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ON THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT AMONG CHILDREN*

DOUGLAS W. MAYNARD

University of Wisconsin

This paper is an analysis of conflict episodes that were videotaped during reading groups of first-grade children. Prior research on children's disputes and arguments has mapped their structure, but neglected how they function. The concept of function here refers to features of interaction that occur as participants use conversational devices in precise ways. The manifest function of social conflict among children is to build their small-group society and its structure. That is, when disputing and arguing, children produce social organization, create political alignments, and thereby realize their practical interests within a changing set of social relationships. Studying the manifest functions of conflict can be a prelude to tracing latent functions. Disputes and arguments among peers represent a way that children acquire a sense of social structure. Conflict may also aid in the reproduction of authority, friendship, and other social patterns that transcend single episodes of interaction.

Nearly 30 years ago, Coser (1956) observed that conflict was a neglected sociological field. That statement, if applied to interaction among children, could still be made today. Conflict sociology, as in Coser's (1956) own study, focuses almost exclusively on interaction among adults and adult groups. Marx, Dahrendorf, and their followers confine conflict to that between economic classes, in which adults are of course the prime movers. Although Collins (1975) considers youth and youth cultures, he examines only that conflict which exists between young people and adults. Thus, the sociology of conflict among children remains undeveloped. At the very least, this means that an important aspect of childhood socialization—peer disputing—needs investigation. A purpose of this paper is to argue that through conflict, children acquire a sense of social structure (Cicourel, 1970).

Recently, a number of researchers in conversational and discourse analysis have examined how arguments and disputes among children start, progress, and either end or merge into ongoing interaction (Boggs, 1978; Brenneis and Lein, 1977; Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981; Genishi and DiPaolo, 1982; Goodwin, 1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1983; Lein and Brenneis, 1978; Maynard, 1985, forthcoming-a, b). These studies are mostly formalistic and describe patterns in "uncontexted" fragments of talk (Grimshaw, 1982a:324). While concentrating on the structure of conflict, they neglect how it functions in the interaction of children (Goodwin, 1982a:91). A second purpose of this paper, then, is to relate structural aspects of children's dispute episodes to their social functions.

* Direct all correspondence to: Douglas W. Maynard, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706.

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1 The perspectives of conversational analysis and discourse analysis, as well as distinctions between them, are discussed below.

Traditionally, the functional approach has investigated latent consequences of conflict and all but ignored its manifest consequences. Thus, Coser (1956) discusses how disputes and arguments work to maintain a group’s boundaries, to reinforce social rules, to release hostility, and so on. The society for which this happens seems to set conflict in motion as a way of preserving itself, apart from the purposes of its members, whose activities are important only insofar as they instantiate these hypothesized latent functions. In the present paper this traditional approach is reversed. That is, the central interest is in actual disputes and arguments among children, and in their immediate and manifest functions. Through conflict, children produce social organization, create political alignments, and thereby realize their practical interests within a changing set of social relationships. By first examining these matters, it is then possible to see how conflict among children may function latently to achieve and reproduce social structures characteristic of wider social arenas in which conflict is embedded.

The data for this analysis are 75 disputes collected from videotapes of unsupervised reading groups in first-grade classrooms. Fifty-four children (23 male and 31 female) in three classrooms of one elementary school participated in the study. There were a total of eight reading groups across these classrooms. The subjects were caucasian, native speakers of English and from middle-class families. Researchers made four separate tapings for each reading group during the fall and again during the spring of the school year, yielding a total of eight samples for each reading group. While the official or formal activities for children in these groups included reading (either silently or aloud), completing worksheets, and drawing or coloring pictures related to the reading material, much informal behavior, including episodes of conflict, also occurred. Arguments or disputes were identified from statements of opposition, contradiction, or disagreement (Boggs, 1978:328; Brenneis and Lein, 1977; Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981; Goodwin, 1982a; Pomerantz, 1975; Willard, 1978). All disputes captured on the videotapes were transcribed, scrutinized, and analyzed. The transcription of audio portions of the data followed a system devised by Gail Jefferson (see Schenken, 1978:xi–xvi). Nonverbal aspects of the interaction were transcribed by descriptive statements, roughly following procedures that Goodwin (1981:vii–viii) developed for studying gaze activity.

ON FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

The term "function" is used in a variety of lay and social science contexts and consequently has a range of different meanings (Merton, 1968:73–79). Therefore, it is necessary to address two issues so as to clarify what functional analysis means in the empirical analysis that follows. One issue is raised in Giddens's (1979) treatment of general sociological theory; the other emerges when comparing two sociolinguistic approaches to interaction—conversational analysis and discourse analysis.

Functionalism in Social Theory

According to Giddens (1979:113, 211), the otherwise diverse functional approaches embodied in the works of Parsons, Althusser, and Merton share a common weakness. Specifically, they imply that abstract societal needs or prerequisites govern the conduct of everyday life quite apart from participants’ own orientations and purposes. In Merton's (1968) well-known distinction between manifest and latent functions, for example, intended and manifest purposes of members' activities are secondarily significant and analytically deficient in relation to the unintended and latent consequences of such activities (Giddens, 1979:211). Latent functions are those of the society rather than the individuals who comprise it. Giddens (1979:210–14) illustrates this point by reference to Merton's analysis of the Hopi rain dance, wherein Merton (1968:118–19) proposes that the Indians' manifest purpose for engaging in the dance cannot, by meteorological standards, be achieved. In Merton's (1968:119) estimation, the activity is therefore "apparently irrational." Its real sociological significance resides in the latent function of reinforcing group identity by permitting otherwise scattered members to engage in a common activity.

Giddens (1979) compares Merton's discussion of the Hopi with Evans-Pritchard's (1937)
study of Azande sorcery. Rather than discounting actors’ reasons for engaging in witchcraft, and for consulting oracles, Evans-Pritchard sought to explicate those reasons. And where Merton ignores the structure of participation in the rain-dance ritual (Giddens, 1979:214), Evans-Pritchard’s (1937) investigation is rich with details of Azande sorcery as an everyday practice. He thus succeeds in analytically appreciating the integrity of the Azande belief system without engaging in the “politics of experience” (Pollner, 1975:424; cf. Laing, 1967), or according a privileged status to the social scientist’s version of some practice while viewing subjects’ belief systems ironically, as Merton does in using meteorology to impugn Hopi lore concerning the rain dance. The task, says Giddens (1979:252), is to appreciate common-sense knowledge and its various linguistic and nonlinguistic displays as a phenomenon “that is not corrigible to the sociological observer.” This requires attention to mundane productive and reproductive social processes, particularly ordinary language (Wittgenstein, 1958).

The thrust of this review of Giddens’s critique is that not social theory must become preoccupied with mundane interaction and talk. After all, just as Giddens (1979) faults Merton for ignoring practical activity and its manifest functions, he also discounts Evans-Pritchard (1937) for overlooking the relationship of sorcery to more comprehensive workings of Azande society. This review, instead, has two more limited implications. First, like Merton’s and other general theories, functional conflict theory has neglected the field of everyday life in a particular way. The latent functions of conflict are translated into an explanation of the stable practices by which they are produced (Giddens, 1979:214), which results in treating forms of interactional conflict—whether in marriage, class, ethnic, or peer relationships—secondarily, as derivatives of transcendent social consequences such as maintaining group boundaries, reinforcing social rules, and so on.4 While serving higher social purposes, conflict in everyday life is regarded as seemingly “dysfunctional” (Coser, 1967:24). Nonetheless, when treated as a valid enterprise in its own right, analysis of the manifest functions of mundane argumentative activities reveals that they are a fundamental piece in the negotiation of local social order.

The second implication of Giddens’s critique is that this starting point is not arbitrary. That is, investigating the manifest functions of conflict is necessarily prior to tracing its latent consequences (Giddens, 1979:214). Conversely, mapping latent functions follows the interactional analysis. For those who examine the world of everyday life, the intriguing possibility is that such a strategy may be a way of relating this world to larger-scale social structures.

Functionalism in Conversational and Discourse Analysis

Broadly speaking, the interactional approach in this paper is sociolinguistic, where that term refers to the study of language use in social contexts (Grimshaw, 1981:200–201). Within sociolinguistics, to which both discourse and conversational analysis are related, the functions of language use have long been a concern (Hymes, 1974:64–65), but discourse and conversational analysis take divergent approaches to functional analysis. In discourse analysis, which largely derives from linguistics and speech-act theory (Austin, 1962; Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Searle, 1969), functions relate to communicative intent as a cognitive phenomenon (Gumperz, 1982:154–56; cf. Grice, 1957). By contrast, in conversational analysis, whose origins are sociological and ethnomethodological, researchers identify functions by examining the technical machinery of talk and how that machinery achieves observable interactional effects. Thus, functional analysis is based not on what participants are “intending” to do, but on what actually happens as participants engage in practical activities. For example, Jefferson (1974) examines, in a variety of conversational contexts, a device that she calls an “error correction format.” As part of their common-sense repertoire for conversing, participants use and recognize this device to display that some word, phrase, or other discourse object is in error and that another object is its correction (Jefferson, 1974:186).5 The error-correction format consists of three parts: /word(1)+hesitation+word(2)/. As an example, consider a witness in traffic court who says, “I told that to thuh-uh-officer.” Here, /word(1) is “thuh,” the hesitation is “uh,” and /word(2) is “officer.” Jefferson documents that “officer” is likely a replacement for “cop,” basing her argument on the

4 One might expect Collins (1975, 1981), who probably focuses on face-to-face interaction more than any other classical or contemporary conflict theorist, to deal more closely with everyday forms of dispute. However, in Collins’s (1975) discussion of conflict, the everyday world is a place where traditional variables such as sex, age, and class explain structures of dominance. His extended treatment of deference, demeanor, and language practices culminates in a propositional inventory predicting how these phenomena are distributed rather than in an analysis of how they are actually produced and patterned. This is not, however, because Collins’s (1975) work is theoretical rather than empirical; see Oberschall (1978:293).

5 The error-correction format consists of three parts: /word(1)+hesitation+word(2)/. As an example, consider a witness in traffic court who says, “I told that to thuh- uh-officer.” Here, /word(1) is “thuh,” the hesitation is “uh,” and /word(2) is “officer.” Jefferson documents that “officer” is likely a replacement for “cop,” basing her argument on the
error correction format, however, does not just operate as a device to maintain smooth and understandable conversation. It also works as a resource for proffering self-identity, displaying recognition of particular social situations and negotiating relationships (Jefferson, 1974:192, 198). Thus, error correction and the means by which conversationalists achieve it are structures of talk that have specific functions. These functions are not cognitive purposes of members but rather are consequences of interaction that can be located in patterns of serially occurring utterances and participants' displayed orientations to them (Jefferson, 1974:196–97).

The conversational-analysis perspective is consistent with Giddens's (1979) suggestion that social functions be linked in a contingent manner to the activities and purposes of actors. In using the term "contingent," Giddens (1979:113) means that social institutions need to be analyzed as evolving out of past concrete conditions rather than as operating teleologically or according to necessary purposes. This concept of contingency is macrohistorical. Here, we will refer to contingent consequences that occur within the duration or process that is intrinsic to the interaction order (Goffman, 1983). This implies a notion of contingency that is microhistorical and a use of the term function that is bound up rather than teleology or with cognition. Contingency is related to how members, through their precise sequencing of talk and action, achieve characteristic, objective, and seemingly recalcitrant features of group life at particular places and moments (Wilson and Zimmerman, 1980:54–55).

HOW CONFLICT FUNCTIONS IN THE INTERACTION OF CHILDREN

The overall thesis is that conflict among children manifestly functions to produce their small-group society and its structure as dual aspects of a single, situated phenomenon. This thesis has three parts. First, when small-group members engage in argument or dispute, the result is a social organization that is, to a degree, coterminal with the dispute episode itself. That social organization is visible to the children whose accomplishment it is; they are capable of describing achieved orderliness in ways which make it clear that the social scientist occupies no privileged analytical position (cf. Schegloff and Sacks, 1974:274). Second, conflict in multi-party disputes is a partisan process. Thus, even among children we need to understand the importance of politics, power, and social control in the constitution of social organization. Finally, social organization achieved through conflict is monetary and susceptible to change. It represents an alliance of interests around some issue, some practical problem that emerges in local interaction. When the problem changes, so may the organization of the group.

Social Organization

By way of conflict, children produce their society and its structure. That is, conflict plays a constitutive role in the process by which participants both make and confront particular relational patterns or features of social organization. This proposition can be made concrete by careful examination of a dispute episode from the reading-group data. Of particular interest in the following segment is line 21, where Mary produces an utterance ("everybody's against me") that formulates opposition between herself and other members of the group. "Formulations" (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970:350–51; cf. Heritage and Watson, 1979) occur in conversation when a participant characterizes the interaction so far or provides a candidate upshot of it. They are related to the notion of "account" in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967:83–84), which refers to those achieved features of social settings that are capable of being reported on or told about. In these terms, we will see that Mary's formulation is an accountable description of the group's organization. (Transcribing conventions are in the Appendix.)

(1) #11
Five children, Jim, Julie, Gary, Mary, and Minda, are working at a rectangular table. Mary is standing at the left side of Minda and moving about during the episode; the others are sitting.

1. Mary: Where's my- where is my folder:?:?
2. (2.5)
3. Julie: How'm I sposed to kno:::w?
4. Minda: Mary, whaddiya expect us to do, find everything for ya
5. (3.5) (Minda lifts up papers in center of table; Mary reaches to the stack and pulls out a folder)

work done by the other two parts of the format. The interactional effect of a visible correction such as this is to propose that the speaker is one who might habitually use the word "cop" but is now speaking with reference to the courtroom and legal environment, thus displaying a respectable public identity.  

For a detailed examination of devices used to generate topical talk and the way these devices may accomplish relational intimacy or distance, see Maynard and Zimmerman (1984).
7. Mary: [How] come everybody else has so much STUFF and I only have a little. (spoken while Mary opens folder and inserts paper)
8. (1.0) (Minda looks at Mary’s folder)
9. Minda: You have a lot of stuff.
10. (0.6) (Minda picks up her own folder)
11. Minda: You don’t call this a lot of stuff.
12. (1.4) ((Mary holds her papers))
13. Mary: Do you call THAT a lot of stuff?
14. Minda: Yeah!
15. (1.2) ((Mary leaves table, goes to nearby area))
16. Jim: You should see MY folder
17. Julie: AHHHHHHH ((yawn; Julie glances at Jim’s folder, goes back to work))
18. ((1.5))
20. (0.4)
21. Jim: Mary look at MY folder. ((Mary returns to the right side of Minda))
22. Mary: (((faces Minda)) Everybody’s against me.
23. (0.3)
24. Minda: I’m not
25. (1.5) ((Mary goes behind Minda))
26. Minda: I don’t got a lot of stuff in mine.
27. (0.7) ((Mary retrieves crayon box from floor))
28. Mary: Well you’re against me. ((Mary returns to Minda’s left side))
29. (0.4) ((Minda, gazing at Mary, produces “questioning” look))
30. Mary: YOU’RE not aAGAINST me.
31. ((Mary leaves table))

The episode starts with Mary’s “request for information” (line 1) regarding the location of her folder. That utterance is treated as an arguable event by three of the other four children at the table. Opposition, which is taken as the defining feature of children’s disputes (Boggs, 1978:328; Brennies and Lein, 1977:56; Eisenberg and Garvey, 1981:150–51; Goodwin, 1982a:88; Pomerantz, 1975; Willard, 1978:125), occurs not with respect to the semantic construction of the offense, however, but relative to what the utterance presupposes (cf. Maynard, 1985). First, Julie makes visible a rule that one who asks a question supposes knowledge on the part of recipient. With a re-

turn question that asks for the basis of her being able to know (line 3), Julie suggests a lack of knowledge regarding the location of the folder, and thereby argues with the presupposition. Second, at line 4, Minda analyzes a further presuppositional feature of Mary’s utterance, i.e., that it is not just a request for information, but carries an expectation for others—formulated as “us” in Minda’s utterance—to engage in a search to find the folder. Thus, the utterance is apparently interpreted as a “directive” (Ervin-Tripp, 1976) by Minda. Moreover, Minda’s utterance characterizes Mary’s request as an instance of a generic set of behaviors. Use of the phrase “find everything” proposes that the folder is one of many items the others may have been obligated to find for Mary. Third, Jim’s “yeah” at line 6 apparently agrees with Minda’s formulation and complaint. By this point, then, each of the three parties—in one of two basic ways—opposes Mary’s first utterance.

Patterns in which one party displays a position or stance, and others support or oppose it in various ways, constitute an alignment structure (Maynard, forthcoming-a). Mary’s next utterance (line 7) in fact formulates an alignment structure by proposing a difference between her and “everybody else.” That is, Mary produces a claim about how much “stuff” the others have in their folders (“so much”) in comparison with what she has (“a little”). Verbalizing such a malodistribution may be a general device for handling an original complaint: instead of denying, rebutting, or accounting for the imputed blameworthy activity (Atkinson and Drew, 1979:160–69), one “complains back.” In effect, this strategy “turns the tables” on her co-participants by altering who is proposed as violator and who as victim.

The placement of the complaint after Mary has clearly “found” the missing folder (with Minda’s help) is also significant. For the folder to be located so readily may provide legitimacy to the others’ oppositional utterances, and may display Mary’s culpability with regard to the proposed offensiveness of asking the group where it is. Thus, to use the contents of the folder to “complain back” focuses off her possible culpability by raising a new issue. Although Minda denies the basis for Mary’s complaint by producing an opposing characterization of Mary’s goods (“you have a lot,” line 9), and of her own (“you don’t call this a lot of

7 While Minda produces her utterance at line 4, and during the initial part of the silence at line 5, she does appear to aid Martha’s search for the folder. Thus Minda’s verbal opposition is “keyed” nonverbally in such a way as to mitigate its provocation. On “keying” opposition, see Maynard (1985).
stuff," line 11), this in effect helps to topicalize the new issue. Then, by way of a questioning repeat (line 13), Mary displays astonishment at Minda’s characterization, to which Minda nonetheless holds (line 14). Opposition is therefore maintained between Mary and Minda because Minda disagrees over the content of Mary’s complaint.

Opposition is also maintained between Jim and Mary, but of a different type. While Mary is away from the table but apparently within earshot, Jim invites inspection of his folder (lines 16, 19, 21) and reports having “lots of stuff” (line 19). This utterance agrees with one aspect of Mary’s line 7 complaint—that he, as a member of the category “everybody else,” has “so much stuff”—and in that way affirms the discrepancy Mary proposes. At this point, then, while Julie appears disinterested in the interaction (line 17), both Minda and Jim are clearly aligned against Mary. They deal with her complaint by different and even incompati-

ble strategies and thus do not seem to be even tacitly collaborating (cf. Maynard, forthcoming-a). Nonetheless, Mary’s utterance at line 22 appears to pursue the complaint issued at line 7, further formulating opposition between “everybody” and herself. “Every-


boy’s against me,” in summary, is an account that is a plausible description of the group’s organization, given (1) the initial opposition and alignments occasioned by Mary’s line 1 “request,” and (2) the subsequent opposition taken with respect to her line 7 complaint. 

Stated differently, the utterance at line 22 makes sense of the previous sequential activities which, as in a gestalt context (cf. Wieder, 1974; Wilson and Zimmerman, 1980), reflexively render that utterance itself meaningful and accountable.

Stances are not immutable; once taken they can be aggravated, maintained at the same level, or diminished. While Minda subsequently maintains her position, Mary does move away from hers, if only minimally.9 The focal point, however, is that conflict is a way that children produce social organization in the form of alignment structures that are capable of indigenous formulation. This proposition helps make sense of the observation that children do not often “resolve” their disputes (Genish and DiPaolo, 1982:63–66; Goodwin, 1982a:87),10

an observation contradicting a central tenet in functional conflict theory that disputes aim toward resolution or, in Simmel’s (1955:13) terms, the “unity” of “divergent dualisms.”11 The reason for the empirical lack of resolution in children’s disputes is that a basic function of conflict is to achieve a concrete, particular so-


10 Resolution may not be a frequent occurrence in adult conflict either (Vuchinich, 1984:219).

11 Coser (1956:72–81) modifies this idea by suggesting that only conflict that operates within the assumptions on which societal relationships are based helps reestablish a broken unity. See also Coser’s (1967) more extended essay on the resolution of conflict.
in that neighborhood that you and me, "live in," the longest.

11. Tom: Mine’s the largest.

12. Sharon: Mine’s the longest in the neighborhood.

13. Tom: Mine’s the biggest.

14. ( ): Sh:::::::

15. Tom: *and the tallest.

Here, Tom’s utterance “I’m all finished” (line 1) is clearly directed to Sharon, selecting her to perform the next relevant action (according to the current-selects-next technique described by Sacks et al., 1974). An issue for Sharon is what action to produce, and that turns on her analysis of Tom’s utterance. Most simply, perhaps, it could be treated as announcing Tom’s transition from “not finished” to “finished” as a pair of contrast categories applicable to the entire workgroup. In that case, as an announcement, it might require only an acknowledgment from Sharon, to mark her having received the news. That is a surface-level characterization, however; Sharon’s response (line 3) seems to operate on what Tom’s utterance presumes. It may be one of a class of utterances through which speakers claim status by exhibiting their incumbency in a preferred category. Thus, the utterance can be treated as an implicitly competitive statement, on the order of the following more explicit one, spoken in a different workgroup.

(3) #37
Jack: ((to Karen)) I’m all done. I beat you.

Moreover, since such utterances propose speaker as “one up,” they may work to “put down” or insult those to whom they are directed. In that case, a relevant next action is to produce a return put-down, which Sharon accomplishes here (line 6) by further stratifying the “finished” category and suggesting that Tom is not on the highest rung within it. Tom discounts that suggestion with a “so” (line 7). Then, competition is produced with reference to a different topic, that of whose house is the largest or longest in the neighborhood (lines 9–15). The collaborative push here is not for resolution of opposition but for a social organization in which some specific status hierarchy will be a definitive feature. Such outcomes are also clearly evident in multi-party contests as well as two-party disputes (Goodwin, 1982a).

The Politics of Children’s Disputes

When children build particular alignment structures during multi-party disputes, they may do so in a partisan manner. That is, these disputes are political to the extent that the realization of one party’s position, claim, or interest is dependent upon how other parties align themselves relative to it (cf. Giddens, 1979:86). The implication is that children are political actors very early, despite a literature on the political socialization of children that considers them to be politically conscious only when they have learned about government, adult political roles, and major political events (Easton and Dennis, 1969; Greenstein, 1965; Hess and Torney, 1967).

The traditional perspective on children’s politics parallels the way social scientists conventionally viewed children’s linguistic behavior. The assumption guiding much psychological, sociological, and anthropological research was that youngsters below the ages of seven and eight are not competent communicators. They must therefore be socialized into being fully skilled users of language. Research in the last ten years demonstrates that children, at extremely young ages, engage in a variety of complex activities via linguistic interaction with their peers and with adults. Thus, researchers now regard children’s “code” as having an integrity of its own rather than as an incomplete version of adult language (cf. Keenan, 1977:126; MacKay, 1974; Speier, 1973).

In addition to being approached as competent users of language, children also need to be appreciated as skilled political actors. If we see children as simply acquiring that knowledge of adult politics which will guide their future behavior (Hess and Torney, 1967:18), we will continue to neglect an impressive array of partisan skills deployed at an early age—skills through which children handle problems that are local to their own play and work experiences. A prime consideration here is that we must also accord integrity to the “interaction order” (Goffman, 1983) of children, whereas the literature on political socialization considers the nation state as the point of political reference. From that angle, children are bound to appear naive. Although the realm of face-to-face interaction is no more real than the internal and external relations of a large-scale polity, it is no less real either (Goffman, 1983), and it therefore requires systematic investiga-
tion for any complete understanding of political and social organization.  

Conflict episodes are a rich arena for understanding the politics of children. We can, for example, look to how alignment structures are collaboratively achieved when one party to a dispute invites an outsider to participate, or an outsider offers to join in (Maynard, forthcoming-a).

(4) #7

Seven children, four of whom participate in the following episode, are seated at a rectangular table. Mary is at the end of the table. Wanda is on her right, seated on the side of the table. On Wanda’s right is Minda. On the left side of the table (from Mary’s perspective), next to Mary, is an empty chair. Next to the chair sits Barb, who is picking up papers and holding them against her body. Mary is looking at Barb, who is gazing at her paper and at Mary alternately.

1. Barb: I can’t let Mary see (on all of these) so long
2. Barb: (2.4)
3. Barb: I don’t want anybody to see (what-)
5. (1.2)
6. Barb: ((gazes at Mary)) you peeked!
7. (1.2)
8. Barb: I don’t trust you.
9. (0.6)
11. (0.8) ((Mary takes a paper in her left hand and offers it to Wanda))
12. Mary: Here you go.
13. (2.8) ((Wanda accepts the paper, looks at it, and places it on the right side of her own paper))
14. Barb: How come you’re gonna let m::: WANDa copy it.
15. (1.8) ((By putting a lunch box on its end at the edge of the paper in front of her, Mary shields the paper from Barb’s view))
16. Barb: Hu:::h Mary?

17. (2.0) ((Mary glances briefly at Barb but continues maneuvering the paper and box))
19. (4.0) ((Mary gazes at her paper and lunch box))
20. Barb: Huh Mary?
21. (0.3)
22. Minda: She can if she wants to.
23. Barb: [Howcome you’re lettin’ Wanda copy yours.

24. (0.4)
25. Minda: She can if she wants to.
26. (0.8)
27. Minda: If she doesn’t want either of us (she doesn’t have to)
28. Barb: She doesn’t like me that’s wh:::y:::

29. (1.4)
30. Barb: Nobody likes me.
31. (2.0)
32. Barb: Not even Wanda.
33. (1.0)
34. Wanda: Nobody does like you.
35. (2.0)
36. Barb: It’s the truth
37. ((Mary and Wanda whisper))
38. Barb: It’s the truth Mary nobody likes me.
39. (1.0)
40. Wanda: Right, it’s true, nobody likes you.

At the beginning of this episode, Barb displays opposition toward Mary and her putative behavior, simultaneously making visible a specific normative issue as to whether others may properly see or share one’s own papers. Specifically, Barb holds her papers to herself, while saying “I can’t let Mary see . . . ” (line 1). These appear as preventative behaviors that protect Barb’s possessional territory and propose it as unshareable, at least with respect to Mary, who is therefore excluded from Barb’s territory. At line 3, Barb’s stance against letting her papers be seen is verbalized to exclude “anybody.” Then, Mary’s utterance at line 4 appears to question this stance, and Barb’s utterance at line 6 answers the questioning by accusing Mary of peeking; it thereby more plainly constitutes opposition to, and proposes, an antecedent arguable event. Barb next announces a lack of trust in Mary (line 8) which accounts for, and reflexively is made sensible by, the series of verbal and nonverbal moves Barb has produced, especially the accusation of peeking.
SOCIAL CONFLICT AMONG CHILDREN

We have already mentioned that accusations can be handled in a variety of ways, such as with a rebuttal, an account, or a return accusation. In this example another device for dealing with an accusation works to undercut the premise on which it is based. Mary reacts to Barb's opposition by offering her papers to Wanda (lines 10–11), thereby exhibiting a stance that while her papers may be part of her possessional territory, they can still be seen or shared, at least selectively. Thus, Mary stays with a position implicit in her proposed antecedent move. That is, the sharing that Mary attempts is consistent with the peeking behavior of which Barb accuses her, insofar as both acts exhibit a position that individual work should be accessible to others. In accepting the paper (line 13), Wanda aligns with that position as well.

Then, Barb characterizes Mary's sharing move as "letting Wanda copy..." (line 14) as she asks Mary why she would do so. The stress on the first syllable of "Wanda" and the downward intonation at utterance end suggest that "Wanda" is a term contrasting with "others" or "me" and indicate that Barb has analyzed Mary's sharing move as questionable not entirely because she would let her paper be copied, but because the move contains an element of exclusivity. Mary may thus have succeeded in returning a display of exclusivity similar to that which Barb initially directed towards her. That Mary is proposing to exclude Barb can be seen in her subsequent actions—she blocks Barb from seeing her work while ignoring Barb's question (line 15), and she continues to ignore the question after Barb's solicitation (lines 16), her reformulation of the question (18), another solicitation (20), and a final asking (23). Part of the latter utterance occurs in overlap with the last words of an answer (line 22) produced by a different party, Minda, who repeats the answer outside of overlap at line 25 and continues it at line 27.

Regarding the alignment structure in this episode, three things can be highlighted. First, Mary's offering her paper to Wanda, and Wanda's accepting it, exhibit opposition to Barb's position on the normative issue about seeing and sharing. Thus, it is an example of a collaboration produced when one participant in a two-party dispute implicates in a joint activity a party originally outside the dispute. Second, while Minda's answer to Barb's question at least grants that question "sequential implicativeness"—i.e., displays recognition that an answer is relevant (Schegloff and Sacks, 1974:239, fn. 4)—the answer appears to be performed on behalf of Mary, in two senses. It takes the place of Mary herself producing an answer, and it justifies the position Mary has previously taken (that sharing possessional territory selectively is normatively permitted). Thus, Minda, in a sense, acts as Mary's agent and offers to participate in the already established Wanda—Mary collaboration. Third, after Minda's justifying utterances (lines 25–27), Barb produces a candidate answer (line 28) to her own question about why Mary would let Wanda copy her paper. That is, she suggests that Mary "doesn't like" her. That statement is generalized, in line 30, to "nobody likes me," which proposal is confirmed by Wanda in subsequent turns (lines 34, 40). As example (1) has already demonstrated, it is possible for an individual to "read" alignment structures in such a way as to formulate a complaint in which opposition between the individual and the rest of the group is given expression.

The politics of children, then, resides in the ways they produce and respond to solicits and offers of alignment within conflict episodes. Their political activities bring about the realization of concrete interests, whether those be excluding someone, as in the above example, maintaining status (Goodwin, 1982a), saving "face" (Adger, 1984; Goodwin, 1980), or socially controlling individual behavior,14 as in the next example.

(5) #64
Joe sits at the end of a rectangular table. On his left, at the side of the table, is Molly. On Molly's left is June. (Four other children are seated at the table but do not participate in this episode.) On the table, between Joe and Molly, are two crayon bins which will be referred to as #1 and #2. Bin #3 is near the middle of the table. The children are coloring. Joe stops, picks up a crayon that is lying on the table, and throws it in bin #1. Molly grabs the bin and says, "hey." Then she returns to coloring for a few seconds before moving her hand back to bin #1. She removes the bin from the table and puts it in her lap while producing the utterance at line 1.

1. Molly: They're not your crayons, they're mine. You have YOUR own
2. (0.8) ((June looks up from coloring and turns her head to Molly))
3. Joe: They're not your:::s!
4. (0.1)
5. Molly: Yes they are.
6. (0.2) ((Molly points to bin #2))
7. Molly: Those are yours.
8. (0.8) ((June looks up at Molly))

14 See Vuchinich's (1984) discussion of how social control is exerted through argumentative sequences in family conflict.
9. June: .hhhh uh uh hh ((points at bin #1))
10. June: You share TH e m. ((Both Molly and June look at bin #1))
11. (2.0) ((Both Molly and June look at bin #1))
12. ( ): Share them you should. They aren't oh-
13. June: [You have to] share them, you don't (get ours)]
14. Joe  I'm telling
15. (0.2) ((Joe leaves the table))
16. June: You don't get yer ow;n. ((Molly pulls bin #1 up from the floor and puts it in her lap))
17. (2.5) ((Molly looks in the di-
rection that Joe went; Joe returns))
18. Molly: ((points at bins #2 and #3)) You have those two ((kitties)).
19. (12.0) ((Molly looks in the di-
rection that Joe went; Joe returns))
20. Joe: Teacher says you should be sharing.
21. (1.5)
22. June: Now you have to sha re.
23. (4.5) ((Molly holds bin #1 on her lap and then puts it on the table))
24. ((The children all return to work.))

At line 1, Molly exerts a territorial claim that both verbally and nonverbally opposes Joe's prior act of tossing a crayon into bin #1. Joe denies her claim, at line 3, which is a restate-
ment of the position implicit in his having used bin #1 initially. Molly contradicts Joe's utter-
ance (line 5) and points to the crayons in bin #2 as belonging to him (lines 6–7). Then, June offers an alignment with Joe's position by de-
nying (line 9) Molly's latter suggestion and producing, with another party (in lines 10–13), "normative assertions" (Maynard, 1985) that oppose Molly's original claim. We have, therefore, an "implicit" form of collaboration (Maynard, forthcoming-a) between at least Joe and June. 15 Joe next announces an intention to tell (line 14) and leaves the table as June and Molly continue the dispute in a two-party fashion (line 16–18). Subsequently, Joe returns to the table and produces an utterance in which the teacher is quoted (line 20). Here, "telling the teacher" appears as a strategy to solicit a sympathetic alignment from an outside party whose categorical memberships (adult, teacher) commonsensically involve rights to issue authoritative normative statements. The strategy worked. After June herself produces a

normative assertion that affirms the teacher's authority (line 22), Molly slowly returns the bin to the table, and it is then a communal resource for the children's subsequent work.

In summary, an initial collaboration between two parties is unsuccessful in getting a third party, whose claim they deny, to change her stance and return the crayon bin. What works is when one of the collaborators seeks help from an outside authority. Children thus not only know how to solicit and offer collabora-
tive alignments among themselves, but also how to utilize other powerful resources in pursuing particular ends, particular forms of social organization. Regularly, participation by an outside authority is not sought to "end" conflict or "settle" disputes as a first priority. Rather, in a political move, children solicit that participation to promote whatever position they have taken during the dispute process.

Political-socialization researchers acknowledge that they may only appreciate a limited amount of political sophistication among children because of the type of political behavior selected for investigation (Easton and Dennis, 1969:84-85). The tendency of social scientists, Epstein (1984:296) remarks, is to consider adult electoral politics as "the sole arena of political behavior." Clearly, the realm of the political needs to be expanded so as not to underestimate both the age at which children are capable of political activity and the range of such activity. In their disputes, children utilize well-defined skills for exhibiting, offering, and soliciting collaboration. These skills are evident at least as early as first grade (according to this data) and probably much earlier.

Children, then, are "political primitives" (Easton and Dennis, 1969:138) only with reference to aspects of the adult world but certainly not with respect to their own interac-
tional realms. In addition, an implication for research on conversation is that power is an important element in it (Grimshaw, 1982a:324), even among children. One resource for the display of power in the pursuit of one's practical interests is collaboration as achieved by obtaining the support of others in that pursuit (cf. Giddens, 1979:93). Situated, achieved collabor-
boration may be particularly important among children because institutionalized sources of power (occupational status, school achieve-
ment) are not available or accorded much re-
spect in the interaction of youthful peers (Goodwin, 1982a:77).

Social Organization as a Momentary Accomplishment

Alignment structures in multi-party disputes are accomplished by offers and solicits of
alignment (Maynard, forthcoming-a), either of which can be accepted or rejected. Thus, the success of a third party offering an alignment with one participant’s position, or one participant seeking a third party’s alignment, is susceptible to on-the-spot recipient response and therefore does not lie in the sheer acts of offering or soliciting themselves. In other words, collaboration is only conditionally achieved. Furthermore, although multi-party conflict arises from the two-party situation, it is not the automatic result of a two-party dispute occurring in a group setting. Once contrary positions are stated, it is only through these offers and solicits that “onlookers” or other members of a reading group enter the conflict and become active participants in the construction of a particular social organization. At every moment, the progress of a dispute, including its outcome—the point at which some interest is realized and matters are left to rest—is a contingent, practical achievement.

Contingency also has to do with the changing social organization which is produced through conflict. The collaborative alliances children build represent a temporary convergence concerning a particular issue. As issues change, so does the social order. Thus, in one episode (#54), two parties engaged in a dispute with each other, then collaborated to oppose another party, and finally returned to the argument between themselves. The initial dispute starts as David, sitting next to Jane, admonishes her for putting her paper on top of his and then tells her she’s “gotta write her ABC’s.” Jane responds, “I know.” David next says, “Shut up then,” gets up from the table, picks up his paper, drops it on Jane’s, pushes her arm, and goes to the end of the table where he begins looking at the work pages of Ray and Cliff. Jane says to David, “Shut up.” David, however, initiates a next phase of interaction by accusing Ray and Cliff, “You guys are so slow.” David responds, “maybe we don’t wanna be messy.” David hears a return accusation in this, as is evident in his denial and opposing characterization, “We ain’t messy, we’re taking our time but we do it fast.” Since David and Jane are both finished with their work, David appears to be talking on behalf of both Jane and himself. This kind of utterance, when allowed to stand by the non-speaking party on whose behalf a claim is partly made, is an implicit form of collaboration (see Maynard, forthcoming-a). That Jane also hears Cliff’s utterance as an accusation and as including her is evident in her own subsequent denial, “mine ain’t sloppy.”

After a series of accusations and denials on the sloppiness issue, collaboration between David and Jane becomes more explicit. David, who has returned to his seat, focuses on Cliff’s paper by standing up and pointing to it.

(6) #54
David: You made the j the wrong way .hhh and the s the wrong way, the f the wrong way .hhh the ess...: That’s a two THAT’s a two .hhhh and that’s a [two::.!
Cliff: THAT’s not a two:::!
Jane: Sure is this is spose to be a j:::

Thus, when Cliff denies part of David’s accusation, Jane contradicts his denial in a way that affirms David’s accusation. Clearly, David and Jane are acting together in a consistent, collaborative way, and when Ray asks, “Did I make a mistake,” Jane answers, “Yes you made a whole bunch o’ mistakes.” Ray rejects that claim by saying, “No I didn’t,” while Cliff appears to concede a little ground with the utterance, “You do too though you guys.” Pointing at Cliff’s paper, Ray produces a denial on behalf of Cliff, “You didn’t even make no mistakes.” Then David counters, “Sure did he made the letters wrong way around.”

(6A)
1. Cliff: tch. hhh the b’s aren’t w- wrong.
2. Jane [I know.]
3. David: But the f’s and the j’s.
4. (0.2)
5. Jane: Duh duh DUH!
6. (0.1)
7. David: Shut up.
8. Jane: ((to David)) Bah!
9. David: ((tongue out)) pthhh!

After both Jane (line 2) and David (line 3) concede to Cliff’s claim that the “b’s aren’t wrong,” conflict among the four parties is abandoned as Jane produces a series of sounds (line 5) that David censures (line 7) and the two parties direct a series of nonverbal and verbal oppositional turns to each other.

Over the course of a few minutes, then, a dispute between Jane and David, occasioned by David’s admonishing Jane about her paper and her ABC’s, dissipates as David subsequently proposes the slowness of Ray and Cliff, who counteraccuse David and Jane of sloppiness. Further, Jane aligns with David’s stance regarding the incorrect nature of the other pair’s work, while Ray and Cliff continue to deny or minimize the accusations. Thus, an alignment structure in which two collaborate against the other two is momentarily visible. However, when Jane produces a series of dramatic tones, and David tells her to “shut up,” their brief collaboration ceases and opposition
is returned and reduced to their two-party interaction. Conflict, and the social organization it realizes, is contingently connected with the ongoing, practical interests of participants. As those interests change, so may the alignment structure of the group.

This proposition sheds light on the observed ubiquity of conflict among children. In absolute terms, children argue often (Genishi and Di Paolo, 1981:63). Comparatively speaking, a number of researchers remark that disputes are more frequent among children than adults. Early research on children’s “quarrel” reports a decrease with age (Dawe, 1934:147).

More recently, Goodwin (1983) explores how children may produce aggrieved correction and disagreement utterances in conversation in contrast to adults, who mitigate these utterances (cf. Goffman, 1967; Pomerantz, 1975). Also, those who study children report on a related feature of youthful interaction, which is its “fragility” (Corsaro, 1979:330, 1981:138; cf. Davies, 1982). Adler and Adler (1984:207) recorded the following remark from a ten-year-old who participated in a carpool:

Kids are always changing around who they’re friendly with. You’re best friends with one kid one day and another the next. You’re always changing around because kids get into fights with each other and then gang up along people’s sides. A lot of times people ask me to choose whose side I’m on, and if you take somebody’s side then they’re your friend and the other one isn’t.

What seems to be afoot is a fluid social organization among children which is exhibited by way of conflict and in an experience of tran sitoriness in friendships (O pie and Opie, 1959:324). Adults live in a relatively reified social world with established relationships; to the extent that conflict represents for them the negotiation of a new micro-interactional order, it may be suppressed.

LATENT FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT AMONG CHILDREN

Children are skilled in disputing and arguing from early ages and thus are active participants in conflict situations. Through conflict, children build discrete, local forms of social organization. They do so in a political fashion, by forging collaborative alliances with one another and using outside authorities to advance their positions. In pursuing changing issues and interests, children also alter their dispute strategies, which, in turn, modifies alignment patterns within the group. This should not imply that conflict is therefore dysfunctional at the interactional underlayer while being struc-

turally important only at the societal level (cf. Rawls, 1984:237). Rather, the occurrence of an episode of dispute may represent the precise moment during which a small group’s social organization is fundamentally negotiated.

Children build a sequence of characterizable conflictual interaction as they are, simultaneously, within it. On the one hand, they produce forms of opposition, offers and solicits of alignments, as well as acceptances and rejections, all of which contribute to a momentary social order. On the other hand, participants formulate that order by way of accounts, such as complaints, that make sense of, and are made sensible by, the achieved visibility of group alignment structures.

That conflict among children reflects the political construction of a momentary social organization does not make it possible to read a complete social world out of the grains of sands in children’s arguments. This paper has focused on direct interactional aspects of dispute structures, and thus on their manifest functions, contingently rather than teleologically conceived. Further research on children’s conflict would do well to incorporate ethnographic analysis of the context within which it occurs, along the lines suggested by Corsaro (1981) and as exemplified in studies of adult conflict by Grimshaw (1982b). As Cicourel (1980:122) has stated, everyday interactional spheres “are always part of more complex social settings.” A question arises, however, as to how to make the connection between interaction and its larger social surrounds. Some directions can be suggested. Recall that Giddens (1979), in his critique of functionalism, does not advocate doing away with a latent-function analysis. Instead, he recommends examining manifest social functions as a prelude to the study of latent functions. In the area of conflict, a way to reintegrate the study of interaction with the investigation of wider social contexts may be, in fact, to consider latent functions of dispute episodes.

Acquiring a Sense of Social Structure

We can investigate latent functions in two ways. The first is to project how participation in peer activities may influence the acquisition of a sense of social structure (Cicourel, 1970). For instance, consider Sacks’s (1980) discussion of the game, “Button, Button, Who’s Got the Button.” Playing this game requires specific interactional competencies. The child who is “it” must guess who among the rest of the group is concealing a small button, and thus must learn to discern facial and other nonverbal cues that will reveal who is and who is not
hiding the button. For the "not-it" children, the task is to engage in "impression management"—that is, to give an appearance that one does have the button (if the child does not) or that one does not have the button (if the child does). The better a participant is at these detection and impression-management tasks, the more likely he or she is to win. But the effects of playing the "button" game go beyond the immediate deployment of the game's rules and strategies for situated ends such as winning or losing. In both making and viewing the transition from "it" to "not-it" statuses, children learn that "categories aren't persons" (Sacks, 1980:324). Thus, they begin to realize that they and significant figures in their lives are persons who have other identities, or roles, than the ones subsumed by familial categorizations such as "mommy," "daddy," and "child." Persons can have one identity at one time and switch to another at another time, or in another situation. In mundane situations of play, then, children acquire some sense of a social system in which frequent transitions between roles and role identities are required.

Let us now reconsider the phenomenon of competition. This is a type of conflict which is frequent in the play of black children (Goodwin, 1982a), particularly in the verbal dueling contests referred to as "sounding" (Labov, 1972). Kochman (1983) suggests that sounding not only has immediate (manifest) effects in terms of producing a status hierarchy among participants. It also helps to develop skills for producing and handling accusations and vilifications in nonplay as well as play contexts. These skills are important in a "high-stimulus" culture such as that which Kochman (1981) argues exists among some blacks. From our data (example 2), it can be added that through competitive conflict, white middle-class children begin to use achievement, possession-oriented, and other criteria by which status is exhibited in the adult culture. In Clicourel's (1970:153) terms, it is as if, within their disputes, children "rehearse" the acquisition of adult social structure by utilizing those skills and categories which sustain it.

Yet it would not pay to assume that, in the realm of conflict, children are simply primitive adults. Formal skills for engaging in arguments and disputes appear to be relatively well developed by age five or six (Maynard, 1985:23). Given that conflict is more prevalent in children's activities than in those of adults, the traditional development question might therefore be usefully reversed. That is, the regular approach to socialization asks how children are becoming like adults. With respect to conflict, the problem might also be to see how adults are like children. For example, the process of political socialization would involve not only how children gain knowledge and attitudes related to government and other major political institutions. In addition, that process may include the ways that peer disputes teach children to fashion alliances and use other power-generating skills to pursue their social claims, stances, and positions (Goffman, 1971:28). Those skills are at least precursors to, if not the same as, ones that are relevantly used in maintaining adult group relationships.

**Relationships of Authority and Friendships**

The first way of relating conflictual interaction and manifest functions to wider social contexts and latent functions consists in hypothesizing that practices learned in immediate play or argumentative activities can be applied to other and more complex environments. A second way of making this connection is to further examine the effects of interaction as they occur across time and space. Thus, we earlier referred to the teacher in example 5 as an "authority." But authority is not just a category; it is a relation that is reproduced in the regularity of particular actions. We saw that when a child solicits the teacher's participation, it is not her help in mediating or resolving the dispute that is sought, but her alignment with an exhibited conflict position. Therefore, the first-order function of teacher's participation is to serve some interest that is relevant and local to the child's interaction within the reading group. However, by consulting her, by quoting her normative assertions, by characterizing those assertions as necessary to follow, and then by collaboratively acting according to their dictates—practices that were displayed in episode 5—children also reaffirm the relationship of authority, whence comes the teacher's ability to command a range of actions (cf. Wrong, 1979:35). To the extent that such practices are regularized, then a conflict strategy with manifest functions that are internal to the reading group performs latent functions for overall classroom organization.

Another situation where the latent effects of conflict can be traced is in the displayed relationship of involved parties. In example 1, Mary produced two main complaints. The first one was that "everybody has so much stuff" while Mary herself only had "a little." Mary's second complaint occurred at line 22:

(1A) 22. Mary: ((faces Minda)) Everybody's against me.

23. 

24. Minda: I'm not

25. (1.5) ((Mary goes behind Minda))
26. Minda: I don’t got a lot of stuff in mine.
27. (0.7) ((Mary retrieves crayon box from floor))
28. Mary: Well you’re against me.
((Mary returns to Minda’s left side))
29. (0.4) ((Minda, gazing at Mary, produces “questioning” look))
30. Mary: YOU’RE not against me.
31. ((Mary leaves table))

As Mary delivers this second complaint, she stands at the right side of, and turns her head and torso to, Minda. The utterance is thus directed to Minda rather than the group as a whole. Minda disagrees (line 24) with that utterance and then rejects (line 26) again the first complaint (Minda originally opposed it at line 9 in example 1). Subsequently, Mary reasserts the second complaint (line 28), thereby relinquishing, and appearing to concede, the first one. And, while Minda continues gazing at her, Mary acknowledges that she (Minda) specifically is not against her. The concession here is minimal because Mary’s stress on two words (“you’re” and “against”) invokes the contrast term for each one. That is, the utterance leaves the suggestion that Mary still considers the others (as compared to “you,” Minda) as being against her; and that if Minda is not “against” her, Mary may not necessarily consider her as completely “with” her either. Still, when Mary removes Minda from membership in the category of “everybody” who is against her, the affront that Mary claimed to experience is partially remedied with respect to Minda. A momentary relationship of affinity rather than antagonism is constructed between the two parties, and we can speculate that rather than “everybody’s against me,” Mary may have been proposing something along the lines of “it’s us against them.” Thus, while we originally examined this episode for the momentary group organization achieved within it, the interaction may also have latent consequences for the children’s relationships. Here we glimpse but a moment in a relationship that is undoubtedly an ongoing process. We would clearly need more ethnographic, biographic, and historical information to understand how this dispute operated in the overall associational process between involved parties and in the structure of classroom friendship and cliquing groups generally (Fine, 1980; Hallinan, 1980).16 Simply put, we would need to examine this conflict episode in relation to other such episodes and to other activities in which the individuals are mutually engaged.

These illustrations are preliminary to a real analysis that is beyond the limits of this paper. However, they both point to interaction in small groups for understanding overall classroom structure and classroom structure as a reference point for better comprehension of the organization of small groups within it. Ultimately, we would like interactional and structural levels of analysis to coincide, and we would want to consider ever wider social contexts that surround interaction episodes.

CONCLUSION

In general, the investigation of conflict may benefit from the intense study of manifest and not just latent functions. This means, in part, relinquishing the term “function” as a theoretical concept or resource and recovering for inquiry how functions are a members’ phenomenon. Conflict among children comes about because they pursue indigenous interests and purposes within their small groups. In addition, the practices through which conflict is managed achieve the very structure of small-group society. As children argue and dispute, they also produce fundamental forms of social and political organization. Analyzing such manifest functions of conflict is an important task in its own right. It can also be a prelude to investigating how argumentative skills learned in interaction are used in other and more complex social environments, and how disputes in the immediate group context work through time and space in conjunction with other activities to constitute features of surrounding social environments. That is, conflict among children latently functions to develop their sense of social structure and helps reproduce authority, friendship, and other interactional patterns that transcend single episodes of dispute.

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16 See Goodwin’s (1982b:806) discussion of how relations between parties involved in a he-said-she-said dispute may promote different responses to the story of one who instigates such a dispute. Conversely, as Goodwin’s 1982b paper demonstrates, these different responses produce or reproduce particular forms of relationship.
APPENDIX
ADAPTED TRANSCIBING CONVENTIONS

1. A: Oh you do? Realy
B: 'Yeah'

2. A: And I'm not use ta that
(1.4)
B: Yeah me neither
3. B: I did oka::y

4. A: That's where I REALLY want to go
5. A: I'll do it if I want

6. A: I told them that there was- well there IS a job opening
7. B: That(h)it was really neat

8. B: You didn't have to worry about having the .hh hhh curtains closed

9. (a) A:((whisper)) I don't know
(b) B:((shakes head)) No

10. B: (Is that right)

11. A: ( )

12. A: *Is that right

13. A: It was great. I had a three point six? I think.
B: You did.

Brackets indicate overlapping or simultaneous activities. A left-hand bracket marks the point where overlap begins, while a right-hand bracket indicates where overlapping activities end.

Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in tenths of a second.

Colon(s) indicate the prior syllable is prolonged. The more colons, the longer the prolongation.

Capital letters indicate increased volume.

Underlining indicates stress and involves increased pitch.

The dash indicates a "cut-off" of the prior word or sound.

The "h" within a word or sound indicates explosive aspirations, e.g., laughter, breathlessness, etc.

The "h" indicates audible breathing. The more "h's" the longer the breath. A period placed before it indicates inbreath; no period indicates outbreath.

(a) Materials in double parentheses indicate features of audio phenomena other than actual verbalization. OR
(b) materials in double parentheses indicate nonverbal activities. If the parentheses are placed prior to an utterance, the activity occurs prior to or during the initial part of the utterance. If the parentheses are placed after an utterance, the activity occurs during the last part of the utterance, or just subsequent to the utterance. If the double parentheses are placed next to a silence indicator (see #2 above), the activity occurs during the silence.

Materials in single parentheses indicate transcribers are not sure about words contained therein.

If no words are contained in parentheses, this indicates that talk occurred which was indecipherable to the transcriptionist.

An asterisk placed before an utterance indicates low volume.

Punctuation markers are not used as grammatical symbols, but for intonation. Thus a question may be constructed with "period" intonation, and "question" intonation may occur in association with objects that are not questions. No punctuation mark at utterance end indicates that intonation was neither upward nor downward.

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