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THE CONNECTED CENTRAL RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS (CCRP): A STRUCTURAL VERSION OF THE CCRT

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The Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) developed by Luborsky is a content-analytic method for the measurement of repetitive relationship patterns. Narratives about relationship episodes with the self and with significant others serve as a data base. The most frequent of three judged components (wish, response from others, response of self) to be rated constitute the CCRT. In this paper we present a further methodological development of the CCRT, a structural version we have named Connected Central Relationship Patterns (CCRP). It is a method of identifying "macromolecular" relationship structures. We describe the approach, the specific features of data acquisition, the statistical analysis which was based on further development of methods for contingency tables and some applications. A psychodynamic short-term therapy with almost 300 relationship episodes serves as an example.

INTRODUCTION

As a serendipitous by-product of his work on the therapeutic alliance, Luborsky (1977) presented a method of identifying the Core Conflictual Relationship Theme (CCRT) of patients in individual psychotherapy. This represents one of the first generation of procedures for the judgment of narrated interactive relationship events.[1]

The method works with narrative episodes, so-called relationship episodes (REs), which focus on interactions with significant others that are of importance to the narrator. Narratives are especially suited to convey affective, subjectively important material (Schütze, 1977). The CCRT method focuses on three aspects of a patient's relationship narratives: What does the patient want from others? How do others react to his wish, and how does the patient consequently react? Luborsky emphasises the closeness of this procedure to everyday clinical reasoning. Experienced clinicians tend to identify the more or less stable transference patterns in this way. His notion of trans-

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[1]In Ulm Luborsky presented a first version of the manual in 1981. Formally the manual was introduced by the publication of the German version (Luborsky & Kächele 1988).

ference is operationally defined: "The CCRT looks much like Freud's (1912) transference template" (Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, Friedman, Mark, & Schaffler, 1991a).

THE METHOD FOR DERIVING THE CORE CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP THEME

As the method has been described in detail by Luborsky and Crits-Christoph (1990), we may restrict our comments to features that seem of importance to us and our aim. It is a content-analytic, categorical conceptualized method; the logic of evaluation is framed within one individual case.

The method works using naturalistic data that are derived from transcripts or videos from therapy sessions or from Relationship Anecdotes Paradigm (RAP) Interviews (Luborsky, 1990c; Dahlbender et al., 1993). These interviews focus on the production of narrative episodes concerning important relationship experiences. The method is based on narratives about real interactions, in contrast to the fictitious interactions as stimulated by the cards of the TAT (Morgan & Murray, 1938). In principle, any kind of narration can be used. The use of dream accounts as data for the CCRT has been studied by Popp, Luborsky, and Crits-Christoph (1990). They found some concordance with the results from therapy sessions.

In contrast to other methods (SASB; Benjamin, 1974), the verbal material is not divided into small and simply structured investigative units but is kept in more comprehensive narratives (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Quasthoff, 1980). These larger units are relatively complex structures. They consist of a section of orientation that informs the listener or reader about the situation of interaction: a part with a complicating action, another part with an evaluative function, a part with a resolution, and sometimes a coda that organizes the reference of the narrative to the present.

The CCRT method focuses on the contents of interpersonal experiences. As a narrator more or less consciously selects what he tells, his transmitted experiences may claim to be adequate samples of specific interactions with specific partners in specific contexts. How significant these experiences are to the narrator cannot be decided a priori. Depending on the theoretical point of view, the significance of the narration will oscillate between situational constraints and repetitive patterns of experience.

The CCRT method relies on the basic assumption, well established by linguists, that specific interactional experiences are presented in narrations (Flader & Giesecke, 1980; Bruner, 1986). Repetitions in the narrative represent structures which indicate important interactive relations between subject and object. They are like a template which transcends the subjective reconstructive perspective of the individual narration. The CCRT method intentionally neglects the context of narration and the probable influence of the clinical investigative situation. The question is not posed, "Why does this patient tell me this story just now?" in order to accentuate the structural properties. This point of view conforms with the classical psychoanalytic position, which states that the object is the most variable part of a drive. In today's language we would say that a subject insists on his (unconscious) wish in different situations with different objects (Sandler, 1989).

In this study, the relationship episodes were analysed according to the rules of a German manual, which contains some further technical specifications decided upon by our group (Luborsky supp. by Albani & Eckert, 1991b). The steps of the procedure are shown in Table 1:

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TABLE 1. CCRT-Rating Steps

1-Identification of a relationship episode by judge A*
2-Evaluation of the RE by judge B making "tailor-made" formulations for three components: Wish (W), Response from Others (RO), Response of Self (RS)
3-Preliminary formulation of the CCRT by putting together the most frequent of each of the three components
4-Rechecking the components in the light of the preliminary CCRT
5-Final formulation of the CCRT.

*In defining "unit of observation" our group is more strictly guided by the space-time structure of the narrative than the original manual points out.

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For the detailed explication of the classical method see Luborsky (1990a). At least 10 (or according to Luborsky 12) REs are required to formulate a representative CCRT.

To simplify interpersonal comparisons, three much-used lists of standard components have been created: (1) Edition 1 consists of 17 wishes, 12 responses from others, and 16 responses of self (Luborsky, 1986); (2) Edition 2 consists of 34 wishes and 30 responses each from others and self (Crits-Christoph & Demorest, 1988); (3) Edition 3 consists of 8 empirically derived cluster standard categories (Barber, Crits-Christoph, & Luborsky, 1990). A theoretical examination of groupings has not yet been presented. The recently demonstrated Quantitative Assessment of Interpersonal Themes (QUAINT) method (Crits-Christoph & Baranackie, 1992; Crits-Christoph, Baranackie, Dahlbender, & Zobel, 1995) tries to combine CCRT logic with the category system of the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB).

However, the consistency of CCRT formulations across relationship episodes containing different objects in different contexts has thus far been rarely investigated. A first study only compared the consistency of the standard CCRT formulation across a series of sessions of a short-term psychodynamic therapy and found some degree of variability of the CCRT within the 10 (out of 28 or 29) sessions that were utilized within this study (Schnekenburger, 1990). This result showed that the CCRTs may be looked upon as representations of the repertoire of relationships of a patient. It is obvious that the more relationship episodes available, the more precise this representation will be. However, within a single session, even within a session where the subject is instructed to produce relationship episodes—for example, a RAP interview—it is not possible to adequately tap the large amount of potential episodes with all significant objects in all significant contexts. If one wants to control situational variability, psychometric diagnostic procedures are more suitable to satisfy this need. On the other hand, one has to live with the disadvantage of not working with naturalistic material which is nevertheless clinically important.

CRITICAL REMARKS ON THE CCRT METHOD

There are three aspects of criticizing the method (see Soldz, 1993). First, the theoretical-conceptual aspect, second the implicit concept of transference, and third on discourse-linguistic assumptions. We shall take up only those aspects that are of importance to our own method which we have developed and named Connected Central Relationship Patterns (CCRP). We were interested in a method that provides insight into the structural connections of the three components.

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The Core Conflictual Relationship Theme represents a hypothetical sequence of interactions between three independent components (W->RO->RS), but in its simple form it does not assume real interactions or associations between them. The decision to use all scorable components, connected or not, is based, as Luborsky (1990b) explains, on the need for simplicity of scoring. The concern is that sequences might often not be explicitly stated and not fulfill the expectation that this would nevertheless provide meaningful data about the central relationship pattern. To get insight into a person's typical sequences of relationship interactions, the CCRT system provides an optional scoring procedure that records the sequence of the appearance of each component in the text of a narrator. Luborsky and colleagues report a study that examined the sequence of CCRT components in a small sample of patient's (Luborsky, Barber, Schaffler, & Cacciola, 1990). Using the standard cluster approach and looking only at the frequency, a judge listed the responses of others and responses of self that were uttered just after the three wishes the study focused on. They identified only one main sequence for each relationship episode, that is, the most frequent combination. For example, the wish "to assert oneself and to be independent" was followed by responses from others "rejecting," "upset," or "bad" in 34.6% of the episodes in which the wish was expressed, and in 64.3% the wish was followed by another response from others. This wish was followed by responses from the self "unreceptive" in 17.9% of the episodes in which the wish was expressed, and in 19.4% the wish was followed by another response of self. However, a complete sequence of all three CCRT components was only seen in very few patients. The authors concluded that overall, the mere compilation of frequencies of CCRT components in the classical method yields similar results to those obtained with a sequential analysis.

Apart from this first attempt, the classical method has not taken the route of analyzing sequential components any further. There has been no examination as to whether the specific wish-response pattern of the CCRT actually occurs in subject-object interaction episodes, and if so, in a psychologically meaningful way or only in a stochastic-probabilistic way. One could argue that the sequence of real interactions and the sequence of narrated interaction components might be different, and furthermore, that the sequence of narrated components must not be congruent with psychological meaningfulness.

The notion of centrality is not theoretically anchored; instead it is purely empirically defined by the largest frequency of components. It should be stated that the variations in frequency are largely dependent upon category formulation. The following example illustrates this:

After a visit to the zoo a child is asked by his parents: "Which animals were the most frequent at the zoo?" His answer is "fish." Discussion about different kinds of fish leads to a more detailed classification of fish according to special attributes. Obviously the classes defined in this way occur less frequently than the former total number of fish. However, if a specific class of animals is referred to, "African elephants" would be the correct answer. The paradox is that both answers are correct.

The known criticisms of the quantitative position in content analysis are that frequency is not identical with relevance and that rare events may be especially important *because* they are infrequent. Infrequent events may indeed be of extreme importance, as is obvious to any clinician. Thus, subjective relevance of frequent events and of infrequent events merits further discussion.

Another point of criticism refers to the merely pragmatic combination of the most frequent components which has no theoretical basis whatsoever. Assembling a com-

plex relationship pattern using the three most frequent, but independently tallied components does not necessarily lead to the most frequent combination nor to the most meaningful. The inherent paradox is easily demonstrated by accompanying the child to the zoo again.

Example: The child is also asked by his parents: "What was the most frequent 'animal food combination' at the zoo?" Relieved, the child remembers that "African elephants" are the most frequent animals and forgets about other animals. Then the child starts to think carefully about various kinds of food it has seen during the visit. "Insects" are the most frequently used food. Combining these two answers the child hesitates—"African elephants" eating "insects"? But factually the most frequent combination is "birds and insects" rather than "African elephants and insects." The paradox is that answers concerning a complex structure need not correspond to the combination of answers concerning single elements of this structure.

We want to emphasize one principal point. If one records the real dependencies of the components, this problem is avoided. Luborsky understands the relation of subject and object in a sequential action and asks explicitly for the evaluation of the response of object and self in the context of the wish. But he abandons the operationalization of these connections. He only records independent *individual* components. Strictly speaking, he is therefore not in a position to make inferences with regard to the connections among the components.

The practical advantage of Luborsky's procedure, which needs just 10 or 12 REs, also has a methodological disadavantage. Though clinicians are very versatile in formulating core patterns based on a minimum of clinical material, this parsimony could turn out to be detrimental to a research method. If one considers that a patient in one session may talk only about certain events with certain significant others, the likelihood for the ten episodes to be a non-representative sample is very high. At least Luborsky and Crits-Christoph have not yet presented data that rule out this possibility. It is not known how many REs constitute an individual's repertoire and how many would constitute a fair sample.

The standard method does not differentiate Object-REs and Self-REs when formulating the CCRT. Besides, the definition of a Self-RE is not very precise in the CCRT manual. We think that Object-REs and Self-REs are distinct events psychologically. A Self-RE does not represent an interpersonal interactional event. It is more usefully understood as a moment of self-communication in the context of self-regulation (Moser & Zeppelin, 1991). This makes the systematic lack of response from others in Self-REs understandable.

THE METHOD OF CONNECTED CENTRAL RELATIONSHIP PATTERN (CCRP)

Having studied a subject using the CCRT method, our group became interested in structurally connected relationship structures. To enable multischematic related relationship structures to be identified in a wider sense, we developed the classical CCRT method further. Taking the above mentioned criticisms as our starting point, we have, deviating from the classical method, made the following assumptions with regard to operationalization:

1) For each RE the judge states a psychologically plausible W-RO-RS combination that formulates the central message of this episode from the patient's point of view. We named this fixed combination A-level-coding.

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2) Where a psychological meaningful connection is sought, all the following wish or response components of an episode are processed as individual elements and not as fixed combinations.

3) The temporal sequences of the components within the REs are not taken into account, the assumption being that the surface level of speech is influenced by a variety of situational constraints which do not decisively alter the deeper structure.

4) We have excluded the so-called therapist type B REs from our rating because they represent a real interaction with the therapist rather than a narration about a past event. The material does not allow a clear differentiation of subject and object in the interaction. As in all real interactions subject and object are interchangable.

5) Object-RE and Self-RE are processed separately.

6) Although the coding has to take into account the psychological context of the episode, the "level of inference" has to be kept rather low, i.e., we orientate ourselves more or less to the manifest level of meaning.

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THE GENERATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

We have developed a convenient recording sheet which is linked to a databank so that all RE information is stored centrally (Dahlbender, Albani, Pokorny, & Frevert, 1994). All components are coded in three ways: first, by tailormade formulations; second, by using the list of standard categories; third, by using the German edition of the "cluster standard categories."

As a result of the procedure described above, we obtained two samples of episodes: one sample of self relationship episodes with only two nominally scaled variables: A-level-wish (W_A) and A-level-response of self (RS_A). Equally, we obtained a sample of object relationship episodes with three nominally scaled variables: A-level-wish (W_A), A-level-response from others (RO_A) and A-level-response of self (RS_A).

If, differently to the CCRT-approach, we assume that the individual CCRT components (W, RO, RS) do not occur in the narratives independent of one another but in psychological dependency, then related W-RO-RS patterns must also be capable of being found. First of all, the frequencies of the W-RO-RS combinations previously operationalized at the A-level are simply counted. However, to avoid missing any important but rare combinations, we also additionally calculate which combinations occur more frequently or more rarely than could be statistically expected. The combination having the greatest value is the one composed of the most frequent individual components, if one calculates the expected frequency of a combination. This is because the expected frequency is determined by the product of the observed frequencies of the individual components. Thus, it becomes clear that the absolute frequencies and the expected frequencies of the individual components or component combinations must be known to enable the associated pattern to be reasonably estimated.

The data analysis mainly relies on contingency tables. These are based on the cluster standard categories which offer a clear but sufficiently differentiated category system of $8 \times 8 \times 8 = 512$ describable W-RO-RS combinations. Standardized categories are a requirement for a computer-assisted analysis of codings. The standard categories give 30,600 possible combinations, i.e., a huge increase in the amount of data compared to the cluster version. The hypothetically ideal number of at least 1,536 narrator episodes would be necessary, in favourable circumstances, to enable a table with 512 possible combinations to ensure accurate statistical analysis. The data analysis of the CCRP variants therefore operates with one or two-dimensional marginal frequency tables.

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Step A determines the absolute frequencies of the individual components or component combinations and, at the same time, excludes, as determined by the Chi-square-test, that the components are uniformly distributed. Only then does it make any sense to determine the significantly more frequent, or more infrequent components, using the Binomial test. The Bonferroni correction is used to control simultaneous statistical inference.

Step B first excludes the independence of the component combinations using a global Chi-square-test. Then component combinations are tested as to which of these occur significantly more frequently than expected under the hypothesis of mutually independent dimensions. Conventional Chi-square based adjusted residuals tend to overestimate significance, especially in the case of sparsely occupied contingency tables containing some cells with low *expected* frequencies (low *observed* frequencies are harmless) (Bishop, Fienberg, & Holland, 1984). As so-called exact methods do not have this disadvantage, we have designed our data analytical procedures using these methods for cell statistics (Binomial test, Fisher test, and its three-dimensional generalizations). Differently to the approach of Mehta (1995), we are applying an "exact" approach to the analysis of individual cells (with the option of Bonferroni's correction) rather than to the table as a whole.

It was our experience that adjusted residuals, in addition to a lot of "nice" patterns, also offered a lot of peculiar combinations which were observed just once in the data. We then had to eliminate such combinations from our solutions, using additional formal and intuitive criteria.[2] On the other hand, investigation of table cells using exact methods led us to a small number of "reasonable" patterns, corresponding fairly well with our previous intuition. So we were strongly encouraged to use exact methods for the sake of pattern search, and wrote EXACT (1, 2, 3) named computer programs for this purpose (Pokorny, 1996).

"THE STUDENT": THE SPECIMEN CASE AND ITS RESULTS

We would like to illustrate the CCRP approach using as an example a psychodynamic short-term psychotherapy. The investigation of this therapy provided the necessary data base for the statistical procedures. The verbatim protocols came from the Ulm Textbank. A systematic clinical evaluation of the 28 sessions and the results in terms of CCRT formulations have been reported elsewhere (Kächele, Dengler, Eckert, & Schnekenburger, 1990a; Kächele, Heldmaier, & Scheytt, 1990b).

The patient we named "The Student" was a 23-year-old student suffering from minor obsessional symptoms and working problems in the context of a typical late adolescent separation problem. He was treated by an experienced psychoanalyst who focused the treatment around the negative-oedipal issue of an unconscious identification with the mother's disappointment in the father. This case was one of the two cases of the PEP-project (Kächele, 1990).

All relationship episodes in the therapy were scored by our procedures (Albani, 1992).[3] A total of 297 relationship episodes, 360 Ws, 361 ROs, and 562 RSs in narrated interactions with 42 different objects were found. Under the described crite-

[2]One referee proposed the very interesting idea of using r-effect sizes, as described e.g. in Rosenthal (1991). However, this measure is based on chi-square theory and will lead stucturally to the same results, and consequently to the same problems.

[3]This medical dissertation was supported by the Breuninger Stiftung, Stuttgart.

ria of the A-level analysis this material contained 224 Object-REs with 224 A-level-combinations and 47 Self-REs. These figures represent the largest data set on a single case in the field of CCRT research up to now. A treatment of comparable length with approximately half the size of our RE sample was investigated by Luborsky's group (Luborsky et al., 1991a; Crits-Christoph & Demorest, 1991).

The following one-dimensional individual component pattern (W, RO, RS—the frequencies of its component parts are noted in parentheses), are absolutely and are at the same time also significantly more frequent than others:

RESULTS STEP A—ONE-DIMENSIONAL INDIVIDUAL CCRT COMPONENTS

wish:	W_5	I want to be close and accepting. (47)
	W_6	I want to be loved and understood. (43)
response from others:	RO_5	Others are rejecting and opposing. (99)
	RO_3	Others are upset. (38)
response of self:	RS_7	I feel disappointed and depressed. (62)
	RS_6	I feel helpless. (44)

Thus, the classical nonconnected patient's CCRT composed of the most frequent individual components is:

$$W_5\ RO_5\ RS_7$$

This one-dimensional pattern is identical to the most frequent three-dimensional A-level pattern, which contains only the W-RO-RS associations operationalized at the A-level and not the individual components of the other levels:

$$\boxed{W_{A5}\text{-}RO_{A5}\text{-}RS_{A7}\ (14)}$$

I want to be close and accepting. Others are rejecting and opposing.
I feel disappointed and depressed.

This pattern was observed 14 times. W_{A5} occurs 47 times, RO_{A5} occurs 99 times and RS_{A7} occurs 62 times. The frequency of this pattern expected under the hypothesis of total independence is computed as a product of the three marginal observed probabilities multiplied by the sample size, i.e., it is the product of the expected frequencies of the individual components: $E = (47/224 \times 99/224 \times 62/224) \times 224 = 5.75$. Actually it was observed $O = 14$ times. Thus, the observed frequency of the pattern exceeds the expected value by a factor of 2.43.

Using the above mentioned, extremely conservative Bonferroni corrected procedure, we also find only one single pattern, but a different one:

$$\boxed{W_{A6}\text{-}RO_{A8}\text{-}RS_{A3}\ (4)}$$

I want to be loved and understood. Others are understanding.
I feel respected and accepted.

W_{A6} occurs 43 times, RO_{A8} occurred 8 times and RS_{A3} occurred 16 times. The calculated expected frequency under the model of total independence is: $E = 0.11$ (see calculation example).

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TABLE 2. Calculation example for pattern: W_{A6}-RO_{A8}-RS_{A3} (N = 224 Object-RE)

observed frequencies:	
	$O_{(WA6)}$: 43
	$O_{(ROA8)}$: 08
	$O_{(RSA3)}$: 16
	$O_{(WA6\text{–}ROA8\text{–}RSA3)}$: 04
expected probabilities:	
	$P_{(WA6)} = 43 / 224 = 0.19200$
	$P_{(ROA8)} = 08 / 224 = 0.03600$
	$P_{(RSA3)} = 16 / 224 = 0.07100$
	$P_{(WA6\text{–}ROA8\text{–}RSA3)} = 0.192 \times 0.036 \times 0.071 = 0.00049$
expected frequency:	
	$E_{(WA6\text{–}ROA8\text{–}RSA3)} = P_{(WA6\text{–}ROA8\text{–}RSA3)} \times N = 0.11$

This connected W-RO-RS-pattern was observed 4 times. Thus, this pattern exceeds the expected frequency 36.4 times. The reader may be confused by the comparably small absolute observed pattern frequency. Nevertheless, exact methods and the Bonferroni principle justify the conclusion that the co-occurrence of W_{A6}, RO_{A8} and RS_{A3} in the investigated material was not a result of random combination.

The Bonferroni principle is a very conservative approach in the current context. We do not claim then that all three-dimensional patterns are simultaneously significant ones. If we reconcile ourselves to the fact that some results of our exploratory approach, the size of which can be estimated, contain erroneous positive findings, we can select the less conservative level of statistical significance of non-simultaneous tests (p = 1%). In this case we find as results of step B seven three-dimensional A-level patterns that are above the expected frequencies, instead of only one classical CCRT pattern (see Figure 1).

RESULTS STEP B—THREE-DIMENSIONAL A-LEVEL PATTERNS

W_{A6}-RO_{A8}-RS_{A3} (4):

I want to be loved and understood. Others are understanding.
I feel respected and accepted.

W_{A5}-RO_{A7}-RS_{A3} (4)

I want to be close and accepting. Others like me.
I feel respected and accepted.

FIGURE 1 Significant three-dimensional Connected Central Relationship Pattern of "The Student". Results based on A-level W-RO-RS pattern of object-RE (N = 224) using the cluster standard category approach. The triangles represent the three CCRT components. The frequencies of single components are given in parentheses. O = observed frequency; E = expected frequency.

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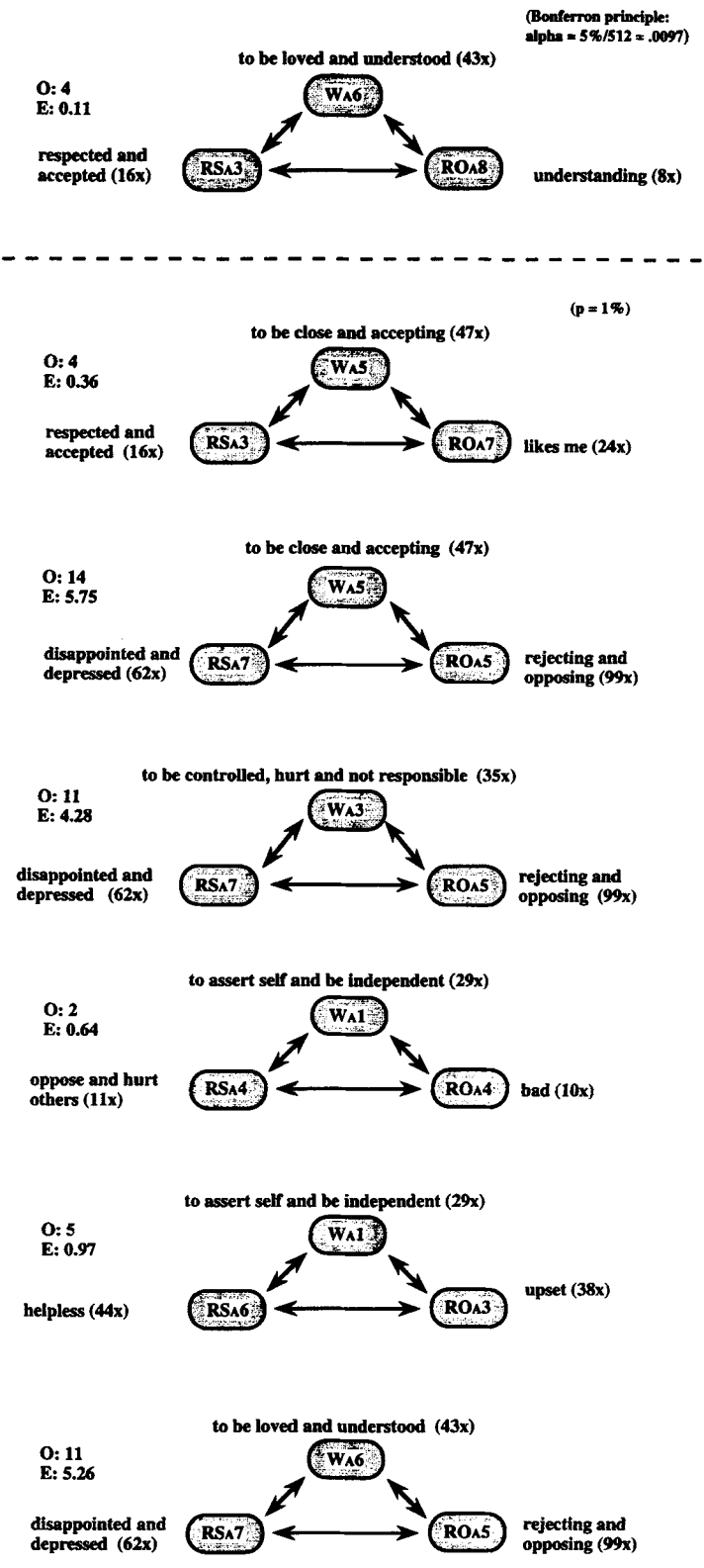

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W_{A5}-RO_{A5}-RS_{A7} (14)

I want to be close and accepting. Others are rejecting and opposing. I feel disappointed and depressed.

W_{A3}-RO_{A5}-RS_{A7} (11)

I want to be controlled, hurt and not responsible. Others are rejecting and opposing. I feel disappointed and depressed.

W_{A1}-RO_{A4}-RS_{A4} (2)

I want to assert self and be independent. Others are bad. I oppose and hurt others.

W_{A1}-RO_{A3}-RS_{A6} (5)

I want to assert self and be independent. Others are upset. I feel helpless.

W_{A6}-RO_{A5}-RS_{A7} (11)

I want to be loved and understood. Others are rejecting and opposing. I feel disappointed and depressed.

Individual components that cannot classically claim any importance, according to the classical CCRT procedures because their frequencies are rather low, are also contained in these patterns. These rare individual components can, however, be connected with more frequent ones and become constitutional parts of three-dimensional patterns. We will not go into a presentation of the display of the unexpected but more frequent W-RO–RS-patterns of the patient and of a discussion as to which aspects of the individual object relationship experience they represent.

The results of both steps, as mentioned above, represent simultaneously central relationship structures. Close to the original CCRT approach, step A identifies frequent one-dimensional components (W, RO, RS). Over and above this, step B identifies three-dimensional combinations (W-RO-RS) that are more frequent compared to the expectation based on separate one-dimensional results. In view of our criticisms and our plans for connected relationship components, this two-step approach may be surprising to the reader. However, we consider information on individual component patterns as important as connected patterns. We illustrate this with a clinical example: A severely depressed patient, for example, feels disappointed and depressed in 95% of his episodes. This happens independently of all his wishes and of all the different responses from others. In step A his depressive response will be identified as a frequent one-dimensional pattern. On the other hand, in step B no three-dimensional association can be found because his all dominant depressive response is not associated with any particular wish or response from others.

In psychotherapy there is a broad consent that we do not internalize independent single CCRT components but complex interactions with a variety of "significant

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others." These interactions are represented in an episodic memory. Having this in mind, we can use the two- and/or three-dimensional components we found by step B and, by means of psychologically meaningful clinical heuristics, then model complex relationship configurations. In contrast to Luborsky's one central relationship pattern, this object-relational network follows the assumption that everyone has several connecting relationship patterns that interact psychodynamically. Because of their high dimensionality these multi-dimensional networks, that resemble the functional structure of neuronal networks, are not capable of being investigated by data analytical means and therefore lead to graphical representations. This imaginary process could help to map the complex structure of internalized relationships. Figure 2 gives an impression of the different relational structures that are available to the patient during the course of therapy. The relationship repertoire of the patient was calculated on all 224 relationship episodes. This strategy consciously neglects possible object-specific features, for instance for the father, the mother or the therapist. Worth noting are those patterns that occur in two different positive vs. negative ending versions (e.g. W5-RO5-RS7 and W5-RO7-RS3). They attract the clinicians and focus on the interpersonal regulation of the patient's relationships. Furthermore, they remind him of working through the more or less unconscious triggering intrapsychic and/or interpersonal conditions under which the patient does realize the positive or negative variant. Compared to the classic CCRT, this approach might lead to more complex and dynamic relationship interpretations and also to a more detailed understanding of the therapeutic process and the changing of maladaptive relationship patterns.

The determination of all of these different patterns always remains an idiosyncratic relationship experience of the patient, as these patterns are based on the expectancy values from the categories mentioned by him in 224 object-relationship episodes. Categories not mentioned by the patient are not used. Alternatively, the relationship pattern of a reference sample of healthy young men or correspondingly healthy young women (Dahlbender et al., 1992) could be used as a base line. However, depending upon the frame of reference of the sample, other patterns may be discovered.

The approach outlined here is referred to by us as the Connected Central Relationship Pattern (CCRP). We view it as a structural version of the CCRT because we would claim that the connections are empirically demonstrable. We therefore no longer talk about *the* central relationship conflict theme since the W-RO-RS scheme implicates neither a content defined intrapsychic conflict nor an interpersonal conflict, even if the interaction theoretically can be experienced as conflictual. We agree with Luborsky that some patterns are more conflictual than others, in terms of the tension they might cause the individual. It should also be kept in mind that the sequence-scheme can already depict a reaction to an inner-emotional or interpersonal conflict that does not even record the previous (chronological) conflict. Antagonistic wishes or responses of the individual are only contained by definition in the Self-RE. If one understands conflict as Kernberg (1988) does in his object-relationship theory, it then becomes apparent that several conflicting self and/or object representations, as he would call these internalized schemata, can take place according to the interaction sequence described by the three components.

In spite of the currently low absolute frequencies of the prepared patterns, we still view these as central relationship patterns. We do so, as we prefer to include, in addition to the pure frequency, the content-related associations of a pattern. The comparison of the more frequent of the patterns named above with the more infrequent patterns shows that according to the interactionally realized satisfaction of wishes

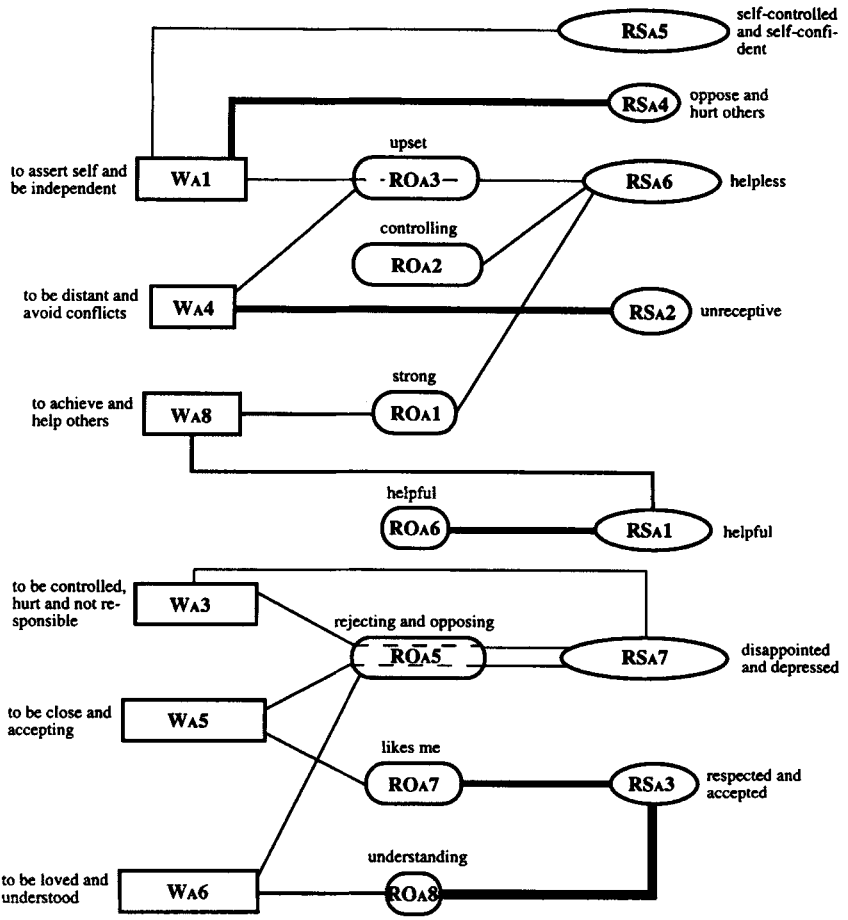

FIGURE 2 Attempt of an object relation network of 42 different object relations of "The Student". Formal combination of significant two-dimensional (W-RO, W-RS, RO, RS) and three-dimensional (W-RO-RS) relationship patterns. The size of CCRT component symbols represent their frequencies, the thickness of the lines between the boxes represent the strength of the associations. Results based on: A-level W-RO-RS patterns of Object-REs (N = 224).

(negative RO vs. positive RO, or negative RS vs. positive RS), the more frequent patterns almost always describe maladaptive interaction sequences. In contrast, the rarer patterns describe more successful strategies. This means that in the context of a structural transference definition, the patient succeeds in some cases, even if they are rarer ones, to minimize the influence of neurotic interaction distortion and repetition compulsion. He becomes able to achieve satisfaction of his internalized infantile longings in the actual object relationship.

QUALITY CRITERIA OF CCRT AND CCRP

Meanwhile numerous investigations exist that provide proof of the validity and reliability of the CCRT method (see Barber & Crits-Christoph, 1993; Crits-Christoph

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et al., 1988; Barber, Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, & Diguer, 1995; Luborsky & Crits-Christoph, 1990; Luborsky & Diguer, 1995). As the CCRT and the CCRP method follow in principle the same operationalization, these results can also be used for the CCRP variant. The difference lies only in the method of data analysis. With respect to the content validity of the list of CCRT standard categories, it has not yet been demonstrated conclusively that the broad spectrum of possible wishes and responses is adequately represented. However, the tailor-made approach makes abundantly clear that there are infinite variations of singular wishes that can be reliably subsumed into one or another category system. So it may be that the use of Benjamin's SASB dimensions will link the CCRT to a more theoretically defined category system. But investigation of discriminant and convergent validity has not yet been presented.

Bond, Hansell, and Shevrin (1987) demonstrated a high reliability for identification of objects, as did Crits-Christoph et al. (1988). In a reliability study on a sample of 48 relationship episodes of young healthy women, we found high coinciding RE limits (87% at a criterion defined at ± 3 lines level). Using a preliminary version of a multidimensional object-map (see Dahlbender et al., 1994) we could identify the same object in 98% of the episodes. Interrater reliability for the CCRT components has been demonstrated by Crits-Christoph et al. (1988): they report kappa values of .61 for W and RS and .70 for RO. For standard categories Luborsky & Diguer (1995) found a mean weighted kappa of .63 for the W component, of .66 for the RO component and of .69 for the RS component. Even lower agreements between transcript and video ratings are reported by the Goettingen group (Zander, Strack, Cierpka, Reich, & Staats, 1995a; 1995b). After long and intensive training we achieved, using a pair-ways comparison with 4 raters for W, RO, and RS cluster components, a mean kappa value of .72 (W: .75 (.67–.97); RO: .71 (.62–.97); RS: .71 (.50–.95)) This, according to Landis and Koch (1977), is in the realm of "moderate to substantial." The same amount of reliability was achieved for the A-level combinations that had to be identified by each judge. We, too, found that the less experienced the judges, the lower the values. In a more recent naturalistic crossover designed comparison of transcripts and videos with two raters on 32 RAP interviews of patients, we found for all 24 clusters a mean intraclass coefficient of .59 (Pokorny et al., 1996).

COMPARISON OF CCRT AND CCRP AND THEIR APPLICATIONS

Both CCRT and CCRP methods capture subjective realities as transmitted through narratives. These narratives function as determinants of ongoing interpersonal exchanges in a dialogue situation. Both methods dissect the complex relationship experience of an individual into individual components or associations of component (A-level), and reconstruct them by creating one or more condensed formulations, i.e., filter a single CCRT or several CCRPs. It may be that the CCRT is replicated in one of the CCRPs as we have shown in the case we analysed. Therefore, Luborsky's approach, even though it relies on the frequency of individual components, has its useful application in small samples of REs. In a larger sample of REs we demonstrated that the CCRT is but a special case of a series of meaningful three-dimensional patterns. The individual components (W, RO, RS) in these patterns may metaphorically be described as the internalized atoms of social bargaining. In this spirit the connected central relationship patterns may be seen as the macro-molecules that entertain a stable relationship within the context of personality.

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Taking into account the degree of differentiation with which both methods approach internalizations, it seems that the CCRT method is less differentiated than the CCRP variant, and compared to others it is simpler than Benjamin's (1986) content version of SASB, Kelly's (1955) elaborate Repertory Grid technique and very complex Role-Relationship Models (Horowitz, 1989; Horowitz et al., 1991). The similarity between CCRP and SASB codings of content sequences cannot be ignored. All these methods work out internalized macro structures at the level of rather stable subjective schemas. Micro structures of interaction or of transference processes are captured only by operationalizations of facial expressions (Krause & Lütolf, 1988).

The pragmatic advantage of the relatively simple CCRT is impressive, as already ten or twelve REs are able to produce a formulation that has stood up to many tests. The scientific advantage of the CCRP consists in its emphasis on complexity and connectedness of components. At the same time it is burdened with the requirement of a substantial increase in sample size which is necessary to meet the statistical requirements. Therefore, we agree with Luborsky (1993) that the classical CCRT system is much easier to use, especially for clinical purposes.

The internalized relationship patterns recorded by the two methods are more or less stable in terms of time, and also succumb to slow changes, although changes of wishes are less likely to occur than changes in the response components. Both CCRT and CCRP are able to capture repetitions. Therefore they can be conceived as operationalizations of a structural transference definition (Kächele & Dahlbender, 1993), that are, however, not distinct but rather implicit via the procedures. Freud's (1912) classical transference concept (Luborsky et al., 1991a) is tied to interpersonal thinking that remains in the reference framework of narrated subjectivity.

The areas of application of both approaches are the identification of repetitive, internalized relationship patterns. The CCRT method supplies relationship models usable for many clinical as well as research purposes, in spite of possible paradoxes and a rudimentary diagrammatic scaling when compared to the CCRP method. Experience has shown that the CCRT method can supply usable heuristics for clinical practice and theory, especially in diagnosis, therapeutic process and technique, also in supervision, learning, and teaching, as well as developmental psychological research (Crits-Christoph, Cooper, & Luborsky, 1988; Crits-Christoph, Barber, & Kurcias, 1993; Dahlbender, Kächele, Frevert, & Schnekenburger, 1995; Eckert, Luborsky, Barber, & Crits-Christoph, 1990; Luborsky et al., 1996). In the meantime, modifications for investigation of couples (Kreische & Biskup, 1990), families (Frevert, Cierpka, Dahlbender, Albani, & Plöttner, 1992) and groups (Finneburg & Klein, 1993) have been developed to state some of the areas of application. These can be accessed when, for example, insufficient narrative material is available, such as at a first interview, at a single therapy hour or at a RAP interview. If more material is available, using the CCRP would mean extra work is involved. However, this might be compensated by a detailed insight into the complex self and object relationship configurations of individuals or, for example, a nosologically defined group.

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Zusammenfassung

Das zentrale Beziehungskonfliktthema (ZBKT), entwickelt von Luborsky, ist eine inhaltsanalytische Methode zur Erfassung sich wiederholender Beziehungsmuster. Narrative über Beziehungsepisoden mit der eigenen Person und mit bedeutsamen Anderen stellen die Ausgangsbasis für die Methode dar. Die am häufigsten vorkommenden drei Komponenten (Wunsch, Reaktionen anderer, Reaktionen des Selbst), welche in den Beziehungsepisoden signiert werden, konstituieren das zentrale Beziehungskonfliktthema. In dieser Arbeit wird eine methodische Weiterentwicklung des ZBKT, eine strukturelle Version, die wir als verbundene zentrale Beziehungsmuster bezeichnet haben, ausführlicher dargestellt. Es handelt sich hierbei um eine Methode zur Identifikation „makro-molekularer" Beziehungsstrukturen. Wir beschreiben den Ansatz, spezifische Details im Hinblick auf die Datensammlung, statistische Prozeduren, die sich im wesentlichen auf Weiterentwicklungen von Methoden zur Analyse von Kontingenztafeln stützen sowie einige Anwendungen. Eine psychodynamische Kurzzeittherapie, in deren Rahmen beinahe dreihundert Beziehungsepisoden signiert wurden, dient als ausführliches Beispiel.

Résumé

Le Thème Relationnel Conflictuel Central (CCRT) développé par Luborsky est une méthode d'analyse de contenu conçue pour quantifier des patterns relationnels répétitifs. Des narrations d'épisodes relationnels concernant soi-même et les autres significatifs servent de base de données. Les plus fréquentes de chacune des trois composantes cotées (désir, réponse des autres, réponse du sujet) constituent le CCRT. Dans cet article nous présentons un développement méthodologique du CCRT, une version structurale que nous appelons les Patterns Relationnels Centraux Connectés (CCRP). Il s'agit d'une méthode pour identifier des structures relationnelles « macro-moléculaires ». Nous décrivons l'approche, la manière spécifique de récolter les données, l'analyse statistique basée sur le développement de méthodes pour des tableaux de contingence, et quelques applications. Une psychothérapie dynamique brève comprenant presque 300 épisodes relationnels sert d'exemple.

Resumen

El núcleo temático de la relación conflictual (CCRT) desarrollado por Luborsky es un método de análisis de contenido para la medición de pautas repetitivas de relación. Le sirven de base de datos las narrativas acerca de episodios relacionales con el self y con otros personajes significativos. Los más frecuentes de los tres componentes (deseo, respuesta de los otros, respuesta del self) a ser computados constituyen el CCRT. En este trabajo presentamos un desarrollo metodológico nuevo del CCRT, una versión estructural que hemos llamado Pautas Relacionales Centralmente Conectadas (CCRP). Es un método de identificación "macromolecular" de estructuras relacionales. Describimos el enfoque, los rasgos específicos de la recolección de datos, el análisis estadístico basado en desarrollos posteriores de métodos para tablas de contingencia, así también como algunas aplicaciones. Como ejemplo, se presenta una terapia psicodinámica de corto plazo con unos 300 episodios relacionales.

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