

SIBLING INTERACTION IN FIRST-BORN ADULTS:  
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under  
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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband,  
Luis, and my son, Joseph, who always told  
me that I could finish the project  
and  
to my mother, Josie Fowler, who helped me  
to bear my burdens so that I could.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In 1970, Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg published The Sibling, in which the authors summarized the results of existing research on siblings. Most of the researchers had focused on birth order and sibling status on personality and intellectual development. At that time, much evidence had been gathered concerning sibling interactions. However, the findings were not consistent. Perhaps the paradoxical findings led to a temporary decrease in the amount of attention paid by researchers to sibling interactions and effects (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982). In 1982, Lamb and Sutton-Smith published Sibling Relationships: Their Nature and Significance across the Lifespan. This volume called attention to recent research findings and ongoing studies which testified to a resurgence of interest in sibling relationships and their formative significance. The authors identified some differences between the earlier research reported and that which was currently becoming more popular. These differences include the following:

1. A shift from the effects of the sibling relationships to the study of formative processes.

2. The appreciation of the variability of sibling relationships among different cultures and the need to study inter- and intraspecies diversity and similarity.

3. The increasing concern with development across the life span, rather than only in childhood (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982).

The life span view proposes that development is continuous, with individuals constantly adjusting to the competing demands of socializing agents and endogenous tendencies. Even those researchers concerned only with interactions among young children directly or indirectly acknowledged that all relationships change over time and that any effects of the interactions may be eliminated, reinforced, or altered by later experiences (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982).

Mussen, Conger, and Kagan (1974) stated that 80% of American children grow up in family contexts which include brothers and sisters. Sibling interaction, according to Redwine (1980), has been characterized as including ambivalence, rivalry, jealousy, and solidarity. Siblings have a desire to be set apart as unique and yet to be treated equally. Siblings can be cruel, selfish, loyal, and loving. Individuals form their self-esteem based on their own behavior and characteristics as well as those

of their siblings. It is certain that one is never neutral towards a sibling (Mussen et al., 1974). The repertoire of positive and negative memories represented by the years of childhood, adolescence, and youth surely influences one's actions, thoughts, and attitudes in adult life.

From a comprehensive review of available literature on sibling interactions it becomes apparent that sibling rivalry is a dominant theme in such literature. Vestal (1979) stated that daily interactions between siblings and between siblings and parents make jealousy and conflict unavoidable. While the conflicts should never be dramatized or aggravated, they are part of the socialization process of children. The methods which are used by children for coping with and resolving problems can set behavior patterns they will use as adults.

Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1970) have pointed out that it is not known whether the differences produced by other siblings enter permanently into their repertoires or not, although there is some evidence they do. In spite of the implications that childhood sibling rivalry experiences may have lasting effects on the adult, the nature of adult sibling relationships and evidence of important aspects of the sibling solidarity question have been neglected in research (Redwine, 1980).

### Statement of the Problem

The problem for the study was: How do selected first-born adult participants describe their lived experiences of sibling interactions?

### Justification of Problem

Ross and Milgram (1982) studied adult sibling relationships with emphasis on three specific areas: (a) perception of closeness, (b) sibling rivalry, and (c) critical incidents and their consequences to the sibling relationships. The authors wanted to know what it meant to be close to a brother or sister and what brings about the closeness. They also wanted to know why some siblings are closer than are others and why they are closer at particular times in their lives. Ross and Milgram wanted to know if the feelings of closeness changed throughout the life span in identifiable patterns. They wanted to know how sibling rivalry affects sibling relationships, who starts it, how long it lasts, and if it can have beneficial as well as detrimental effects. The authors also wanted to know about expected and unexpected critical incidents in the siblings' lives, how they change feelings of closeness, sibling rivalry, and general sibling relationships, and their short- and long-term consequences. The authors were not able to find the answers to their questions

in the literature. Seventy-five adult volunteers between the ages of 22 and 93 years participated in their research study on the topic of adult sibling relationships. The participants were all white and middle-class, with varying education levels and from several cultural groups. The participants met in small group sessions where they discussed appropriate topics related to sibling interaction.

The participants found closeness difficult to discuss because of its abstractness; they also found sibling rivalry difficult to discuss because of the social stigma associated with it. Seventy-one percent of the 55 participants who were included in the group sessions admitted to experiences of rivalrous feelings toward their brothers and/or sisters, usually arising in childhood or adolescence. Forty-five percent of the adults considered their rivalry still active in their adult years (Ross & Milgram, 1982). If almost half of the study participants (Ross & Milgram, 1982) considered sibling rivalry still active in their adult years and 80% of American children have siblings (Mussen, 1974), then sibling rivalry becomes a phenomenon of interest for most of the population.

Psychoanalytic and child-observation studies have suggested several ways in which the sibling relationship may influence the adult personality. These include

becoming fixated over the birth of a sibling, sustained effects on character formation and sexual identity, and linking of the sibling relationship with the oedipal situation (Holmes, 1980). Many researchers believe that in the sibling experience, children first learn the costs and rewards of interacting with peers and begin to assume permanent adult roles (Farber & Jenne, 1963; Koch, 1957; Krout, 1939; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Sutton-Smith, Roberts, & Rosenberg, 1964; Toman, 1961).

According to Cumming and Schneider (1961), Garique (1956), and Irish (1964), bonds between siblings extend throughout life and are second only to mother-child ties. Adams (1968, 1971) suggested that sibling rivalry does not end, but is transformed when siblings leave home. Allan (1977) presented a strong case for the closeness of sibling relationships in adulthood and old age. Yet, even he theorized that if adult siblings were forced to live together or work closely together again that latent feelings of rivalry would re-emerge.

The phenomenon of sibling rivalry is of interest for people throughout the life span. Schvaneveldt and Ihinger (1979) stated that it is reasonable to assume that the experiences childhood siblings share have a profound influence on their socialization and personality

developmental processes. The theorists were surprised that such a fundamental experience has been given so little conceptual, empirical, and theoretical attention. Clearly, the questions need to be researched.

Since the nursing profession deals with human responses to actual or potential problems of their clients (ANA Social Policy Statement, 1980), nursing care is offered to clients across the life span of human development. Sibling interactions are assumed to have life span implications. This leads nurses in most clinical areas to consider the influence that sibling rivalry exerts on client responses.

A review of nursing literature yielded only two articles concerning sibling interactions. Both articles were written by Bliss (1980a, 1980b), who assisted in developing sibling classes at the time of the birth of a new sibling. Bliss reported that parental response to the sibling classes had been primarily favorable. The parents believed that the classes gave their children an understanding of the development and birth of the new sibling, reduced the older child's anxiety about their mother's hospitalization, and helped the child feel more involved in the pregnancy.

Nursing curricula could include a life span human development approach to sibling relationships. Nurses in maternal and child clinical areas need an awareness of possible lifetime implications of unresolved sibling conflict. Much effort could be exerted in including sibling interaction information in expectant parent and parenting skills classes. Furthermore, nurses who render care to adult clients need to include sibling interaction data in their patient assessments. Such data may explain specific aspects of the adult client's behavior. Geriatric nurses can utilize knowledge of sibling interactions as they assess family support for their elderly clients. Finally, nurses can initiate and support further research on sibling interactions in adults.

#### Theoretical Framework

The literature review on sibling rivalry did not yield a single, widely-accepted theoretical framework. The most comprehensive work discovered was a rudimentary theoretical framework developed by Schvaneveldt and Ihinger (1979), which was based on a summarization of available research on the topic. The authors commented on the lack of empirical studies to support some of their propositions. Their framework assumes that sibling groups share the same characteristics as other face-to-face groups.

The sibling group has a communication network, shares power and affective relations with clique assignments, operates according to norms, roles, and functions, and generates cooperation and conflict.

The theorists made five major assumptions:

1. The family is viewed as having three separate, semiclosed subsystems, including spousal, parent-child, and sibling-sibling.

2. Siblings are both recipients and instigators of socialization. Family interaction is a dynamic arena in which each member affects all the others.

3. Sibling interaction is a continuous developmental process not limited to the early "critical" years.

4. The nature of family composition and interaction strongly influences the personality development and social behaviors of members.

5. Sibling groups have distinctive group properties as characteristics.

Schvaneveldt and Ihinger (1979) advocated the following propositions:

1. Each child who enters a family results in more openness in the system.

2. When the parents are solidly united, and no child is ever allowed to form a winning coalition with

one parent against the other, one may expect to see strong coalitions among the children.

3. When there is a dominant parent, a coalition is likely to form between the weaker parent and a child, which may lead to the formation of sibling coalitions against the favored child or to other very complicated patterns.

4. When both parents have equal power but do not have a strong coalition, sibling rivalry will be intense and bitter and children compete for the shifting coalition opportunities offered by their parents.

5. The age of the child and parents' efforts in preparing the child for a new sibling affect the outcome of the dethronement process for a young child.

6. A sibling's personality development involves the dual process of identifying with siblings in certain areas and rejecting or differentiating from them in other areas.

7. Sibling interaction involves mutual regulation and serves the purpose of guiding behavior in such a way that maximizes rewards and reduces costs leading to an increase in sibling solidarity.

8. Sibling interaction is encouraged by the exchange of goods and services by siblings and this increases sibling solidarity.

9. Sibling solidarity is enhanced by the degree that siblings serve as a bridge for one another between their world and the world of adults.

10. When parents view sibling pioneering activities [defined by Bank & Kahn (1975) as one sibling initiating a process, thereby giving permission to other siblings to follow suit] positively, and pioneering sibling will be reinforced for such behavior and harmony will be generated within the family.

11. When parents view sibling pioneering activities negatively, conflict will arise between parents and the pioneering.

12. To the degree that siblings provide essential mediating services between parents and other siblings, a sibling departure from the home can provide clues for assessing the emotional well-being of siblings left in the home.

13. The greater the number of younger siblings in the home the more a child is expected to do household chores.

14. The larger the family size, the greater the number and specialization of roles.

15. As personality or status attributes (age, sex) vary, children will use such attributes to establish their own unique identity within the family.

16. There is an inverse relationship between the number of siblings in the family system and the impact of parents on siblings.

17. Assimilation of sex roles in the sibling complex is facilitated by the presence of opposite--sex members.

18. When parents arbitrate with consistency according to justice norms there will be less conflict between siblings.

19. The degree of sibling affect that arises from sibling interaction is influenced by such variables as age, sex, spacing of siblings, and degree of parental cohesiveness.

20. When parents give authority and responsibility to a sibling, other siblings will perceive this designation as legitimate. The siblings will grant power and authority to that sibling.

21. To the degree that a sibling holds resources that are perceived as desirable by other siblings, that sibling's power and authority will increase.

22. To the degree that a sibling uses coercive power to intimidate another sibling, alienation in the sibling subsystem will increase.

The data collected for the present study focused on the following theoretical propositions:

3. When there is a dominant parent, a coalition is likely to form between the weaker parent and a child, which may lead to the formation of sibling coalitions against the favored child or to other very complicated patterns.

4. When both parents have equal power but do not have a strong parental coalition, sibling rivalry will be intense and bitter as children compete for the shifting coalition opportunities offered by their parents.

16. There is an inverse relationship between the number of siblings in the family system and the impact of parents on siblings.

18. When parents arbitrate with consistency according to justice norms there will be less conflict between siblings.

19. The degree of sibling affect that arises from sibling interactions is influenced by such variables as age, sex, spacing of siblings, and degree of parental cohesiveness.

These propositions reflected the dominant themes from the available literature on sibling interactions. While the present study focus was on 5 of the 22 propositions, support or nonsupport for any of the propositions was planned for discussion.

#### Assumptions

The following were assumptions of the study:

1. Sibling rivalry is a universal phenomenon (Gogan, Koocher, Foster, & O'Malley, 1977).
2. Sibling interaction is a continuous life span developmental process (Lamb & Sutton-Smith, 1982).
3. The participants in the study were able to remember their childhood sibling interactions.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were explicitly defined as follows:

1. Sibling interaction--"the social behaviors involved when two or more persons interstimulate each other by any means of communication, and hence modify each other's behavior" (Schvaneveldt, 1966, p. 103). This definition has been operationalized as any influence exerted by one sibling upon another as described by the study participants.

2. Adult--a person between the ages of 40 to 50 years.

#### Limitations

The limitations noted for the study were as follows:

1. Only one geographic area was represented.
2. Within the adult age range, only one specific group was represented by the participants--40 to 50 years of age.
3. Participants may have demonstrated differing abilities to recall past experiences.
4. Relationships between participants and the researcher (colleague, acquaintance, friend, or stranger) may have resulted in the participant being more or less willing to share personal experiences.

#### Summary

Sibling interaction is a phenomenon with implications for the life span. Researchers are beginning to recognize the need to study the phenomenon from the viewpoint of various age ranges rather than only from the response of the young child at the time of a new sibling's birth. There is much yet to be learned about long-term consequences of sibling rivalry. Chapter 1 has presented a theoretical framework, assumptions, definition of terms, and limitations of the current study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Western society, important changes between parents and children are marked by the rituals of infant baptism, circumcision, confirmation, bar mitzvah, and graduation. Bonds between husband and wife are announced by engagements, weddings, and divorces. There are no rituals to celebrate sibling bonds or legal means to make or break them (Roberts, 1982).

When psychologists Bank and Kahn (1982) began to study bonds between siblings, they found themselves inadequately prepared to understand the emotionally charged dramas that were being enacted in their counseling rooms. These psychologists had been taught that sibling influence on each other was temporary and that parents were the principal influences upon a person's identity formation. They had also been taught that the main influences upon an adult's life and self-identity were the adult's spouse, children, and job. These authors found prevailing theories of human development unexplainably silent about sibling interactions. Bank and Kahn developed a theoretical framework concerning the sibling bond, but before doing

so, they conducted an extensive literature review and discovered the following approaches to sibling rivalry:

1. Psychotherapists have tended to focus on the rivalry for the love of a parent during early childhood (Levy, 1937).

2. Family system experts, emphasizing sensitivity to group dynamics and reciprocal social influences in the family, view siblings as a subsystem, but many family experts ignore the subsystem's special rules and effects (Bank & Kahn, 1982).

3. Birth-order researchers have claimed that an individual's order of birth greatly dictated how personality would develop (Adler, 1928). Bank and Kahn (1982) stated that 30 years of birth-order researchers have compiled a mountain of inconsistent data. Schooler (1972) asserted that sampling error, failure to control for socioeconomic status, and demographic makeup of populations either neutralize or dismiss most of the reported relationships between birth order and certain dependent variables.

4. Family sociologists have found that there are sex differences in the way siblings structure their relationships or that at various stages of life "sociability" and "solidarity" characterize sibling relationships (Cumming & Schneider, 1961). Since sociologists have relied on

questionnaires or interview methods with large groups of individuals, sociologists have often failed to portray the individual's actual sibling interaction experiences (Bank & Kahn, 1982).

Bank and Kahn (1982) suggested three reasons why their questions about sibling interaction could not be answered from existing research and theory. The reasons included:

1. Few studies had the focus simultaneously on sibling relationships and the parent relationship.
2. Researchers had not attained close familiarity with siblings over an extended period of time.
3. Few studies had been conducted during sibling crisis periods.

Although there is little agreement on the entire presentation of sibling interactions, most researchers and/or theorists agree that a predominant theme in sibling interactions is rivalry and conflict between siblings. From available literature, several themes concerning sibling rivalry that will be discussed in this chapter include suggested causes of sibling rivalry, some individuals at risk for developing sibling rivalry, behaviors that maintain sibling rivalry, parental approaches to

manifestations of sibling rivalry, and long-term implications of resolved and unresolved sibling rivalry.

#### Causes of Sibling Rivalry

Adler (1928) attributed sibling rivalry to the older child's "dethronement" or loss of power and importance in the family that occurred when a new sibling joined the family. The older child knows that he is the sole object of his parents' concern and consequently feels his power and influence in the family. After a second child comes along, the household begins to revolve around the second child. According to Adler, the older child is always striving in many ways to recapture his old situation of power and importance in the family. He may try to overcome the obstacle by fighting. Neisser (1951) suggested that there are four predominant causes for the resentment that overtly or covertly characterize the feelings that occur between siblings. These causes included the following:

1. The interaction of opposing forces that exist in every human being.
2. The child's desire to possess one's parents completely.
3. The child's preference for receiving rather than giving.

#### 4. The competitiveness of today's society.

According to Neisser (1951), adults as well as children experience the strains and stresses of the conflicting pulls. Much of what occurs between siblings is the result of these opposing feelings. Children demonstrate this conflict frequently when they antagonize their own siblings, but will immediately defend the same sibling from an outsider's aggression or insult. Neisser's second suggested cause has two aspects. It is the child's desire to have the parents to himself coupled with the fear of being deserted by them. Only with maturity can the young child understand that there is enough love to go around if it is shared.

Neisser (1951) wrote that the ability to give freely is one of the characteristics of an emotionally mature person and is beyond the capability of a child. It is only a short step, for the jealous child, from not liking to give to not liking the person to whom he is forced to give.

The fourth cause suggested by Neisser (1951) is the competitive world that exists. Neisser questioned whether society's competitiveness caused parents to teach competition to their children or if teaching competition to children had made society competitive. Whichever

it is, parental approval is conditioned by some success and doing well usually does not mean the child is doing his best, but doing better than others.

In a study of adult siblings by Ross and Milgram (1982), the participants talked about two types of sibling rivalry: that initiated by adults and rivalry initiated by siblings. Adult-initiated rivalry is thought to begin in childhood. Parents are the major initiators, but grandparents and other adults may also contribute. This type of rivalry involves adults preferring one sibling over another. Two dynamics identified were overt comparison and covert comparison. The overt comparison can be either positive or negative and has the intent of providing models of positive behavior for siblings. Whether it is positive or negative, the young perceiver believes that the comparison child is more acceptable to the adult. The covert comparison is an adult's preferential treatment of another child. Again, the sibling not preferred perceives that the adults place a greater value on the comparison child (Ross & Milgram, 1982). Sibling-generated rivalry includes vying for parents' attention, recognition, and love, as well as a more general juggling for power and position among siblings (Ross & Milgram, 1982).

Ross and Milgram also reported that the dimensions on which sibling rivalry are experienced reflect the values of society. The most frequently observed dimensions included achievement, intelligence, physical attractiveness, social competence, and maturity. These dimensions differ in terms of their frequency, intensity, and duration.

To summarize, sibling rivalry can be initiated by adults or siblings and is concerned with siblings competing for a desirable commodity such as attention, affection, or power.

#### Individuals at Risk for Developing

#### Sibling Rivalry

A classic research study conducted by Foster (1927) in Boston yielded a profile of a jealous child, which indicated those children who are at the highest risk for developing sibling rivalry. Foster reviewed 50 case histories of children who attended the habits clinics in Boston. The children came from varying socioeconomic levels and racial groups. Their ages ranged from 1 to 6 years. The clinics were operated by the Community Health Association of Boston and by the Massachusetts State Division of Mental Hygiene. The two groups of clinics shared one director and had joint staff meetings leading to uniform social histories and clinic procedures.

Cases were selected according to a presenting symptom of jealousy. The resultant data were compared with 100 nonjealous children from five clinics in Boston. The findings of Foster's study were as follows:

1. Girls were more likely to be jealous than were boys.

2. The most jealous child was the oldest child in the family.

3. The most jealous-prone age was from 3 to 4 years.

4. The most jealous children were found to have a higher incidence of selfishness, temper tantrums, preference for one parent over another (with no sexual basis for choice), sleep disturbances, eating disturbances, enuresis, nail-biting, thumb-sucking, and masturbation.

Sewall (1930) conducted a second classic sibling rivalry study for the purpose of identifying some of the causes of the attitude of sibling jealousy. Sewall studied 70 children in Chicago who were either enrolled in one of several nursery schools or in the preschool clinic of a juvenile research institute. Her participants' ages ranged from 12 months to 5 years and 10 months at the time of the sibling's birth. Twenty-four of the children had not demonstrated any problem behavior while 46 had been referred to the clinic because of some behavior

problem. Sewall concluded that the factors that contribute to jealousy seem to lie primarily in the home situation. The predominant factor that results in sibling jealousy is the lack of consistency in discipline. Sewall found the most jealous prone age was from 18 months to 3 years. She found no sex nor intelligence factor in the amount of jealousy experienced. There was more jealousy with fewer number of children in the family. Poverty increased the amount of jealousy. Sewall also discovered that what the child is told about the new sibling's arrival is immaterial in the development of sibling rivalry.

In summary, from two old, but classic, studies on sibling rivalry, there is some agreement about the most age-prone child for developing sibling rivalry. There is lack of agreement concerning the actual cause of the attitude and its relationship with variables such as sex and intelligence.

#### Manifestations of Sibling Rivalry

There was a general consensus in the literature review concerning the ways in which sibling rivalry presents itself. There were four predominant behavioral response patterns identified that occur among older children when a new sibling is born into a family. The patterns included the following: (a) aggressive responses, (b) regressive

responses, (c) developmental spurt, and (d) development of an imaginary playmate.

Robertson and Robertson (1971) studied four young children who were fostered under optimal circumstances during their mother's hospitalization for the birth of a new sibling. All four children demonstrated enough aggression toward their mothers, on the mothers' return home, as to disturb harmonious mother-child relationships.

Thomas, Chess, and Birch (1968) studied the effects of important socializing experiences in 110 normal young children. They found that in 18 families into which a new sibling was born, 10 children became aggressive toward the new sibling.

In their textbook, Children: Development and Relations, Smart and Smart (1982) described the older child's aggression toward the newborn as direct (actual attacks and/or verbalizing a desire to "get rid of the baby") or indirect attacks (accidents of rough play, coughing in the newborn's face, or hovering very closely to the newborn). The aggression may be directed toward toys as well as toward the mother. Levy (1937) observed one boy whose relationships with his peers closely paralleled his relationship with his newborn sister. Levy surmised that this is a childhood pattern. Holmes (1980) in an article entitled,

"The Sibling and Psychotherapy: A Review with Clinical Examples," observed that the child may turn his aggression inward by becoming whinny, miserable, and withdrawn.

In summary, the literature review of behavioral changes of an older child in response to the birth of a newborn sibling revealed that the older child may direct his aggression toward his mother, his newborn sibling, his toys, his peers, or even himself.

Stone and Church (1973) in their textbook, Childhood and Adolescence: A Psychology of the Growing Person, wrote that the older child may respond to the birth of a new sibling by regression or turning back to more infantile ways of behaving. The child may whine or cry easily, cling to the parents, may talk baby talk or stop talking completely, or may begin to experience toileting accidents after having become toilet trained. Moore (1969) reported that a common regression is an increased desire for oral gratification which appears as a renewed desire for a bottle, pacifier, or for sucking the thumb. Rollman-Branch (1966) suggested that when a new sibling arrives, the older child may identify with the newborn child, leading to regression and loss of independence or he may identify with the parent, moving into the direction of greater autonomy and ego-development. In summary, a toddler

may regress in any developmental area when he/she is faced with a new sibling to whom he/she must adjust.

A third response of a toddler to a new sibling is a developmental spurt or a sudden mastery of a developmental task. Holmes (1980) wrote that the older child may cope with jealous feelings by becoming "mother's little helper." In the previously cited research study by Thomas et al. (1968), of the 18 families who reported the addition of new siblings, 5 of the older children showed an improvement in their social responses. Therefore, while some children regress in response to a new sibling's arrival, others choose to become more independent.

The fourth behavioral response of the older child toward a new sibling is the development of an imaginary companion (Nagera, 1969). Nagera reported the case histories of some children who attended the Hampstead Clinic over a several year period. The children were not referred to the clinic because of the imaginary companion, but during the course of the therapy, the existence of the companion became manifested. Three of the children developed their imaginary companions immediately after the birth of a sibling. Based on the three examples, Nagera stated that it was tempting to assume that some sensitive children found their mothers' limited withdrawal of

attention (following the birth of the new sibling) more than they could handle and they reacted to the situation by creating a more faithful and reliable figure in the form of the imaginary companion.

In summary, the toddler may respond to the birth of a new sibling by becoming aggressive toward his/her parent, peers, sibling, toys, or self. He/she may respond by regressing temporarily to a more infantile development level. The toddler may experience a sudden developmental spurt or develop an imaginary playmate to spend time with while his/her mother is occupied with the newborn. Black (1952) concluded that whatever a toddler's specific jealous reactions happen to be, the reactions demonstrate the toddler's anxiety about his/her place in the family. Black believed that the jealousy may end with a patient, reassuring attitude on the part of the jealous child's parents.

#### Behaviors that Maintain Sibling Rivalry

Ross and Milgram (1982) were the only researchers who identified dynamics that maintain sibling rivalry. The most frequently mentioned dynamic was the parents' continued favoritism, which was expressed as preferential treatment of one child or covert comparison between siblings. A second dynamic was competitive behaviors between

the siblings. These behaviors covered a wide range of behaviors, from subtle and creative ways of reminding siblings of their status to all-out conflict over power and control. These behaviors irritated, annoyed, and otherwise upset siblings but could also be fun. Others created or maintained deeper hurts.

A third dynamic according to Ross and Milgram (1982) was a sibling's belief that he/she was being excluded from valued sibling or family interactions. Some siblings responded to the feeling of exclusion by removing themselves either psychologically or geographically from the family.

Sibling rivalry can extend beyond the relationship between two siblings and involve other parts of the nuclear or extended family. Ross and Milgram's (1982) fourth dynamic is the assignment of a specific label to a sibling. When the sibling internalizes the label and acts the role assigned to him, family thoughts, communications, and behaviors become structured to accommodate the role. The family involvement tends to lock the child permanently into the assigned role. Two favorite labels are "intelligent" and "stupid."

The fifth dynamic mentioned by Ross and Milgram (1982) was a silent agreement between siblings not to talk about their rivalries. Several reasons explain

this dynamic. The first is that the comparison sibling may be unaware of the rivalry. The second reason is the speculation that to reveal feelings of rivalry to a brother or sister who is perceived as stronger or as having the upper hand in the relationship increases one's vulnerability in an already unsafe situation.

In summary, behaviors that maintain sibling rivalry have been identified as parents' favoritism, competitive sibling behaviors, feeling left out of family interactions, the assignment of labels to siblings, and a reluctance by siblings to discuss sibling rivalry.

#### Parental Responses to Sibling Rivalry

The literature review revealed three predominant parental responses to manifestations of sibling rivalry. Jensen (1962) observed that some parents deny the existence of sibling rivalry among their children. Wolf (1962) reported that some parents respond negatively to expressions of sibling rivalry. Negative responses included scolding or punishing the child for jealous expressions or ignoring his demands for attention. Elias (1968) recorded that parents' most appropriate responses to the jealous child include understanding the occurrence of sibling rivalry, allowing the child to temporarily regress, and protecting family members from harm caused by aggressive outbursts

of the child. Mussen, Conger, and Kagan (1974) identified some factors that may help lessen sibling jealousy such as good interpersonal family relationships, consistent disciplinary measures, reassuring affection for the displaced child, and consistent gratification of the child's needs (especially his dependency needs).

In summary, parents may choose to respond to expressions of sibling rivalry in their own children by denying its presence, responding negatively to the behavior prompted by it, or by responding positively to the behavior prompted by it. Positive responses allow the older child to have his needs met in order to return to his previous or a more mature developmental level.

#### Long-Term Effects of Sibling Rivalry

There is not a consensus in the literature review concerning the long-term effects of sibling relationships. Bank and Kahn (1975) wrote that siblings continue to influence one another even when they have had little or no communication. Cicirelli (1977) found that during young adulthood and the child-rearing years, siblings tend to drift apart and communicate indirectly through their parents.

Cumming and Schneider (1961) chose a stratified random sample of 220 adult residents between the ages

of 50 and 80 years in a metropolitan area of Kansas City for the purpose of studying adult sibling relationships. Fifteen of the above population were chosen as a representative sample. The genealogies of the sample were described and the participants were interviewed about kinship.

The authors were interested in six areas of inquiry:

1. Patterns of sociability.
2. Patterns of mutual aid in crisis.
3. Power, authority, and influence in the kinship system.
4. Solidary groupings within the system.
5. Co-residential patterns.
6. The history of the marriage and nuclear family.

Several findings from this research study were as follows: in the nuclear family the parent-child bond was manifestly strong but was followed closely by the sibling bond. There appeared to be a shift in sibling solidarity over time. During childhood the parent-child bond is the strongest. After marriage, the bond with parent is replaced with the bond with one's own children. When parents become management problems, a reactivation of strong sibling bonds may occur as a result of an initial crisis, but ultimately the sibling bond may act as a basic foundation of socioemotional interaction.

Foster (1927) found that among adults who could remember their childhood experiences, there were many children who conceal their jealousy in every possible way. Often they assume an attitude of unconcern and indifference. Such an attitude removes them from the battle.

McDougall (1921) noted that jealousy produced two types of reactions. One person may hide and sulk, while another will push forward and demand attention.

Young and Wilmott (1962) conducted a field study of 3 years duration in Bethnal Green and Greenleigh in East London. Their purpose was to determine what happens to family life when people move to an estate (suburb). The families who moved to the estate were compared with the families who remained in a borough (city). One of the findings of the study was that with the death of a mother, her memory served to unite the siblings. Even if the siblings were not able to share their mother's company, they could share her memory.

In a study conducted by Form and Geschwender (1962), the authors determined that workers were more satisfied with their jobs when they felt that they were doing better than their brothers and vice-versa. They observed that many researchers consider the competitiveness and comparison

between siblings to be typical of adult sibling relationships.

Hilgard (1951) reported in an article that there were several clinical cases which led to the author's conclusion that a mother's childhood sibling rivalries can persist into the present and result in an immature parental response to her children's rivalries. The presence of children who are potential rivals to each other in a new generation reactivates the mother's unresolved sibling rivalry as she identifies with one or another of her children or one or the other of her parents. Freud (1969) believed that sibling relationships became important factors in determining an individual's social attitudes since contemporaries outside the family are treated like siblings.

In a study in 1977, Cicirelli investigated the extent of help that elderly interviewees received from their siblings. Children were seen as the primary sources of help. However, when the data were examined separately for different age groups, siblings and other relatives became more important sources of help as people grew older. On the other hand, Berezin (1977) observed frequent quarrels among siblings as they discussed the care of their elderly parents. He interpreted their expressions

as irrational and hostile and concluded that the behavior was a regression to earlier rivalrous relationships. Finally, Laverty (1962) observed that in a home for the aged, when a resident suddenly began to criticize a new arrival, debased him/her in the eyes of other residents, or complained to the administration about him/her, a possible unresolved sibling rivalry problem may have surfaced.

The only researchers who mentioned positive long-term consequences of sibling rivalry were Bank and Kahn (1982). They suggested that sibling rivalry helps a child learn how to manage and resolve conflict, promotes feelings of loyalty, and defends the child against imagined or real aggression.

#### Summary

Although many researchers/theorists have had something to say about the phenomenon of sibling rivalry, there were only a few definitions of the term. The definitions that do exist are in general agreement. Several authors discussed causes of sibling rivalry. Each author seemed to be operating from a slightly different frame of reference than the others, but the suggested causes were complimentary. There was much agreement in the literature concerning

manifestations of sibling rivalry and parental responses to these manifestations in the child.

The area of the literature review on sibling rivalry about which there was little agreement was the area concerning the long-term consequences of sibling rivalry. Some authors seemed to believe that if sibling rivalry is appropriately resolved in childhood, that is the end of it. Others discussed possible long-term implications of the phenomenon. There were several suggestions as to what the long-term implications actually were. Several authors mentioned only negative long-term implications, while one group of authors suggested that there could also be some positive long-term implications.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The study used a descriptive, phenomenological approach to the lived experience of sibling interactions as reported by 10 first-born adults between the ages of 40 and 50 years. Leininger (1985) wrote that a cultural movement is taking place in the manner that humanists and scientists are philosophizing and discovering the nature of knowledge, reality, and expressions of human experience. Leininger asserted that the new movement is calling for new ways of conceptualizing knowledge and experiences in order to discover the interrelationships of different phenomena from a broad holistic and changing perspective. Qualitative research methods offer new hope for the discovery of covert, subtle, and objective realities and truths about the meanings and expressions of various phenomena in individuals. Leininger (1985) stated that the goal of qualitative research is to document and interpret as completely as possible the totality of the phenomenon being studied in particular contexts from the participant's frame of reference.

One of the qualitative research methodologies that is gaining wider acceptance in the nursing profession is the phenomenological approach. Van Manen (1978-79) defined phenomenology as a movement in the social and human sciences, whose main objective is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced. He also stated that phenomenology results in the regaining of a fuller grasp of the nature and significance of lived experiences.

In the 1950s, a group of individual scholars combined efforts and became identified as the Utrecht School. The founder of the Institute for Didactic and Pedagogic Studies at the University of Utrecht was M. J. Langeveld. Langeveld's work is presently considered representative of the philosophic context of social and intellectual thought in which the phenomenological pedagogy of the Utrecht School is grounded. Langeveld's work was closely related to that of German pedagogic thinking which was inspired by the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger and by the social philosophic thoughts of Dilthey (Van Manen, 1978-79).

Van Manen (1978-79) defined "phenomenology" as "a movement in the social and human sciences, which has as its primary objective the direct investigation and

description of phenomena as consciously experienced" (p. 49). There is some agreement that phenomenology is both a method and a philosophy (Giorgi et al., 1971; Langeveld, 1972).

Van Manen (1978-79) asserted that the characteristic feature of the phenomenological method is the process of inquiry and theory-building by which assumptions concerning the concept of man, the nature of learning, and views of knowledge are continually brought to consciousness where they can be reflectively explained. Beekman and Muldeij (1977) viewed phenomenology as a countervailing force against the increasingly externalized experiences, void of all subjectivity, which dominate educational research journals. All researchers who consider themselves phenomenologists subscribe to Husserl's watchword "Back to the things themselves" (Van Manen, 1978-79, p. 51).

Smith (1968) stated that in the phenomenological method advocated by the Utrecht School, raw data are not analyzed for their interpretation of realities. Instead, these descriptions are treated as concepts which are sought to join other concepts in formulating propositions. This method also is concerned with the search for essences or ground structures of selected life-world phenomena (Van Manen, 1978-79).

Beekman and Mulderij (1977) identified three aspects of the investigative studies conducted by the Utrecht School, including:

1. Gathering of life-experience material.
2. Investigating the material for its descriptive-analytic forms (ground structures).
3. Formulations of recommendations and orientations to practical action.

Using the phenomenological approach, the researcher utilized a semi-structured interview method to obtain spontaneous descriptions of the subjective experience of sibling interactions. The descriptions were analyzed in order to identify the common elements of sibling interactions and to derive the essential structures of sibling interactions among first-born adults.

#### Setting

The setting for the interviews of the study took place in the participant's home, office, or the researcher's office. The researcher requested that the participant select the place and time for the interview to take place. The purpose of the choice of locations was to give the participant the opportunity to select the most comfortable and convenient location for the interview.

### Population and Sample

The population for the study included faculty and staff of a small private liberal arts university in the southwestern section of the United States. The invited sample (Fox, 1969) included volunteers and referrals from the population who met the following criteria: (a) male or female, (b) 40 to 50 years of age, (c) first-born child, (d) grew up in an intact nuclear family with only one sibling, and (e) agreed to participate in the study. Those persons who met the criteria and accepted the invitation to participate in the study became the sample (Fox, 1969).

"Deliberate selection is a process whereby the researcher directly and deliberately selects specific elements of the population as the invited sample" (Fox, 1969, p. 340). Fox (1982) also suggested that it is often sensible and simple to justify the use of a deliberate sample selection. According to Fox, if it is believed that a certain population contains elements of interest to a study, then the only way to assure the presence of these elements is to deliberately select them. Fox (1969) reported that since statistical analysis is not planned in some studies (such as this one), a bias-free selection is not a problem. The number of participants

in this study was determined by the emergence of themes and common concepts.

#### Protection of Human Subjects

Application was made to the Texas Woman's University Human Subjects Review Committee (Appendix A). Permission to conduct the study was granted. A written explanation of the study (Appendix B) was distributed in a faculty meeting at a small private liberal arts university in the southwestern United States. Faculty members who met the stated criteria were asked to contact the researcher. Several faculty members referred friends to the researcher. All participants who volunteered were given a further oral explanation of the study (Appendix C). Risks and benefits were explained. Written consent forms were presented prior to the interview to be read and signed (Appendix D). A copy of each was given to the participant. The participant's name was not used on the typed transcript of the taped interview. Each participant was assigned a code number which was used for identification purposes. The tape recordings were destroyed as soon as they were transcribed to protect the participant's confidentiality and anonymity. Neither the participant's name or the name of the university from which the sample was obtained is revealed in this report.

### Instrument

A researcher-developed tool was utilized (Appendix E). The tool requested demographic information and consisted of three open-ended questions which were derived from the theoretical framework. Interview prompts in the form of key words and questions were formulated to be used as needed (Appendix F). The instrument had not been used prior to the present study. Testing for validity and reliability was initiated with the pilot study.

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with a sample of two adults who met the stated criteria for the research study. The two pilot study participants were interviewed using the researcher-developed interview guide. Both interviews were tape-recorded. The recording was transcribed immediately following the interview. The transcriptions were analyzed by the researcher for significant statements and formulated meanings. Two registered nurses who have Ph.D. degrees were asked to study the same two transcripts and to judge the researcher's analysis technique. Both nurses had engaged in qualitative research and had experience with phenomenological research data analysis. One of the validators totally agreed with the researcher's

analysis. The other validator had one suggestion for increasing clarity of the procedure. She also questioned the researcher's interpretation of two significant statements, but on the whole, was in agreement with the researcher's interpretation. The analysis technique was clarified and the transcripts were re-analyzed using the adjusted technique.

Interviews were conducted with the remaining participants until the lived experience of sibling interactions among first-born adults began to produce themes and common concepts. After the 10th participant, the researcher believed that the phenomenon had been described. The sample included three male and seven female participants. The same procedure for collecting data and treatment of data that was utilized in the pilot study was used for the major study.

#### Validity and Reliability

Leininger (1985) contended that validity in qualitative research refers to the gaining of knowledge and understanding of the true nature, essence, meanings, attributes, and characteristics of a particular phenomenon. Leininger wrote that the goal for qualitative research validity was knowing and understanding a phenomenon, while the goal for quantitative research validity was

measurement. Leininger acknowledged that criterion-related approach to qualitative validity assessment does not focus on how well an instrument measures a particular thing, but upon how well a phenomenon is explained. Leininger submitted that concurrent validity refers to the ability to demonstrate congruency, meanings, and syntactical relationships of findings with regard to subjective, inferential, intuitive, symbolic, objective, and other factors. Finally, Leininger wrote that the predictive validity criterion should be based upon the researcher's ability to differentiate an abstract experimental and empirical phenomenon of interest for the purpose of predicting human life ways and/or behaviors.

Stern (1985) stated that reliability can be established by asking the respondents who participate in the study to evaluate the findings. The respondents are the real experts. If a researcher has grasped the truth of the respondent's lived experience of a particular phenomenon, the respondent will demonstrate a positive response to the description of the experience.

Reliability was established by the study participants. After the researcher had identified the formulated meanings, the participants were asked to evaluate the researcher's interpretation of the participant's lived experience

with sibling interactions. There were a few points of clarification with the participants. For the most part, they were in agreement with the researcher's interpretations.

#### Treatment of Data

The analysis of the data was performed utilizing a procedure developed by Colaizzi (1978). Colaizzi wrote that his technique was only one of many methods that can be used for phenomenological data analysis. Colaizzi's steps included the following:

1. Record the participant's description of the phenomenon of interest.
2. Read all of the participant's descriptions in order to make sense of them.
3. Return to each description and extract from them phrases or sentences that directly pertain to the investigated phenomenon.
4. Try to spell out the meaning of each significant statement. This reformulation must discover and illuminate the meanings hidden in the various contexts of the investigated phenomenon which are mentioned in the original description.
5. Repeat the above procedure for each description and organize the aggregate formulated meanings into clusters

of themes. There is an attempt to allow for the emergence of themes which are common to all of the participants' descriptions.

(a) Refer these clusters of themes back to the original descriptions in order to validate them.

(b) Discrepancies may be noted among and/or between the various clusters.

6. The results of the steps listed above are integrated into an exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon.

7. An effort is made to formulate the exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon in as unequivocal a statement of identification of its fundamental structure as possible.

8. A final validating step can be achieved by returning to each participant and asking the participant if the researcher's findings reflect the participant's lived experience of the investigated phenomenon.

The researcher made one departure from Colaizzi's (1978) suggested procedure. Colaizzi suggested that the researcher return to the participants with the fundamental structure for the purpose of data validation. Riemen (1983) found that participants did not easily recognize their experiences in someone else's expression

though they were eventually able to see their experience in the expression. The researcher made the decision to return to the participants following the development of the formulated meanings in order to validate the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. The sample is described, followed by the presentation of the data related to the research question. Examples of data from each of Colaizzi's steps are presented. The descriptive identification of sibling interaction among first-born adults is presented in its entirety for all participants. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of the study.

#### Description of Sample

The sample of the study was composed of seven female and three male first-born adults who were faculty, staff, or referrals of the same of a small private university in the southwestern United States. Each participant had onl one sibling; grew up in an intact, nuclear family; was between the ages of 40 and 50 years; and agreed to participate in the study. After study risks and benefits were explained, all of the invited sample (Fox, 1969) agreed to participate in the study. The number of participants was determined by the emergence of themes and common concepts. The demographic data of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Sample

<u>Participant</u>			<u>Sibling</u>		Miles between siblings	Visits per year
#	Sex	Age	Sex	Age		
1	F	49	M	43	1,000	4
2	F	48	M	46	500	2
3	F	40	F	37	600	2
4	F	43	M	42	350	4-6
5	M	48	M	46	60	6
6	F	45	F	34	5	26
7	F	44	M	37	250	2
8	M	46	F	38	1,500	1
9	F	43	F	39	20	2-3
10	M	47	F	46	500	1

## Findings

The phenomenon to be investigated was: How do selected first-born adult participants describe their lived experiences of sibling interactions? A researcher-developed interview guide was used to conduct a semi-structured interview with each participant. Taped interviews with the 10 participants were transcribed (see Appendix G). The transcripts, which Colaizzi (1978) calls protocols, were read several times to get a general feel for the participants' lived experiences with sibling interactions from the adult perspective. Significant statements were extracted from the protocols and repetitions eliminated. A sample of significant statements is found in Table 2. (A complete listing of the significant statements may be found in Appendix H).

Meanings of each significant statement were formulated. These meanings were derived by reflection on the original protocols and the significant statements. A sample of the formulated meanings of the significant statements is presented in Table 3. (A complete listing of formulated meanings may be found in Appendix I).

The aggregate formulated meanings were organized into clusters of themes. The themes were allowed to emerge from those themes common to all subjects' protocols.

Table 2

Sample of Significant Statements

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Statements
1. Father major decision-maker.
2. Dad's discipline-effective; Mom's ineffective.
3. Joined with sibling occasionally to change parents' minds.
4. Parents were consistent disciplinarians.
5. Higher achiever in school; sibling not compared.
6. Sibling had more educational achievements.
7. Did not want to go beyond high school.
8. Achieved own goal of full-time homemaker and mother.
9. Felt sibling was slightly competitive for attention, but was not mean or jealous.
10. Remembers getting into crib with sibling as infant but mother not allowing.
11. Sibling looked up to participant because she was older.
12. Played in large neighborhood groups--not together often.
13. Both siblings were loved the same by parents.
14. Parents "stuck up" for sibling some to be sure she was included.
15. Grandfather was close and available to both.
16. Participant was peacemaker.
17. Dad was peacemaker.

(table continues)

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Statements

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18. Responsible for sister's care during group play.
19. Enjoyed mothering and bossing sister.
20. Sister resented participant's bossing.
21. Sister more likely to start new family trend.
22. Tried to please parents and do what was "right."
23. Sister was stubborn and had temper.
24. Sister chose lifestyle different from parents.
25. Participant still bosses sibling in one area.
26. Sister has had close relationship with parents but less open verbally.
27. Mother had problems accepting sibling's different lifestyle.
28. Dad disagrees with sister's lifestyle but accepts her as a person.
29. Sister and participant enjoy each other now.
30. Tries to refrain from offering sister advice.
31. Pleased when once gave sister counsel, she followed it, and had positive results.
32. Had very open relationship with father; he answered most of her important teenage questions.
33. Would not want to trade positions with sibling.
34. Wanted an older brother to "stick up" for her.

(table continues)

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Statements

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- 35. Remembers fighting a lot with sister.
  - 36. Once hit sister in anger but was horrified and immediately hugged her and apologized.
  - 37. Sister would not have allowed me to bully her.
  - 38. Does not think sister preferred to be first-born.
  - 39. Remembers complaining that sister got to do things earlier.
-

Table 3

Sample of Formulated Meanings

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Formulated Meanings
1. Father was major decision-maker, peacemaker, and more effective disciplinarian, while Mother was rather ineffective at disciplining the girls.
2. Parents were consistent disciplinarians and there was no "pitting" one parent against another, although the girls occasionally joined forces in trying to change parents' minds.
3. Perceived no favoritism by parents or grandparents, although believes parents made sure sister was included since she was smaller.
4. Participant was higher school achiever but believes that age and personality differences prevented sister from being compared with her. Sister continued education past high school. Participant is proud of her accomplishments and has no resentment since participant achieved her goal, which was to be a fulltime homemaker and mother. Felt sister was a little competitive for attention, but not mean or jealous.
5. Remembers being prevented from getting into sibling's crib when sister was newborn.
6. Played mostly in neighborhood groups but did not play much together. Participant was given responsibility for sister by Mom during play. Enjoyed bossing sister; sister resented it.

(table continues)

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Formulated Meanings

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7. Sister was adventuresome, stubborn, hot-tempered, and more rebellious than participant.
  8. Perceived self as peacemaker, compliant, and want to do what was "right."
  9. In high school, participant became very close to Dad, who answered most of her questions and always had time to listen to her. Sister was also close, but did not open up as much verbally with parents.
  10. Does not believe she or sister would prefer to change birth positions. Did notice that sister got to do things earlier than she had done them. Remembers complaining about that. Sees it differently now as her children complain about the same difference.
  11. Remembers fighting with sister over things but sees this type of interaction as normal and harmless.
  12. Feels closer to sister now and they enjoy each other's company. Still tends to tell sister what to do in one area of her life. Tries to refrain from it. Is very pleased about offering counsel once and sister followed it with positive results.
  13. Feels she is closer to parents now since she lives away and it is easier to please them for short periods occasionally. Sister is close to parents, but in a different way. Mother has not accepted sister's different lifestyle. Dad disagrees with the lifestyle but is more accepting of sister as a person and is proud of her accomplishments.
  14. Felt closest to sister during childhood and during sister's personal crisis.
-

The themes that were identified are presented in Table 4. These themes were validated by referring back to the original protocols to determine if the protocols contained anything not accounted for in the themes or if the themes proposed anything not implied in the original protocols. The results of the analysis to this point were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon of sibling interaction in first-born adults. These descriptions are presented in Table 5.

From the exhaustive description was developed the fundamental structure of sibling interaction in first-born adult siblings. The final step of the data analysis, termed the descriptive identification of sibling interaction in first-born adults, is found in Table 6.

#### Summary of Findings

Chapter 4 has presented the findings of the study. Eighteen themes emerged from the formulated meanings. The themes are listed below:

- initial response to sibling
- responsibility for sibling
- siblings as playmates
- parental discipline
- favoritism
- conflict

Table 4

Clusters of Common Themes

Themes	Statements
Initial response to sibling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was glad to have brother.</li> <li>2. Was slightly aggressive with brother when he was a newborn but does not know if that behavior exhibited jealousy or immaturity.</li> <li>3. Remembers being prevented from getting into sister's crib when she was a newborn.</li> <li>4. Earliest recollection of brother is very very proud of him.</li> <li>5. Remembers being excited about sister's birth.</li> <li>6. Was excited to have a brother since mother had lost three babies in between; wanted a companion. initial response to brother was disappointment because she didn't see much potential in him.</li> <li>7. Had gotten used to being an only child, but joined family in being glad to have a sister.</li> <li>8. Was told by parents that he responded to sister's birth by throwing things into her crib. Believes that is a natural response when one has been the center of attention for over a year.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Responsibility for sibling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Felt as if her brother was "her baby" as she dressed him in baby clothes, rocked him to sleep, and cooked his eggs for him.</li> <li>2. Feels some responsibility for brother as adults as well as in childhood--although responsibility has changed more to concern now.</li> <li>3. Brother lost his business and participant recommended brother try his line of work. Pleased that brother took his advice and is now very successful.</li> <li>4. Felt responsibility to protect him many times.</li> <li>5. Felt protective of brother in early childhood but roles were reversed when older.</li> <li>6. Didn't mind the responsibility for babysitting with sister.</li> <li>7. Still tends to tell sister what to do in one area of life. Tries to refrain from it. It very pleased about offering counsel once and sister followed with good results.</li> <li>8. Was given responsibility for sister during neighborhood play.</li> <li>9. Indicated a prevailing concern about the outcome of her sister's life--from childhood to adulthood but the concern is not a parental type of concern.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Sibling as playmates	10. Was never given any responsibility for sister and does not feel any now. If lived in same city, probably would be more involved in her life.
	11. Never had any responsibility for care of sister due to overseas mission appointment. Doesn't feel responsible for her now since she is financially secure and has more money than participant.
	12. Took a "big brother" attitude which meant he felt some responsibility for her choice of friends.
	13. Responsibility felt was probably self-initiated although it may have been subtly encouraged by parents.
	1. Participant and brother were close playmates when younger because they lived in the country and had no other playmates; later they became best friends.
	2. Played mostly in large neighborhood groups but did not play much together.
	3. Participant and brother played well together because they lived in the country and had few other playmates. When participant started to school, brother was viewed as a pest and much conflict began (from 6-10 years). After an accident, began to play again.

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Parental discipline	<p>4. They were closest in childhood about the 5th or 6th grade when he played with many of his sister's friends.</p> <p>1. Saw parents as consistent disciplinarians; neither parent administered more.</p> <p>2. Mother was major disciplinarian since Dad travelled; Dad was perceived as a stronger influence on children. Both preferred Mother's spankings and other discipline techniques to Dad's talkings. Parents were consistent.</p> <p>3. Parents were consistent disciplinarians and there was no "pitting" one parent against the other.</p> <p>4. Parents supported each other in discipline approaches.</p> <p>5. Both parents disciplined the children but Mom did the most due to Dad's job travels and hard work. Discipline was consistent.</p> <p>6. Mother as major disciplinarian since Dad travelled but parents supported each other.</p> <p>7. Dad made major decisions and Mom supported him; both were disciplinarians.</p> <p>8. Parents were consistent disciplinarians and did not play favorites; however, Dad had more difficulty</p>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
	being firm with sister and Mom with participant (male).
	9. Parents fought about many things, but did discipline consistently.
	10. Parents were very consistent in their discipline.
Favoritism	1. Parents showed no favoritism; grandmother favored participant.
	2. Perceived equal treatment by parents.
	3. Perceived no parental favoritism except sometimes "sticking up" for sister who was younger and smaller, to be sure she was included.
	4. When young children, both participant and brother thought each other was the favorite. Now perceives that there was none. Sees this as normal childhood thinking.
	5. Believed he may have been slightly favored because he was the first-born and was more like his father. Brother still indicates participant was favored.
	6. Didn't suspect any favoritism from parents.
	7. Was favored by grandparents because participant had heart problems as child and she would sit and listen to grandparents, while brother was too busy.

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
	<p>Believes they preferred to favor him because their eyes always lit up when they talked about him.</p> <p>8. Believes brother could just smile and get his way with Mother. Doesn't admit to parental favoritism. Was favored by grandparents.</p> <p>9. Favored by grandparents because they preferred boys at that time. No parental favoritism intended, but Dad may have preferred sister and Mom may have preferred participant (male).</p> <p>10. Believes he had a special relationship with Mom (Mama's boy) and sister had the same with Dad (Daddy's girl). Otherwise, no favoritism shown. Sister did fewer household chores because participant was more able to do more, not because she was lazy.</p>
Conflict	<p>1. Participant and brother had some spats, fights, and arguments, but remained close anyway.</p> <p>2. Remembers fighting with sister over things a lot but sees this type of interaction as normal and harmless. Once hit sister with hand and when she saw her handprint on sister's leg, was horrified and immediately apologized and hugged her.</p> <p>3. From age 6 to 10, participant bossed brother around and he responded by irritating her like punching her in the stomach. Once she hit him and cut his head. When she realized the seriousness of the accident,</p>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Sibling response to academic comparison	<p>she asked God to give her patience. The conflicts decreased after that.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Conflicts took form of minor disagreements with sister.</li> <li>5. From age 5 or 6 until participant left for college, they hated each other's guts. Participant provoked sister, who responded by throwing sharp objects at her.</li> <li>6. Doesn't remember much friction between sister and him but believes he instigated whatever there was.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Believes sibling resented being compared to participant in school.</li> <li>2. Brother was better achiever in school. He mentioned being compared with sister by teachers but it caused him no problem since his personality was so different from participant's.</li> <li>3. Participant was higher school achiever but believes that age and personality differences prevented sister from being compared with her.</li> <li>4. Remembers no school comparison of sibling.</li> <li>5. Doesn't believe brother was compared to her in school due to the different personalities they developed.</li> </ol>

(table continues) 64

Themes	Statements
Sibling influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perceived that she influenced brother more than he influenced her but he only did what she asked him to do when he wanted to anyway. Responded more favorably when he was older. She believes that he reasoned more as she did by then.</li> <li>2. Believes participant influenced sister more than she did him--mainly during childhood. By high school, stopped making suggestions because he thought she would not respond favorably.</li> <li>3. He influenced sister more since he has not had to depend upon her for anything.</li> <li>4. Enjoyed bossing sister. Sister resented it.</li> <li>5. Had few physical fights, but participant always bullied brother to get his way.</li> <li>6. After participant and sister became the same size, neither exerted much influence on the other. Each would have been the last person the other would have sought advice from.</li> </ol>
Family coalitions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant and parents formed coalition against grandmother to protect brother from grandmother's unkindness.</li> <li>2. The siblings occasionally joined forces to try to change parents' minds.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Family peacemakers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="695 278 1734 397">3. Felt grandparents went against Mother in giving participant her way though participant did not deliberately use this resource; she didn't have to.</li> <li data-bbox="695 421 1734 478">4. Siblings did not join forces to try to change parents' minds.</li> <li data-bbox="695 545 1734 571">1. Participant was peacemaker.</li> <li data-bbox="695 595 1734 652">2. Doesn't remember much friction and neither sibling was peacemaker.</li> <li data-bbox="695 677 1734 796">3. Neither parent was a peacemaker. The family system involved a lot of yelling and noisy bantering back and forth. Neither parent attacked anyone character.</li> <li data-bbox="695 820 1734 847">4. Mother was the peacemaker.</li> <li data-bbox="695 871 1734 897">5. Father was the peacemaker.</li> </ol>
Compliant sibling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="695 956 1734 1013">1. Perceives self as more compliant and attempting more to please parents than sibling.</li> <li data-bbox="695 1037 1734 1094">2. Viewed brother as staying closer to home and being more compliant.</li> <li data-bbox="695 1119 1734 1176">3. Neither sibling made a greater effort to please parents.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Desire to trade position with sibling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not remember being jealous of brother or wanting to change places with him as second-born.</li> <li>2. Doesn't believe either sibling saw more advantages in the other's birth position.</li> <li>3. Believes sister saw his family position as more advantageous than he saw hers.</li> </ol>
Pioneer role	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perceives sibling to be more adventuresome and more likely to do things outside the family customs.</li> <li>2. After adolescence, participant was more likely to start a new family trend and get into trouble.</li> </ol>
Closest to which parent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dad was stronger influence on siblings. Respected his discipline the most. Enjoyed his being home since he travelled (female participant).</li> <li>2. In high school, became very close to Dad. He waited up for her and answered almost all her questions.</li> <li>3. During (female) participant's teen years with their emotional ups and downs, there were sometimes fireworks between participant and Mom. Dad would always make things better--just by listening.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Sibling's concern for participant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Dad had more difficulty being firm with sister and Mom had more difficulty being firm with (male) participant.</li> <li>5. Sister was Daddy's girl and (male) participant was Mama's boy.</li> <li>6. (Female) participant was more like and closest to Mother. Sister was like and closest to Dad.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perceives that her concern for brother is deeper than his concern is for her and attributes the difference to his involvement in his business.</li> <li>2. Current relationship with brother is close. Believes she is more concerned about brother than he is about her just because he doesn't think to be and because of his involvement in business.</li> <li>3. Brother and I have come through for each other.</li> </ol>
Closest period	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was closer to brother in childhood than as adults. Attributes this to distance, different interests, and an unpleasant incident that occurred between them in which brother described participant in a negative manner.</li> <li>2. Were closest in childhood about the 5th or 6th grade when they played with my sister's friends.</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Explanation for lack of closeness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Feels closer to sister now that they are adults. Enjoy each other's company. Tries to refrain from giving advice.</li> <li>4. Siblings became close for the first time after they both married.</li> <li>5. Felt closest to sister during the loss of her second child and during the death of our father, to whom she was closest. But I didn't know how to comfort her.</li> <li>6. Felt closer to brother during a personal crisis he experienced during college. Gave much support to him when parents were unable to cope with the problem.</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Believes he and sister would have had a closer earlier relationship except for a wide age span which resulted in their living almost in two different worlds.</li> <li>2. Believes relationship with sister would have been different if they had lived in the same city.</li> <li>3. Participant was like Mother. Sister was like Dad. Since our parents fought so much, it makes sense that we fought also. We try not to spend any more</li> </ol>

(table continues)

Themes	Statements
Jealousy	<p>time together than is necessary since we have very different ideas about politics, philosophies of life, definitions of success, and our husbands are in very different kinds of occupations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perceived that grandmother was jealous of participant's interest in brother. Took it out on brother by being unkind to him.</li> <li>2. Does not remember being jealous of brother.</li> <li>3. Believes Mother was jealous of attention given by maternal grandparents for the 3 years they lived together. Attributes this to Mother's only child status and the leniency with which they treated participant whereas they had been strict with her.</li> <li>4. Was slightly aggressive with newborn brother. Does not know if that behavior exhibited jealousy or childhood immaturity.</li> </ol>

Table 5

Exhaustive Description

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Descriptive Statements
1. First-borns who were old enough looked forward to having a new sibling. One even expected the newborn to be an immediate companion. Some spoke of feeling pride in the sibling.
2. Siblings close in age to newborn exhibited symptoms of sibling jealousy--mainly regression and/or aggression toward the newborn. The siblings did not remember feeling jealous. Family members told them of their initial response to the newborn. The participant who saw newborn as a companion was initially disappointed because she did not see much potential at that time. The siblings who were far apart in age did not interact very much with the siblings.
3. First-born siblings feel varying degrees of responsibility for their younger siblings. This responsibility is not the same as parental concern. Some of the responsibility was delegated by parents--either overtly or subtly and other was self-initiated. The responsibility included actual physical care, babysitting, protection from outside aggression or harm, and giving counsel about choice of friends, childrearing techniques, or employment opportunities. Some of the first-born siblings found it difficult to stop feeling responsible and continuing to offer unsolicited advice to their adult siblings. For some, the responsibility turned into respect or concern. One younger sibling received minor injuries during two separate incidents while under participant's care and Mother

(table continues)

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Descriptive Statements

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- is perceived as having not forgiven participant yet, as Mother continues to discuss the incidents. Even though participant saw no way the accidents could have been avoided, participant continues to feel responsible for them as an adult. Siblings who never had any responsibility for younger siblings in childhood do not feel any responsibility for them as adults.
4. The first and second borns played better together if they were close in age and if there were no other children to play with.
  5. Participants believed that their parents were consistent disciplinarians. The major disciplinarians was the parent who was at home the most or the most effective disciplinarian. Even the parents who did not get along with each other were consistent disciplinarians. This consistency left little opportunity for forming sibling/parent coalitions. The regular exception to the consistency was that parents were more lenient with cross sex siblings.
  6. Favoritism was not shown by the parents except for "looking out for" younger siblings to be included and for showing some age and sex differences. Participants did not view such differences as preferential treatment. Some of the second-born siblings perceived the first-borns to be the parents' favorite. None of the first-borns thought their siblings were the parents' favorite. In one family, both siblings thought the other was the favorite in their younger years. When one sibling was more like one parent, the other sibling often saw that similarity as leading to favoritism. There

(table continues)

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Descriptive Statements

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were several instances in which grandparents clearly favored the participant but none where the younger sibling was preferred.

7. Conflicts engaged in ranged from minor disagreements, instigated by either participant or sibling to physical confrontation in which sibling threw sharp objects at participant or participant hit sibling in the head, cutting his head. Some participants saw the conflict as normal and harmless. The most intense conflict occurred in a participant who never felt any childhood closeness to her sibling. In at least two families, a similar type conflict is presently taking place between the participant's own two children. In the siblings who are widely spaced in age, there was little direct interaction or direct conflict.
8. Some of the second-born siblings followed their siblings in the same schools with some of the same teachers. When females followed and were the lower achievers they resented the comparisons more than males in the same situation. Female participants perceived that male siblings were not bothered by the comparison because they had other ways to call attention to themselves.
9. All except one of the participants said their influence or authority exerted on their sibling was greater than their sibling's influence on themselves. Some siblings responded more favorably when younger and some when older. One male participant avoided physical fights by always bullying his brother to get his own way. One participant equated influence with dependence of one sibling on the other. There seemed to be an implied enjoyment of the influence/authority exerted on the younger sibling. In the family with the most intense rivalry, the participant believed neither sibling influenced nor wanted to influence the other.

(table continues)

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Descriptive Statements

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10. Sibling coalitions that were reported were occasional and weak. Sibling/parent coalitions were almost nonexistent due to the consistent parental discipline approaches. Unusual coalitions described were grandparents and participant pitted against mother and parents and participant joined against strong grandmother to protect younger sibling from grandmother's unkindness.
11. Participants viewed themselves as peacemakers. No younger siblings were viewed in this role. One participant believed that there was so little family friction that no peacemaker was necessary in his family. In some families, the adult peacemaker was the mother, while in others it was the father. In noisy families where harmless bickering was the standard, adult peacemakers were not evident.
12. The first-borns viewed themselves as the more compliant siblings. One participant became more rebellious during teen years. His sibling had always been the more compliant of the two. In one family, there was an equal attempt made to please parents and follow rules by both siblings.
13. There was an overall satisfaction by the first-borns with their positions. None saw many advantages to being second-born. The only advantage listed was that parents often became more lenient in rearing a second child. There was some belief that the younger sibling would rather have been first-born.
14. In families with cross sex siblings, the children were closest to the cross sex parent. With same sex siblings, participants may have been closer to the same sex parent. In a few families no closest parent relationship was revealed.

(table continues)

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Descriptive Statements

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15. A few female participants indicated that they believed their adult concern for their younger male sibling was deeper than their sibling's concern for them. They suggested that the reasons were just not thinking to be concerned or intense involvement of their brother in his work. They were convinced of their brother's concern, however.
16. There was some variability in which period of life the siblings were the closest. In siblings where there was a wide age span or in which there had been little direct childhood interaction, siblings initially became close or became closer as adults. Some siblings have never achieved sibling closeness. Some have only been close or have been closest only during sibling's crisis periods. Participants may have been close to siblings during childhood but have become more distant during adulthood. Several factors were implicated to explain this occurrence.
17. Some explanations offered for adult lack of closeness included geographical distance, wide age spacing between the siblings, and a personal incident in which sibling described participant in a negative manner.
18. A few participants described initial jealous responses to their newborn siblings, but all seemed reluctant to label their responses as jealousy. No participants associated sibling conflict with jealousy. Participants who did mention jealousy included describing a grandmother who was perceived to be jealous of participant's attention given to her brother (grandmother had been very close to participant) and a participant's mother

(table continues)

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Descriptive Statements

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who was perceived to be jealous of participant when maternal grandparents were more lenient with participant than they had been with her mother as a child.

19. Participants were very aware of their parents' personalities and behaviors. They spent much time interpreting their behavior and motivations. They were also very aware of all that occurred between parents and siblings.
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Table 6

Descriptive Identification of Fundamental Structure of Sibling Interaction  
in First-born Adults

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Fundamental Structure

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First-born siblings grew up very aware of their parents' personalities and behaviors. They usually looked to the arrival of a new sibling with excitement and anticipation, some more specific than others. Responses to newborn sibling included behavioral symptoms of jealousy, disappointment at failed expectations, and pride in having a sibling.

The first and second-borns were better playmates if they were close in age and had no other playmates available. Siblings far apart in age had little in common.

Siblings who interacted the most also experienced the most conflict. The family dynamics may have set the pattern for the type of sibling conflict that occurred. When parents quarreled frequently, bitter sibling rivalry occurred. In quiet families, conflicts took the form of minor disagreements. Most siblings were able to resolve major disagreements and by adulthood had become closer. In one family, the siblings had never gotten along well and it does not appear that they plan to try. In another family, the participant remains "on guard" when around younger sibling because she desires to change his negative impression of her. A few participants are experiencing a repeat of their sibling rivalries in their own children.

(table continues)

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## Fundamental Structure

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First-born siblings either carry a prevailing sense of responsibility for their sibling throughout their lifespan or they feel no responsibility for their sibling at all. The responsibility may have been encouraged by parents or it may have developed spontaneously within the first-born. During childhood, the older sibling may have given direct care to their sibling or may have offered advice and/or counsel. As adults, first-borns struggle to keep from interfering in their sibling's life, but are pleased to be asked for counsel and especially if it is followed and gives positive results. The responsibility that is felt is not the same as parental concern. Some feel a definite change as the responsibility shifts more to concern or respect in adulthood.

Parental discipline was generally viewed as consistent with only age and sex differences recognized. These were viewed with approval. If favoritism occurred, it more likely was attributed to grandparents instead of parents. If any parental favoritism was suspected, the participant viewed themselves as the favored child. Coalitions formed were likely to be cross-sex sibling/parent coalitions with occasional sibling coalitions. All mentioned were weak coalitions, except in two families where there was an alignment of participant and grandparents against mother and another where participant and parents were aligned against grandmother to protect brother from grandmother's unkindness. These were strong and long-standing coalitions.

First-borns viewed themselves as concerned about pleasing adults (compliant) and more likely to be peacemakers. Peace may have either been made between parents or between sibling and parent. They described their younger siblings as more adventuresome ("pioneers") and less concerned about peacemaking. If the younger sibling was compared to participant in school, the usual

(table continues)

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### Fundamental Structure

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response was resentment. Adult peacemakers could be either mother or father--the choice appears to have been determined primarily by parent's personality characteristics.

Jealousy between siblings was rarely recognized although it was described in some cases. Jealousy that was mentioned was between grandmother and younger sibling and mother's perceived jealousy of participant.

Some first-borns thought the siblings were closest during childhood, others did not achieve closeness until adulthood, and still others were closest during family or sibling crises. Several explanations were offered to explain lack of closeness.

On the whole, first-borns were satisfied with their birth positions and had no desire to trade positions with their younger siblings. A few participants perceived that their siblings might like to have traded positions with them.

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sibling response to academic comparison

sibling influence

family coalitions

family peacemakers

compliant sibling

desire to trade position with sibling

pioneer role

closest to which parent

sibling's concern for participant

closest period

explanation for lack of closeness

jealousy

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The results of the investigation are discussed in this chapter as they contribute insight into the first-born adult's sibling interactions. The study findings are considered in relation to the theoretical framework on sibling interactions proposed by Schvaneveldt and Ihinger (1979). The chapter closes with conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study.

#### Summary

The research question for the study was: How do selected first-born adults describe their lived experience of sibling interaction? Since the research focused on the participants' perceptions, the phenomenological analysis of transcribed participant interviews was an appropriate methodology for the study. The seven-step method of analysis, proposed by Colaizzi (1978) was followed. The researcher held two concerns during the data analysis procedure. These included the following:

1. To remain true to the participant's original characterization.

2. To characterize the essential meaning fo what the participant's description revealed about the nature of the phenomenon.

The phenomenolgoical analytical process by which findings were arrived at was a reflective activity. Each participant had to have and/or be experiencing sibling interactions in order to contribute to the findings. The purpose of this study was to understand the adult participant's interactions with a sibling. The essential structure of adult sibling interactions was allowed to emerge and speak for itself. It was not translated or defined by any external criteria. The research remained faithful to Husserl's "Back to the things themselves" (Van Manen, 1978-79, p. 51).

#### Discussion of Findings

From the phenomenological analysis of the protocols, 18 themes of adult sibling interactions emerged. Themes that were anticipated, based upon the literature review, were the following:

initial response to sibling

siblings as playmates

parental discipline

favoritism

conflict

sibling response to academic comparison  
sibling influence  
family coalitions  
family peacemakers  
compliant sibling  
desire to trade positions with sibling  
pioneer role  
jealousy

Themes which were not expected, but which emerged included:

responsibility for sibling  
closest to which parent  
sibling's concern for participant  
explanation for lack of closeness

One theme which was expected but did not emerge from these participants was "dethronement." Adler (1928) attributed sibling rivalry to the older child's "dethronement" or loss of power and importance in the family that occurred when a new sibling joined the family. Some of the participants did not have clear memories of their response to the sibling's birth but as adults they all perceived themselves as having operated from positions of power and influence over their younger siblings.

The second expected theme which did not emerge was that of sibling rivalry. Though most of the literature supported the existence of the concept of sibling rivalry, the participants in the present study did not admit to the existence of this phenomenon.

The following discussion relates the fundamental structure of the first-born adults' interaction with sibling interaction to the literature review mentioned previously. Mussen et al. (1974) wrote that one is never neutral towards a sibling. The participants in this study had either very positive or negative feelings toward their siblings. Only one participant had a negative response.

Vestal (1979) stated that daily interactions between siblings and between siblings and parents make jealousy and conflict unavoidable. Even though the participants in the present study described these daily conflicts, they did not admit to feelings of jealousy. This point was made also in the study by Ross and Milgram (1982) in which adult siblings found sibling rivalry difficult to discuss. It was their view that this difficulty was related to the social stigma associated with sibling rivalry. The present study participants did not discuss sibling rivalry either.

In discussing causes of sibling jealousy, Neisser (1951) stated that children demonstrated conflicting pulls when they antagonize their siblings but immediately defend the sibling from an outside aggressor. One of the present study participants demonstrated this conflict.

Some researchers have concluded that bonds between siblings extend throughout life and are second only to mother-child ties (Cumming & Schneider, 1961; Garique, 1956; Irish, 1964). All the participants had clear memories of their sibling experiences. Cumming and Schneider (1961) also found that there are gender differences in the way siblings structure their relationships. This was demonstrated by the approval that the present study participants gave to their parents having cross-sex favoritism.

Ross and Milgram (1982) reported that the dimensions on which sibling rivalry are experienced in this society include achievement, intelligence, physical attractiveness, social competence, and maturity. One participant in the present study was favored because of her educational achievement. Another was favored because of his gender. Neisser (1951) wrote about the effect of competition on sibling rivalry. Each participant remembered immediately which sibling was the better academic achiever.

Ross and Milgram identified the existence of adult-initiated and sibling-initiated sibling rivalry. Two of their study participants mentioned that their sibling rivalry was initiated by adults, who were both grandparents. The others spoke more of sibling-initiated rivalry.

Sewall (1930) found the most jealous prone age to be from 18 months to 3 years. Four present subjects were between 1 and 3 years of age when their siblings were born. They all described behavioral responses which indicate the presence of sibling jealousy. In addition, one other participant was 4 years old when her sibling was born, and she indicated the same responses. The older participants did not describe any such responses. The behavioral responses reported by the participants in Sewall's study included aggression and regression. Smart and Smart (1982) described the older child's aggression as directed toward the newborn. Stone and Church (1973) described the toddler's regression as returning to infantile behavior. One participant in the present study spoke of wanting to get into the sibling's crib. Two participants either tried to hit or pat vigorously the newborn or threw objects at their sibling.

Ross and Milgram (1982) observed that assigning a label to one sibling can help maintain sibling rivalry.

One participant was labeled a scholar by her grandparents. The label remained in spite of her brother's almost equal educational achievements. In the same article, Ross and Milgram also mentioned that there is a silent agreement between siblings not to talk about their rivalries. This was borne out by the present study participants in the fact that they did not even mention sibling rivalry or feelings of jealousy.

Young and Wilmott (1962) discovered siblings who became closer after their mother's death. One participant in the present study and his sister, who had never been close due to the wide age span between the two of them and to favoritism shown to him by the grandparents, developed desires for increased closeness after the death of their last parent. Hilgard (1951) reported that a mother's childhood sibling rivalry can persist into the present. Two female participants in the present study demonstrated this observation as they described the presence of their children's rivalries. They appeared to take the same approach to their children as they had to the rivalry that existed between themselves and their siblings.

### Conclusions and Implications

The conclusions and implications of the present study are discussed as follows. The conclusions are tentative and speculative.

#### Conclusions

1. The five propositions of major concern were supported. The propositions included the following:

Proposition #3. When there is a dominant parent, a coalition is likely to form between the weaker parent and a child, which may lead to the formation of sibling coalitions against the favored child or to other very complicated patterns. Participant #9 appears to have given support for this proposition. The researcher tentatively concluded that the participant formed a bond with her mother, whom she perceived as powerless against a husband who "played dirty tricks on her." The researcher further speculated that this may have led to the younger sibling feeling excluded and then forming a coalition with her father and eventually an intense rivalry developed between the two siblings. Participant #3 described mother as powerless and ineffective in disciplinary techniques. The participant formed a weak coalition with her father. Her sister did not join forces with her mother, but neither did she have as close a relationship with either parent

as did the participant. Participant #7 formed a weak coalition with her father during the teen years. She mentioned that her brother and mother were very close. Since there were only two siblings in each family included in the study, there could not have been additional sibling coalitions formed in response to the sibling/parent coalition formed initially.

Proposition #4. When both parents have equal power but do not have a strong coalition, sibling rivalry will be intense and bitter as children compete for the shifting coalition opportunities offered by their parents. The most intense rivalry reported by participants in this study was by Participant #9. Her experience may give some support to this proposition because her parents were united in their discipline approach even though they agreed about little else. In that situation, the siblings lined up with opposite parents and appeared to play out their parents' conflicts through their rivalry.

Proposition #16. There is an inverse relationship between the number of siblings in the family system and the impact of parents on siblings. All the study participants gave support to this proposition as all of them were able to fully describe their parents' personalities,

motives, and many details about their interaction with each of the two siblings in the family.

Proposition #18. When parents arbitrate with consistency according to justice norms there will be less conflict between siblings. There was some conflicting data concerning this proposition. All the participants described their parents as consistent disciplinarians and none perceived unfair treatment by parents. However, Participants #4, #5, and #9 experienced varying degrees of sibling conflict. The researcher wonders if the participants remembered accurately or evaluated this area appropriately. The possibility exists that this proposition may not be true in all situations. The rivalry may have been related to some factor other than justice and consistent discipline.

Proposition #19. The degree of sibling affect that arises from sibling interaction is influenced by such variables as age, sex, spacing of siblings, and degree of parental cohesiveness. The age difference seemed to be a definite factor in all participants. Siblings closer in age experienced much more interaction, whereas, widely spaced children usually were not close in childhood. At the same time, conflict was more intense when the siblings were close in age. The more intense conflicts

occurred in three same-sex and one cross-sex duos. Gender may have been a factor in determining the amount of conflict experienced.

2. Since Propositions #6, #9, #10, #12, #13, and #14 deal primarily with family sizes larger than those included in the sample, the present study yielded no data to either support or fail to support them.

3. The remaining propositions will be discussed along with the data that yield some support for each of them.

Proposition #1. Each child who enters a family results in more openness in the system. Some support was presented for the proposition by Participants #3 and #9, who observed that their younger siblings were allowed to do things at an earlier age than they had been. They interpreted this as parents becoming more lenient. Participant #7 explained that her grandparents were more lenient when helping rear her than they had been with her mother as a child.

Proposition #2. When the parents are solidly united, and no child is ever allowed to form a winning coalition with one parent against the other, one may expect to see strong coalitions among the children. None of the parents included in this study were solidly united, although

they were described as consistent disciplinarians. Several participants gave some indication that the parents supported each other though they may not have been in complete agreement. None of the participants mentioned strong sibling coalitions.

Proposition #7. Sibling interaction involves mutual regulation and serves the purpose of guiding behavior in such a way that maximizes rewards and reduces costs leading to an increase in sibling solidarity. Participant #2 mentioned trying to get brother to stop "talking that way to mother." One can only speculate about what reward she would have received had he taken her advice. The reward might have been peace between him and his mother, since the participant would cry when they argued and preferred to have a peaceful atmosphere. The researcher also wonders if the responsibility that is felt by the participants is a trade-off for the influence and/or authority they were able to exert over the younger sibling. There is no evidence to support that speculation, however.

Proposition #8. Sibling interaction is encouraged by the exchange of goods and services by siblings and this increases sibling solidarity. Participant #4 discussed her high school days when she catered to her brother. He was a high school hero and she did all his household

chores for him. In return she felt much closer to him during that period.

Proposition #11. When parents view sibling pioneering activities negatively, conflict will arise between parents and the pioneering child. None of the participants seemed to view pioneering activities in a positive manner. Since that role was seen as negative it seems likely that there was some parental child conflict that resulted.

Proposition #15. As personality or status attributes (age, sex) vary, children will use such attributes to establish their own unique identity in the family. Participant #8 gave some support to this proposition. He was born into a family that preferred boys at that time. He was favored by his grandparents. The participant believes that his sister may have felt like a "second-class citizen."

Proposition #17. Assimilation of sex role in the sibling complex is facilitated by the presence of opposite-sex members. Several participants mentioned the existence of the cross-sex coalitions between parents and child. There was uniform acceptance of these coalitions, although they may not have been recognized as such during childhood. This study did not produce evidence that the sex role is facilitated by the presence of the cross-sex parents.

However, there is some indication that it is a natural occurrence when both sexes of parents are in the home.

Proposition #20. When parents give authority and responsibility to a sibling, other siblings will perceive this designation as legitimate. The siblings will grant power and authority to that sibling. Participant #3 shared that her younger sister would occasionally rebel against the participant's authority over her in the neighborhood play and would run home to her mother. Of the other participants who were given authority over sibling, no one else mentioned a failure to recognize the authority. In situations where the participant took on the authority on his own initiative, there seemed to be less cooperation from the younger sibling. The proposition received some support from the data.

Proposition #21. To the degree that a sibling holds resources that are perceived as desirable by other siblings, that sibling's power and authority will increase. All study participants gave support to this proposition as evidenced by the participants' responses to the question of which sibling influenced the other the most. All the first-borns felt they exerted more influence. Also, none of the older siblings wanted to be the younger,

while at least one younger sibling was perceived by the participant as wanting to be the older.

Proposition #22. To the degree that a sibling uses coercive power to intimidate another sibling, alienation in the sibling subsystem will increase. Participant #9 continually provoked her sister and the result was a physically aggressive response from the younger sister during childhood but also lack of closeness as adults. Participant #5 bullied his brother in order to obtain his own way. They became distant during their teenage years. They have been able to establish some closeness in adulthood.

#### Implications

Since the theoretical framework was so well supported, it appears to have value for use in nursing education, practice, and research. Nurse educators would do well to teach the importance of sibling interactions across the life span and not confine them to only the response of a child to a new sibling. Traditionally, sibling interaction has been considered to be a concern of the pediatric person primarily. This study demonstrates that sibling interaction is a life span concern. The study also gives some data about factors that increase and/or decrease the intensity of sibling rivalry.

In nursing practice, an understanding of factors that initiate and maintain sibling interaction and/or rivalry and some ideas of long-term effects of the phenomenon could help nurses understand certain behavior patterns of their clients. Client assessment tools could contain data about the existence of siblings and the nature of the client's relationship with them.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Some investigations that the present study logically suggest include:

1. Replication with a more diverse population. The religious background of the participants in this study seemed to have led to strong values about discipline of children and/or parental consistency. Another population may have yielded different results.
2. A phenomenological investigation of sibling and parent simultaneously.
3. A phenomenological investigation in which participants share their lived experience with sibling rivalry both as children and as parents.
4. A long-range phenomenological study of sibling interactions throughout different periods in the life span.

5. A phenomenological investigation of sibling interactions during crisis periods.

6. Since sibling rivalry did not emerge as a theme in the present study, an indirect approach might be appropriate.

APPENDIX A

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
 Box 23717, TWU Station  
 Denton, Texas 76204

1810 Irwood Road  
 Dallas Irwood Campus

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Name of Investigator: Mary Lee Fowler Becerril Center: Dallas  
 Address: 3302 Texas Drive Date: 6/26/85  
Dallas, Texas 75211

Dear Ms. Becerril:

Your study entitled Sibling Interaction in Adults: A Phenomeno-  
logical Approach

has been reviewed by a committee of the Human Subjects Review Committee and it appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of the individual's rights.

Please be reminded that both the University and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare regulations typically require that signatures indicating informed consent be obtained from all human subjects in your studies. These are to be filed with the Human Subjects Review Committee. Any exception to this requirement is noted below. Furthermore, according to DHEW regulations, another review by the Committee is required if your project changes.

Any special provisions pertaining to your study are noted below:

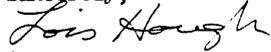
Add to informed consent form: No medical service or compensation is provided to subjects by the University as a result of injury from participation in research.

Add to informed consent form: I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RETURN OF MY QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTITUTES MY INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT IN THIS RESEARCH.

The filing of signatures of subjects with the Human Subjects  
Review Committee is not required.

  X   Other: 1. When informing the subjects that their tapes will be  
destroyed, reword to assure destruction within 30 days.  
2. When obtaining subjects' consent use Form C and B OR  
       No special provisions apply.

Sincerely,



Chairman, Human Subjects  
Review Committee

at       Dallas      

C but not both.

3. Second to last word on interview  
guide misspelled.

PK/smu/3/7/80

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF NURSING

PROSPECTUS FOR DISSERTATION

This prospectus proposed by: MARY LEE FOWLER BECERRIL  
\_\_\_\_\_ and entitled:

SIBLING INTERACTION IN ADULTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
APPROACH

Has been read and approved by the members of (his/hers) Research  
Committee.

This research is (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Is exempt from Human Subjects Review Committee review  
because \_\_\_\_\_

x Requires Human Subjects Review Committee review  
because the researcher will audio tape interviews with  
research participants.

Research Committee:

Chairperson Helen A. Bush  
Member Susan W. Leonard  
Member \_\_\_\_\_  
Member Debi C. Laughan-Walker  
Member Don Jennings

APPENDIX B

## Written Explanation of the Study

Dear Participant:

I am enrolled in the nursing doctoral program at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. In order to complete my dissertation requirement, I am conducting a small research study on the topic of sibling relationships from an adult's perspective. I need approximately 10 participants for my study. If you can meet the following criteria and would be willing to discuss the possibility of your participation in the study, please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as possible. The criteria for inclusion in the study are the following:

1. Male or female.
2. 40 to 50 years of age.
3. Grew up in an intact nuclear family with only one brother or sister.
5. Agree to participate.
6. Will be in the city sometime during the months of May and June of 1985.

If you agree to participate in this study, your name will be guarded and your identity will not be revealed. Any information you share will be utilized only for the purpose of data analysis. You will participate in an initial 1-hour interview. Following data analysis, I

will return to you for a brief interview to determine if I have expressed accurately your description of your sibling interactions. Thank you for considering my request.

Mary Becerril

APPENDIX C

### Verbal Explanation of Study

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. At a time and place convenient to you I will make an appointment to conduct an interview with you. I anticipate that the interview will take approximately 1 hour. I will need to tape record our conversation in order to not lose any of the information that you share. Your name will not be revealed on the tape. Following the interview, the content of the tape recording will be transcribed by a typist who is not familiar with your voice. Upon transcription, the tape will be destroyed. During the report of the data for the dissertation, your information will be discussed by use of an identification number only.

According to the policy at Texas Woman's University, I will need you to read and sign two consent forms. The forms will document that I have given you a verbal explanation of the study and give me permission for the tape recording.

Potential benefits of this study include adding to nursing and recalling some pleasant memories of your childhood. Potential risks include recalling unpleasant memories of painful childhood experiences and embarrassment

in revealing personal experiences with a non-family member.  
You are allowed to withdraw from the study at anytime  
without any penalty to yourself.

APPENDIX D



1. Brief description of the study (use additional pages or attachments, if desired, and include the approximate number and ages of participants, and where they will be obtained).

Open-ended questions (3) will be asked of approximately ten adult faculty members of a small private liberal arts university in the Southwest. Participation will be strictly voluntary. Participants will be asked to describe their past and present relationships with siblings. All faculty will be invited to participate and those who are willing and meet the stated criteria will be accepted. The interviews will be tape-recorded (audio tape only) and participants will be so informed. Interview guide is attached.

2. What are the potential risks to the human subjects involved in this research or investigation? "Risk" includes the possibility of public embarrassment and improper release of data. Even seemingly nonsignificant risks should be stated and the protective procedures described in #3 below.

Potential effects of this proposed study include both positive and negative effects. Participants will be asked to reflect upon their childhood experiences with siblings. They may experience some pleasant memories or they may also experience some discomfort if their previous experiences were unpleasant. Participants may experience some embarrassment at revealing personal experiences with a non-family member. They may fear lack of anonymity.

3. Outline the steps to be taken to protect the rights and welfare of the individuals involved.

Participants will be assigned a code number by which they will be referred. In no way will their names be identified. Audio tapes will be transcribed soon after the interview and the tapes will be promptly destroyed. Participants will be so informed.

No pressure will be exerted upon any participant at any time. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time.

4. Outline the method for obtaining informed consent from the subjects or from the person legally responsible for the subjects. Attach documents, i.e., a specimen informed consent form. These may be properly executed through completion of either (a) the written description form, or (b) the oral description form. Specimen copies are available from departmental Chairmen. Other forms which provide the same information may be acceptable. A written description of what is orally told to the subject must accompany the oral in the application.

Faculty members will be initially contacted by a brief description of the study by a written communication. If a faculty member meets the stated criteria and agrees to participate, then the complete study will be outlined to him/her and appropriate signatures will be obtained for participation in the study and for permission to be audio-taped.

5. If the proposed study includes the administration of personality tests, inventories, or questionnaires, indicate how the subjects are given the opportunity to express their willingness to participate. If the subjects are less than the age of legal consent, or mentally incapacitated, indicate how consent of parents, guardians, or other qualified representatives will be obtained.

This study will yield data by the use of an interview. Participants will only be accepted if they indicate a willingness to participate and to be audio-taped.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Student

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Department Head, Director

Date received by committee chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Form C (to be used in addition to Form A or B when voices or images are to be recorded)

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

We, the undersigned, do hereby consent to the recording of our voices ~~and/or images~~ by Mary Lee Fowler Bacarril, acting on this date under the authority of the Texas Woman's University. We understand that the material recorded today may be made available for educational, informational, and/or research purposes; and we do hereby consent to such use.

We hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned part acting under the authority of the Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such taking, recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

SIGNATURES OF PARTICIPANTS\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

\* \* \*

The above consent form was read, discussed, and signed in my presence. In my opinion, the person signing said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge and understanding of its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized representative  
of the Texas Woman's University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* Guardian or nearest relative must sign if participant is minor.

APPENDIX E

## Interview Guide

Demographic Data:

Participant Number \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling's Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling's Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling's Geographical Location \_\_\_\_\_

Age of parents when participant was born \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time currently spent with sibling \_\_\_\_\_

Has participant or sibling made any major decisions regarding care of parent(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Questions:

1. Would you describe in as much detail as you can, your most vivid recollections of your relationship with your brother/sister when you were a child?
2. Would you describe in as much detail as you can, your present relationship with your brother/sister?
3. Would you describe your remembrance of your parents' responses toward you and toward your brother/sister during childhood?

APPENDIX F

## Interview Prompters

<u>Key Words</u>	<u>Questions</u>
alienation	Did you ever feel left out of any family interactions?
authority dominant parent power	Which parent made the major decisions in your family? Did you or your sibling exert more authority over the other?
coalition	Who ganged up on whom in your family?
dethronement	Do you remember feeling differently about your place in the family after your sibling was born?
difference in achievement level	Were you or your sibling the higher achiever?
"favored" child	Were either of your parents partial to you or your sibling?
consistency solidly united parents parental cohesiveness	Were your parents consistent or inconsistent in their disciplinary methods?
mediating services harmony	Who was the peacemaker in your family?
responsibility	What responsibilities did you have in your household when you were a child? What responsibilities did you have for your sibling?
pioneering	Did you start any family trends that your sibling copied? Did your parents respond positively or negatively to this activity?

APPENDIX G

Participant #3

- RESEARCHER: Who made your decisions in your home?
- PARTICIPANT: My father made the major decisions.
- RESEARCHER: O.K. What about discipline in the children? Was he also the major disciplinarian?
- PARTICIPANT: Both of them were disciplinarians. Mother was easier to, uh, we could snow her easier. We could get by with more with mother. She would get mad, but she wouldn't do anything. Daddy was just even-keeled and when there was some discipline that needed to be applied, he did it in a very loving manner, but he did it.
- RESEARCHER: If there was any ganging up (and I don't know exactly how to say that another way), but sometimes family members line up with another family member in a certain way to get power in the family. If there was any ganging up in your family, who ganged up against who?
- PARTICIPANT: I don't think that we really ganged up. Sometimes my sister and I would join forces to try to change our parents' minds, but my parents never ganged up with one of us against the other.
- RESEARCHER: O.K. So, it was kids against parents, really?
- PARTICIPANT: If there was any ganging up at all, yes.
- RESEARCHER: O.K. Between you and your sister, who made better grades in school?
- PARTICIPANT: I think in high school I probably made better grades. I did not go on beyond high school. She has since gone on to L.V.N. training and has accomplished more with her education than I have.
- RESEARCHER: Does that cause you any problems?

- PARTICIPANT: No, I've never wanted to further my education. I've always been perfectly happy to be home and take care of the children full-time. I am probably better off financially than she is and she feels a real need to do something. She also has a lot more energy than I have. She is always doing and achieving and I am not that way. It is easier for me to just not do anything but enjoy being still or doing something recreational. She is just really always busy and would get bored at home. So, after working without an education for a while, she decided that she wanted this and she is a real good nurse. She really enjoys her work.
- RESEARCHER: What about in high school, since you were older and I don't know how much higher you're talking about the achievement was, did that cause her any problems? Did she go to the same school?
- PARTICIPANT: She went to the same school but she's four years younger than I am so we had different types of interests. And, she wasn't there when I was.
- RESEARCHER: So, they didn't remind her of you?
- PARTICIPANT: I don't know if they did. That would be interesting to know what she would say with the same questions. I feel like she was a little competitive for attention; but, at the same time, not anymore than usual. I mean, she never was mean to me or jealous that I could tell. She looked up to me, I think.
- RESEARCHER: As a role model?
- PARTICIPANT: Maybe, we didn't end up the same at all but just being older. And, of course, when you're a teenager and your sister gets married when she is eighteen, it is kind of an idealistic teenage romance.
- RESEARCHER: How old were you when she was born?

- PARTICIPANT: I was three and a half.
- RESEARCHER: Do you remember that very well?
- PARTICIPANT: No, I don't remember her being born. I remember her as a baby. I remember getting into the crib with her when I was little and Mother didn't want me in the crib with her. I remember her taking me out and I wanted to be in there with her. I don't remember too much about the infant stage of her life.
- RESEARCHER: You don't remember your feelings too much about her coming?
- PARTICIPANT: Oh, I knew I was glad to have a sister. I was glad to have someone else in the family. I don't remember being jealous of her attention.
- RESEARCHER: Has the family told you anything you did in response to that?
- PARTICIPANT: No, they never have said anything.
- RESEARCHER: That's the only thing you remember, is the crib, getting in the crib?
- PARTICIPANT: Yes, I remember not getting into trouble, but being told not to do that. You couldn't get into the crib.
- RESEARCHER: What do you remember about your play activities when you were toddlers and maybe early elementary school?
- PARTICIPANT: We played in large groups. My cousins lived down the street and they were the same ages as my sister and myself. We also had a neighbor next door who was the age of my cousin (she is one year older than I am) and so we played in groups and everybody was always included unless there was some kind of squabble or something and they would go home mad. We didn't play, just the two of us very much that I can remember. I just

remember the neighborhood; we were just in the groups. My mother would have my cousins up at the house and we would play in when we were little.

RESEARCHER: Do you feel like there was a favored child in the family; either you or your sister? Do you feel like anyone, not just your parents but anyone like aunts, uncles, anyone outside the family, singled out either one of you?

PARTICIPANT: No, I think we were both loved the same. I think that some times they would stick up for Donna a little bit (my sister is Donna) and try to, because she was smaller, make sure she was included. But, as far as favoring one or the other, I don't think so.

RESEARCHER: And there weren't any other influence, any other relatives that did that either?

PARTICIPANT: I don't think so. No, all of our grandparents really loved all of us the same that we could tell.

RESEARCHER: And, your grandparents came to live with you at some point?

PARTICIPANT: We had a duplex and my grandfather, after having strokes and my grandma couldn't take care of him, moved to the other side of the duplex. So, they had a separate household but, at the same time, we were in and out of both sides at the same time. It was a real neat experience for me growing up because my grandmother went to work, she worked as a receptionist in the doctor's office, my grandfather was home all the time because of his strokes and the crippling, and he did all the cooking. He was an excellent cook. So, Grandpa was always there. I always had this man that I loved who was always around and we always had attention. There just wasn't; we never had babysitters, it was just family. I miss that with my children because we moved away from there.

RESEARCHER: Yes, I think we have lost something in our mobile society for sure.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, I do too.

RESEARCHER: If there was a peacemaker in the family, on the child's side, who would that have been?

PARTICIPANT: It would be Donna, my sister.

RESEARCHER: And, if there was an adult peacemaker, who would that have been?

PARTICIPANT: My father.

RESEARCHER: Do you remember having any responsibilities, regular responsibilities in the care of your sister?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, when we played outside in groups, I would be looking after my sister. So, I kind of mothered her and bossed her around and she probably resented that.

RESEARCHER: But, she didn't tell you that?

PARTICIPANT: Well, she'd get mad and go home. She had a stubborn streak. She was red-headed and that probably doesn't have anything to do with it, but we always said that she was stubborn and she had a temper. But, she knew that I was supposed to watch after her.

RESEARCHER: Sometimes she would take it and sometimes she wouldn't?

PARTICIPANT: Right.

RESEARCHER: That responsibility was given to you by your mom or someone? It is not just something that you assumed because you wanted to?

PARTICIPANT: No.

RESEARCHER: Did you mind doing it?

PARTICIPANT: No, I liked bossing.

- RESEARCHER: If either you or your sister would start any new family trends, that's either with or without your parents' approval, which one would it have been that started the new trend?
- PARTICIPANT: What do you mean by a new trend?
- RESEARCHER: In the literature they use the word "pioneering" and it's just one child does something that might not have been a family custom. Sometimes it is something the parents like, and sometimes it is something the parents don't like. But if either of you would be brave enough to try something different . . .
- PARTICIPANT: It would have been her. I always wanted to do what was right. I did things that were wrong, but I had a real sensitive conscience and I always wanted to do what was right. She always wanted to be accepted, I think. At the same time, though, she would do things that she knew that they disapproved of. Like, when she became a teenager, she didn't want to go to church. She really resented that Mother and Daddy always made us go. If we were too sick to go, we were in bed all day. It was just that was what we do on Sundays and we spend all day Saturday getting ready for it. I think she resented that a little bit. Plus, the friends that she had made (she didn't really make the close friends at church that I did). I see the same thing in my children. My oldest has been very happy at First Baptist Church. The younger one, while she had friends there, she would love to go somewhere else to church. Donna was a Christian. She married a man that really didn't and they don't go to our church anymore.
- RESEARCHER: Is she happy like that now or do you think she misses it?
- PARTICIPANT: Well, I still boss her in that area a little bit. I still remind her that that's not right, that she has a responsibility to her own

children. But, at the same time, she is submissive to her husband and he likes to fish and to hunt and to do things on Saturday. And, when they both work all week, they think it is their day to do other things. It grieves me that she has chosen to do that and not take the children but that's her choice.

RESEARCHER: Does she have any difficulties with your parents because of that?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, she has not had the same kind of relationship with my mother that I have. But, I think, partly that's because I'm this far away from my parents. I have an advantage. You can enjoy their company and then leave and you can agree with them all the time while you are there then leave and go home and do what you want and they never know the difference.

RESEARCHER: She lives near them?

PARTICIPANT: She lives close. She moved ten miles out of town to a small town called Savannah which has been better.

RESEARCHER: But, she's still close enough.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, and they do enjoy each other's company, though. At the same time, she was more rebellious as a teenager than I was. She smokes and Mother doesn't like that. Daddy doesn't say too much about it. He doesn't like it, but he doesn't say anything. He kind of takes her side because she works so hard and he's just so proud of her. I think when he thinks someone is a little bit of an underdog Daddy is real sensitive that way.

RESEARCHER: And, from what you described too; he is always more easygoing anyway.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, yes. Very loving.

RESEARCHER: What about now? I know you've mentioned that you sort of still feel a little responsible for her and try to help guide her the way you think she should go. What else can you say about your relationship with her now?

PARTICIPANT: Well, I'm sorry that I'm so far away because when we're together, we really enjoy each other. Even though we live a little bit differently in our lifestyles, we enjoy each other. She came down here and spent a week without the children, just on her own vacation and we had a lot of fun. I didn't do any correcting or any "you should do this," I just wasn't going to do that. I was just going to have fun and we really enjoyed being together. At one time, she had some problems in her marriage and she came down here when the children were very small and they came also. She really listened at that time. I just wanted to put a desire to receive counsel and really to change things and her marriage is very solid now.

RESEARCHER: O.K. So, your parents when they were disciplining you; I didn't get the feeling there was any problem with them standing together. Did they have united approach? Did they support each other's discipline approach even if they didn't agree necessarily?

PARTICIPANT: Yes. You didn't play one against the other. Mother was always supportive of Daddy. And, if she would tell him something, we would discuss it and, no, you know that they were united. You knew that it was useless to try to play one against the other. They would never deceive each other; you know, like keep something secret from the other. Whatever Daddy did was right. And, if Mother corrected us, even if he didn't agree, he would say, "You do what your mother said." So, there was no division there that you couldn't win by playing them against each other.

RESEARCHER: Can you think of anything else?

PARTICIPANT: Well, no. I can remember that as a child I always had lots of questions and my parents, my dad especially, would stay up and answer. I mean we would be up late at night and he was so patient. He would talk and listen and talk until I was finished. After dates, Mother would be tired and she would go on to bed, and Daddy would be up waiting for us. We would talk even if I came home at 11:00, we would still be up talking at 1:00. My sister never did that. She kept things to herself even to the point of when we had questions about sex or anything like that. Daddy was the one; I asked questions very young. I remember being in grade school asking him questions or asking Mother and she would say, "Ask your Daddy," and he would explain it all to me very lovingly. But, Donna never felt that kind of closeness; she never felt open to ask her parents those questions.

RESEARCHER: Not ever? Was there anything you can think of that would cause her to withdraw from them?

PARTICIPANT: No, but she doesn't even, I don't think, is not real open discussing that particular aspect even with her own children and I am. We discuss everything there is to discuss. I think it is just more the personality. Some people just don't like to talk about things like that. And, I guess she figured she learned all she needed to know at school and she didn't need to ask any questions.

RESEARCHER: That's interesting how different personalities in the same environment come along so differently.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, it is. First-born and second born children. I think, have totally different personalities.

- RESEARCHER: That is one of my questions. If you could have changed places, your position in the family, would you have done that?
- PARTICIPANT: Well, I always begged my parents to please adopt an older brother. I thought I ought to have somebody who could stick up for me and Donna agreed. She thought it would be nice to have an older brother, but that was just kind of a fantasy, you know. You see your friends who had older brothers and it just seemed so neat to have one.
- RESEARCHER: One other participant with a younger brother said she really was very fond of him but she wanted an older brother. She didn't want to give up the younger brother. She wanted one to teach her how to play baseball and stuff like that because I guess she had a hard time learning how to do those kinds of things. I guess we all have our little fantasies about who we would have. I would have had lots. I was an only child so I would have had a house full if I could have had my choice.
- PARTICIPANT: I never thought about having that many brothers and sisters. I thought three was more of the perfect family. When I married I had the idea that I wanted to have seven children because I wanted a large family but we have two. My husband wanted two so we didn't have that. I think large families are nice though.
- RESEARCHER: Well, for the study I just decided that when you have lots of brothers and sisters there are so many things . . . it gets so complex when we talk about interaction. So, I said, "No, I'm just going to stick with one and then whatever they remember relates to just that one sibling."
- PARTICIPANT: I do remember fighting with my sister a lot. Like, we would fight over clothes, or who was using the bathroom, or just the things sisters disagree on.

RESEARCHER: Daily friction?

PARTICIPANT: I remember one time I got so mad I hit her, and I hit her on the side of the leg, and then I saw my handprint there. And, I threw my arms around her and apologized to her and I felt so terrible that I had done that to her because I was so angry with her. We didn't really fight physically very much but we argued profusely over things like, "Who used all the hot water and now I can't take a bath."

RESEARCHER: How did your parents respond to that? I call it normal noise.

PARTICIPANT: Mother was just kind of powerless. She would get mad and say, "You girls are driving me crazy; quit doing that." Daddy, he would solve the problem. He'd work it now and let us get it out of our system, and he'd work it out. Mother would just, it was just kind of like, you know, "You're driving me up the walls." She would say that a lot, "You girls are driving me up the walls."

RESEARCHER: That didn't have much effect?

PARTICIPANT: No, we just went on. Mother was just getting into it too. We're all going crazy. Daddy would pretty much solve it. He didn't threaten or anything; he'd just talk it through and we'd work it out. But those things, you know, they just blow over. People who are only children; I don't think really understand that.

RESEARCHER: That's something I remember. One of my best friends had two sisters and two brothers. And, I would go to her house and just stand with my mouth open. I was just fascinated by all the interaction.

PARTICIPANT: Even my husband, who had a brother growing up, and they never argued and fought. They just tolerated each other and they did a few things together but they didn't fight. And, it bothered him when our girls would fight out loud. I finally convinced him that it was

normal and it didn't hurt anything.

RESEARCHER: With you and your sister, it sounds like it was just bantering back and forth kind of thing but nobody, I mean, it wasn't like--emotional things weren't involved. It didn't go deep; that's what I'm saying.

PARTICIPANT: It was more just selfishness like with things.

RESEARCHER: You both felt equal to the task?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, oh, yes. I never bullied. She wouldn't have allowed that. She was spunky; she wasn't docile.

RESEARCHER: Do you think if she could have chosen to be the older, she would have made that choice?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know. She might have for a time period.

RESEARCHER: She never said anything about the favored older child?

PARTICIPANT: No, I don't think she ever felt like I was the favorite. I remember complaining, just like my older daughter does, that Donna got to do things sooner than I got to do them because I was first. So, by the time she came along, Mother and Daddy were already willing to let you do something at a younger age, but my youngest does the same thing. She gets by with more. I think that is a valid complaint now that I am a parent, because you're learning on the first one and you want to do everything just right. I think they are achievers; first-born are achievers.

RESEARCHER: The literature seems to agree with that too from what I've read.

PARTICIPANT: But, it's interesting, too, that Donna, my sister, has achieved more than I have if you count education and working and that kind of thing.

RESEARCHER: But, her motivation might be, like you said, economic.

(Participant closed by saying that it would be interesting to also interview the brother or sister.)

NOTE. Upon returning to the participant with the formulated meanings, she stated that she was the peacemaker and not her sister. Participant also stated that her sister was also close to the parents, but had not been as open verbally with them as participant had been.

APPENDIX H

## Significant Statements

Participant #1

1. Both were very wanted by parents.
2. Had repeatedly asked for sibling.
3. Dressed brother in doll clothes.
4. Rocked brother to sleep.
5. Was higher achiever in school; brother complained of comparison.
6. Maternal grandmother moved in with family and was close to participant, but was unkind to brother.
7. Participant and parents were protective toward brother.
8. Peacemakers were participant and mother.
9. Spent more time with brother during childhood.
10. Brother enjoyed participant's friends and dates.
11. Tried to please parents.
12. Brother sometimes rebelled against parents.
13. Surprised that brother was allowed to tell parents "no".
14. Wished for older brother to teach her to play ball; would not trade younger brother for older one.
15. No desire to be second-born.
16. Closer to brother as adults than as children.
17. Wants brother to do the "right thing".
18. Feels concern for brother--wants him to be happy.
19. Feels more concern for contacting brother than he does her.
20. Refrains from advising brother now.
21. Relates brother's talking back to parents to change in acceptable childhood behavior in society.
22. Is proud of her brother's accomplishment--following a disappointment.
23. Felt closer to brother after a crisis--not during it.
24. Perceived equal treatment--except age and sex differences.

25. Parents were consistent disciplinarians.
26. Siblings did not join forces to try to change parents' minds.
27. Part of participant's adulthood (15 years) was spent in missionary work where she was overseas for 4 years at a time; maintained contact with brother in spite of schedule.

Participant #2

1. Playmates when younger--none other available.
2. Felt protective of brother when young.
3. Eventually shared all confidences.
4. Best friends.
5. Wanted to do same things--ice cream flavors.
6. Had some spats, fights, arguments, but remained close.
7. Brother was higher achiever in school; no comparisons made.
8. Described self as quiet and withdrawn and brother as active, like Mom, with more disciplinary problems (minor).
9. Told that she thought her brother was her baby when he was born.
10. Told she squeezed and patted baby brother with increasing intensity.
11. When older, brother became protective of participant.
12. Brother tried to use participant to get permission for him to do things.
13. Dad and participant were peacemakers.
14. Brother and Mother were alike--outsponed and hot-tempered.
15. When brother and Mother would yell, participant would cry--and later speak to brother about his behavior.
16. Closest to brother in childhood.
17. Less close as adults.
18. Perceived equal treatment by parents--except age and sex differences.
19. Mother was major disciplinarian since Dad travelled; she disciplined indirectly through Dad.
20. Children preferred spanking and sitting in corner as part of Mother's punishment to Dad's talking to them.
21. Only favoritism shown was by uncle for brother; they did things together that participant was not interested in.

22. Brother was more likely to start new family trend.
23. Brother could "get away with" things participant could not.
24. Intervened for brother with Mother when brother was in trouble.
25. Brother would get participant "blind date" when she came home from college.
26. Participant exerted more influence on brother than he did on her; he responded to her authority more favorably when he was older.

Participant #3

1. Father major decision-maker.
2. Dad's discipline effective; Mom's ineffective.
3. Joined with sibling occasionally to change parents' mind.
4. Parents were consistent disciplinarians.
5. Higher achiever in school; sibling not compared.
6. Sibling has more educational achievements.
7. Did not want to go beyond high school.
8. Achieved own goal of full-time homemaker and mother.
9. Felt sibling was slightly competitive for attention, but was not mean or jealous.
10. Remembers getting into crib with sibling as infant but mother not allowing.
11. Sibling looked up to participant because she was older.
12. Played in large neighborhood groups--but not together.
13. Both siblings were loved the same by parents.
14. Parents "stuck up" for sibling some to be sure she was included.
15. Grandfather was close and available for both siblings.
16. Participant was peacemaker.
17. Dad was peacemaker.
18. Responsible for sister's care during group play.
19. Enjoyed mothering and bossing sister.
20. Sister resented sister's bossing.
21. Sister more likely to start new family trend.
22. Tried to please parents and do what was "right".
23. Sister was stubborn and had temper.
24. Sister chose lifestyle different from parents.
25. Participant still bosses sibling in one area of life.
26. Sister has had close-relationship with parents but less open verbally.
27. Mother had problems accepting siblings different life-style.

28. Dad disagrees with sister's lifestyle but is more accepting of her as a person and is proud of her accomplishments.
29. Sister and participant enjoy each other now.
30. Tries to refrain from offering sister advice.
31. Pleased when once gave sister counsel, sister followed it, and had positive results.
32. Had very open relationship with father; he answered most of her important teenage questions.
33. Would not want to trade positions with sibling.
34. Wanted an older brother to "stick up" for her.
35. Remembers fighting a lot with sister.
36. Once hit sister in anger but was horrified and immediately apologized and hugged her.
37. Convinced husband that their daughters' loud fighting is normal.
38. Sister would not have allowed me to bully her.
39. Does not think sister preferred to be first-born.
40. Remembers complaining that sister got to do things earlier.

Participant #4

1. Proud of brother--earliest recollection.
2. Good playmates--no one else available.
3. Good relationship until participant began school.
4. After beginning school, brother became a pest.
5. Siblings fought from participant's age six to ten.
6. Brother was an irritation.
7. Provoked brother by being bossy.
8. Got brother in trouble and then pleaded that he not be spanked.
9. After a fight in which brother's head was cut, realized consequences of her behavior.
10. Prayed for patience and temper control.
11. Believes God answered her prayer; more patient thereafter.
12. Later, she and brother took turns playing each other's choices.
13. Siblings were close in high school through shared extra-curricular activities.
14. Catered to brother during high school.
15. During dating age, brother was gone a lot and participant stayed close to home; were not as close then.
16. Does not think brother was compared to her in school.
17. Remembers childhood as wonderful and easy.
18. Believes brother remembers childhood as difficult.
19. Brother got more spankings as a child; participant feels responsible.
20. Described self as complaint and peacemaker.
21. Described brother as probably the one who would start a new family trend and as holding out for what he wanted to the bitter end.
22. Depended on brother to do the begging and screaming for both of them.
23. Feels close to brother now.

24. Believes she is more concerned for brother than he is for her.
25. Gave much support to brother during a personal crisis he experienced.
26. Believes she could count on her brother; she would have to tell him that she needed him.
27. During Dad's illness and death, brother relieved participant and Mother by making decisions.
28. Responsibility felt for brother was self-initiated and not encouraged by parents.
29. When small, participant and brother thought the other was the favorite child in the family.
30. Has been told that she was favored by paternal grandmother.
31. Feels parents treated children equally except brother got into more things which necessitated more discipline.
32. Believes brother sees her as favorite because he received more spankings.
33. Remembers that brother was able to get money from Dad; never occurred to her to ask.
34. Brother may have gone against parents' standards when he left home; participant did not.
35. Dad handled all big family issues; Mom handled daily affairs.
36. Understood family system of bantering between parents and Dad's false presentation of toughness; brother never understood system.
37. Neither parent was peacemaker due to type of noisy relationship they had; neither attacked anyone personally.
38. Perceived that parents had lots of confidence in her.
39. Siblings did not join forces to change parents' minds.
40. Is proud of brother's adult accomplishments but feels sorry for him due to her perception of an inner fear of failure he hides.
41. Participant has the same inner fear; believes they both reflect their Mother's personality.

Participant #5

1. Brother was always in my way.
2. Was always stronger and more active and brother was always home.
3. Remember most that brother irritated me but I had to stand up for him.
4. Remembers brother saying he had been compared to participant.
5. Also remembers brother using the comparison with participant to get his way.
6. Saw self as peacemaker.
7. Responsibility felt for brother was self-initiated and not encouraged by parents.
8. Brothers became closer after they married.
9. Brother was best fantastic salesman in the world.
10. Brother lost businesses. Participant suggested brother go into his line of work. He did and is successful now. Participant is pleased.
11. Have very little in common as adults.
12. Brother always felt I was favored.
13. Probably was favored since I was more like my Father.
14. May have been depended on more because of being first-born.
15. Does not know if there is an advantage to being second-born.
16. Brother is a survivor like me but is not as strong.
17. Mom was major disciplinarian since Dad travelled some but worked very hard; Dad disciplined also.
18. Parents were consistent disciplinarians.
19. When older, brothers occasionally joined forces to try to change parents' minds.
20. I could manipulate anyone to get my way; brother could not manipulate anyone.
21. Mom told participant that he was very independent by 12-13 years of age.

22. Followed parents' rules until 12-13 years; then did his own thing.
23. Participant was more likely to start a new family trend and/or get into trouble.
24. Brother was inclined always to be at home and do things "right".
25. Exerted more influence over brother. Don't know if he resented that or not.
26. Mom was peacemaker.
27. Didn't like to play with brother.
28. When I was 15 and my brother was 13, we really went separate ways.
29. Brother thinks I got the best of some things.
30. Always had a good relationship with Dad even through some strained periods.
31. Brother was never as close to Dad but he is getting closer now.
32. We had few physical fights, but I bullied my brother to get my way.
33. Sees childhood as happy but brother doesn't think it was so happy.
34. Brother still jokes and says, "You always were the favorite"; there's some seriousness to it.
35. I knew who to go to first to get my way.
36. Parents made brother go places with participant occasionally.
37. Brother got participant in trouble by copying his behavior and getting caught (smoking).
38. Feels that he got his brother in trouble deliberately as well.

Participant #6

1. We didn't have a lot in common.
2. Considered her to be in the way.
3. Sister wanted to go and do what I did but wasn't allowed.
4. Don't remember any conflicts.
5. Sister was wonderful (at birth).
6. We were all excited about her birth.
7. Mother treated us the same.
8. Had responsibility for baby-sitting sister on Saturdays; didn't mind.
9. Always concerned about what happens to sister.
10. Tries not to interfere in her life--just listen to her.
11. Remembers no school comparison between the two.
12. Mom compared sister to participant and sister reacted negatively.
13. Peacemakers were Dad (Mom had a temper then) and self (sister is like Dad).
14. Was very compliant and worked hard to please Mother.
15. Sister didn't try as hard to please Mother.
16. Does not remember getting sister into or out of trouble.
17. Became closer after sister married, even with geographic separation.
18. Enjoy being together now.
19. Mom was major disciplinarian since Dad travelled.
20. Parents were consistent disciplinarians.
21. Sister occasionally asks participant for advice on childrearing.
22. Concern felt for sister was not like parental concern.
23. Does not think either sibling would want to trade birth positions with the other.
24. Believes there was no favoritism.
25. Believes she and sister view childhood as happy.

Participant #7

1. Wide gap in ages between self and brother.
2. Mature for age.
3. Grew up in adult household.
4. Always proud to have brother.
5. Thought he was the cutiest thing in the world.
6. Didn't have much in common.
7. Didn't fight over things much--didn't want same things at same time often--except television.
8. Brother was a lot more lively, a lot more full of life, and a little bit more apt to get into trouble.
9. Father was overseas from participant's age 3 to 5; 3 adults in the home gave a lot of attention but placed some restraint on activity level.
10. Wanted a brother or sister very much--as a companion.
11. First impression of brother was disappointment--didn't have a lot of potential for companionship.
12. Was excited about brother's birth.
13. Wrote a newsletter in school about brother's birth.
14. Remembers no comparison of brother to her in school because family changed schools and brother did not directly follow her.
15. Believes grandparents always made such a big deal of participant's being a scholar that he probably felt he was being compared to her.
16. Brother's achievement test scores were much better than his grades.
17. Believes he was so full of life he didn't want to sit down and read books.
18. Brother has MBA degree and teaches in a university; still not perceived as a scholar by family.
19. Loves her brother now.
20. Believes brother knows that participant feels she can count on him.
21. We have both come through for each other.
22. He's very busy with his world and I'm very busy with mine.

23. Have been the same degree of emotional closeness to brother throughout life, but felt closest when they were together in childhood.
24. When younger, my brother was someone I needed to protect.
25. Now I respect him as a person.
26. Was given occasional responsibility by Mother to care for brother.
27. At 2 weeks of age, my brother fell off the big bed while under my care.
28. I don't think Mother ever quite forgave me for that; she still remembers it.
29. When brother was 9 or 10, he chipped a tooth while under my care.
30. Mother still reminds me of that accident, too.
31. Felt responsible for brother just like any family member has for another family member; not parental concern.
32. There is not anything I could have done to prevent my brother's accidents, but I still feel responsible for them.
33. Perceives siblings were treated equally by parents.
34. Doesn't know if brother saw their treatment as equal.
35. Would not have wanted to trade places with brother.
36. Grandparents nurtured and built me up.
37. Believe all self-confidence came from grandfather (a scholar).
38. Brother never developed closeness with grandparents-- age and health of grandparents and activity level of brother.
39. It was boring at my grandparents' for my brother.
40. Believe grandparents were always a little prouder of me.
41. Mother feels I got by with anything because of my grandparents.
42. Might have learned to play grandparents against mother.
43. Believe there was a little bit of jealousy between mother and me at that stage.
44. Mother may have resented grandparents' leniency with me.

45. Believe Mother does not recognize the friction.
46. There are times when I believe there might be some.
47. Father was always there during ups and downs of teen years.
48. Mother was more temperamental and there were sometimes fireworks between us.
49. Brother was more adventuresome and was more likely to get out of bounds and try his wings as a kid.
50. I was so protected. Could not go into neighbor's yard unless I was invited.
51. Father and I were peacemakers.
52. Dad made major decisions and mother supported his decisions.
53. During conflicts, I would shout but would get over anger quickly.
54. Assumed peacemaker role between parents, because they occasionally bickered for the sake of a mental exercise.
55. Parents would say "Didn't you ever catch on to the game?"
56. I didn't. I thought they were breaking up.
57. Brother and I were not effective in changing parents' minds.
58. Used to think my brother could just kind of smile at my Mother and do things she would never let me do.

Participant #8

1. Not real close--age difference.
2. Took "big brother" attitude.
3. Got used to being an only child.
4. Everybody was glad when sister came along--including me.
5. Felt like I had to be an example.
6. I was close in the sense of looking out who her friends were.
7. She didn't come in and consult me about things.
8. Only responsibility given for her was an occasional babysitting.
9. Responsible feeling was somewhat self-initiated.
10. Parents may have implied a couple of times that I was to set an example but it was not a big issue.
11. Was better achiever in school.
12. Sister was compared to participant and she didn't like it.
13. Participant describes self as outgoing, "liked" by peers, more compliant, and a peacemaker.
14. Sister was described as less outgoing, less compliant, and more likely to go against family traditions.
15. Dad was probably the adult peacemaker.
16. Relationship with sister is currently becoming closer, since death of both parents and return of sister to family standards. Initially were not close and paths in life were quite different.
17. Believes sister feels same need to become closer that he does.
18. Increasing closeness has led to more phone calls, letters, and plans for more visits.
19. Believes sister saw his position as more favorable.
20. Was first grandson in a family that preferred boys at that time.
21. Definitely saw no advantage in sister's position.
22. Didn't enjoy sister getting disciplined.

23. Believed discipline was consistent, while Father was less firm with sister and Mother was less firm with participant.
24. Didn't try to get sister in trouble though would defend himself if necessary.
25. Believes there was not a favorite child from parents' perspectives but participant was favored by grandparents.
26. Believes he influenced sister more than she influenced him.
27. Sister responded favorably to brother's suggestion when she was younger.
28. Didn't make suggestions when she was older because he didn't think she would respond.
29. As relationship becomes closer, sister is beginning to call for advice on major matters whereas before she didn't call much at all.
30. Believes age span kept them from being closer; almost like 2 different worlds.
31. Was disappointed in sister when she left family standards.
32. Was pleased when sister returned to earlier standards.

Participant #9

1. Little recollection of sister to age 5 or 6.
2. From 5 or 6 until leaving for college, we hated each other's guts.
3. I would aggravate my sister and she would throw sharp things at me.
4. As adults, we have kind of an uneasy truce more or less.
5. We have realized how ridiculous it all was.
6. Participant received more straight A report cards than sister.
7. Sister was compared with participant and hated it.
8. They get along better now if they spend less time together.
9. Have very different ideas about: politics, philosophies of life, definitions of success, and their husbands are in very different occupations.
10. Get together only at family reunions.
11. If had met as classmates, would probably not have been close friends.
12. Parents fought about many things.
13. Parents were consistent in discipline.
14. Doesn't remember she and sister joining forces to change parents' minds.
15. Sister thinks Mother loved participant most. Participant does not understand this.
16. Mother and I have very similar personalities.
17. Sister acted and thought more like Father.
18. Makes sense--since parents fought so much that we should.
19. I thought all kids fought as we did.
20. Had no resentment toward sister for being closer to Dad because though I respected him for some of his characteristics, I did not like him very much.

21. Parents were better at other things than at being parents.
22. I have forgiven them, more or less, for it.
23. Participant tried to be peacemaker between parents but not between self and sister.
24. Neither parent was a peacemaker.
25. I always played it safe.
26. Sister more likely to do something not an expected family custom.
27. Both sibilings developed approach to religion unlike parents'.
28. Mother made major decisions about family life; parents had many disagreements about same.
29. Dad pulled dirty tricks on Mother.
30. Mother would yell and scream but was powerless to do anything about it.
31. Neither sister exerted any influence on the other after they became the same size.
32. Participant had no responsibility for care of sister due to unique living arrangements.
33. Feels no responsibility for sister now.
34. We very carefully try to not interfere in each other's lives.
35. Felt closest to sister when her 2nd child suffered an accidental death and when Father died.
36. Didn't even know how to comfort sister.
37. We grew up expecting we would each go our own way.
38. Believe sister saw my birth position as more advantageous.
39. Sister had the advantage of not having as much expected of her and having a more normal life.
40. I had the advantage of being a very wanted child and having a lot of attention under an unusual living situation.
41. Have never thought of the trade-off of the advantages and disadvantages of our birth positions.

42. My children's rivalry is just like mine and my sister's expect the tables are turned (younger daughter gives the older daughter the harder time).
43. My girls will probably still have their rivalry until they are grown up.
44. They are so different.
45. I can see why each one has problems with the other.

Participant #10

1. We were close (because ages were close).
2. Never did things together.
3. Had our own separate friends.
4. Weren't best friends or best buddies.
5. We were as close as a brother and sister could be living in the same household.
6. Doesn't remember sister being compared with him in school.
7. Doesn't recall much friction.
8. No peacemaker role.
9. Believes he was the instigator of any disagreements.
10. Mother was peacemaker since she was home more.
11. I'm told I wasn't thrilled about sister's birth.
12. They said I would go up and throw things in her crib.
13. I just think when you've been the center of attention for a year that would be natural.
14. Parents were very consistent in their discipline.
15. I was Mama's boy and she was Daddy's girl.
16. I always did more work than my sister because I was capable of doing more; not because she was lazy.
17. Didn't have any responsibility for care of sister.
18. Neither sibling made a greater effort to please parents.
19. Participant was most likely to start a new family trend.
20. Doesn't remember ever trying to get sister into trouble.
21. Siblings were treated equally except for sex differences.
22. Doesn't see advantages with sister's birth position.
23. Doesn't believe sister would prefer to have been first-born.
24. Closest period of time was in grade school.

25. Played with many of her friends in 5th or 6th grade.
26. You always feel protective of a sister in certain instances but I can't remember any major incidents occurring.
27. In high school, sister was more concerned about participant's dates than he was about hers.
28. Not happy with sister's life due to a serious accident and her resultant paralysis.
29. Have never felt I had to watch over her and protect her.
30. Due to geographic separation, sister has never had to depend on me; she lives close to Mother.
31. Relationship would have been different if we had lived in the same city.
32. When I lived in the same city, I did get involved more.
33. Have no feelings of resentment that sister lives close to Mom and I live away.
34. Mother made major decisions since she was home more and Dad stayed busy working hard.
35. Parents supported each other's decisions.
36. Participant and sister did not join forces to try to change parents' minds.
37. Feels he influenced sister more than she influenced him.
38. When Father died, participant was determined to finish college; sister dropped out and stayed home.
39. Participant disagreed with sister's decision but did not interfere.
40. Didn't feel closer to sister during crisis periods.
41. Sister plans to visit in the fall (first time in 24 years).

APPENDIX I

## Formulated Meanings

Participant #1

1. Felt both children were desired since their mother was ill throughout both pregnancies.
2. Was glad to have a brother.
3. Felt as if her brother as "her baby", as she dressed him in baby clothes, rocked him to sleep, and cooked his eggs for him.
4. Believes her brother resented being compared to her by teachers in school.
5. Does not remember being jealous of brother nor wished to have been second-born rather than first.
6. Perceived that grandmother was jealous of participant's interest in brother. Took it out on brother by being unkind to him.
7. Participant and parents formed coalition to protect brother from grandmother's unkindness.
8. Perceived self as compliant and peacemaker.
9. Perceived Mother as peacemaker.
10. Perceived brother as bolder or more rebellious (minor) and attributes it to a change in what society allowed in child behavior and Mother's understanding of how to deal with brother.
11. Felt closest to brother in early childhood, now as adults, and following a personal crisis in his life.
12. Feels some responsibility for brother--did when he was younger and still does as adults--although the feeling has changed more to concern now.
13. Perceives that her concern for brother is deeper than his is for her and attributes the difference to his involvement in his business.
14. Felt estranged from brother when he adopted a lifestyle very different from upbringing; estrangement due his discomfort when around participant and family, she tried to maintain open communication. Felt relief when he returned to family standards.

15. Felt parental discipline was equal except for age and sex differences.
16. Saw parents as consistent disciplinarians; neither parent administered major amount of discipline.
17. Less opportunity to be close as adults due to overseas missionary assignments of 4 years at a time; managed to stay in contact in spite of separations.
18. Maintains close contact with brother by phone since they are geographically separated now.

Participant #2

1. Participant and brother were close playmates when younger because they lived in the country and had no one else.
2. Later on, they were best friends by choice--desiring to do everything alike.
3. Participant and brother had some spats, fights, and arguments but remained close friends.
4. Brother was better achiever in school. He mentioned being compared with sister by teachers but it caused him no problem since his personality was so different from participant's.
5. Brother had more disciplinary problems in school due to his outgoing personality.
6. Was slightly aggressive with brother when he was a newborn but does not know if that behavior exhibited jealousy or immaturity.
7. Felt protective of brother in early childhood but roles were reversed when older.
8. Brother used participant to get permission for him to do things when younger. Believes he thought she could present a better case than he could.
9. Perceived brother and mother to be alike--outspoken with hot tempers. They would yell and participant would cry but would later tell her brother that he shouldn't talk to their mother in that way.
10. Saw herself as peacemaker--but acted indirectly; tried to make peace between brother and Mother primarily.
11. Was closer to brother in childhood than as adults. Attributed this to distance, different interests, and a personal incident in which brother described participant in a negative manner.
12. Since the above incident participant tries to act around brother in such a way that will negate his former impression of her.
13. Perceived equal treatment by parents. Any differences were related to age and sex.
14. Mother was major disciplinarian, since Dad travelled,

but Dad is perceived as a stronger influence on children and was a peacemaker.

15. Siblings preferred Mother's spankings and other discipline to Dad's talking to them when discipline was needed.
16. Brother more likely to start new family trend and to get into trouble.
17. Perceived she influenced her brother more than he influenced her but he only did what she asked him to do when he was already going to do it. He took her advice more when older than when younger; participant believes this is because he could reason more as she did then.
18. By high school, siblings resented weekends being reserved for family activities (Dad was only home then) and missing peer contact, although they enjoyed Dad being home.

Participant #3

1. Father was major decision-maker, peacemaker, and a more effective disciplinarian; Mother was rather ineffective at disciplining.
2. Parents were consistent disciplinarians and there was no "pitting" one parent against another, although the girls occasionally joined forces in trying to change parents' minds.
3. Perceived no favoritism by parents or grandparents, although believes parents made sure sister was included since she was smaller.
4. Participant was higher school achiever but believes that age and personality differences prevented sister from being compared with her. Sister continued education past high school. Participant is proud of her accomplishments and has no resentment since participant achieved her goal, which was to be a full-time homemaker and mother. Felt sister was a little competitive for attention, but not mean or jealous.
5. Remembers being prevented from getting into sibling's crib when sister was newborn.
6. Played mostly in neighborhood groups but did not play much together. Participant was given responsibility for sister during play, by Mom. Enjoyed bossing sister. Sister resented it.
7. Sister was adventuresome, stubborn, hot-tempered, and more rebellious than participant.
8. Perceived self as peacemaker, compliant, and wanting to do what was "right".
9. In high school, participant became very close to Dad, who answered most of her questions and always had time to listen to her. Sister was also close, but did not open up as much verbally with parents.
10. Does not believe she or sister would prefer to change birth positions. Did notice that sister got to do things earlier than she had done them. Remembers complaining about that. Sees it differently now as her children complain about the same type of differences.

11. Remembers fighting with sister over things but sees this type of interaction as normal and harmless.
12. Feels closer to sister now and they enjoy each other's company. Still tends to tell sister what to do in one area of her life. Tries to refrain from it. Is very pleased about offering counsel once and sister followed it with positive results.
13. Feels she is closer to parents now since she lives away and it is easier to please them for short periods occasionally. On the other hand, sister is close but in a different way. Mother has not accepted sister's lifestyle. Dad disagrees with the lifestyle but is more accepting of her sister as a person and is proud of her accomplishments.
14. Felt closest to sister during adulthood and sister's personal crisis.

Participant #4

1. Earliest recollection of brother is very very proud of him.
2. She and brother played well together until participant started to school because they lived in country and usually had no other playmates.
3. From age 6 to 10, felt brother was a pest because she bossed him around and he responded by irritating her (punching her in the stomach).
4. Would get brother into trouble and then pleaded for mother not to spank him.
5. At 10, hit brother's head and cut it. Realized consequences of previous behavior. Prayed for patience and believes God answered her prayer. Has been more patient since then.
6. Following accident played with brother--alternated his choices with her choices of play activities.
7. Doesn't believe brother was compared to her while in school because they had such different personalities.
8. Siblings were close during early high school because of football and cheerleading; participant catered to brother.
9. Brother dated a lot and participant didn't so they were less close during later high school.
10. Became closer in college (although they attended different ones) as they wrote and attended brother's football games.
11. Perceived herself as a peacemaker, compliant, and understanding family system so she could get her way without exerting much effort.
12. Remembers childhood as wonderful and easy due to lack of conflict with parents; believes brother remembers it as difficult because he received more spankings.
13. Perceives brother to be more adventuresome (more likely to try things outside family customs), and he would hold out for what he wanted until the bitter end.
14. Felt closer to brother during a personal crisis he experienced during college. Gave much support to him when parents were not able to cope with the problem

15. Dad handled mainly big family issues due to work travel schedule; when he was home, everything revolved around him.
16. Mom handled minor daily household affairs.
17. Parents supported each other in discipline approaches.
18. Neither parent was a peacemaker. The family system involved an impatient father with a gruff exterior. Mom would also yell back some. Neither parent would ever attack someone's character. Participant believes she understood the system and knew when to ask for things and how to wait for the right time to ask. Her brother did not understand the system and he would badger to get his way.
19. Current relationship with brother is close. Believes she is more concerned about brother than he is about her just because he doesn't think to be and because of his involvement in business. Believes she could count on brother for anything.
20. During Dad's illness and death, brother relieved participant and Mother of much of a burden by making decisions for them. Participant admired this decisive ability of her brother's.
21. When young, participant and brother each thought the other was the favorite child. She sees this as normal childhood thinking.
22. Was told she was favored by paternal grandmother. Attributed this to a heart murmur and childhood weakness and to her willingness to spend time with grandparents. Believes that grandparents would have preferred her brother because their eyes would also light up when they talked about him but he was bored at their house and wouldn't spend time with them.
23. Responsibility felt for brother was self-initiated and not encouraged by parents.
24. Thinks brother may have gone against family standards when he left home but participant did not.
25. Believes she and brother were treated equally except brother deserved and received more spankings and brother was able to get more money from Dad because he asked for it, whereas participant never thought to ask for money.

26. Siblings did not join forces to change parents' minds.
27. Proud of brother's adult accomplishments since he works hard like her Dad did. At the same time, believes brother has an inner fear of inadequacy. She is not sure he recognizes this tendency in himself. Participant has the same inner fear and she believes she and her brother got the attitude from their Mother.

Participant #5

1. Did not like brother when younger due to varied interests.
2. Felt responsibility to protect him several times.
3. Responsibility felt for brother was self-initiated and not encouraged by parents.
4. Described self as strong, peacemaker, manipulative, compliant in pre-adolescence, independent, and rebellious in adolescence.
5. Described brother as always compliant, not as strong as participant, and inclined to stay close to home.
6. Remembers brother saying he had been compared to participant by teachers, but no response shared.
7. Remembers also brother comparing himself to participant in the home to get something he wanted.
8. Believes he may have been slightly favored because he was first-born and like his father.
9. Brother believed and still does that participant was favored.
10. Both parents disciplined children but Mom did the most due to Dad's job travels and hard work. The discipline was consistent.
11. Mom was adult peacemaker.
12. Always had a good relationship with Dad, even though it became strained at times.
13. Brother never was as close to Dad. He is getting closer to Dad as an adult.
14. Siblings became close for the first time after they both married.
15. Participant thinks childhood was happy but brother didn't think it was so happy.
16. Had few physical fights but participant always bullied brother to get his way. They each got the other in trouble on several occasions.
17. Brother lost his business and participant recommended that brother try his line of work. Participant respects brother's sales ability. Pleased that brother took his advice and was successful.

18. As adults, continue to have different lifestyles and few common interests but participant believes they enjoy their short, frequent contacts now.

Participant #6

1. Remembers being excited about sister's birth.
2. As children, had very little in common due to age differences.
3. Sister wanted to go with participant but wasn't allowed so participant considered her to be in the way.
4. Didn't mind the responsibility for babysitting with sister on Saturdays.
5. Indicated a prevailing concern about the outcome of her sister's life--from childhood to adulthood but the concern is not a parental type of concern.
6. Sister was compared with participant at home but not school and sister reacted negatively to the comparison.
7. Family peacemakers were Dad and participant since participant remembers that Mom had a temper in their younger years.
8. Perceives self as compliant and peacemaker.
9. Perceives sister as more likely to try a new family trend.
10. Doesn't believe either sibling saw more advantages in the other's position.
11. No experience of intervening in sister's difficulties or "setting her up" to get her in trouble.
12. Mother was major disciplinarian since Dad travelled but parents supported each other.
13. Believes parents tried very hard to treat children equally and didn't suspect any favoritism.
14. Conflicts took form of minor disagreements with sister.
15. Sisters became close when younger sister married although they were initially separated by many miles.
16. Sisters enjoy each other's company now and they see each other fairly regularly.
17. Participant tries to refrain from interfering in sister's life but just to be a listener.
18. Sister only asks participant for advice on child-rearing because participant's children are slightly older. Enjoys giving advice to sister.

19. Believes she and sister view childhood as a happy times.

Participant #7

1. Was excited to have a brother since mother had lost 3 babies in between them; wanted a companion.
2. Initial response to brother was disappointment because I didn't see much potential in him.
3. Father was overseas for 3 years so participant grew up in house with 3 adults and was very mature for her age.
4. Didn't have much in common with brother due to age span, different interests, and difference in activity level.
5. Brother was more adventuresome, more likely to go outside the family bounds, and try his wings as a kid.
6. Participant was more compliant, more studious, more of a peacemaker.
7. Parents tried to treat children equally. No favoritism was perceived from them. Participant suspects that her brother could just smile at their mother and get to do things participant could never do.
8. Grandparents favored participant because she applied herself academically and was a good student. Believes brother felt grandparents may have compared him to participant in academics.
9. Remembers no school comparison of the siblings.
10. Dad made major decisions and Mom supported his decisions. Both parents were disciplinarians.
11. Felt need to protect brother as child but as an adult feel respect for him now.
12. Given occasional responsibility to care for brother when younger. Did not mind babysitting. Brother had minor accidents at age 2 weeks and 9 or 10 years while under her care. Feels Mother has never forgiven her for them since she still mentions them. Feels accidents were unavoidable but still feels responsible for them.
13. Believes her mother was jealous of attention given by maternal grandparents for the 3 years they lived together. Attributes this to mother's only child

status and the leniency with which they treated participant.

14. Felt very close to grandparents. Thinks they nurtured her, built her up, and increased her self-confidence. Believes brother did not have the same opportunity for closeness because he was more active, grandparents were in poorer health when he was growing up, and he applied himself less effectively in academics.
15. Felt grandparents went against mother in giving participant her way though participant did not use this resource herself; felt it was not necessary.
16. Believes there may continue to be some friction between Mother and self now but doesn't feel Mother recognizes it.
17. During participant's up and down emotional moods of teen years, occasionally there were fireworks between Mom and her but Dad could usually talk things out with participant.
18. Believes peacemaker role was developed to use between parents. Their system was to occasionally bicker for the sake of mental exercise. Participant thought they were serious and were breaking up.

Participant #8

1. Not real close to sister due to wide age span.
2. Took a "big brother" attitude which meant he felt some responsibility for her choice of friends.
3. Responsibility felt was probably self-initiated although it may have been subtly encouraged by parents.
4. Had gotten accustomed to being an only child but joined family in being glad to have a sister.
5. Sister resented being compared to brother in school.
6. Participant was outgoing, "liked" by peers, had many friends, more compliant with family standards, and a peacemaker.
7. Sister was less outgoing, had fewer friends, less compliant and more likely to do things outside bounds of family traditions.
8. Dad was probably the adult peacemaker.
9. Parents were consistent disciplinarians and did not play favorites with the children. However, Dad had more difficulty being firm with sister and Mom had more difficulty being firm with participant.
10. Participant was favored by grandparents because of their preference for boys and sister may have felt left out.
11. Participant believes he exerted a greater influence on his sister than she did on him. This was mainly during childhood and he believes his sister's response to his influence or authority was usually favorable. In adolescence, stopped offering suggestions because he didn't feel her response would be so favorable.
12. Didn't enjoy his sister's discipline and did not try to get her in trouble but he did expect to defend himself as necessary.
13. Believes sister saw his family position as more advantageous than he saw hers.
14. Was disappointed when, after her marriage, sister developed standards different from her upbringing.

15. After parent's deaths, perceives that both siblings now desire a closer relationship as evidenced by more phone calls, letters, and plans for more visits. Sister is beginning to seek some counsel from participant on major matters only, whereas previously she didn't call at all.
16. Participant is pleased about sister's return to family standards.
17. Believes he and sister would have had a closer earlier relationship except for wide age span which resulted in them living almost in 2 different worlds.

Participant #9

1. Has little recollection of sister until age 5 or 6 because their parents were missionaries overseas and the children had caretakers.
2. From age 5 or 6, until participant left home for college, participant believes she and sister hated each other's guts.
3. There was much fighting. Participant provoked sister and sister responded by throwing sharp objects at participant (scissors).
4. Participant believes if she and sister had met as classmates they probably would not have become close friends.
5. Never had any responsibility for care of sister due to living arrangements on mission field where child care was available. Feels no responsibility for sister now since she is financially secure and has more money than participant.
6. Parents had a very tempestuous marriage and fought about many things. They did discipline the girls in a consistent manner.
7. Mother made major decisions about family life but there was much disagreement between parents about such matters.
8. Doesn't remember sisters joining forces to change parents' minds.
9. Participant was like her Mother while sister was like Dad. Since their parents fought so much, participant believes it makes sense that she and her sister would fight also.
10. Participant grew up thinking all siblings fought the way she and her sister did and was surprised as an adult to discover that her husband's family did not allow fighting or jealousy.
11. Saw herself as a peacemaker between her parents but not between herself and sister. Was also more compliant and usually "played it safe".
12. Sister thinks Mother loved participant most. Participant doesn't understand her thinking.

13. Sister was more likely to do something outside the family traditions.
14. Parents were better at roles other than their parenting roles but participant has attempted to forgive them for that.
15. Did not object to sister's closeness to Dad because, although she respected her dad, she didn't like him very much. Remembers him playing dirty tricks on her mother and her mother being powerless to change things.
16. Participant made slightly better grades in school. Sister was compared with participant at school and hated it.
17. As adults, sister and participant, have a kind of uneasy truce. Realized how ridiculous their fighting was. Get along better now if they don't spend too much time together because of different ideas about politics, philosophies of life, definitions of success, and their husbands are in very different kinds of occupations.
18. Both siblings took a different approach to religion than did their parents but her sister was more likely to do other things outside the family customs.
19. After the girls became the same size, neither exerted much influence on the other.
20. Never thought of trade-off of advantages and disadvantages of their birth positions. Sees her advantages as having been especially wanted (Mother was told she couldn't conceive) and being born into unusual circumstances (prisoners in a foreign country) and having relatives talk about that experience. Sees her sister's advantages of having less expected of her, having a more normal birth, and possibly having parents be more lenient with their upbringing of her.
21. Felt closest to her sister when her second child died accidentally (participant was pregnant with her second child and thought it could have as easily been her) and when Father died, to whom sister was so close (participant imagined how she would feel if Mother, to whom she was closest would die). Participant didn't know how to comfort her sister during those times.

22. Participant's children began an intense rivalry around 8 or 9 years of age. Imagines it will last until they are adults and attributes it to their very different personalities. Reminds her of her rivalry with her sister except her younger daughter is the provoker.

Participant #10

1. Was told by parents that he responded to sister's birth by throwing things into her crib. Believes that is a natural response when one has been the center of attention for over a year.
2. They were closest in childhood about 5th or 6th grade when he played with her friends.
3. Other than that time period, they had different interests and were never best friends or buddies and did not do many things together.
4. Doesn't remember much friction between them and doesn't believe either was a peacemaker. Believes he was the instigator of any of their disagreements.
5. Did more household work than sister because he was capable of doing more and not because she was lazy.
6. Believes he had a special relationship with his mother (Mama's boy) and sister had a special relationship with Father (Daddy's girl). Besides those differences, parents treated them equally.
7. Parents were very consistent in their discipline.
8. Mom made major decisions because she was in the home more.
9. Doesn't remember he and sister joining forces to try to change parents' minds.
10. Was not given responsibility for care of sister. Doesn't feel any now. If lived in the same city as sister, probably would be more involved in her life such as mowing her lawn, etc.
11. Neither sibling made a greater effort to please parents.
12. Doesn't see any advantage to being second-born. Doesn't believe sister would have preferred to be first-born.
13. Has no resentment that sister has more access to Mother than participant has.
14. Feels he influenced sister more than she influenced him since he has never had to depend upon her for anything. Due to geographical separation and proximity of mother and sister, she has not had to depend upon participant.

15. Disagreed with sister's decision to drop out of college after father's death but did not interfere with her decision.
16. Not happy with the way her life has gone due to paraplegia from an accident and eventual divorce.
17. Belives relationship with sister would have been different if they had lived in the same city.
18. Didn't feel closer to sister during father's death because participant was occupied with determination to continue in college or her serious accident because she was in critical condition for some time and he was in advanced flight training in another city and could not be relieved to go home.

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