

categories are added, multiplied and divided as if they were numbers [1].

Another corruption of Hall's (1963) notation system took the form of insouciant modifications of the labels of the nine spatial configurations distinguished. This meant that the same type of spatial arrangements were frequently given different code-numbers by different investigators. For instance, a configuration in which people face a joint space between them, and are standing at right angles to one another, in other words an L-shaped configuration, would be referred to sometimes as arrangement number 2, sometimes as numbers 3, 6 or 9. This naturally created considerable confusion in the whole field of investigations of spatial arrangements, and comparisons between the findings of various researchers were made difficult if not impossible (see Diagram I).

Finally, the notation system in use was suited to the description of 2-person encounters only, ignoring the existence of larger formations. While this strategy was, to some extent, justified - James (1951, 1953) Bakeman and Beck (1974) and others suggest that approximately 60-70 percent of all social encounters take place in two-person groups - a taxonomy suitable at least for dealing with three-person F-formations (which represent approximately a further 20% of all interactions) would be an advantage.

In this paper we shall attempt to develop an "improved" notation system which will avoid the shortcomings just mentioned and which can be applied to an analysis of a variety of arrangements including those characteristic of F-formation configurations (Kendon 1976). This notation system should, in addition, render it possible to make instant identification of a configuration coded by a given symbol whilst at the same time being simple enough for use in both hand-writing and typing.

All these considerations suggest the desirability of a code which would assign certain letters of the alphabet to the discerned types of configurations and employ symbols whose graphic appearance would correspond to the basic shape of interpersonal arrangements. For example, arrangements in which the bodies of the participants were parallel and vis-a-vis one another could be described by the letters "H" or "N", since the vertical strokes serve to illustrate the positioning of the people's body planes. Similarly, people standing or sitting in such a way that their body planes are intersecting at an acute angle can be coded with letters such as "V", "K" or "Y", whose graphic form suggests such an intersection.

An attempt to construct such a code system is

[1] For example one finds it earnestly claimed that Arabs' mean score on the interpersonal orientation variable is 2.57 as against 3.25 among Asians (Watson 1970:78). From the methodological point of view, this is, unfortunately, an absurd way of treating the original data.

provided in Diagram II. In this diagram there are 26 two-person configurations arranged in three basic groups. In the upper (+) row all those arrangements in which individuals are facing one another are represented. The second (0) row provides a list of arrangements in which people have directed their frontal body surfaces in approximately the same direction and are therefore not facing each other. The third row groups all these cases (marked with a minus sign) where people are oriented in opposite directions, are thus, again, not facing each other. Furthermore, each column, group arrangements in which the angle formed by the bodies of the participants and their lateral displacement is of approximately similar magnitude. For that reason all arrangements in the same column are given the same code-letter. For instance, all three arrangements in the fifth column are marked as being of the "C"-type ("C", "C-zero" and "C-minus") [2].

How adequate is this taxonomy of spatial arrangements? Is the whole exercise a purely geometrical game or is it a useful tool for coding patterns of spatial behavior? A closer look at Table 1, one which compares the use of spatial arrangements in three different cultures suggests that the new notation-system is not merely an abstract catalogue of spatial patterns. There one sees that some of the spatial-orientational relationships which were originally deduced on purely logical grounds (e.g. arrangements T-minus, C-zero, H-zero, V-zero) do in fact correspond to arrangements used by people in their everyday social exchanges. From Table 1 it can be seen, for example, that 2 percent of all arrangements adopted by White, urban Australians, 18 percent of those used by Enga people of Papua, New Guinea and 30 percent of those used by the Murngin of Northern Territory, Australia belong to a class of configurations which was not contained in Hall's (1963) taxonomy. Therefore the alphabetic code appears to be not only handier than earlier notations in that it indicates something about the shapes of describing arrangements, but also has the added advantage of covering a greater range of spatial configurations (see again Diagram I).

Furthermore, the alphabetic code can be applied to the description of three-person spatial clusters as well (See Diagram III and Table 2). Since the angles between the bodies of adjacent individuals are expressed as letters of an appropriate shape (and the spatial orientations relative to each other are marked by plus, minus and zero signs) every theoretically possible spatial arrangement of three individuals can be positively identified and described

[2] In the case of sociopetal arrangements the plus sign can be omitted for the sake of simplicity of notation.