2015

Giving Voice to the Silence of Family Estrangement: Comparing Reasons of Estranged Parents and Adult Children in a Non-matched Sample

Kristen Carr
Texas Christian University

Amanda J. Holman
Creighton University, amandaholman@creighton.edu

Jenna Abetz
College of Charleston

Jody Koenig Kellas
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, jkellas2@unl.edu

Elizabeth Vagnoni
Estranged Stories

Published in Journal of Family Communication, 15: 2015
DOI: 10.1080/15267431.2015.1013106

Giving Voice to the Silence of Family Estrangement: Comparing Reasons of Estranged Parents and Adult Children in a Non-matched Sample

Kristen Carr[1], Amanda Holman[2], Jenna Abetz[3], Jody Koenig Kellas[4] & Elizabeth Vagnoni[5]

1. Department of Communication Studies, Texas Christian University
2. Department of Communication Studies, Creighton University
3. Department of Communication, College of Charleston
4. Department of Communication Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
5. Estranged Stories

Abstract
This study investigated 898 parents' and adult children's reasons for estrangement in light of research on interpersonal attributions and the relational consequences of perspective taking. Three primary categories emerged: estrangement resulted from intrafamily, interfamily, or intrapersonal issues. Within each category, the frequency of parents' and children's reasons for estrangement differed significantly from each other. Parents reported that their primary reason for becoming estranged stemmed from their children's objectionable relationships or sense of entitlement, whereas adult children most frequently attributed their estrangement to their parents' toxic behavior or feeling unsupported and unaccepted. Parents also reported that they were unsure of the reason for their estrangement significantly more often than did children. Examining estrangement from the perspective of both parents and adult children offers potential avenues for family reconciliation and future communication research.

Traditionally, family scholars study parent-child relationships as though they are enduring and permanent; thus, it is not surprising that research exploring why these relationships dissolve is relatively scarce. Perhaps because of these normative assumptions about the permanence of parent-child relationships, the effects of family estrangement can be devastating to those who experience it. Parent-child estrangement, or the decision to discontinue communication by either parent or child, occurs when the parent-child bond has been significantly damaged (Friedlander & Walters, 2010), yet the reasons for discontinuing this relationship vary widely.

Reasons for estrangement from extant research include traumatic experiences of family violence, abuse, neglect, (Drozd & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010), and parental misbehavior such as repetitive explosive outbursts or intense marital conflict (Kelly & Johnston, 2001), especially after divorce (Campbell, 2005). The majority of researchers investigating the reasons for parent-child estrangement, however, seek out individuals estranged as a result of a specific circumstance. In other words, existing knowledge of parent-child estrangement reflects researchers' a priori decisions about its possible causes. Asking participants to select the most salient contributing factors surrounding their own experiences (e.g., divorce, abuse) provides an important foundation for parent-child estrangement. However, we know of no study, to date, that allowed estranged parents and children to provide open-ended explanations for why they are estranged. Therefore, the initial

purpose of this study is to examine the reasons given by both parents and adult children for family estrangement.

Because parents and children are unlikely to discuss their estrangement with each other—and are therefore unlikely to understand each other's reasoning—an additional goal of this study is to understand how parents and adult children uniquely make sense of the circumstances surrounding their estrangement. The ability to understand, attend to, and confirm others' perspectives is positively associated with family satisfaction, cohesion, adaptability, and perceptions of family support (Koenig Kellas, 2005; Trees & Koenig Kellas, 2009). Thus, the opportunity to understand one another's point of view may be an important first step for researchers and practitioners in helping families cope with their estrangement.

Making Sense of Estrangement

Because of the social expectation of permanence for parent-child relationships, the dissolution of parent-child bonds requires a valid reason to avoid negative sanctions (McCall, 1982). Yet, the absence of verbal communication between estranged parents and children suggests that estrangement may be best understood through internal sense-making processes such as attribution and perspective taking. Because individuals operate as "naïve scientists" to understand the cognitive and communicative processes in explaining others' behavior (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008), examining how these attributions for estrangement vary may provide important insight to families who have become estranged.

Attribution theory focuses on the degree to which individuals' causal loci for behavior is internal or external (Heider, 1958). Internal causes are those that are associated with the disposition and characteristics of an individual, whereas externally located causes attribute behavior to some environmental factor, such as an illness or injury. Individuals who believe that their relational partners' positive behavior is intentional and voluntary, and that their negative behavior is unintentional and involuntary are making relationship-enhancing attributions, which are associated with increased relational satisfaction and adjustment (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985; Manusov, 1990). Conversely, people who assign internal causes to negative behavior and external causes to positive behavior make distress-maintaining attributions, which often result in anger, conflict (Canary & Spitzberg, 1990) and perhaps, estrangement.

Thus, it seems likely that parents' and adult children's reasons for their estrangement offer insight into their unique sense-making processes. When faced with problematic behavior, people cognitively and discursively construct reasons for self- and other-behavior, and these cognitive and communicative constructions have relational consequences. In the context of parent-child estrangement, understanding the reasons parents and adult children provide lends insight into this understudied but consequential family phenomenon. Thus, we asked:

RQ1: What reasons do parents and adult children provide for their estrangement?

In addition to examining parents and children's explanations for their estrangement, it may also be useful to examine how, if at all, parents' reasons vary from adult children's reasons. Because differing perspectives may be at the heart of the conflict and misunderstanding that characterizes estrangement, it seems likely that parents and adult children provide different accounts for their estrangement as well. Thus, understanding how parents and children's perspectives diverge is an important step in providing practical suggestions for families coping with estrangement.

The ability to take another's perspective and communicate that understanding to others has been identified as a significant predictor of family satisfaction, adaptability, and family functioning (Koe-

nig Kellas, 2005; Trees & Koenig Kellas, 2009) and is predictive of empathic concern (Takada & Levine, 2007). Given the positive links between perspective taking and relationship functioning (Long & Andrews, 1990), estranged relationships are likely characterized by differences in, or lack of, perspective taking. Examining how parents' and children's attributions for estrangement differ offers a window into how they make sense of their relational difficulties and may provide an important first step in helping estranged parents and children to understand each other's perspectives. To gain an understanding of how parents' and children's perspectives differ as evidenced by their attributions for estrangement, we also asked:

RQ2: How do parents' and adult children's reasons for estrangement vary?

Method

Participants

Data for this study were collected as part of a larger research project on parent-child estrangement initiated by the fifth author as the creator and moderator of a website providing social support for estranged parents and adult children. Participants consisted of a nonmatched sample of 546 parents and 352 adult children (N = 898) who were recruited from various websites associated with estrangement. The online survey asked participants to provide basic demographic information, the details surrounding the estrangement, and to respond to the open-ended prompt of "From your point of view, please briefly describe what you believe to be the reason for the estrangement."

In the parent sample, nearly 93% (n = 507) were female, and the majority was Caucasian (95%, n = 520). Although the majority of parents resided in the United States (86%, n = 470), responses were recorded from 11 other countries (11.9%, n = 65). The mean age of the parents was 56 years (SD = 7.64) and they had been estranged from their children for about five years (M = 5.35, SD = 5.60).

Adult children participants were also predominantly female (82%, n = 290), Caucasian (87%, n = 308), and resided in the United States (77%, n = 273). The mean age of estranged adult children was nearly 40 years old (M = 39.76, SD = 10.36) and they reported being estranged from their parent(s) for approximately nine years (M = 8.59, SD = 8.75), beginning at age 31.

Data Analysis

To identify parents and children's reasons for their estrangement, the open-ended data were coded in a series of steps. Consistent with Vangelisti, Crumley, and Baker's (1999) coding procedures, all responses were examined and initial thematic categories were derived using analytic induction (Bulmer, 1979). An additional twenty percent of the data were reviewed based on this preliminary list of categories, allowing thematic categories to be redefined, collapsed, or expanded as necessary, resulting in a final list of 14 reasons for parent-child estrangement. Early in the coding process, we were open to the possibility that the list of reasons would differ between parent and adult-child samples. However, we discovered that the reasons provided were similar enough to be categorized under one coding scheme encompassing both parents and children.

Each response was first read in its entirety to obtain a global sense of its theme. If a single theme emerged as the reason for estrangement (e.g., physical abuse, divorce), the corresponding code was assigned. If the reason for estrangement spanned more than one theme (i.e., several themes were listed in one response), the theme that was the most developed in length or description was selected as the primary theme. After all data were coded, twenty percent were checked for consistency across coders. In this sample, Cohen's Kappa indicated acceptable reliability among coders ($\kappa = .80$, 83%); all disagreements were resolved through discussion and one final code was assigned.

TABLE 1
Categories, Themes, Descriptions, and Variations in Frequency of Parents and Adult-children's Reasons for Estrangement

Categories, Themes, and Descriptions	*n*	%	*Parents (n = 546)*	*n*	%	*Adult Children (n = 352)*
Intrafamily*	250	46%		207	59%	
Estrangement resulted from negative behavior occurring between estranged family members						
Abuse**	16	2.9%	I truly believe that she was molested by her father from a very young age. She shares a 'secret' with her father."	49	13.9%	I was emotionally and sexually abused. My parents will not discuss or accept any responsibility for what happened. Now, being around them leads to hurt (for me).
Emotional, psychological, sexual, or physical abuse; parent acknowledging failure to protect child from abuse						
Conflict/Rivalry	29	5.3%	[He] possibly feels we love his brothers (2) and sister (1) more than him . . . it is not true. Seems jealous of their success and yet he is very successful also.	27	7.7%	Parents favored [my] brother - emotionally and financially.
Existence or perception of, sibling jealousy, favoritism, or other forms of conflict						
Deception	13	2.4%	She got caught in very major lies and deception . . . and a guy she just met and barley knew came into the picture, making things worse.	7	2.0%	Recently learned of his secret double life and a half brother I knew nothing about. . . . He kept a separate room and double life instead of coming clean after he got his mistress pregnant.
Lying or manipulation						
Divorce/Alienation	72	13.2%	After my divorce from his father he seemed to start to hate me as his father did after our divorce.	8	2.3%	My father took me away from my mother at 10 years of age. I could and did not see or communicate with my mother for 8 years. At 18 I reconciled with my mother and my father no longer wanted me in his life or that of my siblings.
Associated challenges/impact of divorce and remarriage						
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	14	2.6%	I am an alcoholic. I only quit 3 years ago. They cut me off when I was still actively drinking and lying about if I was drinking.	12	3.4%	Years of living with alcoholic mother while she was married to abusive, physically abusive, alcoholic step-father, where he and she always came before my well-being.
Use of drugs and/or excessive alcohol that interfered with ability to fulfill responsibility or use good judgment						
Entitlement**	41	7.5%	Money and jealousy. They were told that their father's family had money by biological mom and when their father's mother passed away they demanded what they thought was their share although they were not named in the will. . . . They are convinced that their father has been funneling all of his money to me! I wish there was something to funnel.	6	1.7%	Discrepancies with the cost and venue of my wedding. He said I was acting entitled, and I thought he wasn't listening to me, as I had checked out every venue he wanted me to look at. He ultimately got upset with me over a post on Facebook unrelated to him or our relationship, and the argument snowballed from there.
Ungrateful or unappreciative behavior						

Toxicity** *Continuous situations of hurtfulness, anger, cruelty, or perpetual disrespect*	45	8.3%	He has become defensive, angry, hostile . . . (166).	79	22.4%	The cumulative pain because of the past never went away, never was reconciled, never was discussed, never was apologized for, never acknowledged, nothing. I hoped I could let it go but it never went away. Being around my family brought up too many painful memories that would haunt me for days.
Interfamily** *Estrangement resulted from situations or issues existing outside the estranged family relationship*	161	29%		37	11%	
Physical/Geographical Separation *Physical inaccessibility within the family, often leading to emotional distance*	5	.9%	Unresolved conflict with me-perhaps blaming me for not being there when I should have been instead of working out of the home 3 weeks per month-cooking in a oil rig camp . . . home only 1 week per month.	1	.3%	Geographical separation (I live in another country), lack of emotional closeness early on, lack of perceived interest in my life, lack of communication.
Objectionable Relationship(s)** *Relationships including spouses, dating partners, in-laws, stepparents, or other individual outside the family of origin*	156	28.6%	He has been dating a girl for two years and this is when all the trouble began. He has had a complete personality change and he is now engaged to her. We, as parents, don't like her and neither do his friends. We think she brings out the worst in him. He was so nice and considerate before this girl and he is completely different.	36	10.2%	Family has never accepted my wife (8 years) and is disrespectful towards her. Upon asking it to stop, we were suddenly the attackers and they the victims.
Intrapersonal** *Estrangement resulted from characteristic or personality flaw of self or family member*	70	28%		77	22%	
Mental Illness *Perception or diagnosis of family member suffering from depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.*	20	3.7%	I believe that she has suffered from a mental illness for many years and that I was not aware of it. I believe that her illness warps her thinking so that she sees many things not as they are. . . . I believe that she has inherited a mental illness and that it affects her ability to have good relationships with most people.	12	3.4%	I needed to cut off my mother. She is mentally ill and is dangerous. I need to protect myself and allow myself to one day have a healthy family of my own.

(*Continued*)

TABLE 1
(*Continued*)

Categories, Themes, and Descriptions	*n*	%	*Parents (n = 546)*	*n*	%	*Adult Children (n = 352)*
Self-Centeredness* *Perception of egotism or narcissism*	19	3.5%	. . . after reading extensively with regard to NPD [narcissistic personality disorder], I believe I may have created the narcissistic "monsters". My son is self-important, arrogant, intolerant of others, shows no remorse or empathy. Both children were raised in a kind, compassionate, loving environment. They were given their due privacy but I kept a watchful eye. Perhaps I DID overcompensate and praise excessively. . . . It backfired.	24	6.8%	My father is an extremely self-centered person, who seems incapable of any kind of real relationship. He uses people until they are no longer useful, then discards them. (I often compare it to the way I treat empty ballpoint pens). . . . . Finally, after an exhausting several years of service to him with the only reward being a one-sided relationship, plus the aggravation of dealing with his latest girlfriend, my sister and I (independently–she went first) decided we'd had enough.
Unsupported/Unaccepted** *Feeling judged, unloved, or unaccepted, often as a result of divergent values*	31	5.7%	She has told me only that I don't understand her or appreciate her for who she is and that she has nothing in common with me???? I think she has a lot of anger over something that she perceives that I failed to do when she was growing up. She is the oldest child and I had two younger children who needed attention (boys) and I was sick a lot during her teen years so maybe I didn't attend to her needs as much as I could have or should have.	52	14.8%	I was born with a disability. Thought both my parents wanted me. After my dad died my mom basically said it was his decision to bring me home. . . . I went on to graduate from high school, and get 2 degrees. I have had the most successful careers out of all my siblings. My mom wrote in a journal that I was the problem child - and the other two were beautiful and perfect. . . . The one who wanted me is dead (my dad) and the rest of them have rejected me.
Additional Themes *Estrangement resulted from an unknown reason, or reason provided did not fit into other categories*	64	12%		20	6%	
Other (uncodable)	31	5.7%	Reasons that did not fit into any of the other categories.	17	4.8%	
Unknown/Unsure** *Could not give a reason or did not know why the estrangement occurred*	33	6.1%	I truly have no idea. . . . it could be so many things but basically I believe it's an unwillingness on my adult children to communicate at all.	3	.9%	I don't know.

Note. Asterisks indicate that the frequency of parents and children reporting this category/theme were significantly different.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .001$.

Results

The research questions guiding this study sought to first examine parents' and adult children's reasons for estrangement (RQ1) and then to identify how parents and children vary in their explanation of the circumstances surrounding estrangement (RQ2). The results of RQ1 demonstrated that across both parent and child groups, three overarching categories emerged, indicating that estrangement resulted from intrafamily, interfamily, or intrapersonal issues. Intrafamily issues suggested that estrangement resulted from negative behavior occurring between estranged family members. Interfamily reasons indicated that estrangement resulted from situations or issues existing outside of the estranged family relationship. Intrapersonal reasons suggested that estrangement resulted from a personality characteristic of oneself or a family member. Within these three overarching categories, reasons for estrangement were categorized into 14 themes. A fourth category was created to include themes of unsure/don't know and uncodable. Definitions of each category, theme, and examples from both parents and children are available in Table 1.

To answer RQ2 and understand how parents and children varied in their reasons for estrangement, a cross-tabs contingency analysis revealed significant differences in the frequency with which parents and children discussed their estrangement as the result of intrafamily interfamily, or intrapersonal issues. Follow up pairwise comparisons were then conducted to assess the specific differences among these groups, indicating that, when compared to children, parents' reasons for estrangement tended to result from more interfamily $\chi2(1) = 56.12$, $p < .001$ and intrafamily reasons, $\chi2(1) = 5.37$, $p < .05$, whereas children reported significantly more intrapersonal attributions $\chi2(1) = 44.38$, $p < .001$ than did parents. To further assess these variations between parents and children's reasons for estrangement, we then conducted a series of pairwise comparisons to determine if the frequency of each theme differed between parents and children. Rather than reporting results from all 14 pairwise comparisons textually, we use asterisks in Table 1 to indicate additional statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences between parents and children in categories and themes.

Discussion

This study examined reasons provided by parents and adult children for their estrangement and identified how these reasons differed between estranged children and parents. Previous research on estrangement has focused on predetermined situational occurrences such as divorce (Campbell, 2005), alcoholism, abuse (Drozd & Olesen, 2004; Friedlander & Walters, 2010), or other forms of parental misbehavior such as intense, negative outbursts and repetitive conflict (Kelly & Johnston, 2001). Although these events contributed to estrangement, few parents and adult children reported these as their primary reasons for the dissolution of the parent-child relationships in this large-scale study. For the children in our study, the main reasons for estrangement stemmed from their perception of their parents' toxic behavior, or feeling unsupported and/or unaccepted. Parents, in contrast, most frequently attributed estrangement to their children's objectionable relationships outside the family.

Overall, analyses indicated that parents cited significantly more intra-and interfamily reasons for their estrangement than did children, suggesting that situational or family stressors played a more prominent role for parents than did their estranged child's character or personality. For many parents, estrangement was the result of external circumstances; if absent, estrangement would likely have not occurred. In contrast, children cited significantly more intrapersonal reasons for their estrangement, signifying that children viewed their reason for estrangement as a consequence of the characteristics of their parents; an unfortunate but inevitable ending, barring significant personality changes. These differences are demonstrated by the variations between parents' and children's experience of each category and theme discussed below.

Within the intrafamily category, parents often discussed estrangement as related to their own divorce or their child's entitled behavior more frequently than did children. These differences have several interesting implications. First, existing research on parent-child estrangement has focused primarily on divorce as the impetus for estrangement, but just 13.2% of parents and 2.3% of children reported this as their primary reason for becoming estranged. The significant difference in parents' and children's experiences may reflect their respective attributional biases, in that parents tended to blame estrangement on sources outside of themselves, and children tended to attribute estrangement to the personal characteristics of their parents. Additionally, parents report entitlement as the reason for estrangement more frequently than do children. It is interesting to note that even when children did report entitlement as the reason for being estranged, they generally cited this as their perception of their parents' perspective, rather than as self-reflection or an admission of misbehavior.

Of those parents and children providing interfamily reasons, significantly more parents attributed their estrangement to their children's objectionable relationships. Although parents discussed their children's destructive or hurtful behavior in this category, the reason for the change in their personality was generally attributed to the influence of the objectionable person. Children, however, often indicated that their parents' inability to accept their dating partner or spouse resulted from their parents' narrow-minded personality. Additionally, children discussed their parents' self-centered behavior as a relatively stable characteristic that allowed little opportunity for change. Interestingly, relatively few parents recognized their own role in their children's self-centered behavior, suggesting that they may have been excessively supportive or overly accommodating to their children. Parental self-reflection was not as prevalent, however, when parents reported the reason for estrangement as unloved and/or unsupported. Overwhelmingly, parents discussed their children's perception of being unloved, but were uncertain of their own role in creating these feelings. Children, on the other hand, were explicit about the reasons for feeling unloved, and often attributed these causes to stable and internal characteristics of their parents.

Collectively, the differences outlined here suggest that parents tended to discuss estrangement as the result of external factors (e.g., objectionable relationships), whereas children cited their parents' internal personal characteristics (e.g., toxicity). However, the data suggest that both parents and children are more likely to explain estrangement in terms of the parents' behavior, perhaps reflecting a social expectation that parents are primarily responsible for maintaining the parent-child relationship.

Contribution to the Literature

These variations in experiences of estrangement contribute to the existing body of research in several ways. First, nearly all of the existing research on parent-child estrangement has assumed that estrangement occurs during adolescence (Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Kim, 2006), whereas the average age of estrangement for this sample was 31 years old. Although much of the research on parent-child estrangement has grown out of the literature on parental alienation and divorce, this constituted only 15.5% of the total sample's attributions for estrangement. Family events such as divorce played a role in many of the participants' reasons for becoming estranged, but, like parent-adolescent conflict, was frequently one piece of a larger relational puzzle.

One of the most predominant variations in parents and children's reasons for their estrangement in the current sample is well supported by attribution theory. Specifically, these results suggest that when explaining estrangement, parents tended to make more external attributions about the estrangement (e.g., divorce), whereas children made attributions that were internal to the parent. Overall, however, the data suggest that both parents and children are more likely to explain estrangement in terms of the parents' behavior. If parents are socially expected to take more responsibility for estrangement from their children, it is not surprising that they would make more external,

uncontrollable attributions for their own actions. Research on the fundamental attribution error, which suggests that people are more likely to attribute internal causes to others' negative behavior (Ross, 1977), may help to explain children's attributions. Specifically, children in this study tended to attribute estrangement to the negative, internal, stable characteristics of their parents (i.e., self-centeredness, toxicity). However, as illustrated by the fundamental attribution error, the causes of a person's behavior are rarely this simple or straightforward, and thus children's assessment of their parents' behavior may be incomplete or inaccurate.

In addition to the variation in the nature of their attributions, parents were not as confident in the verity of their attributions for estrangement as were children, and their accounts were less developed. Parents often speculated or listed multiple "options" as reasons for estrangement, whereas children were much more convinced as to the reason they were estranged from their parents. This has significant implications when viewed through the lens of perspective-taking as the ability to take the perspective of others, especially during times of difficulty or stress, has very real consequences for family relationships (e.g., Koenig Kellas, 2005). At the same time, children were even less likely to incorporate their parents' perspectives about estrangement than were the parent sample. Teaching parents and children how to communicate in a way that supports each other's perspective during times of family crisis may result in more generous attributions for each other's behavior.

The silence that inherently characterizes estrangement makes this a particularly difficult issue for families to address. Many parents' reasons for their estrangement were fraught with confusion, bewilderment, and pain as they attempted to grapple with their estrangement from their child. Rebuilding a broken relationship requires the effort of both the parent and estranged child, but misunderstanding one another's reasons for estrangement is likely to make any effort at reconciliation difficult. Thus, although familial experiences with estrangement are likely unique, there is considerable benefit for both estranged parents and children to understand each others' perspectives, even in a general sense.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There are several limitations to this study that should be considered. First, recruiting participants through an online support community may lead to different perspectives than recruiting from the general population because these participants may have spent more time disentangling their own reasons for estrangement already. Additionally, because the majority of parents in this study were female, it may be salient to examine estrangement more closely from fathers' perspectives. Finally, because there are limitations to cross-sectional data, future research should study estrangement longitudinally, as estrangement commonly unfolds over time.

Given the significant distress experienced by estranged parents and children (Baker, 2005; Kim, 2006), our primary focus is on generating conclusions with practical value. Understanding how parents and children uniquely make sense of the circumstances surrounding their estrangement has significant utility for researchers, practitioners, and family members alike. With a richer knowledge of why the parent-child bond becomes severed, researchers might explore the long-term impact of parent-child estrangement over time. Given that toxicity is the primary reason children report for estranging themselves from their parents, practitioners might consider ways to help parents understand how their children see their communicative patterns as hurtful or toxic, which may serve as a mechanism for better understanding their children's perspective.

Likewise, it may be beneficial for adult children to reevaluate their previously-held attributions of parental toxicity, especially when a significant amount of time has elapsed since the estrangement. By definition, estrangement involves the absence of verbal communication between parents and children. Offering a synthesis of large-sample reasons for estrangement from the perspective

of both parents and children offers a communicative link for either of the estranged individuals to be self-reflective. Based on the difficulty both parents and adult children experienced in understanding each others' reasons for estrangement, it seems that developing the skills associated with communicated perspective-taking may be particularly salient as a preventative and reconciliatory mechanism in parent-child relationships.

References

Baker, A. J. (2005). The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative research study. American Journal of Family Therapy, 33, 289–302. doi:10.1080/01926180590962129

Bulmer, M. (1979). Concepts in the analysis of qualitative data. Sociological Review, 27, 651–677. doi:10.1111/ j.1467-954X.1979.tb00354.x

Campbell, T. W. (2005). Why doesn't parental alienation occur more frequently? The significance of role discrimination. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 33, 365–377. doi:10.1080/01926180500274567

Canary, D. J., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1990). Attribution biases and associations between conflict strategies and competence outcomes. Communication Monographs, 57, 139–151. doi:10.1080/0363775900937619

Drozd, L. M., & Olesen, N. W. (2004). Is it abuse, alienation, and/or estrangement? A decision tree. Journal of Child Custody, 1, 65–106. doi:10.1300/J190v01n03_05

Friedlander, A., & Walters, M. G. (2010). When a child rejects a parent: Tailoring the intervention to fit the problem. Family Court Review, 48, 98–111. doi:10.1111/j.1744-1617.2009.01291.x

Heider, F. (1958). The psychology of interpersonal relations. New York, NY: Wiley. doi:10.1037/10628-000

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., & Jacobson, N. S. (1985). Causal attributions of married couples: When do they search for causes? What do they conclude when they do? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48, 1398–1412. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.48.6.1398

Kelly, J. B., & Johnston, J. R. (2001). The alienated child: A reformulation of parental alienation syndrome. Family Court Review, 39, 249–266. doi:10.1111/j.174-1617.2001.tb00609.x

Kim, K. J. (2006). Parent-adolescent conflict, negative emotion, and estrangement from the family origin. Research in Human Development, 3, 45–58. doi:10.1207/s15427617rhd0301_5

Koenig Kellas, J. (2005). Family ties: Communicating identity through jointly told family stories. Communication Monographs, 72, 365–389. doi:10.1080/03637750500322453

Long, E. C. J., & Andrews, D. W. (1990). Perspective-taking as a predictor of marital adjustment. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59, 126–131. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.59.1.126

Manusov, V. (1990). An application of attribution principles to nonverbal behavior in romantic dyads. Communication Monographs, 57, 104–118. doi:10.1080/03637759009376189

Manusov, V., & Spitzberg, B. (2008). Attribution theory: Finding good cause in the search for theory. In L. A. Baxter & D. O. Braithwaite (Eds.), Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives (pp. 37–49). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781483329529.n3

McCall, G. J. (1982). Becoming unrelated: The management of bond dissolution. In S. Duck (Ed.), Personal relationships 4: Dissolving personal relationships (pp. 211–231). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (pp. 10–21). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Takada, J., & Levine, T. (2007). The effects of the even-a-few-minutes-would-help strategy, perspective taking, and empathic concern on the successful recruiting of volunteers on campus.

Communication Research Reports, 24, 177–184. doi:10.1080/08824090701439026.
Trees, A. R., & Koenig Kellas, J. (2009). Telling tales: Enacting family relationships in joint storytelling about difficult family experiences. Western Journal of Communication, 73, 91–111. doi:10.1080/10570310802635021.
Vangelisti, A. L., Crumley, L. P., & Baker, J. L. (1999). Family portraits: Stories as standards for family relationships. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 16, 335–368. doi:10.1177/0265407599163004.