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Relevance of the Circumplex Model to Family Functioning Among Orthodox Jews in Israel

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The circumplex model of family functioning, as advanced by Olson (2000), posits that moderate levels of cohesion and flexibility are more adaptive than high or low levels. Research in majority-culture Western samples supports this model, suggesting that families with moderate levels of cohesion and flexibility display more adaptive functioning. However, the cross-cultural relevance of the circumplex model is unclear. Since Orthodox Jews view the family as an instrument of religious socialization and a key community organizing structure, it was hypothesized that high cohesion (i.e., enmeshment) and low flexibility (i.e., rigidity) would be normative and adaptive among this population. A sample (N = 1,632) of Orthodox Jewish parents of adolescents completed a measure assessing the circumplex model (Family Adapatability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale, FACES-IV; Olson, 2011) along with other related measures of family functioning. Results indicated that the circumplex model had poor fit, reliability, and validity in this population. A four-factor solution including cohesive-flexibility, chaos, disengagement, and modified enmeshment appeared more appropriate. These findings concur and diverge from findings in other populations, and the theoretical implications are discussed.

Keywords: circumplex model of family functioning, family systems, Judaism, religion, Israel

Over the past 25 years, a great deal of theory and research has focused on describing the various elements underlying adaptive family functioning. Summaries of this literature have suggested that functioning can be most parsimoniously characterized along two dimensions: cohesion/warmth and flexibility/control (Amato & Booth, 1997; Baumrind, 1995; Kouneski, 2002; Olson, 2011). Flexibility/control refers to the degree to which parents consistently enforce rules, provide structure, and demand compliance and self-control from their children, whereas cohesion/warmth reflects the degree to which parents provide emotional closeness, approval, nurturance and consistently attend to their children's emotionality. For example, Baumrind's (1995) typology of parenting delineates four possible parenting styles: authoritative (high warmth, high control), authoritarian (low warmth, high control), permissive (high warmth, low control), and rejecting (low warmth, low control). The current study utilized Olson's influential circumplex model of family functioning (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979; Olson, 1989; Olson, 2000), which similarly conceptualizes family functioning in terms of cohesion and flexibility.

Olson's circumplex model, illustrated in Figure 1, assumes that the dimensions of cohesion and flexibility are conceptually and empirically distinct, yielding a two-dimensional assessment of family functioning (Olson & Defrain, 2002). This model also posits that balanced levels of cohesion and flexibility are most adaptive, while very high or very low levels are associated with problematic functioning (Olsen, 2011). Cohesion is defined as emotional closeness and affection between family members. It ranges from low (disengagement), in which family members do not get along, seldom perform activities together, and tend to solve problems on their own, to high (enmeshment), where family members are overly dependent on each other and feel pressured to spend excessive time together. Flexibility refers to the consistency of roles, rules, and expectations within the family. It ranges from high (chaos), where the family is disorganized, lacks leadership, and fails to accomplish everyday tasks, to low (rigidity), where the family has inflexible rules and excessive consequences for deviation from them (Olson, 2011). The circumplex model of family functioning model has been extensively evaluated in

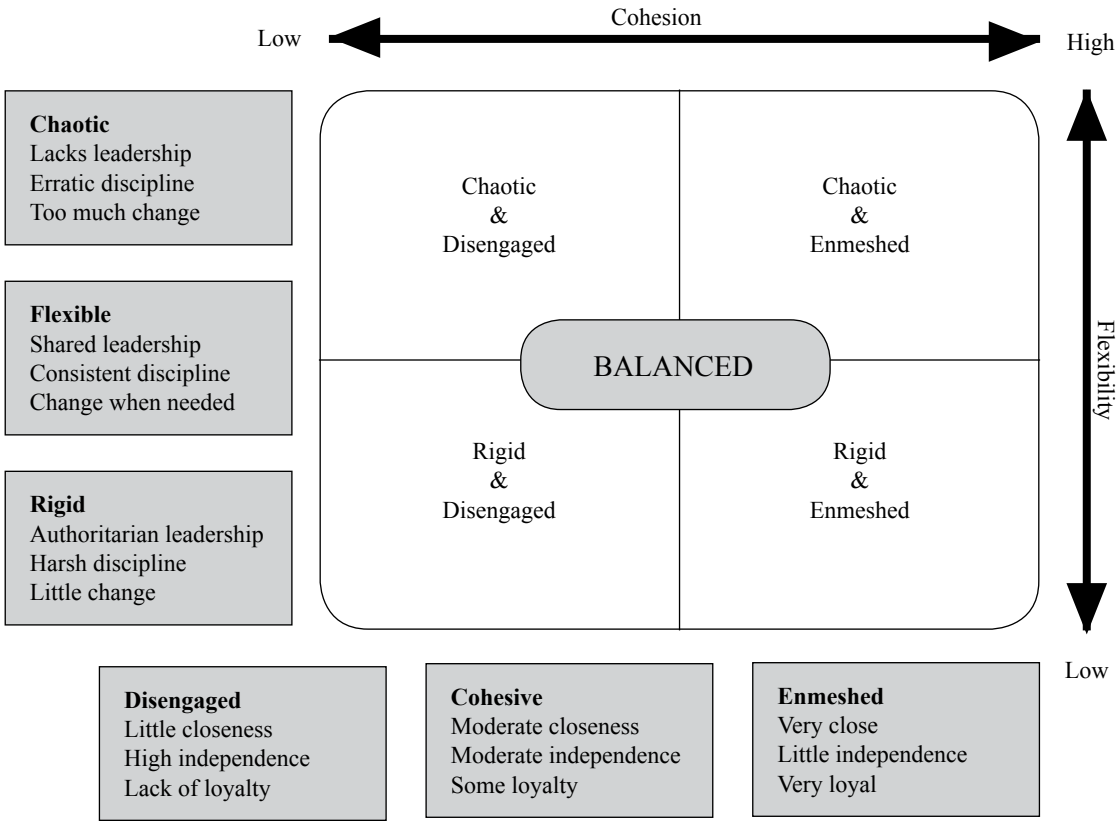


Figure 1
Olson's Circumplex Model of Family Functioning

over 1,200 studies and is widely supported empirically (see Kouneski, 2002).

Specifically, research has shown that families with identifiable problems—such as families of sex offenders (Carnes, 1989), families with mentally ill or substance abusing members, and the families of juvenile delinquents (Finzi-Dottan, Cohen, Iwaniec, Sapir, & Weizman, 2003; Roderick, Henggler, & Hanson, 1986)—report more extreme unbalanced levels of cohesion (either enmeshment or disengagement) and flexibility (rigidity or chaos), as compared to families that do not have these problems. Unbalanced family functioning has also been correlated with lower family satisfaction and poorer communication within the family (Olson & Defrain, 2002). Moreover, unbalanced family functioning has been related to insecure attachment styles (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2003), which may give rise to interpersonal styles characterized by ineffective interpersonal skills and emotional dysregulation. Insecure attachment styles have been shown to relate to the quality of family relationships (e.g., Cummings & Davies, 2002; Davila & Bradbury, 2001) and to negative, relationship-damaging behaviors during dyadic interaction tasks (Collins & Feeney, 2000).

The vast majority of research on the circumplex model has utilized majority-culture American and European samples, and the relevance of the model and its theoretical assumptions to other cultures remain unclear (Kouneski, 2002). A review of the limited cross-cultural research available suggests that the circumplex model implicitly assumes that the Western values of autonomy and freedom are universally beneficial for families; however, other cultures may accept, or even promote, extreme family togetherness (enmeshment) or role rigidity

(Kouneski, 2002; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1982). For example, research has indicated that families in Asian cultures tend to emphasize interdependence, harmony, and mutual obligations, and that this more enmeshed and rigid style is normative within this context (Lee & Mock, 2006). The current study extended this work and explored the relevance of the circumplex model to family functioning among Orthodox Jewish families in Israel. Establishing the organization of problem and non-problem families within this unique religious culture has implications for assessment, treatment, and research within this population. The study may also inform the broader literature regarding cultural variability of adaptive family structures.

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism is a broad categorization encompassing a variety of religious groups that share unconditional acceptance of the Torah's (Jewish Bible) divine origination and its Talmudic interpretation (Huppert, Siev, & Kushner, 2007). This includes strict adherence to detailed religious laws (e.g., dietary restrictions, prayers, holiday rituals, and prescriptions for family life) that infuse everyday life with religious meaning and consequence (Huppert et al., 2007). Followers of Orthodox Judaism espouse a meaning system premised on belief in God, acceptance of divine commandments, and expectation of messianic redemption (Krieger, 2010; Maimonides, 1990). Orthodox Jews generally form sheltered communities organized around this religious ideology and limit contact with the outside world (Huppert et al., 2007). Estimates suggest that approximately one-half to one million Orthodox Jews live in Israel with approximately 65% under the age of 20 (Friedman et al., 2011). Sizeable Orthodox communities also exist in the United States, Canada, Europe, and South America (Gonen, 2001).

This religious ideology also shapes family life in Israel and in other Orthodox communities. In more traditional sub-groups (e.g., Yeshiva Orthodox and Hasidic), men and women are strictly segregated at all ages. Marriages are therefore generally fully or partially arranged through a community matchmaker system, between young men and women in their late teens and early twenties (Grodner & Sweifach, 2004). In less traditional sub-groups (e.g., National Religious and Modern Orthodox) gender segregation is less strict, and dating and marriage occurs in a manner similar Western cultures. Most Orthodox couples begin having children immediately and families tend to be large, due to religious and cultural factors such as the religious commandment to procreate and the desire to replenish the Jewish population following the devastation of the Holocaust (Loewenthal & Goldblatt, 1993). Many Orthodox Jews, particularly from the most traditional subgroups, view male employment as a distraction from religious obligation, and many adult men primarily, or even exclusively, engage in religious study (Gonen, 2001; Shai, 2006). The role of women generally revolves around rearing children and maintaining the family (Cwik, 1995; Kaufman, 1985). These families are supported through a variety of means including family support, community institutions, governmental financial aid, and employment or small business activity of Orthodox women.

Attitudes towards the family generally focus on its pivotal role in the raising of children and transmission of religious values (Brownstien, 2009). Marriage does not focus on romance, but rather on raising a family, although couples generally share intimacy and love (Goshen-Gottstein, 1987; Schnall, Pelcovitz, & Fox, 2013). Parents, particularly fathers, are religiously obligated to provide religious education for their children (Krieger, 2010; Maimonides, 12th Century/1990), and they are held accountable for maintaining religious-cultural norms and boundaries within families (Agudath Israel of America, 2006). Consequently, families are hierarchically ordered and children are expected to honor and obey their parents, and by extension God (Exodus 20:12; Wieselberg, 1992). Empirical evidence supports this relationship between parenting and religious development,and suggests that parent-child relational factors are indeed important to the transmission of religious values within this community (Herzbrun, 1993; Ringel, 2008).

The family is a key organizing structure within the Orthodox Jewish community (Wieselberg, 1992). For example, greeting strangers often involves exchanging family lineage in an attempt to establish shared social assumptions and religious values. Similarly, decisions

Table 1
Demographic, Religious, and Family Characteristics

Age *(M*, *SD*)	42.17 (6.40)
Income (Median in New Israeli Shekel)	73,000 NIS (~$20,000)
Gender	
Males	797
Females	795
Country of Birthday	
Israel	1300 (82%)
W. Europe, U.S., Australia, S. Africa	132 (8%)
Asia/Africa	84 (5%)
Latin America	32 (2%)
Eastern Europe	36 (2%)
Other	8 (1%)
Education	
Non-high school graduate	450 (28%)
High school graduate	444 (28%)
Vocational certificate	331 (21%)
College or graduate degree	297 (19%)
Other	70 (4%)
Occupation	
Professional/Management	444 (28%)
Technical	48 (3%)
Merchant	24 (2%)
Construction	33 (2%)
Religious Profession	558 (35%)
Homemaker	370 (23%)
Self-employed	106 (7%)
Other	9 (1%)
Nuclear Family size (*M*, *SD*)	4.60 (1.62)
Years Married (*M*, *SD*)	19.19 (5.82)
Family Composition	
Two biological parents	778 (98%)
Other composition	18 (2%)
Religious Affiliation	
Hasidic	70 (4.4%)
Yeshiva Orthodox	786 (49.7%)
Modern Orthodox	301 (19%)
Breslov	69 (4.4%)
Chabad	8 (.5%)
National Religious	24 (1.5%)
Traditional	11 (.7%)
Other	314 (19.8%)

concerning community membership, school admission, marriage proposals, and even economic partnerships heavily weigh family visibility and reputation (Rosen, Greenberg, Schmeidler, & Shefler, 2007). In fact, families are often viewed as a single unit with shared characteristics. For example, previous research suggests that stigmatization of an individual with mental illness often extends to the entire family and may isolate family members from social, marital, and economic opportunities (Pirutinsky, Rosen, Shapiro, & Rosmarin, 2010).

Given these unique religious-cultural characteristics, it was hypothesized that Olson's circumplex model of family functioning would not adequately describe family functioning within the Orthodox community, and may wrongly pathologize high-functioning families. Specifically, high cohesion within the family, rather than representing maladaptive enmeshment, may be the mechanism providing children with an adaptive secure base (Bowlby, 1982) from which they may safely explore and function within the wider community. Similarly, low flexibility (rigidity) may be the religious-cultural norm viewed as key to appropriate religious socialization and protection of religion-culture boundaries, and therefore represents functional attitudes and behaviors. Thus we predicted that unlike within Western samples, among Orthodox Jewish families, high cohesion (enmeshment) and low flexibility (rigidity) would be unrelated to lower satisfaction, poorer communication, insecure attachment, and increased parenting stress.

The individuation process of adolescence is particularly stressful on families (McLean, Breen, &

Fournier, 2010; Schnall et al., 2013) and often includes religious conflicts (Good & Willoughby, 2008), since adolescents may question religious beliefs and challenge religious boundaries (Agudath Israel of America, 2006; Glodmintz, 2003; Schnall, Pelcovitz, & Fox, 2013). Thus, the current study focused on assessing functioning among Orthodox Jewish families with adolescent children.

Method

Participants

Participants (N = 1,632) were Orthodox Jewish parents of adolescent children residing in the central area of Israel (e.g., Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Kiryat Sefer, Betar). Demographic, religious, and family characteristics of each group are provided in Table 1. Of note, the sample included a range of religious subgroups, a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and similar numbers of males and females. As typical within this community, marriages were longstanding, family sizes were large, and the vast majority included two biological parents. Income, secular educational attainment, and occupation also matched expectations.

Procedure

To obtain a reasonably representative sample of this insular population, the study was conducted with the aid of Orthodox Jewish community organizations and religious institutions in Israel. Their leadership approved the study and aided recruitment by providing complete membership lists. A sample of 2,800 individuals was randomly selected from these lists, and selected individuals were then contacted by phone and invited to participate in a study of Orthodox family functioning. Of these, 886 (32%) could not be reached, declined, or were ineligible (did not care for at least one adolescent child), while 1,914 (73%) agreed to participate. These individuals were subsequently visited at home by research assistants, who randomly targeted one parent and asked him or her to complete the questionnaires. This procedure was stratified so that number of men and women in the study remained balanced. Respondents were instructed to complete the questionnaire alone, and researchers returned a few days later to collect them. In total, 1,632 (58% of the original 2,800 individuals selected) completed and returned the questionnaire. After returning the questionnaire, participants were given a choice of food vouchers or cash (75 shekels, or approximately 20 U.S. Dollars) for completing the survey.

Measures

All survey items and scales were translated to Hebrew by two bilingual psychologists using the widely supported back-translation technique (Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin, & Ferraz, 2000).

Family functioning. Family functioning was examined using the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES-IV; Olson, 2011), which contains 42 items scored on a 5-point likert scale (strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1), such as "It is hard to know who the leader is in our family," and "Family members feel pressured to spend most free time together." This scale has previously demonstrated reliability and concurrent and discriminant validity (Olson, 2011; Olson, Gorall, & Tiesel, 2007). This measure was specifically developed to assess family functioning within the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (Olson, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979). The FACES-IV includes six scales, two that measure balanced (or adaptive) levels of functioning and four that measure unbalanced (or maladaptive) levels across both the cohesion and flexibility dimensions. Higher scores on the balanced scales (cohesion and flexibility) indicate higher levels of adaptive functioning in these domains. Higher scores on the unbalanced scales (disengaged, enmeshed, rigid, and chaotic) indicate higher levels of these forms of maladaptive functioning.

Family communication. Family communication was examined using a 10-item measure developed by Olson, Gorall, and Tiesel (2007). Sample items included "Family members can calmly discuss problems with each other" and "Family members express affection to each other" and are scored on a 5-point likert scale (strongly agree = 5 and strongly disagree = 1). Items are summed to form a single score, with higher scores indicating more effective communication. It has previously demonstrated adequate reliability and validity (Olson, Gorall, & Tiesel, 2007), and internal reliability in the current

sample was adequate (α= .89).

Family satisfaction. A 10-item scale developed and validated by Olson, Gorall, and Tiesel (2007) was used to measure family satisfaction. Respondents were instructed to rate "How satisfied" they are on a 5-point likert scale (very dissatisfied =1 and very satisfied = 5). Sample items include "Your family's ability to cope with stress" and "The fairness of criticism in your family." Items are summed to form a single score and higher scores indicate more satisfaction. Internal reliability in the current sample was adequate (α = .87).

Parenting stress. Parenting stress was measured using the Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents (Sheras, Abidin, & Konold, 1998). This 112-item measure is scored on a 5-point scale (strongly agree = 1 and strongly disagree = 5) and has previously demonstrated both reliability and validity (Shera et al., 1998). Domains included the following: child behavior (e.g., "My child has sudden changes of feelings or moods"), parenting related quality of life (e.g., "I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my child's needs than I ever expected"), and parent-child relational concerns (e.g., "I cannot get my child to listen to me"). The current research study used the total stress index, which is constructed by summing responses across all domains. This overall measure of parenting stress showed adequate internal reliability in the current sample (α = .95).

Attachment. Participants' general pattern of attachment to others was assessed with the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (Brennan, Shaver, & Clark, 1998), which has demonstrated validity and reliability in Israeli samples (Mikulincer & Florian, 2000). Participants rated the extent to which each item was descriptive of their feelings and behaviors in close relationships on a 7-point scale (not at all = 1 and very much =7). Eighteen items measured attachment anxiety (e.g., "I worry about being abandoned") and 18 items measured attachment avoidance (e.g., "I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down"). These were separately summed yielding two continuous measures of attachment insecurity, with higher scores indicating higher anxiety or avoidance. Cronbach's alphas in the current sample were acceptable for both anxiety (.86) and avoidance (.74).

Marital religious conflict. Marital religious discord was measured by a single item that asked, "How often do you and your spouse experience conflicts regarding differences in your religious observances[1]." This item was scored on a five-point scale (never = 1 and very often = 5). This assessment was included to provide a measure of concurrent validity of measures of family functioning, since marital religious conflict is a significant correlate of family dysfunction within the Orthodox Jewish community.

Statistical Analysis

A three-step procedure was used to assess the validity and relevance of the circumplex model. First, a structural equation model of the circumplex model as measured by the FACES-IV was evaluated using the SEM package in R Statistical Computing (Fox, 2006). Fit, loadings, reliabilities, and inter-correlations were assessed. Second, FACES-IV subscales were correlated with concurrent measures and results were compared to theoretical expectations. Finally, an exploratory factor analysis (principal component analysis with direct oblimin rotation) was conducted to establish the factor structure best supported by our data. Assessments of reliability and validity were performed for each observed factor and the resulting model was qualitatively compared to the circumplex model.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the FACES-IV subscales and comparisons to the normative American sample are provided in Table 2. T-tests comparing these means indicated that the study sample reported significantly higher balanced cohesion and flexibility than the American sample, yet they also reported significantly higher unbalanced disengagement, enmeshment, and rigidity. Chaos did not differ between these groups. These results are inconsistent with the circumplex model, which posits that higher scores on unbalanced scales (e.g., enmeshment) should relate with lower scores on balanced scales (e.g., cohesion). This suggests that the FACES-IV and the underlying

[1] Translated from the Hebrew.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between Family Functioning and Validity Scales

	Cohesion	Flexibility	Disengagement	Enmeshment	Rigidity	Chaos
Family Functioning						
Flexibility	.60	-				
Disengagement	-.38	-.11	-			
Enmeshment	**-.08**	**.09**	.39	-		
Rigidity	.14	.25	.23	.47	-	
Chaos	-.56	-.38	.58	.30	**.01**	-
Concurrent Measures						
Martial Conflict	-.23	-.16	.29	.17	**.09**	.33
Family Satisfaction	.61	.53	-.31	**.02**	**.08**	-.46
Family Communication	.66	.56	-.34	**.00**	.12	-.49
Parenting Stress	-.54	-.36	.45	.22	**.09**	.56
Attachment Avoidant	-.24	-.16	.16	.14	**.04**	.14
Attachment Anxiety	-.21	-.10	.31	.29	.25	.33
Sample Mean (SD)	27.86 (4.47)	24.42 (3.90)	15.16 (4.32)	16.41 (4.71)	19.69 (3.98)	16.47 (4.58)
Normative Mean (SD)	26.98 (5.99)	20.54 (5.39)	13.23 (5.67)	10.78 (4.02)	16.43 (5.52)	13.14 (5.37)
T-test	3.38	16.91	7.77	23.36	13.97	**1.29**
α	.74	.54	.65	.68	.52	.74

Note: All non-bold values $p < .05$. Bold values $p > .05$

circumplex model may not accurately measure and describe family functioning among Orthodox Jewish families.

Structural Equation Modeling

To directly assess the fit of the circumplex model, we conducted a Structural Equation Modeling analysis of the measurement and conceptual model. This analysis yielded fit statistics suggesting that the established model of family functioning poorly fit the Orthodox families in our sample ($\chi 2$ = 8021.8, $p <$ 0.0001; RMSEA = 0.08; GFI = .77, CFI = 0.57; NNFI = 0.54). Factor loadings (M = .46, SD = .16, Range: .11–.70) were low and inconsistent (Figure 2; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998) and reliabilities were low-medium (Table 2). The rigidity scale was particularly problematic, as several items correlated negatively with the underlying factor (Figure 2).

Correlational Analysis

To further assess the validity of the circumplex model among Orthodox Jews in Israel, we conducted a series of correlational analyses. Specifically, the circumplex model implies that families with high scores on the unbalanced scales (e.g., enmeshment and rigidity) should report lower scores on the balanced scales (cohesion and flexibility). Consistent with our hypotheses, in our Orthodox sample enmeshment (high cohesion) was unrelated to scores on the balanced cohesion scale, and rigidity (low flexibility) correlated with greater balanced flexibility (Table 2).

We also assessed correlations between FACES-IV subscales and theoretically related measures of family functioning. Contrary to the theoretical model proposed by Olson (2011), results indicated that enmeshment did not significantly correlate with family communication and satisfaction. In addition, rigidity did not significantly correlate with satisfaction

Table 3
Correlations Between Revised Family Functioning Scales and Validity Scales

	Cohesive–Flexibility	Disengagement	Enmeshment	Chaos
Family Functioning				
Disengagement	-.17	-		
Enmeshment	-.22	.54	-	
Chaos	-.42	.31	.46	-
Concurrent Measures				
Martial Conflict	-.28	.24	.29	.16
Satisfaction	.66	-.21	-.33	-.16
Communication	.71	-.21	-.35	-.18
Parenting Stress	-.56	.37	.51	.27
Attachment Avoidant	-.22	.13	.15	.12
Attachment Anxiety	-.23	.29	.39	.16
n of items	11	3	5	8
M (SD) of loadings	.63 (.03)	.55 (.09)	.56 (.03)	.65 (.02)
α	.82	.61	.68	.78

Note: All correlations $p < .001$.

but correlated with higher communication. Both only weakly correlated with concurrent validity measures such as marital religious conflict, parenting stress, and attachment insecurity (Table 2). Taken together, results suggest that enmeshment and rigidity, as measured by the FACES-IV, are unrelated to maladaptive family functioning within the Orthodox Jewish community in Israel. Furthermore, the broader circumplex model appeared to inadequately describe family functioning in our sample. Exploratory factor analysis was therefore necessary to clarify the factor structure of family functioning within Orthodox families.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Data appeared appropriate for an exploratory factor analysis (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .90, Bartlett's test of sphericity: ÷2 (780) = 15889, $p < .0001$). Examination of the scree plot and a parallel analysis (O'Connor, 2000) suggested that a six factor solution accounting for 42.92% of the variance fit the data optimally. Rotated factor loadings (direct) for this solution indicated that three items failed to load significantly on any factor and six cross-loaded on multiple factors. Two factors contained only three items, were difficult to interpret, and had low reliability ($\alpha < .30$).

The remaining four factors were interpretable and accounted for 35.96% of variance. Examination of loadings suggested that family functioning in the Orthodox community can be most parsimoniously characterized by: Cohesive-flexibility, Enmeshment, Chaos, and Disengagement. Factor loadings were moderate-high and consistent, and reliabilities were adequate, particularly considering the low number of items on the disengagement scale (Table 3; Hair et al., 1998).

Consistent with theoretical expectations, correlations between these four factors indicated that higher levels of maladaptive functioning (enmeshment, chaos, and disengagement) were correlated with lower levels of adaptive cohesive-flexibility (Table 3). In regards to concurrent measures, cohesive-flexibility positively correlated with greater family satisfaction and family communication, and it

negatively correlated with marital religious conflict, parenting stress, and attachment insecurity. In contrast, the maladaptive factors (i.e., enmeshment, chaos, and disengagement) negatively correlated with family satisfaction and communication. These maladaptive factors positively correlated with marital conflict, parenting stress, and attachment insecurity (Table 3).

Comparison between the items and scales retained in this 4 factor solution and the items and scales in the original 6 factor circumplex model suggested four significant differences. First, cohesion and flexibility appear to represent a single factor rather than separate dimensions. Second, rigidity appeared largely irrelevant to family functioning. Third, enmeshment included only items explicitly referring to inappropriate involvement (e.g., "Family members are too dependent on each other"), while excluding value-neutral item relating to high levels of family cohesion (e.g., "Family members have little need for friends outside the family" and "Family members feel guilty if they want to spend time away from the family"). Finally, disengagement included items relating to independence from the family (e.g., "Family members mainly operate independently") and not items referring to lack of emotional closeness (e.g., "Family members seem to avoid contact with each other when at home"), which cross-loaded on other factors such as chaos and cohesive-flexibility.

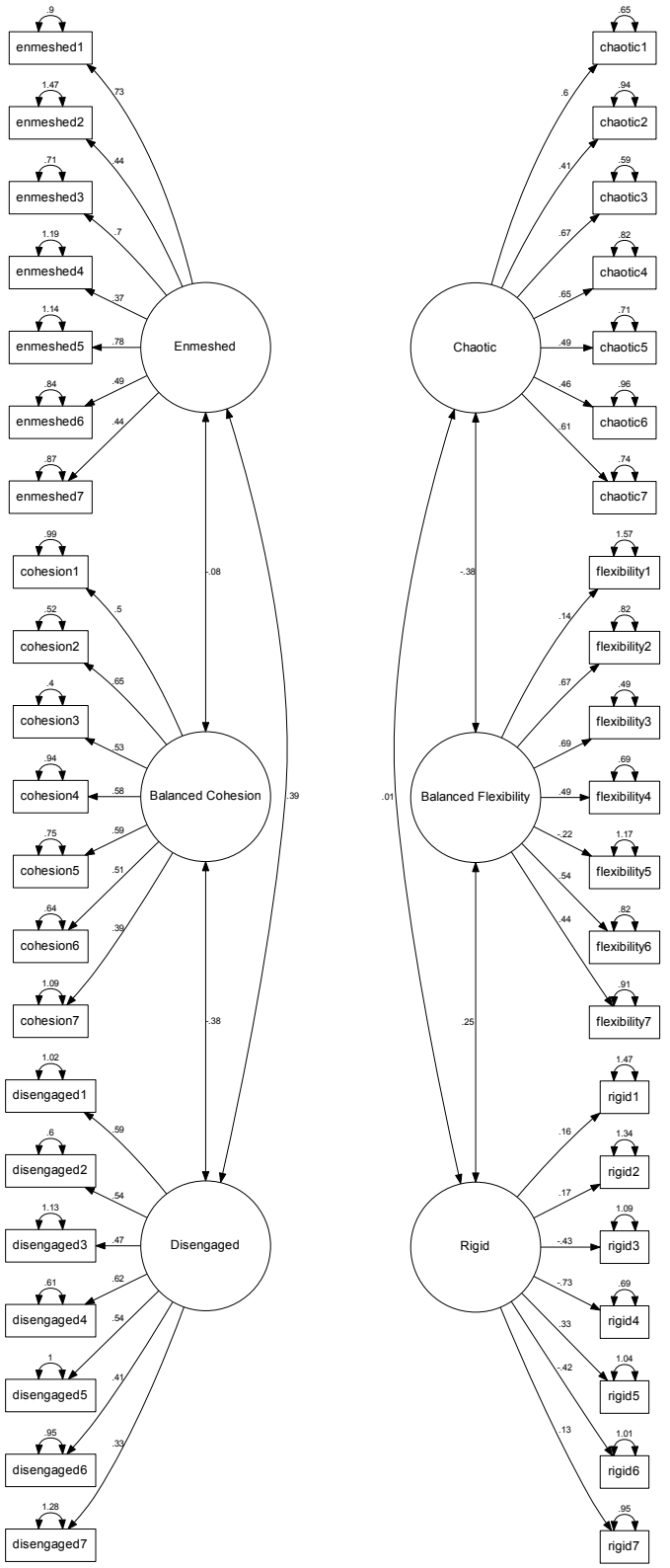
Discussion

Researchers, theorists, and therapists often conceptualize family functioning as comprised of two underlying dimensions: cohesion/warmth and flexibility/control (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1997; Baumrind, 1995; Kouneski, 2002). The circumplex model of family functioning is an exemplar of these models and suggests that balanced levels of both cohesion and flexibility are most adaptive (Olson, 2011). Extreme cohesion, called enmeshment, is theorized to indicate overdependence and lack of individuation from the family; and extreme control/flexibility, called rigidity, is understood to indicate an inflexible environment that is unresponsive to changing demands. While this model has significant support in majority-culture Western samples, its cross-cultural relevance has been largely unexplored (Kouneski, 2002). The current research therefore explored the validity and relevance of this model to Israeli Orthodox Jewish families with adolescent children. Given the centrality of the family as an organizing unit and instrument of religious socialization within this culture, it was hypothesized that enmeshment and rigidity would not be problematic but instead represent culturally adaptive family functioning.

As hypothesized, SEM results indicated that the circumplex model, as measured by the FACES-IV, did not adequately describe family functioning within our sample, as overall model fit statistics were low. Several factors had inconsistent loadings and low reliability, and subscales failed to correlate in theoretically consistent ways. Specifically, unbalanced enmeshment did not correlate with balanced cohesion, and rigidity positively correlated with balanced flexibility. Both unbalanced enmeshment and rigidity failed to correlate significantly or was positively correlated with concurrently administered family satisfaction and communication scales. Measures of marital religious conflict, parenting stress, and attachment insecurity also failed to correlate significantly or only weakly correlated with enmeshment and rigidity. This suggests that as hypothesized, extremes of cohesion and flexibility may not be maladaptive for Orthodox Jewish families. However, an exploratory analysis yielded more nuanced results indicating that family functioning within the Orthodox Jewish community can be coherently organized around cohesive-flexibility, enmeshment, chaos, and disengagement factors.

The cohesive-flexibility factor included items measuring both balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility, suggesting that at adaptive levels these constructs may not be differentiated and represent a single factor. It positively correlated with family satisfaction and communication and negatively correlated with marital religious conflict, parenting stress, and attachment insecurity, suggesting that it is measuring an adaptive dimension of family functioning. This convergence between cohesion and flexibility as a single adaptive factor may be specific to our Orthodox Jewish sample. However, previous studies in Western samples report similarly high correlations between FACES-IV balanced cohesion and flexibility (r = .49; Marsac & Alderfer, 2011), including the primary validation study (r = .95, Olson

Figure 2
CFA of the Circumplex Model



et al., 2007), which calls into question the discriminant validity of these two constructs generally.

Research from the attachment perspective suggests that securely attached individuals hold positive views about themselves and others, which enables them to comfortably balance intimacy and independence (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Family functioning characterized by cohesion and warmth may promote attachment security by supporting a secure base from which children can adaptively exploreroles. Consistent with this possibility, cohesive-flexibility negatively correlated with attachment avoidance and anxiety, suggesting that a secure attachment style may underlie both emotional closeness and behavioral flexibility. These possibilities are speculative and further research examining the conceptual and empirical distinction of cohesion and flexibility at normative levels of functioning is necessary.

Although cohesion and flexibility appeared indistinguishable at adaptive levels, maladaptive functioning divided into correlated but differentiable forms (enmeshment, chaos, and disengagement). Contrary to theoretical expectations, however, disengagement (e.g., "family members mainly operate independently") positively correlated with enmeshment (e.g., "family members are too dependent on each other"), despite being conceptually opposed. This is similar to previous findings in Western samples (r = .48, Marsac & Alderfer, 2011; r = .34, Olson et al., 2007) and appears to suggest that while enmeshment and disengagement are distinct, they do not preclude each other and tend to coexist. This parallels findings in the attachment literature (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), which suggest that both the avoidance of close relationships and anxious seeking of them relate to an underlying insecurity and can coexist. Correspondingly, parental attachment avoidance and anxiety correlated with familial enmeshment,

chaos, and disengagement. These results suggest that a more dynamic model of family functioning that conceptualizes balanced versus unbalanced functioning as maladaptive products of a single process (i.e., attachment insecurity) may be more accurate.

In regards to specific hypotheses, although enmeshment as construed in the general community (e.g., "Family members have little need for friends outside the family" and "Family members feel guilty if they want to spend time away from the family") appeared adaptive and normative among Orthodox Jews, there was a degree of emotional dependence that appeared maladaptive. Items explicitly referring to inappropriate closeness (e.g., "too much time together" and "too connected to each other") loaded on an enmeshment factor. This suggests that while as hypothesized cohesion at high levels may be adaptive within the Orthodox family, problematic and culturally inappropriate extremes of cohesion exist.

In contrast, rigidity did not appear to be relevant to Orthodox families, as items either failed to load or cross-loaded on other scales. This may indicate that a high degree of control is normative and adaptive among Orthodox Jews, who value the familial transmission of strict religious beliefs and behaviors (Pirutinsky et al., 2010). On the other hand, this lack of differentiation may be the result of the content of FACES-IV rigidity items. That is, extreme rigidity may be maladaptive within this culture, but items such as "it is important to follow the rules in our family" and "our family is highly organized" may not represent this extreme and therefore failed to measure this construct. Research exploring if there is a degree of rigidity that would be problematic within this culture and what might be appropriate indicators of this dynamic is necessary.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, exclusive reliance on the FACES-IV may have biased the results. Moreover, although the back-translation method used in this study is widely employed and supported (Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin, & Ferraz, 2000), it is possible that some idioms and phrases did not carry the same implications in Hebrew as in English. Future research should include additional measures including child-report and non self-report indicators of family functioning. Second, the impact of religiosity and spirituality on family functioning is likely multi-faceted and was not directly explored in this study. Future studies could more explicitly examine proximal religious attitudes and beliefs such as authoritarianism, family values, and intrinsic versus extrinsic religiosity.

Third, while the study sample was large and reasonably representative, it consisted exclusively of Orthodox Jews living in Israel. However, Orthodox Judaism is a broad categorization within which exist numerous subgroups defined by dress, language, culture, and religious emphasis. One key distinction is between the more religiously traditional and culturally isolated Ultra-Orthodox and the more moderate Modern Orthodox (Loewenthal and Rodgers, 2004), and both these groups were included in the current research. Given that the impact of religion can vary across religious subgroups (Pirutinsky, 2009), there may be important differences between religious subgroups that are not addressed by the current research. Moreover, generalizability of these findings to other communities including sizeable Orthodox Jewish communities in the United States, Canada, and Europe is limited. Moreover, given that Israel is majority non-Orthodox Jewish, it is likely that the structure of Israeli Orthodox families differs from the structure of Orthodox families in other countries where Jews are a small minority. In addition, the changing ethnic and religious demographics of these communities make broad and static conclusions about groups complex and perhaps temporally limited.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the circumplex model as measured by the FACES-IV has garnered significant support (Kouneski, 2002), the universality of this conceptualization can be questioned, as the model fits Orthodox Jewish families poorly. In addition, some discrepant findings, such as the high correlation between balanced cohesion and flexibility and the positive correlation between enmeshment and disengagement, parallel results in other samples and challenge assumptions inherent in the circumplex model of family functioning.

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