Neither extreme position in the reincarnated discipline controversy offers parents an efficacious model of childrearing today, any more than it did 30 years ago when the authoritative model was developed as a viable alternative to both the conservative (authoritarian) model and the liberal (permissive) model. Each polarized model contains its germ of truth, but each demonizes the other. It is argued here that within a responsive and supportive parent-child relationship, prudent use of punishment is a necessary tool in the disciplinary encounter.

In the course of 1995-1996, I was asked to speak at several conferences dealing with issues of socialization and discipline and, in particular, the place of physical punishment in the socialization process; this article attempts an integration of my position on the issues that were raised at these conferences. The controversy is first set in historical context, followed by a consideration of what constitutes optimal child outcomes. Developmental and cultural factors are considered that must be taken into account for rational debate to occur concerning desirable child outcomes and consequent childrearing objectives. Socialization is construed as an aspect, but not the whole, of childrearing and is distinguished from disciplinary encounters, which, albeit prevalent in family life, are merely one among many socialization strategies. The major dimensions of childrearing are grouped under the two prime factors of responsiveness and demandingness, followed by an overview of different patterns of parental authority with an emphasis on the authoritative model, which is then contrasted with a contemporary Nordic model. The argument presented leads to the general conclusion that it is not the specific disciplinary practice but how it is administered and in what cultural context that determine its efficacy and long-term effects.

**Historical Context**

Sometimes framed as a liberal versus conservative dichotomy, the current reincarnation of this false polarity centers on the proper role of aversive discipline, particularly spanking, in the socialization of children. Within this polarity, current anti-spanking rhetoric (e.g., Hyman, 1990; Straus, 1994) is countered by Christian fundamentalist defense of strict and sometimes punitive parental authority (e.g., Dobson, 1992; Hyles, 1972). The contemporary discipline controversy has resurrected this false polarization between a hierarchical paternalistic authoritarian model that places obedience as the cornerstone in the foundation of character (Hyles, 1972) and a child-centered rights position that demands for children the same civil rights as are possessed by adults (Cohen, 1980).

The authoritative model I posited some 30 years ago (Baumrind, 1966) rejects both extremes of the authoritarian-permissive (or conservative-liberal) polarity, representing instead an integration of opposing unbalanced childrearing positions. At one extreme, child-centered permissiveness high on responsiveness and low on demandingness is justified by a children’s rights position; at the opposite extreme, restrictive parent-centered authoritarianism is justified by fundamentalist religious convictions. Within the authoritative model, behavioral compliance and psychological autonomy are viewed as mutually exclusive but rather as interdependent objectives: children are encouraged to respond habitually in prosocial ways and to reason autonomously about moral problems, and to respect adult authorities and learn how to think independently. Neither arbitrary enforcement of restrictive directives (as in authoritarian relationships) nor avoidance of extrinsic motivators and externally imposed rules and structure (as in permissive relationships) characterize authoritarian parent-child relationships.

The focus of the longitudinal program of research (Family Socialization and Developmental Competence Project [FSP]) I direct and of this article is on the relation between parental authority and normal children’s development. The participants studied, first seen in the late 1960s, were well-educated, middle-class residents of the San Francisco East Bay area. Childrearing dimensions and patterns of parental authority were related to outcomes at three stages of the child’s life: preschool, juvenile, and early adolescence. Externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors of children and parents were also rated, enabling children and their parents to be grouped into dysfunctional as well as functional types. Although parents’ specific disciplinary practices were assessed, analyses to date have focused on the effects of global childrearing dimen-

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tions such as firm control, maturity demands, and responsiveness, and on patterns of childcare. Because of the current interest (manifested by a spate of conferences sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the American Academy of Pediatrics and by books by Hyman, 1990 and Straus, 1994) in precisely how parents discipline their children, in particular how mild disciplinary spanking influences children's development, the transcripts are now being recoded to obtain that information.

When I began my longitudinal study of family socialization effects, the field was dominated by child-centered advocates of permissiveness who, based on psychoanalytic premises, portrayed the child as psychologically fragile and made chronically anxious by parental restrictions and demands (Frank, 1940, p. 346).

Arguing that youngsters have the same right as adults to be self-determining and free of constraint or externally imposed discipline, children's rights advocates of the 1970s (Farson, 1974; Holt, 1974; Neill, 1964) claimed that "we must change our orientation from protecting children to protecting their rights" (Farson, 1974, p. 165). This neo-Rousseauian children's rights position arose in direct opposition to the Hobbesian view (Hobbes, 1651/1946) — which had been prevalent throughout previous centuries of childhood (Aries, 1962) and is represented by the extreme religious right today (e.g., Hyles, 1972) — that, by taming the child's will, paternal authority when strictly applied upholds a higher order defined by religious mandate and cultural tradition.

Until the twentieth century, few questioned the justification for parental authority. Despite his romantic view of the child, Rousseau argued for despotic rule in the family on the basis that parental rule "looks more to the advantage of him who obeys than to that of him who commands" (Rousseau, 1754/1952a, p. 357). The reciprocal relationship between the rights and obligations of parent and child constitutes the basis of Rousseau's social contract, which he defined as follows:

The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family: and even so the children remain attached to the father only as long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved. The children, released from the obedience they owed to the father, and the father, released from the care he owed his children, return equally to independence. (1767/1952b, p. 387)

In a similar vein more than 50 years later, Hegel (1821/1952) wrote:

The right of the parents over the wishes of their children is determined by the object in view — discipline and education. The punishment of children does not aim at justice as such; the aim is more subjective and moral in character, that is, to deter them from exercising a freedom still in the toils of nature and to lift the universal into their consciousness and will. (p. 61)

Hegel chided elders who, by romanticizing the immature child, "corrupt and distort his genuine and proper need for something better, and create in him, a contempt of his elders because they have posed before him, a child, in a contemptible and childish fashion" (p. 61).

Similarly, the rule-utilitarian John Stuart Mill (1859/1973) restricted the ideal of self-determination to individuals capable of assuming adult responsibilities, arguing that, although the adult generation is not perfectly wise and good with regard to the interests of the next generation, it is wiser and better in its judgments of what would benefit them than that generation is itself. What constitutes efficacious childrearing depends upon how one construes what child outcomes are optimal.

### OPTIMAL CHILD OUTCOMES: DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER AND COMPETENCE

It may be said that the two intertwined generic positive childrearing goals are to foster moral character and optimal competence. Character is what it takes to will the good, and competence is what it takes to do good well.

Character refers to the aspect of personality that engenders accountibility, is responsible for persistence in the face of obstacles, and inhibits impulses in the service of some more remote or other-oriented goal. Character consists of positive and cultivated habits of social responsibility, moral commitment, and self-discipline that provide the internal structure of conscience, regulating inner thoughts and volitions. Within limits imposed by their competencies, circumstances, and cultures, moral agents are able to plan their actions and implement their plans; examine and choose among options; eschew certain actions in favor of others; and structure their lives by adopting congenial habits, attitudes, and rules of conduct. Neither wicked nor good, children are born both with moral sentiments and destructive impulses.

Children's character is formed by increasingly complex interactions with socializing adults — primarily parents — who during the early years have the power to control these interactions as well as the way their children are likely to interpret their experiences. Parents influence children's development by such processes as hands on helping by parents in the presence of the child; family solidarity in which habits of hospitality, compassion, and generosity are extended to the larger community; direct training in role-taking; guided participation in community projects; use of induction and reasoning; and observation of loved adults who manifest consistency between their beliefs, self-perceptions, and actions, and who model moral compassion and courage (Colby & Damon, 1992; Oliner & Oliner, 1988).

Competence may be broadly defined as effective human functioning in attainment of personally desired and culturally valued goals. Competence is not the mere absence of pathology. The psychoanalyst Lawrence Frank lamented . . . the pathetic picture of individuals who in their early childhood have been unnecessarily deprived, frustrated, and coerced and so have built up a private world which is forever insecure and threatened; hence, they must react with resentment and hostility to every experience. (1940, p. 346)

Parental demands, said Frank, create a "constant tension which is crystallized into a persistent anxiety about [the child's] own competence and functional adequacy" (p. 346). But we now recognize that few children are as easily traumatized as psychoanalysts imagine; most thrive on challenges and are motivated by a drive for competence.

By optimal competence, I mean an integrated balance within the person of highly developed agentic and communal qualities. The social dimensions of communion (solidarity, affiliation) and agency (dominance, power) emerge as the two orthogonal axes from almost all factor analyses of human behavior at any age (e.g., Baumrind & Black, 1967; Leary, 1957; Lonner, 1980; Wiggins, 1979). Communion refers to the need to be of service and to be included and connectcd, whereas agency refers to the drive for independence, individuality, and self-aggrandizement (Bakan, 1966). Unmitigated by the other, an imbalance of either agency or communion is maladaptive. Thus, agency unmitigated by communion marks the egoist who may ap-
pear competent in the short run but whose lack of concern for others eventually results in reciprocated harm. Similarly, communion unmitigated by agency is self-abnegating and masochistic at best and at worst characterizes cult followers who are willing to be self-destructive or to harm outsiders in support of their in-group’s ideological causes.

Communion

Facets of behavior that load highly on the communion factor in my data include item clusters measuring friendly versus hostile behavior towards peers (referring to empathic, kind, helpful behavior with peers), cooperative versus noncompliant behavior with adults (referring to obedient, trustworthy interactions with adults, which, as the child matures, are transformed into self-regulated, facilitative participation in adult-initiated activities), and achievement-oriented versus nonachievement-oriented behavior (referring to willingness to persevere when frustration is encountered in meeting the expectations of self, parents, and teachers for cognitive performance). In the young child, the cluster “achievement oriented” loaded most highly on the communion factor, but by adolescence it loaded more highly on the agency factor, because the motivation for performance became increasingly intrinsic.

Friendly behavior towards peers is a linear index of competence, but both noncompliance and excessive compliance with adults can be problematic. Thus, failure to achieve about 70% compliance when the mother is present has been found by Patterson (in press) to be a risk factor for frequent and harsh punishment by the parent of the noncompliant child and for later antisocial behavior. Preschoolers’ excessive noncompliance with adults’ directives presages later school difficulties and externalizing problem behavior (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992); in clinical samples, child compliance is as low as 30%. However, automatic or total compliance is not the mark of a securely attached 2 year old (Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978). Excessive or rigid compliance is often present in infants of abusive parents (Crittenden & DiLalla, 1988) and has been found to be associated with internalizing problem behavior in 5-year-old boys (Kuczynski & Kochanska, 1990). Mature noncompliance strategies develop with age as children learn how to negotiate or bargain with parents, as well as how to simply refuse a request without direct defiance. Although behavior problems accompany unskilled or excessive noncompliance, skillful noncompliance, which develops with age, is less aversive to parents and indexes age-appropriate autonomy.

Clausen (1993) developed a construct that he called planful competence, operationally defined by three factors: self-confidence, dependability, and intellectual investment. Correlated with both agency and communion in Clausen’s analyses of the intergenerational data at Berkeley, planful competence in adolescence was a strong predictor, especially for males, of occupational and family success in early adulthood. Plans are future events represented in the present by goals that motivate and guide action (Rogoff, Gauvain, & Gardner, 1987). By being represented cognitively in the present, future events are converted into regulators of behavior and current motivators, with reactive control accomplished by subsequent adjustment of effort or goals. Caregivers play an important role in helping children develop planning skills and prosocial habits by fostering cognitive and social growth in the zone of proximal development (the interval between actual developmental level and level of potential development under adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers; Vygotsky, 1978). The adult demonstrates, persuades, assists, and sanctions beliefs and motives with the intent of encouraging the child, through external guidance, to develop socially responsible thoughts and actions. In order to successfully guide the child, the adult must understand the developmental level of the child.

Agency

Issues of personal agency and autonomy are especially important during critical periods of self-definition; first in the preschool years, when the child learns to say “no” and mean it, and again during early adolescence, when young people differentiate themselves from their parents. In the Family Socialization Project (Baumrind, 1971, 1991; Baumrind & Black, 1967), facets of behavior (measured by coherent clusters of items) that load highly on the agency factor include purposing, goal-directed behavior (referring to confident self-propelled, goal-oriented behavior), dominant versus submissive behavior (referring to initiative and leadership proclivities), and domineering versus tractable behavior (referring to bold, aggressive, dominating behavior). Associated with risk-taking behaviors in adolescence, domineering behavior at that developmental stage represents a problematic facet of agency.

A major focus of contemporary social-cognitive theory concerns the exercise of personal agency through self-efficacy beliefs, which, along with sustained effort, provide a stable basis for authentic self-esteem. An internal locus of control for events (Rotter, 1966; Weiner, 1979) and perception of oneself as an agent rather than a pawn (DeCharms, 1968) are aspects of perceived self-efficacy. People’s self-efficacy beliefs influence their level of motivation and, thus, the amount and duration of effort they will expend when faced with obstacles without succumbing to depressive ruminations about their self-worth (Bandura, 1988, 1989). “Amotivational syndrome” (Deci, 1980) results from the combined effects of perceived self-inefficacy and perceived environmental unre sponsiveness. Although a pessimistic explanatory style has been linked to depression, physical illness, and failure (Petersen, Maier, & Seligman, 1993), unwarranted optimism based on misleading feedback results in overestimating one’s performance relative to one’s effort and to other peoples’ performance and, thus, in failure to work hard enough.

The self-assertive aspects of human nature (aggression and self-love) are often assumed to be evil. Violence is explosive, physical force intended to injure or abuse. Aggression, however, need not be violent. In fact, aggression defined as self-assertive forcefulness and self-love is adaptive, but requires, however, correct socialization in childhood. Controlled aggression in defense of self or others is a socially useful proclivity; offensive, violent aggression is not (Pulkkinen, 1987). Justified self-esteem grounded in competence is an index of healthy self-assertion; inflated conceit, on the other hand, is not and invites hostile aggression (see Baumeister, Boden, & Smart, 1996, for a discussion of the “dark side” of high self-esteem). Juvenile antisocial conduct disorder—with its features of defiance, deceitfulness, lack of remorse, impulsivity, and offensive aggression—is a precursor of adult criminality; by contrast developmentally normative oppositional behavior in 2 year olds and adolescents is not (see Hinshaw & Anderson, 1996).

Developmental Considerations

During the preschool years, adult constraint—expressed as consistent contingent reinforcement and regularity—helps promote the child’s sense of security and her belief that the world can be a safe, predictable place. The imposition of authority, even against the child’s will is stage appropriate during the first 6 years, the period that Dubin and Dubin (1965) refer to as the “authority incep tion period.” During this period, children have what Piaget terms a “heteronomous” belief in rules, with a unilat-
eral respect for adults extending to an uncritical acceptance of the legitimacy of adult rules. The probability that children will repeat either prosocial or antisocial acts is determined to a large extent by the reinforcing responses of their socializing agents, who protect them from more serious extrafamilial negative consequences. Parental authority is legitimated in the young child’s mind by the charisma associated with the person and the role of the parent.

Moral personality evolves by successive forms of reciprocity in which the capacity for treating the other as someone similar to, rather than alien from, oneself develops (Kohlberg, 1971). The earliest form of reciprocity occurs within the family and is that of reciprocity between the child’s obedience to adult authority and the caregiver’s unconditional commitment to the child’s welfare. In first stage reciprocity, which Piaget (1932/1965) terms “moral realism,” adult-made laws are reified as though they were absolute laws. Second-stage reciprocity consists of the literal exchange of reinforcers, with the rightness of the act, however, separated somewhat from its reinforcing consequences. Because the preschooler’s social-conventional reasoning is limited, toddler compliance is most effective when the adult briefly explains the rule, and provides a consequence if the child persists in disobeying, reserving longer explanations for when punishment is over (Blum, Williams, Friman, & Christophersen, 1995).

By the time children have reached the stage of concrete operations (and third-stage reciprocity), they are well aware that others have perspectives that differ from their own, and actively solicit approval from adults as well as peers. The school-age child recognizes that stable social relationships, including those within the family, are based upon reciprocal maintenance of expectations by social partners as well as upon appropriate feelings of gratitude or malevolence so that assignment of some household responsibilities is well-accepted. The prepubescent or early adolescent child has a developed notion of social order in which approval and respect are earned by work and in which keeping one’s word is understood to be mandated by the social contract. If firm parental control has been exercised in childhood, far fewer rules will be required in adolescence, and family power can be distributed more symmetrically (Baumrind, 1983, 1987, 1991; Baumrind & Moselle, 1985). If firm habits of good behavior have been established in early childhood, parents can relax control during adolescence (Kandel & Lesser, 1969; Perry & Perry, 1983). As youths develop formal operations, they become better able to adopt a considered view of existential obligations to oneself that embraces an understanding of one’s obligations to others, or what is called “reciprocal altruism” (see Erasmus, 1977); by acts of compassionate regard and respect for the rights of others, one invites reciprocal acts of good will in time of need.

The importance of using reason to justify caregivers’ directives increases with age. By junior high school, children are more likely to identify with parents who use reason to justify their decisions and demands (Elder, 1963) and to view physical punishment as illegitimate, except in some dangerous urban settings where it may be perceived by both parent and adolescent as an expression of concern. With increasing maturity, children distinguish between personal issues (such as what clothes to wear) and moral or conventional issues. Adolescents tend to regard parental directives pertaining to moral issues as legitimate; conventional or prudential issues are somewhat less legitimate; and personal issues, such as dress, are not legitimate domains in which parents may assert their authority (Nucci, 1981; Smetana, 1988).

### SOCIALIZATION DIMENSION AND PATTERNS

Socialization is an adult-initiated process by which young persons through education, training, and imitation acquire their culture and the habits and values congruent with adaptation to that culture. Children’s perspectives shape their understanding of parents’ socialization efforts, but their perspectives are strongly influenced by their parents’ perspectives, which are grounded in cultural contexts and instantiated in adult behavior. The disciplinary encounter is but one socialization strategy, and the goals of socialization are themselves limited and culturally determined. The short-range objective of the exercise of parental authority is to maintain order in the family, subordinated, however, to parents’ generic objective, which is to further children’s development from an dependent infant into a self-determining, socially responsible young person. For parents who want their children to take initiative, negotiate differences, and oppose injustice, behavioral compliance is a necessary but by no means sufficient long-range childrearing objective.

Self-regulated impulse control and planning skills occur as transformation of the rules learned in social interaction, at first in the family. Parents encourage internalization of their prosocial values by offering children clear, consistent rules of conduct legitimated by moral principles of fairness, compassion, and respect for persons. A caregiver’s social-moral perspective may be transferred to a child through the process called scaffolding in which the adult leads the child to a pattern of behavior desired by both, but often for different reasons consistent with their different developmental levels (Damon & Colby, 1987; Pratt, Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1988).

Attribution theory distinguishes between specific behavioral compliance (adapting one’s actions to conform with the directives of another) and internalization (incorporating values that guide subsequent behavior). An additional distinction should be made between internalization of a specific attitude or norm and internalization of the norm of compliance (i.e., dispositional compliance). A person who internalizes the general norm of compliance to authority may be said to be dispositionally compliant. Indeed, moral internalization is defined as the process by which children come to espouse and conform to society’s rules, even when they are free of external surveillance or the expectation of external inducements. Socialization researchers have implicitly assumed that internalization of society’s rules, represented by parental values, is the prime objective of childrearing. However, many parents do not make that assumption: Internalization by one generation of the rules of the preceding generation represents the conservative force in society, whereas the impetus for social transformation comes about by the challenges each generation presents to the accepted values, rules, and habits of the previous generation.

### The Disciplinary Encounter

Confictual interactions between young children and their parents occur from 3 to 15 times an hour and even more often when children are defiant or disabled (Lee & Bates, 1985). Hoffman (1975) reports that when the child is 2 years old, about 65% of parent-child interactions focus on prohibitions; a figure found in several studies of normal children (e.g., Minton, Kagan, & Levine, 1971) where parents were observed to interrupt their children an average of every 6 to 8 minutes so as to induce them to change their behavior. Because it is rare for a disciplinary encounter to extinguish a child’s motivated behavior once and for all, periodic reinforcement and explanations are necessary; a disciplinary effort should not be deemed a
failure just because the child repeats a punished offense at a later time.

Although it may be, as Wilson (1993) contends, that children are born with the moral sentiments of fairness, duty, sympathy, and self-control, they are also born egocentric, requiring cultivation of their moral sentiments by socializing agents. The child is socialized most effectively by caregivers who have a clear sense of purpose; enforce their directives; and convey their messages simply, firmly, and consistently. Through the disciplinary encounter, caregivers attempt to induce children to behave in accord with parental standards of proper conduct and to become aware that they have an obligation to comply with legitimate authority and respect the rights of others.

Despite the current uncritical acceptance of the notion that extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation, a recent meta-analysis (Cameron & Pierce, 1994) concluded that, under most natural conditions, extrinsic reinforcement is necessary for young children to perform optimally and does not undermine intrinsic motivation. Young children typically require external incentives to put forth the effort required to test their limits. Nisan (1992), among others, has found that students perform far better when traditional learning incentives, including grades, social approval, and admonitions, are used in the classroom than when these external inducements are absent. It is likely that external inducements, such as fear of getting caught and punished, motivate adults as well as children to conform with onerous rules and with strongly motivated proscribed behavior. External incentives that result in proficiency provide an authentic and reliable basis for a sense of self-efficacy, which, in turn, promotes the development of internal standards and intrinsic interest in sustained effort. When certain forms of behavior produce an aversive outcome, children are motivated to initiate the self-controlling mechanisms that will enable them to avoid the negative outcome. Such self-regulating mechanisms result in reliable internalized habits of prosocial conduct that then become strengthened, not diminished, as a result of external incentives. Provided that parents are also responsive and intellectually stimulating, firm parental control and high maturity demands promote rather than undermine self-efficacy and intrinsically motivated engagement in difficult tasks.

Children’s emerging sense of regularity and justice is fostered by a well-structured regimen and clear and consistent rules of conduct that are fairly administered. In order to achieve an acceptable level of behavioral compliance, primary caregivers must supply the predictable reinforcing reactions that children require from their social environment, contingently supporting the prosocial behavior they desire, overlooking minor transgressions in a generally compliant child, and punishing transgressions in a spirited defiant child. Above all, parents must be involved and engaged so that they can both monitor effectively the child’s behavior and level of distress and provide the necessary love and support children need to behave prosocially.

Because children’s wishes often conflict with those of their caregivers, the notion that children can or should be raised without using aversive discipline (e.g., McCord, 1991) is utopian. In families with normally assertive toddlers, scarcity of material resources and time invites frequent aversive disciplinary confrontations. Properly handled, such encounters can teach children the skills of negotiation as well as compliance. However, to the extent that resources permit, proactive caregiving such as childproofing; quality time-in; an abundance of positive attention and active listening; clear, direct instructions; and progressive expectations for self-help can minimize the number of intrusions on their autonomy that frustrate toddlers. A moderate, rather than either a severe or a minimal, level of distress facilitates child compliance with parental demands (Larzelere & Merenda, 1994).

Arbitrary reliance on aversive discipline, rather than its judicious use, is the critical factor resulting in harm to children or failure to obtain their compliance. Thus, Power and Chapisewski (1986) found in a study of healthy infants that impulse control and Bayley scores at 21 months were lower for mothers who had relied primarily on physical punishment but that neither outcome variable differentiated mothers who used physical punishment occasionally from mothers who never used physical punishment. Willingness to spank their preschoolers did not discriminate effective from ineffective parents or competent from dysfunctional children in the FSP; almost all parents, including the most effective, spanked their preschool children, although generally less than once a week; by age 9, only one third of the parents spanked their children as often as once a month; and by adolescence physical punishment was rare. In view of the complexity of the childrearing process, parents need access to a wide range of nonabusive, effective disciplinary responses that fit their child’s unique attributes and the family’s shared values and cultural contexts.

Cultural Considerations

Socialization practices that are normative for a culture are generally well-accepted by children. Differences between groups in childrearing goals and socialization practices reflect culturally specific adaptive solutions to problems posed by the demand characteristics of particular environments (Baumrind, 1972; Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991; Ogbu, 1981). Chao (1994) has shown that the concept of training in the Chinese culture has important features beyond the hierarchical authoritarian model of which it is a part that contribute to, rather than detract from, the school success of Chinese children. The Chinese ideal of training includes high achievement and conformity demands in a context of intrusive control and devoted sacrifice on the part of the mother, who remains supportive and physically close to the child. In that kind of childcare context, the child typically identifies with his or her parents’ values. Thus, a childrearing pattern that would be categorized as authoritarian and deemed undesirable from an emic (outsider’s) Western perspective, when viewed from an etic (insider’s) cultural perspective, has special features that explain its positive association with high achievement in Chinese children.

Parental practices that would be deemed overly restrictive in a benign middle-class environment may provide optimum supervision and support in dangerous, impoverished neighborhoods (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Baumrind, 1972; Kohn, 1977). Successful members of subordinated minorities are often required to develop bicultural competencies, that is, knowledge of the beliefs and values of both their own and the dominant culture, as well as the ability to vary one’s behavior (including relational and coping skills and motivations) and to communicate effectively according to the demands of the social context. However, the values of the dominant and subaltern cultures may clash. The early shift from adult to peer orientation—which is seen as necessary by many poor Black inner-city parents—encourages a linguistic pattern, identification, and socialization process often perceived as antithetical to the middle-class school environment, despite its richness, complexity, and coherence within their own neighborhoods (Ogbu, 1981; Young, 1974).

Because both middle-class and working-class African Americans are more likely than European Americans to use physical punishment without reservation, it is sometimes assumed that they are also more tolerant of harsh dis-
cipline and child maltreatment. However, there is evidence to the contrary. A large-scale study of a demographically representative sample of adults, using 78 vignettes representing a wide variety of situations with potential for child maltreatment, found that African Americans and Hispanics noted more situations as having a potential for child maltreatment than did European Americans (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Members of both minority cultures did not rate "punish by spanking with hand" as having a high potential for maltreatment, although spanking was not a preferred method of punishment for any group. In another study (Heffer & Kelley, 1987), two thirds of both middle-class and lower-class African American mothers accepted spanking as a disciplinary technique in comparison to only one fourth of middle class European American mothers. Lower class African American mothers rated time-out very low as a disciplinary method.

Deater-Decke, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (in press) report that, for their African American sample, parents' use of physical punishment was associated positively with warmth and use of reason, which may explain why the correlation between spanking and children's externalizing behavior was negative (although not significant), rather than positive, as in their European American sample. As Jackson (in press) documents, by third grade, greater externalizing problem behavior in African American boys has its roots in factors extrinsic to the home, including persistent poverty, exposure to lead poisoning, and the disproportionate use of social isolation and severe negative feedback as punishments in school (e.g., Alexander & Entwisle, 1988).

**CHILDREARING DIMENSIONS**

Factor analyses of parents' behavior typically yield two orthogonal second-order factors: responsiveness and demandingness (see Maccoby & Martin, 1983, for a review). Although related to somewhat different child outcomes, facets of both factors typically emerge in cross-cultural studies (Whiting & Whiting, 1975).

**Responsiveness**

The seminal meaning of responsiveness comes from ethological theory and pertains to the meshing or mutual shaping of infant and caregiver behavior to achieve synchrony (Bowlby, 1969; Hinde, 1974). Responsiveness refers to the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquisitive to children's needs and demands. Emotional neglect and the absence of parental responsiveness have been found to be even more important than restrictive, coercive discipline in the etiology of externalizing behaviors (Greenberg, Speltz, & DeKlyen, 1993; Simons, Johnson, & Conger, 1994). Thus, in a recent panel study, once the contribution of parental involvement had been removed, harsh corporal punishment showed no detrimental impact on adolescent aggressiveness, delinquency, and dysphoria (Simons et al., 1994). Important facets of responsiveness include warmth, reciprocity, clear communication and person-centered discourse, and attachment.

**Warmth.** Warmth refers to the parent's emotional expression of love. Affectionate warmth and empathy in parents motivate children to participate in cooperative strategies and are associated with the development in children of an internalized moral orientation (Eisenberg, 1992; Hoffman, 1975). Although a warm and loving parent may also be a firm disciplinarian, persistent child misbehavior eliciting persistent parental disapproval is likely to reflect a past history of parent-child mismatch and lack of parent-child reciprocity. Thus, a predominance of negative affect in parents is associated with defiance and hostile aggression in children (Grusse & Lyttone, 1988; Olauson, 1980). In both attention-deficit hyperactive and comparison boys, negative maternal behavior consisting of discouragement, nonacceptance, and disapproval has been found to predict externalizing child behavior in school, play, and laboratory settings (Anderson, Hinshaw, & Simmel, 1994). Angry parents may be primed to criticize or punish children at times when they most need support. However, insincere or overly affective may prevent parents from disciplining children when limits are called for. Although warmth and empathy are assumed to be positive emotions under all circumstances, their role in promoting prosocial behavior and compliance is understudied (see Dix, 1991, for a presentation of the affective organization of parenting).

**Reciprocity.** The notion of reciprocity encompasses processes of synchrony or attunement in parent-infant interactions (Martin, 1981; Tronick, Ricks, & Cohn, 1982). After achieving object permanence, the infant will anticipate how its caregiver is likely to respond to its behavior and use its repertoire of responses to induce its caregiver(s) to adjust his or her plans to take its needs into account. But the infant can have only as much influence as its caregiver permits. Parpal and Maccoby (1985) observed that a child whose mother willingly complied with his or her wishes was more likely to reciprocate with good-natured compliance with maternal demands.

**Clear communication and person-centered discourse.** Position-centered parental communication legitimizes parental authority on the basis of assigned roles and, as such, is often experienced by the child as coercive, whereas elaborated and person-centered parental communication legitimizes parental authority by persuasion and, therefore, tends to be better accepted by the child. Person-centered communication has been shown to be a more effective form of parent-child social interaction than position-centered communication (Applegate, Burke, Burleson, Delia, & Kline, 1985). Person-centered reciprocal interactions between parents and children produce transformations in thought and action for both. Friendly discourse about feelings (a manifestation of social scaffolding) has been shown to have a positive influence on children's later prosocial behavior (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979) and their ability to recognize emotions (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991). Parents who provide explanations influence children, especially adolescents, to internalize their values more effectively than parents who rely primarily on power-assertive methods or withdrawal of love (Hoffman, 1970, 1983).

The use of a reason in a disciplinary confrontation broadens the context in which compliance is expected by generalizing from a specific act to a rule governing a larger class of behavior. However, several studies have shown that inductive reasoning accompanied by the exercise of explicit control induces internalization of the norm underlying the directive more than the use of inductive reasoning alone (e.g., Baumrind & Black, 1967; Lytton & Zwiner, 1975; Walters & Grusse, 1977). The use of a reason accompanied by a display of power conveys to the child that to satisfy the parent, adherence to a rule of appropriate conduct is required, even in her absence. With young children, a display of power captures their attention and clarifies in their minds that compliance is required, whereas the use of a reason without a display of power signals to the child that the parent is indecisive about requiring compliance. By being paired with punishment, reasoning becomes a discriminative stimulus that noncompli-
ance will be punished. Once this connection has been established, reasoning alone may suffice to obtain compliance.

**Attachment.** In Western societies, securely attached infants generally have a reciprocally affectionate relationship with their caregivers, whereas avoidant infants, in an effort to minimize their caregivers’ intrusive expressions of concern, do not seek close proximity. However, the claim that a singular attachment to the mother is necessary for secure attachment (monotropism) is not supported by some cross-cultural evidence (Tromnick, Morelli, & Winn, 1987) or by the experience of African American families where attachment to multiple caregivers is common (Jackson, 1995). Indeed, if secure attachment requires the full attention of one caregiver, few children are likely to be securely attached in the future, because by the time the child is 2 years of age, both parents now routinely return to work.

**Demandingness**

Demandingness, the second major factor that emerges from factor analytic studies of childrearing, includes direct confrontations; monitoring; and consistent, contingent discipline. Demandingness refers to the claims that parents make on children to become integrated into the family and community by their maturity expectations, supervision, disciplinary efforts, and willingness to confront a disruptive child. Demanding parents supervise and monitor their children’s activities by directly confronting rather than subtly manipulating them and, thus, may engage in open conflict with their children at points of disagreement.

**Confrontation.** Confronting parents are involved and firm but not necessarily coercive, although they may be. A confronting parent takes a stand even when to do so provokes conflict. Lepper (1981, 1983) and Grusec (1983) assert that confrontational social control techniques deter internalization of prosocial attitudes, whereas covert influence techniques do not. The implication for socialization of Lepper’s “insufficient justification” paradigm is that when parents use “functionally superfluous” rather than “minimally sufficient” pressure to induce compliance, children are less likely to internalize norms congruent with their act of compliance than when parents use methods that minimize children’s perception of external control. Exposed to pressure that is objectively just sufficient to obtain compliance, attribution researchers claim that children will attribute their compliance to internal factors rather than to external influences and, therefore, will be less likely to deviate in the absence of external surveillance. Lewis (1981) and Cord (1991) take the position that extrinsic reinforcement is not necessary to obtain child compliance. Lepper states clearly, however, that for mild inducements to enhance internalization of the underlying norm, they must be sufficient to produce compliance. Perry and Perry (1983) point out that to be minimally sufficient to produce compliance, inducements in the home setting must often be moderately severe. It is not confrontational or the exercise of firm control per se, but rather the arbitrary, harsh, and nonfunctional exercise of firm control that has negative consequences for child behavior. By modeling evasive manipulation and depriving the child of opportunities to engage in open dispute, the goal of simply minimizing confrontations can be maladaptive. Power-assertive confrontational upbringing does not undermine prosocial behavior when parents are (a) supportive (Baumrind, 1971), (b) nonpunitive (Hoffman, 1963), (c) authentic (in that they do not attempt to disguise inconsiderate and demeaning remarks to children as friendly confrontation), and (d) sensitive (in that they take into account the extent to which a particular child can profit from direct confrontation without becoming anxious or overwhelmed; Baumrind, 1983).

When parents consistently issue superfluous commands accompanied by threats and promises, but not by reasons, they are being coercive. Coercive parents focus the child’s attention on the powerful status of the parent rather than on the harmful consequences of the act that the parent wishes to correct. Coercive cycles of the kind Patterson and his colleagues (1992) describe tend to escalate into ineffectual and mutually hostile disciplinary encounters that provoke defiance and undermine internalization (Hoffman, 1960). In well-functioning families, children are rewarded for prosocial responses more than for coercive responses by successful termination of parental behavior they find aversive (Snyder & Patterson, 1995).

**Monitoring.** An organized household, consistent expectations, clear guidelines, defined responsibilities, and close monitoring promote self-regulation and planfullness in children. Patterson (1982, 1986) has demonstrated conclusively that close monitoring deters boys’ antisocial behavior. However, close supervision, and the provision of an orderly, consistent regimen require a greater investment of time and energy than poor parents can sometimes afford. Ineffective monitoring has been found to mediate the relation between poverty status and boys’ misconduct. Thus, in Patterson and Capaldi’s (1991) study, knowing that a family was socially disadvantaged predicted ineffectual monitoring to which information about mothers’ personality added very little. Although emotional and social cognitive variables often predict parents’ disciplinary behavior, introducing these variables as mediators does not improve the prediction of child misconduct once monitoring has been entered in that model (Patterson, in press). Thus, the Oregon model suggests that what children and parents believe and feel about what they do, but it is what each does that regulates the behavior of the other. (It should be noted, however, that the Oregon model has not been used to predict internalizing problem behavior or multiple facets of optimal competence; emotional and social cognitive variables are likely to make an independent causal contribution to these other child outcomes).

**Consistent, contingent discipline.** Parental control is intended to orient the child towards goals selected by the parent; modify expression of immature, dependent, hostile behavior; and promote compliance with parental standards. Physical aggression and oppositional behavior appear to peak around 30 months, with other discipline problems, including oppositional behavior and emotional instability, peaking somewhat later in the preschool years (Larzelere, Amberson, & Martin, 1992).

The crucial factor in behavior management is contingent use of positive or negative reinforcers immediately following desired or prohibited child behavior, respectively. A noncontingent caregiver produces a defiant child who induces the caregiver to punish harshly and who coercively controls other family members by temper tantrums and physical attacks (Snyder & Patterson, 1995). Several studies that analyzed the effects on young children of noncontingent positive regard (e.g., Millar, 1972; Watson, 1971) found these effects to be consistent with those of noncontingent aversive stimulation. Whether noncontingent reinforcement is positive in the form of approval or negative in the form of disapproval, the impact on children’s social development of noncontingent or arbitrary reinforcement is detrimental. Noncontingent approval or disapproval may lead children to conclude that the environment is unresponsive to their behavior, inducing beliefs about causality that deter children from trying harder when confronted with an obstacle to goal achievement.
The focus of the Family Socialization Project is on patterns of parental authority defined by contrasting profiles of responsiveness and demandingness. The authoritative and Nordic models of childrearing differ in some important respects.

**The Authoritative Model**

Authoritative parents are both highly demanding and highly responsive, by contrast with authoritarian parents, who are highly demanding but not responsive; permissive parents, who are responsive but not demanding; and unengaged parents, who are neither demanding nor responsive. At different time periods, additional patterns of parenting emerged from FSP analyses, for example, the harmonious family at Time 1. I focus here on the authoritative model.

The rational-authoritative model rejects the false polarity between a childrearing ideology of indulgence and one of tyranny in favor of one that balances control with warmth and judicious demands with responsiveness. Typically, authoritative parents value behavioral compliance but not dispositional compliance (Baumrind 1966, 1975, 1978, 1980). Authoritative parents remain receptive to the child’s views but take responsibility for firmly guiding the child’s actions, emphasizing reasoning, communication, and rational discussion in interactions that are friendly as well as tutorial and disciplinary. The balanced perspective of authoritative parents is neither exclusively child-centered nor exclusively parent-centered but, instead, seeks to integrate the needs of the child with other family members, treating the rights and responsibilities of children and those of parents as complementary rather than as identical.

The authoritative model of discipline is characterized by use of firm control contingent applied and justified by rational explanation of consistently enforced rules. Authoritative parents endorse the judicious use of aversive consequences, which may include spanking, but in the context of a warm, engaged rational parent-child relationship. The effects of firm control differ when embodied in an authoritarian versus an authoritative pattern of discipline, that is, when parents are unbalanced versus balanced in their demandingness-responsiveness ratio and when their exercise of control is based on their power to compel obedience rather than on their knowledge of the child’s developmental needs.

Authoritative parents view the child as maturing through developmental stages with qualitatively different features, but do not describe this maturational process as an automatic unfolding, emphasizing instead well-timed parental interventions. Because children have their own agendas that include testing the limits of their parents authority, disciplinary encounters are frequent, even in authoritative homes. At such times, direct power assertion that suffices to control the child’s behavior and is preceded by an explanation serves to reinforce parental authority concerning the standards that the child must meet. A distinguishing feature of authoritative parenting is its emphasis on discussion, explanation, and clear communication.

It is conceded by attribution theorists (Lepper, 1981, 1983) that, until about age 7, the additive principle (in which external influences increase rather than detract from internal motivation) predominates. Prior to the age that the discounting principle would lead older children to conclude that they are complying only because they are being forced to do so against their will, the combination of reasoning and enforcement typically used by authoritative parents achieves a high level of behavioral compliance (Perry & Perry, 1983). My distinction between authoritarian and authoritative discipline does not coincide entirely with Lepper’s (1981) distinction between “minimally sufficient” and “functionally superfluous” control, because there are circumstances in which, in order to emphasize the parent’s displeasure or to stimulate a challenging confrontation, authoritative parents will use a magnitude of control or a kind of control (abrasive) that is functionally superfluous.

**A Nordic Model**

In contrast with the authoritative model, Swedish and Norwegian educators have adopted what I view as a neo-Rousseauian romanticization of children as rightfully self-absorbed and self-gratifying. Parents are advised to empathize with their children’s wishes and psychic needs and to constrain and inhibit them as little as possible. Swedish and Norwegian parents have adopted a model that puts a premium on persuasion and forbids spanking or other ‘de-meaning’ disciplinary practices. Their children remain in a play-oriented daycare setting, exposed to no formal learning until they start school at age 7. In return for the abundant emotional and financial support provided by the state, most parents willingly conform to their government’s policy concerning how they should relate to their children.

The ban on corporal punishment in Sweden and Norway is often lauded as a model for American families to emulate, although it has not yet been adequately evaluated, even within its own cultural context. With the *aga* law (banning corporal punishment and verbal abuse) in effect in Sweden since 1979, studies of current disciplinary practices of child outcomes are just beginning to emerge. Palmerus and Scarr (1995) obtained current data on six categories of discipline used in Sweden, as well as the U.S. and Bermuda, with 1- to 6-year-olds: (a) physical punishment of any kind; (b) physical restraint without inflicting pain; (c) reasoning with child-centered explanations; (d) harsh, coercive verbal control including threats, angry interrogations, and withdrawal of affection; (e) low use of authority that includes bribes, distractions, pleading, and other avoidance of confrontation; and, finally, (f) behavior modification techniques including time-out and ignoring. Compared to U.S. parents, Swedish parents report much less use of physical punishment, but they also report somewhat less use of reasoning, much less use of behavior modification, and more use of physical restraint and coercive verbal admonitions. Both U.S. and Swedish parents (compared to Bermudan parents) use a great deal of wheeling, bribing, and pleading, or what Patterson (in press) calls “nattering.”

Following passage of the *aga* law, current Swedish statistics (Statistics Sweden, 1995) document the hoped for decrease in use of corporal punishment. But, contrary to expectations, the same statistics report a fourfold increase in child abuse (from 127 reported cases in 1984 to 583 in 1994) and, more to the point, a nearly six-fold increase in teen violence (from 116 cases in 1984 to 718 cases in 1994). Thus, strong endorsement of the ban against spanking and a non-confrontational and lenient approach to childrearing has not reduced abusive violence by children brought up under the *aga* law. The marked increase in youth-on-youth violence suggests that the ban on corporal punishment in Sweden has not resulted in cultural spillover of the adult culture’s nonviolent values to a segment of the youth. Should we conclude from the reports of marked increase in reported child abuse and youth violence in Sweden from 1979 (when the *aga* law was passed) to 1994 (when these statistics were compiled) that avoidance of power-assertive discipline is a crucial risk factor for increased child abuse and...
mishandled, as well as upon the parents' responding in a prompt, rational, nonexplosive manner and with knowledge and consideration of the child's developmental level and temperament. Clear limits that are firmly enforced during the early years and that occur within the context of a rational-autoritative relationship minimize the need for punishment by mid-adolescence, at which time the rights and responsibilities of parents and children become more symmetrical and less complementary, finally approaching the egalitarian relationship characteristic of adult peers.

REFERENCES


