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## Russian Parenting Styles and Family Processes: Linkages with Subtypes of Victimization and Aggression

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### **3 Russian Parenting Styles and Family Processes: Linkages with Subtypes of Victimization and Aggression** *Craig H. Hart, David A. Nelson, Clyde C. Robinson, Susanne F. Olsen, Mary Kay McNeilly-Choque, Christin L. Porter, and Trevor R. McKee*

Political changes in the former Soviet Union have allowed social scientists to explore a variety of family and child development issues that were closed to systematic investigation for many decades (Maddock, Hogan, Antonov, & Matskovsky, 1994). Prior Soviet psychological research focused on cognitive rather than socioemotional processes for political reasons (Kerig, 1996). Therefore, Western researchers had little opportunity to conduct research on children's social development in the context of the family in the former Soviet Union.

During 1995, we gathered extensive parenting, marital, family interaction, and child behavioral data from 207 ethnic Russian families residing in Voronezh, Russia. Portions of this project explored cross-cultural parenting practices and peer contact patterns in China, Russia, and the United States (e.g., Hart, Yang et al., 1998; Hart et al., in press). We also investigated ways that responsive, coercive, and psychologically controlling Russian parenting styles and marital conflict are mutually associated with children's overt and relational aggression in the peer group (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998).

To further explore our Russian data set in a more comprehensive manner than can usually be done in a more tightly focused journal article format, we identified three aims for this chapter. First, we sought to determine whether broader parenting styles (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian, overprotective) could be reliably measured in the Russian culture. A similar goal was pursued for measuring marital relationships, and patterns of family cohesion and conflict. Second, we made conceptual and empirical distinctions

between proactive and reactive overt and relational aggression, as well as between subtypes of overt and relational victimization, and responses to provocation (e.g., assertive and submissive reactions to aggression). Third, using the Western literature as a backdrop, we investigated whether these behavioral subtypes were linked to parenting styles and patterns of marital and family interaction in the Russian culture.

We first provide a brief overview of the social and historical context in which this investigation occurred. To begin, we explore whether parenting styles and patterns of family-marital interaction can be identified in prior writings about Russian family life (cf. Hart, Nelson et al., 1998). This is followed by a synthesis of the Western literature describing subtypes of children's aggression and victimization in the peer group as related to parenting styles and patterns of marital and family interaction. In accordance with the aims of this volume, we highlight child social cognitive and emotional mechanisms that may account for linkages between parenting-family processes and children's aggression and victimization. The measurement of the parenting, marital, and family interaction constructs, as well as different forms of aggression, victimization, and responses to provocation in our Russian data set is then described. The concluding section centers on our findings regarding Russian parenting-family process linkages with different forms of children's aggression and victimization in the peer group.

## **SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

In the mid- to late-1980s, prior to *glasnost* and *perestroika*, traditional Soviet pedagogy promoted childrearing methods designed to foster values supportive of citizenship in a totalitarian socialist society. Conformity, loyalty, group-mindedness, and unquestioning acceptance of and obedience to authority were values deemed to be important (Ispa, 1994; Shipler, 1983). The government did not consider the family to be primarily responsible for the upbringing of children. Rather, a collective-centered system of childrearing was developed (Bronfenbrenner, 1970; Maddock et al., 1994; H. Smith, 1990).

Despite these collectivist ideologies, Soviet data suggests that by 1988, only 58 percent of all children ages 1 to 7 were enrolled in early childhood programs. However, significantly more (71 percent) were attending in the Russian republic than in most of the other former Soviet republics (Maddock et al., 1994). By 1993, this appears to have increased to 86 percent for Russian children ages 2 to 7 (Ispa, 1994). A combination of relatives (e.g., grandparents) or both parents working different shifts were caring for the balance of young children. Recent economic instability may have resulted in less availability of preschool or child care, leaving more responsibilities to families, particularly mothers (Maddock et al., 1994).

Traditionally, child-care personnel and other sources (e.g., medical prac-

tioners, media) conveyed philosophies endorsed by the Central Ministry of Education to parents. Thus, Soviet parents were exposed to little diversity in childrearing opinions from government sources (Ispa, 1993, 1995). The set of expectations and goals for childrearing was quite different for home and school. In accordance with traditions persisting from czarist Russia, restrictiveness, structure, sternness, and emotional distance were the rule in nursery school and other school settings, whereas permissiveness, indulgence, and warmth were used at home (Ispa, 1993; Raeff, 1966).

In this context, parents' use of corporal punishment as a means of fostering conformity to Soviet values was discouraged by the Soviet government for many decades (Ispa, 1994) and authoritarian parenting (i.e., spanking) is viewed as uniformly negative by Russian parents, although it does occur (Ispa, 1995). From the work of Makarenko (1937/1967), a highly influential Soviet educator, to more recent authors (e.g., Azarov, 1983), teachers and parents were counseled to be warm, responsive, and nurturing (withdrawing such only in instances of child disobedience), to use reasoning and persuasion, and to avoid corporal punishment (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1970). Thus, by the early 1990s the major theme in Soviet/Russian educational writing appeared to endorse democratic childrearing strategies that encouraged initiative and independent problem solving in children (Ispa, 1994; Tudge, 1991).

Despite relative uniformity in childrearing advice, observations and descriptions of Russian parenting styles gathered by Hart, McKee, Nelson, and Robinson during our initial informal interviews with educators, parents, and grandparents in Russia (prior to conducting this study) suggested considerable diversity. This corroborated Bronfenbrenner's anecdotal observations in the 1960s of authoritative and authoritarian parenting patterns that corresponded to Baumrind's conceptualizations of U.S. parenting during the same time period (e.g., Baumrind, 1967). References to permissive parenting (Raeff, 1966) are also available, and these three parenting styles were measured in the Russian culture during the mid-1980s (Subbotskii, 1992).

Another style reportedly used by both parents and teachers was "close watchfulness" over Soviet children (Shipler, 1983). This seems akin to "overprotectiveness" in the Western literature (Rubin, Stewart, & Coplan, 1995). Many parents smothered their children with affectionate, bossy attention or anxious affection. Teachers engaged in "more calculated effort(s) at manipulation" (Shipler, 1983, p. 56) and were taught to actively guide play (Ipsa, 1994).

Additionally, Bronfenbrenner (1970), in his description of "love-oriented" discipline, suggested that guilt induction (telling a child he or she is not as good as other children) and love withdrawal (avoiding a child when he or she does not meet parents' expectations) are two other patterns of Soviet childrearing. Such stylistic patterns of parenting have been referred to as *psychological control* and may be used by parents to manipulate the love and

attachment relationship with a child (Barber, 1996). Such parenting patterns constrain, invalidate, and manipulate children's psychological and emotional experience and expression and have also been reported to have been empirically measured in the Russian culture (Subbotskii, 1992).

Unlike writings on parenting, literature concerning specific aspects of family life does not provide much insight concerning the historical Russian past; instead, it is more recent and focuses on contemporary family relationships. For example, some Russian studies indicate that although families are valued, 40 percent of marriages end in divorce (Maddock et al., 1994). The emotional quality of many marriages is reported as being quite low, and drinking and family violence are noted as major sources of marital conflict leading to divorce in families (Maddock et al., 1994). Thus, although little empirical research has examined marital and family relationships in Russian families, it can be assumed that varying levels of conflict and cohesion exist.

Although brief, this historical overview of former Soviet childrearing ideology provides a starting point for our investigation. To our knowledge, no empirical studies have explored children's peer relations or child aggressive behavioral linkages to parenting styles and family interactions in the former Soviet Union. Prior to identifying ways that patterns of parenting and family interaction just noted have been associated with children's aggression and victimization in the Western literature, we synthesize recent research that has been conducted on subtypes of aggression, victimization, and reactions to provocation. Understanding subtypes of these behaviors, particularly relational forms, is a relatively new area of empirical inquiry.

### **Proactive Forms of Overt and Relational Aggression**

The nature of childhood aggression has been greatly clarified in recent years with the identification of various styles, or forms, of aggression. One form, proactive aggression, is defined as nonprovoked, coercive behavior that is used to obtain something desirable or to intimidate others in ways that meet self-serving goals (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1996; Olweus, 1993b). Further clarification of this form can be made according to the intent of the aggressor. For example, *proactive instrumental aggression* is typically defined as hitting, pushing, grabbing, or otherwise using physical force to obtain a desired object, territory, or privilege (Hartup, 1974). In contrast, *proactive bullying aggression* is used to intimidate or harass, and may include name calling, teasing, taunting, and threatening for the sake of just being mean (e.g., Blatchford, 1998; Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994; Olweus, 1993a; Slee & Rigby, 1993). Proactive bullying can also include physical aggression such as hitting, pushing, and kicking for the sake of dominating peers or just being mean (see McNeilly-Choque, Hart, Robinson, Nelson, & Olsen, 1996) and may also subsume proactive instrumental forms of aggression as well (Olweus, 1993b). For the purposes of our research in Russia,

proactive instrumental and bullying aggression were conceptualized as a single construct called *proactive overt aggression* (McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996; Price & Dodge, 1989). Accordingly, proactive overt aggression is goal-oriented and self-serving (e.g., for object acquisition or intimidation for subduing others), and harms others through damage (or threat of damage) to another's physical or psychological well-being (Crick, Werner et al., in press). It may often be manifested by children who display high levels of prosocial behavior (Pepler, Craig, & Roberts, 1998), thus highlighting the possibility that some socially capable children utilize aggression to manipulate peers.

In contrast with overt aggression, relational aggression harms others through damage (or threat of damage) to relationships and is more typical of girls (Crick, Werner et al., in press). It has also been referred to as “indirect bullying” (Olweus, 1993a), and “indirect aggression” (Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988). Relational aggression consists of exclusionary tactics such as ostracism, purposeful withdrawal of friendship or acceptance, or spreading of malicious rumors to damage the peer's relationship with others, and is often included in a broader construct of social aggression (cf. Galen & Underwood, 1997).<sup>1</sup>

Like overt aggression, some forms of relational aggression may be proactive in nature (cf. McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). Crick (1995) postulated that manipulative forms of relational aggression may be used for gaining control of peers (cf. Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996). For school-age and preschool-age children, proactive aggression is driven by the expectation of achieving desired outcomes or by feelings of confidence about being able to manipulate others through aggressive means (e.g., Crick & Dodge, 1996; Hart, DeWolf, & Burts, 1992; Hart, Ladd, & Burleson, 1990; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990). Similar motivations are associated with school-age boys who are relationally aggressive (Crick & Werner, 1998). For our purposes, manipulative forms of relational aggression are referred to as *proactive relational aggression*.

### **Overt and Relational Victimization**

Prior studies have established that victims of childhood aggression are at considerable risk for maladaptive sociopsychological outcomes, particularly if they associate with other children who are also at risk for victimization (Hodges, Malone, & Perry, 1997), and if they have low self-regard (Egan & Perry, 1998). As noted by Crick and Bigbee (1998), being mistreated by peers provides relatively clear feedback that one does not fit into the peer group. Specifically, children who are victimized typically are more depressed, lonely, anxious, rejected by peers, have lower perceived competence, and experience greater school adjustment problems and behavioral difficulties (e.g., Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Schwartz, McFadyen-

Ketcham, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1998). The majority of studies regarding peer maltreatment have focused on overt forms of victimization, particularly physical maltreatment, and suggests this is more commonly experienced by boys than girls (e.g., Boulton, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997). However, recent studies indicate no gender differences in physical victimization for extreme groups of victimized children (e.g., Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997).

Additional research on older and younger children indicates that girls are more often the target of relational aggression (Crick, Werner et al., in press), although boys are often victimized by girls in relationally aggressive ways (Boulton, 1996). In direct correspondence to overt and relational aggression, these studies have identified overt and relational victimization in school-age and preschool-age children (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999). *Overt victimization* represents children being harmed and controlled through harassment, physical harm, or threats (cf. Schwartz et al., 1997). Most children singled out by aggressors respond to this type of provocation in a submissive manner due to their shy and inhibited nature. However, there is a smaller group who react to such provocation in a hostile and aggressive manner.

*Relational victimization* refers to children being harmed by peers who attempt to control or damage their relationships with others through exclusionary means. Children who are aggressed against relationally are typically excluded from peer interaction when a request is not obeyed or are the target of a hostile rumor. Relationally victimized children have also been shown to exhibit adjustment problems (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999).

### **Overt and Relational Reactions to Provocation**

A number of studies also have focused on ways that children respond to aggressive provocations. Overtly aggressive reactions are the most studied form of this behavior. Children, particularly boys (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997), who display overt reactions are prone to hit, push, yell, or fight back when provoked and are referred to as *provocative victims*, *aggressive victims*, or *bully victims* (e.g., Bowers et al., 1994; Olweus, 1993a; Schwartz et al., 1997). They typically display a highly affectively charged response to a perceived threat or blocking of a goal (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Dodge & Coie, 1989). Unlike nonprovoked overt aggression, which is motivated by self-serving outcomes (e.g., object possession or intimidation), reactive aggression stems from anger and arousal associated with hostile attributional biases about the ambiguous intent of a peer, such as perceiving maliciousness when none is intended (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Dodge & Coie, 1989; Price & Dodge, 1989).

Specifically, it has been hypothesized that children who are aggressive

reactive may have difficulty in early stages of social information processing (Dodge, 1991). This includes failure to attend to relevant social cues (due to hypervigilance to hostile cues), thereby interpreting peers' intentions as hostile (Burks et al., 1999). They are also more likely to access aggressive responses to hypothetical provocations. In contrast, proactive overt aggression is thought to be associated with later stages of outcome-related processing as reflected in positive evaluations of likely consequences for aggressive behavior. General support for these assumptions has been obtained in empirical studies, although not always for every component process (see Dodge, Harnish, Lochman, Bates, & Pettit, 1997).

Furthermore, Olweus (1993b) described provocative victims as being hot-tempered (although ineffective in retaliating), anxious, hyperactive or restless, generally clumsy, offensive, vengefully hostile, and immature with irritating habits. Such children typically constitute a smaller proportion of victimized children (cf. Kupersmidt, Patterson, & Eickholt, 1989; Rigby, 1994; P. Smith & Boulton, 1991), and are more likely to be recurrently victimized (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997). This behavior pattern is also more likely to be linked to peer rejection than proactive overt aggression in young children (e.g., Dodge et al., 1997; Price & Dodge, 1989).

For this research, such reactions to provocation are referred to as *reactive overt aggression*, in contrast to overt aggression that is proactive and goal-oriented (Waschbusch et al., 1998). Reactive overt aggression has typically been measured as the degree to which children (as rated by teachers) display hostile reactions to provocation (cf. Crick & Dodge, 1996; Dodge et al., 1997). This construct has also been conceptualized as describing children who are both highly aggressive and highly victimized by peers (e.g., Schwartz et al., 1997; 1998).

Recent conceptualizations of relational aggression focus not only on proactive, manipulative forms, but on ways that relational aggression can be used as a form of retaliation (e.g., Crick et al., 1996; McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). It is not always clear whether spreading rumors or excluding peers from interaction represents retaliation, a dislike of someone because of physical appearance or "strange" mannerisms, a preference for other company, or a proactive and manipulative form of aggression. However, some relationally aggressive acts could be viewed as reactive, particularly when accompanied by visible anger in the face of provocation, implying further contact is not desired (e.g., walking away or turning one's back when angry, pouting or sulking when mad, or not listening when upset). For example, girls are more likely than boys to walk away from provocation when upset (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997). Child perceptions of provocation may or may not always be accurate. However, the angry attributional pattern exhibited by relationally reactive children appears similar to that of overtly reactive children. Relationally reactive children tend to not give peers the "benefit of the doubt" and perceive overt hostility or exclusion by peers even when none is

intended and react accordingly (Crick, 1995). For this research, such reactions to provocation are called *reactive relational aggression* (Crick & Werner, 1998).

### **Assertive and Submissive Reactions to Provocation**

Finally, other responses to provocation include assertion and submission. For example, Schwartz (1995) identified differences in the degree of assertiveness and submissiveness children display in the face of provocation. Assertive children who stand up assertively but not aggressively to a bully (e.g., saying something in a strong voice like, “that’s mine, give it back”) tend to dissuade bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993b).

Most chronically victimized children display submissive characteristics, including anxiety and fearfulness, poor self-esteem, cautiousness, sensitivity, withdrawn behavior, and difficulty in asserting themselves, both physically and verbally in the peer group. They are more frequently found playing alone (Boulton, 1995) and are not aggressive or provoking (Olweus, 1993b; Schwartz et al., 1997). *Submissive reactions* to aggression could include cowering or withdrawing from provocation, appearing worried, sad, or afraid, exhibiting emotional distress such as crying, and engaging in avoidant behaviors. Such anxious vulnerability may signal to aggressors that they are an easy mark, rewarding attackers by submission or the relinquishing of resources (Olweus, 1993a; Troy & Sroufe, 1987). Children displaying these characteristics are referred to as *passive victims* or *nonaggressive victims* (e.g., Olweus, 1993b; Schwartz et al., 1997).

### **Family and Parenting Variables Associated with Aggression and Victimization**

As noted by Schwartz et al. (1997), past research does not provide a strong foundation for specificity in hypothesis formulation regarding the distinct socialization experiences associated with different aggression and victimization profiles (e.g., aggressive victims, submissive victims). This problem is compounded when overt and relational aggression and victimization are considered (Crick, Werner, et al., in press), particularly when couched in the framework of reactions to provocation. Most of the literature also centers on older, but not younger preschool-age children.

Accordingly, our goal was to identify sociocognitive and emotional mechanisms that may link family processes to subtypes of overt and relational aggression, victimization, and reactions to provocation in young children. Research on subtypes of aggression has focused on sociocognitive processes and are emphasized in our synthesis. In prelude to a description of the Russian data, a general overview of parenting styles and patterns of family and

marital interaction associated with subtypes of aggression and victimization (in Western samples) is presented.

***Parenting Styles and Proactive/Reactive Overt and Relational Aggression***

Research exploring linkages involving patterns of family interaction, parenting styles, and children's aggression has focused primarily on overt aggression (see Hart, Olsen, Robinson, & Mandleco, 1997), although proactive and reactive forms of overt aggression have not usually been delineated. Parenting style dimensions associated with overt aggression include lack of responsiveness, less warmth and involvement, nonreasoning coercion, permissiveness or condoning of aggression, and coercive discipline reflected in physical punishment, verbal hostility, and psychological control (see Hart, Nelson et al., 1998; MacKinnon-Lewis et al., 1994; Olweus, 1993a, for reviews).

In prior analyses of our Russian data (Hart, Nelson et al., 1998), similar correlational patterns for overt aggression involving less responsiveness and more coercive parenting appeared to hold true for both mothers and fathers. However, when entered into the same statistical model, lower levels of paternal responsiveness accompanied by higher levels of maternal coercion appeared to work in combination to predict overt aggression. These findings are supportive of research in Western samples highlighting the importance of positive, playful, sensitive, and engaging interactions with children for fathers and less punitive parenting for mothers in the development of socially competent behavior (see Carson & Parke, 1996).

Research also suggests that children reared in a power-assertive manner are more likely to expect to get their way by being mean and aggressive with peers (Hart, DeWolf, & Burts, 1992; Hart et al., 1990). Thus, expectations of positive outcomes associated with coercion is one of a variety of mechanisms described in social information-processing models that may link parenting styles to proactive overt aggression, particularly as parents model coercion as an efficacious means of resolving interpersonal conflict (see Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick, Werner et al., in press; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Parke, Burks, Carson, Neville, & Boyum, 1994; Pettit, Polaha, & Mize, in press).

In contrast, extremely harsh and abusive treatment by adults may serve to deregulate and handicap children by altering their ability to successfully encode social cues and correctly interpret ambiguous peer provocations (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990; Dodge, Pettit, Bates, & Valente, 1995), lending itself to reactive aggression. Rather than being goal-oriented toward self-serving gains, reactive overt aggression is characterized by hostile attributional biases toward the aggressor and an angry and hypervigilant style of personal interaction (e.g., viewing others as out to get them, easily taking offense). Supporting research indicates that overtly aggressive reactive

school-aged boys experienced more extreme abusive family backgrounds during their preschool years when compared with proactive aggressive boys (Schwartz et al., 1997).

What emerges from this line of research is the view that young children who are victimized by adults may come to expect hostile intentions from others, become hypervigilant to these cues, and are less able to control their anger responses to perceptions of danger. Coie and Dodge (1998) speculated that this orientation toward defending self and attacking others may limit alternative thinking about ways social cues could be perceived as not reflecting danger to oneself. How this applies to younger nursery school-age children such as those studied in our Russian sample is uncertain (see Crick & Dodge, 1994; Pettit et al., in press). For example, evidence for hostile attributional biases in reactive aggressive children is mixed across different samples of children, depending on the methodology used and the age group studied (see Crick & Dodge, 1996; Dodge et al., 1997; Pettit et al., in press). Although evidence is far from conclusive (cf. Katsurada & Sugawara, 1998), recent studies suggest that hostile attributional biases may not be very reliable predictors of behavioral adjustment for preschool-age children (see Pettit et al., in press).

It appears that associations between parenting and overt aggression may also operate with relational aggression (see Crick, Werner et al., in press). In prior analyses of our Russian data, and similar to findings for overt aggression, less responsiveness for fathers and more coercion for mothers were found to be the most important contributors to relational aggression (Hart, Nelson, et al., 1998). Additionally, psychological control (e.g., love withdrawal) has also been associated with more overt and relational aggression in school-age children (Grotper & Crick, 1997). For this study, we attempted to approximate child sociocognitive and emotional processes in proactive and reactive relational and overt aggression by embedding attributional biases, positive outcome expectations, and anger reactions in the teacher-rated items delineating these forms of aggression. Because we did not measure extreme forms of maltreatment in Russia, we expected associations for proactive rather than reactive aggression (cf. Dodge et al., 1997; Schwartz et al., 1997). We also expected psychological control (i.e., love withdrawal and guilt induction implying less acceptance) to be associated with proactive aggression (Chen & Rubin, 1994; Hart, Nelson et al., 1998).

Linkages between authoritative dimensions of Russian parenting and children's proactive but not reactive forms of overt and relational aggression were also anticipated. However, these expectations were confined to responsive parenting (particularly for fathers) and parental warmth and involvement (see Russell & Russell, 1996). There is little support in the Western literature connecting reasoning-oriented control and democratic parenting dimensions with less aggression in young children. These stylistic dimensions are typically associated with enhancing prosocial and empathetic forms of

behavior as well as more friendly and assertive consequential thinking skills (e.g., Hart, DeWolf, Wozniak, & Burts, 1992; Krevans & Gibbs, 1996).

*Marital Relationships and Proactive/Reactive Overt and Relational Aggression*

Relative to the parenting literature, little is understood concerning how childhood aggressive subtypes may be related to interparental conflict and harmony (Fincham, 1994; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1994). With few exceptions (Harrist & Ainslie, in press; Schwartz et al., 1997), the marital interaction literature has focused on global categories of child maladjustment (e.g., externalizing, internalizing) to the exclusion of delineating specific aggressive subtypes (e.g., Katz & Gottman, 1993).

Because marital conflict typically does not exist in isolation from other aspects of family interaction (e.g., Hayden et al., 1998), a number of studies have investigated how parenting variables and marital conflict are linked to children's adjustment (e.g., Davies & Cummings, 1994). One line of studies has explored how marital relationships work through the parent-child relationship to predict children's behavioral adjustment (e.g., Fauber & Long, 1991; Harrist & Ainslie, in press). Alternatively, and in accordance with other research traditions in this area (Fincham, 1994), we examined how parentchild interactions and marital conflict were each associated with Russian childhood aggression on an independent basis.

In terms of explanatory mechanisms for how marital conflict is related to children's behavior problems, research conducted by Davies and Cummings (1998) focused on children's emotional security as a mediating link. Their findings suggest that child adjustment problems associated with marital conflict (including internalizing and externalizing symptoms) are mediated, in part, by children's emotional reactivity (e.g., distress reactions including anxiety, tension, fearfulness, vigilance, as well as suppressed anger and hostility). Although child emotional reactivity was not directly measured in our Russian sample, these recent findings can help explain at a conceptual level how emotional arousal associated with marital conflict might stimulate distressful affect that may be manifest in overt and/or relationally aggressive peer group behavior. Cummings and Zahn-Waxler (1992) postulated that exposure to adult anger may lower thresholds for emotional regulation that can, in turn, be translated into aggressive coping responses.

Extrapolating from gender-based findings derived from the marital relations research (see Cummings, 1994), we anticipated that marital conflict would be associated with higher levels of proactive overt aggression in boys but not girls. As postulated by Crick, Werner et al. (in press) and assuming that similar conflictive family processes might contribute to both overt and relational aggression, we anticipated similar findings for proactive relational aggression as well. Whether this expectation applies to both boys and girls is explored in our Russian data. Findings reported by Schwartz et al. (1997)

also suggest that extreme forms of marital violence may contribute to reactive forms of aggression in school-age children (i.e., victimized aggressors). However, proactive aggressors (i.e., nonvictimized aggressors) appeared to have more exposure to marital conflict that was not extremely violent. Rather than being seen as emotion evoking, moderate levels of conflict were interpreted as providing vicarious learning experiences for children by demonstrating how aggression could be used to achieve desired outcomes in the marital relationship. Because extreme forms of marital violence were not captured in our analysis of the Russian data, we anticipated that marital conflict would be linked to proactive forms of overt and relational aggression and not with reactive forms of these aggressive subtypes. Alternatively, in accordance with findings from the Western literature, we anticipated that marital harmony would not be associated with aggression in any form (see Cummings, 1994).

#### *Global Family Processes and Proactive/Reactive Overt and Relational Aggression*

Because marital conflict and individual parent–child interactions represent smaller subsystems that are interlinked within the larger family system (see Davies & Cummings, 1998; Hart et al., 1997; Hayden et al., 1998), we also sought to describe Russian family interactions at a broader level. In so doing, we focused on family conflict and cohesion, two constructs that have been associated with childhood aggression in prior research. Specifically, less cohesive and more disengaged family relationships have been associated with overt forms of aggression (Berdondini & Smith, 1996; Bowers et al., 1994). Similarly, overt family hostility displayed in the home may form a basis for exclusionary tactics that are used with peers (Bryant & De Morris, 1992).

These conclusions might be interpreted in light of a stressor model that may undermine children’s emotional security (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Mann & MacKenzie, 1996). Extremely conflictive or less cohesive patterns of family interaction may upset children and subsequently precipitate aggression (cf. Davies & Cummings, 1998; Parke et al., 1994). In support of this perspective, Gottman and Fainsilber-Katz (1989) noted that cold, unresponsive and angry parenting associated with conflictive interparental relationships is related to higher levels of childhood anger, noncompliance, and higher levels of stress-related hormones.

Less extreme exposure to aggressive, violent, and exclusionary role models might only be associated with proactive rather than reactive overt and relational aggression. Instead of emotional security deficits being the driving mechanism, it is presumed that proactive aggression develops through early vicarious learning experiences in the family where aggression is used instrumentally to achieve desired outcomes (cf. Bandura, 1973; Schwartz, et al., 1997). This could include manipulating other family members through anger

expressions, coercive behavior and/or ostracizing tactics in order to focus on self-oriented rather than family goals.

*Parenting and Family Processes Associated with Victimization*

As noted earlier, children who display reactive aggression are also more victimized by peers, likely because their behavior makes them targets for anger and rebuff by peers (e.g., Olweus, 1993b; Schwartz et al., 1997). However, the majority of children who are overtly victimized do not respond to aggression in overtly or relationally reactive ways. Children who are overtly victimized are often characterized by a pervasively submissive behavior pattern and are frequently found playing by themselves (Boulton, 1995; Olweus, 1978; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). The familial correlates of such behavior include overprotective and restrictive parenting (Bowers et al., 1994; Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1998; Ladd & Ladd, 1998; Olweus, 1993b). As noted by Rubin et al. (1995), anxiously overinvolved and overprotective parents encourage dependency by restricting children's behavior to low risk-taking activities. This may limit spontaneous interaction with peers, thus inhibiting opportunities to explore the social milieu and develop social skills (LaFreniere & Dumas, 1992).

In accordance with overprotective and restrictive parenting correlates obtained with older victimized children in the Western literature, we sought to explore whether such parenting was related to overt and relational victimization as well as to submissive reactions to victimization in younger Russian children. Given that there is little research from which to draw for establishing hypotheses regarding ways that marital and family relationships might be associated with victimization, we also explored whether there were any linkages in this regard in our Russian data. As discussed earlier, emotional insecurity or positive outcome expectations associated with marital and family conflict could result in reactive or proactive child aggression. It is not inconceivable that negative family interactions could also make children more prone to being victimized by peers, particularly if their anxiety and emotional insecurities associated with punitive parenting, marital or family conflict, or family disengagement are displayed in pervasively submissive or aggressive reactive ways (see Siqueland, Kendall, & Steinberg, 1996).

In summary, findings from the Western research literature indicate that a variety of parenting style dimensions and patterns of family interaction may be linked to different forms of childhood aggression and victimization. However, we would not expect all parenting and family variables to be associated with all types of these childhood outcomes. Our literature review indicates that there may be specificity in many of these linkages (e.g., overprotective parenting and child victimization). The data gathered in our Russian sample included all the parenting, marital, and family interaction

variables just discussed, as well as all the forms of aggression and victimization outlined earlier. This gave us a unique opportunity to explore on a variable-by-variable basis that Russian parenting and family variables were (or were not) related to aggression and victimization subtypes as compared with Western findings.

As noted earlier, analyses describing how a select few parenting dimensions (e.g., responsiveness) and patterns of marital hostility (e.g., marital exclusion) may mutually operate to be associated with Russian children's overt and relational aggression are presented in Hart, Nelson et al. (1998). This chapter extends this work by highlighting all the Russian parenting styles and family variables measured (e.g., broader authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and family interaction styles) and examining the specific linkages with subtypes of proactive and reactive aggression and forms of victimization and reactions to provocation.

## METHOD

### Setting

The parents and their preschool-age children involved in this study resided in Voronezh, Russia. Voronezh is a city of approximately 1 million inhabitants and is located approximately 250 miles southeast of Moscow. The vast majority of inhabitants of Voronezh are ethnic Russians, reflecting the relative homogeneity of the sample (100 percent ethnic Russian).

### Sample

Subjects for the study were parents (207 mothers and 167 fathers) and their preschool-age children (207 children out of a potential 255 eligible children). The children attended 1 of 15 classrooms in three nursery schools. The discrepancy between mother and father participation was due to 32 single-parent families and 8 fathers declining to participate. Russian nursery schools act *in loco parentis*, and thus we were not allowed to obtain written parental permission. However, the three nursery school administrators helped arrange group meetings with parents to explain procedures of the study in their own language. Parents were assured of confidentiality concerning data that they or the teachers provided and were informed that they could withdraw themselves or their child from voluntary participation at any time.

Parents were administered a family information questionnaire. Education level ranged from 9 years (high school beginning) to 17 years (college education) for both mothers and fathers. Mothers averaged 14.95 years ( $SD = 2.34$ ) and fathers averaged 14.53 years ( $SD = 2.42$ ), representing a generally well-educated sample. The sample was comprised of 101 boys and 106 girls, ages ranging from 3.6 to 6.6 years ( $M = 5.1$ ;  $SD = .72$ ) upon participation

during May and June 1995 (roughly preschool and kindergarten age in the United States). Sixty-nine percent of the families in the study had one child, 30 percent had two children, and 1 percent had more than two children.

### **Measuring Russian Parenting, Family Interactions, and Marital Relationships**

Paper-and-pencil measures, most with demonstrated psychometric qualities in North American samples, were selected and/or modified for our study of Russian family, marital, and parenting variables. All measures were successfully forward- and back-translated by Russian linguists who were fluent in both Russian and English, with input from the investigators for difficult-to-translate items. Back-translated items were comparable to the English versions. With only minor exceptions, all items were judged to be culturally appropriate by two Russian linguists (see Hart, Nelson et al., 1998). Parenting style and family process measures were administered in conjunction with other instruments addressing different research questions (e.g., Hart, Yang et al., 1998) and were distributed in three packets on three different occasions, each approximately 1 week apart. Mothers and fathers were asked to rate their behaviors as well as their perceptions of marital and family interactions on Likert-scaled items representing the dimensions outlined here. Due to space limitations, full descriptions of measure development and psychometric analyses are not included here but are available from the authors.

#### *Parenting Styles, Marital, and Family Interactions*

Parenting styles are currently defined in the Western literature as “aggregates or constellations of behaviors that describe parent-child interactions over a wide range of situations and that are presumed to create a pervasive interactional climate” (Mize & Pettit, 1997, p. 291). A taxonomy of parenting styles measured is presented in Table 3.1 and includes measurements of stylistic dimensions that exist within overall parenting typologies (Russell et al., 1998; Smetana, 1995), which were derived using factor-analytic procedures outlined in Robinson, Mandlco, Olsen, and Hart (1995). Also measured were psychological controlling styles (Barber 1996; Hart, Nelson et al., 1998) and parental overprotectiveness (our own derivation). The same factors shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 were obtained for mothers and fathers. Maternal and paternal psychological control and overprotectiveness were generally uncorrelated with other parenting dimensions, except for maternal psychological control being correlated with the authoritarian style ( $r = .37; p < .001$ ).

Family interaction variables were measured using items from the family cohesion and family conflict subscales from Bloom and Naar (1994). Marital interactions observed by the child were assessed using eight items from the O’Leary-Porter Scale (OPS) for hostility (Porter & O’Leary (1980) and four

**Table 3.1****Russian Parenting Style<sup>ab</sup> and Dimension Measure (Sample Items)**

Authoritative Style (26 items; Eigenvalue = 7.58;  $\alpha = .87$ )

Dimension 1 (Reasoning/Reinforcing) (<sup>c</sup>10 items; Load = .36-.77;  $\alpha = .80$ ;  $d_r = .36^*$ )

Explains the consequences of the child's behavior Gives child reasons for why rules should be obeyed

Tells child what he or she tries or accomplishes is appreciated

Dimension 2 (Responsive/Easy Going) (<sup>c</sup>4 items; Load = .41-.75;  $\alpha = .76$ ;  $d_r = .34^*$ )

Shows patience with child

Is easy going and relaxed with child

Jokes and plays with child

Responsive to child's feelings or needs

Dimension 3 (Democratic Participation) (<sup>c</sup>5 items; Load = .45-.71;  $\alpha = .71$ ;  $d_r = .38^*$ )

Allows child to give input into family rules

Encourages child to freely express him or herself even when disagreeing with parents

Shows respect for child's opinions by encouraging child to express them

Dimension 4 (Warmth and Involvement) (<sup>c</sup>8 items; Load = .35-.74;  $\alpha = .70$ ;  $d_r = .33^*$ )

Expresses affection by hugging, kissing, and holding child

Knows the names of child's friends

Gives comfort and understanding when child is upset

Authoritarian Style (17 items; Eigenvalue = 4.72;  $\alpha = .82$ )

Dimension 1 (Corporal Punishment/Verbal Hostility) (<sup>c</sup>9 items; Load = .49-.70;  $\alpha = .80$ ;  $d_r = .23^*$ )

Slaps child when child misbehaves

Uses physical punishment as a way of disciplining child

Yells or shouts when child misbehaves

Dimension 2 (Nonreasoning/coercion) (<sup>c</sup>6 items; Load = .39-.75;  $\alpha = .61$ ;  $d_r = .24^*$ )

Punishes by taking privileges away from child with little, if any explanations

Uses threats as punishment with little or no justification

When child asks why he or she has to conform, states: "Because I said so."

Permissive Style<sup>c</sup> (9 items; Eigenvalue = 2.59; Load = .35-.80;  $\alpha = .60$ ;  $d_r = .25^*$ )

Gives into child when he or she causes a commotion about something

Ignores child's misbehaviors

States punishments to child and does not actually do them

<sup>a</sup>A three-factor, parenting style solution was derived first, followed by varimax rotation.

<sup>b</sup>Authoritative/authoritarian ( $r = -.21^*$ ); Authoritative/permissive ( $r = .09$ ); Authoritarian/permissive ( $r = .28^*$ )

<sup>c</sup>Eigenvalues for dimensions extracted from each of the three styles (using oblique rotation) were all  $> 1$ .

<sup>d</sup>Correlations between mother and factor scores  $*p < .001$ .

<sup>e</sup>Three dimensions emerged (i.e., lack of follow through, ignoring, self-confidence) but were unreliable.

**Table 3.2**

**Russian Psychological Control, Overprotectiveness, Family, and Marital Interaction Measures (Sample Items)<sup>a</sup>**

Psychological Control and Overprotectiveness Measure<sup>b</sup>

Psychological Control (7 items; Eigenvalue = 3.12; Load = .47 to .65;  $\alpha = .72$ ;  $r = .40^c$ )

I tell our child he or she is not as good as other children

I stop talking to my child until he or she pleases me

I am less friendly when my child doesn't see things my way

Overprotectiveness (6 items; Eigenvalue = 2.50; Load = .53-.73;  $\alpha = .74$ ;  $r = .35^c$ )

I readily step in when my child is having difficulties

I worry that my child will get hurt

I am overly involved in my child's activities

Family Interaction Measure<sup>c</sup>

Family Cohesion (10 items; Eigenvalue = 4.72; Load = .48 to .71;  $\alpha = .82$ ;  $r = .64^c$ )

Family members spend time together

Family members help and support each other

Family members do not avoid contact with each other

Family Conflict (6 items; Eigenvalue = 1.44; Load = .50-.67;  $\alpha = .70$ ;  $r = .60^c$ )

Family members criticize each other

Family members yell and scream at each other

Family members hit and fight with each other

Marital Relationships Measure<sup>d</sup>

Marital/Conflict (8 items; Eigenvalue = 3.18; Load = .48-.77;  $\alpha = .78$ ;  $r = .57^c$ )

Argue with one another in front of child

Verbally hostile with one another in front of child

Physically hostile with one another in front of child

Marital Harmony (4 items; Eigenvalue = 2.00; Load = .62 to .76;  $\alpha = .67$ ;  $r = .36^c$ )

Display affection with one another in front of child

Laugh together in front of child

Calmly discuss matters in front of child

<sup>a</sup>Principle components with varimax rotation was used in all these measure analyses.

<sup>b</sup>These two scales were correlated at  $r = .13$ .

<sup>c</sup>These two scales were correlated at  $r = -.44$ .

<sup>d</sup>These two scales were correlated at  $r = -.09$ .

<sup>e</sup>Correlation between mother and father factor scores.

\* $p < .001$ .

items we developed for marital harmony. Although the same factor structures were obtained for both mothers and fathers, only mother scores were used in subsequent analyses due to incomplete data on all the fathers in the sample for the family interaction measures.

#### *Correlations Among Family-Marital Measures and Parenting Measures*

Although family conflict correlated with marital conflict at .60, correlations among the other family-marital scales were low to moderate in magnitude and in expected directions ( $r$ s ranging from  $-.43$  to  $.37$ ). These correlations suggested a moderate degree of construct specificity (i.e., non-overlap) in the areas of marital and family functioning assessed, which allowed them to be analyzed as separate scales in subsequent analyses (cf. Hayden et al., 1998; Jouriles et al., 1991). Family and marital measures were generally uncorrelated with parenting style and dimension measures with no significant correlations exceeding .24. Tables with all correlations are available from the authors.

#### **Measuring Russian Children's Aggressive and Victimization Subtypes**

Teacher ratings were used to assess the various forms of proactive aggression, victimization, and reactions to provocation. Observations and teacher and peer reports indicate that overt and relational forms of aggression occur on a relatively frequent basis in North American samples across the age span of children in this study (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). Crick, Werner et al. (in press) concluded that teacher reports are more valid than peer reports for this age group, particularly because they have been shown to correlate significantly with naturalistic observations for preschool-age populations (e.g., McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). Again, all items on the teacher measures were both forward and backtranslated by Russian linguists. Teachers rated the frequency of proactive aggressive, victimization, and aggressive, assertive, and submissive reactions to provocation for each child whose parent was participating in the study on a 3-point scale (*never, sometimes, often*) across items representing each of the domains. Items were derived from pilot work with teachers who rated the behaviors of approximately 600 U.S. children, ages 4 to 5 (McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996).

The results of factor analyses on the Russian measure versions are presented in Table 3.3. Intercorrelations for these measures are presented in Table 3.4. Interestingly, the correlations between teacher measures of proactive overt and proactive relational aggression, overt and relational victimization, and proactive and reactive overt aggression are almost identical to those found in North American samples (see Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999;

**Table 3.3**

**Teacher Measures (Sample Items)\***

Proactive Aggression Measure

Overt (8 items; Eigenvalue = 7.74; Load = .58-.85;  $\alpha$  = .90)

Threatens or intimidates to be mean Enjoys picking on others

Hits, kicks, or pushes to get something he or she wants

Relational (8 items; Eigenvalue = 1.92; Load = .61-.94;  $\alpha$  = .91)

Tells a peer that he or she won't play with them if don't do as asked

Tells other children not to play with or be a peer's friend

Tells a peer that they won't be invited to a party unless they do what is wanted

Victimization Measure

Overt (3 items; Eigenvalue = 1.08; Load = .48-.89;  $\alpha$  = .72)

Is pushed around by others

Is picked on by mean kids

Is made fun of by mean kids

Relational (4 items; Eigenvalue = 3.69; Load = .77-.86;  $\alpha$  = .85)

Is told to go away by other children Is often excluded by other children

Others tell him or her that he or she can't play with them

Is ignored by others

Reactions to Provocation Measure

Overt (9 items; Eigenvalue = 7.07; Load = .68-.84;  $\alpha$  = .92)

Lashes out even when peer did not intend to hurt

Misinterprets friendly intent of others

Retaliates with force when intimidated

Relational (3 items; Eigenvalue = 1.11; Load = .44-.76;  $\alpha$  = .73)

Does not listen or covers ears when mad

Pouts or sulks when mad

Walks away when mad

Submissive (5 items, Eigenvalue = 3.70; Load = .58-.91;  $\alpha$  = .83)

Cowers or slinks away when confronted by a bully

Cries when picked on

Withdraws when provoked

Assertive (3 items; Eigenvalue = 1.91; Load = .44-.76;  $\alpha$  = .68)

Stands up assertively but not aggressively to bullies

Says assertively "that is mine" or "give it back"

Is assertive rather than aggressive when something is taken away

\*The three measures were the result of principle components factor analysis with oblique rotations.

**Table 3.4****Intercorrelations between Subscales of Children's Aggression, Victimization, and Reactions to Provocation**

	Proact. Overt Aggres.	Proact. Relat. Aggres.	Overt Victim.	Relat. Victim.	React. Overt Aggres.	React. Relat. Aggres.	Submis. Reactive	Assert. Reactive
Proactive Overt Aggres.		.62***	.42***	.52***	.83***	.39***	.01	.21**
Proactive Relat. Aggres.			.35***	.38***	.63***	.62***	.25***	.29***
Overt Victimization				.53***	.46***	.39***	.48***	.14
Relational Victimization					.53***	.42**	.38**	.02
Reactive Overt Aggres.						.49***	.03	.31 ***
Reactive Relat. Aggres.							.47***	.15*
Submissive Reactive								-.05

\* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\* =  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

Crick, Werner et al., in press; Dodge & Coie, 1989; Price & Dodge, 1989; Vitaro, Gendreau, Tremblay, & Oligny, 1998).

**ANALYSIS STRATEGY**

In this research, the subscale means for each parenting, marital, and family measure as well as for each teacher measure of aggression and victimization were used in analyses. Pettit and Bates (1989) as well as others (e.g., Belsky, 1984) noted that alternate courses of socialization can often be better appreciated when extremes in parenting and family interaction can be compared and contrasted. However, conclusions about the nature and source of observed differences between extreme groups constituting only a very small proportion of a sample can be problematic (see Pettit & Bates, 1989). Therefore, we chose to create larger “extreme” groups of family, marital, and parenting style differences that were more typical and representative of our sample, but still distinct enough to highlight important family interaction and parenting effects associated with theoretically central differences in aggression and victimization.

We reasoned that this approach would not only allow us to capture a large

enough sample from our Russian data to maintain statistical power due to adequate cell sizes, but would also reduce the possibility of generalizing findings from Russian family groupings that are too extreme and therefore atypical. In accordance with this aim, families were classified into higher and lower groupings for family cohesion, family conflict, marital harmony, and marital conflict by selecting families that fell .5 standard deviations above and below the mean on each of these variables. The same approach was used to classify mothers and fathers on parenting stylistic dimensions.

Typically, we would be interested in aggregating across a number of variables and finding ways to present findings in a more parsimonious manner. However, for this chapter, our goal was simply to highlight specific relations between each family-parenting variable and each aggression-victimization subtype outcome. Although our approach increased the possibility of Type 1 error due to the number of analyses run, it allowed for more specificity in illustrating how results from our Russian data compare with those reported in the Western literature on a variable-by-variable basis. Thus, analyses were not designed to illuminate ways that parenting style and family interaction variables might singly or mutually be related to subtypes of aggressive and victimized behavior in the context of one another, or whether there are mediating paths involving a variety of variables that link up with these outcomes in young children.

## RESULTS

With these limitations in mind, a series of 2 (sex)  $\times$  2 (high-low parenting or family-marital variables) multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was used to investigate the individual and interactive contributions of gender as well as parenting, family, and marital variables to preschoolers' subtypes of aggression and victimization. Gender was included due to findings in the Western literature suggesting that boys are typically more overtly aggressive and victimized, whereas girls are more relationally aggressive and victimized (see Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Crick, Werner et al., in press; McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). However, this has not always been found in all cultural contexts (e.g., Tomada & Schneider, 1997).

All results are summarized in Table 3.5. The left side of the table highlights findings associated with MANOVAs that included all four of the overt and relational aggression and overt and relational victimization variables together in each analysis (as seen across the top of the table on the left-hand side). A parallel set of analyses for reactions to provocation are presented on the right side of the table. In all analyses, child gender was included as an independent variable, with higher and lower groupings of family cohesion, family conflict, marital conflict, or marital harmony scores alternately serving as independent variables in each separate analysis (as seen going down the left-hand side of the table). A similar procedure was followed for higher and

Table 3.5

Summary of Russian Analyses <sup>a</sup>

	Overt/Relational Aggression and Victimization					Reactions to Provocation				
	Mult F	Overt Proactive	Relational Proactive	Overt Victim	Relational Victim	Mult. F	Overt Reactive	Relational Reactive	Submissive Reactive	Assertive Reactive
<b>Family/Marital (IVs)</b>										
Family conflict	2.64 *	H 2.48* L 2.19	--	--	--	0.67	--	--	--	--
Family cohesion	2.52*	H 2.18*** L 2.47	2.36** 2.52	--	1.37* 1.52	2.58*	H 1.38** L 1.63	--	--	--
Marital harmony	0.29	--	--	--	--	1.60	--	--	--	--
Marital conflict	2.49*	H 2.38* L 2.11	2.55** 2.35	1.75* 1.43	1.53* 1.27	2.71* L 1.48	H 1.70* 1.81	2.11***	--	--
x gender (boys)										
<b>Parenting Styles (IVs)</b>										
M Authoritative	0.80	--	--	--	--	0.20	--	--	--	--
P Authoritative	2.17	--	--	--	--	0.52	--	--	--	--
M Authoritarian	5.58***	H 2.33*** L 2.12	2.44** 2.27	--	--	3.21***	H 1.60*** L 1.32	1.94*	--	--
P Authoritarian	3.42**	H 2.38*** L 2.16	2.51*** 2.32	--	--	3.88***	H 1.71*** L 1.39	--	--	--
M Permissive	0.35	--	--	--	--	0.90	--	--	--	--
P Permissive	1.16	--	--	--	--	0.98	--	--	--	--
<b>Authoritarian Style Dimensions (IVs)</b>										
M Corporal/Hostile	5.13***	H 2.34*** L 2.13	2.49*** 2.30	1.58* 1.45	--	3.70***	H 1.63*** L 1.28	1.98*	--	--
P Corporal/Hostile	5.43***	H 2.55*** L 2.15	2.56*** 2.31	--	--	5.82***	H 1.82*** L 1.42	--	--	--

	<b>Mult. F</b>	<b>Overt Proactive</b>	<b>Relational Proactive</b>	<b>Overt Victim</b>	<b>Relational Victim</b>	<b>Mult. F</b>	<b>Overt Reactive</b>	<b>Relational Reactive</b>	<b>Submissive Reactive</b>	<b>Assertive Reactive</b>
M Nonreasoning	3.08**	H 2.31** L2.16	--	--	--	0.93	--	--	--	--
P Nonreasoning	2.72*	H 2.35*** L 2.18	--	--	--	3.70***	H 1.66*** L 1.39	--	1.63* 1.79	-- --
<b>Authoritative Style Dimensions (IVs)</b>										
M Reasoning	1.00	--	--	--	--	1.27	--	--	--	--
P Reasoning	0.47	--	--	--	--	1.17	--	--	--	--
M Responsiveness	1.84	--	--	--	--	0.31	--	--	--	--
P Responsiveness	6.11**	H 2.18*** L 2.43	2.32*** 2.57	--	--	2.82*	H 1.44*** L 1.71	1.84* 2.03	--	--
M Democracy	3.12*	--	2.31 ** 2.47	--	--	1.14	--	--	--	--
P Democracy	3.03*	--	2.31* 2.49	--	--	1.94	--	--	--	--
M Warmth/involve x gender (boys)	1.00	--	--	--	--	2.73*	--	1.75* 2.00	1.59* 1.82	--
P Warmth/involve	1.27	--	--	--	--	0.73	--	--	--	--
<b>Psych. Control/Overprotective (IVs)</b>										
M Psych. control	2.52*	H 2.33* L2.19	--	--	--	1.83	--	--	--	--
P Psych. control	1.12	--	--	--	--	0.58	--	--	--	--
M Overprotective	2.36*	--	--	1.61* 1.51	1.41* 1.26	0.73	--	--	--	--
P Overprotective	--	--	--	--	0.64	1.11	--	--	--	--

Note. IV= Independent variable; M= Maternal; P= Paternal; H= Higher group mean; L= Lower group mean

\*See text for table explanation; - nonsignificant mean differences

\* p < 0.05; \*\* p < 0.01; \*\*\* R < 0.001; multivariate df ranged from 4,98 to 4,140; univariate df ranged from 1,116 to 1,143

lower groupings of parenting style and stylistic dimension constructs that were alternately used as independent variables in subsequent MANOVAs that continue down the left side of the table.

Small cell sizes precluded the possibility of testing maternal and paternal effects simultaneously. Interactions of child gender with each of the family-marital and parenting style independent variables were also tested in each analysis. For all analyses, Wilks lambda was used to test for multivariate effects. Multivariate main effect  $F$  values for each of the analyses are shown on the left side of Table 3.5 for overt and relational aggression and victimization findings and on the right side of Table 3.5 for reactions to provocation. For brevity, gender main effects are not shown as none were significant. Also, only significant interaction effects are shown.

Univariate effects were not examined unless the corresponding multivariate effect was significant. Only significant mean differences in aggression-victimization as a function of high (H) and low (L) groupings of family-parenting variables are shown in Table 3.5 for each subsequent univariate analysis. The superscripts to the right of the means denote the level of significance for the univariate  $F$ s. Complete tables showing univariate  $F$  values, degrees of freedom, and standard deviations accompanying the means are available from the authors. Results are discussed next.

## DISCUSSION

Russian findings shown in Table 3.5 corroborated and extended our understanding of linkages between family processes and children's aggression and victimization as described in the Western literature. Most of the Western literature has focused on overt forms of these constructs. Our research extends this inquiry not only to the Russian culture, but to examining family process linkages with relational aggression and victimization as well. Unlike most prior victimization research that focuses on older children, the sample for this study consisted of younger nursery school-age children. The analysis explored ways that Russian parenting styles, marital interactions, and family interactions were associated with overt and relational forms of childhood aggression and victimization as well as with ways that children react to provocation. Our discussion is organized around each group of these distinct child behaviors.

### **Proactive and Reactive Overt and Relational Aggression**

#### *Proactive Overt Aggression*

Corroborating findings obtained in other samples focusing on overt aggression, Russian children who were more proactive overtly aggressive had

mothers and fathers who were not only more authoritarian, but who specifically directed corporal punishment and verbal hostility toward them. Russian mothers and fathers also perceived themselves as engaging in more nonreasoning and coercive interactional styles with children who were more proactive overtly aggressive. More proactive overtly aggressive children also had mothers who were more psychologically controlling and fathers who were less responsive in terms of being patient, playful, easy going, and sensitive to their needs (cf. Hart, Nelson et al., 1998).

Findings from this investigation also provided new insights into the specificity of linkages between certain dimensions of authoritative parenting styles and children's aggressive behavior. In light of Darling and Steinberg's (1993) assertion that only certain aspects of overall parenting typologies might be specifically linked with certain child behavioral outcomes, we noted that only high levels of paternal responsiveness were significantly associated with less proactive overt aggression. The paucity of findings for the reasoning, democratic parenting, and warmth-involvement dimensions suggests that it may only be the absence of paternal responsiveness in the authoritative style that contributes to proactive overt aggression in children.

In terms of interparental interactions and family relationships, proactively aggressive children were more likely to come from families whose members were more conflictive in their interactions with one another, and who were less cohesive and more disengaged. Mirroring findings from the Western literature, only boys (and not girls) who were more proactively overt aggressive had been exposed to more marital conflict (e.g., Cummings, 1994).

### *Proactive Relational Aggression*

We also obtained partial support for the assumption that processes and associations with parenting and family interactions for overt aggression operate similarly for relational aggression, as well (see Crick, Werner et al., in press). As with overt aggression, higher levels of marital conflict were associated with more proactive relational aggression in boys only. Similarly, less family cohesion was related to more proactive relational aggression. Maternal and paternal authoritarian parenting, particularly corporal punishment and verbal hostility directed toward the child, was associated with proactive relational aggression. Proactive relational aggression was also linked to less responsive parenting on the part of fathers.

Less democratic parenting associated with the authoritative style on the part of mothers and fathers was related to higher levels of relational aggression. From a social learning perspective, not allowing input into family decision making and discouraging child expression may model a form of exclusion that parents use to maintain control of their own agenda in presiding over their children. Such parental manipulation may be perceived by children to be an efficacious means of maintaining control over others (e.g.,

peers). These tendencies may be exacerbated by less cohesive family interactions, which may also model exclusionary behaviors.

Similar to findings for proactive overt aggression, reasoning and warmth-involvement dimensions as well as marital harmony were not associated with proactive relational aggression. Psychological control was also not associated with proactive relational aggression. These findings suggest that corporal punishment and verbal hostility directed toward children, less paternal responsiveness, more marital conflict, less family cohesion, and more exclusionary tactics are the operative family process variables that may facilitate greater proactive relational aggression. Whether these variables act singly or in combination needs further exploration.

### **Overt and Relational Victimization**

The majority of victimized children are characterized by a pervasively submissive behavior pattern and are more often found playing alone (e.g., Olweus, 1993b; Schwartz et al., 1993), and overprotective and restrictive parenting are the known family correlates (e.g., Bowers et al., 1994; Finnegan et al., 1998; Ladd & Ladd, 1998). This appears true for Russian children as well. Children of more overprotective mothers were found to be more overtly and relationally victimized. As suggested by Rubin et al. (1995), anxiously overinvolved and overprotective parents may deprive children of opportunities to interact spontaneously with peers, thus inhibiting opportunities to become more socially skilled. Their children consequently become targets for peer maltreatment.

Little is known about ways that marital and family relationships might be associated with victimization. Earlier, we postulated that anxiety and emotional insecurity associated with hostile parenting, marital or family conflict, and family disengagement could also contribute to children being more prone to victimization by peers (see Siqueland et al., 1996). Some support was obtained for this hypothesis. Mothers who directed more corporal punishment and verbal hostility toward their children were more overtly victimized by peers. Likewise, Russian boys who were exposed to more marital conflict were found to be more overtly and relationally victimized by peers. Children from less cohesive families were also more relationally victimized. Similar to Western findings, other parenting styles and family dimensions were unrelated to victimization.

### **Reactions to Provocation**

#### *Reactive Overt Aggression*

A similar pattern of findings for proactive overt aggression emerged for reactive overt aggression. More authoritarian mothering and fathering was associated with children's reactive overt aggression. This was particularly

true for the corporal punishment and verbal hostility dimension, although fathers (but not mothers) who engaged in nonreasoning coercion also had children who were more reactive overtly aggressive. Likewise, children of fathers who were less responsive were perceived by teachers to exhibit more reactive overtly aggressive behavior. Children from less cohesive and more disengaged families were also more prone to be overtly aggressive reactive. Reactive overt aggression was also more characteristic of boys (but not girls) who were exposed to higher levels of marital conflict (cf. Cummings, 1994).

Less extreme forms of negative parenting, marital, and family interactions as measured here were associated with reactive overt aggression. This contradicts literature reviewed earlier suggesting that it is only extreme forms of abusive parenting and violent family interactions that are associated with child aggressive reactive tendencies (e.g., Schwartz et al., 1997; Shields & Cicchetti, 1998). At first glance, these findings could suggest that moderate levels of family conflict and hostile parenting might also result in some degree of social cognitive, emotional, and behavioral impairment. However, these results should be cautiously regarded because teacher ratings of proactive and reactive forms of aggression were highly correlated ( $r = .82$ ) similar to magnitudes reported in past research utilizing teacher measures of proactive and reactive aggression (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Price & Dodge, 1989; Vitaro et al., 1998). Thus, similar findings obtained for proactive and reactive overt aggression were not surprising. It may be difficult for teachers to distinguish these two forms of aggression. In practice, many aggressive children display both types of behavior in a pervasive aggressive behavior pattern (Dodge et al., 1997; Vitaro et al., 1998).

#### ***Reactive Relational Aggression***

Similar to teacher perceptions of proactive and reactive aggression, proactive and reactive relational aggression were correlated, but were not quite as redundant ( $r = .62$ ). Results for reactive relational aggression did not always directly correspond with those obtained for proactive relational aggression. As with proactive relational aggression, more marital conflict was associated with more reactive relational aggression for boys. Less paternal responsiveness and more maternal corporal punishment and verbal hostility were also linked to reactive relational aggression. Reflecting specific child behaviors associated with authoritative style dimensions (Darling & Steinberg, 1993), boys of mothers who were more warm and involved were less relationally reactive to perceived provocation. Thus, in addition to more responsiveness on the part of fathers, more maternal warmth and involvement in the lives of boys could lend itself to less angry, relationally reactive responses to perceived provocation.

#### ***Submissive and Assertive Reactions***

The only finding for submissive reactions suggested that boys of more warm and involved mothers were less submissive in the face of perceived

provocation. This might be interpreted in the context of other findings for Russian boys which suggest that more paternal responsiveness and maternal warmth and involvement lends itself to less angry, relationally aggressive reactive responses to perceived peer provocation.

Although speculative, findings in this chapter might suggest that children (particularly boys) who are raised in emotionally secure home environments where parents are warm and responsive may be more likely to correctly read emotional signals from others (e.g., Boyum & Parke, 1995; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), making them less likely to perceive others as threatening (Gordis, Margolin, & John, 1997). This may diminish the felt need to respond in submissive or overt and relationally aggressive ways. From an attachment theory perspective, this could be due to “secure” models of self that may give rise to more positive attributions of intent on the part of others and to less likelihood of making hostile attributions (Kerns, Klepac, & Cole, 1996; Pettit et al., in press). In essence, more emotionally secure children may be more likely to give others the benefit of the doubt because they may perceive and remember others in a positive light (e.g., Kerns, 1996). Emotionally secure children may also be more sociable, have greater social confidence, and be better able to handle rebuffs from peers, not needing to be submissive because they are more likely to view others as being nonthreatening (Kerns, 1996). They may be less likely to be victimized because their behavior does not evoke anger from others or make them targets of aggression due to a timid and solitary play style.

Alternatively, from a cognitive social psychology view, children raised in emotionally secure environments may be less likely to develop maladaptive mental representations (i.e., scripts) reflective of repeated exposure to family conflict and parental hostility (e.g., Rogers & Holmbeck, 1997). Rather than behavior being guided by scripts reflecting negative perceptions and expectations of more malicious intentions in others, more positive perceptions of others associated with warm and responsive caregiving may result in less likelihood of hypervigilant submissive or aggressive reactive behavior occurring. Such negative behavior (including reactive aggression or submissive behavior) could stem from maladaptive scripts that are chronically triggered in social situations by emotional anger or wariness in response to ambiguous behavior by others being misperceived as threatening or malicious. However, little research has assessed how emotional arousal and cognitive processing *work together* to facilitate submissive or aggressive reactive behavior (Crick & Werner, 1998; Pettit et al., in press).

## **Limitations and Conclusions**

As with most findings derived from Western samples, our analyses did not address whether all family and parenting variables act singly or in combination to facilitate aggressive and victimized behavior. Future research with

larger samples using more sophisticated analytic techniques will be needed to ascertain whether parenting style and family interaction variables are singly or mutually related to subtypes of aggressive and victimized behavior, or whether there are mediating paths that link up with these outcomes in young children. We also did not assess dispositional and psychobiological influences important for studying the direction of effects and transactional processes (e.g., Coie & Dodge, 1998; Katz, Chapter 5, this volume), or attempt to address how aversive interaction patterns may be maintained and strength-ened through coercive family processes and coercive peer interactions (e.g., Dishion, Andrews, & Crosby, 1995).

Based on the existing Russian parenting-family literature, it appears that our results were more likely to have arisen from the Russian culture than from an imposition of our conceptual and metric biases (see Hart, Nelson et al., 1998). Findings paralleled what has been found in Western cultures with regard to aggression and victimization (e.g., Australia, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, North America), thus lending support for what Berry (1989) referred to as “derived etics” or “cultural universals” as pertaining only to Russian and some Western cultures. This does imply, however, that some theoretical and empirically based concepts derived in Western cultures may not reflect some unique conditions in the Russian culture (“imposed etics”). In essence, this research suggests that there might be similarities between Russian and Western cultures in ways that parenting and family processes are linked to different forms of early childhood aggression and victimization. However, this investigation only represents a starting point for cross-cultural comparisons. Replication studies, particularly those using qualitative methods, may prove useful in further understanding possible “emics” (arising from the culture) when studying Russian parenting and family life as related to child peer group outcomes.

## NOTES

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1. As the aggression literature has progressed since conceptualizing our measures for data collection in Russia, it is becoming increasingly apparent that describing aggressive subtypes in terms of “social,” “indirect,” and “overt” has limitations, particularly in the context of the relational aggression construct. *Social aggression* is de-

finied by some as behaviors that damage another's self-esteem or social standing (Galen & Underwood, 1997), and by others as representing physically aggressive acts (Patterson, 1982). Galen and Underwood's construct subsumes verbal disparagements (e.g., yelling or arguing, teasing, making fun of, or calling peers names), and nonverbal hostilities such as negative facial expressions or body movements (e.g., rolling one's eyes). Social aggression also includes some relationally aggressive behaviors such as rumor spreading and social exclusion. As noted by Crick, Werner et al. (in press), social aggression is a broader construct than relational aggression, which focuses only on hostile acts in which intentional damage to relationships or social standing is the vehicle of harm (e.g., rumor spreading, gossiping, divulging peer's personal secrets, talking behind one's back, verbally or nonverbally excluding others from play).

*Relational aggression* is typically contrasted with overt aggression and is oftentimes referred to as indirect aggression. Relational aggression does subsume indirect, covert, hostile behaviors where the target child is not directly confronted (e.g., gossiping, talking behind one's back). However, relational aggression can also be direct in the dictionary sense of the term (i.e., straightforward, frank, with nothing or no one in between). For example, telling another child that he or she cannot play with a group unless the child does what is wanted involves direct confrontation. Relational aggression can also be overt (i.e., not hidden, open, observable, apparent, with evident intent, without attempt to conceal). For example, intentional covert behaviors such as gossiping, telling secrets, and talking behind one's back can be open and observable to the target child on occasion. Likewise, being told that "I won't be your friend if you don't do things my way" is direct and overt. Thus, acts of relational aggression may be indirect and covert, as well as direct and overt.

In order to avoid pitfalls associated with the social, indirect, and overt aggression terminologies, future researchers may do well to conceptualize aggression in terms of physical, verbal, nonverbal, and relational subtypes, with the understanding that some of these subtypes can co-occur (Galen & Underwood, 1997). Because relational aggression may be overt in nature (e.g., children directly and openly telling other children they won't play with them), Crick, Werner et al. (in press) recently discarded the term *overt* and have instead focused on *physical* aggression (which also includes verbal threats to another's physical well-being for intimidation or instrumental gains). This is distinct from *verbal* aggression or verbal intimidation that includes direct, disparaging, or contemptuous verbal insults and derogation designed to damage self-esteem (e.g., calling a peer mean names, making sarcastic comments, teasing or making fun of peers).

Another category of *nonverbal* aggression could also be contrived (e.g., negative facial expressions or body movements such as rolling one's eyes, or tossing one's hair to convey contempt and damage self esteem). *Relational aggression* encompasses only hostile acts where relationships are used as the vehicle of harm, be it verbal or nonverbal, direct or indirect, overt or covert in nature (e.g., threatening not to invite another child to a birthday party unless the child does what is wanted, excluding others to manipulate or to enact revenge, walking away when angry, revealing a peer's secrets to others, gossiping, talking behind one's back, rumor spreading). Damage to relationships and social standing (reputation) may also occur as a byproduct of physical, verbal, and nonverbal aggression as previously defined, even when the primary motives of these hostile acts is to dominate, intimidate, or harass. Relational aggres-

sion may also serve to carry out these motives, but uses relationally exclusive or slanderous means to accomplish these ends.

As seen in this chapter, there are likely proactive and reactive forms as well as bullying (i.e., intimidating, harassing) and/or instrumental (i.e., meeting self-serving goals) delineations of these four behavioral categories. Because of the way our measures were initially conceptualized, implied verbal and manifest physical forms of aggression were called *overt* in light of the recent mainstream usage of the term (e.g., Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1997). Although cumbersome, *physical/verbal* could be substituted for *overt* throughout this chapter.

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