CHAPTER 6

Internalization within the Family: The Self-Determination Theory Perspective

WENDY S. GROLNICK, EDWARD L. DECI, and RICHARD M. RYAN

The study of familial socialization is concerned with how children acquire the motives, values, and behavior patterns that allow them to function within the larger society (Maccoby, 1984; Zigler & Child, 1973). Although the term *socialization* may conjure up a picture of powerful parents forcing standards and behaviors onto passive or resistant children, effective socialization requires something more than behavior in accord with parental demands. It involves an inner adaptation to social requirements so that children not only comply with these requirements but also accept and endorse the advocated values and behaviors, experiencing them as their own. Thus, although socializing agents can force children to carry out behaviors, the real goal is for children to carry them out volitionally. Whereas socializing agents can "teach" their children the values and attitudes they hold dear, the important thing is having the children "own" those values and attitudes.

The development of volition (as opposed to mere compliance) with regard to socialized behaviors thus requires a transformation of internal structures by which the child fully assimilates the values underlying the behaviors. In a sense, this points to a potential contradiction between the forces of socialization that attempt to promote compliance with culturally transmitted behaviors and attitudes, and the children's need to actively assimilate new values and behaviors if they are to accept them as their own. Insofar as socializers force behaviors onto children they may, unwittingly, stifle the very assimilatory tendencies required for successful socialization. Indeed, within self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995), we assume that children have a natural motivational propensity to take in extant social values and behaviors and to make them their own, but socializers often forestall this occurrence. From our viewpoint, therefore, socializing agents such as parents and teachers face the important challenge of how to mobilize, facilitate, and support a child's natural tendency to internalize cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors. It is the challenge of how to promote socially sanctioned behaving without killing the spirit of the child, without diminishing the child's natural curiosity, vitality, and excitement.

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According to the self-determination perspective, another challenge has been highlighted by recent theory-guided research. New research has indicated that the internalization of some socially promulgated values and goals is associated with well-being, whereas the internalization of others is associated with ill-being. Thus the content being internalized also seems to affect whether the socialization represents healthy adaptation.

One of the remarkable findings from numerous investigations of internalization is that children appear more likely both to fully internalize societal values and behaviors (i.e., make them their own) and also to focus on the values and behaviors that are congruent with their intrinsic nature when less, rather than more, pressure is applied from without. An understanding of these phenomena, and thus of effective socialization, requires a consideration of the motivational processes involved in the child's tendency to internalize aspects of the social world.

INTERNALIZATION AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

Self-determination theory employs an *organismic* perspective, beginning with the assumption that humans are active agents who engage their surroundings in an attempt not only to master and assimilate aspects of the social and inanimate environments but also to accommodate to interesting and important aspects of those environments (Blasi, 1976; Ryan, 1993). Development is understood as moving in the directions of increased complexity, differentiation, and refinement, and at the same time, of increased coordination, cohesion, and unity (Piaget, 1971; Werner, 1948). Psychological development thus entails individuals' working to elaborate or expand themselves while striving to maintain or enhance integration and harmony among all aspects of themselves (Ryan, 1991). We refer to this general developmental process as *organismic integration*, suggesting that it is an innate process which operates at all phases of development. In this sense, self-determination theory is a developmental theory even though it pays relatively little attention to age-related changes in socialization contents and practices.

One corollary of the assumption that individuals are naturally inclined to elaborate themselves over the life span is that they have a readiness to absorb and accept socially transmitted values and practices as they develop a more complex and unified self (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Ryan, 1995). This process of accepting values and behaviors by actively transforming them is typically referred to as *internalization* (Kelman, 1961; Meissner, 1981; Schafer, 1968). For us, then, internalization is theorized to be a natural developmental process in which children (as well as adolescents and adults) progressively integrate societal values and proscriptions into a coherent sense of self.

Internalization does not always function optimally, however. To the extent that the natural process of internalizing and integrating societal behaviors or values is impeded rather than supported, a partial or less effective form of internalization will occur, resulting in less adaptive regulatory processes. Furthermore, if the cultural values being internalized are overly discordant with the individual's intrinsic nature, less adaptive outcomes are also to be expected. Accordingly, our view of optimal internalization as a natural, active process of integrating aspects of the social world with one's intrinsic self—a process that can either be facilitated or forestalled—provides a basis for explaining why different types and contents of socialization represent differentially healthy psychological development.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Although the organismic perspective maintains that development occurs naturally through the dual processes of differentiating psychological structures and processes and then integrating those elements into coherent organizational units and networks (Piaget, 1971; Werner, 1948), this organismic integration does not happen automatically. Indeed, it requires sustained, motivated activity. Both the behaviors that provide inputs to development and the psychological processes through which that development occurs must be energized and directed—they must be *motivated.* A full understanding of development therefore requires consideration of the motivational processes that underlie it and the social conditions that encourage rather than hinder those motivational processes. Self-determination theory addresses these very issues (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995).

The theory employs the distinction between two broad types of motivation: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic.* Intrinsic motivation comprises both behavioral and psychological activities that do not require external prompts or reinforcement contingencies. These are activities that people do freely and for which the only "rewards" are the inherent satisfactions that accompany them. Intrinsically motivated actions are spontaneous and thus do not require internalization. Such activities are an expression of individuals' natural propensity to engage their environment, performing interesting tasks and undertaking optimal challenges. Intrinsic motivation encompasses curiosity and exploration, and it often energizes persistent task engagement. It thus represents an organismic tendency that plays an important role in development by energizing the activity necessary to elaborate one's capacities (Deci, 1975; Elkind, 1971; Ryan, 1991).

Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, refers to engagement in an activity that is instrumental to some separable consequence. When extrinsically motivated, people behave in order to attain some outcome different from the mere enjoyment of the activity itself. In terms of socialization, extrinsic motivation pertains to "acquired" motivations—to values or regulations that are initially advocated by an external source and thus must be internalized to become an enduring motivational propensity. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation will be considered in turn.

Intrinsically Motivated Development

Intrinsic motivation encompasses the energization of both behavior and psychological processes. When applied to behavior, intrinsically motivated activity is often described as "autotelic" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), meaning that it is done "for its own sake" or, more accurately, for the satisfaction inherent in the activity itself (Deci, 1975). Intrinsic motivation thus refers to actions that are done out of *interest.* As adults, the tasks we do because they interest us are often quite circumscribed, but children find many activities interesting and they do them quite willingly, with no prods from socializing agents. They invent games, they manipulate objects, they mimic adults, and they do things that lead to responses from others. Such activities are integral to development for they represent inputs to the natural integrative tendency through which psychological processes and structures are elaborated and refined. Thus, many behaviors that provide inputs for development, as well as the natural developmental process through which these nutriments become part of the self, are intrinsically motivated. Like all natural processes, however, intrinsically motivated development can be either facilitated or

hindered by the social context (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991). Stated differently, intrinsic motivational tendencies requires nutriments from the environment for their expression to be manifest. Specifically, the maintenance of intrinsic motivation, and the vitality and effectiveness of the activity it spawns, is dependent on the satisfaction of three primary *psychological needs*—competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan, 1995; Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995).

Psychological Needs

White (1959) first discussed the desire to feel effectance or *competence* in dealing with the environment. This psychological need underlies a variety of selective, directed, and prolonged behaviors that result in mastery. The experience of competence can therefore be viewed as one type of intrinsic satisfaction that people freely pursue and that promotes learning and development.

A second psychological need that subserves intrinsic motivation is the need for *autonomy*. DeCharms (1968), using Heider's (1958) construct of *perceived locus of causality* argued that a basic human propensity is to be an "origin" or agent with respect to action: People fundamentally desire to experience an internal locus of initiation and regulation for their behavior. According to deCharms, people must experience a sense of choice to maintain high intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Deci and Ryan (1985) have argued that factors that enhance one's experience of autonomy facilitate intrinsic motivation, whereas those that promote a sense of being controlled (i.e., of an external perceived locus of causality) diminish it.

The third fundamental psychological need is for *relatedness*. As Harlow (1958) argued, individuals need to experience love and interpersonal contact to develop optimally—they need to experience warmth and affection. Similarly, Bowlby (1969) has emphasized the importance of children's feeling a sense of security with respect to parents. Although MacDonald (1992) has noted differences between security and affection, the concept of a need for relatedness encompasses both. Considerable research on attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) has demonstrated that if infants and young children do not experience security in their primary relationships, exploratory activity is diminished and various adjustment problems are likely to follow. In this sense, intrinsic motivation flourishes only when there is a backdrop of relatedness to others. This is not just true in infancy, however; the exploratory spirit in all humans is most robust when persons are operating from a "secure base" (Bowlby, 1979) or sense of relatedness (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995).

The active tendency inherent in intrinsic motivation—to do, to assimilate, to seek and master challenges—is theorized to occur primarily under conditions that allow satisfaction of the intrinsic needs to feel competent, autonomous, and related. By contrast, conditions that diminish these crucial experiences interfere with intrinsically motivated processes, thereby undermining the natural developmental tendencies. As such, the specification of innate psychological needs provides a basis for making predictions about what social-contextual conditions will facilitate versus undermine healthy psychological development.

Beyond Intrinsic Motivation: Internalization

Whereas intrinsically motivated behaviors are undertaken for the spontaneous satisfaction that accompanies them, extrinsically motivated behaviors are instrumental to

some separable, rewarding condition. When a boy hangs up his coat to get his mother's approval, he is extrinsically motivated, as is a girl when she plays the piano to get a surprise from her grandfather.

Many behaviors that socializing adults would like children to do are not intrinsically interesting and thus not likely to occur spontaneously (e.g., memorizing number facts or cleaning up after an art project). Indeed, children may not be intrinsically interested in many of the activities adults consider "good for them." Even prosocial behaviors such as sharing may not be intrinsically motivated in spite of the fact that children have the innate propensity to feel related to others. All these behaviors, as well as the values and attitudes consistent with them, thus fall within the domain of extrinsic motivation, for they must, at least initially, be externally prompted. These are the behaviors, attitudes, and values for which internalization is necessary if children are to fully accept them.

As mentioned, the term *extrinsic motivation* refers to any behavior in which the "reward" or desired consequence is separable from the activity, whether administered interpersonally or intrapsychically. Extrinsic motivation subsumes instances in which children behave as a direct function of rules, demands, threats, or proffered rewards, as well as instances in which children behave to maintain a fragile sense of self-esteem, or simply because they think it is important for their health or well-being. Thus, not all extrinsic motives involve external control; the source for some is inside the person.

A critical dimension on which extrinsic motives vary is the extent to which they are self-determined versus regulated by externally imposed constraints, rewards, or punishments (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). According to self-determination theory, individuals become increasingly autonomous or self-determined for extrinsic activities as the process of internalization functions more fully and effectively to bring the initially external regulations into coherence with one's self.

Internalization Defined

Internalization, as we view it, concerns the processes by which individuals acquire beliefs, attitudes, or behavioral regulations from external sources and progressively transform those external regulations into personal attributes, values, or regulatory styles (Ryan, Connell, & Grolnick, 1992). Three aspects of this definition merit discussion because they diverge from various other viewpoints.

First, while internalization is often discussed only in terms of moral or prosocial values, the concept applies to any values, attitudes, and behavioral regulations that were originally external and have been "taken in" by the person. Our work has focused on internalization of regulations for a variety of behaviors such as doing schoolwork (Ryan & Connell, 1989), performing chores around the house (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989), attending religious functions (Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993), and maintaining weight loss (Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996). Further, we have explored the internalization of various cultural values, ranging from materialism to health, and the conditions associated with their adoption (e.g., Kasser, Ryan, Zax, & Sameroff, 1995; Williams & Deci, 1996).

Second, this definition highlights that full or optimal internalization involves not only taking in a value or regulation but also integrating it with one's sense of self—that is, making it one's own—so the resulting behavior will be fully chosen or *self*-regulated.

When values have personal meaning and behaviors are willingly emitted, they are not only internally initiated but they are experienced as autonomous.

This definition of internalization thus differs from various others that refer only to whether the attitude, value, or behavior is regulated internally or externally. That use of the internal/external spatial metaphor as a simple dichotomy between whether a behavior is initiated by the person, or alternatively by external prompts, contingencies, or demands, fails to differentiate between different *degrees* or *types* of internalization. It fails to consider whether a value or regulation that has been taken in by the person has been fully integrated and thus has what we, like deCharms (1968), refer to as an internal (rather than an external) perceived locus of causality. If a behavior is experienced as fully chosen and autonomously undertaken, it would have an internal perceived locus of causality, whereas if it is experienced as pressured or coerced by an internal force, it would have an external perceived locus of causality. In the latter case, the regulatory process would be within the person but would not have been fully integrated.

Think about a boy who feels an intense pressure and a sense of having to do well on an exam to prove his self-worth and gain some imagined approval from a generalized other. The cause of the boy's trying to do well is inside him, but according to our theory it is not internal to his sense of self. It is as if he were being forced to behave by a contingency that has been imposed on him, even though the contingency is now within him. He has partially internalized a regulation, has taken it in without accepting it as his own. As such, he would lack a sense of willingness and choice and instead would feel pressure, anxiety, and a sense of "should." This form of regulation differs greatly from that of a child who tries hard because the achievement is what he wants for himself, because it is central to his future goals and personal values. According to our definition, internalization is thus not an all-or-none phenomenon. Rather, it concerns the degree to which an activity initially regulated by external sources is perceived as one's own and is experienced as self-determined. Internalized regulations can thus vary in their levels of autonomy and integration.

Third, our definition, which views internalization as a developmental process, implies that internalization is an expression of the organismic integration tendency and is energized by the intrinsic needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Through internalization, a child is able to cope more effectively with environmental demands. At the same time, the child will feel more autonomous as he or she moves from the conflicts of external control toward a more flexible, volitional self-regulation. The experience will then be one of activity and willingness rather than passivity and control (Meissner, 1981). Finally, as a child internalizes culturally sanctioned regulations, he or she will experience a greater sense of shared values, and of belonging (Goodenow, 1992) and closeness with the socializing agent or group.

The assumption, then, is that the *process* of internalization of behavioral regulations and values is intrinsically motivated by the three basic psychological needs, even though the behaviors themselves are extrinsically motivated. The importance of this assumption is that it provides a means for predicting what factors in the interpersonal context will enhance versus diminish internalization. Those that allow satisfaction of the basic needs will facilitate internalization, whereas those that thwart satisfaction will forestall it. These phenomena, of internalization being motivated by the three psychological needs and thus being facilitated or forestalled by conditions in the social context, are understood

to operate across the life span. Although the competencies one is acquiring and the content being internalized may vary systematically with age, the fundamental processes and needs are theorized to be operative at all ages (Ryan, Deci, & Grolnick, 1995).

A Continuum of Internalization

One of the features of our theory of internalization is its postulate of a continuum describing how fully a value or behavior has been internalized. Initially, what motivates behaviors in the extrinsic domain are *external* contingencies such as requests, rewards, and demands administered by caretakers. This type of regulation requires only that the person anticipate these contingencies and regulate accordingly. A somewhat greater degree of internalization is seen in *introjected* regulation, where externally imposed regulations have been "taken in" by the person but are maintained in essentially their original form. The resulting source of regulation is within the person, but it has not been integrated with the self and is thus a source of tension and inner conflict. Regulation is not perceived as one's own, but instead as controlling and coercive. The boy who pressures himself to do well on a test provides an example of introjected regulation.

A third form of extrinsic regulation, which lies further along the internalization continuum, is regulation through *identification*. Here, the person identifies with the value of the behavior and sees it as important for his or her own goals. With identified regulation, the person experiences a greater degree of choice and personal valuing. An example of identified regulation might be a man who exercises regularly because it is important to him to be cardiovascularly healthy.

Finally, a still more mature form of regulation resulting from an even fuller internalization happens when the identification has been *integrated* or reciprocally assimilated with other aspects of one's self; that is, with one's unified and coherent system of values, goals, and motives (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). For example, if the man's identification with exercise were integrated, he would also refrain from smoking and eating excessively fatty foods—both behaviors being directly related to cardiovascular functioning. But if he does smoke regularly, that would be evidence that the identification of exercising is not integrated.

Accompanying the structural changes represented by movement along the internalization continuum is a corresponding change in experience. As organismic integration functions more fully, individuals experience greater degrees of volition and choice—they perceive the locus of causality to become more internal. The internalization continuum thus distinguishes experientially as well as structurally among these forms of regulation that differ in terms of autonomy, integration, and self-determination. The control-to-autonomy continuum, with each of the forms of internalized regulation is displayed schematically in Figure 6.1.

Substantial research has explored the antecedents and consequences of different degrees of internalization. The research is typically done within domains (Ryan, 1995), suggesting that individuals can be relatively autonomous in one domain (e.g., schoolwork) while being relatively controlled in another (e.g., chores around the house), although it is possible to explore integration in personality as a more generalized individual difference, which theoretically is as if one aggregated across domains (Koestner, Bernieri, & Zuckerman, 1992).

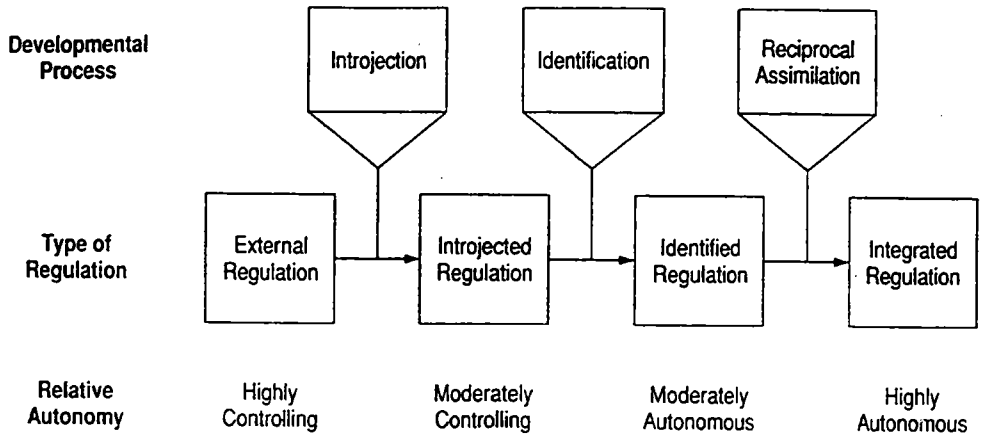

Figure 6.1 Styles and Descriptors of Regulation Resulting from Different Degrees of Organismic Integration

Research on the Internalization Continuum

In a preliminary investigation of the self-regulation continuum, Chandler and Connell (1987) interviewed children between the ages of 5 and 13 about doing "chores," such as picking up their rooms, going to bed on time, and doing homework. The researchers reported that external reasons (contingencies in the environment) decreased with age while transitional reasons (general rules and maxims, which we here call "introjects") and internalized reasons (achievement of a self-determined goal, which we here call "identifications") increased with age, thus suggesting a general movement along the internalization continuum as children grow older.

Ryan and Connell (1989) developed a self-report measure of regulatory styles based on the internalization continuum, which assesses three of the four forms of internalized regulation: external, introjected, and identified. The questionnaire assesses reasons why individuals do particular classes of behaviors, such as schoolwork. *External* reasons include behaving because of constraints, rewards, or punishments externally imposed by a teacher or parent. A sample item would be, "I do my homework because I'll get in trouble if I don't." *Introjected* reasons include behaving because the child would feel unworthy if he or she did not. A sample item would be, "I try to do well in school because I would feel bad about myself if I don't." *Identified* reasons include valuing learning and education, and a sample item would be, "I do my classwork because I want to understand the subject."

This academic self-regulation scale does not include the integrated style for two reasons. First, the scale was designed for middle childhood and the integrated style is a more developmentally advanced form of self-regulation than would be expected for these children. Second, an identified reason is not appreciably different from an integrated reason. What differentiates these two forms of regulation is not why one is doing them, but rather whether the identified reason is integrated with other values and behaviors. The academic self-regulation questionnaire does, however, assess intrinsic motivation because children do vary in the extent to which they are intrinsically motivated

to engage in school activities. An example of an *intrinsic* reason would be, "I do my homework because it is interesting and fun."

Data confirmed that the four subscales of the measure formed a simplex-like pattern (higher correlations between scales that theoretically are more closely related), indicating that these regulatory styles can be ordered along an underlying dimension of autonomy. Although intrinsic motivation is innate and thus does not result from internalization, it correlates more strongly with identified regulation than with introjected regulation suggesting that the more fully assimilated a regulation becomes, the more closely its qualities approximate intrinsic motivation, which is characterized by felt autonomy.

Ryan and Connell (1989) found that, in the academic domain during middle childhood, more autonomous styles (identified and intrinsic) were correlated with positive affect and proactive coping, whereas less autonomous styles (external and introjected) were correlated with negative affect and maladaptive coping. Introjection, in particular, was highly correlated with anxiety and with anxiety amplification following failure.

Ryan and Connell (1989) also found that 10- to 12-year-old children reporting more autonomous regulation in the prosocial domain displayed greater empathy, more mature moral reasoning, and more positive relatedness to others. Support for the existence of an internalization continuum, with more positive outcomes being associated with more self-determined forms of regulation, has been further provided by research using the self-regulation model with widely varying age groups in several domains, including religion (Ryan et al., 1993), sport (Pelletier et al., 1995), aging (Vallerand, O'Connor, & Hamel, 1995), relationships (Blais, Sabourin, Boucher, & Vallerand, 1990), and health care (Ryan, Plant, & O'Malley, 1995; Williams et al., 1996).

Internalization of Values: Content Matters

The work on internalization thus far discussed concerns the regulation of particular behaviors within specifiable domains such as school, work, and sport. Another line of research has focused on internalization of cultural values or aspirations. In particular, this work has considered seven different life aspirations: wealth (i.e., financial success), image (i.e., physical attractiveness), fame (i.e., social recognition), self-acceptance (i.e., personal growth), affiliation (i.e., meaningful relationships), community contribution (i.e., social responsibility), and health (i.e., physical fitness).

Factor analytic studies have indicated that the first three of these values load together, forming an *extrinsic* aspirations factor, so labeled because all three are considered instrumental (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Wealth, image, and fame do not constitute basic psychological satisfactions in their own right but instead are means for obtaining some other tangible or psychological outcome. The other four life values (self-acceptance, affiliation, community, and health) load on a second factor, which Kasser and Ryan labeled *intrinsic* aspirations, for they are typically rewarding in their own right and are closely related to the three fundamental psychological needs (i.e., competence, autonomy, and relatedness). Simply stated, they are congruent with one's intrinsic nature.

Of course, individuals can engage in behaviors that promote health, affiliation, and community for instrumental, even controlled, reasons. However, the two groups of values seem to have a very different character and research indicates that they have quite different correlates.

Several studies have indicated that adolescents and young adults who place particularly strong emphasis on the extrinsic aspirations for wealth, fame, and image were more

likely to experience various forms of ill-being, including depression, anxiety, narcissism, negative affect, and physical symptoms (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996). Similarly, Kasser and Ryan found that placing particularly strong emphasis on these same extrinsic aspirations was negatively associated with the well-being indicators of vitality, positive affect, and self-actualization.

In contrast, the research by Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) indicated that placing strong emphasis on the intrinsic aspirations was positively associated with the well-being indicators and negatively associated with the ill-being indicators. It seems that when people are more focused on intrinsic than on extrinsic aspirations, they will experience more positive and less negative affect, more vitality and less depression, and a greater sense of self-actualization.

Because financial success, fame, and physical attractiveness are culturally advocated values (at least within the ubiquitous media), the socialization of children within our culture could easily result in their strongly holding these aspirations. However, the data indicate quite clearly that when these values are particularly strong within one's overall value configuration, individuals are likely to have poorer psychological adjustment. It is, however, important to note that the negative correlates of extrinsic aspirations appear primarily when the strength of those aspirations is unusually high—that is, when the extrinsic aspirations are out of balance with the intrinsic aspirations. When they are more moderate in strength, it is quite possible that they are more integrated and thus would not be associated with ill-being.

Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, and Deci (1996) have suggested that people are more likely to strongly adopt these extrinsic values if they have an underlying insecurity, a fragile sense of self that must be continually bolstered by outward indicators of worth. Because our culture seems to value wealth and image, the developing individual who lacks the solid foundation of a well-integrated self will be vulnerable to internalizing these values strongly and relying heavily on them as a way to get affirmation and maintain self-worth. The problem, however, is that this self-worth is contingent and requires one to continually prove one's self, to continually accumulate or accomplish (Deci & Ryan, 1995). Thus, as the data now show, achieving self-worth in this contingent way appears not to be an effective strategy for attaining psychological well-being (Greenier, Kernis, & Waschull, 1995).

This negative relation between strong extrinsic aspirations and well-being is undoubtedly bidirectional. In other words, people will be more likely to strongly adopt extrinsic values when they have deficits in the development of self. In turn, having strong extrinsic aspirations will likely interfere with individuals' satisfying their inherent psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, resulting in still greater ill-being.

This work has thus confirmed that the content of internalization does indeed make a difference in terms of its psychological consequences. Internalizing all of society's values does not represent healthy development; suggesting that a differentiated view of socialization is necessary.

EFFECTS OF THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Maintenance and enhancement of intrinsically motivated behaviors and psychological processes are theorized to require satisfaction of the innate needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan, 1995). Thus, our research on the social-contextual

conditions that maintain intrinsic motivation, facilitate the integrated internalization of behavioral regulations, and promote acceptance of the intrinsic values associated with well-being has focused on environmental dimensions that are expected to allow (vs. thwart) satisfaction of the basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991). This section begins with a review of context effects on intrinsic motivation.

Socialization and Intrinsic Motivation

Although intrinsic motivation does not have to be internalized, its expression is strongly affected by social contextual forces. Considerable research has indicated that performing an inherently interesting activity in the presence of events or interpersonal contexts that are controlling results in reduced intrinsic motivation (Amabile, DeJong, & Lepper, 1976; Deci, 1971; Ryan, Mims, & Koestner, 1983), whereas the same activity performed in the presence of events or interpersonal contexts that support autonomy results in enhanced intrinsic motivation (Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, & Deci, 1978). Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested that events such as rewards (Deci, 1971; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973), deadlines (Amabile et al., 1976), threats (Deci & Cascio, 1972), surveillance (Lepper & Greene, 1975; Pittman, Davey, Alafat, Wetherill, & Kramer, 1980), and evaluations (Smith, 1974), as well as pressuring language and a demanding interpersonal style (Ryan, 1982) tend to be experienced as controlling and thus to undermine intrinsic motivation as the perceived locus of causality for the behavior shifts from internal to external (deCharms, 1968). Opportunities for autonomy or choice, on the other hand, have been found to enhance intrinsic motivation while promoting a shift toward a more internal perceived locus of causality (Zuckerman et al., 1978).

These findings from laboratory experiments with children, adolescents, and college students have clear applicability to parent-child interactions, as additional research has shown. For example, Grolnick, Frodi, and Bridges (1984), in a study of infant mastery motivation, found that infants whose mothers were more autonomy supportive evidenced more exploration and persistence in a play task than infants whose mothers were more controlling. Similarly, Deci, Driver, Hotchkiss, Robbins, and Wilson (1993) videotaped 5- and 6-year-old children doing construction tasks (Legos® and Lincoln Logs®) with their mothers in a free-play situation. Maternal vocalizations were coded as autonomy supportive or controlling, and a summary score was calculated for each mother. Children's intrinsic motivation for the target activity was assessed with the free-choice behavioral measure and with the children's reports of interest/enjoyment. Results revealed that the level of maternal autonomy support was positively correlated with the children's intrinsic motivation.

Several studies within school contexts have also explored the effects of autonomy-supportive interpersonal styles on children's intrinsic motivation. Deci, Nezlek, and Sheinman (1981), for example, found that teachers' orientations toward supporting autonomy (vs. controlling behavior) were positively related to late-elementary students' intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, and self-esteem. Autonomy-supportive teachers, who encourage children to take initiative and try to solve their own problems, tended to enhance the children's intrinsic motivation, whereas controlling teachers, who pressure children to behave by using sanctions and comparisons with other children, tended to undermine children's intrinsic motivation (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981).

Ryan and Grolnick (1986) similarly found that children's perceptions of their classrooms as affording opportunities to be autonomous were predictive of their intrinsic motivation, perceived competence and perceived control. In particular, the more autonomy supportive the children perceived their classroom to be, as assessed by both self-report and projective measures, the more they believed that they could control successes and failures in school and the less they reported that the sources of control were unknown or in the hands of powerful others (e.g., the teacher). This study, although not examining internalization, suggests that autonomy support facilitates children's seeing themselves as being more in control of outcomes, a factor that is associated with greater responsibility for behavior.

A second relevant aspect of contexts, in addition to autonomy support versus control, is the extent to which they promote and signify competence versus incompetence. Of particular importance for motivation is the concept of *optimal challenge* (Deci, 1975). When tasks are just slightly beyond a child's capabilities, the tasks are likely to be preferred and to motivate the child to master the task (Harter, 1974). Further, several studies have indicated that positive competence feedback, when presented in the context of experienced self-determination, enhances intrinsic motivation (e.g., Fisher, 1978). Yet, when adults use rewards or external controls to promote behavior, children shy away from optimal challenges and prefer easier tasks, a finding supported by both experiments (Danner & Lonky, 1981) and field studies (Deci, Schwartz, et al., 1981).

Finally, the third relevant aspect, although it has been less thoroughly investigated, is the extent to which there is a backdrop of relational support. This finding, as noted earlier, derives from Bowlby's (1969) theory of attachment and suggests that when parents provide positive involvement and responsiveness—the interpersonal elements necessary for a secure attachment—infants will be more exploratory and mastery oriented. In fact, Frodi, Bridges, and Grolnick (1985) found that secure attachments, in addition to mothers' being autonomy supportive, did relate to infants' mastery motivation. The issue of relatedness and intrinsic motivation is interesting in that intrinsically motivated activity may well be solitary, so it does not necessarily require proximal support for relatedness the way it requires relatively proximal support for autonomy and competence. Nevertheless, there is indication that intrinsic motivation is more likely to flourish if individuals have the security of distal relational support.

To summarize, contexts that enhance intrinsically motivated activity are those that afford autonomy and promote competence. When these affordances occur in conjunction with relational support, even if only distally present in the form of supportive "object representations" (Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994), the conditions will be optimal for promoting intrinsic motivation.

Social Context and Internalization

According to self-determination theory, internalization is a developmental process that leads toward greater integration and felt autonomy. When functioning effectively, people take in aspects of their interpersonal world and work to bring them into a harmonious or integrated relation with other aspects of the self. The issue of promoting internalization, while similar in many respects to that of promoting intrinsically motivated behavior is also somewhat different. Intrinsically motivated behavior is spontaneous and flourishes under autonomy-supportive conditions, but regulations that are to be internalized must typically be introduced to the child by a socializing agent who has some relationship with

that child. Thus, although autonomy support is extremely important for integrated internalization, socializing agents must also provide the structures that are to be internalized, and they must have the type of positive relatedness or involvement that leaves a child willing to engage these structures. For internalization, therefore, relational support from parents must be more proximal and the structures provided must be more extensive than is the case for intrinsic motivation. Thus, in research on internalization, we have focused on three social-contextual dimensions: interpersonal involvement, structure, and autonomy support. These dimensions are elaborated in Figure 6.2.

Involvement refers to the parental dedication of resources to the child. Involved parents put more effort into child-rearing, spend more time with their child, and know more about their child's daily life. *Structure* refers to the provision of guidelines and constraints on behavior. It involves communicating social expectations, explaining why they are important, delineating the consequences of meeting or not meeting these expectations, and consistently following through. This could, for example, involve providing a rationale for a request, such as explaining how a playmate might feel if the child grabbed a toy away. It also involves ensuring that the requested action is appropriate for the child's

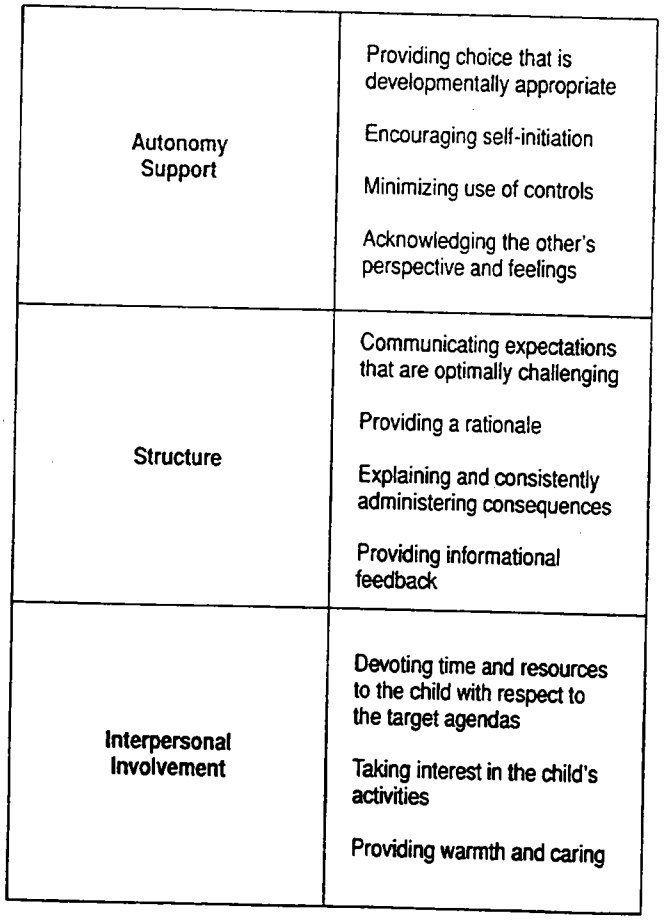

Figure 6.2 The Central Dimensions of a Facilitating Parental Context

capacities. A request to engage in a behavior will not be optimally challenging if there is not a match between the regulatory demand and the child's capacity to understand and carry out the action (Ryan et al., 1992). Efforts to socialize a child too early, for example, generate excessive conflict and anxiety.

It is very important to distinguish between structure and control, however. Structure refers to information about the relation between behaviors and outcomes. Conveying information about socially sanctioned behaviors and naturally occurring consequences to various behaviors are examples of providing structure. But such structure can be provided in either an autonomy supportive or a controlling manner. Language that pressures children and close surveillance to ensure compliance make the structure controlling, but simply conveying information in a reasoned and empathic way allows the structure to provide guidance while at the same time supporting autonomy.

In the first study examining this model, Grolnick and Ryan (1989) conducted individual interviews with 114 mothers and fathers of third- through sixth-grade children about how they motivate their children to engage in school- and home-related activities such as doing homework, going to bed on time, and doing chores. The hour-long interviews were scored by independent raters, and summary scores were generated for parental autonomy support, involvement, and structure.

Autonomy support was operationally defined as the degree to which parents value and use techniques that encourage choice, self-initiation, and participation in making decisions; whereas its opposite, control, was viewed as motivating the child by using controlling techniques and emphasizing obedience and compliance. Involvement was operationally defined as the extent to which the parent is interested in, knowledgeable about, and actively participates in the child's life concerning the target activities. Finally, structure was operationally defined as the clarity and consistency of rules, expectations, and limits.

Data from the parent interviews were then related to children's data collected in their classrooms. Results showed that parental autonomy support was positively related to children's reports of autonomous self-regulation (i.e., greater internalization), teacher ratings of the children's competence and adjustment, and the children's grades and achievement scores. Parental provision of structure was positively related to the children's reporting greater understanding of how to control their successes and failures in school and in general. Finally, maternal involvement was positively related to teacher-rated competence and adjustment, and to school grades and achievement.

Grolnick, Ryan, and Deci (1991) used children's self-reports of their parents' autonomy support and involvement to test whether children's self-related perceptions and motivations mediate between the parenting environment and school outcomes. Findings indicated that children who perceived their mothers and fathers as more involved and as providing greater autonomy support exhibited more autonomous regulation in school, higher perceived competence, and a greater understanding of the sources of control of school outcomes. These self-relevant motives and perceptions, in turn, predicted school achievement.

Finally, Avery and Ryan (1988) related late-elementary children's reports of parental involvement and autonomy support to their projectively measured "object representations" of their parents. They found that both dimensions were significantly related to more nurturant object representations, which in turn were associated with better classroom adjustment among a group of largely urban, minority, children.

In other research, Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) found that both mother and father involvement predicted their children's internalization. Further, Ryan et al. (1994)

found that the quality of relatedness of junior high and high school students to their parents and teachers was associated with greater internalization with respect to school-related activities, and with their sense of well-being. These findings are congruent with the results of attachment research showing that when parents are warm and contingent in their responding to infants, the children are likely to respond more positively to parent requests in subsequent years (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986), and to be less aggressive (Cohn, 1990) and less oppositional (Greenberg, Kusche, & Speltz, 1991), thus suggesting greater internalization.

Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, and Leone (1994) took a different approach to exploring the effects of autonomy support and structure on internalization. They performed a laboratory experiment to investigate how three specific behaviors that represent autonomy support and structure would affect internalization of the regulation for a nonintrinsically interesting activity. Participants were asked to engage in a highly boring task in one of eight conditions, formed by the factorial crossing of the presence versus absence of three facilitating behaviors: providing a meaningful rationale for doing the task; providing an acknowledgment of the participants' feelings of finding the task boring; and emphasizing choice. The dependent variables were the amount of time participants voluntarily spent with the task in a later session when they were alone and had not been asked to do it, and participants' reports of feeling free, enjoying the task, and finding it important. Results indicated that participants in conditions with more of the facilitating conditions spent more subsequent free time with the task and reported more positive feelings than those in conditions with fewer facilitating factors. It therefore appears that supporting individuals' self-determination by explaining the reasons for a requested behavior, validating their feelings about it, and minimizing controls increases the likelihood that a regulation will be internalized.

There was an even more interesting finding in this study. Participants in the supportive conditions showed a strong positive correlation between the amount of free time they spent on the task and their self-reports of freedom, enjoyment, and importance, thus suggesting integration of the regulation, whereas subjects in the nonsupportive conditions showed a *negative* correlation between their free-time behavior and the same self-reports, thus suggesting a lack of integration. It appears, then, that if people do internalize behavior regulations in circumstances that are controlling, the internalization that occurs will take the form of introjection rather than identification or integration. They will perform the behavior because they think they should, despite not liking it and not feeling free. This stands in sharp contrast to the individuals who internalized the regulation under autonomy-supportive conditions and came to enjoy the task and felt free in performing it.

In general, then, the results of these studies on internalization of regulations are consistent and complementary with the results of studies on promoting intrinsic motivation in children. They suggest that parents who provide an environment characterized by autonomy support, structure, and involvement facilitate children's internalizing regulations and displaying both greater competence and healthier adaptation. Variables related to these parenting dimensions have been found to predict child outcomes as widely varied as moral reasoning, behavioral adjustment, and self-regulation in school.

Parenting and the Content of Internalization

Having considered the effects of socializing contexts on the degree to which norms and regulations are internalized we turn to a consideration of the effects of socializing contexts on the profile of values that children internalize. A study by Kasser et al. (1995)

explored the parental antecedents of developing strong extrinsic aspirations, relative to intrinsic aspirations. This seems particularly important in light of the new findings that holding strong extrinsic aspirations is negatively associated with well-being, whereas holding strong intrinsic aspirations is positively associated with well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

In the Kasser et al. (1995) study, 140 eighteen-year-olds from mixed SES backgrounds completed various questionnaires (including the life aspirations questionnaire) and were interviewed by a clinician. In addition, the mothers of these teenagers provided interview and questionnaire data, and a composite variable of maternal nurturance was created, consisting of items indicating high autonomy support, involvement, and warmth. Results revealed that when mothers were more nurturant, the children tended to value the intrinsic aspirations of personal growth, meaningful relationships, and community contributions more than the extrinsic aspiration of financial success. By contrast, children who were reared by more controlling, cold, or uninvolved mothers were relatively more focused on material acquisition than on prosocial or growth-related values. That profile of value content, as has been presented earlier, tends to be associated with unhealthy adaptation. We suggest that parenting which is unresponsive to basic psychological needs of the child creates an insecurity that promotes this inner emphasis on exterior signs of worth such as wealth or appearance.

To summarize our diverse research on the socializing context, findings have consistently indicated that when social and familial contexts are more autonomy supportive, provide optimal structure, and have warm, involved socializing agents, they promote healthy adaptation as indexed by more intrinsic motivation, greater internalization and integration of behavioral regulations, and the adoption of intrinsic life values.

OTHER WORK ON PARENTING

This section provides a discussion of other research on internalization within the family, beginning with research relevant to the concept of control.

Within the parenting literature, many theories include a variable related to control. For example, Becker (1964) spoke of restrictive parenting, Schaefer (1959) described controlling parenting, and Baldwin (1955) discussed an autocratic style of parenting. These terms apply to parents who place paramount value on compliance. Children of parents high on these attributes have been found to be obedient (Baldwin, 1955) as well as dysphoric and disaffiliated (Baumrind, 1967), while also being less likely to turn to their parents for support (Solky, 1995) and being low in social interaction and dominated by peers (Baldwin, 1955).

In research on socialization, among the most studied techniques associated with the construct of control is power assertion (Hoffman, 1960). Power-assertive techniques such as direct commands, threats, deprivations, and physical force put direct coercive pressure on the child to immediately change his or her ongoing pattern of behavior. Hoffman demonstrated that the more mothers used unqualified power assertion in dealing with their children, the more the children were hostile and power assertive toward other children, and the more they were resistant to influence attempts by teachers and other children. Thus, power assertion, when it is extreme, can have the effect of producing resistance (rather than obedience), resulting in the forestalling of internalization and a rejection of socialization attempts.

Lytton (1980) demonstrated a negative effect of control with young children. In his work, the focus was on child outcomes of internalization and compliance, which were based on parents' ratings of whether they had to remind the child to obey and whether the child exhibited self-restraint. Using observations of mother-child interactions, it was shown that mothers who were more controlling and scolding had children with poorer internalization scores than children of mothers who were less scolding and helped the children do things independently.

Research based on attribution theory has also found evidence that superfluous controls hinder internalization. Theorists such as Lepper (1983) and Grusec (1981) argue that internalization requires an internal, as opposed to an external, attributional justification for a behavior that is externally prompted. For example, Lepper (1983) reviewed studies showing that when pressure is just sufficient to obtain compliance, children will attribute their compliance to internal factors such as liking the activity (rather than external demands such as being told to do it), and they will therefore be more likely to continue the behavior in the absence of external surveillance. As such, the prescription from attribution theory is to minimize the use of superfluous controls to maximize internalization.

Interestingly, parents seem to intuitively understand that controlling approaches are less likely to facilitate long-term compliance. Kuczynski (1984) demonstrated that parents tended to choose less controlling discipline methods such as reasoning more often when they were told their child would have to demonstrate compliance at a later time than if they were not given such information.

Although we agree that minimizing the use of external control facilitates internalization, the attribution theory of internalization does not distinguish between introjected versus integrated types of internalization. As such, an attribution to guilt avoidance (an internal factor) could facilitate internalization, but from our perspective it would result in a regulatory style that is internally controlling rather than autonomous.

It is also worth noting that although several theorists have anchored one end of a continuum with being controlling (or an equivalent concept), the other end of the continuum is often not well specified. Thus, for example, attribution theory addresses the need to minimize superfluous controls, but it does not encompass a theoretical explication of what parents would do instead of controlling. In our theory, the answer is support autonomy, which is akin to what Baldwin (1955) labeled democratic parenting.

Several studies have found comparable results regarding the effects of parental control on children's moral development. Dunton (1988) showed that parental restrictiveness was negatively related to moral development. Powers (1982; Powers, Hauser, Schwartz, Noam, & Jacobson, 1983) examined parents' behavior during family discussions of moral dilemmas. Her findings showed, in contrast to what might be intuitively predicted, that it was not how cognitively stimulating the parents' discussions were that predicted high levels of moral development in the children, but rather how supportive versus interfering the parents were in these discussions. Parents who were more supportive and less likely to interfere in their children's communications had children who were more advanced in their moral reasoning. Walker and Taylor (1991), building on this work, found that the discussion style resulting in the greatest increases in moral reasoning over a 2-year time span was one in which the parents elicited the child's opinion, asked clarifying questions, and checked the child's understanding. Such a style is consistent with an autonomy-supportive stance in which the parent attempts to take the child's perspective and support his or her initiations. In contrast, a style that directly

challenged and criticized the child and one in which the parent simply provided his or her opinions (which was described as resembling "lecturing") were associated with lesser increases in moral reasoning over the 2-year span. These styles would be conceptualized as controlling.

Patterns of Parenting

Within the parenting literature, there have been several attempts to describe the effects on children of parents' overall approach to interacting with and motivating their children. Baumrind (1967) was among the first to define and empirically examine approaches to parenting and their impact on the developing child. In this section, we briefly discuss her work, pointing out that general patterns of parenting can be understood in terms of the three parenting dimensions we have outlined.

Baumrind (1971), in her complex study of parenting approaches, made the important distinction between the authoritative and authoritarian patterns of parenting. The *authoritative* style involves parents' encouraging their children's independence and individuality while at the same time expecting mature behavior, firmly enforcing rules and standards, communicating openly, and respecting both parents' and children's rights. In our conceptualization, this parenting approach would be described as a combination of high autonomy support and high structure. The *authoritarian* pattern, in contrast, involves parents' valuing obedience and compliance, attempting to shape and control the child in accordance with an absolute set of standards, and discouraging verbal give-and-take. Using our conceptual model, the authoritarian style involves high levels of both control and structure.

Findings of the Baumrind (1967, 1971) research indicated that children from authoritative homes tended to be the most self-reliant and independent. In contrast, girls with parents characterized as authoritarian tended to be dependent, whereas boys with such parents tended to be aggressive. These two contrasting styles can be conceptualized as opposite reactions to controls. In one case (passive, compliant), the child relies excessively on controls from others, and in the other case (aggressive, reactive) the child actively rebels against controls. In both cases, however, the child exhibits a lack of integrated internalization, so regulation remains tied to the external world.

Discipline Techniques: Inconsistent Findings

Substantial research on parenting has focused on the effects of particular discipline techniques such as reasoning and withdrawal of love. However, a review of this literature by Grusec and Goodnow (1994) indicates that research relating discipline techniques to internalization outcomes has yielded inconsistent and noncompelling evidence. These authors have suggested various factors, such as the nature of the misdeed, that should be taken into account in evaluating the effectiveness of various techniques.

From the self-determination perspective, two important considerations can help disentangle the complex findings concerning the relations between discipline techniques and internalization. First, using the differentiated conception of internalization, based on the internalization continuum, would provide a basis for considering whether a particular technique has led a value or behavior to be only introjected or, alternatively, to be more fully integrated. This in turn would allow for prediction of the accompanying qualities and affects. Second, we suggest that an understanding of

the effects of various discipline techniques requires a consideration of the interpersonal context and relationship within which they are administered. We consider each point in turn.

Discipline and Types of Internalization

Many approaches to discipline have advocated strict socialization practices such as making clear demands and using consistently administered reinforcements or punishments. From our theoretical perspective, these techniques tend to be controlling, and yet there is evidence that some internalization does occur under such conditions. For example, Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch (1991) found that children reared in authoritarian families did well on measures of obedience and conformity suggesting that they had internalized parental demands.

The problem in interpreting these results and reconciling them with the results of other studies which show that less controlling methods promote more internalization concerns the outcome measures one uses to assess internalization. Typically, the outcome is whether the child engages in (or refrains from performing) some particular behavior. However, as delineated earlier, an individual can behave (or refrain from behaving) in either an easy, flexible way, with little or no internal conflict, or alternatively in a pressured way with considerable internal conflict. Even though the outward behaviors might look the same, the consequences of the different underlying regulatory processes for adjustment and self-esteem are quite different. The case of the child's being flexible and unconflicted suggests that the regulation is identified, whereas the case of pressure and conflict suggests that it has been only introjected.

Because we hypothesize that internalization resulting from relatively controlling techniques and authoritarian approaches will be only introjected, we suggest that it is important to use outcome measures that are more complex than just behavior. This could be done, for example, by having children complete the self-regulation questionnaire (Ryan & Connell, 1989) indicating why they engage in the target behaviors. Alternatively, a method such as that used by Deci et al. (1994) might be used. In that study, the introjection that occurred in the nonsupportive conditions and the greater integration that occurred in the autonomy-supportive conditions were distinguished by examining the correlations between the subsequent behavior and the feelings accompanying it. In fact, in the Lamborn et al. (1991) study, although authoritarian parenting led to behavioral obedience, it was also associated with low perceived ability and low social competence, suggesting that indeed the internalization which had occurred was poorly integrated.

An interesting case in point concerns the effectiveness of love withdrawal as a disciplinary technique, a technique that we would consider quite controlling. Research has shown that this technique leads to high compliance (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979) but also to unsophisticated moral reasoning (e.g., Hoffman, 1970). Using our theorizing, these findings indicate that the use of love withdrawal tends to promote introjected rather than identified or integrated forms of internalizations. Thus, a child from a home in which parents rely on this technique may act in parent-valued ways, but the behavior is likely to have negative affective consequences such as low self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967).

Techniques and Parenting Contexts

The second important consideration in interpreting the research relating discipline techniques to internalization is that a particular technique may be administered within

different relational contexts. For example, the technique of other-oriented induction (Hoffman, 1970) involves explaining to the child the effects that his or her behavior would have on another (e.g., the other might be hurt or angry). This technique may be used in relatively autonomy-supportive ways, which would involve minimizing pressure, listening to the child's perspective, and accepting the child's feelings, or the technique may be used in relatively controlling ways, which would involve emphasizing that the child should not do the behaviors that would hurt or anger the other. Our theory suggests that the effects of this technique used in the different ways would be quite different.

Considerable research has shown that the same technique can be experienced as autonomy supportive or alternatively as controlling, depending on the way it is introduced, expressed, or administered (e.g., Ryan, 1982; Ryan et al., 1983). For example, the language used in setting a limit or the tone of voice in reasoning with a child may determine how the child experiences that particular technique, and thus its effects. Studies that focus on a particular technique without attending to issues such as the parents' locution and whether the child's feelings are acknowledged may yield conflicting results.

This point is illustrated in a study by Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, and Holt (1984), which examined the effects on first- and second-grade children of setting limits in a controlling or a noncontrolling manner. The limits were the same, but the style was different. The researchers reasoned that, to relieve the possible controlling pressure created by the existence of limits, it is important to avoid using controlling language and to acknowledge that the children might not want to conform to the limits. Results indicated that the children's intrinsic motivation and creativity were undermined by the controlling limits but not by the autonomy-supportive limits. This study therefore illustrates that the same techniques or structures can either facilitate or impede internalization depending on whether they are conveyed in an autonomy-supportive or controlling manner. In a discussion of the relation between parenting functions and children's motivation, Pomerantz and Ruble (in press) suggested that not only disciplining, but also other parenting functions such as praising, helping, and making decisions can have differential effects depending on whether they are used in ways that promote autonomy or control. Research by the authors indicated that mothers' being more controlling, rather than autonomy granting, was associated with children (particularly girls) making more maladaptive attributions.

The distinction between parenting techniques and the manner in which they are administered is important in considering suggestions by Maccoby (1984) and others that the effectiveness of certain parenting techniques change with children's age. We concur that as children develop greater cognitive capacities they will, for example, be more able to respond to techniques involving perspective taking that require more advanced cognitive abilities. However, whatever the technique, and whatever the child's age, the use of the technique in an autonomy-supportive (rather than controlling) way would be adaptive.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) made a similar distinction when they emphasized the difference between parenting techniques or practices, which refer to relatively specific parenting behaviors, and what they call parenting style, which includes attitudes toward the child and the emotional climate in which the parent's behavior is expressed. Parent style, as the term is used by Darling and Steinberg, can be understood as referring to the ongoing relationship that is evident across a wide range of situations. Thus, they suggested that parenting techniques and practices are used within a general parent-child relationship that may involve respect for the child or lack of respect, connectedness with the child or disengagement from parenting, and support for the child's autonomy or control of the child's behavior. Accordingly, this suggests that the effect on internalization of a particular

technique will depend both on the manner in which it is used and on the more generalized quality of the ongoing relationship that the parent has created with the child.

Darling and Steinberg suggested that parenting style affects internalization in two ways. First, a positive context may render the child more open to communications from the parent, and second, such a context may make the techniques themselves more effective. Within self-determination theory, a positive parenting style would have autonomy support as a central feature.

Promoting Autonomy Not Independence

The concept of supporting autonomy means encouraging children to be self-initiating and volitional in their actions. It means providing the supports necessary for children to feel ownership of their actions, to feel as if their actions were emanating from themselves. It does not, however, mean making children wholly self-reliant, independent, or detached.

Although the concepts of *autonomy* and *independence* are frequently fused or confused (e.g., Kashima et al., 1995; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986), important conceptual distinctions can be drawn between the two terms. Independence means not relying on others; it means behaving on one's own and not depending on others for help. Autonomy does not, however, convey this sense of detachment or nonreliance. One can be volitional or autonomous while still depending or relying on others for support. To be related to others means that one will be emotionally reliant on them, and that reliance can serve to support one's sense of autonomy. Whereas independence or detachment may result from parents being cold, distant, or unreliable, autonomy results from support rather than nonsupport. Research by Ryan and Lynch (1989) indicates that adolescents who rely on their parents for emotional support display more positive mental health indicators than those who are nonreliant and detached. It seems clear from the network of findings that children who are both autonomous and related to (or reliant on) their parents are likely to display healthier psychological development (Ryan & Solky, 1996).

CREATING THE SOCIAL CONTEXT: A TRANSACTIONAL PROCESS

In previous sections, we have provided evidence that characteristics of the social context—autonomy support, structure, and involvement—promote internalization and integration. Although these findings are well supported, it is important to recognize the transactional nature of the relation between parenting contexts and internalization. Children are active participants in determining their social context (Bell, 1968; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Thus, parenting can be seen as a dynamic process in which the parents' behavior and style are affected by their children's behavior and by other contextual factors operating on them (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Grolnick, Benjet, Olson, & Apostoleris, in press).

More specifically, children help create their own parenting context because parents use their children's behavior as a regulator of their own action (Maccoby, Snow, & Jacklin, 1984). When children are more difficult or resistant, for example, parents tend to find the interactions less satisfying and more aversive, and research has shown that they may respond either by being more controlling (Grolnick, Weiss, McKenzie, & Wrightman, 1996) or by withdrawing from contact (Grolnick et al., 1996).

Children's level of internalization with respect to a particular domain will undoubtedly affect parents' strategies within that domain. Children who rely on external controls to regulate their actions will elicit more control from adults, whereas those who identify with values or regulations originally imposed by socializers will tend to receive more support and less control. In fact, a study by Pelletier and Vallerand (in press) showed that when teachers were told that some children were intrinsically motivated and others were extrinsically motivated, even though there were no actual differences in the children's motivation, the teachers were more controlling with the children who had been labeled as extrinsic than with those who had been labeled intrinsic. The challenge for caretakers is, therefore, to break these ongoing cycles of control by providing structure in an autonomy-supportive manner, even when the children's behavior seems to "pull" for control.

Much socialization occurs under adverse circumstances, whether it be family adversities or large classes, creating stress for parents and teachers and leading them to use controls to change behavior in the moment rather than focusing on long-term socialization. Research has confirmed that parents or teachers who have experienced high levels of recent stresses tend to provide less structure (Grolnick et al., 1996) and lower levels of involvement with their children (Grolnick et al., in press), and to be more controlling (Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, & Kauffman, 1982). To be sure, parents and teachers need support, both tangible and emotional, in providing an involved, autonomy-supportive socializing context that will be conducive to children's healthy psychological development—to children's maintaining intrinsic motivation, internalizing and integrating behavioral regulations, and acquiring the values or aspirations associated with well-being.

To conclude, the self-determination approach to parenting and socialization emphasizes that individuals are active organisms who need to feel competent, autonomous, and related to develop in the direction of greater integrity and psychological coherence. Nutriments provided by parents in the form of autonomy support, structure, and involvement are the means through which their children's needs can be satisfied, and yet the provision of these nutriments is itself a dynamic, interactive process. Sadly, when children's behavior makes it harder for the parents to be supportive or when the parents are experiencing other stressors, the children are less likely to experience the need satisfaction that is crucial for their continued healthy development.

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