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2. Autonomy in Adolescence: A Contextualized Perspective

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Of the six domains of psychosocial development identified by John Hill in his 1973 paper, the one that Hill himself studied and reported on most carefully is *autonomy*. Indeed, as recently as 1986, Hill and Holmbeck wrote a chapter titled "Attachment and Autonomy During Adolescence." In it, they covered theoretical streams of influence; key sociohistorical considerations in the study of autonomy; and selected empirical work on familial, biological, and cognitive influences on the development of autonomy and the maintenance of close relationships. Thus, as we developed our account of the notable conceptual and empirical scholarship in this area for the present chapter, we often turned to Hill and Holmbeck's chapter as a rich source of guidance, and we strongly encourage others to read that work as well (see also Hill & Steinberg, 1976). The literature on topics related directly and indirectly to autonomy has grown since 1986. It is this more recent literature that we will emphasize in the present chapter.

OVERVIEW

When one scans the recent research efforts on autonomy and closely related constructs, there emerge some clear advances. Many of these advances in scholarship were suggested or at least anticipated in Hill's insightful conceptual work (Hill, 1973, 1983; Hill &

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Steinberg, 1976). For example, researchers since the mid-1980s have devoted greater attention to age differences in autonomy-related domains from late childhood through early adulthood (e.g., Brown, Clasen, & Eicher, 1986; Greenberger, 1984; Smollar & Youniss, 1989; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; White, Speisman, & Costos, 1983). Also, investigators have begun to ground their research in theory or systematic conceptual frameworks (e.g., Frank, Pirsch, & Wright, 1990; Hauser, Powers, & Noam, 1991; Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming, & Gamble, 1993; Smetana, 1988b; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). In addition, researchers have made further attempts to make critical yet sometimes subtle distinctions among various aspects of autonomy (e.g., Hoffman, 1984; Moore, 1987); autonomy continues, however, to be a fuzzy and elusive concept. Contemporary investigators have also begun to examine systematically (a) the interrelationships between aspects of autonomy (e.g., Frank, Avery, & Laman, 1988; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986), (b) the place of emotional distance from parents in the process of healthy development (Frank & Jackson-Walker, *in press*; Fuhrman & Holmbeck, 1995; Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993; Ryan & Lynch, 1989), and (c) the influence of familial and nonfamilial roles and contexts on the development of self-reliance and responsible independence (e.g., Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994; Eccles et al., 1991; Fuhrman & Holmbeck, 1995; Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg, Fegley, & Dornbusch, 1993; Tremper & Kelly, 1987). In brief, the recent literature on autonomy at adolescence is quite engaging as controversies persist and new directions for study are launched.

In keeping with our focus on the recent literature, we have organized this chapter around a number of key themes that have driven much of the scholarship on autonomy in the last decade. To set the stage, we begin with a brief discussion of the enduring interest in the study of adolescent autonomy. Next, we turn our attention to the continuing debate over the adaptive value of emotional distance or detachment from parents at adolescence. This is followed by a discussion of parent-adolescent relationships and the challenge of encouraging individuality and self-reliance on the one hand, and maintaining emotional connection and guidance on the other; in this section, we also review research on the value of opportunities for decision making in the context of the family. Fourth, we consider the arenas of school and work as contexts that have the potential to enhance adolescents' self-reliance and responsible independence. Last, we

consider the restricted legal rights of adolescents to be self-governing individuals and the empirical literature that may call such restrictions into question. Within this thematic approach, we will touch on issues of definition, measurement, sex differences, and developmental trends, as appropriate.

AUTONOMY AS AN ENDURING FOCUS OF STUDY

It is not surprising that autonomy continues to figure prominently in the work of U.S. social and behavioral scientists. There are at least two interrelated reasons for the enduring interest in autonomy and its development at adolescence. First, the United States has been described as a culture that emphasizes, and is even preoccupied by, issues of self-reliance and independence (see Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985). Within this U.S. context, much of socialization may be seen as preparation for being independent in the world. Second, although autonomy is probably more realistically considered a psychosocial concern across the life span (Baltes & Silverberg, 1994), issues of autonomy and of preparation for leaving home are of particular concern in the "launching" phase of adolescence.

Viewing autonomy as independence and self-reliance, free of emotional attachments and social commitments, however, has come under criticism by a number of contemporary scholars (e.g., Bellah et al., 1985; Cooper, 1994; Gilligan, 1988; Greenberger, 1984; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991; Josselson, 1988; Sampson, 1985; Spence, 1985). Gilligan (1988) expressed this concern:

Psychologists in characterizing adolescence as a "second individuation" (Blos, 1967) and in celebrating an identity that is "self-wrought" (Erikson, 1962), have encouraged a way of thinking in which the interdependence of human life and the reliance of people on one another becomes either problematic or tacit." (p. xii)¹

As described by Bellah et al. (1985),

Clearly, the meaning of one's life for most Americans is to become one's own person, almost to give birth to oneself. Much of this process . . . is negative. It involves breaking free from family, community, and

inherited ideas. Our culture does not give us much guidance as to how to fill the contours of this autonomous, self-responsible self. (pp. 82-83)

Bellah and his colleagues seem to be referring primarily to European Americans; the goal of a primarily autonomous self could not be as easily said of Asian Americans, for example. Nonetheless, many current researchers interested in the period of adolescence have taken these concerns quite seriously and have, in turn, accorded greater significance to relational ties, support, and social commitment in their studies of autonomy at this period of the life span. Evidence for this revised approach can be found in recent empirical work in which investigators have conceptualized healthy ego development, identity formation, and self-esteem as growing from familial climates that promote a sense of connection as well as individuation (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Hauser et al., 1991; Turner, Irwin, Tschann, & Millstein, 1994; also see Knudson-Martin, 1994).

Further evidence for a shift in scholarship is notable in Greenberger's (1984) multifaceted conceptualization of psychosocial maturity. According to Greenberger's model, psychosocial maturity entails the complementary development of autonomy on the one hand, and social responsibility on the other. Greenberger argues that "self-reliance is perhaps the most basic disposition that underlies the capacity for autonomy". Self-reliance, in her model, entails the absence of excessive dependence on others, a sense of control or agency over one's life, and an action orientation or sense of initiative. Social commitment, an underlying feature of social responsibility, entails "feelings of 'community' with others; willingness to modify or relinquish personal goals in the interest of social goals; readiness to form alliances with others to promote social goals; and investment in long-term social goals". Thus, Greenberger's model of psychosocial maturity at adolescence is one in which a sense of responsibility toward others is placed on equal par with a sense of independence or autonomy.

Greenberger and her colleagues have operationalized this model of psychosocial maturity in a self-report instrument (Greenberger, Josselson, Knerr, & Knerr, 1974) that is often used in research on adolescent development (see section on adolescent work to follow, for example). Several studies using this instrument have indicated that both autonomy and social responsibility show signs of development

across the adolescent years, with an especially clear progression for the indexes of autonomy (for a review, see Greenberger, 1984). Studies of adolescents' values, however, suggest that U.S. teens tend to place somewhat greater importance on developing and expressing self-reliance than social responsibility or commitment (this discrepancy is less consistent among adolescent girls than boys because girls appear to be more likely to value both autonomy and social commitment).

In summary, contemporary U.S. researchers continue to focus on issues of separation and independence in their studies of adolescents, and adolescents themselves continue to hold self-reliance as a key developmental task as they progress toward young adulthood. Nonetheless, a prevailing movement in the recent scholarship on adolescent development is to understand autonomy-related growth in the context of relational support and enduring bonds (see Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Steinberg, 1990) and in parallel with growth in a sense of responsibility toward one's family (Pipp, Shaver, Jennings, Lamborn, & Fischer, 1985; White et al., 1983; Youniss & Smollar, 1985) and one's community (Becker, 1976; Greenberger, 1984).

THE "DETACHMENT" DEBATE

One of the most prominent and lively debates in the recent literature on autonomy at adolescence turns on the question of whether emotional distance from parents serves an adaptive function. In 1973, Hill noted that "unfortunately, very little is known about the issue of detachment outside the theory and evidence psychoanalysis provides" (p. 32). Although we do have more theorizing and empirical data today, historically speaking, the psychoanalytic writings of Anna Freud (1958) probably advanced the strongest and most straightforward assertion that emotional distance from parents plays a critical role in healthy development at adolescence. From Freud's orthodox psychoanalytic viewpoint, it is detachment from parental ties (initially manifested in adolescent rebelliousness against parents) that makes possible emotional adjustment, healthy independence, and later attachment to extrafamilial objects.

In light of research findings that have accumulated over the past several decades on nonclinical samples of adolescents, it is no longer possible to enter into the debate over the adaptive value of emotional distance if one assumes that emotional distance entails a state of

detachment from parents as described by Anna Freud (see Steinberg, 1990). Although adolescents and their parents engage in bickering, especially at the apex of pubertal development (Hill & Holmbeck, 1987; Montemayor, 1983; Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Steinberg, 1989) and adolescents seek out greater amounts of privacy (Larson & Richards, 1994), the vast majority of adolescents report that they feel rather close to and respect their parents (Frank et al., 1990; Kenny, 1987; Larson & Richards, 1994; Rutter, Graham, Chadwick, & Yule, 1976). Also, most young people continue to be influenced by their parents during adolescence. For example, when it comes to long-term questions concerning educational or occupational plans or questions of values, adolescents generally seem to follow parental advice even over peer advice (Brittain, 1963; Brown, 1990; Young & Ferguson, 1979).

Researchers have noted, however, that adolescence is a time of transformations in parent-child emotional relations. For example, Larson and Richards (1994) have shown that compared to preadolescents, middle adolescents' feelings of closeness to their parents appear somewhat more conditional or situation-specific, perhaps due to adolescents' greater cognitive complexity. Other researchers have found that in early to middle adolescence, most youngsters begin to disengage somewhat from idealized conceptualizations of their parents as all-knowing and all-powerful, recognizing parental fallibility (Kaul, 1995; Smollar & Youniss, 1989; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Studies also suggest that youngsters begin to experience a differentiation of some aspects of self from parents, extending further the process of individuation that is often noted among toddlers (Kaul, 1995; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; see also Josselson, 1988). For most teens, these affective and conceptual changes, sometimes referred to as features of *emotional autonomy*, neither demand nor signify radical detachment from parents. Indeed, studies that address age differences in emotional autonomy from preadolescence to middle adolescence reveal rather modest increases in deidealization of parents, in feelings of individuation, and in lessened dependence on parents (Kaul, 1995; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; see also Frank et al., 1990). New appraisals of self and parent do begin to surface as part of the process of individuation, but there is no evidence to suggest that even most middle adolescents are consumed or preoccupied with thoughts of parental fallibility and feelings of the self as separate.

The gradual emergence of these new appraisals of self and parent is consistent to some extent with Blos's (1967) neoanalytic theory of adolescent individuation (see also Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Josselson, 1980). In contrast to Freud, Blos focused less on the severance of emotional ties between adolescent and parent and more on the process by which youngsters relinquish childish dependencies on, and conceptualizations of, their parents. Blos would, perhaps, be surprised that the extent to which most adolescents experience these new thoughts and feelings is fairly modest. In any case, he would argue that it is through this process of gaining emotional autonomy that adolescents come to rely on their own internal resources and take responsibility for their actions—that is, come to be mature, competent young people.

It is this proposal that is exactly the point of contemporary debate. Although there is empirical evidence to support a developmental component to emotional autonomy defined and operationalized from Blos's perspective (Kaul, 1995; Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986), there are of course individual differences in the level of emotional autonomy experienced by same-age adolescents. The issue of debate thus becomes whether stronger feelings of emotional autonomy are especially adaptive. Are youngsters who experience strong feelings of emotional autonomy vis-à-vis their parents more competent and well-adjusted than their peers?

Initial Research Using the Emotional Autonomy Scale

Researchers interested in this issue have generally used the Emotional Autonomy Scale (EAS) in their investigations (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). This 20-item scale, which has aroused a good deal of debate itself, is composed of four subscales that are intended to reflect the features of emotional autonomy as outlined by Blos: (a) deidealization of parents (e.g., Even when my parents and I disagree, my parents are always right; reverse scored), (b) relinquishing of childish dependencies on parents (e.g., When I've done something wrong, I depend on my parents to straighten things out for me), (c) individuation (e.g., My parents know everything there is to know about me), and (d) perceiving parents as people (e.g., I might be surprised to see how my parents act at a party).

Steinberg and Silverberg's (1986) initial research using the EAS indicated that early adolescents with relatively high emotional auton-

omy scores tended to be more susceptible to peer pressure, at least in hypothetical situations. That is, the early adolescents who were most emotionally autonomous from their parents appeared to be least able to remain autonomous in the face of pressure from their friends to engage in antisocial behavior. This initial finding, based on cross-sectional data, seemed to suggest that emotional autonomy from parents, at least relatively strong feelings of emotional autonomy, leaves young adolescents in a rather vulnerable position and not one that most adults would consider promising of competence and adjustment (Ryan & Lynch, 1989). Lamborn and Steinberg's (1993) alternative, more optimistic and neoanalytic interpretation of these findings was this:

Young people move through a transitional period in the progression to true self-reliance. Initially, young adolescents gain a sense of emotional autonomy from parents that leaves them susceptible to peer pressure. . . . The development of emotional autonomy in early adolescence is an important stepping stone in the process [toward true self-reliance and responsible decision making]. (p. 484)

Although this positive, transitional interpretation is plausible, in the absence of long-term longitudinal data and in light of additional research findings outlined here, it is open to debate. Notably, a number of researchers have reported findings that suggest that high EAS scores are uncorrelated with measures of global self-esteem and self-perceptions of competence (Ryan & Lynch, 1989) but are correlated with greater substance use and fighting among adolescents (Turner, Irwin, & Millstein, 1991) as well as with greater feelings of insecurity with parents and lower feelings of lovability (Ryan & Lynch, 1989). It is interesting, however, that when researchers who study late adolescents use only the deidealization subscale of the EAS, high scores tend to be associated with some positive outcomes, such as healthier identity development—less identity foreclosure and more identity achievement (Frank et al., 1990).

In short, the overall pattern of findings based on the studies cited thus far suggests that in late adolescence, a more realistic, somewhat deidealized view of parents may play a critical role in the process of identity formation, albeit with some uneasiness (Josselson, 1988), but that high scores on emotional autonomy as a whole are associated with a variety of behaviors and dispositions among adolescents that

are not indicative of responsible independence. Although as a group, youngsters seem to experience some emotional distancing from their parents during the adolescent years, as ego development, human evolution, and family systems theorists would also expect (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Hess & Handel, 1967; Josselson, 1988; Steinberg, 1989), those young people who experience the greatest emotional autonomy—defined in Blos's terms and operationalized by the EAS—may be experiencing feelings of detachment. On the one hand, these feelings of detachment, especially during early and middle adolescence, may lay the foundation for problem behavior as well as for difficulty with emotional regulation (Kobak et al., 1993); alternatively, feelings of detachment, problem behavior, and difficulties with emotional regulation may all reflect a common internal or contextual source or both.

Emotional Autonomy in Context

The debate over the adaptive value of emotional autonomy as measured by the EAS has recently entered a second phase. In this most current scholarship, researchers have proposed that the meaning of emotional autonomy and, more specifically, its link to competence, adjustment, and interpersonal functioning can be understood only if considered in context—that the significance of adolescent emotional autonomy may differ depending on the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993) and the level of stress in the family environment (Fuhrman & Holmbeck, 1995). Researchers have differed considerably, however, with regard to the contextual conditions under which they predict emotional autonomy might be adaptive and thus positively associated with indexes of competence and adjustment.

On the one hand, Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) have taken the position that a negative profile of adjustment and competence would hold true for emotionally autonomous adolescents who also perceive their parents as relatively unsupportive and unavailable; these authors have proposed, however, that emotionally autonomous adolescents who perceive high levels of parental support and availability should score quite favorably on measures of competence and adjustment—indeed, even more favorably than adolescents who report high levels of parental support and availability but low levels of

emotional autonomy as assessed by the EAS. In sharp contrast to Lamborn and Steinberg's predictions, Fuhrman and Holmbeck (1995) proposed that it is only under conditions of family stress—low maternal warmth, low family cohesion, parent-adolescent conflict, or nonintact family structures—that feelings of emotional autonomy can be adaptive and beneficial to adolescents. Emotional autonomy, or emotional distancing under these conditions, the authors reasoned, should serve a protective function and facilitate development (see Rutter, 1990). Under less stressful and more supportive conditions, high emotional autonomy would be maladaptive, with adolescents distancing themselves from the benefits of a supportive relationship with their parents.^{2,3}

The findings that have emerged from the empirical investigations of these two research teams appear very much at odds on certain points but do share some critical commonalities. As Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) anticipated, their findings suggested that adolescents at greatest risk for internalizing and externalizing problems, as well as for low levels of both academic competence and psychosocial development, were those who reported strong feelings of emotional autonomy and who described their relationship with their parents as lacking in support. These findings appeared to confirm the argument that "emotional autonomy from parents when it is accompanied by a weakened parent-adolescent relationship may bode poorly for adolescent psychological development and adjustment" (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993, p. 495). In contrast, Fuhrman and Holmbeck (1995) found that high emotional autonomy seemed to be associated with positive adjustment in less supportive family environments. This pattern was especially strong when maternal warmth was used as the index of family environment. Specifically, Fuhrman and Holmbeck found that among those dyads where mothers reported relatively low levels of warmth toward their adolescent, higher adolescent EAS scores were associated with fewer externalizing behavior problems, higher total competence scores, and higher school grades. These authors draw a tentative analogy to the deactivation of attachment behaviors seen in certain infant-parent dyads (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988) and argue that distancing oneself emotionally from parents—indeed, detaching oneself from parents—may be a strategy that can remove the adolescent psychologically from a stressful situation. Nonetheless, Fuhrman and Holmbeck suggest the following:

Even though adolescents may be advantaged in the short run if they emotionally distance themselves from stressful environments, such avoidance strategies may prove deleterious in the long run . . . particularly with respect to the quality and maintenance of future relationships. (p 806)

They go on to state,

Adolescents may also distance themselves from less optimal family environments in order to preserve their sense of self (Ryan, 1991); such distancing may be adaptive but is not likely to be facilitative of gains in self-governance (Hill & Holmbeck, 1986; Ryan, 1991). Simply put, just because a relationship strategy is adaptive does not necessarily mean that the strategy is optimal. (p. 806)

So, it appears that Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) and Fuhrman and Holmbeck (in press) do reach some consensus, at least in their final interpretations. Both research teams discuss negative outcomes of having an unsupportive family environment combined with a sense of emotional distance from parents. Whereas Lamborn and Steinberg's data implied that these negative outcomes manifest themselves during adolescence, Fuhrman and Holmbeck predict negative outcomes in the long term (and perhaps some in the short run as well).

Do feelings of emotional autonomy as measured by the EAS when combined with perceptions of parental support predict optimal adolescent adjustment and competence as Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) hypothesized? Their findings seem to suggest that "emotional autonomy in the context of a supportive adolescent-parent relationship may carry some developmental advantages as well as some deleterious consequences" (p. 483). On the positive side, the adolescents in this group—compared to their high support-low emotional autonomy peers—were generally superior with respect to academic competence and had higher (boys) or equivalent (girls) scores in the domain of psychosocial development (self-reliance, self-esteem, and work orientation). On the negative side, however, the adolescents in this group reported relatively greater negative affect (depression, anxiety) and were more likely to display problem behavior—not of the most serious sort, but including drug and alcohol use, school misconduct, and conformity to peer pressure to engage in minor antisocial behaviors. Overall, Lamborn and Steinberg's findings sug-

gest that these are youngsters who are cognitively astute, as reflected not only in school but also in their more realistic views of their parents (Holmbeck, Paikoff, & Brooks-Gunn, in press); at the same time, these youngsters seem to be susceptible to peer influence and engage in behavior that may keep them in good stead with their peer group (Brown, 1990), a pattern that is of concern to many adults. Fuhrman and Holmbeck's study similarly indicated that adolescents who experience a supportive-warm parent-adolescent relationship but who report high levels of emotional autonomy tend to engage in relatively high amounts of problem behavior. Their study did not find any of the developmental advantages noted in Lamborn and Steinberg's work.⁴

A number of issues need to be taken into account in an attempt to make sense of the findings from these two studies. One issue is whether we view the "problem behavior" seen in the adolescents who score high on both emotional autonomy and parental support as part of a normative transition (Lamborn & Steinberg, 1993) or as something of greater concern (Fuhrman & Holmbeck, 1995). Another issue to consider is the circumstances under which emotional disengagement from a stressful family environment might be beneficial. For both issues, age (or, more broadly, developmental level) may be a critical variable to take into account.

One way to decide whether a given behavior reflects a normative transition or a problem would be to consider the age of the adolescent. This is especially important because many so-called problem behaviors of adolescence (e.g., drinking) are no longer considered deviant once the adolescent reaches majority just a few years down the road. For many older adolescents, experimentation with alcohol may be a part of a package of age-appropriate steps in the psychosocial transition to adulthood (Jessor, 1982) and may serve social integration functions (Silbereisen & Noack, 1988). On the other hand, the early onset of alcohol use, especially if it serves as a means of coping, is generally indicative of a larger pattern of problem behavior and is predictive of difficulties in the years to follow (Newcomb & Bentler, 1989)—perhaps because the young person has undermined his or her opportunity to develop alternative means of reducing distress. In short, the consequences of emotional autonomy or disengagement may take on different meanings for younger and older adolescents.⁵

Age may also be a critical variable with regard to the issue of the possible positive functions of emotional disengagement. Older ado-

lescents may be more capable than younger adolescents of a proactive response to relationship problems with parents. The greater cognitive and emotional maturity of most older adolescents may enable them to establish an identity and relationships that are indeed separate from parents but that are prosocial or beneficial for their development. In contrast, younger adolescents may react to relationship problems with parents by quickly gravitating toward peers who may be experiencing similar problems and who may provide a supportive context for delinquency (see Fuligni & Eccles, 1993).

Another issue and potential source of within-group differences not discussed by either Lamborn and Steinberg or Fuhrman and Holmbeck is the EAS itself. As the work of Frank and her colleagues (1990) has suggested, the multidimensional nature of this measure must not be overlooked. It is possible, for example, that certain subscales of the measure (e.g., deidealization) reflect emotional or cognitive maturity such that high scores would predict positive outcomes, at least among older adolescents. In contrast, other subscales (e.g., individuation), particularly in early adolescence, may reflect a reactive detachment from parents such that high scores would generally predict negative outcomes. It is important to note, however, that individuals could receive the same high *total* EAS score for different reasons; for example, one high score could be due largely to the endorsement of deidealization items, whereas another could be due largely to the endorsement of individuation (detachment) items. To the extent that different subscales of the EAS reflect more positive or negative aspects of autonomy, the meaning of high total EAS scores may not be equivalent for all individuals.

Last, we must bear in mind the subtle yet important distinctions between emotional autonomy as measured by the EAS and other aspects of psychological separation and individuation that are associated more consistently with personal adjustment and academic competence. Studies on adolescent development grounded in object relations and family systems theories—that have relied on scales other than the EAS—have indicated, for example, that adolescents and young adults who seem most well-adjusted are those who maintain appropriate boundaries relative to their parents, who are willing to express needs or values that may differ from those of their parents but without fear of threatening the parent-adolescent relationship, and who are free of excessive guilt in relation to their

parents (see Cooper, Grotevant, & Condon, 1983; Frank et al., 1988; Hoffman, 1984; Moore, 1987; Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985).

Future Directions

Clearly, there are some unresolved questions with regard to emotional autonomy and its place in healthy development among adolescents. A valuable addition to the empirical literature would be long-term longitudinal studies that (a) focus on the distinctive subparts of emotional autonomy (e.g., distinguishing parental deidealization from other components); (b) consider possible curvilinear relations between emotional autonomy and adjustment; (c) look not only at the consequences but also at the precursors of high emotional autonomy scores, especially among early adolescents; and (d) discern potential differential implications of high emotional autonomy experienced continually from early through late adolescence versus high emotional autonomy experienced initially in late adolescence.

In addition, to understand emotional autonomy as well as its place in the development of adolescents and young adults, investigators need to extend their methods beyond researcher-driven questionnaire, and include in-depth interviews with young people (Cooper, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994). Interviews, if effectively conducted, may help researchers make sense of individual differences in the consequences of, and the meanings attached to, emotional autonomy among young people at different ages, from various cultural backgrounds, for males and females, and under different family circumstances. A qualitative approach will bring richness as well to recent survey data that suggest, for example, that among Indian immigrant families in the United States, adolescents who score higher on a measure of individual and family acculturation also report higher levels of emotional autonomy vis-à-vis their parents, as assessed by the EAS (Kaul, 1995). Propositions that emerge from the self-in-relation model of women's development (Surrey, 1991) and from the ecocultural model of family relations (Cooper, 1994; Weisner, Gallimore, & Jordan, 1988) are constructive starting points for future research. In short, researchers may profit most by adopting a long-range, contextual, and qualitative perspective in their future research on emotional autonomy.

STRIKING A BALANCE IN THE PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP

As the research on emotional autonomy would suggest, one of the most challenging aspects of the parent-child relationship at adolescence involves the process of establishing, maintaining, and renegotiating a healthy and age-appropriate balance of youngsters' individuality and self-reliance on the one hand, and a sense of connection and parental guidance on the other. This pervasive challenge is evidenced in the voices of parents who want to monitor their adolescent's behavior but at the same time grant decision-making privileges and promote feelings of self-reliance, and it is reflected in the desire of many parents to maintain a close relationship with their youngster but at the same time not to stifle their youngster's developing sense of self (Larson & Richards, 1994). Many contemporary researchers, whose work derives from fairly disparate theoretical roots, also recognize this challenge as a critical—even a defining—aspect of the parent-child relationship at adolescence (e.g., Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Cooper et al., 1983; Eccles et al., 1991; Humphrey, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Quintana & Lapsley, 1990; Ruebush, 1994). Although researchers have used a variety of constructs in their theoretical and empirical work in this area, they seem to maintain considerable agreement regarding the importance of striking an effective balance for youngsters' healthy development as they move through adolescence toward young adulthood.

Patterns of Parent-Adolescent Interaction: Individuality and Connectedness

A theme that permeates the recent conceptual models of family interaction and adolescent development is the importance of acknowledging and fostering the adolescent's developing sense of individuality but in a context of parent-adolescent emotional connectedness and support (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Cooper & Cooper, 1992; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Hauser et al., 1984; Hauser et al., 1991; Powers, Hauser, Schwartz, Noam, & Jacobson, 1983). Indeed, several research teams share the general guiding hypothesis that parent-adolescent interactions that encourage differentiation and an autonomous sense of self, but that also send a message of acceptance and connection, should facilitate a variety of positive outcomes in the

adolescent, including healthy identity formation, perspective-taking skills, ego development, and self-esteem. For example, Hauser and Powers and their colleagues have attempted to specify the role that family interactions play in facilitating (enabling) or inhibiting (constraining) adolescent ego development (Hauser et al., 1984; Hauser et al., 1991; Powers et al., 1983). Their work is generally based on the premise that to stimulate youngsters' ego development, parent-child interactions must combine cognitive enabling behavior (communication of different viewpoints, challenging of views, focusing, problem solving) with affective support (acceptance, empathy, encouragement of discussion). Inhibiting interactions, according to these researchers, include those in which parents actively resist their child's differentiation (through devaluing, distortion, and avoidance), especially in the context of affective conflict.

Hauser's and Powers's empirical work provides support for these hypotheses. For example, in a structured interactional study of 14-year-old to 15-year-old adolescents and their parents, Powers et al. (1983) found that adolescent ego development was most advanced when families exhibited a high amount of noncompetitive sharing of perspectives or challenging behavior within a context of high affective support. Somewhat less advanced youngsters experienced sharing of perspectives in their family interactions as well; however, this was combined with high amounts of avoidance (perhaps indicating that family members felt uneasy about openly dealing with differences of opinion). Families whose youngsters were least advanced in ego development were most likely to exhibit high amounts of task rejection and distortion within a context of affective conflict. In short, in these latter families, opportunities for the sharing of alternative viewpoints and noncompetitive challenging or differentiation were denied.

Although the pattern of findings in Powers et al.'s (1983) work seems rather compelling, there remains a question of whether adolescent males and females benefit from a similar combination of overt affective support and encouragement of individuality. In fact, both additional analyses of the Hauser-Powers cross-sectional data set (Powers, Beardslee, Jacobson, & Noam, 1987) and analyses of a 4-year longitudinal follow-up (Leaper et al., 1989) point to possible differences in family interactions that appear to facilitate healthy ego development in adolescent males and females. Unfortunately, these two reports yielded conflicting results regarding the relative benefi-

cial effects of the encouragement of individuality and overt affective support for the two sexes. Thus, future research that focuses on potential differences in facilitative family interaction for males and females—and that is grounded in theory (e.g., self-in-relation theory discussed in Jordan et al., 1991)—is clearly warranted (see, however, Allen et al., 1994).

Aside from this unresolved issue, recent longitudinal data begin to reveal the full import of Hauser and Powers's earlier cross-sectional results (Hauser et al., 1991; Hauser, Powers, Noam, & Bowlds, 1987). More specifically, by assessing the stage of adolescent ego development annually over 4 years (beginning at age 14), Hauser and his colleagues were able to map ego development *trajectories*—early arrested, consistent, precociously advanced, and progressive—and the antecedent family interactional patterns that appear to contribute to these various developmental paths. Analyses revealed that adolescents who subsequently showed trajectories of progressive ego development had parents who engaged in a good deal of cognitive and affective enabling. Parents in these families seemed to permit, encourage, and accept the expression of multiple perspectives or points of view, including the point of view of their adolescent.

In a separate program of research, Grotevant and Cooper (1986) have outlined a model of adolescent development that highlights the facilitative role of individuation in family dyadic relationships (Cooper, 1994; Cooper et al., 1983). According to this model, an individuated relationship is one that displays a balance between individuality and emotional connectedness. "Individuality involves processes that reflect the distinctiveness of 'self' whereas 'connectedness' involves processes that link the self to others" (Cooper, 1994). Using this model as a conceptual framework, Grotevant and Cooper developed a four-part system for coding family communication patterns. In their system, individuality is reflected in expressions of *separateness* (expressions of differentness of self from others) and *self-assertion* (expressions of one's own point of view), whereas connectedness is reflected in *mutuality* (being sensitive to and respectful of others' ideas) and *permeability* (expressing openness and responsiveness to others' views).

The results from Grotevant and Cooper's observational study of high school seniors and their families provide support for the view that an effective combination of cohesion and separation in family

relationships is associated with adolescent identity exploration and perspective-taking skills (Cooper et al., 1983; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). In general, "adolescents rated highest in both identity exploration and role-taking skill were found to have participated with at least one parent in an individuated relationship . . . examining their differences but within the context of connectedness" (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986, p. 92). The specific pattern of results, however, was complicated enough to underscore the importance of examining individuation at the level of particular dyads within the family (including the marital dyad) and of considering differences in communication patterns that are predictive of competence in males and females during adolescence.

It should be noted that the families who participated in the studies described above were European Americans. In her more recent work using self-report and focus group techniques, Cooper (1994) has begun to identify differing patterns of connectedness and individuality in parent-adolescent dyads across various ethnic groups living in the United States. Among her findings, she notes that "overall, Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, and Vietnamese descent adolescents saw themselves, their parents, and grandparents as placing greater value than European American adolescents on norms of support and the use of family for advice". A question to be tested empirically is whether different mixtures of individuality and connectedness in the mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationship are beneficial to adolescents from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In summary, it appears that adolescents (at least European American adolescents) thrive in families where the emotional climate is generally one of acceptance and support but where, at the same time, differentiation is encouraged and the expression of one's own point of view is permitted. Josselson (1988) captured this view of adolescence and the family well by using Mahler's concept of *rapprochement*, initially used to describe development during toddlerhood (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). As Josselson (1988) states,

Rapprochement is about preserving bonds of relationship in the presence of increasing autonomy. . . . The adolescent, as much as the toddler, brings [his or her] new ideas and [his or her] new ways of being home, to be recognized in the context of ongoing connection, to bring the relationship up to date. (pp. 94-95)

Decision Making and the Family

Fulgini and Eccles (1993) capture the adolescent's view in this challenge of parenting when they noted that "most early adolescents do not wish to withdraw completely from their relationships with their parents. Instead, they want greater control over their lives and their personal decision making" (p. 623). Stated alternatively, what adolescents seem to desire is greater self-governance or independence. In the context of research on family relations at adolescence, several investigators have, in fact, conceptualized autonomy as adolescents' participation in decision making regarding matters that concern both the self (e.g., what clothes to wear, when to go to sleep) and the family as a whole (e.g., whether to attend a family function).

A number of studies in this body of literature confirm that as youngsters progress through adolescence, they desire greater say in such day-to-day matters (Eccles et al., 1993; Smetana, 1988a, 1988b). This desire seems to be facilitated or provoked by a host of converging factors that fit well into Hill's (1973) model of adolescent development. First, as youngsters experience the physical changes of puberty, they see themselves as more deserving of the privilege of decision making, which may have been largely the domain of their parents in prior years (Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1990). Second, more advanced cognitive abilities, including the capacity to engage in more adultlike reasoning and abstract thought, lead not only to improved abilities to make decisions but also to increased questioning of the legitimacy of parental control and parental rules over certain issues (Laursen & Collins, 1988; Smetana, 1988b). Third, increased amounts of time spent with peers, common to the period of adolescence, afford youngsters more opportunities to experience symmetry with respect to interpersonal power and authority in their relationships. These experiences outside the home may prompt adolescents to expect something similar in the context of family life (Eccles et al., 1993; Hill & Holmbeck, 1987). Last, cultural beliefs common to many Americans carry the notion that adolescence is a time of practice for adult roles, including responsible decision making (Bellah et al., 1985); adolescents are as, if not more, likely than their parents to embrace this idea (Collins, 1990).

Although youngsters tend to desire greater participation or freedom with respect to decision making as they move into and through adolescence, their desires do not always mesh well with those of their

parents (Collins, 1990; Eccles et al., 1993; Feldman & Quatman, 1988; Holmbeck & O'Donnell, 1991); this mismatch is a major contributor to the challenge of parenting. Smetana's (1988a, 1988b, 1989) influential program of research has shown, for example, that whereas parents (especially mothers) tend to view a wide range of issues and topics as matters legitimately subject to at least some parental say throughout adolescence, young people over the course of adolescence perceive more and more matters as personal and as rightly and solely under their own decision-making jurisdiction. Smetana has found that this discrepancy in beliefs regarding legitimate authority, especially as it manifests itself in early and middle adolescence, appears to be associated with parent-adolescent conflict. This finding coincides well with Collins's (1990) work that suggests that families are especially vulnerable to conflict in early to middle adolescence—a time when parents' expectancies and ideal timetables for adolescent behavior, including decision-making participation, are most likely to be violated or challenged.

It is interesting that research indicates that conflicts over the balance of autonomy and control that do emerge present a stressful challenge to parents and their own sense of self and well-being (Silverberg, *in press*; Silverberg & Steinberg, 1987; Small, Eastman, & Cornelius, 1988; Steinberg & Steinberg, 1994); this is especially true for mothers and for parents who do not have strong psychological investments in extrafamilial roles. Nonetheless, conflict over issues of autonomy and control in an otherwise supportive environment may initiate a process of negotiation, leading eventually to concessions on the part of both parent and child and to a realignment of parental expectations for adolescent autonomous behavior (Collins, 1990; Cooper, 1988). Although not true in all families, many parents do "recognize their children's heightened skills and developmental needs and begin to relax their earlier restrictions and provide more opportunities for independence and involvement in decision making" (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993, p. 623)—that is, strike a new balance in the relationship with their adolescent.

In short, when there is a mismatch between adolescents' desire for decision-making autonomy and parents' willingness to grant such autonomy, the most common scenario is that adolescents desire greater autonomy than they are granted. Research reveals, however, that there are instances in which the tables are turned, and parents expect rather competent and autonomous decision making across a

range of issues on the part of their young adolescent, or even preadolescent, due to factors such as the social stimulus value of early pubertal maturation (Holmbeck et al., in press), family unemployment (Flanagan, 1990), or a recent shift in the household from a two-parent to a single-parent family structure (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1990). In addition, recent research has suggested that certain handicapping conditions and chronic illnesses may influence the strength and timing of adolescents' desire for independence in the areas of decision making and supervision as well as parents' expectations and willingness to grant autonomy in these areas. Considerable variation in findings across studies involving adolescents with special needs highlights the importance of taking into account the specific health problems of adolescents and the differential effects these may have on the parent-adolescent relationship with regard to autonomy (see Holmbeck, Faier-Routman, Willis, & McLone, 1994; Murtaugh & Zetlin, 1988). Last, research comparing youngsters from nations and ethnic backgrounds that seem to vary with respect to the value placed on individualism reveals the significance of cultural attitudes in youngsters' and parents' expectations for independent decision making on the part of the adolescents (Cooper, 1994; Feldman & Quatman, 1988; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991; Poole, Cooney, & Cheong, 1986).⁶

Benefits of Decision-Making Involvement

Although the research literature on parenting practices and adolescent behavior indicates that parents should be involved in their youngster's daily life, monitor their youngster's whereabouts and activities to a certain degree, and maintain reasonable guidelines for behavior throughout adolescence (Fulgini & Eccles, 1993; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Silverberg & Small, 1995; Steinberg, 1986), studies also suggest that a variety of favorable outcomes are associated with granting decision-making opportunities to teens. For example, Holmbeck and O'Donnell (1991) found that adolescents who were involved in decision making in their families displayed increases in self-concept over time; in contrast, those adolescents whose parents were unwilling to grant them opportunities for autonomous decision making experienced decreases in self-concept over time.

Opportunities for decision making in the family also appear to have implications for young adolescents' relationships with peers

and parents. For example, in a 1-year longitudinal study that followed youngsters from sixth grade to seventh grade, Fuligni and Eccles (1993) found that those youngsters who perceived few opportunities to be involved in decision making, and no increase in these opportunities over time, showed an increased tendency to seek out advice from their peers as opposed to their parents about personal and future issues. Those teens who perceived not only limited opportunities for decision-making involvement but also increases in parental strictness were those most likely to be extreme in their peer orientation, endorsing items such as "It's okay to let your schoolwork slip or get a low grade to be popular with your friends" and "It's okay to break some of your parents' rules to keep your friends." Although the issue of direction of influence could not be fully addressed in their study, Fuligni and Eccles proposed that adolescents who are not granted decision-making opportunities and who perceive parental domination may be especially attracted to the peer group and even be willing to forego important responsibilities to maintain a connection to the peer group—a context in which these adolescents may perceive greater chances for "mutual and egalitarian interactions" (p. 628) and validation of their opinions and ideas. In short, for these youngsters, the peer group may provide a better "stage-environment" or need-context fit than might their families (Eccles et al., 1993).

Last, analyses of a nationally representative, longitudinal data set indicated that those adolescents (aged 11-16) who were involved in family decision making—adolescents who had some input into family rules, who made decisions regarding many of their own daily activities (e.g., buying clothes, regulating television watching), and whose parents talked over important decisions with them—were those who, 6 years later (aged 18-22), showed the greatest parent-adolescent attitude similarity across a wide variety of basic values on topics such as sex roles, marriage and divorce, and welfare (Brody, Moore, & Gleib, 1994). This similarity may be due to a combination of factors. According to Brody and colleagues, decision-making involvement "enhances an adolescent's willing acceptance of, rather than forced compliance with, parental attitudes and values" (pp. 369-370). Moreover,

Involvement in the mutual give and take that characterizes the decision-making process provides the adolescent with an opportunity to learn about the parents' point of view. . . . Encouraging adolescents'

participation in decision making also *acknowledges their developing individuality and autonomy*. [Italics added] It communicates to adolescents that *their points of view are legitimate*, [Italics added] and that they deserve to be treated more like adults than like children. (p. 373)

Thus, the research on decision-making involvement brings us back to the theme of individuality and connectedness. It offers further evidence that parent-adolescent interactions that Hauser and his colleagues would describe as enabling and that Cooper and Grotevant would describe as individuated provide a supportive base from which adolescents can develop positive feelings about themselves and their parents as well as the foundations for responsible, independent action.

Future Directions

Although we have a growing body of literature that confirms the beneficial effects of fostering a sense of individuality and decision-making opportunities in the context of ongoing, supportive parent-adolescent relationships, almost all of the empirical work has involved samples of middle-class European American families (see Cooper, 1994, for a notable exception). Future research in the area of renegotiating patterns of individuality and connectedness at adolescence must not only be broader with respect to the composition of study samples, it must also recognize the likely diversity of goals, meanings, and opportunities held by young people and parents from different backgrounds. Second, although existing research samples have included both male and female adolescents, there is some inconsistency regarding the pattern of mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relations that best fits the needs of boys and girls. Because we know from Larson and Richards's (1994) recent time-sampling study of emotions that some adolescent girls are dissatisfied with the ways that their fathers express closeness or connectedness—through teasing and joking—researchers should make efforts to examine boys' and girls' emotional reactions to mothers' and fathers' attempts at encouraging individuality. Not only may parents use different approaches when interacting with sons and daughters, but sons and daughters may attach different meanings to similar interaction patterns (see Gjerde, 1986).

Last, it is somewhat surprising to realize that we know very little about the determinants of an individuated parent-adolescent relationship. Belsky's (1984) model of the determinants of parenting would be a useful starting point for future research in this area. Belsky's model recognizes the delicate interplay of three factors: parents' personal resources (e.g., mental health, flexibility), child characteristics (e.g., temperament), and social sources of support and stress (e.g., marital relations, employment, and social network). Other theoretical models may also be useful in future research endeavors in this domain. For example, a symbolic interactionism framework (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993) would call for the study of both intrapersonal processes (e.g., parents' cognitions, attributions, and expectations about adolescence and adolescents' behavior) and sociocultural influences (e.g., ethnicity, immigration history, socioeconomic opportunities and constraints).

AUTONOMY AND THE CONTEXTS OF SCHOOL AND WORK

As a social phenomenon (e.g., resistance to peer pressure, reasonable independence in the family, development of responsible autonomy in the workplace), autonomy is influenced by the opportunities and boundaries of social organizations and contexts. Indeed, in recognizing the shortcomings of the extant scholarship in 1973, Hill stated, "Obviously, these sets of [psychosocial] variables [e.g., autonomy] are only analytically separable from the roles the adolescent plays" (p. 30), and that,

To the extent that "inner" perspectives predominate, then, the impact of social institutions, roles, and organizations upon behavior and development are given short shrift in both policy-making and scientific investigation. . . . Very little is known in much beyond anecdotal ways about the impact of various social organizations, particularly schools and work settings, upon development and behavior in the adolescent period. (p. 11)

School

Of the main contexts of adolescent development, Hill (1983) believed that school was the one most neglected by researchers. At that

time, he called for increased attention to the school setting, stating, "I view the conceptualization and measurement of schools as environments for development as our most pressing need" (p. 15). Part of the urgency in examining the school context stemmed from the emerging consensus that the United States's secondary schools were failing to meet the developmental needs of most adolescents, especially in regard to autonomy. If as a nation, we depended on our secondary schools to help socialize adolescents toward responsible independence, Hill (1973) believed we were in trouble. As he noted then,

Friedenberg (1963) has been especially forceful in arguing that the typical high school fosters acquiescence rather than autonomy. The preoccupation with matters of control—often over the most petty matters—is extreme. (It must be noted, however, that the information we have on this point is largely unsystematic and informal, even if uniform.) It is unlikely that the high schools socialize for autonomy for any but a few students. Indeed it is widely held that they punish autonomy and positively reinforce a childlike passivity and obedience to external authority. (p. 40)

Since the late 1970s, researchers have devoted more attention to describing the features of U.S. junior and senior high schools and to relating these features to the psychosocial development of adolescents (for a review, see Entwisle, 1990). Of most relevance to Hill's comments and to the present chapter, Eccles and colleagues have focused on the fit between the needs and capacities of early adolescents and the opportunities available to them within the typical junior high school. These authors contend that some of the negative school-related outcomes that often accompany the junior high transition, such as decreased intrinsic motivation and loss of interest in school, may be in part the result of a poor fit between early adolescents and the junior high school environment. More specifically, Eccles and colleagues contend that although early adolescents prefer increasing autonomy in regard to classroom decision making and self-management, junior high school classrooms, as compared to elementary school classrooms, actually reflect decreased opportunities for youngsters to participate in decisions about classroom activities (Midgley & Feldlaufer, 1987) and increased teacher control and discipline (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1988). According to these

authors, the lack of fit is one feature of the typical junior high school environment that may lead to motivational deficits, such as diminished intrinsic interest in academics. In contrast, an environment in which early adolescents are allowed to exercise autonomy in developmentally appropriate ways may be more likely to foster interest in, and involvement with, schoolwork.

To test their model of developmental mismatch at early adolescence, Eccles and colleagues conducted a longitudinal study that followed adolescents as they moved from sixth grade in an elementary school to seventh grade in a junior high school. As part of the data collection, students were asked to rate the degree to which they were allowed to have input into decisions regarding classroom structure and class work (e.g., seating arrangements, homework, class rules, and the sequence of class activities). The students were also asked whether they should have input into decisions about structure and class work. As the researchers expected, students reported that there was less opportunity for participation in decision making at the seventh-grade than at the sixth-grade level. Also as predicted, adolescents reported an increase in the desire for classroom autonomy from the sixth to the seventh grade. Thus, the discrepancy between students' desired and perceived involvement in decision making increased as these students made the transition from elementary school to junior high school.

In addition to desiring greater classroom autonomy as a function of increasing grade level, Eccles et al. (1993) reported that adolescents desired greater autonomy as a function of increasing physical maturation. Among junior high school students, for example, the more physically mature girls expressed a greater desire for involvement in classroom decisions than did the less mature girls. When the perceptions of the more and less physically mature girls were compared, however, it was the less mature girls who actually perceived greater opportunity for classroom decision making. Even more compelling, the early maturing girls felt that their decision-making input decreased over the school year, whereas the late maturing girls in the same classrooms felt that their decision-making input increased.

Why was the discrepancy between desired and perceived classroom autonomy larger for early maturing girls as compared to their on-time and late maturing peers? Furthermore, why did the early maturing girls perceive less opportunity for autonomy as the school year progressed? Eccles et al. (1993) suggested that the differences

between early maturing and late maturing girls could reflect differences in the ways that these youngsters perceived the classroom environment, differences in the ways that more or less mature adolescents were treated by teachers, or some combination of both factors. For example, as part of the changing self-definitions that accompany the physical changes of puberty (Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1990), early maturing girls may come to see themselves as more adultlike and thus deserving of more "say" in their day-to-day activities. Moreover, we do have some evidence to suggest that in the months following menarche, early adolescent girls perceive parents as less accepting and more controlling (Hill & Holmbeck, 1987); perhaps postmenarcheal girls develop similar perceptions of their teachers—something that would be especially apparent in early maturing girls at the start of seventh grade. It is possible, as well, that teachers may be concerned about being able to control the more adult-looking, early maturing girls and so may restrict these students more, rather than encouraging self-direction. Teachers may also worry about early maturing girls becoming more interested in peer relationships, especially interactions with boys, and so may exert more control over early maturing girls as a means of keeping them focused on academics. Unfortunately, this exertion of control may have the effect of undermining early maturing girls' intrinsic motivation and interest in school. Although these possibilities are intriguing, more research, including observational studies of teacher-student interaction, is needed to evaluate them.

It may also be worthwhile to broaden the scope of the inquiry to boys. In their review of their research program, Eccles et al. (1993) did not mention whether boys' maturation had an effect on desired and perceived classroom autonomy. Like early maturing girls, early maturing boys may desire greater classroom autonomy. Contrary to their female peers, however, early maturing boys may actually be granted more autonomy in the classroom because their more adult male appearance may be especially consistent with teachers' expectations for leadership and independence. There is some suggestion, for example, that adults may have higher expectations for early maturing boys in regard to responsibility and independence (Livson & Peskin, 1980). Thus, on the one hand, teachers may grant early maturing boys more classroom autonomy as part of greater expectations for mature behavior. On the other hand, early maturing boys have been characterized as acting out more than their late maturing

or on-time-maturing peers, both in school and in nonschool contexts (Duncan, Ritter, Dornbusch, Gross, & Carlsmith, 1985). Given these findings, one would expect that teachers would be more concerned about controlling the behavior of early maturing boys. Clearly, more research is needed to investigate the potential interactive effects of adolescent gender and maturational status on teacher perception and behavior.

To summarize to this point, Eccles and colleagues have empirical support for their notion that there is often a mismatch between early adolescents' desires for classroom autonomy and the opportunities for classroom autonomy available to them. What about the second part of their theory? Does the discrepancy between perceived and desired classroom autonomy actually lead to decreases in intrinsic interest in schoolwork? Preliminary data reported by MacIver and Reuman (1988) suggest that it does. These authors charted changes in intrinsic interest in math among students making the transition from sixth grade to seventh grade. For a portion of the sample, a mismatch occurred between desired and perceived opportunities for autonomy in math classrooms such that desires for classroom autonomy increased, whereas perceived opportunities for autonomy decreased across the transition to seventh grade. Those students who experienced this type of mismatch were found to have the most consistent and substantial declines in intrinsic interest in math when compared to students who did not experience a mismatch or students who perceived more opportunities for classroom autonomy than they desired. Thus, exposure to what Eccles et al. (1993) have called a *developmentally regressive* environment was associated with the predicted declines in intrinsic interest in schoolwork.

Future Directions

The research by Eccles and her colleagues has made important inroads into questions regarding students' perceptions of autonomy in the context of school and the relationships between these perceptions and student motivation and interest. Nevertheless, more observational research of student-teacher interaction is needed to clarify the connections between youngsters' maturational status and opportunities for classroom autonomy. In addition, more attention needs to be directed toward understanding the forces that constrain opportunities for reasonable autonomy in junior high school. The typical

U.S. junior high school is characterized by large class size, departmentalized teaching, normative grading, and tracking (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Junior high school teachers—like other adults in contemporary U.S. society—also appear to hold negative attitudes and stereotypes about early adolescents, including the view that young teens are more moody, unpredictable, and unreachable than younger children (Buchanan et al., 1990; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). The institutional characteristics of the junior high, combined with negative attitudes about young adolescents, may undermine a teacher's sense of efficacy and motivation, leading to an emphasis on control of students rather than on promotion of reasonable autonomy (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Eccles et al., 1993). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) has recommended a number of changes in the junior high environment that may facilitate the promotion of autonomy, including the creation of smaller learning communities within the school (e.g., work groups and teams), the elimination of tracking, and special training and empowerment of teachers who work with early adolescents. Program evaluation research is needed to determine whether these kinds of changes help teachers develop and maintain a high level of efficacy and motivation and whether this, in turn, promotes a sense of "shared community" (Eccles et al., 1993, p. 95) for both teachers and students and greater involvement on the part of youngsters in their day-to-day education.

Of course, the classroom is a hierarchical setting in which adolescents and their adult teachers do not have equal power and authority. Perhaps researchers should thus look beyond the classroom to school-based extracurricular activities that may afford adolescents opportunities for self-direction and decision making. As nonclassroom activities are explored by researchers, however, several important issues should be considered. First, researchers should remember that not all students have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, especially in large schools in which there is greater competition for relatively few positions on sports teams and other performance-oriented activities and in large families where the adolescent's help at home or afterschool earnings are needed. Second, researchers would do well to consider that many school-based activities and clubs are organized and controlled by adults rather than by students. Last, researchers should keep in mind that even student-

run clubs and activities may actually encourage conformity to peers rather than self-direction and independent decision making—that is, autonomy.

Workplace

Much of what we know about the features and effects of adolescent employment is based on research conducted by Greenberger, Steinberg, and colleagues (e.g., Greenberger & Steinberg, 1981, 1986; Steinberg, Greenberger, Garduque, Ruggiero, & Vaux, 1982). In their research, these authors have investigated the effects of working on adolescent psychosocial competence, including psychological well-being, family and peer relationships, school involvement, problem behavior, attitudes about work, and, most relevant to the present chapter, autonomy-related variables, such as self-reliance and decision-making freedom within the family. Findings from this research program suggest that the effects of work on adolescent development are variable. The effects of work seem to depend on what outcome variables are considered, on whether employment status or hours of work are considered, and, in some cases, on the gender of the adolescent worker.

A short-term longitudinal study that followed first-time workers for 1 year (Steinberg et al., 1982) indicated that for girls, hours worked were positively associated with scores on a measure of self-reliance, which included items pertaining to initiative and absence of excessive dependence on others (Greenberger et al., 1974). In contrast, number of hours worked was associated with lower self-reliance scores among boys, especially for those boys who worked a substantial number of hours per week. The effect of work on adolescents' autonomy within the family also varied according to gender. For girls, being employed had a negative effect on scores on a multifaceted measure of parent-adolescent closeness; that is, over the 12-month period, girls who worked reported decreased emotional closeness to parents and were less likely to turn to parents to discuss problems. In contrast, for boys, being employed was associated with increased emotional closeness to parents and a greater frequency of turning to parents to discuss problems. Examination of parent-adolescent closeness as a function of hours worked (rather than work status per se) revealed a richer pattern of findings. For both boys and girls, working a limited number of hours was associated with in-

creased closeness; for girls who spent a great deal of time in the workplace, perceived closeness to parents decreased sharply, whereas for boys, parent-adolescent closeness was positively associated with hours spent at work. In general, the pattern of findings in this study suggested that involvement in work was associated with greater autonomy for girls (as manifested in higher self-reliance scores and lower parent-adolescent closeness scores), especially if they worked long hours, whereas among boys, work involvement was associated with lower self-reliance scores and higher parent-adolescent closeness scores. In interpreting these findings, Steinberg et al. (1982) suggested that girls may gain in self-reliance through work because employment is less expected for girls. According to the authors,

For girls, entering the labor force at an early age represents, in some respects, a departure from the expectations placed on them by significant others. In contrast, for boys, taking on a job is more consistent with social expectations and with socialization for adulthood. Thus, working may be viewed as an act of independence for girls but an act of conformity for boys. (p. 394)

Follow-up studies to the Steinberg et al. (1982) study have produced somewhat inconsistent findings. A cross-sectional study with a larger, more heterogeneous sample (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991), for example, indicated that employment was not associated with self-reliance, either for boys or girls. Consistent with the findings from the Steinberg et al. (1982) research, longer work hours were associated with greater autonomy from parents; however, this occurred for both boys and girls. More specifically, youngsters who worked more hours each week spent less time in family activities, were monitored less closely by their parents, and perceived higher levels of decision-making freedom in regard to day-to-day issues (e.g., curfew, money management, leisure activities).

A mixture of consistent and contradictory results were again found in a more recent longitudinal follow-up (Steinberg et al., 1993). Consistent with findings from the previous studies, involvement in work was associated with higher levels of adolescent decision-making autonomy in the family. More specifically, nonworkers who began extensive involvement in the labor force (at more than 20 hours per week) reported greater decision-making autonomy than their peers who remained nonemployed during the study's 1-year interval. In

contrast to Steinberg and Dornbusch's (1991) findings, working long hours was associated with self-reliance for both boys and girls, such that extensive work hours were associated with *lower* self-reliance scores. Even more intriguing, an interaction indicated that the negative effect of employment status (employed versus nonemployed) on self-reliance was especially true among girls—a finding that was directly opposite to that reported by Steinberg et al. (1982). It is interesting that results of analyses focused on potential selection effects indicated that autonomy can also be considered an independent variable that predicts future behavior. For example, the results indicated that nonworkers who joined the labor force as the study progressed were granted more decision-making freedom by parents and experienced lower levels of parental monitoring *before* employment than did nonworkers who remained unemployed. Thus, although involvement in work appeared to increase youngsters' autonomy in the family, being granted more autonomy by parents also appeared to facilitate the movement into the labor force.

Future Directions

The research to date has yielded inconsistent findings about the effect of working on adolescent self-reliance and autonomy vis-à-vis parents. The inconsistencies do not appear to be the result of poorly designed studies; the extant research appears to be well designed, with large, heterogeneous samples and cross-sectional and longitudinal data collection. Perhaps a more consistent relationship between workplace involvement and self-reliance would be obtained if the measures of self-reliance were expanded to include specific behavioral indicators of self-reliance (see Feldman & Wood, 1994) as well as a subjective sense of autonomy. For example, a stronger relationship might emerge between work involvement and behaviors such as taking care of possessions, taking responsibility for one's own schedule and time management, and other details of life, such as getting one's own meals and obtaining needed items.

The existing research might also be expanded by determining whether the effect of employment on adolescent self-reliance and responsible independence is moderated by youngsters' perceptions of the costs and benefits of their jobs. Mortimer, Finch, Shanahan, and Ryu (1992), for example, reported that for ninth-graders, employment was positively associated with various indexes of mental health

and behavioral adjustment if the adolescents believed that their jobs offered skill training that would be useful in the future and especially for girls, if the jobs were perceived as not interfering with schoolwork. Based on the Mortimer et al. finding, future research may find that employment fosters self-reliance and other indicators of autonomy for those adolescents who believe that their current jobs provide important training for their future occupations and are complementary to their school performance. If this moderator effect holds, then those youngsters who may be most likely to benefit from working during adolescence may be those who participate in apprenticeship programs—training for occupations they intend to pursue as adults—as is the case for large numbers of teens in European countries (Hamilton, 1987; Smith & Rojewski, 1993).

DECISION-MAKING COMPETENCE AND ADOLESCENT LEGAL RIGHTS: AUTONOMY AS SELF-GOVERNANCE

When autonomy is defined as *self-governance*, questions regarding the legal rights and status of adolescents naturally surface. As the U.S. system stands today, adolescents' legal rights to self-governance are restricted in many ways. The paradox, noted by Hill and Holmbeck (1986), is that

We continue to associate adolescence with independence-striving, yet the emergence of adolescence—conceptually by Hall (1904) and operationally through policies regarding work, education, and justice, for example (Bakan, 1972; Hill & Monks, 1977)—is historically yoked to a monumental preoccupation with protectiveness. (p. 147)

In fact, it is not until they reach adulthood or legal majority that individuals are granted certain constitutional rights. These rights hold the adult individual as a full and autonomous member of the community (Melton, 1983)—someone who is permitted to consent or refuse medical treatment and mental health interventions for themselves, to elect to terminate a pregnancy through abortion without parental notification, and so on.⁷ The explicit justification that is offered for restricting the legal rights of adolescents most often rests on the argument or assumption that adolescents are not competent in deci-

sion making. In fact, in 1979, Chief Justice Burger of the U.S. Supreme Court maintained that "most children, even in adolescence, simply are not able to make sound judgments concerning many decisions, including their need for medical care or treatment. Parents can and must make those judgments" (quoted in Melton, 1983, p. 100).

Decision-Making Competence: Adolescents and Adults

Several authors have questioned the fundamental assumption that adolescents are in fact less competent decision makers than adults and thus have questioned public policies that restrict adolescents' rights and that make adolescents dependent on others to make critical decisions for them (Lewis, 1987; Melton, 1983; Quadrel, Fischhoff, & Davis, 1993; Tremper & Kelly, 1987). In a brief review of the psychological research literature through 1983, Melton concluded that "for most purposes, adolescents cannot be distinguished from adults on the ground of competence in decision making alone" (p. 100). He referred, for example, to Weithorn and Campbell's (1982) study in which young people 9, 14, 18, and 21 years old were presented with a series of hypothetical dilemmas about medical and psychological treatment in a laboratory situation. (See the following discussion of caveats to laboratory-based research.) The responses of the 14-year-olds did not differ from those of the 18-year-olds and 21-year-olds on a range of tests designed to measure decision-making competencies, including reasonable decision-making process and understanding of the facts. Other studies have also suggested that adolescents tend to use the same basic cognitive processes in decision making as do adults, such as identifying and weighing out alternatives and their consequences (see Fischhoff, 1992; Grisso & Vierling, 1978; Tremper & Kelly, 1987). In fact, in a recent study, a group of approximately 160 adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years, and their parents listed consequences that might follow from either taking or not taking the opportunity to engage in a risky behavior, such as a ride from friends who have been drinking (Beyth-Marom, Austin, Fischhoff, Palmgren, & Quadrel, 1993). The findings indicated that the adolescents and parents listed very similar consequences and with similar frequency.

There are some studies on decision making, however, that suggest that young adolescents—seventh and eighth graders, in particular—

are less likely than both older adolescents and adults to consider future consequences, to use information about options, to recommend consultation with specialists, and to recognize spontaneously the possible vested interests of advice givers (Gardner, Sherer, & Tester, 1989; Lewis, 1981). These deficiencies appear to be critical ones. Furthermore, research by Lewis (1981) and Weithorn and Campbell (1982) suggests that young adolescents may place more significance than appropriate on potential consequences that concern short-term issues of appearance when arriving at major decisions, at least in hypothetical situations. Youngsters in the age group from 12 to 15 could thus be viewed as in transition with respect to certain cognitive abilities essential to prudent decision making—for instance, the ability to recognize the value of objective sources of information (Lewis, 1987; Melton, 1983; see also Lewis, 1980). Moreover, there may be situational or topical variations in the quality of early adolescents' decision making. On certain topics—or with respect to certain treatment outcomes—their decision making may be less adult.

A small-scale study by Lewis (1980) on pregnancy decision-making plans of minors (17 and younger) and adults raises the possibility that adolescents often may possess decision-making competencies but may reach their decisions largely due to their social situations. In this study, conducted at the time of the pregnancy test, minors and adults did not differ with respect to knowledge of the legality and confidentiality of abortion, nor did they differ with respect to the significant others (boyfriend, peers, parents) with whom they had consulted or expected to consult about the pregnancy, nor did they differ with respect to the expectation of receiving conflicting advice from different sources.

Moreover, when presented with hypothetical situations (e.g., "Imagine someone your own age is asking your advice about what to do about her pregnancy"), minors and adults were equally likely to consider the child-raising abilities of the potential mother. Minors were, however, less likely than adults to mention child-rearing abilities when asked to give reasons for their own pregnancy decisions. In addition, they were more likely than adults to mention the effect of the decision on their family and on their parents, in particular. In many cases, the minors seemed externally compelled to accept a decision due to family influence, whereas other factors were outweighed or disregarded; they seemed to feel that they had only one realistic alternative. According to Lewis (1987),

One striking difference between minors and adults may be the influence of their social situation on pregnancy decision making. Even if minors and adults do not differ in their competence (latent ability) to imagine consequences of the pregnancy decision, they may differ in the social circumstances that permit them to apply their abilities to their own decisions. (p. 86)

One shortcoming of Lewis's 1980 study, with respect to its potential implications for granting legal rights to adolescents, is the fact that the subsample of minors was considered as an undifferentiated group, perhaps due to the study's small sample size. As a result, there was no opportunity to discover potential differences between younger and older adolescents in terms of their approach to decision making. Lewis's (1981) laboratory research suggests that there may indeed be important age differences in decision-making process during the adolescent years, including increases in the likelihood of thinking through future consequences and of using objective sources of information.

Peer-Parent Influence

It is interesting that it was parental influence and not peer influence that seemed to drive many of the minors' decisions in Lewis's (1980) pregnancy study. This pattern is consistent with the developmental literature on vulnerability to social (peer) influence—another reason that could be offered to restrict adolescents' rights as autonomous decision makers. Although it is widely assumed that adolescents tend to follow peer dictates, the existing research would suggest that on major decisions, most adolescents do not, at least once they reach middle adolescence (age 16 or 17 years) when major decisions are more likely to present themselves (Lewis, 1987). Self-report studies indicate that conformity to peer influence seems to peak during early adolescence (about eighth grade) and tends to decline thereafter (Berndt, 1979; Brown, 1990; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Moreover, like Lewis's study, Rosen's (1980) research also indicates that most adolescents tend to involve their parents in major decisions even when they are not obligated to do so by law. In his study of pregnant women under age 18 living in Michigan (where legal, low-cost outpatient abortion was available to minors without the requirement of parental consent or notification), 57% of the adolescents involved

their parents in the decision regarding pregnancy continuation or termination. In fact, most of the adolescents in the study reported that influence of mothers was greater than that of girlfriends or of male partners (the exception was among the sample's European American adolescents who planned to keep their children and to remain single). Although some research suggests that only a minority of women under age 18 notify their parents of their plans for abortion, it appears that younger minors (i.e., age 15 years and younger) are those most likely to involve parents in an abortion decision (Clary, 1982; Torres, Forrest, & Eisman, 1980).

Risk-Taking Behavior

It is very likely that the risk-taking behavior of some adolescents, such as reckless driving, unprotected sex, and decisions to drink, so often discussed in the media, has also influenced the reasoning of policymakers to restrict the legal rights of teens as a whole. If adolescents cannot make so-called rational choices in these areas, the argument may be, how can they be trusted to make competent decisions with respect to medical or psychological treatments for themselves? First, it may be important to point out that it is unlikely that individuals—adolescents or adults—always use a rational process in arriving at their decisions, whether those decisions concern drinking or financial investments (Quadrel et al., 1993; Steinberg, 1993). Second, as described above, research suggests that once most teens reach middle adolescence (age 16), they seem to apply similar decision-making processes as do adults when asked to consider issues such as medical and psychological interventions. Last, the risk-taking behaviors commonly associated with adolescence seem to entail choices that are most likely to be subject to peer influence, such as perceptions of how one will be judged for not taking a drink at a party (see Beyth-Marom et al., 1993).

Even with these points in mind, the relatively high rate of risk-taking behavior on the part of many adolescents clearly presents a special challenge to policymakers. Choice of policy seems to depend in part on political values, such as the degree of importance one places on individual autonomy and protection, as well as on beliefs regarding adolescents' general abilities to regulate and manage certain personal decisions (Quadrel et al., 1993). An empirical basis for understanding adolescent risk behavior can help policymakers decide whether it is

valid to use such behavior as a justification for restricting the general legal rights of teenagers.

One widely cited explanation for adolescent risk-taking behavior is that adolescents ignore, or greatly underestimate, the likelihood that harmful outcomes would affect them—that adolescents view themselves as invulnerable to potential negative consequences and as a result, focus only on the benefits of risk behaviors (Quadrel et al., 1993). The notion that adolescents are especially susceptible to feelings of invulnerability or are especially likely to hold an optimistic bias has been discussed in the theoretical work of Elkind (1967) under the rubric of adolescent egocentrism and in particular, the personal fable. Quadrel et al. (1993) note that, "if it could be demonstrated [empirically] that adolescents were uniquely afflicted by such an exaggerated sense of personal invulnerability, then a stronger case could be made for restricting their freedom" (p. 111).

It is interesting that there is little empirical evidence to support the suggestion that perceived invulnerability (or at least an optimistic bias) is especially high during adolescence (for a review, see Quadrel et al., 1993). In a recent study, for example, Quadrel and her colleagues compared adults and teens (aged 11-18 years) on perceived vulnerability across a wide range of events (e.g., unplanned pregnancy, auto accident injury, alcohol dependency, sickness from air pollution). In general, the authors found that adults and teens seem to use similar, somewhat biased psychological processes in estimating their vulnerability. The most common pattern in the findings for both adults and adolescents was to see no difference between one's own level of risk and that of others; when differences were perceived, both adults and adolescents were likely to see themselves as facing somewhat less risk or vulnerability than others. In short, adolescents did not seem to hold especially exaggerated beliefs of their own invulnerability. Unfortunately, the age range of the adolescents in this study was wide, and the researchers did not analyze whether response patterns differed systematically as a function of adolescent age.

Caveats for Decision-Making and Risk-Taking Research

There are some important caveats to consider with respect to the external validity and generalizability of studies on perceived risk and decision making (Quadrel et al., 1993). In most research in this area,

investigators rely on paper-and-pencil tests, present hypothetical situations, and administer their questionnaires in schoollike or laboratory settings. Participants are thus isolated from social pressures that are likely to accompany actual decision making. Not all researchers agree, however, on whether such research conditions enhance or diminish decision-making performance or whether the conditions affect adolescents and adults in similar ways. Quadrel et al. also raise the question of whether "similar performance deficits have similar consequences for adults and adolescents" (p. 114). This is a critical question when one considers possible policy implications for limiting adolescents' rights and advocating protective measures.

Summary

The evidence available to date suggests that adolescents—at least once they reach age 16—have acquired a host of critical decision-making skills that are comparable to those of adults. Prior to age 16, most teens display a good number of deficiencies in their decision-making skills, although this may vary with topic or situation; for example, early adolescents are less likely to consider future consequences and to recommend consultation with specialists when arriving at major decisions. Second, field research, which tends to focus on females, further suggests that adolescents often involve their parents, especially their mothers, in their decisions; and, in arriving at certain major decisions, mothers' influence seems to be more salient than that of peers. Because part of responsible decision making entails a sense of when it is appropriate to turn to others—including parents, peers, and nonfamilial adults—for input (Baltes & Silverberg, 1994; Ryan & Lynch, 1989), this is a notable finding. Third, laboratory-based research conducted to date suggests that teens (at least when considered as a group with no age differentiation) do not have a greater sense of invulnerability than do adults. Before policymakers could justify granting certain legal rights to adolescents at an earlier age than is now the case, however, further research is in order.

Future Directions

If policymakers decide to take research into account in their own decision making regarding the legal rights of adolescents, several changes are warranted. First, studies that inform policymakers need

to move beyond the simple comparison of adults and adolescents and incorporate a systematic focus on developmental differences and progress during the adolescent years. Second, policymakers should request additional field research—in particular, field research with samples of boys making major decisions because it is possible that boys and girls employ different decision-making strategies and are influenced by different external sources. Third, even if policymakers accept the existing research findings that suggest that middle and late adolescents have the cognitive capacities to make major decisions, they must consider how adolescents manage emotionally in comparison to adults when they are faced with the burden of making real-life major decisions. If significant and meaningful differences were found at the emotional level, then perhaps the argument for restricting the decision-making rights of adolescents could be justified. According to Tremper and Kelly (1987), who are generally in favor of granting autonomy rights at an earlier age,

The difficulty lies in formulating policies that appropriately balance minors' need for autonomy with opposing interests. Policies fostering minors' autonomy will be most preferable if they facilitate healthy identity development, concern matters with which youths are familiar, present little risk of aggravating parent-child conflict, minimize state intervention into family affairs, and rely upon measures other than absolute rules. (p. 126)

A final recommendation for future research would be to make comparisons of the health and well-being of adolescents who reside in different states throughout the United States, which vary with respect to legal rights afforded to teens.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is clear that researchers interested in the study of autonomy at adolescence can turn their investigations in myriad directions, ranging from the emotions associated with individuation in the parent-adolescent relationship, to opportunities for self-direction in the classroom, to the legal ramifications of adolescents' decision-making capabilities. Throughout this chapter, we have highlighted specific avenues for future research in these areas as well as in others. Rather

than concluding with a summary of those suggestions, we offer four concepts central to a life span orientation on human development (Baltes, 1987) that can serve as an organizing framework for future research endeavors on autonomy. These concepts are (a) lifelong development, (b) multidimensionality-multidirectionality, (c) historical embeddedness, and (d) contextualism.

First, with respect to lifelong development, we must recognize that the changing demands, challenges, and opportunities that individuals face throughout their lives—whether they are primarily biological, interpersonal, or economic—will necessarily bring the issue of autonomy to the fore in the years following adolescence. What may be valuable to know is whether the skills and dispositions individuals hold during adolescence are good predictors of how they manage the autonomy challenges they face later in life. Second, we must bear in mind the multidimensional character of autonomy and devote more systematic attention toward tracing the interacting trajectories of each of these components. Third, we must recognize that the vast majority of the extant scholarship on autonomy at adolescence is based on samples of healthy youngsters who were adolescents in the 1980s, who were in school (i.e., had not dropped out), and who were growing up in middle-class, European American, two-parent families. A life span orientation to the study of human development reminds us that our expectations and norms regarding autonomy—whether defined in terms of emotions, behaviors, or relationship quality—are inextricably linked to historical period and social context. To the extent that our empirical findings are based on a selective group of adolescents, then, we have only a limited perspective on the salient and adaptive aspects of autonomy. Researchers must reach beyond easily accessible populations and contexts in their future efforts and study adolescents who, for example, face economic deprivation, poorly funded school systems, and dangerous communities. Our notion of autonomy at adolescence can only be complete when we step into the worlds of all adolescents and view their lives through a contextual and historical lens.

NOTES

1. Gilligan may have underestimated to some extent Erikson's notion that commitment to the past and integration of relations with others are key aspects of identity.

2. To test their proposal, Lamborn and Steinberg studied a large, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse sample of high school students 14 to 18 years old ($N = 2,416$). Data were collected via a battery of self-report questionnaires. Fuhrman and Holmbeck's sample ($N = 96$) was socioeconomically diverse and composed of European American and African American adolescents aged 10 to 18 years. Data were collected via questionnaires completed by the adolescents and by mothers and teachers on certain variables.

3. Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) used only three of the four EAS subscales as their index of emotional autonomy. They chose not to include the "perceiving parents as people" subscale because previous research indicated that this aspect of emotional autonomy is slow to develop over the adolescent years (e.g., Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Note as well that there were other methodological differences between the Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) and Fuhrman and Holmbeck (1995) studies.

4. It is interesting that both studies indicated that adolescents who experience a supportive-warm parent-adolescent relationship and low levels of emotional autonomy as measured by the EAS are those who engage in the fewest problem behaviors.

5. In separate analyses involving age, however, Fuhrman and Holmbeck found few age interaction effects.

6. Cooper (1994) proposes that we should challenge the view of cultural groups as homogeneous, however. She states, "ecocultural analyses of activity settings can help us 'unpackage' global characterizations of diverse groups as 'communal' or 'individualistic' " and recognize heterogeneity within groups.

7. Generally speaking, in the United States, the age of majority is 18 years. Younger teens may become legally emancipated or act autonomously under certain circumstances (see Tremper & Kelly, 1987; Willemsen & Sanger, 1991). In addition, states are permitted to vary with respect to the issue of parental notification and abortion.

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