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PARENTS WHO DON'T SPANK: DEVIATION IN THE LEGITIMATION OF PHYSICAL FORCE (VIOLENCE, CHILDREARING, DISCIPLINE)

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DEVIATION IN THE LEGITIMATION OF PHYSICAL FORCE

BY

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ABSTRACT

PARENTS WHO DON'T SPANK:

DEVIATION IN THE LEGITIMATION OF PHYSICAL FORCE

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, May, 1986

This study investigates why some parents deviate from American norms on childrearing and decide to use no form of physical punishment. Based on the percentage of American parents who use physical punishment, the views of popular childrearing manuals, relevant laws and court cases it is concluded that the use of physical punishment of children in American society is a context where the use of physical force is legitimate

To locate non-spanking parents, questionnaires were distributed to parents of all first, second and third graders in a eastern seacoast town of approximately 27,000 people. Of those who returned the questionnaires, 87% reported using physical punishment. Among those who spank, 60% said they used it for rule violation and found it to be effective in childrearing. Forty percent reported that they used it when the parents themselves were tired, frustrated or out of control. These parents said nothing about the behavior of their children as being

related to the use of physical punishment and, in addition, these parents said that spanking was not an effective method of disciplining.

Indepth interviews were conducted with the parents who use no form of physical punishment. The reasons they gave for not spanking involved issues of child management (e.g. it does not work), reactions to their own parent's abusive treatment and views of spanking being a form of violence. All of the non-spanking parents reported being tempted to spank and they all said that they might spank in response to hypothetical scenarios where other parents frequently spank. Yet, when describing misbehaviors of their own children which were similar to the behaviors described in the hypothetical scenarios, these parents did not use physical punishment.

It is concluded that the decision not to spank in American society is an extremely deviant position. Non-spanking parents are hesitant to acknowledge their commitment to not spanking. In fact, these parents do not tell others about their deviance. Non-spanking parents are very skilled at the management of their deviance and use socially acceptable accounts, such as saying their children do nothing so serious to deserve spanking, to avoid confrontation with others around them. Yet, by their own descriptions, their children do engage in the very behaviors that would be met with a spanking by other parents.

Chapter I

Cultural Norms and Violence

In American society, there are times when it is not only permissible to hit another person, but when such a behavior is a culturally encouraged response. Experts in the field of violence have described situations where the use of physical force is a rational, culturally legitimate act but, as yet, there has been little empirical investigation of these contexts. The present work will investigate one such context where Americans are allowed to hit another; the physical punishment of children.

The major focus of this study will be to investigate why some parents deviate from this cultural practice and do not use physical punishment. Following the conceptual lead of Goode (1971), it will first be shown that the use of physical force in childrearing is culturally endorsed. Specifics of who can use it, when it is used and why it is used will be included. Attention will then be directed at why some parents do not use physical punishment. Their reasons for not adhering to cultural norms will be analyzed. It will be determined whether or not these parents challenge the cultural legitimacy of physical punishment and if they do, attempt will be made to understand why they question its use. Finally, this study will look at how these parents manage their tasks of childrearing without the use of physical force and how they manage being deviants in American society.

CROSS-CULTURAL INTERPRETATIONS OF PHYSICAL FORCE

In this work, violence will be defined as an act intended to cause pain or injury. Before discussing the implications of cultural interpretations of violence, a brief review of cross-cultural data on the use of physical force in two, non-industrialized societies will be presented. The two societies discussed, the Yanomamo of Amazonia and the !Kung of Southern Africa, are particularly relevant because much has been written on their use of violence. The analysis of these two, very different, non-Western societies will also help highlight how the use of violence in varying contexts is interpreted differently.

The sources of data reported here are from the writings of anthropologists. None of these anthropologists specifically examined cultural evaluations of physical force but, based on their indepth descriptions of incidents, information on this topic is available. Admittedly, secondary data anlysis is problematic and additional data collection on this topic should be made before these cultural descriptions are fully accepted. However, in their present state, these data do illustrate differences on how cultures interpret acts of physical force.

The Yanomamo

The Yanomamo are frequently characterized by outsiders as the most violent traditional society presently existing (Pfeiffer, 1980; Chagnon,

1983). It appears that this label is not only the result of the Yanomamo's aggressive behavior, but is also based on their excessive preoccupation with fighting. They are constantly talking about fighting, making new weapons and building new palisades for protection against fighting. As Chagnon(1983) characterizes them, the Yanomamo live in a state of chronic warfare. To back this up he states that in the fifteen months he stayed with one group they were in active battle twenty-five times.

The Yanomamo live in the Amazon jungle area of South America. They are semi-nomadic hunters and forest gardeners (horticulturalists) who live in groups ranging in size from 40 to 300. Their system of authority and conflict resolution are informal and incapable of controlling large groups of people. As a result, the size of the group fluctuates as people become angry with each other and splinter off to form new groups.

Among anthropologists there is disagreement on why the Yanomamo fight so much (Harris,1979; Chagnon, 1983) but all agree they are unusual in their use of physical force. While the Yanomamo are characterized by outsiders as being quite violent, there is still a normative structure which separates the legitimate from the illegitimate use of force. For the Yanomamo, the use of physical force is considered legitimate in the following contexts:

Protection - The use of physical force for protection by the Yanomamo entails two dimensions: the physical protection of one's self, family and village, and the protection of one's social esteem. The use of force to protect people is usually in response to raids by outsiders,

although it can be used in interpersonal situations within one's tribe. Fights over self esteem usually occur within villages and are usually between only two people, for example between two wives (the Yanomamo are polygynous (Biocca, 1969; Chagnon, 1983). Another example is in the case of adultery where a husband may use lethal force and kill both his wife and her lover (women, however, have no rights in similar matters involving adulteruous husbands).

Revenge - A central reason the Yanomamo give for engaging in war is to capture women (Biocca, 1969; Chagnon, 1983; Pfeiffer, 1980). This may involve stealing women from other tribes to avenge previous kidnappings or it may involve recapturing one's own stolen women. In these raids, women and children are usually not killed although occasionally this does happen (when it does arrows are not used because women can only be killed by head-bashing(Biocca, 1969)). Another restriction on these raids is that a woman without relatives can not be killed because "they have no one to weep for them." (Biocca, 1969).

Raids are also conducted to avenge the killing of one's own village members (Chagnon, 1983). The Yanomamo style of warfare has several distinctive characteristics. The typical raid is a secret attack where the aggressors kill only one designated male and then flee. The Yanomamo believe that if any one of the attackers is killed the entire raid is unsuccessful regardless of the number of victims killed. These raids are usually well-planned and executed quite smoothly. There are also several rituals associated with these raids such as cleansing the body before, during and after the killing.

Punishment - In some cases, the Yanomamo legitimate the use of

physical punishment. This may involve a man physically punishing his wife for acts of disobedience. Chagnon (1983) describes a case where a man branded his wife with a burning stick because she was slow in fixing a meal. In addition, children may be physically punished by their elders for misbehaving. Severe injury, however, is not approved and older members of the group may intervene in extreme cases (Chagnon, 1983).

Contests - Young boys are encouraged to play at being physically aggressive but, for adults, there is a more institutionalized form of competition where physical force is involved. These are chest pounding duels which take place at feasts when neighboring villages are visiting. While these are seen as displays of ability they may be provoked by minor conflicts such as malicious gossip or stinginess. In these duels representatives of each village take turns hitting each other on the chest, as hard as possible. The game ends when only one person remains standing. This is a highly regulated contest having strict rules on the proper way to deliver and to receive blows. For example, the rules allow for additional members to take part in the game and for the use of machettes or axe butts, as long as the two sides are even.

In some cases these duels may escalate and result in war between villages. However, Chagnon (1983) characterizes them as being an antithesis of war in that they are a structured alternative to killing. While the extent of injury done to the players is often severe and permanently disabling usually the two groups part on friendly terms. The contest serves to demonstrate that the two villages are friends, yet

each is capable of maintaining their own sovereignty and is willing to fight if necessary (Chagnon, 1983).

Infanticide - Within this culture there are certain situations where a mother is expected to kill a new-born child. These are 1) if the child is deformed, and 2) if there is already an older child whom the mother is still nursing (Chagnon, 1983).

As can be seen, the Yanomamo have various situations where the use of violence, the intentional act of physically hurting or injuring someone, is legitimate. In fact, at times it is an appropriate and encouraged social act. However, the Yanomamo also have many rules regarding how physical force can be used and if these rules are violated, such as if a woman is killed by an arrow or if the chest pounding duel is deemed unbalanced, the use of physical force is considered illegitimate.

The !Kung

The !Kung San are Bushmen who reside on the western edge of the Kalahari in South Angola, Botswana, and in parts of South-West Africa. The San are nomadic hunters and gatherers who traditionally lived in bands of approximately 8-30 people. The San are relatively egalitarian in that there is no assigned position of leadership, yet some individuals are informally considered more knowledgeable about worldly events than others. The only division of labor in this society follows age and sex differences (Lee, 1984).

The San are of particular interest to the present discussion because

they rarely approve of any use of violence. There appears to be only one norm legitimating the use of physical force and this is infanticide (Thomas, 1958). Again, as with the Yanomamo, a mother is expected to kill any newborn that is crippled or deformed.

There is disagreement among those studying the San on their use of physical force. Earlier investigators reported them as being extremely non-violent (Thomas, 1958; Marshall, 1966) but more recent works have documented occasional events, such as assaults (Draper, 1978; Shostak, 1983) and homicides(Lee, 1984). These typically result from interpersonal conflicts such as inappropriate meat distribution or stinginess. While these later works illustrate episodes where physical force is used, it still can be argued that the !Kung have few norms legitimating it, either by mandating or encouraging its use. For example, in the case of homicides (which are rare) the !Kung have no institutionalized means of dealing with the killings and as a result the incidents are frequently ignored(Lee, 1976).

This extremely non-violent lifestyle does not mean that the social relations of these people are somehow inherently different from others. Rather, their behavior differs in part, because their society devalues aggression and violence. The teaching of non-aggression begins with children who see no adult models who are aggressive or violent. Children's attempts at such behaviors are met with strong disapproval but not aggressive discipline. For example, if young children are fighting among themselves an adult will physically separate them or distract them. If the conflict is between older children an adult will call away the one who is escalating the conflict. In other words, the

!Kung interrupt misbehavior before it gets out of hand, without using any form of physical force or punishment.

The San stress non-assertiveness as well as non-violence. They are actually fearful of conflict and will try at all costs to avoid it. This avoidance means removing oneself from a situation or strictly controlling one's emotions. To illustrate this excessive avoidance, Thomas (1958) describes a situation where the San are sometimes illegally captured by nearby plantation owners and forced to work as slaves. The San do nothing to prevent this from happening although they intensely dislike being kidnapped. Their only feasible response to this dilemma is to wait for the right moment and run away.

To avoid any conflict with their own people the San do not compete with each other (Marshall, 1976) and they do not infringe upon other groups' territories (Marshall,1976). Informally they rely on gossip ridicule, ostracisim and public debate for violators of this code (Draper, 1978).

As can be seen from this brief review of the Yanomamo and the !Kung San, the extent to which physically aggressive acts are socially endorsed varies extensively in these two particular societies. The Yanomamo provide many motives for people to engage in the legitimate use of physical force while the San define very few. Yet, in both societies there are situations where the use of force is not only permissible, but in fact, a socially appropriate act.

VIOLENCE AND THE LEGITIMATE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE

Several sociologists have described how some acts of violence are normative although their conceptualizations vary. Ball-Rokeach (1980) distinguishes between what she labels as social and asocial violence. Asocial violence consists of residual acts caused by abnormal states such as "psychopathology, biochemical (e.g., certain drugs or blood sugar), neurological, hormonal or genetic malfunction or acute breakdown of reasoning faculties (e.g., drunken rage) (1980:47). Social violence includes rational human responses which are primarily goal oriented and entail behaviors incorporated into everyday systems of action. In Ball-Rokeach's conceptualization, social violence, incorporates a wide variety of behaviors which may be rational to the individual but are not necessarily approved by others or by one's culture.

Goode (1971, 1972) creates further distinctions within Ball-Rokeach's category of social violence and defines legitimate violence as the socially approved use of force to cause pain or injury. Primarily through his analysis of family relations, Goode describes certain situations where Americans are encouraged to use violence. He points to sanctions by our laws, our court systems,our economic system and community norms to support this. To illustrate his point, Goode describes how children learn the appropriate uses of force:

> The child learns to make differentiated responses, depending upon the number of variables: he learns to gauge, however incorrectly, which people seem more willing and able to fight. He learns which kinds of situations call forth a greater amount of violence, within the family or outside it. For example, to challenge his father by aggressing against him

> is almost certain to elicit violence, but perhaps not a challenge against a playmate. A boy should not punch a girl, or a younger or weaker boy, but he may punch a bigger boy, and especially if the other started the battle. He learns that some acts so dishonor a person that violence is the only appropriate answer. In former days, of course, some kinds of acts justified duels.
>
> He also learns, as part of this training for violence, that others are more or less likely to justify his violence; that is, others may support his own evaluations. In a slum area, to back down in a violent argument is to lose more face than is tolerable. (1971:630)

Williams (1986) continues in this line of thinking by stating that cognitive definitions and appprаisals of desirability are interwoven into the definition of legitimate violence. He continues to explains that definitions of legitimate and illegitimate violence change considerably across time, place and circumstance.

The present work follows the conceptual lead of Goode and Williams in the analysis of legitimate force but restricts the focus to the cultural level of analysis. It can be argued that there is too much variation in individuals' interpretations of situations to be of use in a general discussion of violence. Since much of an individual's patterned responses are the product of shared meaning which comes from prior socialization, it can be argued that culture is a viable level of analysis in which to study how violence is legitimated. Indeed, as can be seen from the review of the Yanomamo culture, there are many situations where the use of violence is deemed an appropriate and legitimate act at the cultural level.

In the present work the term "legitimate physical force" will be used to indicate acts of violence which are culturally approved. Within our own culture the term "violence" is frequently perceived as a bizarre,

inappropriate behavior. Thus, in the present work, legitimate physical force will be used to indicate positive evaluations of violence. Accordingly, a Yanomamo using an arrow to kill a man as an act of revenge is an act of legitimate physical force while using an arrow to kill a woman is illegitimate. Both are acts intended to cause physical injury however, in the first case,(the killing of the man), the act causing injury is seen as a normative, acceptable behavior whereas in the other case, the way in which the woman is killed is interpreted by the Yanomamo as unacceptable.

American culture allows for many situations where the use of physical force is legitimate. Before investigating the legitimate use of physical force in the context of childrearing, a general overview of other situations where the use of physical force is legitimate will be presented. This discussion will provide a brief background on the scope of legitimate uses of physical force which presently exist in our society.

LEGITIMATE USES OF PHYSICAL FORCE

IN THE UNITED STATES

In contemporary American society there are at least three contexts where the use of physical force is legitimate: for protection, in contests and as punishment. In these contexts, the use of physical force is not only permissible but it is a fully expected, encouraged response to these situations. Following is a review of the major contexts where American culture legitimates the use of physical force.

Protection - In the United States the use of physical force is legitimate in the context of protection. At the interpersonal level our legal structure allows for the legitimate use of force to protect oneself. For example, a legal defense for violent crimes such as assault or homicide is self protection. A typical law regarding this states, "If while defending oneself one commits an act which in itself is a crime... the act, under certain limitations, is justified and such justification will be available as a defense to criminal responsibility." (Klein, 1953:44). There are restrictions to this such as apprehension of imminent danger must be reasonable (e.g. threatening words are not sufficient) and the amount of force used must be commensurate to the attack, but it still allows for individuals to use potentially lethal force against other individuals (Sykes, 1978).

Violence committed by the State in the context of protection is also accepted in the United States. As in most state societies, one of the privileges of the state, if not its essence (Collins, 1975), is its right to use force. As such, the U.S. legitimates the use of physical force by all agents of social control. For example, most communities allow police to use deadly force if one of the following conditions is met: "1) a suspect is engaged in a felony; or 2) a suspect is fleeing the scene of a felony; or 3) a suspect is resisting arrest and has placed the officer or a civilian in mortal danger." (Barlow, 1984:420). The assumption here is that in order to do their job of protecting the public, all agents of social control, be they police, the FBI or military personnel, must be allowed to use more force than that allowed the common person.

Attitudinal surveys show that most Americans agree with the legitimation of force in the context of protection. For example, in a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults, 72% could imagine a situation where they would approve of a policeman striking an adult male citizen and 69.6% could imagine a situation where they would approve of a policeman shooting an adult male citizen. Fifty-one percent could imagine a situation where it would be appropriate for a civilian to punch a stranger, primarily if the stranger had broken into the citizen's house or was beating up on a woman(Blumenthal, et al., 1970).

Accordingly, the U.S. government may also engage in war using the rationale of protecting our country, our country's interests or our allies. Like the Yanomamo, the U.S. has some limits on the type for force that may be used during warfare. For example, in the 1979 Geneva Conference, the U.S. and 71 other nations agreed to prohibit using weapons designed to scatter fragments such as glass or plastic that cannot be detected by x-rays of the human body. The U.S. also agreed to ban the use of incendiary bombs in populated areas, to prohibit using children's toys, religious objects and kitchen utensils as booby traps and to prohibit the concealing of booby traps on the wounded or dead and at grave sites (N.Y. Times, Oct. 8, 1980). Another example, one which is receiving current attention, is the United Nations sponsored Outer Space Treaty signed by both the United States and the Soviet Union in 1967. In this treaty all parties agreed "not to place in orbit around the earth any nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons for mass destruction nor to establish any military bases, installations fortifications, or to test any weapons or conduct military maneuvers on celestial bodies." (Mische, 1984).

In the United States, war is legally defined as "A state of activity in which a nation prosecutes its rights or its claims by force of arms," (Ballentine's Law Dictionary). The legal rule surrounding the initiation of war is that Congress has the authority to declare war, but the Commander-In-Chief has the right to "introduce armed forces into hostilities or into situations where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances". The ambiguousness of these terms is, in part, responsibile for the passage of the War Powers Resolution of 1973(Public Law 93-148) which requires the President to confer with Congress on any deployment of armed troops and that Congress has the opportunity to evaluate and either endorse or reject the act. These official dictates are very vague and, in actuality, allow for the initiation of aggressive offenses as well as defensive acts. Furthermore, some armed conflicts where issues of protection are at stake are not necessarily labeled as war,(e.g the Korean Conflict). It appears that here, the legitimation of violence for protective reasons is dependent upon official interpretations of the situation and is not necessarily synonymous with declarations of war. This is clearly a situation where those in power can manipulate the interpretation of a situation to be consistent with the culture's evaluation of the legitimacy of violence.

Contests - Our society also legitimates the use of physical force in many organized sports. Sports such as football and boxing are concrete examples of this. In these contests, whether at the professional level or at the sand-lot level, physical force is approved. Most sports do not have the specific goal of trying to cause permanent injury and

accordingly, most contests have restrictions on the extent of force allowed such as in hockey where high-sticking, slashing, and roughing are not sanctioned. Interestingly, these behaviors still occur, even though they are considered fouls. The implications appear to be that at one level, the formal rules of the game, the use of physical force is restricted, but informally this is not always the case

Continuing with the example of hockey, it can be seen that informally, there is considerable endorsement of acts intended to cause pain or injury. While these are outside of the rules of the game, in fact, they are encouraged by various outside participants such as coaches, promoters or spectators(Smith,1979). At times, even non-contact sports like basketball fall into these patterns, such as when Tree Rollins bit the finger of Danny Ainge during the 1978 National Basketball Association play-off game.

Thus, in spite of the rules structuring the use of violence, injuries do occur. Football leads all other sports in the number of game related injuries (largely due to the number of players on each team). In 1980, 14 football players died on the practice field or during an actual game. In 1981, the National Injury Information Clearinghouse reports 443,361 football players (from professional, organized or informal games) were admitted into emergency rooms for injuries ranging from broken legs to broken necks (New York Times, Dec. 4, 1982). More recently the relationship between boxing and violence has received public attention primarily as a result of an American Medical Association announcement that boxing causes permanent brain injury.

Public concern about the relationship between sports and violence has

also been heightened in the past. For example, in 1980 the House Judiciary Subcommittee of the U.S. Congress questioned whether or not there should be federal laws making excessive violence in sporting events a federal crime (N.Y. Times, Oct. 1, 1980). Technically, physical assault of any kind is already illegal and the rules of most games prohibit the use extreme force, yet, it is interesting that some members of this society feel the need for a special statute regarding sports related violence.

Punishment - At the societal level the use of physical force as a punishment is legitimated by our legal system. The Anglo-Saxen tradition encouraged torturing, mutilation and execution as a means for deterring criminal behavior. In the latter part of the Eighteenth Century doubt arose as to its deterrent effectiveness (Sykes, 1978)and more recently, monetary fines or restriction of freedom are prescribed punishments for most illegal behaviors. Capital punishment, however, is a special case where the use of physical force for punishment is still allowed. Law-makers supporting capital punishment claim it not only punishes the offender but also serves as a general deterrent for others. This is an issue which is frequently debated and, as such, its legal standing often changes. For example, in 1972 the U.S. Supreme Court said the death penalty was cruel and unusual punishment but in 1976 the High Court changed this opinion. While there is considerable debate on its effectiveness as a general deterrent as well as its moral soundness, the point still remains that presently the execution of criminal offenders is a legal form of physical punishment in this country.

It is also legitimate to use violence to physically punish children. It is illegal to hit or even threaten to hit an adult and it is illegal for children who are in state operated juvenile detention areas to be hit, but, parents may use physical force to cause pain. Indeed, studies show that anywhere from 85% to 95% of all parents use some type of physical punishment (Sears, et al., 1957; Blumenthal, et al, 1975; Straus, et al., 1982). There are limits on the amount of force which can be used and this is usually defined in terms of injury. The physical punishment of children is considered legal as long as there is no injury such as "death, permanent or temporary disfigurement or impairment of any bodily organ,"(HEW's Model Law Format, Besharov, 1978). A more indepth analysis of this particular context will be presented in later chapters.

In conclusion, protection, contests and punishment all provide contexts where American culture clearly provides motives for the legitimate use of physical force. In these contexts, the intentional use of force to cause pain is not considered deviant or violent. It can be argued that there are others, most particularly suicide, euthenasia and treatment (such as psycho-surgery), however these are contexts where this society is not totally committed to the legitimacy of such acts.

The present work will provide a more thorough investigation of the use of legitimate physical force specifically for the last mentioned situation, the disciplining of children. This is one form of violence which is firmly rooted in American society and is commonly used by most American parents. First, evidence which documents this as a legitimate use of physical force will be reviewed, followed by an analysis of a

group of people who vary from these practices. The focus of the analysis on these people who do not use physical punishment in childrearing will investigate why they do not use it and how they manage their lives without it. As such, this work will provided insight on why these parents deviate and on how this deviance affects the culturally legitimation of physical force in the context of childrearing.

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed the implications of cultural norms surrounding the evaluation of violence. Prior research has suggested that, at times, the use of physical force is a socially tolerated, approved and even an encouraged act. In the present discussion, it is suggested that one level for studying the legitimate use of physical force is a cultural one, that there are cultural norms which have become engrained in society which evaluate the use of physical force as positive. Examples of these in non-industrialized societies as well as in American society were presented.

Subsequent analysis will investigate more fully the cultural legitimatation of physical force in the specific context of childrearing. The next three chapters will review evidence which substantiates the view that the discipline of children is a context within which American culture legitimates the use of physical force. Following Gcode's suggestions this discussion will include a review of the frequency of the use of force and the socially perceived appropriateness and meaning associated with its practice. This will

include a review of the opinions of publically defined child-rearing experts and a review of the legal interpretations of adults hitting children in the context of discipline. Following this will be a review of research on characteristics associated with the use of physical punishment which will highlight similarities or differences between social interpretations of its use and scientific finding.

After these reviews an investigation on why most parents use physical punishment to discipline their children will be provided. Finally, extensive information will be presented about parents who use no form of physical punishment. This will include an analysis of why they chose to vary from societal practices, what alternative methods of discipline they employ, their perceptions of the outcomes of their decision not to use physical force, and a review of the implications the decision not to use physical punishment has for cultural norms regarding the legitimate use of physical force.

CHAPTER NOTE

The label of deviant as used in this work follows the sociological tradition of being a value neutral description. It does not indicate that these people are engaging in a behavior which is undesirable or desirable. It simply means that they engage in behavior which violates norms (Sorokin, 1950) or, as described by Matza, (1969) they are people who have strayed from the path.

Chapter II

CHILD-REARING EXPERTS' OPINIONS ON THE USE OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

This chapter will review evidence which shows that the use of physical force in the context of child disciplining is legitimate. First will be a review of the number of American parents who use physical punishment. However, since behaviors are not always consistent with socially prescribed norms, this review will continue with an investigation of opinions of physical punishment as espoused by publically defined child rearing experts.

In non-literate societies publically defined experts might mean consulting with elders asking them how one "should" raise children (as compared to what parents actually do). In contemporary American society it can be argued that popular books on child-rearing perform this function. These are sources parents can consult to see what others recommend on how to successfully raise a child. A review of some of these manuals will be described next.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT BY AMERICAN PARENTS

Most American parents use some type of physical punishment with spanking being the most frequent type. Studies indicate that between 85% and 95% of all parents spank their children (Erlanger, 1974a). This

appears to start at a very early age. Based on a sample of 100 randomly selected mothers attending a well-baby clinic, Korch, et al., (1965) found that one-third of the mothers with children less than one-year-old had physically punished that child and 25% of those with children less than six-months-old had already started spanking their children.

The use of physical punishment by parents is related to the age of the child. Sears, et al., (1957) found that 98% of parents of two and three year olds spanked their children and Straus, et al., (1982) found that 97% of their national probability sample spanked their three-year-olds. In a study where a vignette of a misbehaving five year old was presented to respondents, Blumenthal, et al., (1975) found that 98% of the adults reported a willingness to hit or spank the child and 83% stated they would use a belt or paddle.

As children get older the probability of them getting spanked decreases although many teenagers continue to receive physical punishment. Straus, et al., (1974) report 52.3% of a sample of college students reported having been hit or slapped during their last year of high school.

Furthermore, the use of spanking by American parents has not changed much over the last ten years. Straus and Gelles (1986) conducted two national probability studies, of parents with children age 3 to 17. They found no significant difference between the percentage of parents who spanked in 1975 and the percentage who spanked in 1985.

These studies indicate that parents spanking their children is normative in this society. The practice starts when children are very

young and, for most, continues throughout their childhood. In addition, there appears to be no societal change over time in the percentage of parents who use this technique

CHILD-REARING EXPERTS' OPINIONS OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

Throughout history people have been offering advice on child rearing. As early as 175 B.C. the Greek physician Galan presented his views and as early as 1429, parent training manuals were being created—20 years before the advent of printing (Bogg, 1981). Various scholars have offered opinions as to why these early manuals emerged. Aries (1962) believes they appeared during a time of changing attitudes toward children, a change reflecting the growing belief that adults were responsible for the care and guidance of children. Mayer and Nagle (1975) tie the appearance of these manuals to the change from the view of the family as a private institution to that where the welfare of children became a public affair.

Regardless of the reasons for their appearance, in contemporary America the variety of child rearing manuals is astounding. The 1983-84 Books in Print lists 271 entries under the heading of Child Management. Brieland (1957)describes these types of books as serving at least two basic functions. First, they dissiminate information on child development and second, they provide a context for parent support groups. Boggs (1981)adds a final function. She sees them as a means of transmitting values within a culture and as such, they may promote one

set of values over another. She continues to state there is little agreement as to whether the books are in response to requests for help from parents or if in reality, they are the result of an elite group within our society attempting to preserve the status quo.

Analyzing the basic philosophies of these manuals Boggs (1981) reports the presence of three basic assumptions regarding the role of parents. First, they assume that every thing parents do every minute of their lives affects their children. Second, they assume that if left to his/her own devices, the child is incapable of developing one's own good potential, that is, without intervention, disaster will result. Third, these manuals promote the belief that one's adult life is largely dependent upon experiences in the early life. In addition, these manuals are also characterized by frequent change in advice corresponding to the era one lives in (Brim, 1959).

It should be pointed out that the date of the writings of most of the aforementioned critics of child rearing manuals are old. It appears that no recent analysis of these books has occurred and there has been little attempt to review how contemporary books view the use of physical punishment. Although, as will be seen, the criticisms described in these older writings may still be relevant because several of the books being published today have been around for a number of years.

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF CONTEMPORARY CHILD-REARING MANUALS

Since there so many books available and a best-sellers list was not located, a list of books to review was created by seeking the opinion of

Table 2-1. Childrearing Manuals Recommended by Key Informants.*

Book Titles	Number of Recommendations: Consultants	Bookstores
Children: The Challenge R. Drueckers	6	
STEP Program Dinkmeyer and McKay	3	
Parent Effectiveness Training W. Gordon	4	1
Baby and Child Care B. Spock	1	2
Between Parents and Child H. Ginott		1
Dialogue for Parents Ilg and Ames	1	1
Your Child is a Person Chess, et al.,	1	

*Based on 8 key informants and clerks from 2 different bookstores.

key informants within the community which will later be studied studied. These informants included the five grade school counselors in the district where the later part of this study takes place, the public library's children's librarian, a pediatric clinic's nurse practitioner and the community's Home Extension's Human Development Specialist. It was assumed that these were resource people a parent might contact when seeking advice on child-rearing. Each informant was asked, "If a parent with children between the ages of 5 and 8 called you and asked for your recommendation for general child-rearing books, what would you suggest?"

In addition, one clerk from each of the three book stores in the community was approached and told about the study. Clerks were asked to make recommendations based on the books that seemed to sell the best. Clerks at two of the three stores responded immediately but the clerk at the third was unable to make any recommendation. The results of this survey are listed in Table 2-1. As can be seen, some books received multiple endorsements and some were listed by only one person. The ones listed most frequently will be discussed in more depth. Following is a review of the assessments of physical punishment as expressed in these popular child rearing books.

Children the Challenge by R. Dreikur (1964)

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting by D. Dinkmeyer and G. McKay (1976)

The pediatrician Rudolf Dreikurs, has written several books regarding the role of children in our society. His ideas have been incorporated into the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) program as outlined by Dinkmeyer and McKay (1976). This book is an exercise workbook based directly on Dreikurs ideas, thus, it is appropriate to discuss these two books together. As will be discussed later, this approach is relevant to the present study because classes using this approach were attended by several of the parents interviewed.

The issue of children's rights is central to Dreikurs in that he bases his approach on the belief that children have as equal claim as adults to dignity and respect. As such, he spends much effort describing his philosophy of family constellation focusing primarily on the power relations. He argues that in prior historical times parents were automatically considered legitimate authorities over children, thus, parents inherently posessed power over children. However, in contemporary society, this source of power is gone and today it is futile for parents to attempt to impose their will over children. Children today have been exposed to various role models of powerless groups fighting for equality and, as a result, children have joined in demanding some of the same rights as adults, especially within the family unit.

Based on this, Dreikurs suggest that no amount of punishment directed toward a child will bring lasting submission. The use of punishment

will only bring greater resistence and defiance. Dreikurs also suggests that the use of rewards for positive behavior is also problematic for childrearing in that rewarding appropriate behavior also indicates a lack of respect because good behavior should be a reward in its own right. Dreikurs proposes the most effective way for dealing with children is to use "natural and logical consequences".

The approach of logical consequences holds the child responsible for her/his own behavior. Logical consequencese permits the child to learn from the reality of the social order. Specifically, the parent's response to a child's misbehavior is to follow through with logical consequences. For example, when a child consistently fails to get dressed in the alotted time before leaving for school, rather than yelling and cajoling the child to hurry up, the child must simply skip breakfast. If a child returns home later than the designated time, on the next occasion the child is not permitted to leave home.

Dreikurs contends that the use of logical consequences teaches the child about the reality of life and the social order. It teaches them to be responsible for their own behavior. Dreikurs views punishment as an arbitrary parental decision which treats the child with disrespect. In contrast, the use of logical consequences separates the deed from the doer so it does not threaten the personal integrity or dignity of a child.

In Dreikurs writings little is said about physical puinishment. In one of the few passages where physical punishment is discussed Dreikurs claims that the use of physical punishment indicates that there is no democracy within a family. He continues to describe any type of

punishment as a power grabbing move used by parents to support the autocratic social system they have created.

However, in a different example, Dreikurs defines the use of corporal punishment as a logical consequences; if a child slaps, kicks or bites a parent, the parent has the obligation to demonstrate the inapprorpiateness of this behavior. As a response, following the natural and logical consequences, the parent should do likewise, that is, the parent should slap,kick or bite the child in return. Drueikurs advises parents to approach this as a game so that each time the child initiates the parent responds similarily. Dreikurs claims the game will only last a few rounds before the child decides to stop.

In summary, Dreikurs and the STEP approach state that no form of punishment should be used . Rather, parents should use logical consequences to teach their children appropriate behavior. Physical punishment is considered a form of punishment and we can assume this approach disapproves of its use, although, this is not specifically stated. However, there may be particular circumstances where the use of physical force is the appropriate natural and logical consequence.

Parent Effectiveness Training by T. Gordon (1976)

Another popular parent guidance approach is Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training (PET). This approach places much emphasis on changing the behavior of the parent such as getting the parent to be less selfish or teaching the parent to listen more closely to the child. Being consistent in meta-communication is also stressed. Gordon

states that every interaction between a child and a parent is a process of defining the relationship between the two and that the message parents must send to children is that communication, at any level, is always possible.

PET stresses active listening. Parents need to suspend their own thoughts and attempt to accept what the child is saying without redirecting the child's feelings. As with STEP, parents relying on authoritative power over the children, is seen by PET as being a losing proposition. Gordon claims that parents are usually too eager to justify their own position and because they exert more power, they fail to listen to their children. All too often emphasis is placed on who wins during conflicts between children and parents and, a result, resentment, anger and hostility frequently occur. PET recommends parents try finding a method of conflict resolution where no one loses, that is, a solution which is acceptable to both parties. This approach, as does STEP, puts much attention on maintaining the dignity of children.

The issue of corporal punishment is not specifically addressed in Gordon's book. In light of the content of this approach it can be argued that physical punishment probably would be seen as an extreme use of power by the parent and as an act which ignores and abruptly stops communication. Yet, this is simply an abstraction of the approach in that physical punishment is not discussed.

Baby and Child Care by B. Spock (1985)

One of America's most popular childrearing manuals is by Dr. Benjamin Spock, originally printed in 1945. In the earlier editions of this book, Spock recommends simply removing young children from situations and gradually teaching children the meaning of the word "no". As they get older parents must teach their children appropriate means of behavior because punishing them usually does not work. He is sympathetic to the parent who is occasionally tired and cross with the child and as a result, one who may spank. He suggests the parent should not feel guilty if this occasionally happens. He disagrees with parents who feel punishment, of any kind, is a good regular method of child-rearing. Spock specifically states that he does not advocate spanking although he implies that other types of punishment, such as nagging the child for half-a-day or sending children to their rooms, may be worse than physical punishment. He also states that parents who waits until they cool down emotionally before spanking seem terribly grim.

In the most recent edition of this book, 1985, where it is co-authored with Dr. Michael B. Rothenberg, the evaluation of physical punishment changes. They are still against the use of punishment in general, although, they can see that it may be necessary as a last resort. In this edition Spock and Rothenberg state that physical punishment, in particular, should be avoided because it teaches a child that a larger, stronger person has power and that after seeing an adult use physical force a child may feel justified in beating a younger sibling. They continue to say that they have actually met children who are well behaved, cooperative and polite who have never been physically

punished.

Between Parents and Child by H. Ginott (1969)

Ginott says that children should be directed away from undesireable acts rather than punished. If punishment occurs it should be applied without violence or excessive anger. Parents should convey authority but they should not insult children. If a child breaks a rule the parent should not become argumentative or verbose because it weakens their status. Children generally expect retaliation. Ginott views spanking as a bad method even though he admits it is popular. He claims it is usually not planned response, rather the result of a parent's burst of anger. Physical punishment is seen as a bad technique because it teaches children undesirable ways of dealing with frustration and because it interferes with the development of the child's conscience. In addition, Ginott feels that spanking absolves the child of guilt too easily. Children must be made responsible for their actions and other types of punishment are more effective.

The Gesell Institute's Child Behavior by F. Ilg and L. Ames(1955)

Ilg and Ames contend that discipline should be considered from a developmental point of view. Discipline should be geared towards the child's ability, interests and weaknesses associated with particular stages of development. They say the easiest way to discipline children is at the emotional level but this should not be a customary practice. Spanking is not very successful either, and if it is, it is only in the short term. It may backfire in the long run creating more problems than

it solves. If spanking occurs it is because the parent has failed to support the growth process in the child. Thus, they clearly are against its use.

Your Child is a Person by S. Chess, A. Thomas and H. Birch(1966)

These authors stress that discipline should be a positive learning experience and that parents should help their children learn rules of social behavior in ways that best fit each individual temperamental style. They contend that punishment should not be used to "show who is boss" or to "let off steam". Rather it is to underscore the necessity of learning. Spanking should only be used as a last resort. There are occassions when a whack, administered with dramatic suddenness, accomplishes what weeks of patience has failed. However, spanking is most effective when administered with calm determination (which is directly opposite of Spock's view). These authors also felt that the specific case of hitting a child for hitting could lead to serious problems.

Summary of Six Child-Rearing Manuals

In this brief review of six child rearing manuals it is seen that none of the manuals strongly advocate the use of physical punishments such as spanking or slapping. The sole one which did, Chess, et al., qualified that it should only be used as a last resort and during a time when parents are calm. Yet, even these authors state it is unappropriate to

hit a child who is hitting another person. Negative aspects of physical punishment outlined by others included opinions that physical punishment teaches children a bad way of dealing with frustration, it violates the respect of children's dignity and it may only serve to escalate problems.

While none of these manuals strongly advocate the use of physical punishment, only a few --Ginott, Illg and Ames and the most recent edition of Spock--specifically suggest it should not be used. In these exceptions we find that Spock sympathizes with parents who occassionally use it and Ginott claims it is too lenient in that children are not made responsible for their misbehavior. Thus, they are weak condemnations of its use.

Interestingly, Dreikurs and Gordon, the two authors who approaches have been developed into formal parent training programs, do not specifically address the issue of physical punishment although they both describe problems in the use of any form of punishment. It is remarkable that the one technique which is almost universal in this society is hardly mentioned by these authors.

In conclusion, none of the books reviewed strongly advocated the use of physical punishment while only one (Ilg and Ames) was strongly against its use. It is difficult to speculate on the reluctance of these publically defined experts to discuss physical punishment but possible reasons may be 1) it is so taken for granted that it is overlooked as an important issue. 2) It was deliberately avoided because these authors (consciously or not) realized that taking an explicit anti-physical punishment stance would make them lose rapport

with readers, i.e. selling no books, or 3) the authors, as members of a society which uses physical punishment are themselves ambivalent about it and therefore avoid the issue.

Credibility of Childrearing Manuals

A final point where other reviewers of child rearing manuals agree and one which is most relevant to the present discussion, is that the connection between empirical research and the information covered in these manuals is very weak (Winch, 1971; Vincent, 1951; Brim, 1959; Senn, 1957; McGuire and Smith, 1948). Numerous researchers report that the authors of child rearing manuals represent a wide range of self designated experts (Boggs, 1981; Burch, 1954; Winch, 1971). Burch aptly describes this group as the following:

> As to the qualifications there is a wide range from people with excellent training, integrity and mature judgement to those with only scanty information, the uncritical disciples, passionate crusaders and the frank quacks who dabble in child psychology because it is fashionable. In addition, there are the "one-case wonders" who become experts by viture of having given birth to a child.

In analyzing why research is not discussed in parent advice manuals nor in many popular parent magazines such as Parents Magazine or National Parent Teacher, Brieland (1957) suggests that many problems of interest tc parents have not been studied by researchers and that many researchers write for other researchers, not for parents. Thus, the information does not reach parents. McGuire and Smith (1948)extend this to include the fact that requirements of interest, readability and pertinence influence the writing of child rearing manuals more than does

a desire for empirical soundness

Regardless of the problems of not incorporating empirical findings in contemporary child rearing manauls and having them written by individuals with dubious credentials Boggs(1981) leaves us with a final note. Although it appears that parents at least buy these manuals, as of yet, it is not known as to whether or not the parents actually read the manuals and more importantly, we do not know if these manuals truly affect the interactions between parents and their children.

SUMMARY

To verify the legitimate use of physical force in childrearing the behavior as well as social evaluations of its use were reviewed. From this analysis it is seen that most American parents use physical punishment, especially when their children are young. This is not surprising if the position taken by authors of the child rearing manuals reviewed here is representative. On one hand, these manuals do not strongly advocate the use of physical punishment. Yet, on the other hand, they do not condone its use. In fact, several of the more professional manuals do not even discuss its use.

Several possible reasons why physical punishment is ignored were presented but, from reviewing the quality of these manuals and the relatively low level of expertise (as compared to the accumulation of knowledge on child rearing) the issues of not being aware or of not wanting to confront society on a popular norm become more credible. This suggests some ambiguity in the evaluation of the use of physical

force in the context of child rearing but, from this review, it is difficult to determine the reason for this lack of attention. This issue will be taken up again in subsequent chapters.

The next chapter will review legal procedings where the use of physical punishment has been specifically address in laws and in court rulings. While within prescribed limitations, the use of physical punishment of children is basically legal, this review will also highlight some problems American society has regarding specific circumstances of its use.

Chapter III

LEGAL OPINIONS ON THE USE OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

In the United States, it is illegal to hit or even threaten to hit an adult but, under certain circumstances, it is legal to hit a child. This chapter reviews legal statutes which formally verify the legitimacy of the use of physical force in the context of childrearing and reviews specifics of its practice. In addition, some court cases which have interpreted these laws are also reviewed. In American society, two specified groups, parents and school personnel, are allowed to physically punish children thus, laws affecting both of these two will be discussed.

To understand the use of physical punishment of children, attention must be paid to the legal status of children, something that has changed throughout American history. In colonial America, following the English precedent, children were basically treated as adults. According to English Common Law a child of seven years or older could be found guilty of a felony and punished as an adult. The first attempt to separate the legal standing of children from adults occurred in the English Court of Chancery with the introduction of the doctrine "parens patriae". This was the right of the sovereign to be responsible for the welfare of orphan children, particularily in the management of the estates of wealthy children. The sovereign also could assume parental

responsibility over children who were neglected or abused by their parents (Reid, 1982). The American extension of this occurred in 1899 with the formulation of the juvenile court where special courts took over the role of the sovereign.

Today, juvenile courts have legal control over juveniles who have violated federal, state or local laws or ordinances. More importantly, they also have jurisdiction over youths who behave in ways which are not forbidden by criminal laws but in ways that the community regards as unappropriate for children. These behaviors include immoral or indecent conduct, association with immoral people and wandering in the streets at night. This extended control by the state over incorrigible youths is a phenomenon which is not found in most other industrial societies (Gibbons, 1970).

It has been suggested that the separation of the legal rights of juvenile from those of adults was initiated to benefit minors although it has also been argued that this system has been terribly abusive of children (Platt, 1969). Several Supreme Court rulings have confirmed that abuses of children have occurred particularily in the denial of the right of due process, (Kent v. U.S. and In Re Gault) but, the Court, thus far, has still substantiated the need for treating juveniles differently from adult criminals. For example, in June of 1984, the Supreme Court authorized pretrial detentions of accused juvenile delinquents if it is suspected that the child may commit an additional crime before their appointed date to return to Court (The U.S. Law Week, 1984). This is directly opposite of the way adults are treated. Adults can not be held on the suspicion that they may commit crimes at some

future time.

The United States is not alone in its differential treatment of minors. The United Nations originally excluded children in its concern for human rights. Only in 1960 was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Amended to address the rights of children. Even with this, the rights of children are separated from adults in that the child's physical and mental unmaturity require special safeguards and care (Boulding, 1978). These are similar to the rationals used to justify creating a separate legal status for children in the U.S.

LAWS REGARDING PARENTS' RIGHTS TO USE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

In the United States, spanking, hitting or slapping a child is not considered assault because children occupy a different legal status from adults. There are limitations on the extent of the force used but, it is legal as long as "there is no physical injury such as death, permenant or temporary disfigurement or impairment of any bodily organ" (HEW's Model law format, Besharov, 1978). In such cases it gets defined as child abuse. The line between child abuse and legitimate physical punishment is hazy. In fact, prior to 1960, little differentiation was made between the two. Only by 1974 did all 50 states have laws defining and prohibiting child abuse. Today, there is still variation in states' definitions of child abuse. For example, the age separating childhood from adulthood varies tremendously and some states include emotional or psychological injuries as part of abuse while others do not. All, however, require the presence of some type of physical injury as a means

for distinguishing between abuse and the legitimate use of physical punishment. The child abuse statute in at least one state, Indiana, specifically states that reasonable corporal punishment is exempt from child abuse and another state, North Dakota, specifies that parents may use force to maintain discipline whether it is necessary or not (Hauser, 1985).

It should be noted that laws separating legitimate acts of punishment for children do not specify the reasons nor the circumstances under which a child may be struck. These laws only address the result of such acts; the presence of injury. In addition, there are no laws which mandate parents to use physical punishment.

Cross Cultural Comparisons

Cross culturally, there is tremendous variation in the practice of physical punishment of children. On one hand, parents in Sri Lanka believe that caning or thrashing is necessary and good for children (De Silva, 1981). A saying in that country is, " A child who is not beaten into shape is like a gravy which is not stirred"(p.395). On the other hand, parents among the Munderacu never use physical punishment on their children and this is a society that practices head-hunting (Murphy and Murphy, 1973). Using the Human Relations Area File Probability sample Levinson reports that most of the 60 small scale and folk societies do not physically punish their children (Levinson, 1981)

Of particular interest to the present study is the industrialized country of Sweden, the first nation to adopt a law forbidding parents

from beating, spanking cuffing or otherwise harming children. This was adapted during the International Year of the Child, 1979. Under this law, "A Child may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment"(Chap 6, para. 3, 2nd Sec of Code relating to Parenthood and Guardianship). The government commission which proposed this law explained, "The primary purpose of the provision is to make it clear that beating children is not permitted. "(Hauser, 1985). This commission stated that the elimination of physical punishment was not only seen as a standard for good child care generally but also as a means to reduce child abuse.

According to Public Opinion surveys, most Swedish parents agree with the bases of this law. The percentage of parents who favor the use of physical punishment is decreasing. In 1968, 42% of the parents in that country felt physical punishment was necessary for child rearing but, in 1982, only 26% felt this way (Hauser, 1985).

To understand how this law fits with this culture it must be remembered that Sweden has not been involved in any war since 1815, (they remained neutral during World War I and World War II). In addition, Sweden is a country where childhood is seen as a time for children to be individuals and for parents to create an environment conducive to the child's growth and development. The government describes the duty of parents as caring for the children and fostering their growth. The role of the government is to offer assistance through guidance if the parents seek advice, to assume responsibility for the child on a voluntarily basis if the parents so wish, and to intervene on the behalf of the child if a parent is not assuming responsibility for

the child(Sohein, 1982). It is likely that this orientation toward childrearing is related to the legal characterization of physical punishment in this country.

LAWS REGARDING SCHOOLS' RIGHTS TO USE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

In the United States, the other group which is allowed to administer physical punishment to children is school personnel. As reported in a comprehensive study by the Illinois State Board of Education,(1983), all but four states allow the use of corporal punishment in their schools. Massachusettes and Maine have had this prohibition for about ten years. These two plus New Jersey have provisions for teachers and school personnel to use reasonable force to either restrain a student from hurting others or themselves. The fourth state is Hawaii.

California allows the use of corporal punishment although parents must give their consent in writing. Similarily, the city of Houston allows the use of corporal punishment although here parents can request in writing, that it not be used on their children.

In states and school districts where corporal punishment is allowed, some have policies which restrict how a child may be struck, e.g. specifying the size and type of paddle, the necessity of witnesses and the amount of hits allowed. Many states which allow corporal punishment also have laws protecting educators from criminal prosecution on grounds such as assault and battery.

Court Cases Defining Corporal Punishment

Many of the laws regarding the use of corporal punishment are vague and as such, there have been court cases where the line between legitimate punishment and illegal behavior is argued. Litigation usually focuses on two issues: a) the use of corporal punishment where prohibited and b) unreasonable or excessive force. An infamous case which challenged both of these was Ingraham v. Wright, 97,S.Ct. 1401 (1977). A more thorough review of this case highlights some of the difficulties in applying the these laws.

The case involved 14 year old James Ingraham, an eighth grader attending Drew Junior High School in Dade County, Florida. On October 6, 1970, James was slow in leaving the school auditorium when asked to do so by a teacher. The principal, Willie J. Wright, Jr. took Ingraham and several other students to his office to be paddled. Ingraham claimed his innocence and Lemmie Deliford, the assistant principal and Solomon Barnes, an assistant to the principal were called in. Barnes and Deliford held Ingraham prone across a table with his feet off the floor and Wright paddled him. Ingraham claimed he received more than twenty licks and cried because of the pain. When Ingraham went home his mother took him to a local hospital because of the black and blue marks and because his backside was tight and hot. The doctor diagnosed Ingraham's pain as hematoma and prescribed pain pills, a laxative, sleeping pills and ice packs. He also advised Ingraham to stay home for at least a week. Ingraham returned to the hospital on October 9, and again on October 14. On this last visit the hematoma was six inches in diameter and still swollen, tender and purple in color. Also, there was a

serousness or fluid oozing from the hematoma. The doctor told Ingraham to continue resting for 72 hours. James complained that he could not sit comfortably for about three weeks.

At this same school, Roosevelt Andrews was taken to a bathroom by the same Solomon Barnes, and was made to lean over a urinal. Andrews, along with fourteen or fifteen other boys was paddled with a board. Andrew's father complained to the principal about this but within ten days, Wright, the principal, paddled Andrews on his buttocks and arms causing him to lose the full use of his wrist and arm for a week.

In 1977, the Supreme Court considered the Constitutionality of punishments administered to these and other children at this school. The Court only agreed to review limited parts of this case, the two issues being 1) Does the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the 8th Amendment apply to the administration of discipline through severe corporal punishment inflicted by public school teachers and administrators upon public school children, and 2) Does the infliction of severe corporal punishment upon public school students, absent notice of the charges for which punishment is to be inflicted and and opportunity to be heard violate the due process clause of the 14th Amendment?

Ingraham and Andrews, on behalf of all of the children, did not argue that every act of corporal punishment violated the Constitution rather that only severe and brutal excessive punishment was at issue. In analyzing the American Civil Liberties view on why these acts violated the 8th amendment of cruel and unusual punishment, Reitman, (1979) outlines the following points. First, the use of corporal punishment

has been eliminated from prisons and from the military as being inappropriate. Second, many foreign countries have abolished corporal punishment in schools as being unhealthy and unncessary for the educative process. Third, the use of corporal punishment is psychologically cruel in that it teaches children that violence is an appropriate means for handling differences and disputs. Finally, the use of corporal punishment violates the dignity of the individual.

Bacon and Hyman (1979), in a brief submitted to the Court by the American Psychological Association Task force on the Rights of Children, in support of the petitioners, report that the following countries prohibit corporal punishment in schools: Poland, Luxenbourg, Holland, Austria, France, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium Cyprus, Japan, Ecuador, Iceland, Itatly, Jordan, Zulon, Mauritius, Norway, Israel, Philippines, Portugal and all of the Communist Bloc countries. The APA agreed that corporal punishment does not aid learning and defined it as violence. They continued to define it as cruel because it is inflicted on children who are struggling with a variety of development and social problems related to self image.

In arguing the violation of due process as outlined in the Fourteenth Amendment, the petitioners stated that the punishments received were severe, annoying, frightening and humiliating. Furthermore, because of the inability to attend school due to the injuries incurred, the students felt they had been denied "property " rights in the violation of due process. They continued to claim that some type of notification of charges, that is informing them of their wrongdoings, was needed. As such, the petitioners charged they had received unfair and severe

physical punishment without notification of charge nor right to council.

Regarding the claim of cruel and unusual punishment, the Supreme Court agreed with the school officials that the 8th Amendment is not applicable to the use of discipline by public school personnel. In a 5 to 4 decision, the Court claimed the 8th Amendment was only concerned with criminal actions.

Regarding the denial of due process, the Court again sided with the school officials by deciding the 14th Amendment does not require due process procedures prior to the use of physical punishment. They said that teachers and administrators have a common law privilege to use reasonable corporal punishment. If punishment is seen to be excessive the school authorities can be held liable for criminal damage (e.g. child abuse) but that the issue of due process is not relevant.

In a more recent case, Hall v. Towney (621 F2d 607(1980)), 12 year old Naomi Hall was paddled by her teacher, G. Garrison Towney. The school principal had authorized the spanking. Afterwards, she was taken to the hospital emergency room and was hospitalized for ten days for traumatic injury to her hips, thighs and buttocks and possible permanent injury to her lower back and spine.

Her parents brought action against the school in the U.S. District Court For Southern District of West Virginia. They charged violation of Constitutional rights of procedural and substantive due process, cruel and unusual punishment, right of equal protection and violation of the parents' due rights. This court dismissed all charges but the Appeals

Court reversed part of this decision.

Citing Ingraham, the issue of parents due rights was dismissed. Cruel and unusual punishment was also dismissed since this only applies to criminals. Equal protection was dismissed because the degree of punishment is not a part of determining the nature of punishment. The one charge the Appeals court reversed was denial of substantive due process. Here the Court decided that the severity of forced used was beyond the need so as to be inspired by malaise on the part of the principals.

These two cases show the range of complaints against the use of corporal punishment in schools. As can be seen, the Courts have clearly designated the use of physical punishment in schools as acceptable primarily because children, when they are in class, are seen as being in the official custody of school officials and school officials have the right to use the same punishing techniques as used by parents.

The Courts have declared that child misbehavior is not considered a crime. Therefore, the administering of punishment for child misbehavior is not affected by due process or the Constitutional definition of cruel and unusual punishment.

There is one other way in which parents have gone to court to protest extreme uses of corporal punishment in schools and this is charging the educators with child abuse. As a result of these types of charges, some school districts in states which allow individual communities to decide their own policies regarding the use of corporal punishment have prohibited its use. Most recently, St. Louis made this change (Illinois

Board of Education, 1983). Interestingly, some major urban areas such as Chicago and New York City have long standing policies prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in their schools.

SUMMARY

In the United States the use of physical force to punish children is legal. No restriction is placed on why or under what circumstances a child receives it, nor do any laws mandate that it must be used. The only restriction is that the act must not cause permanent or temporary injury. The right to use physical punishment is given to parents as well as "loco parentis", or parent substitutes such as school personnel.

There is some controversy surrounding the American norm on the use of corporal punishment in that a few communities and states prohibit or restrict its use. Some states even have elaborate procedures for soliciting parental consent regarding its use. In addition, there is some concern over separating the legitimate use of corporal punishment from child abuse.

In contrast to the school situations, the legality of the use of physical punishment of children within the sanctions of their own homes, administered by their parents , has not been challenged. Thus, unless severe injury occurs, the American legal definition of assault as "the attempt to cause injury" does not apply to parents striking their children.

The next chapter will analyze the causes, correlates and consequences of the use of physical punishment on children as described by researchers investigating topics in child development and socialization. This will allow for a comparison between the cultural evaluation of physical punishment and existing scientific knowledge regarding its effectiveness.

Chapter IV

RESEARCH ON PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

This chapter will review characteristics associated with the use of physical punishment as found in research on child development, socialization, aggression, juvenile delinquency and child abuse. Situations where physical punishment is typically used and outcome factors resulting from its use will be described. These research findings will then be compared to cultural norms regarding the use of physical punishment.

RESEARCH ON PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

Research on the corrolates, causes and consequences of physical punishment a major problem incurred is that physical punishment is frequently combined with other types of punishment and no data on the sole description of physical punishment are presented. For example, Grusec and Kriczanski (1980) place both verbal and physical punishment into one category, Eron, et al., (1970) combined multiple forms of punishment to create a scale where harsh verbal punishments were combined with 15 or more hits on the behind, and Dlugokinski and Firestone, (1975) combined physical punishment with other power assertive techniques such as taking away privileges or making one do

extra work. While these studies used the variable of physical punishment it is impossible to tease out its effects as distinct from the interactions of other variables. Thus, the following review will not include these studies.

Causes of Physical Punishment

Reasoning is the primary disciplining technique most parents use with children regardless of the child's age (McKenry, et al., 1981; Sears, et al., 1957; Zahn-Waxler and Chapman, 1982) although, it has been noted that a wide range of things get covered under this label (Parke, 1974). Spanking, as with most punishments, is found to be more effective if associated with reasoning (Sears, et al., 1957) but it has been found that most parents who use frequent reasoning use little corporal punishment and those parents who use frequent corporal punishment use little reasoning (Sears, et al., 1957; Bryan and Freed, 1982).

Mothers, as measured by observations, self reports and children's reports, spank more often than fathers (Sears et al., 1957; McKenry, et al., 1981). Mothers and fathers are more punitive with their sons than their daughters, using spanking, withdrawal of privileges, isolation and ignoring more with the boys than the girls (Sears et al., 1957; McKenry, et al., 1981; Bryan and Freed, 1982).

Behavior of the child is also associated with the use of physical punishment although the summary of work done on this suggests the relationship may be complex. In 1957, Sears found mothers of five year olds were more likely to use physical punishment for aggressive acts

directed against the parent and toward children outside the family than for aggression directed toward other siblings. There is also indication that parents will use physical punishment for extremely aggressive and flagrant acts of disobedience (Walters and Parke, 1976) yet physical punishment is more likely to be used for destruction of property and lapses of self control than for interpersonal aggression (Zahn-Waxler and Chapman, 1982).

Corrolates of Physical Punishment

The most common variable investigated as being associated with child rearing is socio-economic class. Early research by Sears et al., 1957; Miller and Swanson, 1958 and Kohn, 1963, suggest working class parents are more likely to use physical punishment as well as ridicule and shouting than middle class parents. Middle class parents are more likely to use reasoning and guilt-arousing techniques.

More recent work has diminished this difference (Straus, 1974; Bryan and Freed, 1982). After reviewing studies published between 1936 and 1970, Erlanger (1974b) concluded that the relationship between social class and the use of spanking is weak. As Erlanger states, "the best conclusion is that there is indeed some relationship between class and punishment technique but that it is probably not strong enough to be of great theoretical or practical significance." (1974b, p. 154).

Societal contexts as related to physical punishment have also been explored through the use of cross-cultural comparisons. Petersen, et al., (1982) hypothesize that the use of physical punishment might be

related to issues of conformity and self reliance and that cultural variation in these would be related to cultural differences in the use of physical punishment. These authors argue that cultures having conformity as a goal will emphasize teaching children to obey authority, that is to obey externally imposed standards. They expect to find more use of physical punishment in these types of cultures. Likewise, in societies emphasizing self reliance where children are taught to think for themselves and have minimal dependence on external sources for directions they expect to find little physical punishment.

Using the Standard Cross Cultural sample of the Human Relations Area file, 122 societies were evaluated on the amount of control or close supervision societies have over economic, family, political and religious realms. As was predicted, they found that the greater the valuation of conformity relative to self reliance the greater the use of physical punishment

Consequences of Physical Punishment

There is an extensive range of factors which have been seen to be consequences of physical punishment. For example, Bryan and Freed, (1982) examined a sample of college students and found that those who experience frequent and intense use of physical punishment in their homes, reported receiving significantly lower grades than other students. However, upon inspection of the college transcripts no difference in grades between the two groups was found. For some reason, students who reported having received high levels of physical punishment

perceived themselves as having lower grades. Bryan and Freed's study suggests possible consequences of physical punishment in the area of self concept but there has been little follow up in this direction

Baumrind, (1973,1977), contends that controlled use of physical punishment teaches children self-reliance and self control. Based on observations of structured teaching sessions between mothers and three-year olds and in-home observations, Baumrind states that parents who are generally permissive (who also use low levels of physical punishment) have children who score low on self reliance, self control and are immature. Likewise, parents who are too authoritative are too controlling and have children who are too dependent and have trouble making friends. She endorses what she calls an authoritarian style where parents are warm yet, controlling. These parents use less ridicule and withdrawal of love techniques than the other two groups and they use more physical punishment than the permissive parents. Baumrind's work clearly documents differences in child-rearing styles which create differences in children but the specific impact of the use of physical punishment is hard to tease from the overall style of parenting.

Another frequently investigated topic is the relationship between physical punishment and aggressiveness of the child. Most studies have assumed causality here, but as will be discussed later, longitudinal data casts doubts on this. Two major review articles, Becker (1964) and Parke and Slaby (1983) describe many research studies which have documented the relationship between power-assertive disciplining techniques, (ranging from verbal rebukes to physical force) and higher

levels of aggressive behavior by the child, (such as Eron, et al., 1971; Becker, et al., 1962; Sears, et al., 1953). This relationship exists for children of all ages. However, both reviews suggest major problems in the implications of these studies.

Becker reviews many studies that find hostile parents, who frequently use physical punishment ,have aggressive children. He points out that we do not know if this correlation is the result of the type of discipline used or if it is the result of the parents' hostility or if it is some interaction of the two which is actually related to the child's aggressive behavior. The reason this is unclear is that it is difficult to locate warm, loving parents who use frequent physical punishment or hostile parents who do not use physical punishment.

Parke and Slaby continue this argument in suggesting that multivariate analyses show that many factors interact with the use of disciplining techniques, such as parental rejection, extreme permissiveness or parental inconsistency and that it is usually a combination of such factors that is highly associated with children's aggressive behavior, not just the frequent use of punishment and the specific use of physical punishment.

Becker presents three hypotheses as to why we might expect the association between physical punishment and child's aggressiveness. First, physical punishment is frustrating and might instigate anger in the child. While we have only correlational data on this topic thus far, Becker believes there is strong empirical support for this. A second explanation may be that physical punishment serves as a model for aggressive behavior. Becker claims there also is much support for this

(e.g. Bandura, et al., 1961). Finally, it is possible that corporal punishment directly reinforces the aggressive behavior in children. This hypothesis, as of yet, has received little attention. Again, at the present state of the research it is impossible to determine if these or any combination of these hypotheses are true.

A final problem in this literature is that most of the data are static. Typically, the frequency in which physical punishment is used is compared to a child's immediate behavior. The few longitudinal studies which have been conducted suggest the long term effect of physical punishment may not be related to child's latter agressiveness. For example, Eron, et al., (1971) analyzed parental punishment pratices of 875 third graders in relationship to the child's aggressive behavior and as with other static studies, they found a high correlation between parental use of physical punishment in the home and aggressiveness in school. However, in a ten year follow up (Lefkowitz, et al., (1977) of 427 children from the original study, the results changed. Based on peer, parent and self ratings of aggressive behavior, no significant relationship between earlier parent punitiveness (specifically including physical punishment) and children's aggressiveness displayed ten years later, was found. These findings suggest there is a weak or nonexistent relationship between earlier parental punitiveness and later aggression, at least with moderate levels of physical punishment.

This general conclusion, however, is not agreed upon by all researchers in the field. After reviewing the research on this topic, Walters and Grusec conclude:

> The obvious extrapolation is that if parents employ physical punishment their children will become physically aggressive,

> where as if they rely on other forms of punishment (such as withdrawal of approval and privileges or social isolation) their children are less likely to become aggressive. It could be argued that because of the lack of sufficient evidence it is premature at this point to maintain that physical punishment leads to aggression. However, because an experiment in which children are physically assaulted can never be carried out, it will never be possible to assess the effects of such treatment on subsequent behavior in the laboratory. And not all naturalistic studies of child-rearing have shown a positive correlation between physical punishment and aggression (See Yarrow, et al., 1968). Moreover, an interpretation of those in which the correlation is positive must be tempered by the possibility that the relationship is reversed and that aggressive children require aggressive treatment in order to keep them under control. But the data certainly suggest to us that there is a strong possibility that physical punishment--and physical punishment alone--leads to an increase in aggressive behavior and that the mechanism for this increase is imitation. (1977: 148)

Before closing this discussion of characteristics associated with the use of physical punishment there are two other, major fields of research which have looked at the implications of physical punishment but it is difficult to categorize these as either causes, corrolates or consequences. Thus, because of this and because of the extensive efforts in these areas the relationship between physical punishment and juvenile delinquency and the relationship between physical punishment and child abuse will be analyzed in separate sections.

The Relationship between Physical Punishment and Juvenile Delinquency

The relationship between physical punishment and juvenile delinquency is one where there has been much interest, primarily in the field of criminology. In the 1940's, Social Disorganization explanations were popular and one application of this addressed the relationship between

juvenile delinquency and family structure. At first it was theorized that the "intact family", one where the father was employed and the mother stayed at home, was inversely associated with delinquency. When the research linking "broken" homes and juvenile delinquency found no significant relationship efforts focused on specifics of the perceived disorganization of the family, such as the nature of the emotional relationship between family members and the overall child-rearing practices. Discipline was specifically referred to here. Yet, this avenue of thought, as with many applications of the Social Disorganizational approach, did not empirically document any significant relationships (Sykes, 1978).

Later work looked at the relationship between specific types of disciplinary techniques and delinquency. Glueck and Glueck (1950) found that lax and inconsistent types of discipline were more strongly associated with delinquency than very strict techniques, including frequent physical punishment. Similarly, McCord, et al., (1959) found that the erratic nature of punishment, not the type or amount, was the major determinative factor related to delinquency.

More recently, McCord (1979), in a comprehensive longitudinal study, analyzed data from social workers, therapists and court procedings of 233 boys who were placed in a delinquent rehabilitation program. At the time of placement (1939 to 1945) the boys were between the ages of 5 and 13. In 1975, 76% of these boys, now men, were located. A comparison of earlier parent disicplining techniques as reported in the records to criminal behavior was made and found that severe disciplining were techniques directly related to some types of crime. Specifically, they

were positively associated with crimes against people but not with crimes against property.

As with some of the other studies already reviewed, McCord's study tells us little about the relationship between criminal behavior and any one specific type of punishment because the use of verbal and physical punishment were combined into one category for data analysis. This combined variable also included the amount of restraint a parent used when angry, such as whether or not they threw things and whether or not the parent was consistently punitive.

Welsh (1979) has analyzed the relationship between juvenile delinquency and physical punishment most directly and has formulated what he refers to as "The Belt Theory of Juvenile Delinquency". This title is the result of his documentation of a strong relationship between parental use of physical punishment and juvenile delinquency. For example, in a study of 19 court referred girls and 29 court referred boys, Welsh found all of the boys and 12 of the girls had been exposed to severe parental punishment. Severe parental punishment was defined as the use of a belt, extension cord or boards. Welsh also looked at the prison records of 132 prisoners and found that for males, the reported aggression was directly related to the severity of physical punishment as reported in their case histories. Interestingly this relationship did not hold up for females. For males though, this relationship remained even after controlling for socio-economic status.

Welsh's work appears to document the relationship between physical punishment and juvenile delinquency, although, as with studies on aggression, the causal direction of this relationship cannot, as yet, be

specified. There is a further problem in generalizing from Welsh's work. His operational definition of physical punishment includes behaviors which in contemporary times would be classified as child abuse.

The Relationship between Physical Punishment and Child Abuse

Recently, researchers in the area of domestic violence have started looking at the relationship between the legitimate use of physical punishment and child abuse. One theorized connection between the two is that physical punishment actually trains children in the use of violence and that this is a root cause of both child abuse and wife beating.

In an analysis of a nationally representative sample surveying 2143 American families, Straus (1982) investigates this by comparing "ordinary violence" to more serious acts of domestic violence. Parents were asked if they themselves, had received physical punishment around the age of 13,(the age when approximateily 50% of the parents were not spanked). There is little or no relationship between the amount of physical punishment experienced by the parents around age 13 and their subsequent use of ordinary physical punishment on their own children. Straus argues that this is because almost all parents use physical punishment regardless of their backgrounds. However, in respect to severe assaults on children, Straus found that the more parents were physically punished, the greater the probability of them severely assaulting or abusing their own children. In addition, Straus points

out similarities in the etiology of child abuse and physical punishment in terms of variables such as family size, age of parents, income, employment patterns and alcohol patterns.

Using these same data, Straus finds associations between the use of physical punishment and other forms of domestic violence. The more physical punishment experienced by husbands, the higher the rate of violence against their wives and similarily, the more physical punishment experienced by wives, the higher the rates of violence against their husbands. Interestingly, Straus also found a significant relationship between level of parent-to child violence and sibling violence. Forty-two percent of the children who experienced culturally permissible acts of physical punishment repeatedly and severely assaulted their siblings while only 15% of those children who received no physical punishment during the target year did so. In addition, it was found that 76% of the children who were repeatedly abused by their parents engaged in severe assaults against their brothers or sisters.

It has also been theorized that in many instances of abuse, parents believe they are using legitimate force, that is, they do not realize that what they are doing is illegal or inapproriate (Garbarino and Gilliam, 1980). Martin and Kadushin, (1981), attempted to look at this by analyzing the interactive sequence that lead to an episode of abuse. They conducted 66 interviews of confirmed cases of abuse where the interviewee admitted to being the abuser. From this parent's description, the reported incident began with the child engaging in some type of noxious and aversive behavior. Eighty-five percent of the parents were angered by this behavior. In almost all of the cases, the

parent's first response was some type of low-level, non-corporal intervention. Forty-two percent of the parents admonished, threatened or warned the child, 40% explained why the behavior was wrong, 4% either walked away or tried to place the child in time-out, 5% used some mild type of physical punishment such as shaking or slapping, and 8% used a more punitive form of physical punishment such as whipping or beating. Of these instances, all of which ended as an episode of abuse, 91% began with a non-abusive disciplining procedure initiated with the intent of changing the child's behavior. In most cases, the parent's behavioral response did not alter the child's behavior and then the parents became more distraught because the child was still engaging in a misbehavior and because the child was now, blatantly disobeying the parent. High levels of frustration were described by these parents during the situations when they eventually abused their children

This consistent pattern of interaction clearly shows a relationship the use of physical punishment and child abuse. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, this relationship was one of the reasons the Swedish government outlawed all types of physical punishment

SUMMARY

Most research on the causes of physical punishment have analyzed its usefulness for the task of childrearing. Under some circumstances it appears to be effective as a method of social control. However, considerable attention has been directed at analyzing the negative consequences of its use. These include loss of self esteem or

inappropriate aggressiveness.

Several of these negative factors associated with physical punishment involved illegitimate uses of force, either by the parent or by the child. For the general study of the cultural legitimation of physical force this suggests that the line separating legitimate force and violence may be a bit hazy. One of the strongest supports for this is the work by Martin and Kaduchin who show that sequences of substantiated abuse began with the use of normal, legal, physical punishment.

This ambiguity on the relationship between legitimate and illegitimate physical force is similar to the dilemma found in the American school system regarding its use of corporal punishment. While the use of physical punishment in schools is basically legitimate, there are times when instances have resulted in child abuse. This is why some districts have prohibited its use

In light of these undesired consequences associated with the use of physical punishment it is noteworthy that it continues to be culturally endorsed and actively engaged in by most American parents. As was seen in the review of the childrearing manuals, the legitimacy of this practice is not challenged. Even in the court cases described in Chapter III, complaints were directed at the manner in which the physical punishment was administered, not that its use was inappropriate.

Perhaps the use of physical punishment remains legitimate because most parents who use it do not cross the line into abuse. Perhaps the benefits of its use are more important than the potential negative

consequences. Finally, perhaps it is because of these negative consequences associated with physical punishment that cause some parents to refrain from using it.

The following empirical analysis will address these issues. Testimony from people who do not engage in the use of physical punishment will be analyzed to determine why they deviate from this norm. In addition, from the process used to locate these parents, information from a larger group of parents will also be analyzed.

Chapter V

METHODS

The focus of the present work is to investigate the meanings parents attribute to the use of physical punishment, including their perceptions regarding its legitimacy and their opinions on why they do not use it. A viable method for studying these parents' views is to ask them to describe and explain their own behavior. Since extensive details about these parents opinions needs to be collected, it is most appropriate to conduct interviews with those parents who use no form of physical punishment.

Following is a description of how the sample was selected and a more detailed description of the methods use.

The Sample

Data were collected from a Northeastern seacoast city with a population of approximately 27,000 people. This site was chosen because it was close to the researcher and because the school district in this city was extremely willing to support research efforts. The Assistant Superintendant of the school district was presented with an indepth description of the proposed research. She then, agreed to present it to the Superintendent and to the School Board. The study was approved by

the school district with one stipulation; the researcher would have no access to the names of the students nor their parents unless the parents volunteered this information.

The initial screening questionnaire was given to the Assistant Superintendent who gave them to the six public grade school principals at their weekly meeting. The principals, in turn, gave them to each classroom teacher in grades one through three (including the learning disabled and remedial classes) and then the teachers gave them to the students who took them home to their parents. Seven days later the same process was used to send the parents a reminder notice.

Nine-hundred fifty questionnaires were sent out but only 186 (19.5%) were returned. Undoubtedly, the cumbersome process of sending out these surveys affected the response rate. It is impossible to say how many of the questionnaires and follow up letters actually made it to the parents although this is the method the school district uses to communicate with parents.

Eighty-four percent of those questionnaires received were completed by mothers, 15% by fathers and 2% by both parents. Regardless of who completed the questionnaire data were collected on all adults living in the household. Eighty-one percent of the families had two parents living in the home. The mothers' average age was 31.9 years with a range of 22 to 48 years and the average age of fathers was 33.8 with a range of 21 to 48 years. Mothers had an average of 2.2 years of college and fathers had an average of 2.9 years. Census data for this community show that 76% of the adults have finished high school and 17.5% have finished college. Thus, this sample is comprised of more educated

people than in the overall community.

The mean income of those mothers reporting an income (52%) was $9,306. Adjusting this by excluding one extremely high outlier brought the average to $8,562. Fathers reporting an income (76%) reported making an average of $20,244 although the removal of one outlier (not related to the female outlier) reduced this to $19,817. The average family income was $26,415 which is high compared to the adjusted family income of $20,861.29 as reported in the census for this particular community.

Thirty-six percent of the mothers reported working at blue collar jobs, 30% reported having white collar jobs and 34% reported having no job. Forty-seven percent of the fathers were working at blue collar jobs, 50% are at white collar jobs and 3% reported not working. A final characteristic which is uniquely important in describing this sample is that 40% of the fathers and 2% of the mothers are employed by the military. The high percentage of military families is due to the location of an airforce base and a naval shipyard in the community.

The extremely low response rate suggests severe problems for generalizing from these parents to all of the parents in the school system. However, the main focus of this study is to understand parents who use no physical force and this sampling procedure did locate such parents. Nevertheless, for any conclusions involving the representativeness of the findings, it will be critical to remember the potential biases of this sample.

The Initial Questionnaire

A cover letter was attached to the initial questionnaire explaining to the parents who was conducting the research and who they could contact if they had any questions or comments (Appendix A). The instructions on the questionnaire asked the parents to describe how they disciplined only this particular child (Appendix B). The questionnaire used to collect data listed nine different methods of disciplining children. Parents were asked to respond to the following questions:

(a) Have you ever used this technique to discipline your child?

(b) Do you usually use this technique?

(c)In a typical two week period how often do you use this technique?

(d) How effective do you feel it is?

This last question was scored on a four point Likert scale with the following response categories: 4 = very effective, 3 = usually effective, 2 = seldom effective, 1 = not effective.

Parents were asked to indicate which technique they used most frequently. They were also asked to describe the most frequent type of misbehavior their child performed. Two open-ended questions pertaining to why parents use physical punishment were asked, "If you spank or slap your child what are your reasons for using this type of discipline?" and "If you do not spank or slap your child what are your reasons for doing this?".

In addition to these items, several questions regarding family

background were included such as the number of people in the household, ages of family members, ethnic background, education and occupation of parents and religious preference. If the parents were willing to be interviewed about their childrearing techniques they were asked to fill in a card with their name and address for later indepth interviews.

The instrument was pretested in a group of 88 families living in married student housing. Although the age range of the children was larger than the target group several minor problems in the questionnaire were detected and changes were subsequently made. Examples of the problems included asking for the age of the child not just the grade level since children of various ages may be in the same grade at school. Another change was the inclusion of the word "restriction" as well as the word "grounded" to designate one type of discipline.

In both the pretest and the main study the cover letter sent with the questionnaire informed parents that the study was investigating the variety and the effectiveness of techniques used to discipline children. Parents were informed that if they did not return the enclosed postcard with their names and addresses the questionnaires were anonymous. In the cover letter it was clearly pointed out that the large six-digit number on the post card matched the number printed on the questionnaire and thus, if parents agreed to be interviewed (and sent in the signed postcard) their names could be matched to the questionnaire. Of those returning the screening questionnaire 68 % also returned the postcard indicating a willingness to be interviewed.

The Interview Schedule

Of the 186 questionnaires received, 19 families did not spank their children but of those only 12 agreed to be interviewed. Nine additional families were added by expanding the definition of not spanking from never to not having done it for several years. This proved to be a reasonable strategy because it turned out that some of these parents thought they might have spanked their children but it had been such a long time ago that they really could not remember.

The interview schedule, (Appendix C) included a wide range of questions regarding the following topics: the parent's description a typical situation where the child misbehaves, the parent's goal when disciplining and their assessment of its effectiveness, the spouse's views on childrearing and if there was any disagreement on views between the parents and finally, a review of the parents' childhoods. In addition, they were asked why they did not use physical punishment and why they thought other parents did.

While there was a prescribed order for the questions, this order was flexible. During the interviews it often became apparent to the respondent that the goal of the interview was to find out everything about these families. As a result, the respondents frequently brought up a new group of issues without being asked. For example, after a woman described how her parents disciplined her she continued to describe how her husband was raised.

The interview schedule was pretested on the parents in the married student housing sample and this also provided the interviewer with

practice. From listening to these tapes some changes in style were made such as addressing children as "children" rather than "kids". Another problem incurred was asking parents to describe the type of people they want their children to be. This was simply too broad of a question for people to answer so it was replaced with a closed-ended question used by Kohn (1969), where a list of characteristics is presented and the parent choses the three most desireable.

Exposure to Violence

At the end of the interview two identical self-administered questionnaires requesting information on the respondent's prior exposure to violence and attitudes toward the legitimate use of physical force were left for the respondent and her spouse to complete (Appendix D). These questions were ones used in a national sample, survey conducted by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker and Ball, 1969). The original study collected data by interviewing 1,176 people, 18 years or older in 1968.

The items selected for the present study were the same questions used by Owens and Straus (1975) in their analysis of the effects of exposure to violence as related to attitudes toward the legitimate use of physical force. These items included assessments of exposure to a range of types of interpersonal violence including slapping, punching, choking, knifing or shooting. Exposure was measured in three ways; either a witness, a victim, or a perpetrator. Incidents occuring during childhood were separated from incidents occuring during adulthood.

The questionnaire also surveys attitudes toward the approval of violence at three different levels, the national, the political and the interpersonal levels. At the personal level there were specific questions on the legitimacy of spanking children under the following circumstances: if the child was noisy, disobedient, expelled from school or if the child had broken a law.

In addition to providing a means to compare this group to the general population in terms of exposure and attitudes towards violence, this questionnaire provided other functions. First, it provided some data regarding the spouse. It also provided a rational for revisiting the respondent two or three days later. During the interim the tapes could be listened to and the researcher could see if any questions had been skipped, if there were any which required clarification or if there were any answer which should be followed up with more probing questions. Finally, this questionnaire also gave the respondent time to think about the interview. When this final questionnaire was left respondents were told that if they had any questions or thought about any other information which could be relevant the talk could be continued in a few days when the questionnaires were picked up.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Initial contact with the parents to be interviewed was a telephone conversation where the respondents decided if they wanted the interview to take place in their homes or if they wanted it at some public place. This option was offered in case some respondents did not want a stranger entering their home. All but two chose their homes with these two exceptions taking place a two different restaurants. After these two

interviews, neither person objected to me coming to their houses at a later time to pick up the final questionnaires.

Appointments were set up with the mothers. This parent was selected because they were easier to reach and because 6 of the families were headed by single female parents. While setting up the interview nothing was said about wanting the interview to be private and since most of the interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes, many of the interviews were not. Specifically, the husband, (and in one case the live-in male companion) were also present. This was especially true for the military families.

The effect of the male presence varied but in most cases did not seem to alter the answers to most questions. It added insight to the report on how each adult was raised and it lead to interesting conversations between the parents when they were asked if they agreed about childrearing. In these situations, the parents appeared to be frank in their answers, demonstrating how their opinions differed. Often, they directly criticized some aspect of each other's child-rearing approach. This suggests that parents may conduct extensive negotiations among themselves in regards to child disciplining but because there were so few cases in this sample little else can be said about this topic. However, in regards to the quality of the interviews, it appears that the presence of the spouse had little influence on information presented in the interview, with one exception.

Halfway through the interview with one woman, her husband came into the room, brought us all some coffee, sat down and joined us. In reviewing the tape of this interview I discovered discrepancies between

information presented before the husband joined us and that presented afterwards. These discrepancies were not simple distortions of the truth rather they presented a totally different picture of what the family was like. For example, the woman describe most of the family's problems as revolving around behavior problems of the middle son. This was not the child who was the target of my investigation, I was actually interested in his little sister. I had an extremely difficult time getting the mother to stop talking about how terrible the middle son was and provide information on the youngest daughter. The woman was persistent in describing what an awful child this boy was. The picture totally changed when the husband joined us. He defined the family as having minor problems and spent little time focusing on one specific child. Due to inconsistencies such as this it was difficult to determine what was really happening in this family. Because of the mixed opinions and because both parents admitted spanking recently, this family was removed from the main part of the analysis.

This was not the only family who reported recent slappings or spankings of their children. Four other families reported this and they too were removed.

At the beginning of each interview the respondents were presented with a consent form to sign (Appendix E). A copy of this, signed by the researcher, was left with each family. The nature of this study did not demand this type of consent process but it created a tone of seriousness about the work. It also provided the respondents with the written name, university affiliation and telephone number of the researcher which they could use to verify the interviewer or to contact the researcher for any

reason.

After this, the respondents were asked if they minded if the interview was tape recorded. Several people showed signs of nervousness but all agreed to its use. Most appeared to forget about its presence and thus, as often found in other works(Orne, 1968), it is doubtful that the tape recorder altered the content the discussion.

During the course of the interview people revealed a tremendous amount of information about themselves and their families. The prepared strategy of the interviews was to foster and encourage a friendship-like relationship. This helped facilitate feelings of trust between the respondents and the researcher and often created a situation where respondents shared personal information which they had not revealed to many, if any, other people.

In many interviews a situational "demand characteristic" was created (Orne, 1968). However, the demand was not upon the respondents but upon the researcher. The interviews were similar in form and tone, to a conversation between two people who were in the process of becoming friends. As such, when respondents were urged to reveal personal experiences, they frequently expected some type of personal revelation about the researcher. It was not always deep personal information that they requested but they wanted to know something about me. They asked questions, such as, where did you grow up, are you married, how did you get along with your parents? In more structured types of interviews these questions would be deflected because they are seen to be irrelevant to the study but with the types of interviews in this study, it was an issue to be dealt with. People did not feel comfortable

revealing their own lives without me revealing something about myself. This process is one also apparent among friends where mutual trust is built around mutual exchange of personal information.

There were two other dimensions of the demand characteristics placed upon the researcher. Some people felt awkward doing all of the talking. They were not accustom to someone asking them so many questions and they needed an occasional break. Some appeared to need time to figure out the nature of the situation. This was particularily apparent for the two women in the study who were at least ten years older than me.

Both of these women seem to question why I would be interested in how they raised their children. One woman was very careful about everything she told me (this was one of the interviews which took place in a restaurant). She also seemed very apprehensive about the fact that I was not only younger but also associated with a university. She was clearly confident about the way she raised her children but she just could not understand why I was interested in her opinions. This was affecting the interview in that she was not providing indepth answrs to any of the questions.

After going through several questions where she gave me minimal, one syllable if possible, answers I finally mentioned that I was presently five months pregnant and that I had not thought about many of the issues she had mentioned. I continued to say that there seemed to be so many things to know about raising children. At this point I had given her an explanation as to why I might be interested in how she raised her children. I was asking her to help me prepare for my own. The

motivation she attributed to me was not my principle one but, by offering this explanation, she could see some value in continuing the interview. The quality and depth of the answers she provided from this point on clearly differed from the earlier part. She now had a purpose for the conversation and her purpose was one which gave me a good opportunity to get the type of information I was interested in.

The other older woman, age 39, also differed significantly from the other interviews in that she appeared to have little commitment to the interview. She was polite and very causal, but she appeared to be uninterested in the interview. This was an atypical reaction in that most of the parents were extremely interested in the study. Throughout this one particular interview I only received very brief information. It was among the shortest interviews. Again, after the interview I tried to determine what had prevented this interview from being as successful as the others. Age differences between us was the only factor that seemd to vary but this did not seem to be sufficient to explain this difference.

Three days later I returned to this woman's house to pick up the survey and, to my surprise, she invited me in to have a beer with her. She was in the middle of a conversation with a married couple, who were obviously good friends of hers. When I entered I realized they had been casually sitting in the living room, drinking their beers, and discussing my study. They were trying to figure out why so many parents use physical punishment to disciplining their children. I sat down and listened.

Both families had spanked their first set of children but both had had

another child, relatively late in life. These later children were never spanked. In analyzing this, all three agreed that their lives as parents with the later child were much different than their earlier childrearing experiences. They all agreed that money was a major factor. In raising these later children both families were much more financially secure than during the earlier years so they did not have to worry about running short of money. In addition, they all agreed that now they felt more confident about their childrearing skills. One of their children had "make it through adolescence" and, in their opinion, the children had turned out to be decent human beings. This seemed to be proof to them that they had been successful parents.

After spending an hour and a half talking with these parents I concluded that probably there had been more interest in the interview than I had originally suspected. It is possible that the differences between this particular woman and some of the younger mothers I interviewed was that she was fairly relaxed and self assured about the way she raised her children.

The final dimension of the demand characteristic was another point often found in everyday communication. Some of the respondents asked about events in my life for reasons other than attempting to build trust between us. They were trying to see if I had understood them. Frequently they described situations to me which were highly emotional and difficult to articulate clearly, or as was frequently described, " It's difficult to put into words". The respondents would try to see if I could recall an event which was similar, attempting to validate that I had understood them. They would ask, "Does that seem strange?" or "Has

anything like this ever happen to you?". As in everyday conversation, there was tremendous social pressure to respond. Prior to the interviews I had planned to constantly maintain the focus of the talks on the respondent, not on myself. Yet, here the respondents were pushing me to talk about myself.

As a strategy for dealing with all of these demands I decided that if pushed, I would talk about myself although, I tried to present the same information in each interview. This usually included information about my marital status, my pregnancy and my five year old neighbor. I would describe situations relating to this neighbor boy to verify that I understood some of the points the mothers were making. Describing his antics also provided some humor and eased the respondents some. After describing how he drew murals on the wall they frequently launched into extensive monologues telling me about their children, telling me things that I was directly going to inquire about.

Only one time did I temporarily dominate the interview by giving a short monologue. This was when one woman started to cry and was unable to talk. All of the people I spoke with considered the raising of their children a very important responsibility. They all took considerable time evaluating how they were doing. I suspect this partially explains why they were so invested in my interviews. It gave them an opportunity to sit back and to review their own childrearing skills. The woman in this particular case, started to cry because she was trying very hard to be good to her children because she really loved them. They were very important to her and she hoped she was doing a good job. This was a very emotional issue for her and she suddenly broke down and started to

cry.

Then, she became embarrassed and stopped talking. At this point I launched into a soliloquy saying how I too felt that childrearing was very important and that I could understand how she felt. My temporary domination of the conversation gave her an opportunity to to calm down, to get away from the guilty feelings and to relax. This was the only time I really had to do an extensive amount of talking during any interview.

Usually, at the end of the interview I conducted a brief debriefing. At this time I mentioned that I had previously done research on child abuse and that I hoped by studying parents who used no form of physical force I could gain insight on information to help abusive parents. This comment was usually met by the parents presenting their own personal theories on the causes of child abuse. At this time I usually received a long general declaration by the parents on their overall view of childrearing. They did this while criticizng and/or comparing themselves to other parents.

At the closing of the interviews, most parents felt a strong investment in the study. Some often added additional information which might aid my analysis. For example, one woman casually mentioned that her husband felt that she had been abused as a child. She had never thought about this prior to his saying it but she thought it probably was true. Based on the description of her childhood she had described earlier in the interview, I firmly agreed although I did not mention this to her.

By the end of the interview the overall relationship between the parents and me was good. Most wished me good luck and told me to feel free to call them again if I had any more questions. In some cases the closing was a bit awkward. I had stepped into their homes, asked them about many personal experiences and got them to tell me about much of their life. Then, I left. An ethical problem with attempting to develop a friendship like relationship during an interview is that a friend does not simply walk out after the sharing of life histories. This is an unfortunate aspect of this approach. It was exceptionally difficult when, at the conclusion of a particularily long and intense interview, the 6 year old daughter ran after me as I walked out the door saying, "Come back and visit my mom again. She needs to talk with friends like you".

Chapter VI

CONTEXTS WHERE THE USE OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT IS LEGITIMATE

This chapter will analyze parents' perceptions of when the use of physical punishment is socially appropriate as indicated by their descriptions of when they themselves use it. This analysis will primarily focus on spanking since it is the most frequently used form of physical punishment. The following analyses are based on the responses of 186 parents who completed the initial screening questionnaire.

FREQUENCY OF USE

Eighty-seven percent of the parents report having spanked their children at least once and 12% said they did so regularly. Since the term "regular" may be ambiguous, another item which measures frequency of use shows that of those parents who report having spanked, 39.3% used it at least once in the last two weeks, 56.3% used it within the past month and 98.2% used it sometime within the last year. Sixty-eight percent of the parents have slapped their child at least once, but only 3% describe it as a usual method. This sample includes a slightly lower percentage of parents who have used physical punishment compared to some studies reviewed in Chapter 2 but, it is still close to other, more representative samples.

WHY PARENTS SPANK

The open-ended question asking parents why they spank produced a wide variety of responses. Some parents described very specific rules for their children to follow and when the children violated these, they were spanked. Examples of these rules are "is doing something to hurt herself', "lies", or "steals". Thirty-one percent of the parents listed a violation of a specific rule such as these as the reason why they spanked.

More frequently, parents did not list a specific behavior which resulted in the use of spanking rather, they described times of interpersonal conflict between the child and the parent which led to the spanking. This included responses such as, "talks back", "refuses to reason", "to get my child's attention", or " to show I am serious". Of those parents who spank, 68.8% list one such description as the reason why they spank.

Within this latter group, representing a large percentage of the parents who spank, a further breakdown of these answers was made. Some of these answers refer to the escalation of conflict between the parent and the child, (e.g. "nothing else works"), some refer to the child's behavior during times of conflict, (e.g. "talks back" or "continues to misbehave") and still others describe some aspect of the parents' behavior which caused the spanking (e.g. "I'm tired and frustrated," or "As a way of showing my dominance").

The first category, representing 34.7% of the parents who list

interactive conflict as the reason for spanking, is largely comprised of situations where the parent has tried a variety of tactics but has not succeeded in creating the desired response in the child's behavior. Possibly this category could have been included as part of the child's behavior or the parent's behavior but it seems to include a combination of both. This escalation involves multiple transgressions by the child, the initial behavior and the violation of the parent's initial intervention, and multiple attempts by the parent. The answer that spanking is used as a last response typifies this category and by itself was listed as the primariy reason by 20% of all spanking parents.

Relatively few parents who listed interactive conflict focused exclusively upon the child's behavior: only 17.4%. A much larger proportion, 47.9%, focused on the parent's behavior with no mention of the specific behavior of the child. Examples of these comments included," A quick spank on the bottom does more to release my frustrations" or "Mostly because of my mood (tired or irritable)- less patience." or "Very rarely do I spank but when I do it is because I am overtired, under great pressure and have lost my temper." These types of comments reflect the responses of 27.5% of all parents in the sample who spank.

Sears, et al.,(1957) suggest the importance of the parent's role in the conflict as related to the use of spanking in that if the child physically attacks the mother, the child is more likely to be spanked than if the child attacked another child. This new finding suggests that other factors of the parent's behavior are also related to the use of physical punishment. It appears that these factors may result from

situations that have little to do with the child's transgressions, rather, they suggest that if the parent has had a bad day or is in a bad mood, the child is more likely to be spanked. It is possible that the child's behavior contributed or exasperated these problems for the parent, but, by these parents' own evaluations of the situations, their own behavior is focused upon, not the child's. In fact, many of these parents expressed guilt about using physical punishment as is reflected in the above statement by the woman who rarely spanks or by another parent who put it quite succintly, "I spank because I am angry and I am immature."

In summary, approximately one-third of the parents report spanking when their child breaks a specific rule with the remaining two-thirds spanking for reasons related to events occuring during times of interactive conflict. Thirty-five percent of this last group, or slightly over one-fifth of all spanking parents, located the impetus for spanking in both the child and the parent, claiming that the conflict just kept escalating and other things did not work. Very few parents spanked because of the child's role in the conflict and close to one-third of all spanking parents did so because of their own contribution to the conflict.

Table 6-1. Background Characteristics of Spanking and Non-Spanking Parents

Characteristics	Percent of: Spankers (N=161)	Non-Spankers (N=19)
Age of Father		
18 - 30	20.6	12.5
30 - 34	36.8	43.8
35 - 39	30.9	31.3
40 and over	11.8	12.5
Education of Mother		
No High School Degree	7.6	5.5
High School Degree	38.0	33.3
Some College	24.1	11.1
College Degree	10.1	38.9
Post College	20.3	11.1
Education of Father		
No High School Degree	5.9	--
High School Degree	30.9	25.0
Some College	24.3	37.5
College Degree	14.0	12.5
Post College	25.0	25.0
Occupation of Mother		
Blue Collar	35.4	52.9
White Collar	29.3	29.4
Not Employed	31.3	17.7
Occupation of Father		
Blue Collar	49.3	31.3
White Collar	50.0	50.0
Not Employed	0.7	18.9

Table 6-1. Continued.

Characteristics	Percent of: Spankers (N=161)	Non-Spankers (N=19)
Income of Mother		
Less than $10,000	65.0	66.7
10,000 - 19,999	31.0	25.0
20,000 - 29,999	3.0	--
30,000 or more	1.0	8.3
Income of Father		
Less than $10,000	5.5	0.0
10,000 - 19,999	49.3	45.5
20,000 - 29,999	29.7	36.4
30,000 or more	15.6	18.2
Mothers in the Military	1.3	5.6
Fathers in the Military	41.9	37.5
Single Parents	18.6	26.3

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPANKERS AND NON-SPANKERS

Background Characteristics

As previously mentioned, 13% of the parents reported they do not spank. In comparing spanking and non-spanking parents there were very few statistically significant differences between the two, which, in part, may be the related to the relatively small number of non-spankers. Yet, there appear to be many differences between the two groups and since few studies have ever compared the two, these differences will be reported, even though they are not statistically significant.

Table 6-1 shows many of the background characteristics of non-spanking and spanking parents. As can be seen, both non-spanking mothers and fathers tend to be older than the spanking parents. Only one non-spanking mother and two non-spanking father are less than thirty years old. The overall level of education for non-spanking parents is higher than the spanking parents although there are slightly more spanking parents who have post Bachelor's degree than non-spanking parents. The percentage of non-spanking mothers and fathers who have white collar jobs is very close to the percentage of spanking parents. It appears that the older age and higher levels of education of non-spanking mothers does not guarantee that these women are more likely to have higher status jobs and relatedly their incomes are not too

Table 6-2. Methods of Discipline of Spanking and Non-Spanking Parents

Techniques Used	Percent of: Spankers (N=161)	Non-Spankers (N=19)
Reasoning		
Ever Tried	99.4	100.0
Usual Method	85.1	94.7
Time Out		
Ever Tried	70.8	73.7
Usual Method	35.4	42.1
Grounding		
Ever Tried	80.1	63.2
Usual Method	44.7	31.6
Restrict Privileges		
Ever Tried	85.7	57.9
Usual Method	39.8	26.3
Withhold Allowance		
Ever Tried	34.2	21.1
Usual Method	7.5	10.5
Scold		
Ever Tried	96.9	89.5
Usual Method	57.8	52.6
Slap		
Ever Tried	72.0	26.3
Usual Method	3.1	--
Spank		
Ever Tried	90.7	31.6
Usual Method	13.7	--

different from the spanking mothers. Non-spanking fathers however, tend to have higher incomes than spanking fathers.

Two other major differences between these groups is that a larger percentage of spanking mothers have no job outside of the home compared to non-spanking ones. In addition, there is a higher percentage of single parents who are non-spankers than who are spankers.

Style of Childrearing

Non-spanking and spanking parents also differ in how they discipline their children. As is seen in Table 6-2, non-spanking parents are more likely to reason than spanking parents and they tend to use it more frequently. Other analyses show that 94.7% of non-spanking parents evauate reasoning as an effective technique compared to 84.1% of the spanking parents.

Table 6-2 also shows that non-spanking parents are generally less likely to use other punishing techniques such as grounding, taking away privileges, and taking away allowances although a slightly higher percectage of non-spanking parents compared to spanking report regularily taking away allowances. Both non-spanking and spanking parents have tried "time-out" at least once, but a higher percentage of non-spanking parents report using it regularily as compared to the spanking group. Likewise, a higher percentage of non-spanking parents evaluated "time-out" as an effective technique as compared to spanking parents. One other difference between the two groups' styles of disciplining is that while fewer non-spanking parents have tried scolding and fewer use it regularily as compared to spanking parents, a

higher percentage of non-spanking parents evaluate it as effective as compared to spanking parents.

In general, non-spanking parents are less punitive than spanking parents but this may be related to a final difference between the two groups. Non-spanking parents consider their children less difficult to deal with than spanking parents. Fifty-eight percent of the non-spanking parents see their children as much less difficult than other children compared to only 24.8% of the spanking parents. The largest group of spanking parents, 42% see their children as being about the same as other children.

This suggests that perhaps the reason non-spanking parents do not spank is because they have better behaving children. However, the dilemma of causal order, as discussed earlier in the section on child's aggressivity and physical punishment, is also a problem here. As will be seen in the next section, these parents acknowledge that they have no need for spanking but they also have other reasons for not using it.

Why They Don't Spank

The question of why do you not spank was originally directed towards those parents who do not spank but almost every parent, even those who do spank, answered it. The spanking parents answered it referring to episodes when they did not use physical punishment as compared to episodes when they did. Non-spanking parents generally presented their rationale for totally abstaining from this form of punishment. Thus, these two groups may be answering different questions, the non-spanking referring to general principles of childrearing and the spanking

Table 6-3. Reasons for Not Spanking by Non-Spanking and Spanking Parents

Reasons	Percent of: Non-Spankers (N=19)	Spankers (N=161)
Do Not Believe in Using	23.8	1.2
Not Appropriate to the Situation	4.8	19.3
Other Things Work	14.3	42.8
Blames Parent	4.8	12.0
Hurts Parent/Child Relationship	4.8	7.2
Teaches Violence	47.6	17.5

referring to specific circumstances. Still the variation in their answers is relevant for the discussion on the legitimation of physical punishment. Table 6-3 presents these reasons.

Non-spanking parents see their children as less difficult to deal with but, their reasons for not spanking do not focus specifically upon the child's transgressions. Instead these parents dwell on the negative consequences of spanking. Close to fifty percent of the non-spanking parents said they do not spank because it is a form of violence and it teaches children to use physical force in conflict resolution. In contrast, less than twenty percent of the spanking parents report this as a reason why they do not spank. The most frequent answer given by spanking parents as to why they do not spank is that other things work. Again, they are primarily focusing on the interactive conflict. Only 14.3% of the non-spanking parents mention this as a reason for not spanking.

The operational definition of non-spanking parents was based on their answers to how long it had been since they had spanked. Only those who reported not having spanked in over two years were included in this group. However, 26.3% of this group did indicate that they had tried spanking at least once and 26.3% of them reported having slapped their child at least once. None reported regularily spanking or slapping their children. Only one of the non-spanking parents did consider slapping an effective method compared to 33.8% of the spanking parents. No non-spanking parent evaluated spanking as an effective technique as compared to 59.7% of the spanking parents.

Thus, non-spanking parents do not find spanking to be particularly effective but this is not the primary reason they give for their decision not to spank. A few simply say that they do not believe in using in it, a rather non-descript response. More frequently, these parents focus on the modeling effects of spanking which teaches the child the use of physical force for conflict resolution. This is especially relevant since close to two-thirds of all spanking parents report spanking during times of interpersonal conflict.

A few spanking parents describe other negative consequences such as hurting the relationship with the child but more frequently, close to fifty percent look at the particular situation of controlling the child and say they do not spank if it is not appropriate to the situation or if other things work. Spanking parents tend to look at altering the behavior of the child rather than at the negative consequences of spanking. In addition, 40.3% of the spanking parents saw no positive benefits in that they described it as ineffective.

While there appear to be differences between spanking and non-spanking parents there is also variation among the spanking parents particularily in terms of how they evaluate the effectiveness of this technique. Two out of every five parents who used spanking evaluate it as ineffective. Since this is a substantial proportion of this group it is appropriate to further investigate the differences between this group of parents compared to the others who see spanking as effective

SPANKING PARENTS WHO VIEW SPANKING AS INEFFECTIVE

Background Characteristics

The group of parent who spank but see it as ineffective was created by combining two variables; those who spank versus those who do not and parental evaluation of effectiveness of spanking. This created three categories; those parents who do not spank, all of whom view spanking as ineffective, parents who spank but view it as ineffective and parents who spank and view it as effective.

In many ways, the spanking/ineffective parents are very similar to the spanking/effective parents, yet, when they differ, spank/ineffective parents seem to fall somewhere between spank/effective and those who do not spank. For example, 44.4% of the mothers in the spank/ineffective group are employed in blue collar jobs compared to 52.9% of the non-spankers and 34.7% of the spank/effective group. Twenty-two percent of spank/ineffective mothers are at home compared to 17.7% of the non-spankers and 32.0% of the spank/effective mothers. For fathers, there is little difference between blue and white collar occupations, like spank/effective fathers, spank/ineffective fathers are evenly mixed. Finally, 46.5% of the spank/ineffective fathers are in the military.

Similarily, there is a slightly higher percentage of single parents among the spank/ineffective parents than in spank/effective but still

less than among the non-spankers. The non-spanking group has 26.4% single parent households, spank/ineffective has 23.0% and spank/effective has 18.2%. A similar percentage of the spank/ineffective mothers have finished high school as compared to spank/effective but latter group has slightly more mothers with post-college education. Non-spankers has 11.1% with higher education, spank/ineffective has 16.0% and spank/effective has 22.4%. The distribution of fathers' education is very similar between both spanking groups however, non-spanking fathers generally have more years of education.

Styles of Childrearing

The approach to childrearing among the spank/ineffective group continues to lie somewhere between non-spankers and spank/effective groups. For example, non-spankers report 94.7% report using reasoning as a technique, compared to 88.5% of spank/ineffective and 80.5% of spank/effective. Parents' who spank but see it as ineffective reactions to slapping are similar to the spanking in that 75% report having tried it at least once compared to 26.3% of the non-spankers and 72.7% of spank/effective but only 9.2% of spank/ineffective (three cases) evaluate it as being effective compared to 69.8% of spank/effective and 16.7% (one case) in on-spankers. Again, they use the technique but they do not see it as effective.

The parents in the spank/ineffective group do not evaluate the behavior of their children to be much different than other children. In fact, 41.2% saw their children's behavior as being about the same as

Table 6-4. Reasons for Spanking by Spanking Group

Reasons	Non-Spankers (N=19)	Percent of: Spank/ Ineffective (N=52)	Spank/ Effective (N=77)
Rule Violation	--	22.2	34.9
Escalation of Conflict	--	25.9	22.9
Child's Behavior	--	7.4	13.3
Parent's Behavior	--	44.4	28.9

Table 6-5. Reasons for Not Spanking by Spanking Group

Reasons	Non-Spankers (N=19)	Percent of: Spank/ Ineffective (N=52)	Spank/ Effective (N=77)
Do Not Believe in Using it	23.8	1.8	--
Not Appropriate to the Situation	4.8	14.5	27.6
Other Things Work	14.3	36.2	44.7
Blame Parent	4.9	9.1	14.5
Hurts Parent/Child Relationship	4.8	12.7	3.9
Teaches Violence	47.6	23.6	9.2

other children's and 51.0% saw their children as less difficult.

Why Do They Spank?

Parents who spank but view it as ineffective appear to be different from both other groups in their responses to why they spank. As is seen in Table 6-4, these parents are less likely to spank for specific rule violations than spank/effective parnets, 22.2% compared to 34.9%, and thus, spank/ineffective parents are more likely than spank/effective to spank for form of interactive conflict. Furthermore at the refined categories of this interactive conflict as described earlier it is seen that spank/ineffective parents are much more likely to blame themselves for the use of physical punishment than spank/effective parents. Similarly, while both groups are less likely to blame the child for their use of spanking during times of conflict, spank/ineffective are even less likely to do this.

The reasons spank/ineffective parents provide for why they don't spank yields further insight into this group as is seen in Table 6-5. Like spank/effective parents, although to a lesser extent, the most frequent explanation spank/ineffective parents give for why they do not spank is that they do not have to because other techniques work. The next most frequent response for spank/ineffective, representing 23.6%, answer that they see spanking as teaching violence, the very reason given by close to half of all non-spanking parents. Furthermore, the one response given more freuqently by spank/ineffective parents than either group is that they blame the parent for spanking, that is, as long as they can control themselves, the child does not get hit.

From these data it appears that the spanking/ineffective parents are distinct from other spanking parents and from the non-spanking parents. Not only do they evaluate spanking, a disciplinary technique they report using, as ineffective but they tend to acknowledge the negative consequences of its use (hurts the relationship and teaches violence) and, they say that the primary factor which determines whether spanking will or will not be used is more related to the parent's behavior than the child's.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in this chapter reveal multiple sets of rules regarding the use of physical punishment with each description presented by different groups of parents. One interpretation is presented by a group of parents who do not engage in this behavior. This sets them apart from the reports of the other parents because they may be reporting on different phenomenological experiences. The non-spankers are describing (and/or justifying) why they have not engaged in this behavior. Spanking parents are describing (and probably to an equal extent justifying) behaviors they have just acknowledged using. Both groups are reporting on the same normative practices but they are relating it to different experiences. There also appear to be other differences between these two groups.

The non-spanking parents tend to be slightly older, most of the woman have education beyond a high school degree and many are outside of the home, working at blue collar jobs. The non-spanking fathers tend to

have slightly more years of education than spanking fathers but there are few other differences in the types of occupations or the income between them. Non-spanking parents also have different styles of childrearing in that they use different techniques than the spanking parents. This may be due in part, to the non-spanking parents reporting that their children are much less difficult to handle than other children. Although, with these data there is no way to determine if not being spanked is the cause or the effect of the children's behaviors.

Non-spanking parents claim that the reason they do not engage in physical punishment is because of its negative consequences. These parents see spanking as 1) ineffective in altering a child's behavior, and 2) teaching children that physical force can be used to resolve conflict. This second point is one which has been speculated upon in prior research. Although all of the specific relationships are not clearly understood, findings which relate spanking to child's aggressivity and to juvenile delinquency, as discussed in Chapter 4, seem to support these parents' interpretations. The interpretations of these parents will be taken up more thoroughly in the subsequent chapter. However, more can be learned about the use of physical punishment in looking at the parents who do use physical punishment.

Some of these parents, labeled spank/effective, have specific behavioral rules for their children to follow, most of which focus on the possibility of physically injurying one's self or others. If a child breaks these rules they are spanked. These parents feel that spanking, as used in this context, is an effective means of disciplining. Again, prior research can substantiate some of these

interpretations. For example, if used under proper conditions, such as if combined with reasoning, physical punishment can be effective in altering behavior. In addition, spank/effective parents generally report no negative consequences of spanking although they describe usually using it as a last resort when other techniques have failed.

Finally, there is another interpretation on the meaning of spanking and a different description of when it is appropriate to use physical force. This is described by a group of parents who engage in the behavior but who feel it is not effective as a disciplining technique. Spank/ineffective parents also appear to be distinct from others in that they focus on their own behavior when describing the situations where they spank saying that they are frustrated, moody or angry.

These parents describe an entirely different set of rules surrounding the use of physical punishment. They describe spanking as an appropriate means for communicating emotions. These parents use spanking to tell their children that they are frustrated, tired or angry. It is not surprising that the parents say it as an ineffective disciplining technique, since they, themselves, do not view it a form of discipline. Rather, they define it as a way of expressing feelings, negative emotions in particular.

Furthermore, these parents say that they spank because of something related to their own behavior. While it is entirely possible that the children may be in part responsible for causing the parent to feel frustrated, moody or angry, many of these parents do not even mention their children. In fact, they tend to see their children as being no more difficult to handle than other children.

This role or input of the parent has not received much attention in the research on spanking. Most studies have focused on what the child did to cause the parent to spank or how the spanking affect the child's subsequent behavior. Few people have looked at factors related to the parent. Few have thought that parents may be spanking for reasons other than their children's transgressions.

In this chapter, three different views of the physical punishment of children have been presented. One group sees spanking is a form of violence that also encourages the use of physical force in conflict resolution, one group sees it as a legitimate way to express emotions and a third views it as an effective means of disciplining children. One inconsistency in this last interpretation which cannot be further analyzed with the present data is that it is unclear why this last group of parents, those who feel spanking is an effective and appropriate means of disciplining, describing usually spanking only as a last resort. If they see it as an effective technique, why is it not used first?

The next chapter will review information collected about the group of parents who use no form of physical punishment. Analysis of the interview data will address several of the issues raised in this chapter.

Chapter VII

WHY THEY DON'T SPANK:
THE PHENOMONOLOGY OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

This chapter will investigate why some parents chose not to spank. Information as collected during the interviews will be analyzed. The interviewed parents is a subset of the parents on the initial questionnaire who described themselves as non-spankers. Thus, to distinguish the group of parents who were discussed in the preceding chapter from those who were interviewed, the phrase "interviewed parents" will refer to the latter group.

Parents reasons for not spanking and the extent of their commitment to this practice will be explored. The analysis will also review other factors which may be associated with their views on physical punishment including background characteristics of the family, their goals for childrearing and the parents' own childhood experiences

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

As described in Chapter 5, this analysis is based on 17 of the 21 families interviewed. Four families are excluded because, contrary to their answers on the initial screening questionnaire, they revealed in the interview that they frequently use physical punishment. Table 7-1

Table 7 -1. Background Characteristics of Interviewed Parents

Characteristics	Percent of: Mothers (N=17)	Fathers (N=14)
Age		
18 - 30	11.8	--
30 - 34	35.3	28.6
35 - 39	52.9	57.1
40 and over	--	14.3
Education		
No High School Degree	5.9	7.1
High School Degree	41.2	21.4
Some College	11.8	21.4
College Degree	29.4	21.4
Post College	11.8	28.6
Occupation		
Blue Collar	35.3	21.4
White Collar	29.4	71.4
Not Employed	35.3	7.1

presents many of the background characteristics of the selected 17 families.

The average income was $29,593 but if the one extremely large income is excluded the mean drops over $2,000 to $27,254. This is still higher than the average income for the community and than the average income of families who completed the initial questionnaire. Two of the three low income families (those below $10,000) are headed by single female parents and the other is one where the woman works because her husband is physically handicapped and has to stay home. Six women have no jobs outside the home and all but one of these are married to husbands who hold white collar jobs. Education levels also vary within this group.

The families have between 1 and 3 children with a mean of 2.1. Three of the families are headed by a single femaly parent and the rest are heterosexual couples. One couple is not married but they have shared finances, household responsibilities and childrearing duties for the past five years. As can be seen, no one background characteristic stands out as being particularly representative of this group.

WHY THEY DON'T SPANK

Information on why parents do not spank as indicated on the initial questionnaire was reported in the preceding chapter but the interview data provide more thorough information. In the course of the interview, some parents found it difficult to answer when asked why they don't spank. They responded with a brief comment such as "I don't need to,"

or "other things just seem to work". Eventually during the later parts of the interview I would say something such as, "From my study I found that most people in this community with children the age of yours spank. Why don't you?" With this I found that most of these parents are more committed to not spanking than I originally realized because additional reasons for not spanking were always presented.

Not all parents needed to be prodded about their views on spanking. Some casually informed me near the beginning of the interview that they do not spank their children. They informed me of this prior to my even mentioning spanking. A few realized that this aspect of their approach to childrearing was different and they thought that it might be of some interest to me.

A few parents, upon saying that they did not spank proceeded to give lengthy discourses, listing every possible reason why one would not want to spank a child. They gave so many explanations it is difficult to determine which is most salient. For example, one woman listed five different reasons and then added "besides, I have a bad back." Parents like this one answered as if they were trying to justify their behavior to me and had to present as many reasons as they could think of to back their position.

As most parents gave more than one explanation, discrete categories on why they do not spank can not be made. However, there is much overlap in the reasons given by these parents and from these explanations six major themes are clearly identifiable. Following is a brief description and example of each theme.

Spanking Hurts My Child

One of the most popular explanations, one given by ten of the seventeen parents in this analysis, is that they do not spank because they feel spanking hurts the child. Two directly mentioned physical injury but all ten are also concerned with hurting the child in different ways, such as humiliating the child or damaging the parent/child relationship. For example, one woman said:

> Natalie: I don't want to spank. And, I don't think it should be necessary. I don't want my children to fear me. I want them to be reasonable and not do things out of fear, but because we're a family and we work together.

> Nancy: I really feel awful when I'm home and see little kids outside getting hurt. It's terrible to see the look on their faces when they are hurt from something like falling off a bike. Oh my God. I couldn't do that to my child. I couldn't make her feel like that. I couldn't make her hurt like that, you know. I just couldn't spank her. Besides, spanking is really humiliating to kids.

My Children Are Not that Bad

Ten of the seventeen parents interviewed said that one reason they did not spank is that their children are well-behaved and that there is usually no need to spank nor to punish them. One woman thought for a while and then said:

Gayle: I'm not sure that my children really have never done anything that awful. I think spanking is done in anger anyway. It's that moment you're mad and they're going to get spanked.

Interviewer: "Is there ever any time that you thought about spanking?

Gayle: No, I never thought about it. I mean, you know, spanking, we just don't do it.

Norma: I don't like really spanking the kids, I don't like to do that. If they had ever done something dangerous to themselves maybe. But, you know, I really can't remember when's the last time I spanked them.

As mentioned before in Chapter 4, it is difficult to determine if spanking leads to aggressive behavior or if the children are not disruptive and thus, parents do not spank. Parental perception on the behavior of their children will be presented shortly.

Parents Spank When They Can't Cope

Similar to the responses on the screening questionnaire, nine parents see spanking as a result of the parent's inability to deal with their children. They feel that people who spank only do so because they are frustrated and out of control

Karin: Parents spank when they can't handle the situation. It's humiliating to the kid. There's got to be a better way. It's frustrating. Like I know when I was frustrated, just my whole world crashes down. It's easier to hit and send the kids crying to their bedroom and then go back in your own little world. You know, it is easier, it takes time to talk things out. Talking takes time.

Nancy: It's the parents, not the children. A lot of mothers, a lot of single mothers just can't handle it. They've got a job, they've got the pressure, anxiety, frustration and it all comes down on the kids.

Interviewer: But you don't. You fit that description but you don't spank. Why is it that you can do it differently?

Nancy: I don't know. I have, I have a lot of strength. I guess.

Spanking is a Form of Violence

Another relatively frequent explanation given by 8 parents is that they see spanking as a form of violence, the illegitimate use of force. For example:

Norma: I don't believe in violence, that's just me. I don't know about everybody else around here.

Denise: I've always been very against it. You know, pow, whack, teach you , whack, not to, whack, hit your sister, whack... you know. I really can't think of anything that justifies violence.

Some parents continued to say that it teaches children to use physical force as a means of conflict resolution. In response to question asking if their children will turn out different because they are not spanked, mothers gave answers such as:

Elizabeth: I hope that they won't try to seek physical solutions to problems. I don't know if that's the word but that's certainly a goal. When you argue you don't punch the guy out.

Natalie: I think they'll be compassionate and considerate, gentle human beings. Ones who know that force generally does not solve any problems at all. It may change the situation but it does not solve the problem. I remember a cartoon they showed once in a PET course one night when a father had the kid over his knee spanking him and he says, "There, that'll teach you not to hit your sister." It teaches him only hit people who are smaller and not get caught by bigger people.

My Parents Influenced Me

A smaller number of parents, seven, claim that one of the reasons why they do not spank relates to the way they themselves were raised. Two said that they do not spank because their own parents did not spank although these two seemed much less committed to not spanking than most of the others interviewed. Other parents described situations where they, themselves had been abused and were determined not to treat their own children this way. In contrast, they were more committed than many others on their decision not to spank

Nancy: I was an abused child, I was physically abused by my mother and I swore to God that I'ld never, never do that to my children. I had two sisters and if one of us did something wrong, we were lined up and all three of us got it. You know, be it a switch from the tree or something. It wasn't very nice. I was on months of restriction at a time, not just a couple of days, not a week or something like that. You just don't need physical pressure against children. I mean, they're human. I don't even beat a dog or a cat. You know, you just can't do that to children.

Norma: A belt was always used on me and I swore that once I had kids, I would never do that because it accomplished nothing. I look at it this way, my parents, I love them

> dearly so don't get me wrong. But, if they had sat down and talked to me, even when I was 7 or 8 years old. I'ld know what was going on. You sit down and talk to kids. If they would have sat down and talked to me I could have explain to them why I did what I did. I was sort of rebellious because they spanked me so much. I would go out and set a fire because , that's an awful thing to say, but it's true. I would do it to pay my parents back for what they did to me.

Some of these parents did not identify their parents as abusive, but as people who used physical punishment, which the respondents, as children, did not like.

> Hannah: My mother was somebody that was the type of person that would love to quarrel. Always yelling and screaming and spanking and send you to your room and then fifteen minutes later she'd come in and look at me, like asking me why I always displease her. Like the guilt trip type of thing. She would be angry one minute and then lovey dovey. I thought, "My God, how can you do this, all in fifteen minutes?" You know it was really strange. After we had our daughter my mother really complained about "How come you don't ever spank her? How come you don't ever yell at her?" I just say, "Ma, I didn't like that when you raised the three of us kids and I just think that there's other ways to do it". I don't know if it's gonna work or not but I'm going to try something different. I just don't think spanking kids and having them screaming and hollering and getting everybody upset is the answer. Sometimes I think things are going along real smooth and other times I think, "Ah Jesus!" But you know everybody has those kinds of days. I guess I don't like spanking and yelling because to me that made me afraid of even trying to do something because I thought "My gosh, if I do something wrong, my mother's gonna hit me and you know, I don't want my mother to hit me, I want my mother to love me". I got to the point where I was a little bit afraid of my mother and to me, I wouldn't want that to happen to my children.

> Natalie: I can remember being hit specifically, twice in my life, by my father. And both times were unjustified. One time, I was out in the backyard, playing with his golf clubs. The dog was running around. I told the dog to move away and the dog backed up. As I swung the golf club, the dog walked right into it. My father turned me over his knee, hit my little bottom and sent me to bed for the rest of the day. He thought I had deliberately taken a golf club to the dog's

head. The other time was when my aunt had purchased a new refrigerator. It had a mechanical latch on it. At home we had one with a magnetic latch so all you had to do was push and shove and it closed. My father called me up in the kitchen saying I had not shut the refrigerator door. I did shut the refrigerator door. "You did not shut the refrigerator door"he said. "I certainly did." "It's standing open." "Well, I can't help if it's standing open. I shut it." And with that I got, slap "don't lie to me" I said," It's not my fault that it's not a magnetic lock. I'm used to a magnetic lock. I pushed it shut and it did not latch." I did not lie. I guess that really turned me against hitting.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Natalie: The first time I was about six and the second time I was about fourteen. Those two incidents have always stuck with me.

It Doesn't Work Anyway

On the screening questionnaire all non-spanking parents said that spanking is ineffective in altering a child's behavior and in the interviews seven parents reiterated this. They emphasize that other things usually work so there is no need to spank.

Corina: I feel like I don't have any reason to spank them, and that isn't going to do anything for them now, you know. They're older, I just feel that spanking isn't going to make an impression on them. They're old enough now where they can think and other things hurt more than getting spanked.

Merlinda: I'm sure you're familiar with the whole theory of child rearing with its logical consequences. It doesn't seem like spanking seems to fit in with logical consequences.

Natalie: We found that spanking was futile when Bobby looked up at us one day when he was about six years old, and said "You can hit me, but that will only hurt for a little while." Therefore, we found that there was very little value in physical punishment. If it's necessary we do drastic things.

> Like, if you don't lock up your bicycle then you don't get to ride it for a week. If you don't get your clothes into the laundry, then they're not going to get washed. And you won't have clean clothes.

In conclusion, these were the six themes presented as the primary reasons the interviewed parents do not spank. In supplement to these reasons one parent said that the reason she did not spank is because she did not drink and two other parents included the explanation that if they relied upon spanking now, they would have trouble when the child grew to be bigger than themselves.

TEMPTATION TO SPANK

These interviewed parents report not spanking and have reasons to support their decision. However, most of the non-spanking parents did comtemplate spanking and at times truely restrained themselves. A few incidents highlight this point.

> Diane: The night of my son's third birthday we were in the kitchen and we were having company. I had my plate collection on shelves here in the living room. He was really a super baby but this time, I don't know what possessed him. I don't know where Andrea was at the time, she might have been in a highchair. We were all in the kitchen and the next thing I heard was a crash. He had climbed up and had completely pulled all three shelves right off the wall. The only thing I could figure out was that maybe he had seen me wind the clock and he was reaching for it by putting his weight on the shelves for balance as he climbed. But I mean the stuff went into the playpen and all I could think of was "Oh, my God, If Andrea had been in this playpen all this glass would have been all over, broken on her head. Things that I could never replace were broken, like antiques. I just got so upset. I mean it was awful. I cried, I can remember that, and I got so emotionally upset about it that my girlfriend said to me "Just go back into the kitchen. Just go in to the kitchen and I'll clean it up." She and my husband and her husband cleaned the

whole thing up. They put everything in a box so if anything was salvageable I could go through it later. But then the very next morning I was in bed and I heard the chair being dragged across the kitchen floor. I jumped up and I said "Kelly, where are you?" In the mean time I'm getting my robe on and I'm coming downstairs. I said "What are you doing?" He said, "Dropping eggs on the kitchen floor." He had broken 18 eggs. I had 18 eggs and he threw 18 eggs from the refrigerator to the counter. One had made it to the counter. Now whether at the time he wanted eggs for breakfast or if he thought he was helping me with the eggs, I don't know. But all I can remember doing is bodily carrying him up the stairs putting him into bed and I said, "You will stay there until I get you up. Don't move, don't get out of bed, don't leave this bed. Stay here." I said "It might be until lunch time but just don't come out" and I closed the door and he did do it. He went back to sleep. I remember that. I came down and I cleaned up the eggs. Someone later said to me "Why didn't you make him clean up the eggs?" and I said "Are you kidding" I said " I would have killed him, I would have watched him clean the eggs and make twice the mess." Talk about child abuse. I would have really beaten the child, but I didn't hit him.

Interviewer: So why didn't you, Why didn't you spank him?

Diane: I don't know, I, I don't know if psychologically I knew if I hit him, I was so mad that I really would have hurt him. I don't know, but I can remember just yelling at him, just saying "What have you done? Why have you done this? Look at the mess you've made" and then carrying him upstairs and putting him to bed.

Theresa: Before this son was born my husband, who is in the military, was gone a lot. My older kids were about, well, one was in third grade, one was in first and one was about 4 or 5 years old. I used to do a lot of spanking. Mostly because I was on a short fuse. Everything was kind of rough with him gone and I was in charge and I had a very short temper and I spanked them a lot. I can remember the day, my oldest daughter did something and I raised my hand to her and she just looked up at me. She looked so scared. It just flashed in my head that she was just a little bitty kid and here I was, standing over her with my hand up. She had no defense whatsoever.

Interviewer: Have there been times more recently when you've been tempted to spank?

Theresa: Oh yea, you're always tempted, as long as you have kids you're tempted. When my seven year old came home much later than when he was suppose to I wanted to just pick him up

and shake him. But, you learn control after a while.

> Natalie: The urge is there but I just hold both hands and don't hit. I say, "You know, we're both being unreasonable. You're getting mouth and I can't handle that. So I think we better not talk about this until we're both better able to handle the situation."

COMMITMENT TO NOT SPANKING

A second way to approach these parents' views on not spanking is to analyze their commitment to this practice. Based on their own self reports there is reason to question their statements on why they do not spank. In the course of most interviews, it became apparent that there are situations where most of these parents said they would consider using physical punishment.

Fourteen out of the seventeen families described at least one situation where they had spanked their children. All of these episodes occured when the child was less than four years old and for most families there was only one episode of spanking. Frequently it was after this one spanking, initiated because of reasons such as disobedience or being in a dangerous situation, some parents became more committed to never spanking their children again. For example:

> Sarah: I think I may have spanked her once when she was around 9 months old. She was just screaming and I couldn't handle it and I gave her a little whack on the rear end. I just started crying--"Oh God, What have I done!

> Hannah: When she was little she ran away from me because she didn't like carriages. I thought, well, I'll have her push

> the carriage. A real smart mother. Then all of a sudden she'd run away from me. A lot of times I would catch myself but once I hit her on the hand or slaped her on the bottom before I realized what I was doing and I thought "Oh, you weren't suppose to do that',. You said you weren't going to do that," But it's hard.

In analyzing the circumstances in which these parents would spank two factors seem most important, age and the nature of the situation.

Age of Child

Age was mentioned by these parents in two ways. First, several parents felt that spanking was not a good technique because it would not be effective if used when the children were older and physically bigger than the parent. More frequently, the other end of the spectrum was emphasized. Some parents used physical punishment when their children were very young. Most of these parents said that they stopped spanking their child around age three (consistent with prior research discussed in Chapter 2). Their explanation for the use of physical punishment at this age was that the children were too young to understand why certain rules had to be obeyed. Thus, at times when obedience was essential and reasoning or other techniques failed, the parents spanked. Although one mother added that at a younger age her child probably did not understand why he was being spanked either.

Often, it was this one episode where the parents spanked which convinced the parents that spanking was not an appropriate technique. Remember, these parent all indicated that they felt spanking was not an effective technique of disciplining. Many came to this evaluation after only one time of using it and many, such as the following parent felt

guilty about ever resorting to it.

> Debby: The only time I felt I was really physically abusive with one of my kids was when my husband and I went down to Boston. It's a long story but we had just moved here from Boston and I was having a very hard time adjusting. We went back for a weekend and stayed at a guesthouse. It really wasn't that nice. We went for a weekend, taking our daughter because we could not afford to get a sitter for the entire weekend. Anyway, she cried in the middle of the night and was very upset. She didn't know where she was.
>
> Interviewer: Can you remember how old she was?
>
> Debby: She would have been less than a year old. She would have been, maybe eight months old. Anyway, we took her down there and she screamed in the middle of the night. She had never slept in a bed she had slept in a crib, and she was very upset. I spanked her to get her to behave and settle down but it didn't work. She cried more and got scared. I spanked her again and again because I wanted her to just be quiet. You could hear people waking up and turning on the lights. I was afraid we could get kicked out. It all of sudden came to me that I was hitting her to get her to shut up so I wouldn't be embaressed. That seemed abusive to me.

Situational Factors

Commitment to not spanking also varied depending on situational factors. The themes for not spanking characterized as "Other Things Work" or "Not Necessary for My Child" indicate that there may be less than total commitment to not spanking. Additional support to this was found in responses to parts of the Exposure to Violence questionnaire which was left for the parents to complete after the interview. Both parents in each family were asked "Are there any situations that you can imagine in which you would approve of a parent spanking his or her children, assuming the child is healthy and over a year old?"

Table 7-2. Percent Approving of Spanking for Interviewed Parents and National Violence Survey

Misbehavior of Child:	Interviewed Parents (N=29)*			National Violence Survey (N=1176)		
	Yes	Not Sure	No	Yes	Not Sure	No
Is Noisy	0.0	13.0	87.0	43.0	5.8	51.2
Misbehaves all day	36.0	12.0	52.0	88.7	3.9	7.5
Is Expelled from School	16.0	16.0	68.0	56.7	10.8	32.5
Breaks a Law	32.0	20.0	48.0	69.0	8.1	23.0

*Includes 17 mothers and 12 fathers

Seventy-seven percent of the parents interviewed said yes, 11.5% said no and 11.5% said they were not sure. This compares to Ball and Baker's National Violence Study in 1968 where 92.2% of the total sample said yes, 6.8% said no and 1.0% were unsure. In making comparisons between these two studies it should be remembered that they were conducted close to twenty years apart and this may contribute to some differences.

The questionnaire also asked about four specific situations. The percentage of interviewed parents and participants in the National Violence Study who would spank in these specific situations is reported in Table 7-2. There are two situations where about one-third of the non-spanking parents would consider spanking a child; if the child had been disobedient all day and if the child had broken a law. Still, this is a much lower percentage than the National Study reports. Also, no non-spanking parent approved of spanking a child who was noisy and getting on the parents nerves, compared to 43.0% of the national sample.

In the interview there was another measure of parents commitment to spank. The parents were asked to think about six other hypothetical situations where a child misbehaves and to consider if their own child engaged in these behaviors, would they spank. This list was created by selecting the six most frequently described situations where parents reported spanking as indicated on the screening questionnaire. These included: if your child was in a dangerous situation, if your child was hurting another person, if your child lied to you, if your child talked back to you, if your child was too excited, if no other means of disciplined worked. The parents were instructed to think about a child

Table 7-3. Willingness to Spank in Hypothetical Situations by Interviewed Non-Spanking Parents and Spanking Parents.

Might Spank if Child:	Percent Who Would Spank: Non-spanking Parents (N=17)	Spanking Parents (N=41)
Is in a Dangerous Situation	21.4	16.0
Is Hurting Someone	35.7	10.0
Lies	10.7	16.0
Talks Back	14.3	9.0
Is too Excited	10.7	6.0
Refuses to Obey and Nothing Else Works	7.1	43.0

the age of their own commiting these acts. As can be seen from Table 7-3 only three of the seventeen families said they would not spank in any of these situations.

Spanking parents emphasized spanking as a last resort, when nothing else worked but these non-spanking parents generally would not spank in that situation. As one woman put it, "By the time I've reached that point, spanking probably isn't going to work either."

The non-spanking parents are most likely to spank if the child was doing something to hurt anotner person or if the child was in a dangerous situation. A situation frequently mentioned by these parents in the interview was that they were especially likely to use some form of physical punishment if the child was "a biter". These parents knew children who had done this and rather than using a verb to describe their behavior the reaction was one of almost creating a master status. This seemed to be something the parents truely feared and they said they would probably use some form of physical punishment if their child engaged in this behavior. Sometimes the response was that the parent would bite the child, in attempt to show the child that biting hurt.

The fact that eight parents would consider spanking a child for hurting another one again, seems contradictory to the claim that the reason they don't spank is because it may hurt the child or is a form of violence that only teaches children to use force to resolve conflict. Perhaps the reason why they might spank in this context is because of the overriding importance of stopping the hurting of another person. It should also be added that in attempting to investigate the level of

assertiveness the parent taught, parents were asked if there was ever a time when their child was involved in a physical fight. Most parents were able to describe such a situation and these events had all taken place when the parent was not around, e.g. on the school playground. When the child informed the parent of these events, the parents usually discussed and helped their child evaluate the situation. In no case did the parent use physical punishment on the child. This further supports the point that perhaps the overwhelming importance of stopping injury to another person leads them to abandon their non-spanking conviction.

An additional indication of the parents commitment to not spanking was that only three parents could remember ever threatening to spank. Most parents reported that if they threatened to spank there might come the time when they would have to carry out the threat and they really did not want to use this technique. Two of the three exceptions said they probably would never spank but the third was not sure. All three acknowledged that their children probably believed that they might carry out the threat some time.

In summary, non-spanking parents commitment to not spanking is mixed. Non-spanking parents indicate that there are factors, such as age of the child or dangerousness of the situation, which might influence them to spank, factors which spanking parents probably agree with. There are also factors which are seen as relevant to why spanking parents use physical punishment but not relevant to the non-spanking parents, such as a noisy child or when no other technique works. Yet, in spite of the non-spanking parents description of factors which might influence them to spank, these parents do not use it and this is very different from

most other parents.

There is one other characteristic of the non-spanking parents which reflects on this commitment; non-spanking parents reported being reluctant to advocate not spanking to other parents. For the most part, they did not talk to other parents about their decision not to spank and felt uncomfortable in recommending it to other parents. This is exemplified in the response of one woman when she was informed that most parents spank:

> Merlinda: Well, I don't, you know. I'm not saying that they're wrong, I just don't feel the need. Maybe that's the way other parents get through. Maybe they feel that's the way they can get their message across.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR CHILDREN

Non-spanking parents claim that one reason they do not spank is because their children are well-behaved. Thoughout the interview schedule, more specific questions about the children's behavior were asked, specifically in terms of how the child adapts to the world outside of the family.

Parents were asked how children performed at school at the academic level and at a social level. One daughter had gotten a below average grade for penmanship and one son was described by teachers as not working up to his potential but, otherwise, the grades of these children were generally above average, if not exceptional.

Several parents described conflicts their children had with some one teacher but these problems never continued past one year with other teachers. In families where such conflicts occured, the parents, undoubtedly like many other parents, uniformly placed the blame on the teacher rather than their own children. Finally, one mother indicated that her daughter is frequently hasseled by the school principal because the daughter telephones her mother at least once a day from school. The principal wants this to stop but the mother feels its justified because of family circumstances. The daughter witnessed the father beating on the mother and then the father had mysteriously disappeared for the past few months. The daughter was calling home to make sure that her mother was alright.

Parents were also asked about how their children got along with other children. In this collection of children with non-spanking parents there are many different types of people. Some were described as social butterflies, others as loners, some were too sensitive and some too assertive. Only two parents believe their children have trouble making friends and two more wished their children were not so close to just one friend but had a larger circle of friends. However, for the most part, these children appear to be socially well-adjusted in their social worlds.

As a further evaluation of the children's behaviors parents were asked to compare the the target child to her or his siblings. All but two parents described their children as being very different from each other and as such, they were frequently disciplined differently. Some parents felt this was largely a reflection of the age differences between their

parents but more frequently they attributed it to sex differences. Six parents said that their sons are more active and aggressive than their daughters and thus they have to use different types of disciplinary tactics with them. While these parents rarely use physical punishment, they reported themselves as being more likely to use it on their sons than on their daughters, a finding which is consistent with previous research by Sears et al., 1957, McKenry, et al., 1981 and Bryan and Freed, 1982.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Parke and Slaby (1983) it is difficult if not impossible to carry out an experiment to truely determine the relationship between aggression and physical punishment because it is difficult to find warm and loving parents who use frequent physical punishment or hostile parents who do not use physical punishment. With the data described here it can at least be seen that the non-spanking parents are, for the most part, satisifed with the behavior of their children. The parents are aware of the weaknesses or difficulties their children have but, they do not view these problems as serious. They do not see their children as constant trouble makers or as children who seriously misbehave. In addition, the feedback that some of these parents get from outsiders supports this view of their children. In fact, over half of the parents have been complimented by neighbors, teachers, family friends and even strangers in public settings who have commented on how pleasant and well-behaved these children are.

ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Goals of Childrearing

The parents were asked to share their goals of child-rearing and this again, took some parents by surprise. They had not been asked this question before and some had not specifically thought about this. However, eventually all were able to give an answer.

Most people wanted their children to grow up to be nice, considerate people. Several added that they wanted their children to be happy and to feel good about themselves. Independant, self-reliant and self-disciplined was also mentioned by most of the parents. One parent emphasized the desire that her child have religious understanding and two others said that they wanted their children to live up to their intellectual potential. Other than these there was very little variation in their answers.

In addition, in order to compare these goals to those held by other parents in our society, the non-spanking parents were asked to select goals from the same list used in several studies by Kohn, (1963). Despite the thirty years time difference, there are strong similarities between the responses of the non-spanking parents and Kohn's samples. Among the interviewed parents, "responsible" was selected most frequently, by ten parents. The next most frequently selected goals, each selected by nine interviewed parents are honesty, self control and is considerate. These are the same characteristics found by Kohn to be

most common of American parents with responsibility being the singly most frequently selected goal.

Thus, even though the time difference between these studies may complicate the comparison, it appears that the goals of the parents in the current study are not that different from other American parents.

Parent's Childhood

As with other factors analyzed, the childhood experiences of these non-spanking parents is quite varied. Some grew up in working class families, some grew up in middle class families, some grew up in rural areas, others in urban or suburban areas. Some felt they had great parents, others felt they had too strict or too permissive or even neurotic parents. Other variables such as family size, birth order, working mother and divorced parents also varied. Sixteen of the mothers had been physically punished as a child, and there was variation in whether they were spanked frequently or rarely and at what age the spanking stopped. Thus, there was only one mother who was a second generation non-spanker.

One factor which seemed to be mentioned more frequently than might be expected is the level of violence some parents had experienced while growing up. Three of the women volunteered that their fathers had beaten their mothers. One of the single mothers also mentioned that her ex-husband had beaten her. One father mentioned that his father had been a volunteer police officer and that every Sunday morning his father would take all of the kids to a neighbor's house and show them "suicide

Table 7-4. Age When Exposed to Violence by Interviewed Parents and National Violence Survey.

Reasons	Sample*	Percent Ever	Percent of Those Exposed as a: Child	Adult	Both
% Who Have:					
Kicked or Slapped Someone	Interview	85.2	40.9	13.6	45.5
	National	24.9	35.2	53.3	20.9
Punched or Beaten Someone	Interview	51.9	76.9	--	23.1
	National	25.9	41.5	34.8	23.1
%Who have Been a Victim Of:					
Kicking or Slapping	Interview	88.9	83.3	--	16.7
	National	54.1	67.5	16.7	15.4
Punching or Beating	Interview	59.3	68.8	18.8	12.5
	National	30.7	51.8	29.2	17.8
Choking	Interview	11.1	66.7	33.3	--
	National	7.9	36.0	53.5	8.1
Threatened or Cut by Knife	Interview	7.4	50.0	50.0	--
	National	13.2	24.0	69.9	5.5
Threatened or Shot by Gun	Interview	18.5	--	100.0	--
	National	12.3	17.6	77.9	4.0

Table 7-4. Continued

Exposure	Sample*	Percent Ever	Percent of Those Exposed as a: Child	Adult	Both
% Who have Witnessed Someone being a Victim of:					
Kicking or Slapping	Interview	88.9	34.8	4.3	60.9
	National	58.7	30.2	39.7	29.2
Punching or Beating	Interview	74.1	40.0	20.0	40.0
	National	46.7	23.0	49.6	26.2
Choking	Interview	14.8	33.3	16.7	33.3
	National	14.1	20.9	60.8	16.9
Threatened or Cut by Knife	Interview	18.5	--	80.0	20.0
	National	17.8	15.8	72.6	11.6
Threatened or Shot by Gun	Interview	25.9	14.3	71.4	14.3
	National	17.6	12.7	78.8	7.9

*Interview sample based on 29 respondents and National sample based on 1176 respondents.

Table 7-5. Frequency of Exposure to Violence by Interviewed Parents and National Violence Study.

Exposure	Sample	Percent Ever	Percent of Those Exposed: Once	2-3 Times	More than 4 Times
% Who Have:					
Kicked or Slapped Someone	Interview	85.2	4.3	26.1	34.8
	National	24.9	10.8	30.6	49.3
Punched or Beaten Someone	Interview	51.9	7.1	35.7	35.7
	National	25.9	13.4	34.8	47.5
% Who Have Been a Victim Of:					
Kicking or Slapping	Interview	88.9	6.7	33.3	60.0
	National	54.1	16.5	30.0	42.6
Punching or Beating	Interview	59.3	12.5	25.0	37.4
	National	30.7	14.8	33.1	45.3
Choking	Interview	11.1	66.7	33.3	--
	National	7.9	54.5	23.9	18.2
Threatened or Cut by Knife	Interview	7.4	50.0	50.0	--
	National	13.2	54.5	23.9	18.2
Threatened or Shot by Gun	Interview	18.5	40.0	20.0	20.0
	National	12.3	43.3	21.6	32.8

Table 7-5. Continued.

Exposure	Sample	Percent Ever	Percent of Those Exposed: Once	2-3 Times	More Than 4 Times
% Who Have Witnessed Someone Being a Victim of:					
Kicking or Slapping	Interview	88.9	8.3	20.8	33.3
	National	58.7	12.2	28.3	51.2
Punching or Beating	Interview	74.1	10.0	45.0	20.0
	National	46.7	17.0	29.4	47.0
Choking	Interview	14.8	16.7	50.0	33.3
	National	14.1	36.2	35.6	24.2
Threatened or Cut by knife	Interview	18.5	20.0	60.0	20.0
	National	17.8	33.3	34.9	28.1
Threatened or Shot by Gun	Interview	25.9	42.9	42.9	14.0
	National	17.6	39.5	21.6	33.3

*Interview sample of 29 respondents and Nationalsample of 1176 respondents

flicks." These were films made by the police department showing how they found people who had commited suicide. Finally, four women and one man reported that they had been severely abused by at least one parent and based on their description of some of the situations, these events would probably meet today's legal definition of child abuse.

It is difficult to assess how abnormal these exposures to family violence are. First, these people grew up in a time period when child abuse was not publically chastized. Second, we have few studies which give us something to compare to these family experiences. There has been prior work on the effects of exposure to violence on attitudes towards legitimate uses of force in the national violence commission study (Ball and Baker, 1968). Even though this was not limited to the family context it still can serve as a useful comparison.

In the national violence study, parents were asked if they had ever attacked another person, if they had ever been a victim of various types of physical attacks and if they had ever witnessed someone else being attacked. Their answers to these are presented in Tables 7-4 and 7-5. Again, the National Violence Study was conducted in 1963 compared to the interview data in 1983 which complicates the comparisons but the difference between the groups may be indicative that the non-spanking parents come from very different backgrounds.

With the exception of being attacked by someone with a knife, a much higher percentage of non-spanking parents reported attacking someone, being a victim of various attacks and being a witness of other people being attacked than those in the National Study. The differences are

extreme for the less serious types of attack, and decrease but do not disappear as more severe forms are discussed.

Most of their exposure to violence ocurred for the non-spanking parents when they were children. This is especially true for attacking and being a victim where more experienced violence as a child among the non-spankers than among those who nad been exposed in the National Violence Study. As far as witnessing another person being attacked, most interviewed parents described it as primarily happening as a child but this also happened to many as adults as well. In regards to the frequency of exposure, generally there was slightly less frequent exposure to violence for the non-spanking parents than for those in the national sample.

Nevertheless, parents interviewed in this study report more exposure to violence during the course of their life time than others, with most of it happening as children.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter characteristics of non-spanking parents are reviewed. As has been seen, there is little uniqueness in their family background characteristics and in their goals for childrearing. The most notable distinction may be that the non-spanking parents report relatively high exposure to violence, especially violence that occurred in their childhood. At the present time, it is difficult to determine how different this is from other people's experience, but in the comparison to available data it appears that this may be a significant

characteristic.

In this chapter six themes which characterized the reasons non-spanking parents give to explain their deviant behavior are presented. In looking at this list it is seen that the themes address varying levels of meaning directed toward the act. Following is a discription of these levels.

Behavior Management

Two themes address the utility of spanking for the task of child management. These are the explanations that the child does not engage in behavior provoking a spanking and that spanking, itself, is ineffective in altering the behavior of children. This last point is in direct contrast to the opinion of some parents who use spanking as a regular method discussed earlier, those parents labeled spank/effective. At this point it is difficult to determine why these parents view it so differently from each other but it is apparent that it can not be evaluated as an effective technique for all parents.

In trying to assess the relative importance of these different themes it is notable that the other theme, "My children are well-behaved" was typically the first answer the non-spanking parents provided. This is a response which is socially acceptable explanation even to spanking parents. Of course there is no need to spank if the children does not misbehave and based on the parents' reports it looks like these children are well-behaved. Yet, the non-spanking parents described situations where they are tempted to spank, situations where they had to restrain

themselves from hitting. It appears that even though these children are usually pleasant, rule abiding people, they do occassionally engage in disruptive behavior. Most critically, even during these instances of extreme misbehavior, these children are not spanked.

Situational Factors

Another level which these themes address refers to the incident where spanking is used. Like those parents who spank but view it ineffective, the non-spanking parents agree that spanking results when the parent is frustrated and loses their ability to manage the situation. Like the spank/ineffective parents, the non-spanking parents said this frustration may occur for reasons that have little to do with the children's behavior. The non-spanking parents describe frustrating experiences in childrearing yet, while these interviewed parents empathize with these frustrations, unlike the spank/ineffective parents, they do not hit. This may be related to the non-spanking parents views on the negative consequences of spanking, the third level the themes address.

Negative Consequences

The final level which these reasons address seems to be the most salient for many of these parents, especially those who have experienced severe physical punishment in their own childhood. This is the negative consequences of spanking: the teaching of violence, the hurt caused to the child and to the parent/child relationship and the parent's dislike for being a victim of spanking during their own childhood. This is not

logically distinct from the other levels of answers in that there is no reason to use it if there are no positive consequences of it other than the parent using it to express anger. Yet, it is the negative consequences which directly affect the child which seemed most important to these parents.

Newberger and Cook (1983) provides a useful framework for analyzing these parents approach to childrearing. They describe stages of developmental maturity individuals progress through in their role as parents. Following this scheme, the interviewed parents are minimally at the individualistic stage in that they are able to understand the child's perspective. They realize that spanking may hurt the child's dignity or cause the child to dislike the parent.

These parents may also be at the highest level, the systems level. As seen in the list of reasons given for why they do not spank, these parents appear to be able to integrate their own personal experiences with that of the conventional norms in regards to childrearing and with the subjective opinions of their children. Within the confines of the present study it cannot be determined if these parents went through the developmental process described by Newburger and Cook. However, it does appear that these parents may be developmentally mature in their approach to childrearing. As such, according to Newburger and Cook, these parents may be more flexible and more adaptable to the task of raising children than other parents.

More insight on the appraisal of the negative consequences of spanking was found in the assessment of the level of commitment the interviewed parents had to not spanking. This commitment is not one of crusaders.

These parents are determined not to spank their children but they said they could picture situations where they said they might resort to it. Another notable characteristics of the interviewed parents' commitment to not spanking was that they did not actively advocate it for other parents. In fact, for the most part, they did not discuss this with others. Similarly, the interviewed parents were also reluctant to talk to me about why they do not spank.

The next chapter will further analyze the non-spanking parents with particular attention to how they raise their children and how the decision not to spank fits in with this process.

Chapter VIII

NON-SPANKING AND OTHER ASPECTS OF CHILDREARING

This chapter investigates how non-spanking is incorporated into the general approach of childrearing of the interviewed parents. These parents tend to have similar guiding principles which help them to be consistent in the treatment of their children. Most of the non-spanking parents appear able to impliment these beliefs in the daily interaction with their children but a few of the parents, by their own discription, have some difficulty carrying this out.

This analyses will focus on how the interviewed parents' approach to childrearing is related to the decision not to spank for fourteen of the seventeen families. Three families were excluded from this analysis because disruptive family patterns made it difficult to determine the typical approach to childrearing (See Appendix F for a more thorough description of these three families).

To evaluate the remaining parents, the following discussion will be broken into an analysis of the interviewed parents' opinions on why children misbehave, their general approach to childrearing and how the decision not to spank relates to this approach. Following this discussion, excerpts of an interview with one parent will be presented to highlight this description. Finally, there will be a discussion of problems a few parents have in implementing their ideas about how to

raise children and the relationship of non-spanking to this difficulty.

WHY CHILDREN MISBEHAVE

After describing an episode where their own child misbehaved parents were asked, "Generally, why do children this age misbehave?" This was to focus the parents not so much on any one particular behavior but on a more global analysis of why children between the ages of five and eight years old get into trouble. For the most part, these parents gave similar answers.

Parents said that sometimes children disobey because they do not know the rules. However, these parents continued to add that children this age should already know the rules. If children do not know the rules this indicates a problem with their parents, not the children. The more strongly believed reason the non-spanking parents gave for why children misbehave is that sometimes children simply forget; they forget to do something they were supposed to do or they forget to think before they engage in some behavior. This is when the children know the rules but forget to apply or attend to them. The non-spanking parents believe that occassionally children intentionally break rules they know exist. If this happens, it is because the children are communicating a meta-level message, such as a request for more attention or an indication of boredom. This last reason was used to explain the behavior of really difficult or troublesome children. Non-spanking parents said that generally, this was not typical of their own children.

In the chapter prior to this it was seen that the non-spanking parents stressed independence, self reliance and self discipline as goals for childrearing. It is consistent then, that these parents see lack of internalization of rules as the primary reason for misbehavior. Nowhere was the gratification children receive from engaging in inappropriate acts mentioned as a reason for misbehavior. For example, a child may steal a cookie from the jar because she wants the cookie, not because she has forgotten the rules. The explanations for misbehavior given by these parents are very sympathetic to the child and perhaps they are explanations constructed by the parents to be consistent with their own values and approaches to childrearing rather than description of the intentions perceived by the children

APPROACH TO CHILDREARING

As was mentioned earlier, the parents interviewed were able to verbalize how they wanted to raise their children. They described general principles to which they try to adhere, principles which help guide them through specific situations when they have to interact with their children. This does not mean that these parents believed they had all the answers needed to raise children, nor that they were overly confident in what they were doing. Basically, no parent has the capacity to evaluate the type of job she or he is doing until the child is grown because our society does not advocate one single method for raising children, nor one single way of measuring success. Thus, even though these parents felt things were going well during this particular stage of their children's growth, all were concerned, if not frightened, about what would happen during the teenage years. To help them through

the childrearing process, the non-spanking parents describe commitments to at least four principles which they perceived as important

Open Communication

First, non-spanking parents stress the importance of maintaining open communication with their children. They said they want their children to be able to talk with them about any problem the children might have. Their stress on communication goes beyond creating a situation where children are encouraged to talk to an emphasis of responsibility of the parent to do likewise, for the parent to talk with the child. The parents stress the importance of constantly and thoroughly explaining things to their children, be it explanations for socially appropriate rules of conduct or explanations (combined with apologies) for why a parent reacted inappropriately or even as attempts to help the child interpret her or his own emotional feelings. These parents started explaining things when their children were babies and, according to their own reports, still continue to spend considerable amounts of time talking with their children.

Involvement in Child's Life

A second principle related to the first, is that the non-spanking parents believe it is essential to be thoroughly involved in the lives of their children. For this particular age of children (the target age was between five and eight years old) this means that parents should be involved in children's organized group activities. Among this group of parents there were many team coaches, girl scout or cub scout leaders and school volunteers.

There are several reasons why a high level of involvement is considered necessary. Some parents feel it benefits the child. For example, one military mother, who was very concerned about the public school education her children were receiving, said that no matter what military base they were stationed at, she always became a school volunteer, such as a playground supervisor, a library assistant or a teacher's aid. She did not do this to spy on her children but described it as a means of informing the teachers that she was a parent who was very concerned about her children's education. She claimed that her willingness to volunteer improves the quality of education her children received because it causes the teachers to pay more attention to her children.

Other families explain that intensive involvement in a child's life helps the child adjust to the world outside of the family. Involvement in sports such as baseball, swimming or gymnastics were examples of this. Some parents supported activities like these because it gets the entire family involved in things that are important to the child and thus creat a form of suppport for the child. For example, one father gave this interesting explanation for why he did not spank while other parents did:

> Max: I think its because we do things as a family more. I don't know, I go to ball games, we got to Cub Scouts, Boys Scouts and other parents don't come. They just don't come. We go to everything. There's times in the summer where, well, you know, it's like this. In the summer, there was a time when my oldest son played in the 14/15 year old Babe Ruth Baseball league. Jeff was in the 13 year old Babe Ruth and Mark was in Little League. There were some nights when my wife and I were bouncing from Little League to 13 year old Babe Ruth and then at 8:00 when they were done, we all went over

> and watched Bob play. We were at them all. We love our kids. We're concerned for them and want to show them we're interested in them. We give up what other people don't give their time for.

Other parents describe organized group activities as an important part of child development because they teach the child how to be a member of a group and the responsibility one has to a group. Several parents mentioned that, unlike other parents they knew, never punish their children by not letting them participate in a group activity. They see this as hurting the group, not just the child, and it invalidates the importance of group responsibility.

Reduction of Conflict

There is a concerted effort by the non-spanking parents to reduce and avoid potential sources of conflict between them and their children. Again, organized activities are consistent with this principle because they help channel some of the child's energy in an appropriate direction. Sports in particular are frequently described as a form of behavior management in that they keep children busy and distracts them from getting into trouble.

Reduction of conflict is extremely important to these parents and they make considerable efforts to structure the lives of their children and even the whole household to keep the level of conflict minimal. This clearly fits in with the other principle of open communication and involvement in their children's lives because this is where they observe their children's needs, developmental capabilities and weaknesses of their children. By having this knowledge, the parents are more effective at prevention points of conflict from arising.

One reported technique for reducing conflict is making agreements or even contracts with the children to direct them in an appropriate direction. This prevents the parent and child from having to deal the inappropriate behavior after it occurrs. Another technique described uniformly by all these parents is that they never use threats of punishment unless they fully plan to carry them out if needed. They perceive their children being at an age where the child will occassionally engage in inappropriate behavior just to test the parent on this point.

Acknowledgement of Frustration

The final principle held by these parents is somewhat different from the others in that it is directed more towards the parents. This is the acknowledgement that the task of raising children can be a very anger-provoking, frustrating job, no matter how perfect the parent. While they try to prevent crises or conflict from occuring they also realize that they can not totally control everything. Thus, with the recognition of this fact, these parents feel they are better able to handle those tense moments when they did get upset with their children.

All of the non-spanking parents reported experiences they had had with their children that were infuriating. Like the parents who spank but view it as ineffective discussed in earlier chapters, the non-spanking parents are very open in admitting their own frustrations. They too, have limitations. When pushed they get upset. For example, one woman who has very clear principles on how to raise children and who is strongly committed to not spanking, was quite frank on this point:

> Laurie: I like this age much better than when they were babies. As a baby, my daughter used to cry, cry all of the time. I used to imagine throwing her against the wall to get her to shut up. I never would do such a thing but somehow, thinking about it made me feel better.

Several similar comments were made other non-spanking parents which suggest that even if these parents have children who are less difficult to handle than parents who spank, these children still have the ability to totally unnerve their parents. As a result, there are times when focusing on the positive aspects of the children's behavior does not work.

Perhaps part of the reason these parents are aware of the frustrating parts of childrearing is because, as a group, they have had considerable education in child development and childrearing. Eight of the mothers are or have had been teachers sometime during their lives which means they have had some type of college education on this topic. Others, who are not teachers, had taken college courses in psychology of child development or have attended childrearing classes held in the community. Dreikur's STEP program and Gordon's PET approach were mentioned by several parents and one parent quoted Dr. Spock's philosophy almost verbatim. Yet, while the recognition that childrearing can be exacerbating may help a parent cope with a problem, they still must react to these transgressions. The following section review the methods used by non-spanking parents.

Alternative Techniques Used

As has been stated, the non-spanking parents try very hard to prevent misbehavior by their children. In general they do not like to use any type of punishment. During times of escalating interactive conflicts they make frequent use of isolation to decrease the friction. Again, the use of isolation or "time-out" is an integrated part of their childrearing approach. For example, some parents send the child to a hallway or a stairway rather than to their room because the parents considered the child's room the child's personal space amd say it should not be confused with a place of punishment. Other parents say, rather than taking advantage of the power differences between the parent and the child in forcing the child into an isolated area, the parents themselves leave the area. The effect is the same, it isolates the child and gives everyone, both the child and the parent, a chance to calm down.

In extreme situations non-spanking parents will use some type of punishment that is seen as a logical consequences of the misbehavior. Most of these parents feel that punishment is usually unncecssary especially with children this age. Many non-spanking parents describe their children as being extremely sensitive to their parents feelings. Often the parent simply expressing displeasure is enough punishment to alter the child's behavior. The children do not like to displease their parents. In fact, many parents said they have to be careful about expressing anger because they do not want to emotionally disturb their

children while expressing this displeasure.

In general, non-spanking parents have very well-formulated ideas about why children misbehave and on what their role as a parent should be. The following section will analyze how the decision not to spank fits in with this overall approach.

INTEGRATION OF NON-SPANKING WITH CHILDREARING

Primary reasons parents give for not spanking are that their children do not do anything so serious to deserve a spanking and that spanking is primarily a release for the parents. These are follow by explanations that spanking hurts the child and teaches the use of violence for conflict resolution. In looking at these reasons for not spanking, perhaps the belief that the child never does anything so serious is the most easily associated with the approach to childrearing taken by the non-spanking parents. These parents place strong emphasis on promoting appropriate behavior by informing their children of the rules, by promoting the reasons for these rules before the rules are violated and by structuring their children's world so that they are less likly to get into trouble. As a result, they may not have to make frequent use of any type of punishment.

Many spanking as well as non-spanking parents, believe that parents spank when they are frustrated and out of control. Part of the frustration may relate to events in the parent's own life but it is also frustrating for a parent to deal with the misbehavior of one's own child. Not only does misbehavior mean that a parent must in some way

attend to the situation and develop an approach to intervene but, the child's misbehavior also reflects negatively upon the parent's childrearing ability. This may add to the frustration because it has the potential to affect how others view the parent.

The group of parents who have integrated non-spanking into their general approach of childrearing may not have to face this as frequently as others because they focus on preventing their children from misbehaving. Obviously a parent is never going to be able to intervene and prevent all transgressions but by reducing the number a parent has to deal with, the occasional incident probably is not so threatening to the performance of the parent, especially if the parent believes that occassionally frustration is an inevitable reaction to childrearing.

Finally, these parents claim that spanking may have negative consequences of hurting the child's dignity or teaching inappropriate use of violence. Because the non-spanking parents emphasize open communication they may be closely in tune with their children's feelings and may realize the potential negative consequences more acutely. The description of the children's sensitivity to the parents expressing displeasure as described earlier exemplifies this. In addition, the negative outcomes of spanking have the potential to create further conflict in the household and this is inconsistent with their commitment to reduce conflict.

In conclusion, the reasons non-spanking parents give for not spanking are extremely consistent with their general approach to childrearing. Because these parents construct their childrearing around a commitment to open communication, to be involved in their children's lives, to

reduce or avoid conflict if possible and because these parents realize that things will not always go as planned, it is understandable that they do not like to spank their children. First, the negative consequences of spanking go against their plan on how to raise children. Second, because of the particular approach taken by the interviewed parents, they are less likely to have to confront unwanted behaviors so they are less likely to be exposed to situations where they might spank. This in turn, can also serve to prevent frustrations. Finally, when frustration does occur, these parents recognize it as an inevitable occurrence and thus seem better able to cope with it.

It can be argued that the principles described by the non-spanking parents are ones that any "good" American parent might have. They certainly are consistent with some values of our society, especially regarding the role of parents, and represent at least one viable mode of raising children. This may be a result of the relatively frequent exposure to working with children and the amounts of education about childrearing experienced by these parents. It could be argued that parents could advocate these same principles but contend that spanking is necessary to implement them. Yet, the consistency between these principles and the commitment not to spank is so logically connected that the adherance to these principles by a spanking parent would appear to be an inconsistent approach to childrearing.

Awareness of Deviance

Finally, while the decision not to spank appears consistent with the

approach to childrearing taken by the interviewed parents there are mix assessments of their awareness of their deviant status. As part of the interview, parents were asked if the friends of their children were spanked. Four said "yes" and two replied "no." The rest responded, "I'don't know." A few of the parents who did not know continued to add that they feel it is fairly normal to not spank children this age and they assume others feel this way too.

As previously described, toward the end of the interview parents were informed that most parents in their community, with children of a similar age, spank their children. The overwhelming response to this was one of surprise. Yet, this reaction of surprise was not one of disbelief, rather a reaction of parents who did not realize that so many parents spank their children. A few said they were saddened by this knowledge and went on to describe how most spanking is the result of parents' frustrations.

CASE STUDY OF DENISE

To illustrate how these pieces fit together the following is an abreiviated transcript of an interview with a non-spanking mother. Identifying characteristics of this family have been altered and replaced with similar but fictitious ones.

Denise, age thirty, has been married to her thirty-three year old husband for ten years. They have two children, a daughter Lorrie, age seven, and a son, Steve, age 4. Denise has a bachelors degree in business and has just started to work as a systems consultant for a

computer manufacturer. Her husband also graduated from college and is employed as a manager of a public relations office for a large corporation. Denise reports her income as $3,500 and her husband's as $28,000. Denise says that she has not spanked, slapped or hit her daughter in over four years and has not done so to her son for the last two years. She can only remember three times when she ever used physical punishment and all three were spankings.

Interviewer: To get a better idea of how you raise your children, particularly your seven year old, can you think of the last time she got into trouble or did something that you didn't like?

Denise: (laughs) I felt like such a sap when I was filling out your first questionnaire because I said that they're never going to believe that any kid is this well behaved or has gotten in this little trouble. But, it's really true. I really have trouble thinking of anything in general that she does that bugs me. Oh, little everyday things like she's supposed to wash out her thermos when she gets home from school and she doesn't always, so she gets sour milk in there, but she has to live with that , not me. I guess most things get headed off before they really become problems. I can't think of anything she's ever done that she hasn't very quickly confessed, and things make a big impression in her memory. There was one time when she was around four years old. We were rushing to get ready to go out to dinner or something, and she was left down here to finish her dinner, with the understanding that if she didn't eat her hotdog, she wouldn't get any dessert. Well, she put the hotdog down the disposal (laughs). We found it later. Somebody dropped a fork down it or something and went to get it and saw a perfectly good whole hotdog there. She still remembers that! Whenever we talk about something she's done and she comes and confesses it, we always tell her that we really appreciate it because it just gets worse if you wait and she says, "I know it's like the hotdog, Mom!"

Interviewer: Did you say anything to her when you found the hotdog?

Denise: We just told her that we were disappointed and told her that of course she couldn't have dessert. We didn't make it any big deal. I guess our point of view, even when she was very little, is that we didn't want to be with her if she's screaming her head off. I just say "Lorrie, it gives me a headache to be in the same room, I'm going to go in the next room and when you calm down I'd like to be with you again."

Once when she was like two and a half, I laid into her for something that was unfair. I had a headache or something and she did something or even didn't do something, and I "Nyahh Nyahh Nyahh - why'd you do that- Nyahh Nyahh" and she looked me right in the eye and she could hardly speak but, this still astounds me, She looked at me and said, "Mommy, I'm going up to my room and I will come down when you can be more pleasant" (laughs). I can't believe that I ever heard that, you'll think I'm making this up but this is true and living.

Interviewer: Are you usually the one that leaves the room or do you usually send her to her room?

Denise: I used to when she was little but, of course, it's much easier to do something yourself than try and make a child do it, especially when the child is upset. I guess we fell into a pattern of, you know, I will just go into the next room. I can remember what she was around two, when she was in her difficult stages. She would follow me from room to room crying at the top of her lungs. I'd say "Sorry Lorrie, I just don't want to be with you" and I'd move onto another room and two minutes later she'd come following me.

Interviewer: Is there any other time she has done something inappropriate?

Denise: Oh yes! There was one time that I was worried sick about her, I guess it was the beginning of first grade. We had an apartment about half to three quarters of a mile from here that we own and I had told her that I needed to go over there after school and that I might not be right home. If I wasn't home I'd be home shortly and to go to her friend's house across the street. She got the message mixed up and thought she was supposed to go to the apartment. She didn't come and she didn't come and she didn't come and I didn't know where she was and then I thought that maybe she'd gone over there so I drove over there. She wasn't there so I drove to school to see if she was there. Finally, I caught up with her as we were going past the school again. I can't say that I really got mad because it was an honest misunderstanding. Anything she's done like that I get to the panic point and get so worried that it overcomes the madness. Anytime something like that has come up, it's been a misunderstanding and she thought that she was doing exactly what she was supposed to be, so you can't really get mad at the kid. I can't think of any time when she has deliberately known she was supposed to be home and decided to go off with a friend or do something instead. She's just a good kid.

Interviewer: What are the goals of your child rearing? What are you trying to do by the ways you raise your children?

Denise: First of all, I think the same goal every parent has, of making day to day life pleasant, reasonable, bearable. Second of all, I think our major goal is to teach

our children that they are responsible for whatever they do. If they believe that the outcome of some mistake or bad judgement is that somebody else will punish them, well, then they'll just make sure there's nobody else around when they do something. But if they are taught that things ultimately really hurt them, then it's more internalized, it doesn't matter who's around. I think that's been our position on things like lying, cheating, and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: What is the role of discipline in raising children, what does discipline mean?

Denise: Boy, you come with the toughies. What is disc_pline? Discipline to me, as I guess I've made clear,is, is teaching self discipline, teaching that even when there are structures in the world, and you have to operate within those structures there are reasons for them. We had a big go-round last week about clothes she wears to school. She tends to wear the same clothes for ten days in a row until I can get them away from her. Being neat and clean, is not one of my first priorities but I don't want people to think my kid is a slob. I said, "Hey Lor, that shirt has got a spot on it, and it's not high enough up so you can just tuck it in today" which is what we'd done the day before when we'd gone around on that shirt. "You can't just tuck it in today, wear another shirt please." She looked at me and said, "Why is it so important to have clean clothes anyway?(laughs). Okay, good question, if everything's got a reason you've got to come up with it Mom. I had a doctor's appointment that day so I said, "What if you went to the doctor's and the doctor had eggs spilled on his shirt and his hair was messed up and there were crumbs in the corner of his mouth. Wouldn't you think maybe he wasn't a very careful person and you'd be worried if he was going to give you a shot or do something to you. You'ld think that maybe his work wouldn't be that good either. I think that the way people dress and whether they're neat and clean affects the way that people think about them whether they think they're careful and reasonable people. If somebody looks at me and I had on messy clothes, they might say "Boy, maybe she'll do a bad job and tell us the wrong computer because she doesn't watch out for the details and seem very unorganized." This made sense to her so she changed her shirt.

Interviewer: Does she seem to understand you when you're presenting explanations like that?

Denise: Yea, I also think it's more important that she asks for the reasons rather than just digging her heels in and say, "I'm not going to, I'm going to wear this shirt and you can't make me" or anything like that. She knows that if I'm saying something there's got to be some kind of reason for it.

Interviewer: Is punishment the same thing as discipline?

Denise: Punishment is, as in discipline is helping the child see that there is a system and there are reasons for it and helping the child internalize that. I think punishment is bringing it out a little more. If you've got cause and effect for everything and maybe the effect didn't affect them that much and maybe you've got to think of something that is alive to it, that is more effective. She remembers very clearly once, she went to see the lady next door. The woman who lived there used to give her cookies, sort of the grandmother type. One time she didn't tell me she was going to leave the house and she was only three. She wasn't big enough to be wandering around the neighborhood. She went next door and she didn't tell me, I was up in the bathroom or something. I came down and no Lorrie, so I figured, well, she was allowed to be right out in front of the house maybe she's there. I went out and expected to see her out there but no Lorrie. I looked up and down the street, no Lorrie, I even had neighbors out of their houses looking. She'd gone next door and she'd gotten herself locked on their porch. They weren't home and she couldn't get the door open to come out again. I was frantic, I had the neighbors combing the neighborhood by that point. When we found her I kept her in for a couple days. If I had taken away her dessert for doing that I don't think it would have been related. If she couldn't't handle going out of the house then she had to stay in the house and if a couple of days hadn't made an impression then I would've had to find a punishment that would have, something else that would be related to that

Interviewer: So you try to find a punishment that is logical?

Denise: I could have taken her to a morgue and shown her a dead kid (laughs). I'm taking this out of proportion. Obviously not that, but something that is related that helps to show her that yes, there is a cause and effect here.

Interviewer: Do you ever use physical punishment such as spanking?

Denise: I don't think its very effective myself. I've used it just a few times and it is more out of frustration which probably isn't the best way to use it.

Interviewer: What about other types of physical punishment such as slappping, smacking or shaking?

Denise: No, no I don't believe, I don't think it's a good thing to do.

Interviewer: Why?

Denise: Because I think it hurts and it doesn't resolve anything. I just don't see that it serves any real purpose.

Interviewer: As part of punishment, do you ever threaten to spank her?

Denise: No, that's one thing I learned very, very early I think it was in Vermont that summer. Never threaten anything, lay the rules down, and this is also something that was reinforced in me in a psych, I must admit, a child psych course, in teaching preparation. If you threaten the child, it is begging the child to do it one more time, if you say do that one more time and I will, the child just has to see if you really will and I have completely stayed away from that. Lay the rules out, if something happens, say, "Remember, we have a rule about that, not if you do it one more time, remember we have a rule." And then, if they do it, then the consequences come.

Interviewer: Well, you mentioned that you don't spank her, but most people that I've talked to that have children of this age do end up spanking their children sometimes.

Denise: This age? Really!

Interviewer: I've collected several situations that people have talked to me about where a child misbehaves. Would you ever consider it appropriate to spank a child between the ages of six and eight for these behaviors? For example, would you ever consider spanking a child for being in a dangerous situation such as playing in the street?

Denise: If you had a kid that age playing in the street, they're probably dead by now.

Interviewer: Well, let's think of a dangerous situation that's a little more appropriate at that age. What if a child is riding a bike on a busy street?

Denise: Okay, like if they were weaving up and down the street? No, I just take away the bike riding privileges for a while.

Interviewer: What if a child is hurting somebody else, such as biting a playmate?

Denise: Again, it bothers my mind to think that anybody that age could do that. I know I have to think back, I had kids in my classroom who did things like that. Umm, my kids wouldn't do that. I think isolation. If you can't get along with that child, then we'll have to put you by yourself where you can't hurt anybody. I've always been very against hitting a child because they are hitting. That doesn't make much sense, does it?

Interviewer: What if a child lies? Is that appropriate grounds for spanking?

Denise: I really can't think of anything that justifies violence.

Interviewer: What if the child talks back to you?

Denise: No

Interviewer: What if the child is too active or excited and needs to be calmed down?

Denise: No

Interviewer: What if the child just misbehaves and nothing else works, should spanking be used as a last resort?

Denise: I don't know, I just can't contemplate any reason I would spank children at this age.

Interviewer: Do you know if any of Lorrie's friends are spanked?

Denise: Not that I'm aware of. Not that anybody talks about.

Interviewer: Can you think of any possible reasons why people do spank their children at this age, why do you think people do spank their kids?

Denise: Frustruation and desperation, nothing else has worked. But they're going to be in more trouble as the kid gets bigger and bigger. That was something I read in a book, very young, if you do depend on spanking you're going to be in trouble as the kid gets bigger than you.

Interviewer: How did you get your ideas about how to raise children?

Denise: Ahh, that's interesting because my approach is very different from my parents approach. I was an elementary school teacher for three years before Lorrie was born and.

Interviewer: What grade?

Denise: Kindergarten and first grade remedial reading. So I think that gave me a chance to experiment on other people's kids (laughs) before I had to go FLASH into my own kids.

Interviewer: That also means you've probably had college courses on child development?

Denise: Yahh. Yahh. Although most of them were in business management. I think my big introduction to child psych and how to deal with kids in difficult situations, came that summer between Freshman and Sophomore year when I lived with a family in Vermont for the summer and helped take care of their

kids. They had a five year old who was an absolute hellion. He lied and threw temper tantrums, while their two year old was the dearest thing you ever saw. The parents were wonderful but they couldn't figure out how this kid got how he was. We used to stay up nights talking about gee, should we try this and then what would happen, and we were having big discussions about what effects various approaches to child rearing would have. So I must say that I was going into parenthood a little bit more experienced than sixteen year old pregnant woman" or whatever. I guess if we had to say we were getting it from one side or the other we're going more along the lines of my husband's family. My family was quite a great deal more authoritarian, you know, I was spanked when I was little. There were very strict rules and no one really explain things to kids. Kids were expected to just accept the rules.

Interviewer: What would you do as a child that would provoke your parents?

Denise: I remember getting in trouble for going down to the corner variety store, which was about a mile away, when I was six and I was not allowed to go down there by myself. I seem to remember when I was four, I'd get in a lot of trouble because I was fascinated with floating boats in the toilet.

Interviewer: Were you generally spanked then, was that the type of discipline they used with you?

Denise: Spanked, and then when I got older, grounding was very big.

Interviewer: How old were you when you were last spanked?

Denise: Oh, I don't know, maybe like Lorrie's age, seven-eight, something like that.

Interviewer: Let's go back to when she was one or two, at the time when kids have to be taught to stay out of things. How did you deal with her then?

Denise: That's the time to lay the ground rules.

Interviewer: What did you do with her then?

Denise: I explained to her why she shouldn't touch the stove, why she shouldn't touch the outlets. I can remember my parents for the longest time really being wary of this approach. Anytime something would happen and everything stopped, we'd sit there and explain it all and talk it out and talk it out and talk it out. I remember very vividly when she was about two, my father said, "I've got to hand it to you, after all Denise, it really works." I don't usually make believers out of them.

Interviewer: So it seems that she generally understood what you were trying to say to her?.

Denise: Yah, yah

Interviewer: Do you still find when you try to explain things to her now that she pretty much understands?

Denise: Oh yah, I really do.

Interviewer: Does she usually agree with you?

Denise: Yah, usually. I did spank her once and she remembers very vividly. I was pregnant with Steven and she wa three, just short of three years old. I was trying to take a nap in that sleepy sleepy period of pregnancy and she was playing with the water in the sink which was fine with me. She turned it on too fast and instead of turning it off, she came to me and said, "Mummy, come turn the water off." I said "I'm resting Lorrie" and she said, "Mummy, come turn the water off." So I went in there and it was cascading all over the floor and everything and I just took a look at her and whacked her, She remembers that, "I remember the time you spanked me".

Interviewer: Why don't you spank any more?

Denise:I always feel awful afterwards. I just don't like using it.

Interviewer: What do you want your kids to be when they grow up? Or how do you want them to be, what type of people do you want them to be?

Denise: Oh the best of course! I would like to raise responsible, well-adjusted adults. I'ld like them to be happy and feel good about themselves, too. I think they're both very much exploring roles. Lorrie still says she wants to be a ballerina. Steve, for the longest time says he wants to be a "struction worker", which means construction worker, and therefore couldn't be a daddy because he wants to be a "struction worker". And we say things like doesn't daddy have a job and be a daddy? Anything that makes them happy, I know Lorrie would make a tremendous judge, she's such a reasoner and such a people person. She had her little friends in here when she was five. She had the neighborhood kids in, and the little boy across the street, he tends to be a little unruly. He had done something that the rest of the kids didn't like and they came in complaining. "Jeremy did this, blah,blah blah". I said, as I frequently try to, I try to turn it back on them so I said, "Well, how do you think you can settle this? Why don't you think about how to solve this instead of just how to complain about it?" Jeremy told his sister, a little older than Lorrie, that he'd been learning something about courts and we'd been talking to Lorrie about courts. He

said "I know, let's have a court" and they sat in here on the floor. Lorrie looked at Jeremy and said, "Hey Jeremy, why don't you tell us why you're guilty?" They were giving him a chance to talk and explain it. I guess I'll have to be honest that I won't be terribly pleased if Steve is a construction worker,umm, because I think he's a smart kid and I don't think construction workers use their brains that much, if he wants to be a builder like his grampy' you know, that's something that's a little better than a ditch digger.

Interviewer: Let's talk about kids in general, kids in first, second, third grade. Why do they misbehave? Why do they end up getting in trouble? Again, children in general, not necessarily just yours.

Denise: I would have to say in most cases it's probably the fact that they view the system as something that in order to prove their intelligence, their independance, whatever, that they have to go against it, but if you taught a child that the system is inside them, how can they rebel against it that much? They know they're not hurting me or proving they're more powerful than me if they misbehave, they're just going to do something that's going to have some consequences on themselves, in some way or another. Umm, I'm that way today and I don't like it, I still have a weight problem but I will sneak food when nobody's looking because I can get away with it. And I say "Denise, you are an adult, thirty one year old human being and you know that only hurts you" but I haven't internalized that yet because I wasn't brought up that way.

Interviewer: Has anybody ever hassled you about how you raise your children? Hassled you or criticized you?

Denise: Just my parents in that first three years. They were really skeptical that it would really bring the kid around. Which was very hard on me because we lived with them for three months when Lorrie was just over one, so we did infringe on them. Nobody else has ever hassled me because they're such good kids. I have from time to time gotten compliments on my kids,in public situations. By the way, when we were speaking about dealing with younger children I had a rough time of things, especially before I started back to work. I would go on these tear jerks at night and say: I know I'm working my head off doing a hell of a job and nobody else in the world knows it. I want some recognition. Having a couple of good kids wasn't enough for me. NO! I want everyone else to know that I was fantastic. People still complimented me but it didn't seem like enough. It's better now that I am working.

Interviewer: Has she ever come home having been hit by another kid?

Denise: No, unless they were just kidding.

Interviewer: What would you say to her if she did come home and tell you that somebody had hit her?

Denise: Ask why, you know, find out all about the circumstances that led up to it. Has she in any way done anything that justified it , or was it completely unprovoked.

Interviewer: How would you advise her to handle the situation the next time?

Denise: Ooh, just advise her to walk home with friends or something like that, you know, keep herself covered.

Interviewer: Has Lorrie ever talked to you about a situation where she's had a disagreement with somebody and she's had to stand up for herself?

Denise: Yes, but she can be very assertive. She was threatened with a knife on the school path when she was in kindergarten. Some bully, in the neighborhood apparently came up with a jackknife. He wouldn't have hurt her, he was like in second grade at that time, but he was saying," I've got a knife and I can cut you." or something like that. I asked Lorrie, "What did you say?" Here I am quaking in my boots. She said, "Well, I was really scared Mommy, but I thought that if I ran , he might get more excited and run too, and I told him I just didn't believe he'd really cut me and that he was just a big bully." To look at Lorrie, she's not very agressive, but I think that she has such a sense of what is right and what's really going to happen, that she just knew that this guy wasn't really going to hurt her. Although she was scared when she went out of the house after that. She wanted to stay out of school for the next couple of days.

Interviewer: Most kids get picked on sometime or another, by others kid. Do you know if this has ever happened to her?

Denise: Yah. Yah. She had a big problem, last year there were two girls who were a year or two older than she, who came home walking near her one day and decided that it would be a fun thing to do to wash her face in the snow that particular day right over there at the playground. She came home and she was crying and she was very upset. She said, " You have to do something" and I said, "Of course, did you try talking to them?"and we went through the whole thing. Yes she tried to talk to them but they wouldn't listen. "Well, what would you like me to do?"I asked. She said, "I want you to talk to them." Gulp. How would I feel if somebody's mother came to this house? Then I said, well, if my kid had been doing something and needed talking to I guess I'd just have to deal with it. I was scared to death, I didn't know these families, and yet, it was very important to Lorrie. I went and I knocked on Sally's door and said to her mother, whom I had never met, "Lorrie had a problem on the way home from school with Sally and I would like to speak to Sally if I may!" Sally being the

big liar that she is , denied that anything happened but that the other girl Lauren had done it. So I went to Lauren's house and she said Sally had done it. I said to Lauren, "Did you know that Sally said that you did it all?" "She did?!" "Why don't you come with us and we'll talk to Sally together?" We got them together, and they didn't ever really admit anything but I think they got the message. Anyway Lorrie was very satisfied with the outcome.

Interviewer: How'd the other parents handle this?

Denise: I don't think they did. Sally's mother said, "You'd better not be lying, that's all I can say!" Of course she was, but her mother didn't make any effort to really get to the bottom of it or find out what had happened or anything about to get her on the spot. They felt it's not their duty to defend their own kid in front of strangers, you know. I knew I had put her on the spot and I needed to give her some way of saving face so I didn't push it.

Interviewer: So Lorrie felt satisfied with how it ended?

Denise: Yah, yah. They knew how she felt then and they knew that this sort of thing wasn't going to go without notice. I think that's what she wanted to happen.

Interviewer: Does she seem to get along pretty well at school? Get along with her teacher?

Denise: With the other students, she has gotten along fine. She got along super with her nursery school teachers and she had an absolutely fantastic teacher last year that we were all crazy about. In fact she said she wanted to stay back so she could have her again. But this year's teacher, none of us are crazy about, she's very crabby, unreasonable woman who will, again this is Lorrie's sense of justice, she will keep the whole class in for recess because five kids were talking too loud. That sort of thing, you know. We've all run into it in grade school but it galls Lorrie to the point that she had asked me to go in and talk to the teacher. I talked to her a couple of times and things get better for a while. We just found out that she isn't going to teach next year because she's very burnt out from this year. So I guess that's just a part of her feeling,

Interviewer: So did you talk to Lorrie about this, telling her about the teacher being burnt out?

Denise: Well, I would go that far because she still has to go to school everyday and see this teacher. We have tried to dwell on the positive, too. Okay, you don't get along with Mrs. Campbell, but think of the things you have learned this year. She's not a total failure is she? What have you learned? "Well, I've learned lots about reading and we're doing neat things i math and she does do good science projects

once every two weeks."

Interviewer: What about the other students in her classes, does she seem to get along with other kids her age?

Denise: Yah, she can be a loner, she's gotten better at this, umm, she is so wrapped up in her homelife and her family, for instance, when she was little, she would always say, "I want to have friends, I want to have friends" She would never go to anybody else's house, it had to be here. .....home ground, she always wanted to invite somebody else over, but never go there, and, I think that's still generally true.

Interviewer: Did you..

Denise: She'll always have people over here instead of going to their house. The only criticism a teacher had on her first report card was she tended to go out at recess and just kind of stood there . Then, a new kid moved into the class and she and Molly have become inseparable. I think Lorrie has learned alot from this friendship, about getting along with somebody outside the family.

Interviewer: Is that something you talk to her about, or is it generally do you just have to let her work it through?

Denise: I think I have to let her work it through. If it went on for longer and she became more of a loner I might have said something but it's kind of dissolved because she's gotten so close to Molly. I know for a fact that my husband's family was like that. It was very home oriented. I don't think he even kissed a girl until he started college! (laughs) So I can'see that it didn't warp him permanently being so close to his family. Lorrie's like him a lot. For example, she does marvelous things over on the bars and she's very athletic. She took a gymnastics class at the community center last fall for six weeks. I asked her if she wanted to do more because she was the best in the class in some of the things and the teacher was really proud of her. But she didn't want to do it anymore. I asked why and she said, "Hommy, I spend all day at school, I don't have any time to just be at home." That's fine with me.

In many ways, Denise is similar to the other non-spanking parents. She sees the few times when she did use physical punishment as a result of her own frustration. She also sees spanking as a form of violence that is not effective nor justifiable to use in childrearing. She describes her children as being extremely well-behaved which she sees as

the result of the extensive talks she has with her children where she constantly explains why certain behavior is appropriate. As such, she explains that she does not frequently have to punish her children.

This case also illustrates the ambiguities in the awareness of deviance held by non-spanking parents. On one hand, Denise reports she does not know if her daughter's friends are spanked, it is not talked about. In addition, she is surprised to find out that most parents spank children this age. Yet, on the other hand, upon hearing that other parents spank, she seems to know why they do it, out of frustration and desperation. Furthermore, she says that as a child, she too was spanked when she was around the age of Lorrie. Denise appears surprised to learn she is different but at the same time she gives indications that she knows her attitudes and behaviors toward spanking are contrary to other parents.

There is one point where Denise's approach to childrearing is different from some of the other non-spanking parents. This was most clearly seen in her reaction to the time her daughter was attacked by two other girls. Denise took a major role in resolving this conflict using her status as an adult to impress upon the other children that they had engaged in inappropriate behavior.

Most of the other parents interviewed were not this intrusive in the affairs of their children. They reported being equally concerned about the welfare of their children but, rather than taking things into their own hands, they used situations like this to educate their children and to push them to be assertive. Even Denise in the earlier part of the interview when she was asked how she would react if her daughter had

been hit by another child responded that she would advise Lorrie on how to handle it. Yet, when a very similar situation occurred, she did not do this.

There may be special circumstances surrounding this episode or specifics in the relationship between this mother and child which explains why Denise intervened in her daughter's affair. For example, Denise is a very outgoing, assertive and social person but she describes her daughter as someone who frequently prefers to be alone or at least to be at home much more frequently than someone like Denise. Denise seems to recognize this difference between she and her daughter and she may try to compensate for it. She may have been more intrusive in the childhood conflicts of her daughter because she knows these are situations that are especially difficult for Lorrie to handle. Regardless of the reason, this is a situation where Denise did not carry through on a belief she has regarding childrearing.

Several other parents interviewed also had difficulty in implementing all of their ideas on how children should be raised. The next section reviews some of these situations.

DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING PRINCIPLES OF CHILDREARING

Four of the fourteen non-spanking parents discussed in this chapter have more serious difficulties than Denise in employing their beliefs about how to raise children. Basically, they have the same attitudes about childrearing as the other parents but, there are inconsistencies

between what they describe as how they want to raise their children and what they report doing.

Some of the inconsistencies are the result of external factors. For example, a low income makes all of these families live in small apartments where it is difficult to reduce many sources of conflict. In fact, the lack of money causes conflict because there are disagreements on how the limited resources should be allocated. Frequently, things the children would like to do, such as being involved in organized activities or doing things with friends, received low priority creating arguments the financially stable households do not experience.

Another factor which appears to be related to difficulties these four families have in implementing their principles of childrearing is that the parents are ill-equipped to do so. For example, the parents would encourage their children to talk openly about problems but often the parents were unable to give any helpful advice. This may have been a result of limited knowledge about child development or childrearing although, it is unlikely because they believe in the same guiding principles as the other non-spanking parents. More likely their exposure to violence may be related particularly since three of these four women had themselves been victims of child abuse.

While these four parents have problems in implementing some of their ideas regarding childrearing it is noteworthy that their belief that spanking is wrong is one attitude they are most able to integrate into their behavior. These woman have a strong commitment to not spanking and are able to stick with this when dealing with their children. Perhaps this is related to the perceptions of the negative consequences

of spanking and because it is something in which these parents have some control over.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter reviewed the relationship between the decision not to spank and the general approach to childrearing taken by the interviewed parents and provides more information on why these parents do not spank.

It has been seen that, for the most part, non-spanking parents have several guiding principles on how children should be raised. While this particular approach to childrearing may not necessarily be the best way, it is comprised of a set of compatible tenets which are acceptable standards for childrearing in American society. As such, these parents are not deviant in their general approach to childrearing. In fact, perhaps as a result of their education backgrounds, their approach may be characterized as appropriate and recommended way of raising children. Again, the content of these principles suggests that these parents may be a a relatively high level of cognitive maturity (Newburger and Cook, 1983) in their approach to childrearing.

It is difficult to determine if non-spanking is a consequences of these principles or if it is a separate principle in its own right. Nevertheless, it is a stance which is consistent with the overall interpretation these parents have on their role as parents

This relationship between not spanking and the more general approach

to childrearing may help explain in part, why the relatively low level of commitment to not spanking as discussed in Chapter 7, is presented by these parents. The interviewed parents may be attaching a higher priority to the task of childrearing than they do to their decision not to spank. They are more concerned about the outcome of childrearing as reflected in the behavior of their children than their own adherance to the principle of not spanking. This could explain why the non-spanking parent would consider spanking if the transgressions of the child outweighted the negative consequences of spanking.

However, their behavior is not consistent with this. They do not spank, even when their children engage in serious transgressions. Nor does this explain why the non-spanking parents do not recommend this approach to other parents, nor why they appear ambiguous on the acknowledgement of their deviance regards to this behavior. The following chapter will present a possible explanation for these findings.

Chapter IX

CONCLUSIONS

The legitimation of physical force in the context of childrearing has been extensively documented and analyzed in this work. It has been found that the physical punishment of children is not only formally allowed, but is used by most American parents. At the same time, throughout the course of this discussion several inconsistencies or unresolved issues regarding the legitimate use of physical punishment have been revealed.

This final chapter will review the research findings from this study regarding the use of physical punishment by American parents. This discussion will be followed with a review of the limitations of this study. Next, a description of unresolved issues regarding the legitimation of this particular type of force and suggestions for future research are offered. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on why the use of physical punishment remains legitimate in American society in spite of the potential problems associated with it.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Physical Punishment is Legitimate

Most American parents use some form of physical

punishment, specifically, 85 to 95% spank their children. Our legal system consistently upholds the right of parents to hit their children. One state specifically exempts "normal" physical punishment from the legal definition of child abuse. In addition to parents, school personnel are also allowed to administer physical punishment, although most state-controlled facilities, such as juvenile detention centers, prohibit its use.

For the most part, childrearing experts do not criticize the use of physical punishment. A few encourage its use and a few suggest it should not be used too frequently, but none take a clear stance prohibiting its use. In fact, it is remarkable that most of the child rearing manuals reviewed spend little, if any, time discussing one of American's most frequently used disciplinary technique. This reluctance to discuss physical punishment was also found among the interviewed parents.

When Physical Punishment Is Used

Two scenarios when physical punishment is used were described by the parents answering the initial, screening questionnaire. First, physical punishment is used in childrearing when a child breaks a specific rule such as hitting someone. Usually, the child must have been aware of the rule before physical punishment is administered and frequently, the punishment is used only as a last resort. Parents who spank under these conditions evaluate it as an effective method for childrearing.

The second scenario is described by a different group of parents.

These parents say they spank when they, themselves are unable to cope with the situation. This is because the parent is tired, frustrated or angry. These parents describe the impetus for spanking as coming from their own behavior and do not mention the behavior of their children. It has been suggested that these parents are using physical punishment to communicate anger and frustration to their children. Parents who describe spanking under these conditions evaluate it as ineffective in childrearing.

Deviants' Perspective

A small group of parents who currently use no form of physical punishment were located and interviewed. While these parents differed from most American parents in their views of physical punishment, the study found that they too, at least once, had used some form of physical punishment.

The explanations these parents provide for not spanking were classified into three different levels of meaning. First, non-spanking parents address the utility of spanking for behavior management. They believe that their children are generally well-behaved and that there is little need for punishment. In addition, they feel that spanking is an ineffective method for childrearing. Second, like the spank/ineffective parents, the non-spanking parents see spanking as a result of a parent's inability to cope, rather than a reaction to a child's behavior. Thus, these parents do not see spanking as appropriate to use for disciplining. Finally, the non-spanking parents emphasize the unwanted,

negative results of spanking. These consequences include children learning to use physical force to resolve conflict, and the potential for physically or emotionally hurting the child or doing injury to the parent/child relationship.

The non-spanking parents tend to have specific guiding principles on how to raise children and the negative consequences of spanking are inconsistent with these principles. As such, it was seen that the decision not to spank fit together with these parents' overall approach to childrearing. Finally, for the most part, the interviewed parents were able to implement their decision not to spank and, by their own report, were able to raise relatively, normal, well-behaved children.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Throughout this work, physical punishment has been discussed in isolation from other disciplinary techniques. Undoubtedly, there are negative aspects associated with the use of many of these other techniques, whether in the evaluation of their effectiveness or in unwanted negative side-effects. For example, manipulation of guilt or withdrawal of love both have the potential for causing tremendous damage to the child. However, since the focus of the present work is on physical punishment, little can be said about these alternative techniques.

Most of the families discussed in this work were comprised of two parent households, however, perspectives described here, for the most part, came from only one parent. Given this circumstance, little can be

said about the negotiation or consistency of the decision not to spank that takes place between parents.

It must also be remembered that both waves of data collection involved parents who had sufficient interest to take the time to complete the questionnaire or to be interviewed. This self selectivity could be related to why the present study found a slightly larger percentage of parents who do not spank compared to other studies. This factor may also explain why the group of non-spanking parents interviewed, are very similar in the ways they raise their children. It is possible that other types of non-spanking parents exist but were not a part of this study.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN THE LEGITIMATION OF PHYSICAL FORCE

The findings of this research are based on cultural interpretations regarding the appropriateness of physical punishment. As with many norms in American society, not all dimensions are described, nor is every potential situation specified. The following is a description of a few issues left unresolved in the legitimation of physical punishment in childrearing.

Effectiveness for Childrearing

Some parents feel physical punishment is effective in childrearing and some feel it is not. Parents who believe it is effective are those who use it for specific rule violations. Forty percent of the parents who

spank evaluate it as ineffective. These parents describe using spanking under different circumstances than the parents who describe it as effective. Parents who describe spanking as ineffective are the ones who use it to communicate anger.

Non-spanking parents also describe spanking as ineffective but they too, may be describing a different phenomenological event because they do not use it. With the non-spanking parents it is also difficult to determine the causal ordering of this decision. Perhaps they do not spank because they evaluate it as ineffective, but perhaps, they are determined not to use it and thus, to be consistent with this decision, they describe it as ineffective.

These findings may indicate that if spanking is used for rule violations, as compared to the other scenario, it will be effective in childrearing. They also may indicate that spanking is not an effective technique for all parents. Future research could further investigate both of these interpretations. However, evaluation of the utility of physical punishment can not solely rest on the effectiveness of its use because there are also indications of additional, unwanted outcomes resulting from physical punishment.

Physical Injury

Looking at the effectiveness of physical punishment focuses on the intent of the act (for child management) and fails to consider the implications of any undesired outcome or injury resulting from this act. This is one possible negative outcome suggested by the

non-spanking parents. Spanking during the course of childrearing may physically injure a child.

This issue is omitted in the childrearing manuals, by researchers on child disciplining techniques and, for the most part, by researchers in child abuse. The one place where our society has had to confront this possibility is in the litigation involving school personnel's use of corporal punishment which has led to extensive injuries. In spite of the severe injuries described in these court cases, the emphasis has been placed upon correctly administering physical punishment rather than on the legitimacy of its existence. Even the parents who brought charges against the school officials did not advocate abolishing physical punishment, rather, they wanted to curtail how it is used.

In the confines of their own home, some parents administer physical punishment under circumstances which are not effective in child rearing, and it is likely, that as with some school personnel, some parents may be administering physical punishment which is physically damaging to the child. Future research should investigate the extent to which legitimate physical punishment (not child abuse) has the potential to injure a child.

Teaches Inappropriate Use of Physical Force

As suggested by the non-spanking parents, physical punishment may teach children inappropriate uses of physical force. Children may learn that hitting is an acceptable way to solve problems or an appropriate means for expressing anger. Neither use is acceptable or legal behavior

for adults in our society, so it is questionable whether children should be socialized to these uses of physical force.

Prior research has investigated the relationships between physical punishment and aggressiveness or juvenile delinquency. Generally, the relationships have been supported but many particulars of the relationships are still unknown. The present research suggests future attempts should specifically look at whether or not the use of physical punishment is associated with delinquency.

Hinders Social Development of Children

Some of the non-spanking parents believe that the use of physical punishment hurts the parent/child relationship. They describe it as being a humiliating experience for the child, one which hurts the dignity of the child, and one which generally occurs when parents take advantage of the power differences between adults and children. Childrearing manuals suggest this as a possible outcome of punishment in general, but, to the best of my knowledge, no one has yet investigated the effects of physical punishment upon the parent/child relationship. Future research could clarify whether or not this is a potential, negative consequences of its use.

The use of physical punishment may also hinder the social development of children in another way. This is related to the finding that physical punishment is used in two different types of scenarios, one for rule violation and one for expressing emotions such as frustration or anger. Problems may arise if children misinterpret which scenario their

parents are using. For example, parents may be spanking to communicate emotions but it is possible that their children interpret the spanking as a result of rule violation. In this situation children would respond by trying to assess the inappropriateness of their own behavior while, in fact, the hitting has little to do with their behavior.

This type of mixed message could be developmentally disabling to a child because it hinders development of the ability to evalute her or his own behavior from the viewpoint of others. The ability to role-take and to think reflexively is essential for the development of the self. If a definition of child abuse similar to Garbarino and Gilliams'(1980),is adopted, where any act which is developmentally disabling, is considered abuse, it is possible that the use of physical punishment where a child misinterprets why such punishment is being administered,may be seen as a form of emotional or psychological child abuse.

In summary, physical injury, the inappropriate teaching of violence, and the injury to social development are all potential negative consequences from the use of physical punishment. These effects, as well as the issue of effectiveness in childrearing, appear to be most relevant to those parents who use physical punishment to express feelings such as anger or frustration, which may include a large proportion of those parents who spank. In the present study, this pattern was described by close to forty percent of all parents who spank. Relatively little is known about these issues and future research should look at both scenarios where physical punishment is used, for expressing emotions and for rule violation, to determine the

exact relationship of physical punishment to these consequences, be they desired or undesired outcomes.

WHY THE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN REMAINS LEGITIMATE

Despite the wide use of physical punishment, and the wide acceptance of physical punishment as a legitimate technique in childrearing, both parents and researchers question its effectiveness and are concerned about negative side effects. There are several possible reasons why, despite these problems, physical punishment remains legitimate and widely used.

First, children, the victims of this type of physical force are largely powerless members of our society. In the United States, it is believed that children occupy a special status. It is believed, and legally enforced, that children are under the constant custodial care of adults for the duration of their childhood. Children are given fewer individual rights than adults and in many ways, are powerless against adults, particularly against their own parents. When they are victims of any type of physical force, be it legitimate punishment or child abuse, they have few resources to rely upon to stop it. Part of the reason that the use of physical force is legitimate in the context of childrearing is undoubtedly related to the fact that children are relatively powerless members of our society.

Another factor which may contribute to the continued legitimacy of physical punishment is that Americans are reluctant to interfere with affairs of the family. "What happens in the family is a private

matter", is a belief that has kept public focus away from family problems such as wife abuse, elder abuse and child abuse for many generations. While at this point it is difficult to totally document, it appears that our society as a whole, is more interested in parents' ability to control the behavior of their children than in their ability to provide loving environments which foster the emotional and intellectual growth of children. This may explain in part, why the United States has yet to develop a national policy on families. It could also explain why it is legitimate to use physical force in the context of childrearing when it is not permissible to hit adults; the goal of child management is so strong that exceptions on the use of force are granted.

A final factor which contributes to the legitimacy of physical punishment is that no one challenges it. The victims are relatively powerless to confront its use and those who have knowledge regarding its negative consequences, do not publically criticize it. In fact, many experts are reluctant to discuss its practice. This avoidance has been documented from a sample of childrearing manuals but this is also the practice of researchers in the field of child discipline and child abuse, albeit in a more subtle fashion.

As was described in prior chapters, negative consequences of abuse such as aggressivity or juvenile delinquency have been found. While the specifics on these outcomes are still being investigated, it is clear that these associations exist. Yet, these research findings have not reached the public in a form which might challenge societal practices.

The situation is more curious for researchers in the field of child

abuse in that there have been very few studies looking at the relationship between abuse and legitimate physical punishment. The two studies previously described indicate that there is indeed, some type of association between these behaviors in that a) parents who frequently use physical punishment are more likely to be physically abusive than parents who less frequently use physical punishment (Straus, 1980), and b) parents who have abused their children describe the incident as being one which started with legitimate use of physical punishment (Kaduchin and Martin, 1981). Yet, there are few other studies in the child abuse literature which analyze this relationship. For example, there is no study which investigates abusive parents' opinions regarding their use of physical punishment. We do not know what percentage of abuse cases are ones where the parents feel the use of force was a necessary part of childrearing. It is likely that parents have varying definitions as to what separates physical punishment from abuse. Even child abuse researchers have had difficulty in defining abuse as distinct from normal physical punishment; thus, it is likely that parents may have similar problems. Perhaps it is because child abuse researchers have wanted to create a new field of study distinct from the child discipline literature and have not ventured into this relationship. Whatever the reason, the authors of childrearing manuals and researchers in the fields of childrearing do not confront the legitimation of physical punishment even with knowledge of the potential negative consequences surrounding its use.

The present study can not verify or refute that at times, the use of physical punishment in the context of childrearing is constructive and produces no negative consequences. However, this research does document

that there are occasions when the use of physical punishment produces negative consequences and it suggests that the range of these consequences, based on the opinions of parents, may be more extensive than prior research has indicated. Many of these undesired consequences were suggested by parents who believed in the possiblity of these effects so strongly that they actively try to refrain from using any type of physical punishment. These parents constitute the final group in our society who do not challenge the legitimacy of the use of physical force in the context of childrearing.

Durkheim, (1934), stated that deviance in a society challenges the status quo and can serve as an impetus for social change. But non-spanking parents have not done this. These parents are not crusaders for non-spanking, they do not recommend this approach to other parents and in fact, they do not publically announce their views on this issue. Rather than admitting their deviance, non-spanking parents devise accounts which allow them to escape from the label of deviant. Non-spanking parents approach to the management of deviance is so effective that they have no reason to challenge the legitimacy of physical punishment.

MANAGEMENT OF DEVIANCE

The beliefs and behavior of the parents interviewed suggest that the process of becoming a non-spanking parent is similar to the process of becoming deviant in any other sphere of life. Becoming deviant is a process where an individual is willingly exposed to a new set of

meanings for conduct they previously saw as outlandish or inappropriate and they decide to try it (Matza, 1969). The behaviors of the interviewed parents indicated that they are strongly committed to not spanking but, their verbal description of this commitment appears much weaker. A possible description of how these parents came to be deviant can give insight on this discrepancy.

It was found that the interviewed parents had considerable education in child development, child education and child psychology. Perhaps from this education, they became aware of the negative consequences that may result from the use of physical punishment, and thus, tried to avoid using it. In this sense they approached this deviant stance not as a convert but as an experimenter.

In the process of becoming a deviant other aspects of one's life must be refashioned around the deviance (Matza, 1969). As with all deviants, non-spanking parents still have to make public appearances and continue in ordinary life in spite of their deviance. During interactions with others non-spanking parents may be confronted on their deviance although, because childrearing is a matter for the family, they are not as likely to be questioned as other deviants. Nevertheless, some non-spanking parents were challenged, usually by their own parents or their in-laws, people who are aware of what takes place within the home. Through these threats to their ability to raise children, non-spanking parents learned the usefulness of a socially appropriate account, "I don't have to, my children are well behaved."

Scott and Lyman's (1968) define accounts as linguistic devices employed to ease social interaction when questions arise regarding the

appropriateness of an act. Some accounts become firmly ingrained into American society such that when offered, they are quickly and easily honored by the challenging parties. This allows the flow of normal interaction to continue as it did before the questionable act occurred.

In the typology of accounts created by Scott and Lyman, non-spanking parents who exclaim that their children are well behaved are using an excuse (as compared to justification) in that there is an acknowledgement that the behavior is questionable but understandable because of extenuating circumstances. This is a form of scapegoating. These parents are claiming that it is not their fault that they do not spank, rather it is their children's. Ironically, the children are criticized for being too well behaved. This is an account that even the most ardent spanker would have trouble refuting.

In all of the interviews the non-spanking parents described their children as being very well-behaved but, all of these parents continued to describe situations where their children misbehaved. And contrary to the parents' claim that they might spank sometime, none of them did. This was true even when the children engaged in the specific behaviors the parents described as occasions when they would consider spanking.

By offering the account that their children are well behaved, non-spanking parents are seen by outsiders as normal. It was suggested earlier that these parents also construct interpretations regarding the reasons why their children misbehave. Perhaps this is all part of the "construction of reality" which allows them to avoid using physical force. And, besides, perhaps secondary labeling effects or the removal of undesirable consequences associated with use of spanking contribute,

in part, to why their children are generally well-behaved.

The one thing which might refute the account offered by these parents is if others view their children as poorly behaved. Based on the parents' interpretation, this does not happen. If anything, these parents get complimented on the behavior of their children. As such, it is easy for these parents to continue in the deviant path of not spanking their children.

Non-spanking parents have integrated approaches to childrearing which logically exclude the use of physical punishment and they are basically successful in their role as parents. This allows them to continue in their deviant paths of not spanking without being challenged about their deviance. They can continue to raise their children in the manner in which they prefer without interference from other members of their society. Thus, they have no reason to confront the legitimation of physical punishment because the societal practice does not interfere with their own situations. Non-spanking parents are so successful with their management of deviance that there is no reason to challenge the status quo. With no one to challenge its use, the use of physical force in the context of childrearing remains legitimate.

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Appendix A.

unh FAMILY RESEARCH LABORATORY, 128 Horton Social Science Center
University of New Hampshire Durham, New Hampshire 03824
(603) 862-1888

October 29, 1982

Dear Parent,

I am conducting a study on the ways parents use to discipline their children. I would really appreciate your help with this project.

Enclosed is a short questionnaire that can be completed by either parent. In answering the questions about disciplining please refer to techniques you use with your child in first, second or third grade. In the family background section please include all children in the household. The completed questionnaire should be placed in the enclosed, addressed envelope and dropped in the mail.

The major part of this study will be to interview parents about how they discipline their children. If you would be willing to talk with me for about an hour please fill out the enclosed index card with your name and telephone number and place it in the envelope. I would really appreciate your further help in this project.

There is no place to put your name on this questionnaire and if you so wish, the questionnaire will be anonymous. However, notice the identical identification number on both the card and the questionnaire. If you do decide to be interviewed and sign your name to the card I will be able to match the questionnaire to your name. This matching is necessary for the interviewing process.

Again, I would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete the survey and mailing it back to me. If you have any questions please feel free to call me collect.

Thanks for your help,

Barbara Carson

Barbara Carson
Family Research Lab.
University of New Hampshire
Durham, N.H.
659-6239

Appendix B.

101475

FAMILY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. How many individuals live in your household?

2. What are the ages of all of your daughters?

3. What are the ages of all of your sons?

4. Please circle ages of all sons and daughters who presently live at home

5. What are the ages of other people living in your household, please specify their relationship to you.

6. What is your relationship to the child? (circle one)
   Mother Father Guardian Other (specify)_____

(Please answer the information below for both parents if both are presently living in the household and for other adults in the home)

	Mother	Father	Other adult in home
7. Age of adults in home	_____	_____	_____
8. Years of education completed by adults (start with number of years of high school, if any)	_____	_____	_____
9. Approximate yearly income of adults in home	_____	_____	_____
10. Race/national background of adults in home	_____	_____	_____
11. Religion of adults in home	_____	_____	_____
12. Length of time residing in local school district	_____	_____	_____
13. Occupation of adults in home (type of work)	_____	_____	_____

Please answer each question according to how you discipline your child in first, second or third grade. Child's Age_____

Disciplining Techniques	A. Check the ways you have ever used to discipline this child	B. Check the ways you usually use	C. In a typical two week period approximately how many times do you use these techniques	D. Circle a number for each method to show how effective you feel it is with your child 1=not effective 2=seldom effective 3=usually effective 4=very effective
14. Attempt to Reason with	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
15. Scold	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
16. Slap	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
17. Spank	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
18. "Ground or Restriction	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
19. Take away allowance	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
20. Take away privileges	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
21. Give extra duties	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
22. Time out (e.g. make sit in a corner)	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4
23. *Others (please specify)* _____	_____	_____	_____	1 2 3 4

24. Which one technique do you use most often _____

25. Generally, what does your child do to get in trouble_____

_____

26. Generally, how does your child compare to other children this age? (circle one of the following)
1) much more difficult to handle 2) more difficult 3)about the same as other children this age
4) less difficult to handle 5) much less difficult to handle

27. When you spank or slap your child what are your reasons for using this type of discipline?_____

_____

28. When you do not spank or slap your child what are your reasons for this? _____

_____

29. When was the last time you spanked or slapped your child?_____

Appendix C.

unh FAMILY RESEARCH LABORATORY, 128 Horton Social Science Center
University of New Hampshire Durham, New Hampshire 03824
(603) 862-1888

Date

I agree to be interviewed by Barbara Carson regarding my child-rearing techniques. I understand I may refuse to answer any question during this interview. I further understand that no names will be used in any reporting of this interview or in research that comes from it.

Interviewee

Interviewer

Appendix D.

Interview Schedule
Page 1

In this study I am primarily looking at how parents discipline their first, second and third graders so many questions will be directed toward your relationship with this child. First, though, I would like to double check some information from the questionnaire you mailed to me earlier.

1. There are ___ people living in your household, ___ adults and ___ children, correct? Do you have any children not living at home at the present time?
   If yes, How old are they and where are they living?

2. Are these the correct ages of the people in your household?

3. According to the questionnaire you have ___ years of education and your spouse has ___ years, correct?

4. You list your occupation as _____ and your spouse's as _____. Is this correct?

5. Now I would like to ask you some information about your family. On an average weekday, what are the times when the entire family is together? What do you do during this time?. How about a typical weekend?

6. Are there times you specifically spend with _____? What do you do during these times?

7. How much time does your spouse spend with this child? What do they do together?

8. You mentioned in your questionnaire how you usually discipline ___ but I am interested in some more details. First, could you tell me about the last time or two she/he got into trouble. What do she/he do?

9. How did you handle these situation? If so, how?

   When you disciplined her, what were you trying to achieve?
   (prompt - for example, were you trying to punish, discipline, or teach)

   What happened after you disciplined? (prompt - Did it work)..

   Are these typical situations where ——— gets in trouble and is this typical of how you usually handle these situations?

10. What are your goals of child rearing (prompt - what are you trying to achieve?)

11. Which three qualities listed on this card would you say are the most desireable for a child your child's age to have?

12. Which one of these three is the most desireable of all?

13. All of these may be desireable, but could you tell me which three you consider least important?

14. And which one of these three is least important of all?

15. How far would you like your child to go in school?
How far do you think she probably will go in school?

16. What type of occupation would you like her to go into?
And what type of occupation do you think she will probably go into?

17. Where did you get your ideas about child rearing?
Did you ever attend child-rearing classes? Which?
Did you ever read any books or talk with others?

18. How does your spouse (or other adults in household) discipline this child?

19. In your opinion, is your spouse effective?

20. Which adult usually disciplines this child? (prompt - who does it more often?)

21. Who's means of disciplining is more effective?

22. Is there any disagreement between you and your spouse on <u>when</u> you discipline this child? Over what?

23. Is there any disagreement between you and your spouse on how you discipline?

24. Have you ever specifically talked with your spouse about how to discipline children or have patterns just worked out over the years?

    If talked, When did you do this?
    What did each of you say?
    How did you feel about what your spouse said?
    How have things worked out between the two of you?

25. Would you say that you or your spouse is stricter toward —— or would you say that you both are equally strict, or that neither is strict?

    more warm and loving
    more likely to restrict ——'s freedom
    quicker to praise her for the things she does well
    more likely to lay down the law when she misbehaves
    more likely to dominate her

26. With which parent is —— more likely to feel she can talk things over?

27. Let's go back to when —— was 2 or 3 years old. What type of mischief did she get into?

    How did you discipline her at this age?
    What were you trying to accomplish?
    Did it work?

28. In general, is the way you discipline —— similar to how you discipline your other children?
    if yes, Do your children behave similarly?
    if no, How do the children differ in behavior?
    Why do you treat them differently?

29. In general, how do you want your children to grow up? What kind of person do you want your child to be?

30. What is the role of discipline?

31. Can you discipline for me?

    Does discipline differ from punishment? If so, how?

32. Why do you think children misbehave? I am not specifically refering to your children but to children in general. Why do they misbehave?

33. On your questionnaire you checked that you frequently attempt to reason with —— when you don't approve of her behavior. At these times what do you say to her?

34. Does your child seem to understand you? Does this work?

35. Do you ever use any type of physical punishment to discipline your child? For example do you ever slap, shake, smack, spank or hit your child?

36. Have you ever spanked ——
    If yes: When was the last time?
    Was this a typical situation where you spank
    What happened or what usually happens
    Do you consider it an effective means
    How frequently do you spank her?

    If no, Why don't you spank your child, most people spank theirs
    When did you decide not to spank or did it just happen
    How does your spouse feel about not spanking?
    Did you discuss this with your spouse at some point? When? What was said?

37. Does your spouse ever spank ——

    If yes, What is a typical situation where she/he spanks?
    Why does she/he spank?
    What usually happens when she/he spanks
    When was the last time she/he spanked——

    if no, why doesn't she/he spank?

38. Has there ever been any situation where you've really been tempted to spank or where you felt bad about spanking or hitting your child?

    Could you describe the situation for me?
    How did you feel about this?

39. Have you ever threatened to spank or hit your child? Why?
    Is this effective?
    Might you carry out the treats?
    Does your child believe you might follow through?
    Does your spouse ever threaten?

40. I am going to mention some specific circumstances where some people might feel spanking a child your child's age is appropriate and I would like your opinion on these situations. Is it ever appropriate to spank a child if she/he:

    is in a dangerous situation such as playing in the street
    is hurting someone else such as biting a playmate
    lies to you about something
    talks back to you
    is too excited and active and needs to be calmed down
    misbehaves and nothing else works, that is, spanking as a last resort?

41. Most parents spank their children occassionally. Why do you think they do this? Do you agree with these reasons?

42. Are ——'s friends spanked?

43. How do other people discipline ——? Do they spank?
    (prompt - people such as grandparents, teachers, babysitters)

44. Has anyone ever hassled you for not spanking your child?

    if yes, who? what did they say? How did you react to this?

45. Do you think not spanking —— will make her different somehow?

46. Now I would like to ask you some questions about your own childhood. Where did you grow up? Were both parents living in the home when you were younger Were ther any other adults? Who? What did your parents do for a living, how much education did they have?

47. As a child, what did you do to get into trouble?
    How did your parents respond to this? How did you react? Were you ever spanked? under what circumstances? How old were you when you were last spanked? Why do you think your parents disciplined you this way
    Were your brothers and sisters treated similarily?
    As an adult now, how do you feel about the way your parents disciplined you, were they too strict or too permissibe?

48. What about your spouse's family, where did she/he grow up?
    Who lived in their household
    What did the parents do for a living
    Do you know how your spouse was disciplined as a child

49. Let's go back to talking about ——. What type of child is she?
    (prompt - how does she compare to other children)

50. Do you believe a child her age should be taught to stand up for herself or do children need to learn this for them selves?

    Do you teach her to defend herself? How? In what typical situation?

Appendix E.

Please circle the appropriate number for each question. Thank you.

1a. Have you ever slapped or kicked another person?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 1b)
2. No (Skip to Question 2)
3. Not Sure

1b. How many times would you estimate that you have done this?

1. Once
2. Two or three times
3. Four or more times
4. Not Sure

1c. Did you do this as a child or as an adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not Sure

2a. Have you ever punched or beaten another person?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 2b)
2. No (Skip to Question 3)
3. Not Sure

2b. How many times would you estimate that you have done this?

1. Once
2. Two or three times
3. Four or more times
4. Not Sure

2c. Did you do this as a child or as an adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not Sure

3a. Have you ever been slapped or kicked by another person?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 3b)
2. No (Skip to Question 4)
3. Not Sure

3b. How many times would you estimate that this happened to you?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not Sure

3c. Did this happen to you as a child or as an adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not Sure

4a. Have you ever been punched or beaten by another person?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 4b)
2. No (Skip to Question 5)
3. Not Sure

4b. How many times would you estimate that this has happened to you?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not Sure

4c. Did this happen to you as a child or as an adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not Sure

5a. Have you ever been choked by another person?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 5b)
2. No (Skip to Question 6)
3. Not Sure

5b. How many times would you estimate that this happened to you?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

5c. Did this happen to you as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

6a. Have you ever been threatened or actually cut with a knife?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 6b)
2. No (Skip to Question 7)
3. Not Sure

6b. How many times would you estimate that this happened to you?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

6c. Did this happen to you as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

7a. Have you ever been treated with a gun or shot at?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 7b)
2. No (Skip to Question 8)
3. Not Sure

7b. How many times would you estimate that this happened to you?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

7c. Did this happen to you as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

8a. Have you ever seen another person slapped or kicked?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 8b)
2. No (Skip to Question 9)
3. Not Sure

8b. How many times would you estimate that you saw this?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

8c. Did you see this happen as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

9a. Have you ever seen another person punched or beaten?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 9b)
2. No (Skip to Question 10)
3. Not Sure

9b. How many times would you estimate that you saw this?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

9c. Did you see this happen as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

10a. Have you ever seen another person choked?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 10b)
2. No (Skip to Question 11)
3. Not Sure

10b. How many times would you estimate that you saw this?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

10c. Did you see this happen as a child or as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

11a. Have you ever seen another person threatened or actually cut with a knife?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 11b)
2. No (Skip to Question 12)
3. Not Sure

11b. How many times would you estimate that you saw this?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

11c. Did you see this happen as a child as as a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

12a. Have you ever seen another person threatened with a gun or shot at?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 12b)
2. No (Skip to Question 13)
3. Not Sure

12b. How many times would you estimate that you saw this?

1. Once
2. Two or three
3. Four or more
4. Not sure

12c. Did you see this happen as a child or a a adult?

1. Child
2. Adult
3. Both
4. Not sure

In this section I would like to know if you would approve or disapprove of people taking certain actions in a variety of imaginary situations.

13a. Are there any situation that you can imagine in which you would approve of a parent spanking his or her children assuming the child is healthy and over a year old?

1. Yes (Continue to Question 13b)
2. No (Skip to Question 15)
3. Not Sure (Continue to Question 13b)

13b. Would you approve if the child:

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Was noisy and getting on the parent's nerves..	1	2	3
Had been disobedient all day.....	1	2	3
Has been expelled from school.....	1	2	3
Has broken a law.....	1	2	3

51. Has —— ever been hit by another child?
    If yes, did your child tell you about this?
    How did you respond?

52. To give me a better idea of what type of person she is can you tell me what types of games she likes to play?

    Does she watch much television? About how many hours a day?
    What are her favorite programs
    Do you ever encourage her to watch particular shows
    Do you ever restrict the types of programs she watches?

53. What is ——'s favorite toy?
    Do you have any particular toys you like to give her?
    Do you prohibit her from having any particular types of toys

54. Does —— seem to get along well at school? With teachers? With other children?

55. What are the problems you feel your child has to deal with now?

    Do you ever talk with her about these problems?
    What do you say to her
    Do you think she understands what you are trying to say
    Does your talking seem to help any

56. Do other children ever pick on her
    If so, what does she do?
    How do you feel about her response
    Do you talk with your child about these situations or is it best to let her figure out her own solutions?
    if talk, what do you usually say? How does she respond?

57. How does —— get along with her brothers and sisters? Do they argue much?
    Do they hit each other much?
    If so, over what?
    Do you intervene? At what point? What do you do?

That is all the questions I have. Would you like to clarify any of your comments or do you have anything to add which might give me a clearer understanding of your relationship with ——?

Appendix F

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

The approach to childrearing taken in three different households is difficult to categorize. For the most part, these families have similar views as others on why they did not use physical punishment. They described it as ineffective and acknowledged its negative consequences. However it is difficult to assess the relationship of this to their manner of childrearing because these families are in the midst of major changes.

All of these women have recently become single, female head of households. Two women are recently been divorced and the third describes herself as being permanently separated for her husband for almost a year. As a result, all three women are experiencing tremendous life changes in their own lives. For example, one is a thirty-five year old, upper-middle class woman who, for the first time in her life, just entered the labor force. Another had just moved herself and her children to an apartment three weeks prior to the interview after having lived with her family of origin (which involved a total of 16 people living in the same household)for the first few months after the separation from her husband. The third woman, a deaf woman without a high school degree, had just recently left her husband after he had repeatedly beaten her up. She is presently trying to understand what happened in her marriage while dealing with the problem of not earning enough money to support her household of two children.

None of these women reported spanking their children but it was difficult to determine what their style of childrearing was. All of these women are desperately trying to help their children adjust to the new living arrangements but, at the same time, at least two of these women appeared to be extremely dependant upon their children, seeking their children's help in getting them through these major changes. In the sample of interviewed parents there were two other women who had been divorced but, at the time of the interview, both were re-established in stable relationships. Thus, it is possible that the difficulty in assessing the approach to childrearing of the three recently divorced women relates to the recency of their life changes, rather than to the nature of the change itself. Possibly they were in the process of rearranging their lives and reassessing how they were going to raise children as a single parent. This may explain why it was very difficult to determine a general approach to overall interpretation these parents have on their role as parents