



## Article

# Mothers' Perspectives on Resistance and Defiance in Middle Childhood: Promoting Autonomy and Social Skill

Leon Kuczynski <sup>1,\*</sup> , Taniesha Burke <sup>2</sup> and Pauline Song-Choi <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Konstanz, 78464 Konstanz, Germany; taniesha.burke@uni-konstanz.de

<sup>3</sup> Department of Psychology, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC V8P 5C2, Canada; psong@uvic.ca

\* Correspondence: lkuczynski@uoguelph.ca

**Abstract:** This study explored mothers' perceptions of their children's resistance to their requests and defiance of parental authority during middle childhood and early adolescence. We were interested in parental perceptions of change in resistance, their interpretations of the meaning of resistance, and parental responses to these behaviors. Forty Canadian mothers of children 9–13 years of age participated for one week in a study focused on parents' experiences of children's resistance and opposition. Procedures consisted of a qualitative analysis of mothers' reports from a five-day event diary and a 1 h semi-structured interview. Mothers reported developmental changes in the quantity and quality of children's resistance to parental requests and expectations. Most mothers reported increasing displays of defiance and direct and indirect expressions of attitude but also noted changes in the skill with which children expressed resistance. Mothers interpreted children's resistance as annoying but normal expressions of children's developing autonomy. Mothers supported children's right to expression of agency through resistance but attempted to channel children's resistance toward socially competent expressions of assertiveness. The findings have implications for a relational perspective on autonomy-supportive parenting and parents' goals for children's developing social competence in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** autonomy; children's agency; noncompliance; resistance; parent–child relationships; parenting practices; socialization; social relational theory; teenage attitude



**Citation:** Kuczynski, Leon, Taniesha Burke, and Pauline Song-Choi. 2021. Mothers' Perspectives on Resistance and Defiance in Middle Childhood: Promoting Autonomy and Social Skill. *Social Sciences* 10: 469. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10120469>

Academic Editors: Christy Buchanan and Terese Glatz

Received: 14 October 2021

Accepted: 3 December 2021

Published: 7 December 2021

**Publisher's Note:** MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:** © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. Introduction

Children's tendency to resist or disobey the requests and directives of their parents or to defy parental authority is a common occurrence in family life. How parents interpret this phenomenon in the 21st century, as in previous centuries, has important implications for how they respond to their children and the nature of parent–child relationships (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997). Parental childrearing values regarding autonomy and obedience provide one lens for understanding parents' interpretations of their children's resistance. Do parents in the 21st century prefer compliant children who immediately obey without challenge? Or do they want children who advocate for themselves by questioning rules and requests, think independently, and make their own decisions?

An important perspective originating from some cultures and religions is that children's resistance is illegitimate and should be suppressed. Strict respect for the authority of elders and communal cooperation is a common expectation for appropriate parent–child relationships in collectivist cultures (Tamis-LeMonda et al. 2008; Trommsdorff and Kornadt 2003). In contrast, individualistic cultures and cultures transitioning to modernity tend to prioritize independence, self-assertion, and the pursuit of autonomous goals.

There have also been social changes in how parents value obedience and autonomy in individualistic cultures. For example, Miller (1990) in the European context and Greven

(1990) in the North American context documented the religious roots of authoritarian childrearing beliefs and practices and argued that unquestioning obedience and coercive parental control persisted as child-rearing norms prior to the first world war. However, Alwin (1988); (Alwin and Tufiş 2021), using data from the United States and Europe, found that there were consistent decreasing trends in parental values for obedience and increasing trends for autonomy as childrearing goals throughout the 20th century and into the present. Despite this trend for parents to value autonomy, Alwin and Tufiş (2021) found relatively greater preferences for obedience among conservative religious groups and cultural groups such as Latinos and Blacks, and greater preference for autonomy and self-direction for parents with higher education, and for females compared to males.

An implication of cultural and historical surveys of childrearing values is that parental responses to children's resistance during the 21st century, particularly in Western cultures, are influenced by prevailing social values that favor children's autonomy. However, researchers who study parenting practices have generally not acknowledged the significance of such background social values. Therefore, in the present study, we were alert to how values for autonomy and obedience contribute to parental perceptions of and responses to acts of resistance and defiance in their children.

In psychological research, there are two principal perspectives on how parents experience and "should" respond to children's refusal to follow parental directives, one using the construct of *noncompliance* and one using the construct of *resistance*. The term "noncompliance" is used in longstanding research on authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles (Baumrind 2012) and clinical/behavioral approaches to child management (Patterson et al. 1992; McMahon and Forehand 2003). The noncompliance construct interprets nonconforming behaviors from the perspective of the adult authorities and is operationalized as the failure to comply immediately and exactly to the parents' requests or standing rules. In this perspective, noncompliance is considered to be a deviant or coercive behavior and concepts such as children's autonomy or agency receive little consideration.

In contrast, the term "resistance" is used to describe children's nonconforming responses from the perspective of the child agent (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997). Resistance, in this view, is a manifestation of children's motives for autonomy and reflects children's attempts to protect their freedom of thought and action from their parents' attempts to control them. Similarly, in self-determination theory, oppositional defiance is thought to be triggered when one's need for autonomy is thwarted by others (Van Petegem et al. 2015).

Children's resistance is associated with the development of autonomy motives, in research on the phenomenon of toddler negativism when young children begin to oppose parents' increasing attempts to control or restrict their behavior (Wenar 1982; Kuczynski et al. 1987). Resistance is also implicated in increased parent-child conflict during early adolescence when children's strivings for independence and freedom of action are thought to be particularly acute (Branje 2018; Laursen et al. 1998). In these perspectives, children's resistance may serve positive developmental functions. For very young children, parental leeway for resistance provides an opportunity for children to develop their skills as agents in the supportive context of the parent-child relationship (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997). In early adolescence, the increased tension between children's desires for more autonomy and parents' efforts to retain control may serve as a catalyst for parents to realign their expectations in a way that recognizes children's developing maturity. These changed expectations, in turn, may create changes in parent-child relationships so that they function on a more egalitarian foundation (Branje 2018).

Building on the idea that resistance is an expression of children's agency, Kuczynski further proposed that specific acts of resistance can be viewed as social strategies that children use in the attempt to influence parents to drop or modify their demands (Kuczynski et al. 1987; Kuczynski and Kochanska 1990). Using this framework in a research program using Canadian samples, Kuczynski et al. followed the development of

children's repertoires of resistance strategies covering the age range from 18 months to 18 years.

Observational research with toddlers (Kuczynski et al. 1987) and preschool children (Kuczynski and Kochanska 1990) indicated that young children's strategies for resisting parental requests became increasingly skillful and assertive between the ages of 18 months and five years. For example, children were less likely to ignore or directly defy parental requests and more likely to use polite refusals or engage in verbal negotiation such as offering explanations or suggesting compromises as they grew older. These findings were extended using qualitative methodologies with 9–13-year-old children (Kuczynski et al. 2019) and 13–18-year-old adolescents (Parkin and Kuczynski 2012) who reported a rich repertoire of overt and covert strategies for resisting parental expectations. Children in these studies displayed increasing social skill in negotiating and evading parental demands and an increasing willingness to challenge parental authority. For example, children reported using assertive refusals, direct defiance, and verbal and nonverbal ways of communicating their nonacceptance of parental authority when forced to comply.

### *The Present Study*

As reviewed above, there is now substantial research documenting the development of children's strategies for expressing agency by resisting parental requests and prohibitions. However, there is little research on parental responses to resistance using the "child as agent" perspective, especially past early childhood. The purpose of the current study was to explore parents' perspectives and responses to resistance and defiance in a sample of 9–13-year-old children attending elementary school. The 9–13 age range straddles the periods of middle childhood and early adolescence and coincides with developmental changes in children's cognitive and social skills, increasing orientation to peers, and freedom of action outside the direct supervision of parents (Collins and Madsen 2003). This is also a period of increased parent–child conflict due to differences between parents' and children's expectations regarding children's exercise of autonomy and children's emotional lability associated with pubertal changes (Branje 2018; Cservenka et al. 2015; Mastrotheodoros et al. 2020). Social relational theory (SRT) informed the design and interpretation of the study. SRT is a framework for studying bidirectional processes in socialization and parent–child relationships (Kuczynski and De Mol 2015). In SRT, parents and children are both considered to be human agents who are causally connected within the constraints of a culturally embedded, interdependent, long-term, close relationship (Kuczynski and De Mol 2015). This distinctive social context influences how parents and children experience, interpret, and respond to each other and makes them both receptive and vulnerable to each other's influence (Kuczynski 2003). In the case of parents, the history of the relationship provides them with knowledge about the child's competencies, vulnerabilities, and probable reactions to their interventions. Furthermore, the anticipated future of the relationship enables parents to construct long-term socialization goals for the child, or goals to maintain or strengthen the parent–child relationship (Dawber and Kuczynski 1999).

The implication is that because of this distinctive relationship context, parents may tolerate or even promote resistant behaviors in their children that would not be contemplated with children with whom they were not in a close long-term relationship. Several general predictions can be made on using existing theory and research. Findings that parental attitudes favor autonomy over obedience (Alwin and Tufiş 2021) suggest that contemporary parents, particularly in individualistic cultures, may tolerate, if not encourage, children's opposition to their instructions under some circumstances. In addition, parents may have competing goals when confronted with resistance from children besides compliance. For example, parents may use children's resistance as a context to support children's autonomy or to guide them to develop skills for asserting themselves in an appropriate manner (Kuczynski and Hildebrandt 1997). Parents may also be receptive to their children's resistance and other requests to maintain a close mutual relationship

with their children or empower children to be confident and assertive and not afraid to ask parents questions (Kuczynski et al. 2016).

We had three main research questions: (1) We were interested in mothers' perceptions of changes in resistance since earlier in childhood. (2) We were interested in mothers' interpretations of the meaning of children's resistance, particularly, whether mothers viewed children's resistance positively or negatively. (3) We were also interested in parental responses to children's expressions of resistance or defiance to their authority.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The parental data were collected as part of a larger study on socialization during middle childhood that also included child participants. The criteria for recruiting families stipulated families with at least one parent and one child between the ages of 9 and 13 who were attending elementary school. The final sample consisted of 40 well-educated, English-speaking mothers who had a mean age of 44.4 years. The educational breakdown of the sample was as follows: high school (1), technical college, (8), undergraduate, (20), postgraduate (11). The employment status of mothers was as follows: 23 worked full-time, 13 worked part-time, and 4 did not work outside the home. The ethnic background of the sample was predominantly Canadian or European in origin but included several participants who identified themselves as Metis, West Indian, and African. Of the 40 children who were the focus of the interviews, 20 children were ages 9, 10, or 11 (10 males, 10 females), and 20 children were ages 12 or 13 (10 males, 10 females).

This research was a component of the Socialization in Middle Childhood Study and was approved by the university research ethics board. Families received two CAD 25 gift cards for their participation. Mothers participated with their children in their homes during three phases occurring within one week. The data were collected between 2007 and 2009. The larger study also included data from the children (see Kuczynski et al. 2019). However, the present study focuses on mothers' responses only. Phase 1 was designed to introduce parents and children to the study, build rapport, and train mothers to use the Parents Daily Report (PDR) for Phase 2 of the study. Building rapport was important because parents and children were asked to report separately, and in private, on sensitive incidents involving non-compliance and rule transgressions.

Phase 2 consisted of the PDR, a booklet of target incidents that guided parents to track and report specified incidents using a digital voice recorder for five consecutive days. The target incidents include parental requests and prohibitions (including out-of-home instructions and reminders of standing rules), children's noncooperation with parental instructions, parental knowledge of the child, and enjoyable parent-child interactions. Each page of the booklet consisted of one target incident, followed by prompts that guided the parent to describe each incident in detail. For example, there were three prompts for reporting incidents of children's noncooperation (resistance). These were: "How did it start?", "How did your child respond to your request?" and "How satisfied were you with your child's response?"

Only the reports describing children's disagreements and resistance to parental requests, rules, and prohibitions were relevant to the current study. The PDR methodology served two purposes. First, it contributed to the ecological validity of parental narratives in the Phase 3 interview (Bolger et al. 2003) by providing parents with concrete, recently occurring, contextualized experiences on which to base their responses. Second, it provided complementary data to that obtained in the final interview regarding counts and detailed descriptions of specific acts of resistance.

During Phase 3, parents participated in a 1-hour semi-structured interview that capitalized on the rapport and insights generated during the 5-day diary. The interview covered four broad topics: parental rules and expectations, children's resistance to parental requests and prohibitions, recent changes in children's resistance, behavior away from home, and parent-child intimacy. In practice, information from the digital diaries and open-ended interviews overlapped but provided complementary information, with the digital diaries

contributing to the counts and detailed descriptions of specific acts of resistance and the final interview contributing an in-depth understanding of parents' meanings and intentions regarding the events reported during the previous week and parents' views of longer-term changes in children's resistant behaviors.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

The analyses of parental narratives took place within the theory-generating mode of research (Kuczynski and Daly 2003) using the procedures for theoretical thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The goal of theory-generating research is to identify, describe, and explain phenomena by the process of interpreting naturalistic data. See Kuczynski and De Mol (2015) for a discussion of theory-construction methodology as a complement to theory-testing methodology in developmental science.

The interviews and daily digital diary reports were transcribed from audio recordings. To identify themes, the researchers used Braun and Clarke's (2006) theoretical thematic analysis procedures. The steps of thematic analysis included familiarization with data through repeated reading of the transcripts, creating initial categories, searching for overarching themes, evaluating themes, and labelling and conceptualizing themes. In the present study, the initial interpretation of the data was sensitized by existing behavioral and social relational perspectives on child noncompliance and resistance. However, throughout the analyses, the researchers were alerted to novel ideas expressed by the participants that were not present in the theoretical or empirical literature. Constant comparison (Charmaz 2003) was used to continually assess the similarities and differences between coded segments and themes as well as between the emerging themes themselves.

In qualitative research, quality assurance is addressed by the criterion of trustworthiness, which is analogous to reliability in quantitative research. Stiles (1993) suggested that a trustworthy study is one where the researcher's theoretical orientation is outlined and intensively engages with the data, and discussions with other researchers confirm the findings and emerging themes during the analytical process. All three authors participated in data coding and met regularly to review the themes, discuss alternative interpretations, and ensure rigor in the constant comparison process. The first author reviewed all the coding and selected the final themes. Throughout the analyses, the researchers used the qualitative data analysis software program MAXQDA to ensure the systematic categorization of data, documentation of the analytical process in memos, and interpretive comments assigned to narratives and codes.

## **3. Results**

The results focus on three research questions: mothers' perceptions of change in resistance, the meaning of change, and responses to children's expressions of defiance. The analyses suggest that mothers in our middle-class sample perceived that children between the ages of 9 and 13 increasingly resist parental rules and requests and defy parental authority. Moreover, parents perceived children's resistance as a normal developmental process and supported and channelled children's resistance toward socially appropriate expressions of agency. The illustrating quotes from mothers are identified by family number, sex, and age of the child to which the narrative refers. Most mothers accompanied their reports with laughter, and these expressions were preserved in the quotes.

### *3.1. Perceptions of Change in Assertion and Defiance*

Most mothers (75%) said their children displayed increasing resistance since early childhood. Mothers who reported no recent changes in resistance said that their children had always been resistant (20%) but that the way they expressed resistance had changed in recent years. The two parents (5%) who reported that their 9- and 10-year-old sons had never intentionally said "no" to parental requests also commented about their children's developmental immaturity.

The mothers who reported changes in resistance comprised two groups: those who reported increases in direct defiance and those who reported increases in indirect resistance. About two-thirds (19) of parents who reported changes in their children's resistance characterized the change as increases in defiance, whereas the remaining parents reported that their children (at middle childhood) were more resistant but did not defiantly express resistance.

**Increases in defiance.** Mothers used terms such as "attitude", "backtalk", "mouthy", "lippy", "grumbling" and "saucy" when children communicated their unwillingness to comply, or that their compliance was not voluntary. Examples of verbal expressions of attitude included questioning the legitimacy of mothers' requests, complaining, defiant refusals, and rude rebuttals. Nonverbal expressions included kicking or slamming doors, displaying anger, whining, dismissive facial expressions such as eye-rolling, and vocalizations such as sucking teeth or "Pssh!"

Many mothers experienced the change as qualitatively different from how their children behaved earlier. A mother who reported instances of talking back and verbal attacks said that during the previous year, her son began to "flat out refuse" her requests. "He has come up . . . with sort of a very defiant response. Like basically, 'S please take your shoes away', 'No! {Laughter}. Well, you can't be more direct. Um, and it stuns me!" (F37, male, 9). Another described her son as being "much more attitudey, much more attitude. The whole, you know, shrug your shoulders, drag your feet, slam the door. Yeah, that's really big" (F11, male, 13). Mothers of girls reported similar examples. One mother said, "You know, she was always so compliant {Laughter} . . . And now I get 'Oh my gosh, you're repeating yourself! Are you going to say that again?'" (F1, female, 12). Another described her daughter's resistance as "Just the usual, what I would expect from kids you know—the 'Uhh! I don't want to do that', the eye rolling, the 'Oh, give me a break, not again!'" (F38, female, 11). Another said, "I think they're just more mouthy" (F33, male, 10).

**Increases in indirect resistance.** A third of parents (11) reported that their children's increased resistance took the form of delaying compliance or asking parents to justify their requests rather than direct defiance. "When she was younger, in a way, she did it immediately, like spontaneously. But now you have to ask, and then *maybe* she will do it" (F8, female, 12). Other parents reported that their children began to choose the timing of their cooperation. For example, a mother of a girl said, "I've noticed that we will ask them to do the dishes, and if they are younger, they want to please more and they'll do it right away. But as they get older and more independent, they will do it on their own time" (F26, female, 13). Similarly, a mother of a boy put it this way: "When he was younger it was more that he would do it like, immediately, and now, it's like, 'I'm not so sure I want to do that. I'm not so sure I want to do that right now. I'm going to put you off. Wait a minute' (F30, male, 11)." Another said, "He won't talk back. He's not rude. He just won't do it, and he's completely and utterly immovable" (F31, male, 11).

### 3.2. Increasing Skill in Expressing Resistance

Mothers also talked about changes in the skill with which their children expressed resistance. Some mothers noted that their children's current displays of attitude constituted an advance over earlier temper tantrums. For example, one mother said, "Yeah, the lip now. There was no lip when she was younger. It was just that three or four temper tantrum . . . It's gone from stomping to just attitude. Change is part of the course" (F9, female, 9). Another mother said, "He would go up to his room when he was four and would slam the door and kick it from the inside and just bang and bang and bang and just refuse to stop . . . But what I am going to call the typical teenager shrug and nonchalance has probably come in the last year" (F11, male, 13). Other parents described a change from crying to more assertive forms of resistance. "When she was younger, her way of dealing with when she didn't like something was just to start crying. Now . . . she might say something like, 'Nope, I don't want to do it' or, 'Um, okay, in a minute' (F27, female, 11). Similarly, a mother described how at age three, her son responded to her requests with temper tantrums, but

now at age 10 “no longer throws himself on the floor” but instead cried, walked away, or displayed attitude (F32, male, 10).

Another advance was from children’s earlier strategies of blatant defiance or ignoring to their current practice of questioning instructions or offering verbal excuses. “Because when they were younger, it’s like ‘No!’ . . . and as they get older, they sometimes turn it back on you which isn’t a good thing. They’ll be like ‘Well, remember when you did la la la’ . . . So, you can almost see them developing logic. So certainly, the way that they don’t cooperate becomes different” (F7, male, 12).

In summary, most mothers reported changes in their children’s expression of resistance from earlier in childhood. For most parents, the change was from an earlier period of relative cooperation and acquiescence to the increasingly intentional and direct communication of defiance. In addition, mothers reported changes in the skill with which children expressed resistance. However annoying or coercive their children’s resistance was in middle childhood, their child’s way of expressing resistance, including expressions of attitude, was an improvement over the way they expressed their agency earlier in childhood. One mother explained the continuity of her son’s resistance over time and the discontinuity of how he expressed opposition. The mother explained: “So, yeah, of course, the behavior changes. The reaction changes, but the triggers are the same—Something is not the way that want you it to be. Right? So, it’s the reaction to not getting what you want, and life is not about getting everything that you want anyways {*Laughter*}” (F32, male, 10).

### 3.3. Meaning of Resistance

Mothers commonly interpreted their children’s increased displays of defiance as an inevitable developmental phenomenon associated with emerging motives for autonomy. Mothers used terms such as “pre-teen”, “teen” and “hormones” in an assumed way of explaining their children’s defiant behavior. One mother, having described her daughter’s increasing displays of attitude, said, “Actually, both of my older children were around 13 or 14 and sort of snapped into this attitude. Kind of, ‘I don’t need to do that’” (F16, female, 13). Another said, “He’s a teenager and when I ask him to do something—‘Yeah, what do you want?’ Typical answer you know?” (F21, male, 12). Another described her son as “Flashing of that teenager sort of attitude where he knows everything and we as parents know nothing” (F7, male, 12). Some mothers used this explanation even for very young children, “I know she’s changing even though she’s only nine, she’s changing into that teenage kind of phase with that little bit of back talk” (F40, female, 9). A mother describing her struggles with a previously cooperative daughter attributed a spectrum of behaviors including increased demands to do things her own way, increased resistance, and increased emotional lability to her daughters’ developmental status: “Okay, she’s a pre-teen, she’s soon to be 13 and all those hormones” (F8, female, 12).

Mothers also attributed their children’s resistance to an emerging autonomy motive, where old tendencies to comply voluntarily competed with impulses for self-determination and assertion of agency. “Her attitude is getting stronger. Her will is getting stronger. I can tell that she wants more decisions on her own (F 40, female, 9).” Another mother said, “I guess it’s because they don’t like being bossed around” (F26, female, 13). Some mothers said that they detected in their children an internal struggle between competing motives to cooperate with parents and motives to assert their own control. “It’s not that she doesn’t want to do it—she wants to *argue* about doing it . . . It’s almost like inside her, ‘I want to be helpful, but I want to show you that, almost like, I’m in charge’ . . . And I don’t know, maybe that’s just a sense of, they’re learning their own power” (F 35, female, 10).

Mothers also attributed children’s resistance to intentions to test parental limits and push back parental control boundaries. “It was like, at age three, you know, when they start talking back {laughter} was when [child] and my oldest son both started, you know, really finding out where the boundaries are” (F29, male 9). Other mothers said, “I think she’s just trying to see how far she can go” (F38, female, 11) and “Maybe he’s testing us, maybe . . . just wants to rebel a little bit” (F20, male, 13). Another said, “I think it’s a natural

development in a child. I think it's the newfound freedom of being a step older and a step further in life that they just need to check their boundaries" (F37, male, 9).

### 3.4. *Qualified Support for Children's Resistance*

Almost all mothers (90%) indicated that they supported their children's expression of agency through resistance. However, their support tended to be both ambivalent and conditional. Mothers believed that assertiveness was desirable for children but annoying for themselves as parents. As well, more than half of the sample said that they supported or tolerated their children's resistance only if they did so in a skillful manner. Only two parents indicated that they did not tolerate resistance or defiance. As an example, one mother who described herself as having strict and distant parents when she was young reported that she slapped her daughter for talking back. "Because, she has a real attitude. It just scares me, you know, I mean she's a good kid, don't get me wrong, I'm just scared that she will rebel. That's every parent's nightmare" (F3, female, 11).

Some parents clearly articulated their support for their children's resistance: "She is a lot more vocal about how she feels. She's a lot more disagreeable and, surprisingly, I'm okay with that" (F1, female 12). Another referred to the motive to resist as an existential prerogative of human agents: "That comes with the turf, they want to know what their boundaries are and how much they can push, and I expect them to push the envelope. They are thinking human beings and I think we welcome that, but there is a time when you ask and a time when not to ask" (F16, female 13).

Some mothers described their dilemma of wanting to empower their children by tolerating or supporting their children's resistance but nevertheless wishing for voluntary acquiescence. For example, one mother said, "I guess I don't really have a problem with kids standing up for themselves . . . I think it's good that a child feels comfortable to say that 'I don't want to do this. Or that he's not afraid . . . I think it's good for kids to challenge and to push things a little bit because it would be bad if he didn't. Because he's going to have to learn, and I don't want them to be pushovers. Obviously, I don't want them to argue, I know I'd be great if he'd say, 'OK mom!' but, like I know that would be wrong, because I think that's only normal" (F13, male, 11).

Another mother said that she wanted her son to rebel now, so he won't have to do it in his 20s when rebellion is more dangerous. However, she said she was happy that the child began showing resistance at age 13 rather than earlier at age 10 and that she wanted her child to be only moderately rebellious: "We want a little rebellion. But I guess, you know, we don't control them a whole lot. Maybe they won't have to rebel so much" (F20, male 13).

Parents also said that children's resistance allows them to practice skills of independence and assertion that would empower children in their future lives: "I don't want her to be a doormat, I don't want her to do everything I say without having a thought, but I want her to be fair in her resistance" (F9, female 9). Another said, "It's really important that she does establish a feeling of independence . . . she needs to be able to make her own decisions and not second guess what we're going to think about her decisions" (F18, female, 13).

One mother discussed her different concerns about her two daughters, one described as defiant, and the other, compliant: "[Child] is the type who will always stand up for herself, [child] is not going to let anyone walk over her, where my other daughter, as I said before, she is the pleaser, right, to keep the peace. [Child] might piss some people off, but she might be better for it because she doesn't let them walk all over her" (F15, female, 11).

Another mother said she tolerated her daughters' sometimes "brutal" defiance to empower her for her future life: "One, because I want her to get it out of her system now, and the other thing, too, is that I believe that if she could stand up to me then maybe she could stand up to some of her friends once she gets into high school. So, some days I'm actually glad she talks back—as long as she does it appropriately" (F1 female, 12).

Mothers identified several aspects of skillful resistance that they wished to foster in their children. These included verbal negotiation, acknowledging parental requests, and

respectful forms of assertion. Verbal negotiation, which consisted of providing explanations, asking for explanations, and bargaining, was regarded as the most skillful form of resistance. One mother said approvingly, "I like that he was able to, even though he didn't agree with what I was making him do, I was happy that he chose to negotiate for a compromise as opposed to just getting angry and giving attitude or refusing to do it or something. So . . . I'd much rather that type of response" (F7, male, 12). Another mother shared, "Yeah, it is more communication, you know? If, say 'mom I am in the middle of whatever,' okay, well either I can get it myself, or I can say I'm sorry I need you to do it. But the give and take and the communication is more to me the better solution than to just shrug and say 'Okay, well, yeah, maybe'" (F11, male, 13).

Another mother described her efforts to teach her son the skills of conflict management:

"I was also trying to explain to him some of the techniques to use while having a discussion so that people don't get defensive and get their back up and how that can work against you when you're trying to work things out because it's not reasonable to expect that you're going to get 100% of what you want". (F22, male, 13)

Another parent encouraged her son to construct skillful arguments for resisting parental requests:

"He, J, is getting to that point where he will argue back, and like I said, we've sort of encouraged him to use that. 'Okay, you want it your way. Explain to me why with a persuasive argument of why because you know we can give you ours. Let's hear what you have to say, and we'll see.' He still usually doesn't win because he usually can't get it together well enough. And you know what? It works the same way with anybody in a job and if you can't explain yourself fully, you're not gonna make your point well". (F24, male, 13)

Another mother said she encouraged her daughter to explain her position rather than just refuse or ignore requests. "I've been trying to say that 'Use your words to tell me what it is that don't like about it or, you know, maybe we could come to some kind of {laughter} common ground together" (F27, female, 11).

Parents were most firm in correcting children's verbal and nonverbal displays of attitude. Although parents believed that attitude and defiance are associated with autonomy development, this way of expressing resistance was not acceptable. For some parents, attitude needed to be absolutely discouraged because it violated core values that the parent wished to foster: "The no violence, the no swearing, the no disrespect with attitude are the core, everything other than that is fair game for re-negotiation" (F9, female, 9). Another said "Oh, we just say 'No' {laughter}. Yeah, you just think 'Oh no you are not going to talk to me that way!' because I know if you don't nip it now at nine . . . good Lord knows what coming at me when she's 13 . . . And if you can't be respectful to your parents, who are you going to be respectful to?" (F9, female 9).

"He's got to obey us and respect his adult, adults in his life. That he's not to talk back . . . that's a pretty firm rule I would think . . . Otherwise, he's perfect {laughter}". (F29 male, 9)

Mothers also said that they confronted both nonverbal and verbal aspects of their children's displays of attitude:

"I just can't stand when they're really disrespectful. We'll allow certain latitude in terms of joking around, but if you're just being rude and disrespectful, like 'If I'm speaking to you, look at me, give me the courtesy of pausing your game, give me your attention so we can just talk about it instead of me having to repeat myself'. And, you know, talking back and stuff, it's just . . . you have those certain trigger things that drive you crazy, and you also want to teach them some social graces and everything too" (F7, male, 12).

Similarly, another mother said "But it depends on how he expresses it. If he goes 'Waaaah!, I don't want to!' No, that's illegitimate . . . I don't stand that type of behavior.

You tell me normal voice. You tell me what you don't like. I'll explain to you what I feel about it. Or I'll explain why I'm insisting on this. Um, um . . . when he goes and shuts down and starts you know just showing his temper then I also resent that" (F32, male, 10).

In summary, all parents said that the right to express resistance was conditional and involved a process of parental guidance and mutual adjustment between the parent and child. Some parents looked forward to this process as a positive challenge that they approached in a game-like manner: "Learning your own independence . . . that whole growing up. 'Why are you telling me what to do?' 'Because you live here {laughter}, because I feed you.' Yeah, it comes from growing up and learning that you do have a say, that you do have a right to question authority. And sure! Feel free! {laughter}. Bring it on! But I'm gonna put you back down!" (F24, male, 13). Another mother said she sometimes "got a kick" out of watching her son negotiating out of her requests: "I want to see the mental gymnastics that he's going through to see what the thought process was to arrive at that" (F22, male 13). Others approached children's challenge to their authority with ambivalence: "Uh I really struggle with that attitude and try to say and try to point things out and be logical . . . So, I find that tough because, you know, in your head you're going 'They have no idea what they're talking about!' And the whole attitude with which they deliver their knowledge about whatever the topic is, is quite annoying. But, you know, on the other hand I do realize that he has to learn on his own and make his own mistakes" (F7, male, 12).

#### 4. Discussion

Contemporary parents tend to have childrearing values that favor autonomy over obedience, and this represents a continuation of social change in values and norms occurring during the previous century (Alwin and Tufiş 2021). The present study makes empirical and theoretical contributions to understanding how such values affect family dynamics and parent-child relationships during the 21st century. Empirically, the study contributes several insights into parents' perceptions and management of resistant and defiant behaviors of their school-age children. Theoretically, the study highlights the advantages of viewing children's resistance as a form of agency expression and adds a neglected relational perspective to conceptions of parental support for autonomy.

Mothers' descriptions of the various strategies their children used to evade their requests align with those reported by children from the same families (Kuczynski et al. 2019). Mothers' reports of defiance, arguing, negotiation, displays of attitude, and ignoring or deflecting parental requests closely corresponded to children's reports of their own overt strategies. What was different was that children also reported subversive strategies such as minimal compliance (e.g., following the letter but not the spirit of mothers' instructions), covert transgressions occurring out of the parents' sight, and internal resistance where children complied overtly but emotionally and cognitively rejected the parents' messages (Kuczynski et al. 2019). Although mothers in this study could not report these hidden forms of resistance, their frequent references to children's motives and internal dialogues indicate an awareness of opposition occurring beneath the surface.

The finding that mothers perceived that children's resistance and defiance are a manifestation of children's developing autonomy or assertion of agency is important conceptually because it adds complexity to a dominant psychological perspective that views resistance exclusively from the pathologizing lens of "noncompliance" (McMahon and Forehand 2003; Patterson et al. 1992). Although mothers experienced their children's increased resistance as aversive, they interpreted their opposition as a symptom of a normal developmental process. The finding of increased defiance clarifies that one of the processes underlying parent-child conflict in middle childhood and early adolescence is, specifically, children's resistance to parental control. Although the phenomenon of increased conflict between parents and children during early adolescence is well established (Branje 2018; Laursen et al. 1998; Mastrotheodoros et al. 2020), the underlying processes have been obscured by the use of the more general term "conflict." A specific focus on the process

of resistance enables researchers to link parent–child conflict in adolescence with similar phenomena known as the “terrible twos” and toddler resistance in early childhood and as assertion (Potter and Potter 2016), reactance (Brehm and Brehm 1981), or resistance to oppression (Kent 2012; Scott 1990) in adulthood. We suggest that the emergence of resistance and defiance of authority in middle childhood is part of a continuous process of autonomy development and expression of human agency extending into adulthood.

The identification of social skills in expressing resistance as a central concern of parents is also a novel contribution of this study. We argue that by middle childhood, what parents object to is not so much their children’s resistance but the way they express their resistance. This provides evidence for a proposal first made in research on toddler resistance, namely, that children’s repertoires for communicating “no” develops along two orthogonal trajectories: increasing assertiveness and increasing social skill (Kuczynski et al. 1987; Kuczynski and Kochanska 1990). In this study, parents identified changes both in their children’s assertion of autonomy and the skill with which children defended their autonomy. Mothers appeared to welcome resistance, albeit with ambivalence, as an inevitable sign of growing maturity, but they did not tolerate their children’s direct, aversive, or socially unaccommodating way of asserting their opposition. These findings are consistent with research indicating that parents of toddlers react more punitively when children display oppositional and defiant tactics but are more likely to use positive tactics when children resist using verbal negotiation (Larzelere et al. 2018). Similarly, parents of adolescents perceive strategies such as simple assertion, explanation, and negotiation as acceptable and legitimate expressions of children’s autonomy in adolescence (Morrissey and Gondoli 2012).

Parents’ joint focus on supporting autonomy and promoting social skills has a larger theoretical implication. The idea that parents were interested in promoting socially skillful forms of resistance suggests that parents wished to promote a relational rather than an individualistic mode of autonomy expression in their children. According to social relational theory, individuals can develop relationally connected versus relationally isolated modes of expressing agency (Kuczynski and De Mol 2015; De Mol et al. 2018). Children who develop as connected agents enact their agency within the context of interdependent social relationships, which enables and constrains their actions as agents. In contrast, children who develop as isolated agents, which can be considered an extreme form of individualism, experience themselves and act without relying on or considering others. We argue that mothers’ focus on respectful and socially skillful forms of assertion suggests that they had an implicit goal of fostering a relational or connected autonomy in their children.

#### *Implications for Parenting in the 21st Century*

The parents in this study represent middle-class families exposed to prevailing 21st-century values favoring children’s autonomy. We suggest that one way that this social change in values has played out is that contemporary parents look beyond the short-term annoyance of their children’s resistance and defiance and tolerate these behaviors as actions of agents in order to promote long-term goals for their children. One of these goals was to foster in their children the skills of competent adults who competently assert their own wishes and resist harmful or unquestioning submission to the influence of others. Mothers of both girls and boys expressed concerns about behavior that seemed overly compliant or expressed hopes that their children would not become “pushovers” or “doormats” in their future lives.

For these families, parents’ supportive yet ambivalent responses to children’s resistance reflect contemporary values for autonomy, assertion, and egalitarian parent–child relationships that are likely culturally and historically specific. The reality is that children in this sample could practice their agency in a protected parent–child relationship context that affords leeway for the child to resist parental authority. However, strict obedience and hierarchical parent–child relationships remain ideal in collectivistic cultures, where

parental responses are likely to be harsher and less tolerant of children's resistance (Burke and Kuczynski 2018).

We also highlight two directions for research on parenting in the 21st century. First, we suggest expanding the kinds of practices that constitute autonomy-supportive parenting. Existing conceptions of autonomy support stem from self-determination theory and focus on parental practices that foster intrinsic motivation by enabling children to perceive themselves as determining their own actions and outcomes (Grolnick 2003). Examples of autonomy support include valuing autonomy over obedience, using techniques such as explaining requests with reasons rather than using coercive power, and allowing choices rather than imposing parental agendas (Grolnick and Ryan 1989). An implication of the present findings is that tolerating and supporting a degree of opposition from children may also constitute a form of autonomy support. This form of autonomy support is not permissive because parents were firm in demanding that children assert themselves in a socially skillful manner. Parental acquiescence to children's resistance (Kochanska and Kuczynski 1991) and, more generally, parental receptivity to children's requests (Kuczynski et al. 2016) may support children's developing autonomy by providing them with experiences of successfully influencing their parents. A history of such interactions may contribute to a sense of relational efficacy, knowing that one can influence significant others in a relationship (De Mol et al. 2018).

The second implication is that developers of parenting interventions should consider redirecting parental efforts from an exclusive focus on suppressing noncompliance to improving the skill with which children express their opposition. In the present study, parents firmly opposed unskillful expressions such as angry defiance, sullenness, or unassertive expressions of nonacceptance of parental communications. Instead, parents discussed many approaches to guiding children to express resistance in an assertive but socially competent manner. These included respectful forms of communication, acknowledging that the other's request has been heard, providing logical explanations, and negotiating compromises. In addition, parents coached children to consider others' perspectives and appraise situations to determine when to stand firm and when to relent.

## 5. Limitations

The present sample of well-educated Canadian mothers constitutes a limitation of this study. Because the participants' socioeconomic status and cultural diversity were restricted, it must be considered that middle-class families' experiences and parent-child interactions might differ from the general population within that culture. Additionally, as representatives of Western culture, their experiences and expectations may differ from families in collectivistic cultures that expect reverence for adults and obedience to their rules and expectations (Trommsdorff and Kornadt 2003).

The qualitative methodology of this study is both a strength and a limitation. A holistic approach to methodology in developmental science involves not only the process of testing theories and hypotheses, which is a domain of quantitative and experimental methods, but also the process of theory construction and hypothesis generation, which typically relies on naturalistic and interpretive methods (Kuczynski and De Mol 2015; Overton 2002; Valsiner 2000). As such, the present study identified neglected phenomena regarding the nature of mothers' responses to children's resistance. A limitation is that qualitative methods do not adequately fulfill the theory testing phase of the research process. Although it is hoped that this study may lead to the construction of new measures and the testing of new hypotheses, this requires replication in different and larger samples, and the attendant tools of operationalization of constructs, reliability testing, and statistical analyses.

## 6. Final Conclusions

In conclusion, our paper suggests that children's expression of resistance and defiance in 21st-century families should not be considered a form of deviance or the action of isolated or disconnected agents. Rather, children's resistance occurred in the context of supportive

parent–child relationships where mothers allowed their children to exercise some degree of self-determination. Allowing self-determination during interactions involving resistance does not mean parents were responding permissively or abandoning rules, structures, and expectations. On the contrary, mothers' impulses to allow resistance were intended to provide the opportunity for children to develop social skills and self-confidence, and make decisions about their own actions through practice and their mothers' guidance for appropriate responses.

Mothers also appeared to be more concerned about the health of their relational connections than strict adherence to rules and commands. When taken together with an earlier study (Kuczynski et al. 2019) that examined children's perspectives on the interactions reported here, the study indicated tcontemporary children's comfort in overtly resisting their mothers' rules and requests. This also suggests a level of trust and a knowing that their autonomy was not under threat within the confines of the relationship.

**Author Contributions:** L.K. acquired funding, conceptualized the study, participated in formal analysis of data, supervised research assistants, wrote original draft. T.B. participated in analysis and revision of the data through all the steps in the analysis process using MAXQDA software. She wrote part of the discussion section and reviewed and edited the final version of the manuscript. P.S.-C. participated in the transcription of interviews and the coding and analysis of data using MAXQDA software. She reviewed and edited the final version of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** This research was funded by The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC #81655).

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Guelph (protocol #06FE028) on 3 June 2006.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data supporting reported results can found in the form of MAXQDA files in the possession of the first author. The data are part of the larger Socialization in Middle Childhood study that continues to be analyzed for future publication. Contact Leon Kuczynski, Emeritus, at lkuczyns@uoguelph.ca.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

- Alwin, Duane. 1988. From obedience to autonomy: Changes in traits desired in children, 1924–1978. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52: 33–52. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Alwin, Duane F., and Paula A. Tufis. 2021. Class and Conformity: Thirty Years of Adult Child-rearing Values in the U.S. *Social Forum* 36: 315–37. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Baumrind, Diana. 2012. Differentiating between confrontive and coercive kinds of parental power-assertive disciplinary practices. *Human Development* 55: 35–51. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bolger, Niall, Angelina Davis, and Eshkol Rafaeli. 2003. Diary methods: Capturing life as it is lived. *Annual Review of Psychology* 54: 579–616. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Branje, Susan J. T. 2018. Development of parent–adolescent relationships: Conflict interactions as a mechanism of change. *Child Development Perspectives* 12: 171–76. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77–101. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Brehm, Sharon S., and Jack W. Brehm. 1981. *Psychological Reactance: A Theory of Freedom and Control*. London: Academic Press.
- Burke, Taniesha, and Leon Kuczynski. 2018. Jamaican mothers' perceptions of children's resistance strategies for parental rules and requests. *Frontiers in Psychology* 9: 1786. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2003. Grounded theory. In *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. Edited by Jai A. Smith. New York: Sage Publications, Inc., pp. 81–110.
- Collins, W. Andrew, and Stephanie D. Madsen. 2003. Developmental change in parenting interactions. In *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations*. Edited by Leon Kuczynski. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 49–66.

- Cservenka, Anita, Madison L. Stroup, Amit Etkin, and Bonnie J. Nagel. 2015. The effects of age, sex, and hormones on emotional conflict-related brain response during adolescence. *Brain and Cognition* 99: 135–50. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Dawber, Tess, and Leon Kuczynski. 1999. The question of ownness: Influence of relationship context on parental socialization strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 16: 475–93.
- De Mol, Jan, Ellen Reijmers, Lesley Verhofstadt, and Leon Kuczynski. 2018. Reconstructing a sense of relational agency in family therapy. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy* 39: 54–66.
- Greven, Philip. 1990. *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse*. Washington, DC: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Grolnick, Wendy S. 2003. *The Psychology of Parental Control: How Well-Meant Parenting Backfires*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grolnick, Wendy S., and Richard M. Ryan. 1989. Parent styles associated with children's self-regulation and competence in school. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 81: 143–54. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kent, Alexandra. 2012. Compliance, resistance and incipient compliance when responding to directives. *Discourse Studies* 14: 711–30. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kochanska, Grazyna, and Leon Kuczynski. 1991. Maternal autonomy granting: Predictors of normal and depressed mothers' compliance with the requests of 5-year old's. *Child Development* 62: 1449–59. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Kuczynski, Leon. 2003. Beyond bidirectionality: Bilateral conceptual frameworks for understanding dynamics in parent-child relations. In *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relationships*. Edited by Leon Kuczynski. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 1–24.
- Kuczynski, Leon, and Grazyna Kochanska. 1990. The development of children's noncompliance strategies from toddlerhood to age 5. *Developmental Psychology* 26: 398–408. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kuczynski, Leon, and Jan De Mol. 2015. Dialectical models of socialization. In *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science: Theory and Method*. Edited by Willis F. Overton, Peter Molenaar and Richard M. Lerner. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., pp. 323–68. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kuczynski, Leon, and Kerry Daly. 2003. Qualitative methods as inductive (theory generating) research: Psychological and sociological approaches. In *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations*. Edited by Leon Kuczynski. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 373–92.
- Kuczynski, Leon, and Neil Hildebrandt. 1997. Models of conformity and resistance in socialization theory. In *Parenting and the Internalization of Values: A Handbook of Contemporary Theory*. Edited by Joan E. Grusec and Leon Ed Kuczynski. New York: Wiley, pp. 227–56.
- Kuczynski, Leon, Grazyna Kochanska, Marian Radke-Yarrow, and Ona Ginius-Brown. 1987. A developmental interpretation of young children's noncompliance. *Developmental Psychology* 23: 799–806. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kuczynski, Leon, Robyn Pitman, and Kate Twigger. 2019. Flirting with resistance: Children's expression of autonomy in middle childhood. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well Being* 13: 1564519. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Kuczynski, Leon, Robyn Pitman, Loan Ta-Young, and Lori Harach. 2016. Children's Influence on parents' adult development: Mothers' and fathers' receptivity to children's requests for change. *Journal of Adult Development* 23: 193–203. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Larzelere, Robert E., Sada J. Knowles, Carolyn S. Henry, and Kathy L. Ritchie. 2018. Immediate and long-term effectiveness of disciplinary tactics by type of toddler noncompliance. *Parenting: Science & Practice* 18: 141–71. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Laursen, Brett, Katherine C. Coy, and W. Andrew Collins. 1998. Reconsidering changes in parent-child conflict across adolescence: A meta-analysis. *Child Development* 69: 817–32. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Mastrotheodoros, Stefanos, Jolien Van der Graaff, Maja Deković, Wim H. J. Meeus, and Susan Branje. 2020. Parent-adolescent conflict across adolescence: Trajectories of informant discrepancies and associations with personality types. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 49: 119–35. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- McMahon, Robert J., and Rex L. Forehand. 2003. *Helping the Noncompliant Child*. New York: Guilford Books.
- Miller, Alice. 1990. *For Your Own Good, Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*. New York: Noonday Press.
- Morrissey, Rebecca A., and Dawn M. Gondoli. 2012. Change in parenting democracy during the transition to adolescence: The roles of young adolescents' noncompliance and mothers' perceived influence. *Parenting: Science and Practice* 12: 57–73. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]
- Overton, Willis F. 2002. Understanding, explanation, and reductionism: Finding a cure for cartesian anxiety. In *Reductionism*. Edited by Terrance Brown and Leslie Smith. Mahwah: Erlbaum, pp. 29–51.
- Parkin, C. Melanie, and Leon Kuczynski. 2012. Adolescent perspectives on rules and resistance within the parent-child relationship. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 27: 555–80. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Patterson, G. R., J. Reid, and T. J. Dishion. 1992. *Antisocial Boys: A Social Interactional Approach*. Eugene: Castalia Press.
- Potter, James V., and Paula M. Potter. 2016. *The Road to Individuation & Autonomy: An Assertiveness Training Manual*. Redding: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Scott, James. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Stiles, William B. 1993. Quality control in qualitative research. *Clinical Psychology Review* 13: 593–618. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tamis-LeMonda, Catherine S., Niobe Way, Diane Hughes, Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Ronit Kahana Kalman, and Erika Y. Niwa. 2008. Parents' goals for children: The dynamic coexistence of individualism and collectivism in cultures and individuals. *Social Development* 17: 183–209. [[CrossRef](#)]

- 
- Trommsdorff, Gisela, and Hans-Joachim Kornadt. 2003. Parent-child relations in cross-cultural perspective. In *Handbook of Dynamics in Parent-Child Relations*. Edited by Leon Kuczynski. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 271–306.
- Valsiner, Jaan. 2000. *Culture and Human Development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Van Petegem, Stijn, Bart Soenens, Maarten Vansteenkiste, and Wim Beyers. 2015. Rebels with a cause? Adolescent defiance from the perspective of reactance theory and self-determination theory. *Child Development* 86: 903–18. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wenar, Charles. 1982. On negativism. *Human Development* 25: 1–23. [[CrossRef](#)] [[PubMed](#)]