DEFINITION OF THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

Since the 1960s, we have witnessed a burgeoning of child-custody disputes in family courts. These disputes have greatly affected the social context of child-rearing and the medical-referral context of child psychiatry. In the first decade of this century, the courts assumed a new role, one side to take just the opposite position from the other, if one is to prevail in that forum. A parent accused of inducing a PAS in a child is likely to engage the services of a lawyer who may invoke the argument that there is no reason to believe that PAS exists.

There are some, especially adversaries in child-custody disputes, who claim that there is no such entity as the PAS, that it is only a theory, or that it is “Gardner’s theory.” Some claim that I invented the PAS, with the implication that unless it is acknowledged and named, it cannot exist. This is a misunderstanding of the concept of “programming” or “brainwashing.”

There are others who say that PAS is a fabrication, that it never occurred in the United States, that there is no evidence for its existence, or that it is a new and untested concept. These are all arguments about the existence of PAS, not about its reality or its existence.

One explanation lies in the situation in which the PAS emerges and in which the diagnosis is made: vicious child-custody litigation. Once an issue is brought before a court of law—in the context of adversarial proceedings—it behooves the parents to present a case that is in their interest and that the court will favor.

But why this controversy in the first place? With regard to whether PAS exists, we generally do not see such controversy regarding most other clinical entities in psychiatry. Examiners may have different opinions regarding the diagnosis of another clinical entity, but once it is made, there is little controversy about whether it exists.

The parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is a disorder that arises primarily in the context of child-custody disputes. Its primary manifestation is the child’s campaign of denigration against a parent—a campaign that has no justification. It results from the combination of a programming brainwashing parent’s contributions and the child’s own contributions to the situation of the targeted parent. What the parental abuse and/or neglect to present the child’s vulnerability may be, and the parental alienation syndrome explanation for the child’s behavior is not applicable.

THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME IS ... THE SAME AS PROGRAMMING BRAINWASHING

In this book, in addition to the main report, I will attempt to help the legal and mental health professionals understand the meaning of the PAS, in which programming, or brainwashing, plays a central role. I will try to do this using the standard diagnostic medical textbooks. The PAS is not a theory, it is a fact. My ideas about its etiology and psychodynamics might very well be called theory. The crucial question then is whether my theory regarding the etiology and psychodynamics of the PAS is reasonable, and whether my ideas fit in with the facts. This is something for the readers of this book to decide.
"THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME IS NOT A SYNDROME"

There are some who think that PAS is not really a syndrome. How curious, how naïve, how unobservant can courts of law be in the context of child-custody disputes. It is an argot sometimes promulgated by those who think that the PAS is a construct that is popular among mental health professionals, but is not a concept that is widely understood by others. It seems to be a way for some parents to seek to keep their children from living with the other parent. As such, it is a way for some parents to seek to keep their children from living with the other parent.

One should remember that not all of the symptoms that are currently associated with the PAS are present. This is especially true if one compares them to the criteria for other syndromes. In some cases, the symptoms that are not present may be more likely to be present in other cases. For example, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS. However, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS.

In recent years, some examiners have been using the term PAS to refer to a false sex-abuse accusation in the context of a child-custody dispute. In some cases the terms are used synonymously. This is a significant misperception of the PAS. In recent years, some examiners have been using the term PAS to refer to a false sex-abuse accusation in the context of a child-custody dispute. In some cases the terms are used synonymously. This is a significant misperception of the PAS.

The PAS is a relatively new phenomenon, and in its early stages many of the symptoms associated with it have been misdiagnosed. This is especially true if one compares them to the criteria for other syndromes. In some cases, the symptoms that are not present may be more likely to be present in other cases. For example, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS. However, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS.

In the majority of cases in which a PAS is present, the sex-abuse accusation is not promulgated. In some cases, however, especially after other exclusionary maneuvers have failed, the sex-abuse accusation will emerge. The sex-abuse accusation is, at this time, often a spin-off, or derivative, of the PAS but is certainly not synonymous with it. Furthermore, there are divorce situations in which the sex-abuse accusation may arise without a preexisting PAS.

The sex-abuse accusation is more likely to be false than true. Claiming that a sex-abuse accusation may be false also has potentially been politically risky in recent years and not "politically correct." Those of us who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims.

The fact that an accused woman is more often designated to promote the PAS and the male is more often designated to promote the PAS does not seem to dispel the myth. My experience has been that when a sex-abuse accusation emerges in the context of a PAS—especially after the failure of a series of exclusionary maneuvers—the accusation is far more likely to be false than true. Claiming that a sex-abuse accusation may be false also has potentially been politically risky in recent years and not "politically correct." Those of us who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims, both those who have stood up and made such claims.

The fact that most other professionals involved in the evaluation of the PAS have been male, and that nearly all of the symptoms that are currently associated with the PAS are present. This is especially true if one compares them to the criteria for other syndromes. In some cases, the symptoms that are not present may be more likely to be present in other cases. For example, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS. However, the symptom of mental retardation is not present in all cases of the PAS.

The sex-abuse accusation then, is often a spin-off, or derivative, of the PAS but is certainly not synonymous with it. Furthermore, there are divorce situations in which the sex-abuse accusation may arise without a preexisting PAS. In the majority of cases in which a PAS is present, the sex-abuse accusation is not promulgated. In some cases, however, especially after other exclusionary maneuvers have failed, the sex-abuse accusation will emerge. The sex-abuse accusation is, at this time, often a spin-off, or derivative, of the PAS but is certainly not synonymous with it. Furthermore, there are divorce situations in which the sex-abuse accusation may arise without a preexisting PAS.

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The fact that a sex-abuse accusation is a possible spin-off or derivative of the PAS. My experience has been that the sex-abuse accusation does not appear in the vast majority of PAS cases. There are some, however, who equate the PAS with a sex-abuse accusation, then, is often a spin-off, or derivative, of the PAS but is certainly not synonymous with it. Furthermore, there are divorce situations in which the sex-abuse accusation may arise without a preexisting PAS. In the majority of cases in which a PAS is present, the sex-abuse accusation is not promulgated. In some cases, however, especially after other exclusionary maneuvers have failed, the sex-abuse accusation will emerge. The sex-abuse accusation is, at this time, often a spin-off, or derivative, of the PAS but is certainly not synonymous with it. Furthermore, there are divorce situations in which the sex-abuse accusation may arise without a preexisting PAS.
THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME AND "PARENTAL ALIENATION"

There are some who use the term parental alienation instead of parental alienation syndrome. Generally, there are individuals who use the term in the sense that it may be defined to include virtually everyone who does not exhibit the various behaviors associated with it. There are others who have used the term parental alienation syndrome even though it is not clear what they mean by it. We will use the term parental alienation syndrome in the traditional sense in order to make it clear what is meant. It is this particular combination of behaviors that warrants the designation parental alienation syndrome. Changing the name of an entity because of political and other unreasonable considerations generally does more harm than good.

There are some who use the term parental alienation instead of parental alienation syndrome. Generally, these are individuals who know of the existence of the parental alienation syndrome but want to avoid using it because it may be considered in some circles to be politically incorrect. But they are necessarily describing the same clinical entity. There are others who use the term parental alienation syndrome even though it is not clear what they mean by it. We will use the term parental alienation syndrome in the traditional sense in order to make it clear what is meant. It is this particular combination of behaviors that warrants the designation parental alienation syndrome. Changing the name of an entity because of political and other unreasonable considerations generally does more harm than good.

In addition, the following articles are devoted completely to the PAS. I am not referring here to occasional reference, or even emphasis, but rather such focus that the term is utilized in the title.


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• Guidelines for Child Custody Evaluations in Divorce Proceeding (1994). ... ... ... ... ... American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Divorced and Custody nonresidential Parenting, 152-160.
• Mapes, B. E. (1995), ... ... ... ... ... ... Brandon, Vermont: Clinical Psychology Publishing Co., Inc.
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The Family Law Section of the American Bar Association invites and clients to write children from divorce: dealing with programmed and brainwashed children? The following book of mine is referenced: (1 item)


The State Bar of Texas, Family Law Section, published in 1999 its *Expert Witness Manual*. The section: *Psychological Syndromes* includes a chapter entitled *Psychological Syndromes: Parental Alienation Syndrome* (Chapter 3-32). Accordingly, the Texas Bar recognizes PAS as a syndrome. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for mental health and legal professionals who work in courts of law.


The European Court of Human Rights has jurisdiction over the courts of all member nations and its decisions are binding. The court is analogous in this regard to the International Court of Justice in The Hague and the US Supreme Court. On July 13, 2000, in the case of *Elsholz v. Germany*, the court ruled that the German lower courts, (both trial and appellate) had erred in not recognizing the PAS, thereby depriving the plaintiff father of the right to see his children. The court stated:

35. The results of American research concerning the PAS had been available since 1984 and 1992. They very soon led to a large number of specialised publications and were taken into account by American and Canadian courts in their case-law. If Germany had been prepared to adopt the results of the research carried out in the United States, where far larger research budgets were available, and to act upon them, the court could, at the time, have reached a different decision, because the judge who questioned the child could have interpreted differently the child's remarks rejecting his father. At the very least, however, the court should have appointed a competent expert familiar with the specific psycho-dynamics of family relations.

• *Elsholz v. Germany*. European Court of Human Rights, July 13, 2000