries	Open external boundaries. Closed internal boundaries. Rigid generational boundaries.	Semi-open external and internal boundaries. Clear generational boundaries.	Semi-open external boundaries. Open internal boundaries. Clear generational boundaries.	Closed external boundaries. Blurred internal boundaries. Blurred generational boundaries.
Coalitions	Weak coalitions, usually a family scapegoat.	Marital coalition clear.	Marital coalition strong.	Parent-child coalitions.
Time	Time apart from family maximized (physically and/ or emotionally).	Time alone and together is important.	Time together is important. Time alone permitted for approved reasons.	Time together maximized. Little time alone permitted.
Space	Seperate space both physically and emotionally is maximized.	Private space maintained;some family space.	Family space maximized. Private space minimized.	Little or no private space at home.
Friends	Mainly individual friens seen alone. Few family friends.	Some individual friends. Some family friends.	Some individual friends. Scheduled activities with couple and family friends.	Limited individual friends. Mainly couple or family friends seen together.
Decision Making	Primarily individual decisions.	Most decisions are individually based, able to make joint decisions on family issues.	Individual decisions are shared. Most decisions made with family in mind.	All decisions, but personal and relationship must be made by family.
Interests and Recreation	Primarily individual activities done without family. Family not involved.	Some spontaneous family activities. Individual activities supported.	Some scheduled family activities Family involved in individual interests.	Most or all activities and interests must be shared with family.

flexible, or somewhere in between (see Figure II).

The assumption underlying the explanation of the adaptability dimension is that an adaptive system requires both positive and negative feedback. Positive feedback allows a system to elaborate, change, innovate and create, while negative feedback allows none of this and forces maintenance of the statis quo (Buckley, 1967). Haley (1962, 1963, 1964), in early development of the systems theory to families, emphasized the rigidity of the family and its tendency to maintain the status quo. The systems term used to describe this pattern of rigidity to change is morphostasis, while morphogenisis is the systems potential to develop and grow (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980).

The stability of a family system is maintained by morphogenic (changing) and morphostatic (stabilizing) processes (Buckley, 1967; Speer, 1970). Morphostasis allows for a somewhat predictable pattern of rules to govern family relationships while morphogenesis allows for enough change to successfully cope with the challenges of stress and developmental tasks. Speer (1970) and Wertheim (1973, 1975) have noted that systems need both stability and change and that it is the ability to change when appropriate that distinguishes functional couples and families from others. "In line with this thinking, the Circumplex Model postulates that the balance is critical and that problematic families often function at either the

FIGURE II: Circumplex Model with Family Types



extreme of continual change leading to chaos or that of no change, which results in rigidity" (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980, p. 132).

Olson, Russell and Sprenkle (1980) suggest that the difference between moderate and extreme functioning family systems can be determined by observing how problems or stress are handled. While a balanced family system may shift toward one of the extremes in an attempt to deal with a problem, they will probably return to functioning at a moderate level after the problem is resolved. In contrast, when an extreme family type encounters problems, they are much more resistance and will have difficulty functioning at another level to enable resolution of the problem.

A review of the literature reveals that, as with cohesion, empirical research regarding adaptability is is minimal. Tallman (1961) and Kieren and Tallman (1972) used a conceptualization of adaptability as a framework for evaluating both spousal and parental competency. They found that in order to effectively deal with a problematic situation, changes in roles and strategies were necessary to cope with new and modified assessments of the situation. Moderate change allowed for necessary adjustments while, at the same time, allowing for some continuity.

Haley (1964, 1967) and Winter and Ferreira (1967) investigated the dimension of adaptability with clinic and non-clinic families. In general, these researchers

have found clinic families to maintain interaction patterns more rigidly than non-clinic families. The "normal" families were found to be more adaptive to situations but not so flexible as to be chaotic.

The observations of clinicians indicate that when disturbed families are forced to change their patterns of relating, they often change radically. The predictable unpredictability of these drastic shifts functions to create additional stress in the family, which often results in some form of symptomatic behavior emerging.

As in foster families, who have already been identified as open systems, it would consequently be expected that they are more susceptible to the perils of prolonged functioning at one of the extremes of this dimension. However, it may be further expected that "successful" foster families will have that quality identified as healthy for families (Speer, 1970; Wertheim, 1973, 1975; Olson et al. 1979, 1980), the ability to return to moderate functioning following stress.

The specific sub-indicators of the adaptability dimension are provided under four main categories of this dimension. Descriptive conditions for each of thesevariables are listed under the catagories of chaotic, flexible, structured and rigid families (see Table 2).

Table 2: FAMILY ADAPTABILITY DIMENSIONS: INTER-RELATED CONCEPTS

	ASSERTIVENESS	CONTROL	DISCIPLINE	NEGOTIATION	ROLES	RULES	SYSTEM FEEDBACK
CHAOTIC (Very High)	Passive and Aggressive Styles	No leader-ship	Laisses-faires Very lenient	Endless negotiation. Poor problem solving	Dramatic role shifts	Dramatic rule shifts. Many implicit rules. Few explicit rules. Arbitrarily enforced rules.	Primarily positive loops
FLEXIBLE	Generally Assertive	Equalitarian with fluid changes	Democratic; Unpredictabile consequences	Good negotiation;good problem solving	Role making and sharing. Fluid change of roles	Some rule changes.More implicit rules. often enforced	More positive than negative loops
STRUCTURED	Generally Assertive	Democratic with stable leader	Democratic; Predictable consequences	Structured negotiations good problem solving	Some role sharing	Few rule changes.More explicit than implicit rules. Rules usually enforced	More negative than positive loops
RIGID	Passive Aggressive Styles	Authoritarian leadership	Autocratic; Overly strict	Limited negotiantions; Poor problem solving	Role rigidity; Stereotyped roles	Rigid rules; Many explicit rules. Few implicit rules. Strictly enforced rules	Primarily negative loops; few positive loops

Types of Marital and Family Systems

There are sixteen family types identified by Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) and classified within the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (see Figure II). Each type is labeled to highlight the level of cohesion and adaptability, while avoiding value-laden terminology. The focus is on the pattern of interaction, rather than the clinical label attached to a single family member. There are two descriptive terms for each type of family and each of the terms is related to levels of cohesion and adaptability, respectively. Their terms are intended to describe the basic and underlying dynamics of a marital and family system.

The eight most common types of families are represented within the inner and outer circles of the Circumplex Model (see Figure II). The four types within the central circle reflect balanced levels of both adaptability and cohesion. These are considered to be the most functional for individual and family development. These four types within the center circle are labeled 1) "flexible separateness," 2) "flexible connectedness," 3) "structured connectedness" and 4) structured separateness." The terms "flexible" and "structured" refer to the degree of allowed change on the adaptability dimension and the terms "separateness" and "connectedness" refer to the degree of balance on the cohesion dimension.

The four types within the outer circle represent the extremes. They reflect very high and very low levels of adaptability and cohesion and are seen as dysfunctional to individual and family development. These four extreme and less functional types are labeled: 1) "chaotic disengagement," 2) "chaotic enmeshment," 3) "rigid enmeshment" and 4) rigid disengagement." The terms "chaotic" and "rigid" refer to the extremes on the adaptability dimension, and the terms "disengagement" and "enmeshment" refer to the extremes on the cohesion dimension (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980).

The remaining eight types within the circle between the inner and outer circles (see Figure II) are balanced on one dimension but extreme on the other. Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) suggest that these types appear less frequently than those previously described.

The model is considered to be dynamic in that it provides for changes in family types over time. Changes in developmental and situational contexts may demand periodic shifts in family functioning. For example, the requirements on behalf of the family to meet the needs of infancy may vary considerably as their child grows into adolescence. A "structurally connected" family with an infant may find it necessary to gradually move toward a more "flexible connectedness" or "structured separateness" in order to meet the developmental demands at a later state in the life cycle.

The model assumes that families may move from one family type to another in meeting new situations, such as, loss of a family member, birth of a child or changes in the external environment. However, it is also the author's contention that over a period of time, a pattern of relating will emerge into a predominant style. Families whose predominate style is "rigid enmeshment," "rigid disengagement," "chaotic enmeshment" or "chaotic disengagement" are expected to be more likely to develop problems which could lead to a more dysfunctional family style. Traditionally, these more dysfunctional family styles have been clinically referred to with labels such as schizophrenia, delinquency, depression, etc.

Several empirical investigations have been conducted which support certain components of the Circumplex Model. Sprenkle and Olson (1978) perfromed an empirical study utilizing clinic and non-clinic couples. By examining the interaction processes of twenty-five couples receiving marriage counseling, and observing the same in a comparable control group, not receiving counseling, they were able to examine the variable of family adaptability. Utilizing the instrument, SIMFAM, they found a combination of high support and equalitarian leadership (balanced adaptability) to be especially characteristic of non-clinic couples. These couples were also found to be significantly more creative, more supportive, and more responsive to each other's attempts to influence each other than clinic couples.

Russell (1979) empirically investigated the variables of family cohesion, family adaptability and the facilitative variables of support and creativity. Thirty-one Catholic family triads with daughters ranging in age from 14 to 17 years of age participated in the study which utilized SIMFAM and questionnaries designed to measure crucial variables in relation to the Circumplex Model. Analysis of the data yielded some support for the model.

A modified multi-trait multi-method analysis was again used by Russell (1980) to assess the validity of four separate instruments for measuring family cohesion and adaptability. Twenty volunteer families with at least one child between age 13 and 17 responded to the Bowerman and Bahr Identification Scale and the Moos Family Environment and participated in the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Test and the SIMFAM game. This study clarified the usefulness of the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Test, especially as a measure of family cohesion. Thus, providing additional support for the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems.

Optimal Family Functioning

In the preceeding literature review reference has been made to numerous terms to describe the level of functioning in a family. On the continuum of "good vs. bad," family

systems have already been described as "healthy vs. unhealthy," "normal vs. abnormal" and "functional vs. dysfunctional." In describing the level of functioning in families one difficulty that arises is the use of value ladden terms which makes them too ambiguous for comfortable use. This is one reason why the Circumplex Model is so refreshing to the field of family theory, research and practice.

However, for clarity concerning how foster families function, a description of how optimal families function may be beneficial. Numerous studies have been undertaken to determine the differences that occur between clinic and non-clinic families (primarily schizophrenic families). Reis (1971) investigated family pathology and styles of family problem-solving. By using a card-sort procedure, Reiss was able to distinguish among normal, schizophrenic and delinquent families. Normal families in his sample allowed individual members exploration before coming to a consensus ("environment-sensitive families"), whereas schizophrenic families rapidly came to share a distorted view of the environment, omitting exploration of alternatives ("consensus-sensitive families"), while delinquent families frequently failed to come to a consensus at all ("inter-personal-distance-sensitive families"). These findings suggest optimally functioning families explore alternatives and respond to them in proper perspective.

Stachowiak (1975), similar to the Circumplex Model, identified "separateness and togetherness" as the key element

of family functioning. This issue needs resolution so that each individual can be an individual in his/her own right and yet come together with the other members of the family as a group when this is indicated. "The adaptive families in all our studies reached a significantly greater number of group decisions in the allotted time period than the maladaptive families" (Stachowiack, 1975, p. 70).

Numerous investigators have associated leadership and parenting style with adequate family functioning. Foster families have been identified as maternally dominated. However, the critical issue may be the degree of support provided by the remaining parent (foster father). Murrell and Stachowiak (1967), Stachowiak, (1975), Lewis et. al. (1976) and Lewis (1980) have noted that effective family leadership seems to require that the parents have the greatest influence in the family, and that one take the more dominant leadership role, with the other parent cooperating and supporting this leadership. "In families with young children, the mother tended most often to be the one designated as the leader in relationships with small children, and as the children became adolescents, the father seemed to take a more active role. In maladaptive families what we found was either on extremely autocratic position by the mother or father, or an inept attempt to be equalitarian resulting in everybody sitting around not knowing who was going to make a decision or be the leader in the situation" Stachowiak, 1975, p. 71).

Lewis et al. (1976) undertook an extensive investigation of family functioning as did Lewis (1980). These reports, while using different semantics to distinguish levels of functioning, ended with similar results in regards to optimal functioning. Such families may vary widely in style, but their relationship patterns and ways of communicating support Tolstoy's observation that happy families are much alike.

These families respect each others differences, have clear ego boundaries, and associate with high levels of closeness. They are clear in their communication, despite high levels of spontaneity. Family members take responsibility for their thoughts and actions, and the system as a whole have high levels of permeability. These family systems offer family members a high level of emotional support and, at the same time, encourage individuality and autonomy.

In contrast to these optimally functioning families, Lewis (1980) reports finding two types of dysfunctional families: the dominant-submissive and the conflicted. Both patterns are characterized by rigidity, with a fixed, "is now, was then, and ever will be" quality to family life. In severely dysfunctional families, Lewis (1980) also reports two types, with one being chaotic. That is, no member has enough influence to provide leadership.

As an open system with numerous intrusions that result in family stress, foster families may be especially prone

to functioning in a less than optimal manner. With this type of stress, Anthony (1970) suggests that there may be a change from a pattern of clear structure and flexibility to rigid patterns of responding. If the stress is not dealt with adequately, the organization may disintegrate into chaos, with the family drifting aimlessly "like a ship without a rudder."

Hypotheses

The preceding literature review of foster families suggests that the primary characteristics necessary for high quality foster parenting involves balanced degrees of adaptability and cohesion. By measuring these dimensions the family may be located in the matrix developed in the Circumplex Model of Marriage and Family Systems.

There are strong indications from social workers ratings that the foster families that have balanced degrees of adaptability and cohesion are more "successful" than are those who are more extreme on these dimensions (Fanshel, 1976). The factors that may affect the functioning of the foster family have been identified and again a balanced range of these dimensions is described as being desirable for these families to adequately deal with their role.

The previously discussed literature also suggests that those persons perceiving their family to be balanced on adaptablity and cohesion also perceive themselves to be

"satisfied with life." As the preceeding literature review suggests, the degree of stress in the family affects the degree of life satisfaction. It further indicates that those families with extreme degrees of adaptability and cohesion experience higher degrees of stress.

Following the above rationale, the two major hypotheses of this study are:

Major Hypotheses I: Those foster families in which there is balanced family adaptability and family cohesion will report high levels of well-being.

Major Hypotheses II: Those foster families in which there is balanced family adaptability and family cohesion will earn high social worker ratings.

In the preceeding literature review the foster family has been identified as an open system, and by necessity open to complete strangers. Yet, there are strong indications that families experience stress with each entrance and exit of a member into or from its system. Over time, it is reasonable to expect the family to be able to recuperate from such a stress situation.

The foster child's perception of the foster family and his/her response to this perception may indeed have an obvious effect on the functioning of the family, both positively and negatively. While evidence is inconclusive

as to the effect of parental age on the level of functioning in the family, the older the parents, the more likely the foster child will perceive them as "grandparents" rather than parents.

Following the above rationale, the four minor hypotheses of this study are:

Minor Hypothesis I: Family cohesion and family adaptability will be more extreme the greater the number of entries and exits of family members the core family experiences.

Minor Hypothesis II: The greater the number of persons in the home, the more extreme the levels of reported family cohesion and family adaptability.

Minor Hypothesis III: Family cohesion and family adaptability will be more balanced as the length of the shortest current placement increases.

Minor Hypothesis IV: Family cohesion and family adaptability will be more extreme in families with parents over age 45.

Operational Definitions

Several hypotheses have been stated in conceptual terms. The following provides operational definitions for the conceptual terms stated:

Foster Family:

The term foster family refers to a family in which persons are placed by a social agency. These families maintain the title of "foster family" for up to one year after the last foster placement has left their home, as long as their home is open for additional foster placements.

Family Cohesion:

Levels of "family cohesion" are measured in degree through the summation of the sub-scales associated to this dimension by FACES. These sub-scales are: emotional bonding, independence, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests and recreation. For the specifics of the calculation of this score refer to Appendix F.

Family Adaptability:

Levels of "family adaptability" are measured through the summation of the sub-scales associated to this dimension by FACES. These sub-scales are: assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation, roles, rules, and system feedback. For the specifics of the calculation of this score refer to Appendix F.

Well-Being:

Levels of "well-being" are measured through the summation of the sub-scales on the Index of Well-Being. These sub-scales are: general affect and overall life

CHAPTER II:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The complexity of family interactions makes precise inquiry into the family especially difficult. The problem lies in validly identifying and measuring the variables in question. A common problem, especially with self-report surveys, involves the poor fit between the action-process phenomena and the conceptual and linguistic framework in which the action processes has to be reported (Lennard & Berstein, 1969). Distortions often exist between the individual's perception and the actual interactional processes of the family (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967; Minuchin, 1974).

Accurately assessing and measuring variables in foster families may pose even more of a problem. "Family loyalties, based on blood ties and early personality-formation influences, supercede all other allegiances, even when the family members do not like or have much to do with each other" (Framo, 1965, p. 418). That is, perceptions reported by family members may be clearly (but subconsciously) distorted.

Outside observation of the family will allow for there to be a check of this effect and that of distortions

in the family's perception. Insiders (foster family members) can provide information about their "subjective reality," and outsiders (foster care social workers) can provide data on "objective reality," "and both realities are important if we are to gain a comprehensive picture of interpersonal relationships" (Olson, 1974, p. 2).

The present study employs this insider-outsider approach; gaining the insider's perspective by utilizing the self-report measures of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES) (Olson, Bell & Portner, 1978) and Campbell, Converse and Roger's (1976) Index of Well-Being Scale with foster families and attaining the outsider's perspective through responses of foster care social workers on a revised "flexibility" scale from the Potential for Foster Parenthood Scale (Touliatos & Lindholm, 1977).

Subjects and Procedure

The sample population for this study was drawn from the more than 2100 foster families across the state of Kansas. All subject families were volunteers from educational workshops that were made available to foster parents by the Social Rehabilitation Services of Kansas and Kansas State University. While all 2100 foster families in Kansas were invited to these workshops, approximately 225 attended at least once. This clearly indicates that the sample drawn

from this population may be non-representative of the entire population. The social workers that attended these workshops indicated that the foster parents in attendance were, by and large, among the best they knew, yet, face problems very similar, if not identical to the population at large.

At these workshops the foster parent participants were provided with a brief rationale and request of their foster family's confidential participation in a study of the characteristics of foster families (see Appendix A). All those who filled out the provided form indicating their willingness to participate in this study (see Appendix A) were contacted by phone at a later date and asked if their family was still interested in participating in this study. If the response was "affirmative," the foster mother or foster father was asked to provide demographic information of the family (parents, natural children, and foster children) (see Appendix 8). At this time they were also asked for consent to allow their foster care social worker to share his/her yearly evaluation of the foster parents with us.

Whether or not this later permission was granted, each person in the foster family above the age of 12 was mailed a questionnaire (including FACES and Index of Well-Being questions) (see Appendix C thru E) and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the confidential return of the questionnaire. (Exceptions: Those children who were 11 but in the 6th grade were sent questionnaires while

those over 12 that had a handicap that limited their reading ability below the 6th grade level were not.) One and one-half months after receiving the questionnaire, those who had not returned it were called by telephone to determine if they planned to return it.

As mentioned earlier, the foster care social workers of those foster parents who gave the appropriate consent were asked to respond to a short evaluation of the foster parents.

What follows is a description of each evaluation instrument used in this study, along with a brief explanation of its development and the validity and reliability associated with each measure.

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES)

The self-report Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale was developed by Olson, Bell, and Portner (1978), in an attempt to more adequately and systematically assess family cohesion and adaptability. These are the two variables Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) found to be underlying a number of concepts in the family field. This 111 item questionnaire enables the clinician and the researcher to obtain a subjective or "insiders" measure of those variables. Responses to these items are made on a 4-point scale. They range from "true none of the time"

to "true all of the time" with "true some of the time" and "true most of the time" in between (see Appendix F for scoring procedure).

Fifty-four of the items measure the cohesion dimension and 42 measure the adaptability dimension. FACES also provides subscores for the 9 concepts related to cohesion and the 7 concepts related to adaptability that the Circumplex Model identifies. The 9 cohesion subscales are: emotional bonding, independence, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests, and recreation. The 7 adaptability subscales are: assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation, roles, rules, and system feedback. FACES measures each of these sub-scales with two items each for the high moderate and low levels of each concept. Also included in FACES are 15 items from a modified version of the Edmonds Social Desirability Scale. It is estimated that for the average reader this entire 111 item questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Validity and Reliability of FACES

To date, rigorous investigation into the validity and reliability of FACES is somewhat lacking. The items that appear on this questionnaire have been selected from 204 statements that were initially developed by its authors (Olson et al. 1978).

The limited evidence available regarding reliability of the FACES indicates support of its use for both clinical and research purposes. The internal reliability of the major dimensions of adaptability and cohesion is respectable, .75 and .83 respectively. However, the split-half reliability has been measured at a rather low .49 on the cohesion dimension and .42 on the adaptability dimension (Olson, et al., 1979). While figures are not available, indications at the present time indicate that the subscales are producing relatively low reliability coefficients (Bell, 1980).

Further investigation into the validity and reliability of the FACES is presently continuing at the University of Minnesota under the direction of David Olson (Olson et al., 1979).

Index of Well-Being

Campbell, Converse, and Rogers (1976) in their extensive study of the quality of American Life developed the Index of Well-Being. This scale utilizes a technique developed by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) for exploring the connotative meaning which any concept, object, or situation may have for an individual, known as the semantic differential. This technique involved a battery of opposite or polar adjectives placed at the extremes of a 7-point rating scale with respondents being asked to check a point on the scale that best represents their

description of the concept or object.

In the case of the Index of Well-Being, respondents were asked to describe their "present life" by responding to the given set of 10 semantic differential items and 1, seven-point Likert item. Campbell et al. (1976) broke the Index of Well-Being down into 2 separate measures; the Index of General Affect and the scale of Overall Life Satisfaction. The average of 8 of the 10 semantic differential items produces the Index of General Affect (Following factor analysis, 2 of the items did not seem to fit as tightly within the same cluster as did the other eight.). The Overall Life Satisfaction Scale consists of the respondent indicating on a 7-point scale where they rate their satisfaction of life "these days" between "completely satisfied" and "completely dissatisfied." An independent item is added to determine if these respondents are "very happy," "pretty happy" or "not too happy" with "how things are these days."

The Index of Well-Being is computed as the mean of the Overall Life Satisfaction question, and of the Index of General Affect. Thus the Index of Well-Being gives considerably more weight to the overall life satisfaction item than to any of the semantic differential items taken alone.

Scores on the Index of Well-Being are calculated by the following formula: Index = 1.1 x (Overall Life

Satisfaction) + 1.0 x (Index of General Affect) (Campbell et al., 1976) (see Appendix G).

Validity and Reliability on Index of Well-Being

Both the validity and the reliability on the Index of Well-Being are relatively respectable. However, at this point the validity of this scale is a statistical approximation derived from the reliability coefficient.

The omega and Cronbach's alpha internal reliability have been determined and found to be equal to .89. Campbell et al. (1976, p. 50) note that this figure was "calculated as if the index were on equally weighted mean of the 9 items, so may be overestimated." The stability reliability over an 8 month period has been found to be .43 for the overall life satisfaction question and .56 for the Index of General Affect. While these coeffecients appear to be measuring test-retest reliability, these investigators identify them as stability correlations since real change in the experience and states of mind of the respondents may have occurred. "Since we can demonstrate that some true change was involved for some respondents between interviews, the actual reliability is surely somewhat greater" (Campbell et al., 1976, p. 48).

These authors have reported the validity of the Index of Well-Being as being "very respectable." They

arrived at this conclusion by taking the square root of the reliability coefficient as a measure of the validity of the measure. Thus, they concluded the validity to be equal to the square root of .89, or .94. They admit that this may be an overestimate of the validity, "since some of the strength of the correlations among the items can probably be attributed to a methods factor" (Campbell, et al., 1976, p. 47).

Procedure of Testing for FACES and Index of Well-Being

After the parents voluntered their family for participation in this study and were contacted by phone for demographic data, each family was mailed a packet containing materials for each member meeting the prior stated criteria. This packet contained envelopes personally addressed to the appropriate subjects plus:

1. Two informed Consent Forms
   (One to be signed and kept by the respondent and one to be signed and returned with the questionnaire) (see Appendix D);
2. One five page questionnaire plus one page instructions (see Appendix E). The first 111 questions were FACES items and the last 12 were Index of Well-Being items: a total of 123 questions;

3. One self-addressed stamped envelope to allow each respondent to return his/her questionnaire individually. This was done to insure confidentiality of response within the family.

The packet containing the personal envelopes also included a letter to the foster parents informing him/her that the enclosed questionnaires for the identified family members takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. They were asked to inform each person in their family, with an envelope addressed to them, of this and to wait until they had that much time to attempt to complete the questionnaire. They were also informed of the coding numbers on each envelope that matches the code number on the questionnaire. This assured each person and each family of their promised confidentiality and increased the study's reliability by making sure that the assigned respondent matched the appropriate code number (see Appendix C).

Foster Care Social Workers Evaluations of Foster Parents

The foster care social workers of the foster parents who give their consent, were asked to respond to a 10 item questionnaire (see Appendix H). Seven of these 10 items were drawn from "The Potential for Foster-parenthood Scale"

(PFPS) developed by John Touliatos and Brian Lindholm (1977). The items on PFPS were correlated with each other and factor analyzed separately for both foster mothers and foster fathers. The results of the factor analysis yielded 9 clusters that comprise this scale. One of the factors identified overlaps with the adaptabiltiy dimension that the present study is focusing on. It is "flexibility." The sub-scale on the PFPS measures flexibility in 3 areas: children's needs and problems, expectations of children, and use of help if needed.

The remaining 3 questions were devised by this author. Issues often identified in the literature as being characteristics of "healthy" families involve parental coalitions and parent's support of each other (Stachowiack, 1975; Aldridge & Cautley, 1975; 1976; Lewis, 1976; Shapiro, 1976; and Hofling & Lewis, 1980). These questions attempt to tap these dimensions of the family, with social workers rating them on a 7 point scale. The final question is included to gain an "outsiders" perspective as to the degree of success each set of parents are as foster parents. This will be done on a rating scale of 1 to 5 (see Appendix I).

Validity and Reliability of Foster Care Social Workers Evaluations

The validity and reliability of the Potential for Foster Parenthood Scale (PFPS) has been established for

when it is used in its entirety. However, it is undetermined for the sub-scales.

Two types of validity, content and construct, have been established for the PFPS. The fact that the items were based upon the Standards for Foster Family Service "insures that they are representative of the domain of characteristics that need to be measured" (Touliatos & Lindholm, 1977, p. 3). Construct validity "is reflected in terms of internal consistency and factor analysis. Internal consistency was obtained by means of the item-total correlations, and the factor analysis revealed clusters of sub-sets of items which were consonant with the Standards" (Touliatos & Lindholm, 1977, p. 3). The 9 factors identified accounted for 70% and 74% of the total variance for the mothers and fathers, respectively. Factor loadings for questions being used in this study load very high, average .73, on the factor identified as flexibility.

The reliability of the PFPS is based on coefficient alpha for an estimate of the upper limit of reliability. For mothers this coefficient is .97, and fathers is .98. Specific reliability for the flexibility sub-scale has not been established.

The final 3 items that the social workers will be asked to respond to have no validity or reliability established.

The final 3 items that the social workers will be asked to respond to have no validity or reliability established. However, 2 of the items are adapted from scales used by Lewis, Beavers, Gossett and Phillips (1976), in their research on pyschological health in family systems. There are indications that the final question, regarding success, may actually measure cooperativeness of the foster parents. After using a similar question in research of 118 foster homes, Rowe (1976, p. 512) notes, "If a foster parent is cooperative, it is possible that the social worker would rate the parent as successful, regardless of the parent's actual performance with foster children. This investigator found a correlation of .76 between success and cooperation. Due to the complexity of measuring "true success" this measure is the only measure practical for use in the present study.

Procedure for Collecting Foster Care Social Workers Evaluations of Foster Parents

The foster care social worker, for each foster family that gave their consent, were asked to respond to a brief questionnaire regarding the specified foster family. These social workers were mailed a copy of the questionnaire with brief description and explanation (See Appendix H). At a later date they were contacted by phone and asked to

respond to the questionnaire with a specified foster family in mind. Their responses were taken by phone, however, the social workers had a copy of the questions to refer to.

CHAPTER III:

RESULTS

Demographic Description of Sample

Of the ninety-nine foster families that agreed to participate in this study, sixty-five (65.7%) returned usable questionnaires which included 212 individuals. These included 65 foster fathers, 65 foster mothers, 40 foster children (above age 11), and 42 biological children (above age 11). Fifty-two of these foster families (80%) had at least one child in their home 11 or younger.

The average length of foster parent involvement for these couples was 6.1 years with a range from 1 to 18 years. Their length of marriage averaged 17.5 years with a range of 1 to 42 years. Foster fathers in this sample averaged 41.9 years of age while the foster mothers mean age was 39.2 years. Formal educational levels of foster fathers and foster mothers was 13.5 and 13.9, respectively (see Table 3). Forty-one (63.1%) of the foster mothers did not work outside the home while 12 (18.5%) worked part-time and 12 (18.5%) worked full-time outside the home (see Table 4).

Fourteen (21.5%) of these families presently had no biological children in the home. Of those families who did have biological children in the home the range was from one to six children. Eleven of the families (16.9%) in this sample had no foster children in present care, but all of these had had foster children in their home

Table 3

Characteristics of Foster Families in Sample

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Med.	Min.	Max.
# of Years as Foster Parents	65	6.11	4.60	4.92	1	18
** Father's Age	65	41.89	10.60	40.67	23	69
** Mother's Age	65	39.11	9.82	36.86	23	63
Father's Education	65	13.46	3.08	13.31	6	20
Mother's Education	65	13.88	2.10	13.40	10	18
Length of Marriage	65	17.51	10.18	15.75	1	42
** Total # of Persons in Home	65	5.66	1.73	5.66	2	10
** # of Entries in Past Year	65	3.60	4.02	2.39	0	18
** # of Entries in Past Two Years	65	6.11	6.17	4.19	0	35
** # of Exits in Past Year	65	3.06	3.59	2.00	0	18
** # of Exits in Past Two Years	65	5.17	5.84	3.73	0	32
# of Biological Children in Home	65	1.85	1.33	1.92	0	6
# of Foster Children in Home	65	1.82	1.25	1.79	0	5
# of Biological Children out of Home	65	.83	1.27	.29	0	4
Total # of Foster Children ever in Home	65	16.34	17.65	8.75	1	80

**Dependent Variable

Table 4

Foster Mother's Work

	N	%
Not Working Outside Home	41	63.1
Part-time	12	18.5
Full-time	12	18.5
Total	65	100.

in the past year. Otherwise the range of the number of foster children in the home was from one to five.

The total number of persons in the home ranged from 2 to 10, with only 2 families (3.1%) presently having neither a biological nor natural child in their care. The average number of persons presently in the home was 5.7 persons. Forth (61.5%) of the families had no biological children living outside the home while 18 (27.7%) had more than one biological child living outside the home. During their years of foster parenting, these families cared for 1,052 foster children, an average of 16.3 foster children per family.

These families have had repeated experiences with what Hill (1958) describes as "crises of accession." In the past year the number of new persons coming to live in these homes (including aunts, uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers, nieces, nephews, friends, etc.) averaged 3.6 persons, with a range from 0 to 18 persons. The number of new persons coming to live in these families over the past 2 years averaged 6.1 persons with a range from 0 to 35 persons. Over the past year these families averaged 3.1 persons leaving their homes to live elsewhere. Similarly over the past 2 years these families averaged 5.2 persons leaving their homes to live elsewhere (see Table 3).

The foster children participating in this study ranged in age from 11 to 18 with a mean of 14.95 years.

Their average formal education level was slightly above grade 9. They had been placed outside their biological families in foster homes for an average of 4.08 years and had been living with their present foster family for a mean of 2.6 years.

The biological children living in the home at the time of this study averaged 14.45 years of age and had a mean formal education level of 8.8 years (see Table 5).

Treatment of Data

In those cases in which there were missing data (due to items being left blank) on the FACES portion of the questionnaire, individual means were obtained for cohesion, adaptability and social desirability subscores for each respondent and the appropriate mean was inserted to replace missing data.

Cutoff points for FACES subscores followed those used by Olson, Bell and Portner (1979). Family cohesion, adaptability and social desirability subscores were calculated as the mean of all family members' subscores respectively. The mean family cohesion score was 261.3, with a standard deviation of 12.0 and a minimum score of 242.6 and a maximum score of 302.0 (see Table 6). The mean family adaptability score was 179.9, with a standard deviation of 9.3 and a minimum score of 163.6 and a maximum

Table 5

Characteristics of Children in Sample

	N	$\bar{X}$	Min.	Max.
Age of Foster Children in Home	40	14.95	11	19
Education of Foster Children in Home	40	9.20	6	12
** # of Years Foster Children Have Been in Present Home	40	2.60	1	9
Age of Biological Children in Home	42	14.45	11	23
Education of Biological Children in Home	42	8.83	4	16
# of Years Foster Children Have Been in Foster Care	40	4.08	1	11

** Dependent Variable

score of 201.0. These means indicate the average family would fall in the "structurally connected quadrant." Thirty-nine point zero was the mean social desirability score, with a standard deviation of 3.9 and a range from 29.2 to 47.5. This mean is approximately 1 standard deviation above the mean reported by Olson, Bell and Portner (1979). Items omitted from the Index of Well-Being (IWB) scores were treated as missing data. The family Index of Well-Being was the mean of all individual family members' scores on this scale. The mean IWB score was 11.8 with a standard deviation of 1.3 and a range from 8.1 to 14.6 (see Table 6).

Of the sixty-five study families, only four (6.2%) requested that their social worker refrain from evaluating them. The reasons given ranged from "we're not getting along with our social worker" to "I would prefer you didn't." A factor analysis of the social worker-scored items revealed two primary factors. Factor 1 consisted of the 7 items from the adaptability subscale of Touliatos and Lindholm's "The Potential for Foster-parenthood Scale" (1977). All these items, except number six ("Is adaptable in use of help when it is needed to meet problems of family living"), loaded above .75 on Factor 1. Item 6 loaded .48 on both Factor 1 and Factor 2 and was consequently not used. The remaining 6 items made up a scale that is referred to as the Couple Adaptability Scale (CAD), and represents the

Table 6

Distribution of Scores on Major Measures: Total Family

	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Median	Min.	Max.
*Cohesion	65	261.30	12.03	260.00	241.60	302.00
*Adaptability	65	179.91	9.29	179.20	163.67	201.33
***Social Desirability	65	39.31	3.92	39.25	29.20	47.50
**Index of Well-Being (IWB)	65	11.84	1.33	11.93	8.10	14.58
**Couple Adaptability (CAD)	61	20.84	5.94	21.00	10.	24.
**Parental Cohesion (PCO)	61	11.57	3.17	11.93	6.	14.
**Fostering Success (SUC)	61	4.21	1.15	4.08	3.	5.

* Independent Variable
** Dependent Variable
*** Control Variable

social worker's evaluation (see Table 7).

The second factor from social worker evaluations consists of items 8 and 9 (description of parental coalition and parents "togetherness" of discipline of the children). They loaded .86 and .91, respectively, on Factor 2. These two items make up the scale identified as Parental Cohesion (PCO). The PCO, like the CAD, represents the social worker's perception of the couple (see Table 7).

The tenth and final item of the social worker evaluation of foster parents weighted .65 on Factor 1 and .50 on Factor 2. Consequently this single item was used by itself and is identified as foster parent success (SUC) from social worker's evaluations (see Tables 6 and 7). It is important to notice that the three factors identified in Table 6 are consistent with the conceptual foundations of this study. That is, the first two factors refer to the two main independent variables of adaptability and cohesion, while the third factor relates to the dependent variable, success of family functioning.

Data Analysis

Following the Olson, Bell and Portner (1979) cutoff points, cohesion and adaptability scores were collapsed from four categories to two (balanced vs. extreme). Balanced categories include "seperated" and "connected"

Table 7

Factor Anaylsis of Items on Social Worker Evaluations (SWE)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communality	Eigenvalue
SWE 1	.811	.313	.782	6.166
SWE 2	.762	.430	.818	1.178
SWE 3	.758	.416	.703	.712
SWE 4	.831	.356	.771	.420
SWE 5	.841	.150	.658	.384
SWE 6	.480	.478	.456	.362
SWE 7	.847	.047	.638	.246
SWE 8	.313	.856	.669	.242
SWE 9	.101	.913	.580	.187
SWE 10	.654	.500	.615	.104

on the cohesion continuum and "flexible" and "structured," on the adaptability continuum. Extreme categories include "disengaged," "enmeshed," "chaotic," and "rigid." This collapsing was done in order to maintain a high enough expected cell frequency to allow for first order analysis (controls), to utilize the power of the statistical tests and to be consistent with the curvilinear hypotheses of the study.

Scatterplots were done for all hypotheses. No curvilinear relationships were revealed. Therefore, data will be reported in chi-square tables only, without going to the more sophisticated comparisons between eta (a non-linear statistic of association) and Pearson R (a linear statistic of association).

The distribution of cases within the contingency tables which would support the main hypotheses of this thesis is:

FACES SUBSCORES
(Independent Variables)

(Dependent Variables)	EXTREME	EXTREME
Lo	X	O
Hi	O	X

Extreme levels of cohesion and adaptability were hypothesized to be associated with low levels of family functioning while balanced levels of cohesion and adaptability were hypothesized to be associated with high levels of family functioning.

The analysis of the data was carried out and will be presented in two parts. First, the data was analyzed by mean family response, then it was analyzed according to family position: father, mother, foster child and biological child. The results will be presented in that order.

Family Hypotheses

Family: Major Hypothesis I Results - Chi-square tests of association between the variable family cohesion and family Index of Well-Being (IWB) yielded 11 families in the extreme cohesion dimension and 54 families in the moderate cohesion dimension. Thirty-seven families scored in the Lo IWB category while 28 families scored in the Hi IWB category. This analysis resulted in significance at the .01 level ($x^2 = 6.3$). This significance, however, was in the opposite direction hypothesized. The majority of families reporting moderate cohesion were low on the Index of Well-Being (see Table 8).

Family adaptability was not significantly correlated with Family IWB ($x^2 = .005$, $p < .94$) (see Table 9).

Table 8

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of
Well-Being: Total Family

IWB	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	2 3.1%	35 53.8%	37 56.9%
HIGH	9 13.8%	19 29.2%	28 43.1%
	11 16.9%	54 83.0%	

$X^2 = 6.314$
d.f. = 1
p = .012
gamma = -.785
eta = .353
r = -.353 p = .002

Table 9

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of
Well-Being: Total Family

IWB	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.2%	33 50.8%	37 56.9%
HIGH	2 3.1%	26 40.0%	28 43.1%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

$X^2 = .005$
d.f. = 1
p = .942
gamma = .224
eta = .628
r = .063 p = .310

Family: Major Hypothesis II results - The chi-square tests between cohesion and Couple Adaptability (CAD) revealed a non-significant association (x^2 = .003, p<.96) as were the correlations of cohesion and Parental Cohesion (PCO) (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0), and SUC (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) (see Tables 10, 11, and 12).

Non-significant results were also yielded between adaptability and CAD (x^2 = .53, p<.46), PCO (x^2 = .83, p<.36), and SUC (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) (see Tables 13, 14, and 15).

Family: Minor Hypothesis I results - Chi-square tests between cohesion and the number of entries into the family in the past year were non-significant (x^2 = .69, p<.41), as were the tests with the other dependent variables of entries to the family in the past two years (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) and exits from the family in the past year (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) and past two years (x^2 = .15, p<.70) (see Tables 16 thru 19).

Those same dependent variables yielded non-significant results when chi-square analyses were done with the independent variable of adaptability (x^2 = .30, p<.58), x^2 = .39, p<.53), (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0), and (x^2 = .05, p<.82) respectively (see Tables 20 thru 23).

Family: Minor Hypothesis II results - Non-significant results were yielded when chi-square was computed between cohesion and the number of persons in the home (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) (see Table 24).

Table 10

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Couple
Adaptability: Total Family

CAD	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	5 8.2%	22 36.1%	27 44.3%
HIGH	5 8.2%	29 47.5%	34 55.7%
	10 16.4%	51 83.6%	

x^2 =.003
d.f. = 1
p =.959
gamma =.137
eta =.051
r =.051 p =.348

Table 11

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Parental
Cohesion: Total Family

PCO	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.6%	21 34.4%	25 41.0%
HIGH	6 9.8%	30 49.2%	36 59.0%
	10 16.4%	51 83.6%	

x^2 =0.0
d.f. = 1
p =1.00
gamma =.024
eta =.009
r =.009 p =.473

Table 12

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Parental
Success: Total Family

SUC	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.8%	30 49.2%	36 59.0%
HIGH	4 6.6%	21 34.4%	25 41.0%
	10 16.4%	51 83.6%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = .024
eta = .009
r = .009 p = .473

Table 13

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Couple
Adaptability: Total Family

CAD	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.6%	23 37.7%	27 44.3%
HIGH	2 3.3%	32 52.5%	34 55.7%
	6 9.8%	55 90.2%	

X^2 =.534
d.f. = 1
p =.465
gamma = .471
eta =.149
r =.149 p =.126

Table 14

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Parental
Cohesion: Total Family

PCO	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.6%	21 34.4%	25 41.0%
HIGH	2 3.3%	34 55.7%	36 59.0%
	6 9.8%	55 90.2%	

X^2 =.828
d.f. = 1
p =.362
gamma =.528
eta =.172
r =.172 p =.092

Table 15

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Parental
Success: Total Family

SUC	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.6%	32 52.3%	36 59.0%
HIGH	2 3.3%	23 37.7%	25 41.0%
	6 9.8%	55 90.2%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .179
eta = .051
r = .051 p = .347

Table 16

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Entries in
Past Year: Total Family

Entries in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.2%	30 46.2%	34 52.3%
HIGH	7 10.8%	24 36.9%	31 47.7%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = .690
d.f. = 1
p = .406
gamma = -.373
eta = .144
r = -.144 p =

Table 17

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Entries in
Past Two Years: Total Family

Entries in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	29 44.6%	35 53.8%
HIGH	5 7.7%	25 38.5%	30 46.2%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = .017
eta = .006
r = .006 p = .480

Table 18

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Exits in
Past Year: Total Family

Exits in Past Year

	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	5 7.7%	22 33.8%	27 41.5%
HIGH	6 9.2%	32 49.2%	38 58.5%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p =1.00
gamma = .959
eta = .036
r = .036 p = .388

Table 19

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Exits in
Past Two Years: Total Family

Exits in Past Two Years

	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.2%	26 40.0%	30 46.2%
HIGH	7 10.8%	28 43.1%	35 53.8%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

$X^2 = .147$
d.f. = 1
p = .702
gamma = -.238
eta = .089
r = -.089 p = .241

Table 20

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Entries in
the Past Year: Total Family

Entries in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 3.1%	32 49.2%	34 52.3%
HIGH	4 6.2%	27 41.5%	31 47.7%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

X^2 = .300
d.f. = 1
p = .584
gamma = -.407
eta = .121
r = -.121 p = .168

Table 21

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Entries in
Past Two Years: Total Family

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 3.1%	33 50.8%	35 53.8%
HIGH	4 6.2%	26 40.0%	30 46.2%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

X^2 = .395
d.f. = 1
p = .290
gamma = -.435
eta = .131
r = -.131 p = .149

Table 22

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Exits
in Past Year: Total Family

Exits in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 3.1%	25 38.5%	27 41.5%
HIGH	4 6.2%	34 52.3%	38 58.5%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.190
eta = .053
r = -.053 p = .337

Table 23

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Exits in
Past Two Years: Total Family

Exits in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 3.1%	28 43.1%	30 46.2%
HIGH	4 6.2%	31 47.7%	35 53.8%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

$X^2 = .054$
d.f. = 1
p = .817
gamma = -.287
eta = .082
r = -.082 p = .258

Table 24

Association Between
Family Cohesion and # of
Persons Presently in Home:
Total Family

Cohesion

Persons Presently in Home

	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	5 7.7%	25 38.5%	30 46.2%
HIGH	6 9.2%	29 44.6%	35 53.8%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.017
eta = .006
r = -.006 p = .480

Table 25

Association Between
Family Adaptability and # of
Persons Presently in Home:
Total Family

Adaptability

Persons Presently in Home

	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	3 4.6%	27 41.5%	30 46.2%
HIGH	3 4.6%	32 49.2%	35 53.8%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = .843
gamma = .085
eta = .025
r = .025 p = .423

Similarly, non-significant results were yielded in the chi-square test of adaptability and number of persons in the home ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 25).

Family: Minor Hypothesis III results - The chi-square between cohesion and the length of the shortest current foster child placement was non-significant ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 26).

A non-significant association ($x^2 = .181$, $p<.67$) was found to exist between adaptability and the length of the shortest current foster child placement (see Table 27).

Family: Minor Hypothesis IV results - Chi-square tests between cohesion and the foster father's age (with the split being at 45) yielded non-significant results ($x^2 = 1.56$, $p<.21$). This was also true with respect to the foster mother's age ($x^2 = 1.07$, $p<.30$) (see Tables 28 and 29).

Non-significant tests also resulted from the chi-square analysis between adaptability and the age of the foster father ($x^2 = 0.0$, $<p$ 1.0) and age of the foster mother ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), also with the cutoff at age 45 (see Tables 30 and 31).

Family: Controls for Social Desirability - In this sample, families average just slightly below one standard deviation above the mean on family social desirability then that reported by Olson, Bell and Portner (1979) (see Table 6). Due to the susceptibility of family cohesion

Table 26

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Shortest
Current Placement: Total Family

Shortest Current Placement

	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.2%	18 27.7%	22 33.8%
HIGH	7 10.8%	36 55.4%	43 66.2%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.067
eta = .024
r = -.024 p = .425

Table 27

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Shortest
Current Placement: Total Family

Shortest Current Placement

	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	3 4.6%	19 29.2%	22 33.0%
HIGH	3 4.6%	40 61.5%	43 66.2%
	6 9.2%	59 90.8%	

X^2 = .181
d.f. = 1
p = .671
gamma = -.356
eta = .109
r = -.109 p = .194

Table 28

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Father's
Age: Total Family

Father's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	10 15.4%	36 55.4%	46 70.8%
HIGH	1 1.5%	18 27.7%	19 29.2%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = 1.557
d.f. = 1
p = .212
gamma = .667
eta = .200
r = .200 p = .055

Table 29

Association Between
Family Cohesion and Mother's
Age: Total Family

Mother's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	10 15.4%	38 58.5%	48 73.8%
HIGH	1 1.5%	16 24.6%	17 26.2%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = 1.074
d.f. = 1
p = .300
gamma = .616
eta = .175
r = .175 p = .081

Table 30

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Father's
Age: Total Family

Father's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	26 40.0%	32 42.2%
HIGH	5 7.7%	28 43.1%	33 50.8%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = .003
d.f. = 1
p = .955
gamma = .128
eta = .048
r = .048 p = .352

Table 31

Association Between
Family Adaptability and Mother's
Age: Total Family

Mother's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	20 30.8%	26 40.0%
HIGH	5 7.7%	34 52.3%	39 60.0%
	11 16.9%	54 83.1%	

X^2 = .552
d.f. = 1
p = .458
gamma = .342
eta = .134
r = .134 p = .145

to a social desirability response set (Olson, Bell and Portner, 1978), first order partial tables were constructed for all associations involving family cohesion. These first order chi-square tests for association failed to bring the relationships up to a level of statistical significance.

Fathers Hypotheses

Fathers: Major Hypothesis I results - Chi-square analysis between foster fathers' cohesion score and their IWB score in a 2 X 2 matrix yielded significant results ($x^2 = 9.48$, $p<.002$). As with the significant results found with family cohesion and IWB, this significant finding for fathers was in the opposite direction than that was hypothesized. That is, the majority of fathers reporting Lo IWB also reported moderate cohesion and the majority of those fathers reporting Hi IWB scores also reported extreme cohesion scores (see Table 32).

In order to clarify the distribution of IWB within the extreme cells, a 3 X 2 chi-square analysis was done, controlling for social desirability. Low social desirability respondents (39 or below) yielded non-significant results between cohesion and IWB ($x^2 = .082$, $p<.78$). However, significant results were yielded for high social desirability respondents (40 of above) between the same variables ($x^2 = 7.64$,

Table 32

Association Between Cohesion and Index of Well-Being: Fathers

IWB	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	3 5.0%	22 36.7%	25 41.7%
HIGH	19 31.7%	16 26.7%	35 58.3%
	22 36.7%	38 63.3%	

$X^2 = 9.482$
d.f. = 1
p = .002
gamma = -.794
eta = .433
r = -.433 p = .0003

$p<.02$). In this analysis the majority of the high IWB fathers also reported cohesion scores that would be plotted in the enmeshed quadrant (see Tables 33 and 34).

Foster fathers adaptability was not found to be significantly correlated with IWB ($x^2 = .11$, $p<.73$) (see Table 35).

Fathers: Major Hypothesis II results - Non-significant relationships were found between cohesion and CAD ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), PCO ($x^2 = .15$, $p<.70$) and SUC ($x^2 = .52$, $p<.47$) (see Tables 36, 37, and 38).

Similar non-significant associations were found between adaptability and CAD ($x^2 = .18$, $p<.67$), PCO ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), and SUC ($x^2 = .47$, $p<.49$) (see Tables 39, 40, and 41).

Fathers: Minor Hypothesis I results - The analysis revealed non-significant associations between cohesion and the number of entries in the home in the past year ($x^2 = .58$, $p<45$), the number of entries in the past two years ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), the number of exits in the past year ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<.98$), and the number of exits in the past two years ($x^2 = .34$, $p<.56$) (see Tables 42 thru 45).

Non-significant associations were also found between adaptability and the same dependent variables of entries ($x^2 = .19$, $p<.66$), entries ($x^2 = .10$, $p<.76$), exits ($x^2 = .003$, $p<.95$), and exits ($x^2 = .10$, $p<.76$), respectively (see Tables 46 thru 49).

Fathers: Minor Hypothesis II results - The analysis revealed a non-significant association between cohesion and

Table 33

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of Well-Being:
Fathers; Low Social Desirability

	Cohesion			
	DISENGAGED	BALANCED	ENMESHED	
LOW	0 0.0%	10 40.0%	1 4.0%	11 44.0%
HIGH	0 0.0%	11 44.0%	3 12.0%	14 56.0%
	0 0/0%	21 84.0%	4 16.0%	

X^2 = .082
d.f. = 1
p = .775
gamma = .463
eta = .167
r = .167 p = .212

Table 34

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of Well-Being:
Fathers; High Social Desirability

	Cohesion			
	DISENGAGED	BALANCED	ENMESHED	
LOW	1 2.9%	6 17.1%	1 2.9%	8 22.9%
HIGH	0 0.0%	11 31.4%	16 45.7%	27 77.1%
	1 2.9%	17 48.6%	17 48.6%	

X^2 = 7.644
d.f. = 2
p = .022
gamma = .836
eta = .467
r = .450 p = .003

Table 35

Association Between
Adaptability and Index of
Well-Being: Fathers

IWB	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.7%	21 35.0%	25 41.7%
HIGH	8 13.3%	27 45.0%	35 58.3%
	12 20.0%	48 80.0%	

$X^2 = .107$
d.f. = 1
p = .743
gamma = -.217
eta = .085
r = -.085 p = .260

Table 36

Association Between Cohesion and Couple Adaptability: Father's

CAD	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 14.8%	18 29.5%	27 44.3%
HIGH	11 18.0%	23 37.7%	34 55.7%
	20 32.8%	41 67.2%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = .022
eta = .010
r = .010 p = .469

Table 37

Association Between Cohesion and Parental Cohesion: Father's

PCO	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 11.5%	18 29.5%	25 41.0%
HIGH	13 21.3%	23 37.7%	36 59.0%
	20 32.8%	41 67.2%	

X^2 = .149
d.f. = 1
p = .670
gamma = -.185
eta = .085
r = -.085 p = .258

Table 38

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Success:
Fathers

Cohesion

SUC	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	10 16.4%	26 42.6%	36 59.0%
HIGH	10 16.4%	15 24.6%	25 41.0%
	20 32.8%	41 67.2%	

X^2 = .522
d.f. = 1
p = .470
gamma = -.268
eta = .128
r = -.128 p = .163

Table 39

Association Between Adaptability and Couple Adaptability: Father's

CAD	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.8%	21 34.4%	27 44.3%
HIGH	5 8.2%	29 47.5%	34 55.7%
	11 18.0%	50 82.0%	

X^2 = .179
d.f. = 1
p = .672
gamma = .274
eta = .097
r = .097 p = .228

Table 40

Association Between Adaptability and Parental Cohesion: Father's

PCO	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.6%	21 34.4%	25 41.0%
HIGH	7 11.5%	29 47.5%	36 59.0%
	11 18.0%	50 82.0%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.118
eta = .044
r = -.044 p = .368

Table 41

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Success:
Fathers

SUC	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 13.1%	28 45.9%	36 59.0%
HIGH	3 4.9%	22 36.1%	25 41.0%
	11 18.0%	50 82.0%	

$X^2 = .466$
d.f. = 1
p = .495
gamma = .353
eta = .131
r = .131 p = .158

Table 42

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in
Past Year: Father's

Enties in Past Year	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	14 21.5%	20 30.8%	34 52.3%
HIGH	9 13.8%	22 33.8%	31 47.7%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

Cohesion

X^2 = .582
d.f. = 1
p = .446
gamma = .262
eta = .127
r = .127 p = .157

Table 43

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in
Past Two Years: Father's

Entries in Past Two Years	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	12 18.5%	23 35.4%	35 53.8%
HIGH	11 16.9%	19 29.2%	30 46.2%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

Cohesion

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.52
eta = .025
r = -.025 p = .422

Table 44

Association Between Cohesion and Exits in Past Year: Father's

Exits in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	18 27.7%	27 41.5%
HIGH	14 21.5%	24 36.9%	38 58.5%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

X^2 = .001
d.f. = 1
p = .980
gamma = -.077
eta = .036
r = -.036 p = .388

Table 45

Association Between Cohesion and Exits in Past Two Years: Father's

Exits in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	21 32.3%	30 46.2%
HIGH	14 21.5%	21 32.3%	35 53.8%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

X^2 = .337
d.f. = 1
p = .562
gamma = -.217
eta = .104
r = -.104 p = .204

Table 46

Association Between
Adaptability and Entries in
Past Year: Father's

Entries in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	26 40.0%	34 52.3%
HIGH	5 7.7%	26 40.0%	31 47.7%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

X^2 = .189
d.f. = 1
p = .664
gamma = .231
eta = .092
r = .092 p = .232

Table 47

Association Between
Adaptability and Entries in
Past Two Years: Father's

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	29 44.6%	35 53.8%
HIGH	7 10.8%	23 35.4%	30 46.2%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

X^2 = .097
d.f. = 1
p = .756
gamma = -.191
eta = .077
r = -.077 p = .271

Table 48

Association Between Adaptability and Exits in Past Year: Father's

Exits in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	21 32.3%	27 41.5%
HIGH	7 10.8%	31 47.7%	28 58.5%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

$X^2 = .004$
d.f. = 1
p = .950
gamma = .117
eta = .047
r = .047 p = .356

Table 49

Association Between Adaptability and Exits in Past Two Years: Father's

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	5 7.7%	25 38.5%	30 46.2%
HIGH	8 12.3%	27 41.5%	35 53.8%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

$X^2 = .097$
d.f. = 1
p = .756
gamma = -.194
eta = .077
r = -.077 p = .271

the number of persons presently in the home (x^2 = .21, p<.65) (see Table 50).

Similarly, there was a non-significant association between adaptability and the number of persons presently in the home (x^2 = .87, p<.35) (see Table 51).

Fathers: Minor Hypothesis III results - The chi-square tests between cohesion and the length of the shortest current foster child placement was non-significant (x^2 = .001, p<.97) (see Table 52).

A non-significant association (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) was likewise found to exist between adaptability and the length of the shortest current foster child placement (see Table 53).

Fathers: Minor Hypothesis IV results - In order to obtain adequate cell size, the age cutoff for foster fathers was dropped to age 40 and for foster mothers it was lowered to age 35. Non-significant associations were revealed between cohesion and the foster father's age (x^2 = .08, p.<78), and foster mother's age (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0) (see Tables 54 and 55).

Non-significant associations also appeared between adaptability and these two dependent variables (x^2 = 0.0, p<1.0), and (x^2 = .19, p<.66) respectively (see Tables 56 and 57).

Table 50

Association Between
Cohesion and Persons
Presently in Home: Father's

Cohesion

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	12 18.5%	18 27.7%	30 46.8%
HIGH	11 16.9%	24 36.9%	35 53.8%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

X^2 = .212
d.f. = 1
p = .645
gamma = .185
eta = .089
r = .089 p = .240

Table 51

Association Between
Adaptability and Persons
Presently in Home: Father's

Adaptability

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	22 33.8%	30 46.2%
HIGH	5 7.7%	30 46.2%	35 53.8%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

X^2 = .871
d.f. = 1
p = .351
gamma = .371
eta = .154
r = .154 p = .101

Table 52

Association Between
Cohesion and Shortest Current
Placement: Father's

Cohesion

Shortest Current Placement	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	13 20.0%	21 32.3%
HIGH	15 23.1%	29 44.6%	44 67.7%
	23 35.4	42 64.6%	

X^2 = .0001
d.f. = 1
p = .970
gamma = .087
eta = .039
r = .039 p = .378

Table 53

Association Between
Adaptability and Shortest Current
Placement: Father's

Adaptability

Shortest Current Placement	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.2%	17 26.2%	21 32.3%
HIGH	9 13.8%	35 53.8*	44 67.7%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.044
eta = .016
r = -.016 p = .448

Table 54

Association Between
Cohesion and Father's Age: Fathers

Father's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	11 16.9%	23 35.4%	34 52.3%
HIGH	12 18.5%	19 29.2%	31 47.7%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

X^2 = .076
d.f. = 1
p = .783
gamma = -.138
eta = .066
r = -.066 p = .300

Table 55

Association Between
Cohesion and Mother's Age: Fathers

Mother's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	10 15.4%	19 29.2%	29 44.6%
HIGH	13 20.0%	23 35.4%	36 55.4%
	23 35.4%	42 64.6%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = -.036
eta = .017
r = -.017 p = .447

Table 56

Association Between
Adaptability and Father's Age: Fathers

Father's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	7 10.8%	27 41.5%	34 52.3%
HIGH	6 9.2%	25 38.5%	31 47.7%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = .039
eta = .015
r = .015 p = .452

Table 57

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age: Fathers

Mother's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	7 10.8%	22 33.8%	29 44.6%
HIGH	6 9.2%	30 46.2%	36 55.4%
	13 20.0%	52 80.0%	

$X^2 = .191$
d.f. = 1
p = .662
gamma = .228
eta = .093
r = .093 p = .231

Mothers Hypotheses

Mothers: Major Hypothesis I Results - The association between foster mothers' cohesion scores and their IWB score was non-significant ($x^2 = 1.40$, $p<.24$) (see Table 58).

The same dependent variable was found to have a non-significant association with adaptability ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 59).

Mothers: Major Hypothesis II results - Non-significant results were found to exist between cohesion and CAD ($x^2 = .37$, $p<.54$), PCO ($x^2 = .03$, $p<.87$) and SUC ($x^2 = .53$, $p<.47$) (see Tables 60 thru 62).

Similar associations were found to result from chi-square analysis between adaptability and CAD ($x^2 = .35$, $p<56$), PCO ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) and SUC ($x^2 = .10$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 63 thru 65).

Mothers: Minor Hypothesis I results - There were non-significant associations between cohesion and the number of entries in the home in the past year ($x^2 = 1.11$, $p<.29$), the number of entries in the past two years ($x^2 = .47$, $p<.49$), the number of exits in the past year ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), and the number of exits in the past two years ($x^2 = .87$, $p<.35$) (see Tables 66 thru 69).

Non-significant results were also found between adaptability and the same dependent variables ($x^2 = .05$, $p<.82$), ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), ($x^2 = .10$, $p<.75$) and ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) respectively (see Tables 70 thru 73).

Table 58

Association Between Cohesion and Index of Well-Being: Mothers

IWB	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 6.3%	17 26.6%	21 32.8%
HIGH	16 25.0%	27 42.2%	43 67.2%
	20 31.3%	44 68.8%	

$X^2 = 1.403$
d.f. = 1
p = .236
gamma = .432
eta = .184
r = .184 p = .073

Table 59

Association Between Adaptability and Index of Well-Being: Mothers

IWB	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	5 7.8%	16 25.0%	21 32.8%
HIGH	11 17.2%	32 50.0%	43 67.2%
	16 25.0%	48 75.0%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.477
eta = .019
r = -.019 p = .440

Table 60

Association Between Cohesion and Couple Adaptability: Mothers

CAD	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	10 16.4%	17 27.9%	27 44.3%
HIGH	9 14.8%	25 41.0%	34 55.7%
	19 31.1%	42 68.9%	

$X^2 = .368$
d.f. = 1
p = .544
gamma = .241
eta = .113
r = .113 p = .192

Table 61

Association Between Cohesion and Parental Cohesion: Mothers

PCO	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 11.5%	18 29.5%	25 41.0%
HIGH	12 19.7%	24 39.3%	36 59.0%
	19 31.1%	42 68.9%	

$X^2 = .026$
d.f. = 1
p = .872
gamma = -.125
eta = .057
r = -.057 p = .332

Table 62

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Success:
Mothers

SUC	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	13 21.3%	23 37.7%	36 59.0%
HIGH	6 9.8%	19 31.1%	25 41.0%
	19 31.1%	42 68.9%	

X^2 = .523
d.f. = 1
p = .469
gamma = .283
eta = .129
r = .129 p = .162

Table 63

Association Between
Adaptability and Couple Adaptability:
Mothers

CAD	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.8%	21 34.4%	27 44.3%
HIGH	11 18.0%	23 37.7%	34 55.4%
	17 27.9%	44 72.1%	

X^2 = .347
d.f. = 1
p = .556
gamma = -.252
eta = .112
r = -.112 p = .195

Table 64

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Cohesion:
Mothers

PCO	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	7 11.5%	18 29.5%	25 41.0%
HIGH	10 16.4%	26 42.6%	36 59.0%
	17 27.9%	44 72.1%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .006
eta = .002
r = .002 p = .493

Table 65

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Success:
Mothers

SUC	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.8%	21 34.4%	27 44.3%
HIGH	11 18.0%	23 37.7%	34 55.7%
	17 27.9	44 72.1%	

$X^2 = .958$
d.f. = 1
p = .758
gamma = -.171
eta = .077
r = -.077 p = .279

Table 66

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Year:
Mothers

Entries in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	26 40.0%	34 52.3%
HIGH	12 18.5%	19 29.2%	31 47.7%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

$X^2 = 1.114$
d.f. = 1
p = .291
gamma = -.345
eta = .164
r = -.164 p = .096

Table 67

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Two Years:
Mothers

Entries in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	26 40.0%	35 53.8%
HIGH	11 16.9%	19 29.2%	30 46.2%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

$X^2 = .468$
d.f. = 1
p = .494
gamma = -.252
eta = .118
r = -.118 p = .174

Table 68

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Year:
Mothers

Exits in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	19 29.2%	27 41.5%
HIGH	12 18.5%	26 40.0%	38 58.5%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

$x^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.046
eta = .021
r = -.021 p = .435

Table 69

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Two Years:
Mothers

Exits in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 10.8%	23 35.4%	30 46.2%
HIGH	13 20.0%	22 33.8%	35 53.8%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

$x^2 = .871$
d.f. = 1
p = .351
gamma = -.320
eta = .149
r = -.149 p = .118

Table 70

Association Between
Adaptability and Entries in
Past Year: Mothers

Entries in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	26 40.0%	34 52.3%
HIGH	9 13.8%	22 33.8%	31 47.7%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

$X^2 = .049$
d.f. = 1
p = .825
gamma = -.141
eta = .063
r = -.063 p = .310

Table 71

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past
Two Years: Mothers

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	26 40.0%	35 53.8%
HIGH	8 12.3%	22 33.8%	30 46.2%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.025
eta = .011
r = -.011 p = .466

Table 72

Association Between Adaptability and Exits in Past Year: Mothers

Exits in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	21 32.3%	27 41.5%
HIGH	11 16.9%	27 41.5%	38 58.5%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

X^2 = .103
d.f. = 1
p = .748
gamma = -.176
eta = .075
r = -.075 p = .275

Table 73

Association Between Adaptability and Exits in Past Two Years: Mothers

Exits in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 12.3%	22 33.8%	30 46.2%
HIGH	9 13.8%	26 40.0%	35 53.8%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .025
eta = .011
r = .011 p = .466

Mothers: Minor Hypothesis II results - Non-significant results were yielded when chi-square was computed between cohesion and the number of persons presently in the home ($x^2 = .47$, $p<.49$) (see Table 74).

Similarly, non-significant results appeared between adaptability and the same dependent variable ($x^2 = .04$, $p<.84$) (see Table 75).

Mothers: Minor Hypothesis III results - The relationship between cohesion and the length of the shortest current foster child placement was non-significant ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 76).

A non-significant relationship ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) was likewise found to exist between adaptability and the length of the shortest current foster child placement (see Table 77).

Mothers: Minor Hypothesis IV results - Cutoff points were again lowered to age 40 for foster fathers and age 35 for foster mothers (as reported earlier). Non-significant associations resulted between cohesion and the foster father's age ($x^2 = .27$, $p<.60$) and foster mother's age ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 78 and 79).

Non-significant results also appeared between adaptability and these two dependent variables ($x^2 = .82$, $p<.36$), and ($x^2 = 1.18$, $p<.28$) (see Table 80 and 81).

Table 74

Association Between
Cohesion and Persons
Presently in Home: Mothers

Cohesion

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	11 16.9%	19 29.2%	30 46.2%
HIGH	9 13.8%	26 40.0%	35 53.8%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

X^2 = .468
d.f. = 1
p = .494
gamma = ,252
eta = .118
r = .118 p = .174

Table 75

Association Between
Adaptability and Persons
Presently in Home: Mothers

Adaptability

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	7 10.8%	23 35.4%	30 46.2%
HIGH	10 15.4%	25 38.5%	35 53.8%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

X^2 = .038
d.f. = 1
p = .845
gamma = -.136
eta = .059
r = -.059 p = .319

Table 76

Association Between
Cohesion and Shortest Current
Placement: Mothers

Cohesion

	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	15 23.1%	21 32.3%
HIGH	14 21.5%	30 46.2%	44 67.7%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.077
eta =.033
r = -.033 p = .397

Table 77

Association Between
Adaptability and Shortest Current
Placement: Mothers

Adaptability

	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	6 9.2%	15 23.1%	21 32.3%
HIGH	11 16.9%	33 50.8%	44 67.7%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma =.091
eta = .038
r = .038 p =.382

Table 78

Association Between
Cohesion and Father's Age:
Mothers

Father's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	25 38.5%	34 52.3%
HIGH	11 16.9%	20 30.8%	31 47.7%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

X^2 = .268
d.f. = 1
p = .605
gamma = -.210
eta = .098
r = -.098 p = .220

Table 79

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age:
Mothers

Mother's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	9 13.8%	20 30.8%	29 44.6%
HIGH	11 16.9%	25 38.5%	36 55.4%
	20 30.8%	45 69.2%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .011
eta = .005
r = .005 p = .484

Table 80

Association Between
Adaptability and Father's Age:
Mothers

Father's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	11 16.9%	23 35.4%	34 52.3%
HIGH	6 9.2%	25 38.5%	31 47.7%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

X^2 = .825
d.f. = 1
p = .364
gamma = .332
eta = .148
r = .148 p = .120

Table 81

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age:
Mothers

Mother's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	10 15.4%	19 29.2%	29 44.6%
HIGH	7 10.8%	29 44.6%	36 55.4%
	17 26.2%	48 73.8%	

X^2 = 1.183
d.f. = 1
p = .277
gamma = .371
eta = .170
r = .170 p = .088

Foster Children Hypotheses

Foster Children: Major Hypothesis I Results - The association between foster children cohesion scores and their IWB scores were non-significant ($x^2 = .02$, $p<.90$) (see Table 82).

The same dependent variable had a non-significant association with adaptability ($x^2 = .58$, $p<.44$) (see Table 83).

Foster Children: Major Hypothesis II results - Non-significant associations were revealed between cohesion and CAD ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), PCO ($x^2 = .04$, $p<.84$), and SUC ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 84, 85, and 86).

Similar associations were found between adaptability and CAD ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), PCO ($x^2 = .34$, $p<.56$) and SUC ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 87, 88, and 89).

Foster Children: Minor Hypothesis I results - Non-significant associations were revealed between cohesion and the number of entries in the home in the past year ($x^2 = 1.50$, $p<.22$), the number of entries in the past two years ($x^2 = .23$, $p<.63$), the number of exits in the past year ($x^2 = .08$, $p<.78$) (see Tables 90 thru 93).

Non-significant associations were found between adaptability and the same dependent variables ($x^2 = .03$, $p<.86$), ($x^2 = .73$, $p<.39$), and ($x^2 = .35$, $p<.56$), respectively (see Tables 94 thru 97).

Table 82

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of Well-Being:
Foster Children

Cohesion

IWB	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	5 14.7%	19 55.9%	24 70.6%
HIGH	3 8.8%	7 20.6%	10 29.4%
	8 23.5%	26 76.5%	

X^2 = .017
d.f. = 1
p = .896
gamma = -.239
eta = .098
r = -.098 p = .290

Table 83

Association Between
Adaptability and Index of Well-Being:
Foster Children

Adaptability

IWB	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	7 20.6%	17 50.0%	24 70.6%
HIGH	5 14.7%	5 14.7%	10 29.4%
	12 35.3%	22 64.7%	

X^2 = .584
d.f. = 1
p =.444
gamma = -.417
eta = .199
r =-.199 p =.130

Table 84

Association Between
Cohesion and Couple Adaptability:
Foster Children

CAD	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.8%	13 34.2%	19 50.0%
HIGH	5 13.2%	14 36.8%	19 50.0%
	11 28.9%	27 71.1%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .128
eta = .058
r = .058 p = .365

Table 85

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Cohesion:
Foster Children

PCO	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.8%	12 31.6%	18 47.4%
HIGH	5 13.2%	15 39.5%	20 52.6%
	11 28.9%	27 71.1%	

$X^2 = .043$
d.f. = 1
p = .836
gamma = .200
eta = .092
r = .092 p = .292

Table 86

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Success:
Foster Children

Cohesion

SUC	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	7 18.4%	17 44.7%	24 63.2%
HIGH	4 10.5%	10 26.3%	14 36.8%
	11 28.9%	27 71.1%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.00
gamma = .014
eta = .006
r = .006 p = .485

Table 87

Association Between Adaptability and Couple Adaptability: Foster Children

CAD	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	7 18.4%	12 31.6%	19 50.0%
HIGH	7 18.4%	12 31.6%	19 50.0%
	14 36.8%	24 63.2%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = 0.0
eta = 0.0
r = 0.0 p = .500

Table 88

Association Between Adaptability and Parental Cohesion: Foster Children

PCO	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 21.1%	10 26.3%	18 47.4%
HIGH	6 15.8%	14 36.8%	20 52.6%
	14 36.8%	24 63.2%	

$X^2 = .342$
d.f. = 1
p = .559
gamma = .302
eta = .150
r = .150 p = .185

Table 89

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Success:
Foster Children

SUC	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	9 23.7%	15 39.5%	24 63.2%
HIGH	5 13.2%	9 23.7%	14 36.8%
	14 36.8%	24 63.2%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .038
eta = .018
r = .018 p = .458

Table 90

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Year:
Foster Children

Entries in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	5 12.5%	21 52.5%	26 65.0%
HIGH	6 15.0%	8 20.0%	14 35.0%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

$X^2 = 1.500$
d.f. = 1
p = .220
gamma = -.518
eta = .252
r = -.252 p = .058

Table 91

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Two Years:
Foster Children

Entries in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.0%	21 50.0%	26 65.0%
HIGH	5 12.5%	9 22.5%	14 35.0%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

$X^2 = .233$
d.f. = 1
p = .629
gamma = -.299
eta = .135
r = -.135 p = .203

Table 92

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Year:
Foster Children

Exits in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.0%	20 50.0%	26 65.0%
HIGH	5 12.5%	9 22.5%	14 35.0%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = .233
d.f. = 1
p = .629
gamma = -.299
eta = .135
r = -.135 p = .203

Table 93

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Two Years:
Foster Children

Exit in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.0%	19 47.5%	25 62.5%
HIGH	5 12.5%	10 25.0%	15 37.5%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = .075
d.f. = 1
p = .784
gamma = -.226
eta = .101
r = -.101 p = .267

Table 94

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past Year:
Foster Children

Entries in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	9 22.5%	17 42.5%	26 65.0%
HIGH	6 15.0%	8 20.0%	14 35.0%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = .029
d.f. = 1
p = .864
gamma = -.172
eta = .081
r = -.081 p = .309

Table 95

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past Two Years:
Foster Children

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	9 22.5%	17 42.5%	26 65.0%
HIGH	6 15.0%	8 20.0%	14 35.0%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 =.029
d.f. = 1
p =.864
gamma =-.172
eta = .081
r =-.081 p = .309

Table 96

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past Year:
Foster Children

Exits in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 20.0%	18 45.0%	26 65.0%
HIGH	7 17.5%	7 17.5%	14 35.0%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = .733
d.f. = 1
p = .392
gamma = -.385
eta = .189
r = -.189 p = .120

Table 97

Association Between
Adaptability and Exit in Past Two Years:
Foster Children

Exits in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 20.0%	17 42.5%	25 62.5%
HIGH	7 17.5%	8 20.0%	15 37.5%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = .348
d.f. = 1
p = .555
gamma = -.300
eta = .147
r = -.147 p = .183

Foster Children: Minor Hypothesis II results - Non-significant associations appeared between cohesion and the number of persons presently in the home ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 98).

Similarly, non-significant results appeared between adaptability and the same dependent variable ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 99).

Foster Children: Minor Hypothesis III results - The association between cohesion and the length of the shortest current foster child placement was non-significant ($x^2 = .42$, $p<.52$) (see Table 100).

A non-significant relationship ($x^2 = .11$, $p<.74$) was likewise found to exist between adaptability and the length of the shortest current foster child placement (see Table 101).

Foster Children: Minor Hypothesis IV results - Cutoff points were again lowered to age 40 for foster fathers and age 35 for foster mothers (as reported earlier). Non-significant associations appeared between cohesion and the foster fathers age ($x^2 = .10$, $p<.75$) and foster mothers age ($x^2 = .003$, $p<.95$) (see Tables 102 thru 103).

Non-significant results were also yielded between adaptability and these two dependent variables ($x^2 = .03$, $p<.87$), and ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 104 and 105).

Table 98

Association Between Cohesion and Persons Presently in Home: Foster Children

Cohesion

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	4 10.0%	11 27.5%	15 37.5%
HIGH	7 17.5%	18 45.0%	25 62.5%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.034
eta = .014
r = -.014 p = .465

Table 99

Association Between Adaptability and Persons Presently in Home: Foster Children

Adaptability

Persons Presently in Home	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.0%	9 22.5%	15 37.5%
HIGH	9 22.5%	16 40.0%	25 62.5%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .085
eta = .040
r = .040 p = .403

Table 100

Association Between
Cohesion and Shortest Current
Placement: Foster Children

Shortest Current Placement	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 20.0%	16 40.0%	24 60.0%
HIGH	3 7.5%	13 32.5%	16 40.0%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = .423
d.f. = 1
p = .515
gamma = .368
eta = .160
r = .160 p = .162

Table 101

Association Between
Adaptability and Shortest Current
Placement: Foster Children

Shortest Current Placement	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	10 25.0%	14 35.0%	24 60.0%
HIGH	5 12.5%	11 27.5%	16 40.0%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = .111
d.f. = 1
p = .740
gamma = .222
eta = .105
r = .105 p = .259

Table 102

Association Between
Cohesion and Father's Age:
Foster Children

Father's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 10.0%	14 35.0%	18 45.0%
HIGH	7 17.5%	15 37.5%	22 55.0%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = .103
d.f. = 1
p = .749
gamma = -.241
eta = .107
r = -.107 p = .256

Table 103

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age:
Foster Children

Mother's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	3 7.5%	10 25.0%	13 32.5%
HIGH	8 20.0%	19 47.5%	27 67.5%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = .003
d.f. = 1
p = .955
gamma = -.168
eta = .069
r = -.069 p = .337

Table 104

Association Between
Adaptability and Father's Age:
Foster Children

Father's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 15.0%	12 45.0%	18 45.0%
HIGH	9 22.5%	13 32.5%	22 55.0%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = .027
d.f. = 1
p = .870
gamma = -.161
eta = .078
r = -.078 p = .317

Table 105

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age:
Foster Children

Mother's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	5 12.5%	8 20.0%	13 32.5%
HIGH	10 25.0%	17 52.5%	27 67.5%
	15 37.5%	25 62.5%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .030
eta = .014
r = .014 p = .466

Biological Children Hypotheses

Biological Children: Major Hypothesis I Results - The association between foster children cohesion scores and their IWB scores was non-significant ($x^2 = .19$, $p<.66$) (see Table 106).

The same dependent variable was found to have a non-significant association with adaptability ($x^2 = 1.41$, $p<.23$) (see Table 107).

Biological Children: Major Hypothesis II results - A non-significant association were found to exist between cohesion and CAD ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), PCO ($x^2 = .96$, $p<.33$), and SUC ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Tables 108, 109, and 110).

Similar associations were found between adaptability and CAD ($x^2 = 1.73$, $p<.19$), PCO ($x^2 = 1.68$, $p<.20$) and SUC ($x^2 = .33$, $p<.57$) (see Tables 111, 112, and 113).

Biological Children: Minor Hypothesis I results - Non-significant associations were found between cohesion and the number of entries in the home in the past year ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), the number of entries in the past two years ($x^2 = .59$, $p<.44$), the number of exits in the past year ($x^2 = 1.50$ $p<.22$), the number of exits in the past two years ($x^2 = .59$, $p<.44$) (see Tables 114 thru 117).

Non-significant associations were also found between adaptability and the same dependent variables ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$), ($x^2 = 1.08$, $p<.30$), $x^2 = .56$, $p<.45$), and ($x^2 = .11$, $p<.74$), respectively (see Tables 118 thru 121).

Table 106

Association Between
Cohesion and Index of Well-Being:
Biological Children

Cohesion

IWB	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	7 17.5%	18 45.0%	25 62.5%
HIGH	6 15.0%	9 22.5%	15 37.5%
	13 32.5%	27 67.5%	

X^2 = .190
d.f. = 1
p = .663
gamma = -.263
eta = .124
r = -.124 p = .223

Table 107

Association Between
Adaptability and Index of Well-Being:
Biological children

Adaptability

IWB	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	9 22.5%	16 40.0%	25 62.5%
HIGH	2 5.0%	13 32.5%	15 37.5%
	11 27.5%	29 72.5%	

X^2 = 1.413
d.f. = 1
p = .235
gamma = .570
eta = .246
r = .246 p = .063

Table 108

Association Between
Cohesion and Couple Adaptability:
Biological Children

CAD	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 17.1%	14 34.1%	21 51.2%
HIGH	6 14.6%	14 34.1%	20 48.8%
	13 31.7%	28 68.3%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .077
eta = .036
r = .036 p = .412

Table 109

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Cohesion:
Biological Children

PCO	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 17.1%	9 22.0%	16 39.0%
HIGH	6 14.6%	19 46.3%	25 61.0%
	13 31.7%	28 68.3%	

$X^2 = .964$
d.f. = 1
p = .327
gamma = .422
eta = .207
r = .207 p = .097

Table 110

Association Between
Cohesion and Parental Success:
Biological Children

SUC	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.5%	17 41.5%	25 61.0%
HIGH	5 12.2%	11 26.8%	16 39.0%
	13 31.7%	28 68.3%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .017
eta = .008
r = .008 p = .481

Table 111

Association Between
Adaptability and Couple Adaptability:
Biological Children

CAD	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.5%	13 31.7%	21 51.2%
HIGH	3 7.3%	17 41.5%	20 48.8%
	11 26.8%	30 73.2%	

$X^2 = 1.731$
d.f. = 1
p = .188
gamma = .554
eta = .261
r = .261 p = .050

Table 112

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Cohesion:
Biological Children

PCO	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 4.9%	14 34.1%	16 39.0%
HIGH	9 22.0%	16 39.0%	25 61.0%
	11 26.8%	30 73.2%	

$X^2 = 1.678$
d.f. = 1
p = .195
gamma = -.595
eta = .259
r = -.259 p = .051

Table 113

Association Between
Adaptability and Parental Success:
Biological Children

SUC	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.5%	17 41.5%	25 61.0%
HIGH	3 7.3%	13 31.7%	16 39.0%
	11 26.8%	30 73.2%	

$X^2 = .328$
d.f. = 1
p = .567
gamma = .342
eta = .146
r = .146 p = .181

Table 114

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Year:
Biological Children

Entries in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 16.7%	15 35.7%	22 52.4%
HIGH	7 16.7%	13 31.0%	20 47.6%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.071
eta = .034
r = -.034 p = .416

Table 115

Association Between
Cohesion and Entries in Past Two Years:
Biological Children.

Entries in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.0%	11 26.2%	19 45.2%
HIGH	6 14.3%	17 40.5%	23 54.8%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = .589$
d.f. = 1
p = .443
gamma = .347
eta = .169
r = .169 p = .142

Table 116

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Year:
Biological Children

Exits in Past Year	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.0%	9 21.4%	17 40.5%
HIGH	6 14.3%	19 45.2%	25 59.5%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

X^2 = 1.495
d.f. = 1
p = .222
gamma = .476
eta = .240
r = .240 p = .063

Table 117

Association Between
Cohesion and Exits in Past Two Years:
Biological Children ,

Exits in Past Two Years	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	8 19.0%	11 26.2%	19 45.2%
HIGH	6 14.3%	17 40.5%	23 54.8%
	14 33.3%	28 33.7%	

X^2 = .589
d.f. = 1
p = .443
gamma = .347
eta = .169
r = .169 p = .142

Table 118

Association Between
Adaptability and Entries in Past Year:
Biological Children

Entries in Past Year	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	6 14.3%	16 38.1%	22 52.4%
HIGH	5 11.9%	15 35.7%	20 47.6%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .059
eta = .026
r = .026 p = .436

Table 119

Association Between
Adaptability and Entries in Past Two Years:
Biological Children

Entries in Past Two Years	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	3 7.1%	16 381%	19 45.2%
HIGH	8 19.0%	15 35.7%	23 54.8%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

$X^2 = 1.083$
d.f. = 1
p = .298
gamma = -.480
eta = .215
r = -.215 p = .086

Table 120

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past Year:
Biological Children

Exits in Past Year	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	6 14.3%	11 26.2%	17 40.5%
HIGH	5 11.9%	20 47.6%	25 59.5%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

Adaptability

X^2 = .561
d.f. = 1
p = .454
gamma = .371
eta = .171
r = .171 p = .140

Table 121

Association Between
Adaptability and Exits in Past Two Years:
Biological Children

Exits in Past Two Years	EXTREME	BALANCED	
LOW	4 9.5%	15 35.7%	19 45.2%
HIGH	7 16.7%	16 38.1%	23 54.8%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

Adaptability

X^2 = .113
d.f. = 1
p = .737
gamma = -.243
eta = .106
r = -.106 p = .252

Biological Children: Minor Hypothesis II results - A non-significant association was found between cohesion and the number of persons presently in the home ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 122).

Similarly, a non-significant association appeared between adaptability and the same dependent variable ($x^2 = .09$, $p<.76$) (see Table 123).

Biological Children: Minor Hypothesis III results - The association between cohesion and the length of the shortest current foster child placement was non-significant ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 124).

A non-significant association ($x^2 = 1.15$, $p<.28$) was likewise found to exist between adaptability and the length of the shortest current foster child placement (see Table 125).

Biological Children: Minor Hypothesis IV results - Cutoff points were again lowered to age 40 for foster fathers and age 35 for foster mothers (as reported earlier). Non-significant associations resulted between cohesion and the foster fathers age ($x^2 = 2.34$, $p<.13$) and foster mothers age ($x^2 = .02$, $p<.90$) (see Tables 126 and 127).

Non-significant associations also appeared between adaptability and these two dependent variables ($x^2 = .005$, $p<.94$), and ($x^2 = 0.0$, $p<1.0$) (see Table 128 and 129).

Table 122

Association Between
Cohesion and Persons Presently
in Home: Biological Children

Persons Presently in Home	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 9.5%	7 16.7%	11 26.2%
HIGH	10 23.8%	21 50.0%	31 73.8%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .091
eta = .038
r = .038 p = .405

Table 123

Association Between
Adaptability and Persons Presently
in Home: Biological Children

Persons Presently in Home	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	2 4.8%	9 21.4%	11 26.2%
HIGH	9 21.4%	22 52.4%	31 73.8%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

$X^2 = .092$
d.f. = 1
p = .761
gamma = -.296
eta = .109
r = -.109 p = .247

Table 124

Association Between
Cohesion and Shortest Current
Placement: Biological Children

Shortest Current Placement	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	6 14.3%	13 31.0%	19 45.2%
HIGH	8 19.0%	15 35.7%	23 54.8%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = 0.0$
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = -.072
eta = .034
r = -.034 p = .416

Table 125

Association Between
Adaptability and Shortest Current
Placement: Biological Children

Shortest Current Placement	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	7 16.7%	12 28.6%	19 45.2%
HIGH	4 9.5%	19 45.2%	23 54.8%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

$X^2 = 1.154$
d.f. = 1
p = .283
gamma = .470
eta = .220
r = .220 p = .081

Table 126

Association Between
Cohesion and Father's Age:
Biological Children

Father's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	7 16.7%	6 14.3%	13 31.0%
HIGH	7 16.7%	22 52.4%	29 69.0%
	14 33.3%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = 2.353$
d.f. = 1
p = .125
gamma = .571
eta = .291
r = .291 p = .031

Table 127

Association Between
Cohesion and Mother's Age:
Biological Children

Mother's Age	Cohesion: EXTREME	Cohesion: BALANCED	
LOW	4 9.5%	6 14.3%	10 32.8%
HIGH	10 23.8%	22 52.4%	32 76.2%
	14 23.8%	28 66.7%	

$X^2 = .016$
d.f. = 1
p = .898
gamma = .190
eta = .079
r = .079 p = .309

Table 128

Association Between
Adaptability and Father's Age:
Biological Children

Father's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	4 9.5%	9 21.4%	13 31.0%
HIGH	7 16.7%	22 52.4%	29 69.0%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

X^2 = .005
d.f. = 1
p = .942
gamma = .166
eta = .070
r = .070 p = .330

Table 129

Association Between
Adaptability and Mother's Age:
Biological Children

Mother's Age	Adaptability: EXTREME	Adaptability: BALANCED	
LOW	3 7.1%	7 16.7%	10 23.8%
HIGH	8 19.0%	24 57.1%	32 76.2%
	11 26.2%	31 73.8%	

X^2 = 0.0
d.f. = 1
p = 1.0
gamma = .125
eta = .048
r = .048 p = .380

CHAPTER IV:
DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, AND SUMMARY

Discussion

The basis of this research thesis has been that cohesion and adaptability are primary indicators of optimal family functioning. While this may indeed be the case, support for the following hypotheses was very limited.

Major Hypothesis I - Those foster families in which there is balanced, family adaptability and cohesion will also have a high degree of well-being. Contrary to the hypothesis, families with balanced cohesion scores tended to get low scores on the Index of Well-Being. This is in the opposite direction of hypothesis. These results would indicate that these family members perceive themselves to be doing rather poorly individually, though the family group is moderately cohesive. The range on the Index of Well-Being in this sample was from 8.1 to 14.6 with a mean of 11.8. The cut-off point used in the data analysis was 12.1 (the approximate median score). However, this is .35 above the mean reported by Campbell, Converse and Rodgers (1976) for their rational sample. It could be argued that some of the families labeled as "Lo IWB" are actually moderate in well-being. If this indeed is the case, it would be expected that this phenomenon would contaminate the results since the "Hi IWB" families were expected to

be moderately cohesive.

Major Hypothesis II - Those foster families in which there is balanced family adaptability and family cohesion will also have high social worker ratings. The Couple Adapatability (CAB), Parental Cohesion (PCO) and Parental Success (SUC) scores had no significant association with either independent variables (cohesion or adaptability). The dependent variables determined by social workers evaluations are apparently quite different from that of the family members themselves. While obviously different scales were used to determine cohesion and adaptability, the factor analysis of social workers evaluations indicated rather dramatically that CAD (which had already been established as a scale of adaptability by Touliatos and Lindhom, 1977) was indeed an adaptability scale and PCO was a cohesion scale. Thus, these results indicate that foster care social workers perceive the degree of cohesion and adaptability somewhat differently than the family members themselves. Likewise, when social workers measure success of the foster home, it is not indicative of the family members perception of their cohesion or adaptability. These indeed, may not be the two diminsions that foster care social workers focus on in determining success. However, as mentioned above, social workers perception of cohesion and adaptability differed substantially from the families perception. This raises questions in the "insider,"

"outsider" approach. Social workers may not be seeing the family as it actually is or foster families may report a higher degree of functioning than actually exists.

Minor Hypothesis I - Family cohesion and family adaptability will be more extreme the greater the density of entries and exits of family members the core family experiences.

This hypothesis failed to be supported. Contrary to the notion that stress is created by people entering or leaving the family system (Monane, 1967; Eastman, 1979), the foster families of this study appeared to accomodate with little shift in overall adaptability or cohesion. Possibly entries and exits have become part of the routine of these families and not a departure from their usual rythmn.

Eastman (1979) states that the early changes effect the family system much more significantly than do later ones, that is, the arrival of the first child is more traumatic than the ones that follow. While this was not a testable hypothesis for this thesis, the effect of numerous system changes may be observed through these results. The continual system changes that these foster parents experienced, averaging 3.6 entries and 3.1 exits in the past year, may indeed result to a numbing effect to change that Eastman (1979) alludes to. Thus, due to the openness

of the system, the consequential reverberations of stress may go unnoticed or ignored. Yet, it would appear that these foster families have the ability to incorporate entries and deal with the loss of exits to a degree that enables them to maintain balanced levels of cohesion and adaptability.

Minor Hypotheses II & III - The greater the number of children in the home, the more extreme the levels of reported family cohesion and family adaptability. Family cohesion and adaptability will be more balanced as the length of the shortest placement increases.

These hypotheses failed to be supported. A majority (83%) of the large families (6 or more persons) reported balanced cohesion and 92% reported balanced adaptability. This indicates that these foster families did not respond to the challenge of coordinating a large household size by moving to extreme levels of cohesion and adaptability. Once again, the "normative" frame of reference for these families may be different from the population at large. A larger household may not be perceived as a stressor or unusual challenge. Hill (1978) has emphasized the importance of the family's perception of the event in his A→B→C→X model of family crisis. It may take more dramatic events for these families to define the situation as stressful. Furthermore, the expectation that foster children are to be temporary household members may serve to buffer any stress associated with entries and exits.

This ability to define entries and exits as non-stressful may also be associated with the lack of significant association between the length of placement and family cohesion and adaptability. If the entries and exits are not responded to with a shift in these dimensions of family interaction, "a return to the balanced region" of the Circumplex Model would not be expected as the length of placement increases.

Contrary to the literatures suggestion that stress and interaction styles may be related to the number of persons in the home, the indication from this analysis is that these families, after numerous changes in the configuration of their family, develop a style of adjustment that treats such change as "routine" - responding with balanced levels of both cohesion and adaptability. While balanced cohesion and adaptability are somewhat unexpected in these foster families (especially the larger ones) that also have numerous other stressors effecting them, may use the maintenance of a large family as a means of coping with such stresses. For instance, the larger the family the easier it is to insolate from the stress yet maintain adequate functioning within the system. Likewise, the larger the family, the greater the number of potential subsystems within the family that are available to buffer stress.

Minor Hypothesis IV - Family cohesion and adaptability will be more extreme in families with parents over age 45.

This hypothesis failed to be supported. Prior literature is contradictory regarding the age of the foster parent and functioning of the foster family. Trasler (1960) and Parker (1966) report older foster parents (over age 45) as being most successful, while Murphy (1964) and Rowe (1976) found success to have no association with parental age. Similar to Trasler (1960) and Parker (1966) the results of this study were not significant but were to some degree in that direction regarding the cohesion dimension. Thus it may be that in foster families the degree of cohesion is more a function of parental age than is adaptability.

It was the implicit assumption of this thesis that the degree of adaptability and cohesion would be indicative of success. This does not appear to be the case, and similarly, age does not appear to be associated with the degree of family functioning. The structure of foster families may indeed by very similar across parental age ranges. This structure may be a function of mitigating circumstances prior to foster parenting that are maintained across the foster parenting experience. From the results of this study there are no indications that a certain age range of the parental dyad provides the "most" beneficial care for foster children.

Limitations of This Study

Due to the nature of this study, the sample was necessarily made up of volunteer families of whom at least one of the foster parents was attending a Foster-Parent Educational Workshop provided by the Kansas State Foster Parent Project. This in itself precluded random selection.

The representativeness of this voluntary sample is likewise unclear. The question arises as to whether these foster parents were already very qualified foster parents and were seeking additional education or whether they were less then qualified foster parents in need of additional education. Subjective observation would favor the former (Marr and Haines, 1980). If this is indeed the case, it may be expected that these families would tend to be more adaptable and cohesive than the general population of foster parents.

Foster parents are also, by and large, a very closely monitored group of people. That is, they must fill out extensive application forms and go through extensive interviews prior to receiving a license to keep foster children. Even though all families were informed that the information they provided would not be shared with social service agencies on an individual basis, and confidentiality was guaranteed, they may have feared that this study, in

one way or another, could affect their status as foster parents. While workshop participants were very willing to participate in this project (approximately 70%, with 65.7% of these returning usable responses) their willingness seemed to be based on a desire to refute recent nationally publicized news reports concerning the "atrocities" of foster care. A common concern of foster parents in each of these workshops was the bad press foster parents were receiving and what could be done to point out the positive elements of foster care.

The family problems reported by these families did not seem to be unusually abnormal to those expected in the foster family situation but, due to the fore mentioned circumstances, these foster families would appear to have good reason to lean toward social desirable responses.

It was also impossible to cross-validate the self-report of these families on the independent variables of cohesion and adaptability with a behavioral measure of these variables due to the time and expense involved. Two commonly used behavioral measures used are SIMFAM (Straus and Tallman, 1971) which takes 20 to 30 minutes to administer and the Kvebaek Family Sculpture Test (KFST) (Kvebaek, 1978), which takes approximately 15 minutes. Self-reports of their own family process are difficult for people to give (Olson and Rabunsky, 1972). Furthermore self report measures may be more susceptible to the effects of social

desirability: It is easier to alter one's perceptions in a favorable direction than to alter one's behavior. Therefore, it may be expected that the responses of these families be in the socially desirable direction.

At this point it is unclear if the self report measures used are adequate indicators of foster family functioning. The occurrance of elevated social desirability scores, would indicate, when logically followed, that report of family functioning would also be elevated. This, in fact, is the case in this study.

A final limitation of this study involves the cutting points for levels of cohesion and adaptability. To insure generalizable results within the research field on the Circumplex Model of Marriage and Family Systems, the recommended cutting points determined by Olson, Bell and Portner (1979) were used. In many cases they did not allow for adequate cell sizes to be obtained. For instance, chi-square analysis of family responses using these cutting points allowed only 11 families to fall in the extreme cohesion quadrant and only 6 families to fall in the extreme adaptability quadrant. For accurate analysis of the data, manipulation of the cutting points of FACES scores may be necessary. In first order analyses controlling for the effects of social desirability, cutting points of dependent variables were manipulated in an attempt to supplement the small cell size of independent variables. Cutting points

on FACES for specific populations is an issue in need for further exploration.

Practical Applications

The sample population of this study was found to be very adaptable and cohesive as families. The flow of people in and out of the home and maintenance of a large number of persons in the home had no significant effect on the style of functioning in these families. However, social workers perception of cohesion and adaptability and the families perception of cohesion and adaptability was noticeably different. Social workers reported families to be much less adaptable and cohesive than did the foster families themselves. This may be another indication that foster families tended to respond in a socially desirable fashion. Yet, the social worker, foster family relationship may be such that enables social workers to have the most accurate perception of the families functioning. Yet, social workers have the least contact with the person in the family that probably provides the most accurate assessment of the family, the fathers. As mentioned earlier, it is generally the foster mothers who are most involved in the care of the foster children, thus the foster father, by and large, has "the least to lose" in providing information to social workers (outsiders). By tapping this resource of foster

fathers, social workers may be able to most adequately monitor the functioning of the foster family.

Whatever source is used by the social worker to determine family functioning, it is necessary to be aware of the foster families need for acceptance and a need to please those who are responsible to evaluate them. Indications are that foster families may learn what the social worker wants to know, and provide that information in a way that may cover-up other pertinent aspects of the family. Focusing in on the indicators of cohesion (emotional bending, independence, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests, and recreation) and adaptability (assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation, roles, rules, and system feedback) may allow social workers to make the most accurate assessment of foster family functioning and lessen the importance of extraneous inter-personal relationship variables that often makes such a task difficult.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study is just a start at empirically looking at foster family functioning in relation to the stressful events such a family experiences. It is suggested that future research not only use self-report measures of family functioning but also behavioral measures. Likewise,

the addition of a comparison group from the population at large would provide pertinent information regarding family styles which are most condusive to foster parenting.

It is still unclear as to whether foster families actually make a shift in their style of family functioning when stressful events (such as the placement of a new child in their home) occur in their family. Subsequent research may provide this answer by assessing foster family functioning prior to such stressing events then at intervals afterwards.

There likewise remains unanswered questions regarding the foster family, foster care social worker relationship. While criteria for "successful" foster parenting remains ambiguous, foster families may provide the "expected" information to foster care social workers in an effort to be considered a "success." Continued efforts should be made in accurately assessing "successful" vs. "unsuccessful" foster parenting. At the present time the interpersonal relationship between the social worker and the foster family (especially the foster mother) seems to be the most pertinent variable in determining success. Thus, new measures of determining success may be especially beneficial.

Summary

The results of this study indicate that self-reported family cohesion and adaptability (as measured by FACES) have

no association with the level of family functioning as measured by social workers evaluations and the Index of Well-Being. Furthermore, balanced versus non-balanced patterns of family cohesion and adaptability failed to be associated with the number of persons "entering" and "exiting" the home in the recent past, the total number of persons in the home, the length of the shortest current foster child placement or the age of the foster parents. The implicit assumption throughout this thesis has been that any occurrence in the foster family that induces stress and a reorganization of the family structure would be responded to with shifts in family cohesion and adaptability. These results tend to indicate that this is not the case. The families of this study seem to have a family style of interaction that allows for repeated reorganization of the family without noticeable shifts in family cohesion and adaptability. One possible explanation for this finding is that families which volunteer for foster child placements have a high "threshold for crisis definition." That is, these families may not define successive addition and departure of persons as stressful, but rather as routine and expected.

Further research is necessary to determine if foster families do indeed have a style of adjustment to stress and family reorganization that allows for a balanced level of adaptability and cohesion to be maintained in the face

of repeated entries and exits. More work should be done on what constitutes a "crisis" in the perception of foster families.

The often sacrificial work of foster families is complex and often misunderstood. Future research is necessary to adequately determine the characteristics that optimally benefit these families while facing the array of difficult situations they voluntarily handle.

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Appendix A

Description of Study for Foster Parents and Foster Parent Volunteer Response Form

FOSTER PARENT EDUCATION

Characteristics of Foster Families

In conjunction with our educational workshops for foster parents, we also want to look at how such a family adjusts to the challenges of foster care. Since there are so few families that are willing to accept the responsibility of foster care, we believe that the families that are willing to be foster families have special characteristics and abilities. With this in mind we are looking at family characteristics that allow your family to adjust and succeed with not only the challenge of parenting your biological children but also your foster children.

If you can assist us in identifying and understanding how your family has made the adjustment to foster care, we may be able to help others do the same.

If you are willing to volunteer to assist us with this project we would ask each member of the family to confidintially fill out a questionnaire that takes about twenty minutes. Then we would ask each family member to return their questionnaire to us seperately in a self addressed, stamped envelop that we will provide.

It is our estimate that children under the age of 8 - 10 years may be unable to respond adequately or confidentially.

No names will be placed on the questionnaire and no individual responses will ever be released. <u>All information is confidential</u>. The responses of a large nember of families (or group responses) are what we will focus on, not individual responses.

These questionnaires will be mailed to you at a later date.

Your cooperation is very much appredíated.

Yes, our family is interested in participating in this study of identifying characteristics of foster families.

Name (Husband) _____ (Wife) _____

Biological Child(ren) _____

Foster Child(ren) _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

(Collected by phone)

1. How long have you been foster parents?_____

2. How long have you been married to your present spouse?_____

3. How old are you?_____and your spouse?_____

4. How many years of schooling have you completed?_____and your spouse?_____

5. What are the names of your natural children living at home?

_____and their ages	_____and their grade in school	
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. Do you have any natural children living outside your home?_____

How many _____ How long have they been living out of your home?_____

7. What are the names of the foster children living in your home?

_____his/her age	his/her grade in	how long has he/she been	how long has he/she been	
_____	_____school	_____in foster	_____in your home?	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

8. How many new persons have come to live in your home (including relatives) in the past year_____ past 2 years_____?

9. How many persons have lived in your home but left to live somewhere else (including family members) in the past year_____ past 2 years_____.

10. All total, how many foster children have you had in your care?_____

11. Are there any of the children in your home above the age of 12 who would be unable to complete a questionnaire?_____

"Your family's participation in the Kansas State Foster Parent Education Project study of 'The Characteristics of Foster Families' is greatly appreciated. I'm sure you are aware that social workers make eyarly evaluation of each foster family. We realize these social workers evaluations are simply one piece of information. That is shy we are asking each family member for their perceptions of your family. It would be helpful to us if you would agree to allow us to compare this information with that of the social worker. May we have your permission to contact your social worker for this information?_____ If yes, what is the name of your foster care social worker?_____

Within the next month we will mail to you questionnaires to be completed by your family. Your confidentiality is guaranteed and we will provide stamped self-addressed envelopes for each person's responses. We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance.

Appendix C

Cover Letter Sent to Foster Families

KSU
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Family and Child Development

Justin Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
913-532-5510

We, the Foster Parent Education Project staff, are grateful to you and your family for agreeing to participate in our study of the characteristics of foster families that enable you to confront numerous unique circumstances.

Enclosed are envelopes for each identified family member. Each person has a number beside their name. It is important that each person complete the questionnaire having the same number as that beside his/her name. This enables us to know that each person has completed the questionnaire assigned to him/her and also assures confidentiality for each person.

Instructions for filling out the questionnaire are in each family member's envelope. We suggest that each member wait to open their envelope until they have approximately 20-30 minutes to complete it.

Enclosed with each questionnaire is a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Each member of your family can individually enclose their completed questionnaire in this envelope and return it to us as soon as possible. This assures confidentiality among family members.

If any or all the addressed persons in your family choose not to complete this questionnaire, please return the blank questionnaire in the self addressed, stamped envelope. If you have any questions regarding this project please feel free to contact Jon Benigas or Pam Marr at 913/532-5519.

Again, we thank you and your family for your participation in this part of the Kansas State Foster Parent Project.

Sincerely,

Pamela C. Marr

Pamela C. Marr
Coordinator

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Family Characteristics in Foster Families

Informed Consent Statement

The purpose of this study is to help develop a better understanding of foster families. Training and planning with foster parents can be improved as their experiences and attitudes are better understood. Your participation will help us gain that understanding.

Your answers will be treated confidentially, therefore, you are not to put your name on the questionnaire. Your participation in the study is voluntary. There is no physical activity or risk associated with this study. In regard to mental or emotional risks, while the questions deal with general information, it is possible that one or more may stimulate painful memories or thoughts. If there is a question you do not wish to complete, you are free to omit that question or to quit working on the questionnaire at anytime. In any report from this study, no name will identify any individual participant.

Project staff will be happy to answer any questions regarding this study.

There are two copies of this statement. Please sign both copies (below). Keep the top copy for your file and leave the second copy attached to the questionnaire.

I have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this study as described above. I understand the conditions associated with the study and I hereby voluntarily agree to participate.

_____ _____

Date Signature

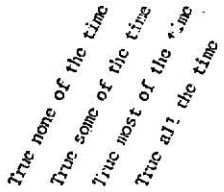
Appendix E

FACES and Well-Being

Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire that has been specifically written and developed for families. It specifically looks at the ways family members interact with each other.

After you have read the statement place an X in the box that most appropriately describes the way you see your family. See example below:



Example

[1] [2] [3] [4] 1. Family members are concerned with each other's welfare.

If you feel the members of your family are concerned with each other's welfare all the time, place an X in box 4. If they are concerned with each other's welfare most of the time, place an X in box 3, and so on. If they are concerned sometimes mark box 2 and if you feel they are not concerned mark box 1.

By the word family in each of these questions, we mean all the persons you are living with now.

When you complete this questionnaire, please mail it back to us in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that is provided.

Thank you for your time and participation.

True none of the time	True some of the time	True most of the time	True all the time		
1	2	3	4	1.	Family members are concerned with each other's welfare.
1	2	3	4	2.	Family members feel free to say what's on their mind.
1	2	3	4	3.	We don't have spur of the moment guests at mealtime.
1	2	3	4	4.	It is hard to know who the leader is in our family.
1	2	3	4	5.	It's difficult for family members to take time away from the family.
1	2	3	4	6.	Family members are afraid to tell the truth because of how harsh the punishment will be.
1	2	3	4	7.	Most personal friends are not family friends.
1	2	3	4	8.	Family members talk a lot but nothing ever gets done.
1	2	3	4	9.	Family members feel guilty if they want to spend some time alone.
1	2	3	4	10.	There are times when other family members do things that make me unhappy.
1	2	3	4	11.	In our family we know where all family members are at all times.
1	2	3	4	12.	Family members have some say in what is required of them.
1	2	3	4	13.	The parents in our family stick together.
1	2	3	4	14.	I have some needs that are not being met by family members.
1	2	3	4	15.	Family members make the rules together.
1	2	3	4	16.	It seems like there is never any place to be alone in our house.
1	2	3	4	17.	It is difficult to keep track of what other family members are doing.
1	2	3	4	18.	Family members do not check with each other when making decisions.
1	2	3	4	19.	My family completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.
1	2	3	4	20.	Family ties are more important to us than any friendship could possibly be.
1	2	3	4	21.	When our family has an argument, family members just keep to themselves.
1	2	3	4	22.	Family members often answer questions that were addressed to another person.
1	2	3	4	23.	The parents check with the children before making important decisions in our family.
1	2	3	4	24.	Family members like to spend some of their free time with each other.
1	2	3	4	25.	Punishment is usually pretty fair in our family.
1	2	3	4	26.	Family members are encouraged to have friends of their own as well as family friends.
1	2	3	4	27.	Family members discuss problems and usually feel good about the solutions.

True none of the time	True some of the time	True most of the time	True all the time		
1	2	3	4	28.	Family members share almost all interests and hobbies with each other.
1	2	3	4	29.	Our family is not a perfect success.
1	2	3	4	30.	Family members are extremely independent
1	2	3	4	31.	No one in our family seems to be able to keep track of what their duties are.
1	2	3	4	32.	Family members feel it's "everyone for themselves".
1	2	3	4	33.	Every new thing I've learned about my family has pleased me.
1	2	3	4	34.	Our family has a rule for almost every possible situation.
1	2	3	4	35.	We respect each other's privacy.
1	2	3	4	36.	Once our family has planned to do something, it's difficult to change it.
1	2	3	4	37.	In our family we are on our own when there is a problem to solve.
1	2	3	4	38.	I have never regretted being with my family, not even for a moment.
1	2	3	4	39.	Family members do not turn to each other when they need help.
1	2	3	4	40.	It is hard to know what other family members are thinking.
1	2	3	4	41.	Family members make visitors feel at home.
1	2	3	4	42.	Parents make all of the important decisions in our family.
1	2	3	4	43.	Even when everyone is home, family members spend their time separately.
1	2	3	4	44.	Parents and children in our family discuss together the method of punishment.
1	2	3	4	45.	Family members have little need for friends because the family is so close.
1	2	3	4	46.	We feel good about our ability to solve problems.
1	2	3	4	47.	Although family members have individual interests, they still participate in family activities.
1	2	3	4	48.	My family has all the qualities I've always wanted in a family.
1	2	3	4	49.	Family members are totally on their own in developing their ideas.
1	2	3	4	50.	Once a task is assigned to a family member, there is no chance of changing it.
1	2	3	4	51.	Family members seldom take sides against other members.
1	2	3	4	52.	There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my family.
1	2	3	4	53.	When rules are broken, family members are treated fairly.
1	2	3	4	54.	Family members don't enter each other's areas or activities.

True none of the time
True some of the time
True most of the time
True all the time

[1] [2] [3] [4] 55. Family members encourage each other's efforts to find new ways of doing things.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 56. Family members discuss important decisions with each other, but usually make their own choices.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 57. If I could be a part of any family in the world, I could not have a better match.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 58. Home is one of the loneliest places to be.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 59. In our family, it's important for everyone to express their opinion.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 60. Family members find it easier to discuss things with persons outside the family.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 61. There is no leadership in our family.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 62. We try to plan some things during the week so we can all be together.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 63. Family members are not punished or reprimanded when they do something wrong.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 64. In our family we know each other's close friends.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 65. Our family does not discuss its problems.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 66. Our family doesn't do things together.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 67. If my family has any faults, I am not aware of them.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 68. Family members enjoy doing things alone as well as together.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 69. In our family, everyone shares responsibilities.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 70. Parents agree on how to handle the children.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 71. I don't think anyone could possibly be happier than my family and I when we are together.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 72. It is unclear what will happen when rules are broken in our family.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 73. When a bedroom door is shut, family members will knock before entering.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 74. If one way doesn't work in our family, we try another.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 75. Family members are expected to have the approval of others before making decisions.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 76. Family members are totally involved in each other's lives.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 77. Family members speak their mind without considering how it will effect others.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 78. Family members feel comfortable inviting their friends along on family activities.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 79. Each family member has at least some say in major family decisions.

True none of the time	True some of the time	True most of the time	True all the time		
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	80.	Family members feel pressured to spend most free time together.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	81.	Members of our family can get away with almost anything.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	82.	Family members share the same friends.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	83.	When trying to solve problems, family members jump from one attempted solution to another without giving any of them time to work.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	84.	We have difficulty thinking of things to do as a family.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	85.	Family members understand each other completely
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	86.	It seems as if we agree on everything.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	87.	It seems as if males and females never do the same chores in our family.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	88.	Family members know who will agree and who will disagree with them on most family matters.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	89.	My family could be happier than it is.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	90.	There is strict punishment for breaking rules in our family.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	91.	Family members seem to avoid contact with each other when at home.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	92.	For no apparent reason, family members seem to change their minds.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	93.	We decide together on family matters and separately on personal matters.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	94.	Our family has a balance of closeness and separateness.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	95.	Family members rarely say what they want.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	96.	It seems there are always people around home who are not members of the family.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	97.	Certain family members order everyone else around.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	98.	It seems as if family members can never find time to be together.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	99.	Family members are severely punished for anything they do wrong.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	100.	We know very little about the friends of other family members.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	101.	Family members feel they have no say in solving problems.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	102.	Members of our family share many interests.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	103.	Our family is as well adjusted as any family in this world can be.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	104.	Family members are encouraged to do their own thing.
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	105.	Family members never know how others are going to act.

True none of the time | True some of the time | True most of the time | True all the time

[1] [2] [3] [4] 106. Certain individuals seem to cause most of our family problems.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 107. I don't think any family could live together with greater harmony than my family.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 108. It is hard to know what the rules are in our family because they always change.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 109. Family members find it hard to get away from each other.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 110. Family members feel that the family will never change.

[1] [2] [3] [4] 111. Family members feel they have to go along with what the family decides to do.

112. Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days? Would you say you are: 1. VERY HAPPY____ 2. PRETTY HAPPY____ 3. NOT TOO HAPPY____

Here are some words and phrases we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. For example, if you think your present life is very boring, put an X in the blank right next to the word "boring". If you think it is very interesting, put an X in the blank right next to the work "interesting". If you think it is somewhere in between, put an X where you think it belongs. Put an X in one blank on every line.

113.	BORING	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	INTERESTING
114.	MISERABLE	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	ENJOYABLE
115.	HARD	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	EASY
116.	USELESS	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	WORTHWHILE
117.	LONELY	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	FRIENDLY
118.	EMPTY	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	FULL
119.	DISCOURAGING	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	HOPEFUL
120.	TIED-DOWN	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	FREE
121.	DISAPPOINTING	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	REWARDING
122.	DOESN'T GIVE ME MUCH CHANCE	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME

123. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Put an X where you think it belongs.

COMPLETELY SATISFIED	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	COMPLETELY DISSATISFIED

Appendix F

Scoring Procedure for FACES

Scoring Procedures for FACES

Computation of scores for FACES provides total scores for each family member in three areas or dimensions; (1) Adaptability Dimension Score, (2) Cohesion Dimension Score and (3) the Edmonds Social Desirability Score.

The FACES answer sheet provides the person scoring the results with a number for each answer. The answer is then multiplied bythis number to provide weighted scores for each sub-scale within each dimension. Under family adaptability, the sub-scales are: assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation, roles, rules and systems feedback. Under family cohesion, the sub-scales are: emotional bonding, independence, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision-making, interests and recreation.

According to Olson, Bell and Portner (1978; p.6), the breakdown of these scores are as follows:

Family Cohesion: The possible range for this scale is 162 to 303.
(271-303) indicates high cohesion
(231-270) indicates balanced cohesion
(162-230) indicates low cohesion

Family Adaptability: The possible range for this score is 109 to 236.
(199-236) indicates high adaptability
(167-198) inidcates balanced adaptability
(109-166) indicates low adaptability

Social Desirability: The range is from 20-48, with the mean equal to 35.

To determine the total family score on each of these areas, each individual's score in each area of adaptability, cohesion, and social desirability is added up and divided by the number of participating family members. This allows for families to beo compared with other families.

Appendix G

Scoring Procedure for Index of Well-Being

Scoring Procedure for Index of Well-Being

The Index of Well-Being is computed by summation of two independent sub-scores that comprise this Index. The first sub-scale is identified as the "Index of General Affect". This scale contains 10 sematic differential items scored on a 7 point scale. Two of the items are not included in the scoring of this Index. They are "easy" vs. "hard" and "free" vs. "tied-down". Each respondent's "Index of General Affect" is the mean of their responses on the remaining 8 items.

The second sub-scale in the Index of Well-Being is a 1 item "Overall Life Satisfaction" question. This question is also on a 7 point scale; 1 being completely dissatisfied to 7 being completely satisfied.

Computation of the Index of Well-Being follows the following formula: Index = 1.1 x ("Overall Life Satisfaction) + 1.0 x (Index of General Affect).

Another independent item, a 3 point scale of overall happiness, is not included in the computation of the Index of Well-Being.

Appendix H

Foster Care Social Worker

Evaluations of Foster Parents

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Research Office

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To social worker:

"We would like you to respond to the following questions regarding Mr. and Mrs. ____X____.

Rate the following questions on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being uncharacteristic of the couple and 4 being a characteristic of the couple.

1. Attitudes concerning needs of children are flexible.....1 2 3 4
2. Gives evidence of flexibility in behavior regarding children's needs.....1 2 3 4
3. Attitudes concerning problems of children are flexible.....1 2 3 4
4. Gives evidence of flexibility in behavior regarding children's problems.....1 2 3 4
5. Is adaptable in expectations of children.....1 2 3 4
6. Is adaptable in use of help when it is needed to meet problems of family living.....1 2 3 4
7. Has capacity to be giving without prospect of immediate returns.....1 2 3 4

Respond to the following questions as indicated.

8. Would you describe this parental coalition.....1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   very weak ... very strong
9. How supportive do you see the parents being of each other in their discipline of the children...1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   unsupportive of each other ... very supportive each other
10. Overall, how successful do you think these foster parents have been..

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely among the worst	worse than majority	average	Much above average	Among the best I've known

Appendix I

Scoring of

Foster Care Social Worker

Evaluations of Foster Parents

Scoring of Foster Care Social Worker Evaluations of Foster Parents

The first 7 items of this evaluation are adopted from a flexibility sub-scale in the Potential for Foster Parenthood Scale (Touliatos & Lindholm, 1977). The range of scores on this sub-scale are from 28 to 7, with 28 being excellent; 27-25 being good; 24-21 being fair; and 20 or less being poor.

Scores from the two questions regarding parental coalition and discipline of the children will be combined for a "Parental Functioning" score.

The final question regarding successful foster parenting will be an independent item.

INTERACTION IN FOSTER FAMILIES: AN APPLICATION OF THE CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS

by

Jonathan E. Benigas

B. S., Evangel College, 1976

AN ABSTRACT OF

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1980

Abstract

The results of this study indicate that self-reported family cohesion and adaptability (as measured by FACES) have no association with the level of family functioning as measured by social workers evaluations and the Index of Well-Being. Furthermore, balanced versus non-balanced patterns of family cohesion and adaptability failed to be associated with the number of persons "entering" and "exiting" the home in the recent past, the total number of persons in the home, the length of the shortest current foster child placement or the age of the foster parents. The implicit assumption throughout this thesis has been that any occurrence in the foster family that induces stress and a reorganization of the family structure would be responded to with shifts in family cohesion and adaptability. These results tend to indicate that this is not the case. The families of this study seem to have a family style of interaction that allows for repeated reorganization of the family without noticeable shifts in family cohesion and adaptibility. One possible explanation for this finding is that families which volunteer for foster child placements have a high "threshold for crisis definition." That is, these families may not define successive addition and departure of persons as stressful, but rather as routine and expected.

Further research is necessary to determine if foster families do indeed have a style of adjustment to stress and family reorganization that allows for a balanced level of adaptability and cohesion

to be maintained in the face of repeated entries and exits. More work should be done on what constitutes a "crisis" in the perception of foster families.

The often sacrificial work of foster families is complex and often misunderstood. Future research is necessary to adequately determine the characteristics that optimally benefit these families while facing the array of difficult situations they voluntarily handle.