The purpose of this study was to examine the development, stability, and change of attraction relations in a natural group situation by:

1. testing certain predictions based on Newcomb's theory of communicative acts; and
2. investigating the factor of the length of time over which the group interacts as this variable relates to the dynamics of intra-group attraction relations; and
3. demonstrating the possibility of tracing the consequences of certain theoretical assumptions about cognitive patterning in individuals for certain structural relations within a group.

The study was conducted as part of the Michigan Group Study Project. A house was established as the research site which served as living quarters for two successive groups of seventeen undergraduate students. Subjects were selected such that no group members knew each other prior to coming together to live in the house. In each group, measures of the liking of each member for every other member were obtained each week for sixteen weeks.

A set of interrelated predictions was made on the basis of certain properties of two-person systems, as postulated by Newcomb's theory.

1. Stability of attraction choices is lower at early stages of acquaintance than at later stages.
2. Popular group members have more stable attraction choices than unpopular persons.

3. Popular members have higher average agreement with other members about their relative preference for other members than have unpopular persons.

4. Intra-pair attraction is positively related to intra-pair agreement, and this relationship increases over time.

5. The total group can be divided into subgroups on the basis of total agreement, and these subgroups are characterized by a high degree of inter-member attraction.

Analyses of the data resulted in a large measure of support for the predictions, in most cases at less than the .05 level of confidence. The factor of length of time over which the group members interacted was found to be significantly related to most of the relationships examined. The basic finding—the increasing relationship of the attraction between any two group members and the extent to which they agree about their liking for other group members—was interpreted as giving support to a fundamental postulate of Newcomb's theory of communicative acts.