PUNISHING CHILDREN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF RATIONALES, FEELINGS AND REPORTED PRACTICES

by

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THIS BOOK CONTAINS NUMEROUS PAGES WITH MULTIPLE PENCIL AND/OR PEN MARKS THROUGHOUT THE TEXT.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The social science literature abounds with work on discipline in child rearing, ranging from experimental and observational studies of punishment to studies on child abuse, but offers little information on parental attitudes and feelings about child discipline. In addition, some of the different theoretical views of punishment emanating from this bulk of literature disagree over the effects and effectiveness of punishment in producing behavioral change. From these divergent perspectives a variety of child rearing philosophies are advanced which at the lay level make decisions concerning appropriate disciplinary practices, at best, quite confusing. Yet, despite conceptual confusion over whether punishment is an effective or appropriate disciplinary technique, most individuals are content to operate on their own understanding, employing some form of punishment in their child rearing. The focus of this study is to examine how individuals think about the punishment of children and to examine their reports of actions or behaviors by which these beliefs are implemented. Due to the lack of conceptual agreement over the effectiveness of punishment and the absence of any guidelines concerning the justification of punishment, the question of how it has acquired its meaning for the individual poses a genuine psychological problem.

It seems clear that in the parent-child relationship punishment is adhered to for behavioral control. The actual form of punishment utilized, reflected in behavior, may encompass a broad continuum from physical to emotional methods and, perhaps, be based on a variety of different rationales.

Another area of investigation, in addition to examination of the

individual's conceptualization of punishment, involves comparison of the relationship between attitudes and reported practices of discipline to the phenomena of child abuse. From this comparison some forms of child abuse are suggested as characteristic of extreme cases, 'the tip of the iceberg,' of more commonly practiced forms of force, labeled under the rubric of discipline. While child abuse has received considerable public and professional attention as a major social problem, very little is known about the more general modes and patterns of force occurring in the parent-child relationship, which between adults might be considered chargeable assault. And yet, even less is known about the attitudes and beliefs which underlie these patterns of force and may be lending support to their continued use as acceptable forms of discipline in the parent-child relationship. One of the questions to be investigated in this study is: Can the point be established at which punishment ends and child abuse begins in the mind of the individual? Another specific question considers: Is it reasonable to think of child abuse in a way that suggests it is conventional punishment out of control? The problem may arise in that parents inflict more punishment than they intend. If, in fact, most people do have experiences of carrying punishment too far, this may provide insight to understanding the continuity proposed for child abuse.

Another significant facet of this study lies in its potential methodological contribution. To explore the various problems and issues noted above, a quasi-phenomenological analysis will be utilized to analyze a series of in-depth, open-ended interviews. Since the focus of this study is to examine divergent conceptualizations of punishment and their potential relationships to commonly practiced forms of force and extreme force in the parent-child relationship, an open conceptual framework is

required. That is, a comprehensive understanding of these areas is enhanced by a phenomenological approach which permits the nature, scope and implications of these issues to reveal themselves.

CHAPTER 2

Prior Research and Theory

A review of theory and research in the social sciences reveals that although there has been much work relevant to the concept of punishment, there has been no direct investigation of how people think about it as a disciplinary tool. Previous studies of punishment and discipline generally fall into two major categories. The first category consists of experimental research involving animals and human subjects. The second consists of research on the specific phenomena of child abuse including historical analyses, as well as analyses of individual and institutional abuse. These analyses focus on the more extreme cases of force occurring in the parent-child relationship.

Research relevant to punishment and discipline is at best confusing and disparate. On the basis of psychological literature alone, any disciplinary technique could potentially be justified. Generally, there has been little or no systematic effort to integrate or interpret prior research in connection with parental feelings and the disciplinary problems that arise in the parent-child relationship. Thus, a major aim of this study is to review and critique prior research and to identify the gaps and thus, any confusion that may exist for parents at the practical level, while some general notions on punishment are developed.

Conceptual Problems with Punishment

Prior to discussing the pertinent literature on punishment and child abuse, it is essential that certain problems associated with the concept of punishment be discussed. The most salient problem arises from the disparity between the pure technical or scientific meaning of punishment and the common or lay interpretation. This distinction does not arise solely from lack of awareness or ignorance on the part of the lay

person. The experimentalists' under emphasis or inattention to the reality of child rearing and social customs must be recognized.

That a dual vocabularly exists is emphasized in a review on corporal punishment by Maurer (1974). As an explicit description of this problem Maurier describes a U.S. Supreme Court ruling (1973, Editorial) in favor of the spanking rules of the public schools of Dallas, Texas, where B. F. Skinner was incorrectly cited as supportive of spanking. The inaccurate citing of scientific research as supportive of policies derived from the common or lay definition of the term poses a real threat to the public as well as to the scientific community.

According to the scientific definition of punishment, the term is devoid of emotional meaning and implications. There is no reference to, nor consideration of, the intentions of the experimenter or feelings of the subject. Baer (1971, p.34) defines punishment as "any stimulus that reduces the frequency of the behavior that precedes it." From this definition the independent and dependent variables become confused. In Baer's discussion (1971) he comments that revulsion against punishment is essentially a reaction against the type of punishment used for inhumane purposes years ago, and overlooks all the years of progress and humane reform men have achieved.

Azrin and Holz (1966, p. 381) define punishment of operant behavior as "a reduction of the future probability of a specific response as a result of the immediate delivery of a stimulus for the response; a punishing stimulus is thus,a consequence of behavior that reduces the future probability of that behavior." The only criterion for the stimulus is that it is successful in diminishing or suppressing the chosen undesired behavior. According to the scientific definition of the term there is no limit on what the stimulus may be and no requirement that

it be unpleasant or painful.

Generally, these technical definitions may be useful in facilitating communication between those who understand their meanings between and among disciplines. However, outside the laboratory at the lay or practical level, this vocabulary may be loaded with meanings far beyond that intended for narrow application in the laboratory.

Controversy over the effectiveness of punishment is another area that creates problems at the lay level. The work by Skinner (1938) and Estes (1944) supported the view that punishment is relatively ineffective as a technique for elimination of undesired behaviors. That is, punishment only acts temporarily to suppress a response rather than extinguish it. The generalization that punishment was not a dependable mechanism for changing behavior prevailed for two decades until it was called into question by the work of Solomon (1964), Baer (1971), Johnston (1972) and Baumrind (1966). The effectiveness of punishment still continues to be a subject of controversy among social scientists. Consequently, it would appear crucial that the translation of results and conclusions of research on punishment, into the lay vocabulary, be as specific and precise as possible.

Punishment

The literature abounds with experimental work on punishment. Skinner (1938) demonstrated with rats first that even a mild punishment produces a temporary decline in the frequency of a behavior's appearance. Estes (1944) later confirmed Skinner's belief that the main function of punishment was to suppress, not extinguish, the occurrence of an undesired behavior. In 1964 Solomon called Skinner's formulation into question, contending that no real determination could be made on the effectiveness of punishment because only limited information and research was available. Solomon's proposal stressed the complexity of the issues

involved in studying punishment. This controversy over punishment still continues even while experimental laboratory and field observational studies are currently being conducted.

While it is beyond the scope of this investigation to review the theoretical controversies over punishment, technical studies involving punishment of children are examined for their relevancy to applied disciplinary practices. The technical aspects of punishment, involving variables such as the timing, intensity, and form of punishment, are examined because they are of practical concern to parents.

Technical aspects of punishment. Walters, Parke and Cane (1965) examined the timing of punishment, that is, either before or after the undesired behavior, and its effectiveness. Results from their experiment indicated that punishment before the crime combined with examples of punishment for undesired behavior was most effective in reducing the number of times the undesired behavior occurred. In this experiment the undesired behavior was touching a forbidden toy. This finding and relevant replications support the generalization that the longer it is delayed, the less effective punishment is as a response inhibitor.

Examining the effects of the intensity of punishment, Aronfreed and Leff (1963) investigated response inhibition in a discrimination task with six and seven year old males. In this task the punishment was either a verbal statement, "no," deprivation of candy, or varying intensities of a noise. Aronfreed and Leff concluded that high intensity punishment could create emotional reactions that interfere with discrimination learning and retard inhibition of the undesired behavior.

Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957), in their study of child rearing practices, reported that mothers rated warm and affectionate, who frequently used punishment, thought spanking was an effective means of dis-

cipline. Moreover, spanking was described as more effective when it was administered by the warmer of the two parents. Sears, Maccoby and Levin concluded that punishment may be more effective in controlling the child's behavior when the parent-child relationship is close and affectional. Also, investigating the use of punishment accompanied by reasoning, these authors indicated that mothers who combined physical punishment with extensive use of reasoning reported punishment was more effective, than mothers who reported using punishment alone. Experimental studies by Cheyne and Walters (1969) confirmed these results. However, these studies did not indicate how reasoning in combination with punishment altered the effectiveness of punishment. And in contrast to these studies, Parke and Murray (1971) found that rationale without punishment for inappropriate behavior was much more effective than punishment used alone.

In discussing the actual pattern or schedule of punishment administered, Pavlov (1941) indicated that inconsistent punishment was quite detrimental. Utilizing an inconsistant punishment schedule, Pavlov (1941) noted the complete breakdown of behavior in dogs, taking the form of aggressive behavior in some cases or withdrawal or compulsive behaviors in others. In Sears, Maccoby and Levin's (1957) child rearing study, they reported that inconsistant punishment of children was extremely disruptive and related to high aggression. Furthermore, their results indicated that punishment did not eliminate the behavior toward which it was directed. Investigating delinquency, Glueck and Glueck (1950) concluded that delinquents had been raised by parents utilizing a high amount of physical punishment inconsistantly.

Generally, these studies indicate that the effectiveness of punishment is unclear and confusing. That is, the effectiveness of punishment as a behavioral control varies with a variety of known and perhaps

unknown parameters. In addition, some of these parameters are confounded. The usefulness of these studies at the practical or applied level is limited and perhaps even confusing.

Parental discipline and child's personality. Aside from the more technical aspects of punishment there are a number of studies that have examined the relationship between parental discipline patterns and specific areas of the child's personality and behavior. The more prominent areas to be reviewed include morality, achievement, aggression and authoritarianism.

In the area of morality Hoffman and Saltzstein (1967), from interviews with parents on the specific type of discipline utilized and from tests of the child's moral behavior, hypothesized that discipline techniques such as love withdrawal and induction, where the parent concentrates on the consequences of actions, are related to indices of moral development. Their results for middle class mothers indicated that induction was most strongly related to advanced moral development. On the other hand, love withdrawal, which involved direct but nonphysical expression of parents' anger or disapproval, infrequently related to moral development. Additionally, for the lower class parents, there were few significant relationships between the child's moral development and his report of parental discipline. The explanation was offered that the socializing process may be more diffuse in the lower class. That is, discipline may be shared by many individuals, whereas in middle class families, the mothers are the primary agents of discipline.

In research on aggression, Hollenberg and Sperry (1951) indicated high punishment for aggression in the home was related to high aggression in doll playing. Sears, Whiting, Nowlis and Sears (1953) investigated the relationship between aggression in role playing and the disci-

plinary styles of mothers. They concluded that the kind and amount of frustration and punishment experienced by the child were the major determinants of aggression.

In examining the relationship between child-rearing practices of punishment and achievement, Winterbottom (1969) indicated that there were no significant differences in the frequency and intensity of punishment administered by mothers of high and low achievement males.

Studies on authoritarianism (e.g., Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1950; Block, 1955) and creativity (e.g., MacKinnon, 1962) suggest that an overly controlling parent reduces a child's creativity and is disruptive to the child's behavior. However, reviews by Baumrind (1966) and Marshall (1965) suggest that most forms of punishment are not as damaging as indicated in the earlier literature. Baumrind and Marshall concluded that in some circumstances punishment is effective in producing the desired behavioral changes. As an alternative to the authoritarian or permissive approaches to child rearing, Baumrind proposed an authoritative approach. Utilizing an authoritative approach a parent attempts to direct the child's activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner. While self-will and disciplined conformity are valued by parents, firm control is exerted at points of parent-child divergence. It was hypothesized that with this approach a parent can achieve responsible conformity with group standards without the loss of the child's individual autonomy or self-assertiveness.

In a 1967 study Baumrind and Black attempted identification of parental attitudes and behaviors associated with dimensions of competent behavior in preschool children. Generally, their findings suggested that independence granting and verbal give and take, coupled with enforced demands and consistant discipline were associated with stable assertive

behaviors in children. Also their findings indicated that parents of the most assertive, self reliant and self controlled children were controlling, demanding, communicative and loving. Parents of the children identified as unhappy and disaffiliative were detached and only relatively controlling; and parents of the least self reliant and self controlling children were noncontrolling, nondemanding and only relatively warm.

Investigating the relationship between affection and control in males and females, Bronfenbrenner (1961) stated that males received less affection and more physical punishment than females. Bronfenbrenner also stated that parents using either lax or severe methods of punishment had less influence on the values of their children than parents who used moderate control.

In sum, one important function of these studies lies in their identification of the particular effects produced by specific disciplinary practices. Generally, these studies reveal that the relationship between parental disciplinary patterns and the child's personality is quite complex and subject to a variety of influences. However, since these studies attempt to isolate the relationship between specific disciplinary practices and specific personality traits in the child, the more general relationship between disciplinary practices and personality may be obscured.

Patterns and incidence of parental disciplinary practices. A third area to be reviewed involves research on parental disciplinary practices providing insight into the actual incidence and forms of punishment. Research by Clifford (1959), Blumberg (1974), Stark and McEvoy (1970) and Erlanger (1974) is examined. It must be noted that all the studies reviewed relate to how people are punished, not the judgment made whether to punish.

In an investigation of the types and frequencies of disciplinary techniques utilized, Clifford (1959) examined the records kept by mothers over a three week period. On all the dimensions that Clifford examined, the primary factor associated with discipline was the child's age. The results indicated that with increasing age, parents come to rely more on verbal techniques and less on physical methods. Clifford also noted that the frequency of situations which required discipline decreased with the child's age. Additionally, the variety of methods utilized by parents in the space of one incident decreased with age. However, the use of multiple methods was still evident at the age of nine.

Blumberg (1974) compared American studies of physical punishment with British studies, noting very few differences. Her research suggests that physical punishment tends to be as much a result of the stress experienced by the parents as it is of the objective need to control the child's behavior. In this respect, the dynamics of physical punishment could be interpreted as comparable to the dynamics of child abuse.

In an investigation of the child's perception and interpretation of his parents' behavior, Radke (1946) found that 74% of the preschool children interviewed mentioned spanking as the type of punishment they received. However, their parents reported that they rarely spanked their children. Radke also noted that 87% of the children reported that they felt spanking was the best punishment.

Based on a 1968 study on violence in America, conducted for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Stark and McEvoy (1970) challenged some of the current myths about violence. With respect to childhood violence they questioned the idea that permissive child rearing practices have increased over the last generation. In this study 9 of 10 adults reported being spanked sometime as a child.

Also, 8 in 10 men and 9 in 10 women reported utilizing spanking with their children, and one third of all the adults reported using spanking frequently. A majority (86%) agreed that strong discipline was what young people needed the most. In general, this study lends some insight into the prevalance of spanking as a disciplinary technique. However, no attempt was made to examine the punishing atmosphere in general or distinctions between slight and extreme physical force with children.

In an updated analysis of recent studies and a secondary analysis of the survey taken for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Erlanger (1974) concluded that although various studies have reported a statistically significant relationship between social class and the use of corporal punishment, the relationship is weak and not strong enough to be of great theoretical or practical significance. Previous studies generally concluded that working class parents were more frequent users of physical punishment, whereas middle class parents resorted to reasoning and love oriented techniques (Bronfenbrenner, 1958). Bronfenbrenner contended that the class differences had persisted over time. In opposition Erlanger asserts that in the past significant relationships between social class and corporal punishment were used as explanations of behaviors thought to be more common in the lower class, but these correlations were not strong enough to support these inferences.

In summary, these investigations of parental disciplinary patterns generally indicate that between 84 and 97% of all parents use physical punishment at some point in the child's life (Clifford, 1959, Blumberg, 1974, Bronfenbrenner, 1958, Stark & McEvoy, 1970, and Erlanger, 1974). However, some of these studies are not comparable since they focus on approval of punishment rather than actual behavior. And some of these

studies are based on nonrepresentative clinical samples or specialized populations. Therefore, while it may be concluded that physical punishment of children is common, no estimate is available regarding the actual incidence.

In sum, these studies reveal little about the punishment atmosphere. That is, the harshness of discipline, the conditions calling for discipline, or the particular way different methods are combined by different parents with different rationales.

Child Abuse

The second major category of literature to be reviewed relevant to the concept of punishment relates to increasing public and professional awareness of the phenomena of child abuse. This increased awareness is indicated in legislative enactments (e.g., Public Law 930-247, The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, 1974), the establishment of government agencies for children, and an abundance of literature emanating from all professional fields (legal, medical, educational and social-behavioral sciences). Professional and public interest groups have also emerged. These include the American Psychological Association's six member task force on children and their rights, the Committee to End Violence Against the Next Generation (EVAN-G), the National Committee to Abolish Corporal Punishment, and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Historical analyses. The fact that abuse is not a new aspect of child rearing is emphasized in historical analyses of abuse (Radbill, 1968; Bakan, 1971; and deMause, 1974, 1975). Throughout these analyses, the specific forms of child abuse, including infanticide, starvation, bondage, etc., are discussed in relation to their historical context. These accounts reveal how prevailing religious, philosophical and economic trends influenced attitudes and behaviors toward children.

Especially representative of these analyses is deMause's work (1974, 1975) which provides a comprehensive review of childhood history and child rearing patterns, as well as a theoretical scheme based on this material. Briefly, according to deMause the history of child-rearing practices involves a maturation of the parents' psychic structure. DeMause contends that the further back in history one goes, the less effective parents were in meeting the developing needs of their children. DeMause categorizes modes of child rearing according to patterns exhibited by the most advanced groups of parents in the most advanced countries, maintaining that the evolution of psychic structure procedes at different rates. His work suggests that historically,different forms of abusive treatment of children such as infanticide, starvation and beating were commonly practiced and accepted.

Incidence of child abuse. Current theory and research classifying the incidence, etiology, prevention and/or treatment of child abuse concentrates on the most extreme negative examples of the parent-child interaction. A review of research on the incidence of child abuse indicates that a number of different estimates exist based upon a variety of techniques of analysis such as: official statistics, households interviews, interviews with welfare agencies and statistical projections. These estimates range from thousands of children abused per year to millions.

During the late 1960's all fifty states enacted legislation which mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect cases. A survey conducted by Gil in 1969 of official statistics on confirmed cases of physical child abuse yielded a figure of 6,000 abused children (Gil, 1970). The U. S. census bureau (1975) estimated from reports of courts serving approximately two-thirds of the population of children under 18,that in 1972 there were 141,000 dependency and neglect cases and 158,000 dependency and

neglect cases in 1973. Dependency and neglect includes acts of commission such as physical injury and/or acts of omission such as failing to maintain reasonable care and treatment to the extent that the child's emotional and physical well-being is endangered. The reporting of these cases required court action. However, the figures cited by the census bureau do not in any way reflect the findings of the court. Figures on legally adjudicated abuse are often criticized as gross underestimates of the problem, since most agencies, as well as the courts, attempt to help families without court action. Estimates of national incidence figures based on statistical projections encompass a broader range. Kempe (1971) estimates 60,000 cases of child abuse each year, while Fontana (1973) proposes that there may be as many as 1.5 million cases of child abuse per year.

Despite what the statistics report, these results are confounded by the lack of conceptual agreement on what actually constitutes child abuse. As the literature indicates, a multitude of definitions exist (Gil, 1970; Helfer & Kempe, 1968; and Polansky, 1975). According to Gil (1970) child abuse occurs when a caretaker injures a child in anger or deliberately. Helfer and Kempe (1968) refer to clinical conditions diagnosed by x-rays, such as broken bones, as child abuse. The Mondale Act or Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1973 (PL 93-237) defines abuse as "... the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment of a child under the age of 18, by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare..." In addition to the numerous definitions there are several alternative conceptual frameworks: the psychodynamic model, the sociocultural model, and the labeling theory of social deviance proposed for understanding the phenomena. The problems arising from the lack of conceptual agreement over what constitutes child abuse are very important

when one recognizes that the definitions utilized determine which phenomena are studied, how the phenomena are to be studied and thus, the prevention and treatment strategies to be established to deal with the problem. That is, the generalizations from child abuse statistics and research reflect more who has been labeled and how, rather than the causes and incidence of abuse.

Psychodynamic model. Investigating the etiology of child abuse, Spinetta and Rigler (1972) reviewed professional opinions and research concerning the psychological characteristics of the child abusing parent. This review was based on a definition emphasizing willfully inflicted physical injury. The research of Steele and Pollack (1968), Kempe (1962), Fontana (1968), and Melnick & Hurley (1969) was cited as supporting the hypothesis that the abusing parent was once abused. Concerning the effects of economic and political factors the conclusions were more ambiguous. Steele and Pollack concluded that previous research (Kempe, 1962; Elmer, 1967; and Young, 1964) had overemphasized the importance of these variables. According to Steele and Pollack these two variables could only be considered as having an incidental effect. The research of Fontana (1968) and Kempe (1962) offered that child abuse was a result of a defect in character structure which manifests itself when additional stress is present. In reviewing research on parental attitudes toward child rearing, Spinetta and Rigler (1972) concluded that abusing parents lack appropriate knowledge of child rearing. They also note that a drastic change in thinking regarding the abusing parent has occurred from the early view that the abuser was psychotic to the more current view that only a few of the abusers exhibit psychotic tendencies. Spinetta and Rigler (1972) state that attempts to develop a typology predicting high risk parents, such as in the research of Merrill (1962), Delsordo (1963) and Zalba (1967) are quite useful and deserve additional

attention and refinement.

In general, based on Spinetta and Rigler's review it appears that child abuse is perceived by most investigators as an individual or familial phenomena. From this formulation a psychodynamic approach is advocated where abusers can be distinguished from nonabusers on the basis of precise psychological profiles.

Sociocultural model. A second analytic approach identifies the phenomena at a more general level. Gil (1970) proposes a sociocultural model for understanding child abuse which is based on the data of previously identified child abusers. According to the sociocultural model, child abuse arises from the stresses of low income, education and occupational status and the prevailing cultural norms that support violence toward children. And thus, prevention and treatment must deal with the causes of the stresses and the cultural norms. Gil (1970) contends that the psychodynamic approach, which identifies the child abuser as sick, may be fulfilling some societal function. That is, if the abuser is viewed as sick or possessing a characterological disorder, society and individuals can then be absolved from responsibility and guilt. Gil (1970) also indicates that what a society considers sick and deviant may not be qualitatively different from what it considers healthy and normal. The difference, thus, is quantitative. What may be understood dynamically as individual psychological disorders and/or environmental stress may be deeply rooted in culturally supported attitudes and sanctions.

This approach also recognizes the phenomena of institutionally sanctioned abuse. The institutional settings include day care centers, schools, the juvenile justice system, child care agencies, and correctional and residential settings where physical punishment techniques are utilized and sanctioned as appropriate. Thus, these institutional settings are often viewed as conveying the accepted cultural norms concerning child

rearing practices and discipline.

Labeling model. A third theoretical framework for studying the phenomena of child abuse is the labeling theory of social deviance. In this approach the process of labeling is critical to understanding how deviance is defined and individuals are labeled. Gelles (1975, 1976) suggests that deviance is not an inherent property in the forms of behaviors, but is conferred upon these forms. The focus of study in this approach becomes the process of who does the labeling, what definitions are employed, and the consequences of the labeling process.

From the sample of research reviewed it becomes apparent that a great deal of research has been done on the phenomena of child abuse. Generally, this work focuses on the most extreme negative examples of behavior in the parent-child and/or institution-child interaction. While efforts are concentrated on the physical abuser and abused, the more sophisticated levels of abuse inflicted upon children go unattended. It is the contention of this paper that emphasis on one particular aspect of child abuse, such as physical force or the personality disposition of the abuser, may obscure a clear perception and understanding of the problem.

Perhaps the work of Gelles (1977) provides the most direct support for the hypothesis that some forms of child abuse may be more appropriately conceptualized as the most extreme end of a continuum of more commonly practiced and accepted forms of force in the parent-child relationship. Gelles (1977) proposed that there are a number of parents whose use of physical force goes beyond mild punishment, but for various reasons do not get identified and labeled as child abusers. Based on a national probability sample of 2,143 completed household interviews, designed to measure the extent of parent to child violence, Gelles' results indicated that violence is an extensive and patterned phenomena in parent-child

relations.

More specifically, milder forms of violence were the most commonly mentioned (such as: spanking, slapping, pushing, throwing objects) and the more dangerous types of violence were the least frequently mentioned (such as: kicking, beating, biting, threatening with a knife or a gun). However, extrapolation of Gelles' results reveals that between 1.4 and 2.3 million children were beaten at some point while they were growing up, and between 275,000 and 3/4 million children were beaten in 1975. Additionally, between 90,000 and 1.8 million children had their parents use a gun or a knife on them. Results also indicated that mothers were the most likely users of violence, while sons and younger children were the most common victims.

However, while this study comes closer to describing the real situation of violence toward children in the U.S. than any other study, it does not deal with or specify the circumstances under which the violence occurred, nor does it examine parental attitudes or feelings about these situations.

General Summary and Statement of Aim

From the previous review of material one can see that there are all sorts of different conceptions of punishment. In the laboratory studies, where a wide range of independent variables such as timing, intensity and form are manipulated, it is not clear what the specific dependent variable is (inhibition, suppression or extinction). This is important because the different variables have different implications for child-rearing practices at the applied level. Even in the developmental studies some of the more prominent writers argue that punishment is not effective in producing change and may even produce harmful effects in children. Generally, examination of laboratory and field observational research does

not reveal any clearer picture or understanding of the meaning and effects of punishment. Consequently, at the applied or practical level individual parents are left to their own devices with no real guidelines for appropriate techniques.

Upon examination of the child abuse literature, the same type of conceptual problems arise. In this case, there is no single agreed-upon definition of what constitutes child abuse. This creates problems because the definitions utilized determine which phenomena are studied, how they are studied and treatment strategies. The one main conclusion that can be made is that the literature is confusing and creates uncertainty over the most appropriate disciplinary techniques.

The implicit premise underlying this study is there are no clear cut "scientific" guidelines for child rearing at the level of discipline and control, and folklore or the prevailing social norms are contradictory and unclear. The individual actions and attitudes of parents are, therefore, clearly a matter of psychological interest. It is anticipated that individuals utilize a number of different techniques to discipline their children on the basis of a variety of different rationales. Thus, one of the major aims of this study is to gain a perspective on all the various disciplinary methods being used.

Most of the emphasis in the studies reviewed has been upon the child. Much more information is needed about the parent, especially whether or not disciplinary patterns are related to the parent's emotional feelings. In summary, the present study was designed to examine parental feelings in relation to reported disciplinary practices and situations. The distinction between conventionally accepted forms of punishment and child abuse may not be clear cut, especially if punishment of the child is as much a result of the stress experienced by the parent, as it is a result

of the need for correction of the child's misbehavior. Child abuse may be more appropriately construed as only the 'tip of the iceberg,' of broader but less extreme forms of force that commonly occur in the parent-child relationship. Extensive concern over child abuse, as such, may be serving as a redherring which diverts attention to the more extreme cases of deviant behavior and thus maintains a questionable status quo.

The chaotic and confusing literature emanating from a variety of viewpoints on appropriate disciplinary practices, suggests it is necessary to gather material on parental feelings and conceptualizations of punishment in the broadest possible way. Thus, a quasi-phenomenological analysis is employed as the most appropriate methodology for collecting and analyzing this broad scope of information. The purpose of this study, in addition to being exploratory in nature, is twofold. First, relations between parental feelings and disciplinary practices and implications for child abuse are explored, while a modified phenomenological data analysis is tested as a new methodology.

This study was designed to tap the historical, affectional, behavioral, perceptual and symbolic dimensions of individual conceptualizations of punishment. Responses to specific questions are grouped together in accord with three major topics. These three topics include: (1) general and specific comparisons between past and current punishment practices, including consideration of the factors which may have influenced punishment practices, as well as individual descriptions of past disciplinary experiences; (2) parental variables, including the individual's rationales, actions and feelings on punishment; and (3) characteristics of the child, that is, the individual's perception of the influence of the child's age, sex and birth order upon punishment practices. The first section generally explores the historical dimensions. The second

section explores behavioral, symbolic and primarily the affectional dimensions of punishment. The last section explores the perceptual dimension of child characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

Method and Design

Conduct of this research hinges upon the use of in-depth interviews designed to identify feelings, practices and attitudes on punishment. Thus, in this study a sample of parents (students, faculty or their spouses) affiliated with Kansas State University were questioned about their feelings and attitudes according to an open-ended interview guide.

In order to carry out a phenomenological analysis, all interviews were taped and transcribed. Additionally, notes were taken during all interviews to serve as supportive material in case of any taping problems.

Subjects

Twenty-seven parents, 13 males and 14 females each from a different family, were interviewed in depth. The number of interviews conducted was limited due to the extensiveness of the interview. That is, each interview took approximately one to two hours. Rather than utilizing a large representative sample that could *only* be dealt with superficially, a small sample was employed in order to examine attitudes, feelings and actions in greater depth. Also, since the general nature of the study is exploratory, that is, to examine generally what different techniques are being utilized and divergent conceptualizations of punishment, there is no attempt to develop a systematic sample for the purpose of generalization to any specific population.

Subjects were selected from the Kansas State University community for convenience and because diverse professional and educational backgrounds could be represented. Since there was a greater likelihood of this group being exposed to child development and child care information, examination of these attitudes and reported practices might indicate if

more enlightened or reasonable disciplinary approaches are associated with membership in the university community. However, separate breakdowns by educational background were not made, rather the sample was assumed to reflect the typical cultural atmosphere associated with a university community. Moreover, strict specification of education in terms of years completed appeared meaningless as in the distinction between faculty and graduate students. Generally, there was no indication that years of formal education made any difference in rationales, feelings or practices.

Subjects were randomly selected from the adult parent population residing in university married student housing, university or faculty housing, and from the faculty directory in order to represent various educational and professional backgrounds. Originally 24 interviews were proposed to be conducted with equal male/female ratios. However, three more interviews were added because the sampling procedures yielded a distribution for males skewed toward the doctorate level, and a distribution for females skewed toward the undergraduate and high school educational levels. While this skew for male and female parents toward the highest and lowest educational levels may currently be representative of the parental educational levels, additional interviews were included so that a higher educational level might be represented for both sexes. The age range for parents interviewed included 21 to 65-year-olds with their children's ages ranging from $3\frac{1}{2}$ months to 40 years old.

Of the individuals contacted for the interviews over three-fourths consented to being interviewed. There were no problems during the interviews such as someone becoming angry, and thus, all interviews were completed. Several of the parents that declined participation in the interviews stated reasons such as: being quite busy, their children were ill, or would just rather not participate if someone else could be found.

Instrument

In order to examine how and why parents discipline their children, their understanding, use and feelings on punishment, a general interview guide was developed. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore several different dimensions of the individual's conceptualzation of punishment including historical, affectional, behavioral, perceptual and symbolic meanings.

A pilot study involving 8 interviews was first conducted in order to determine if preliminary questions were effective in tapping this information, and if any additional beliefs and issues pertinent to the individual's conceptualization of punishment might have been missed. On the basis of these preliminary interviews, the interview structure was revised and the final protocol developed (see Appendix A). The interviewer's observations concerning general impressions, cooperativeness of the subject and the subject's understanding of the questions were included in the protocol.

Interview procedure

All students were selected randomly from university housing designated for parents with children. Initially, all faculty subjects, randomly chosen from the faculty directory, were called over the phone and interviews were arranged with those who agreed to participate in the study. All the interviews were conducted at the subject's home or office. It was believed that the subject might feel more comfortable and at ease during the interview if it was conducted in a familiar environment.

The purpose of the study was explained to all subjects and then they were asked if they would be willing to participate in an in-depth interview requiring approximately one hour of their time, at a time of their con-

venience. All subjects were assured that the interviews were completely confidential.

During the interview the subject was read the questions and his/her responses were tape recorded for later transcription and analysis. Subjects' responses were coded by number in order to protect their confidentiality. They were told that results from the study would be available in the summer or fall if they were interested in reviewing them.

Analysis

Due to the nature of the problem being investigated, that is, individual conceptualizations of punishment, the traditional experimental and/or correlational designs do not provide the most appropriate methodological framework for a clear understanding of the problem. These approaches do not get at the problems individuals experience when punishing or the meaning of punishment, perhaps because of the widespread and general uncertainty over the meaning of punishment. Therefore, it was decided to follow an approach that draws individuals out and allows them to decide what is significant and important. Thus, based on the assumption that the method of analysis utilized should be chosen on the basis that best allows full emergence of the phenomena, a quasi-phenomenological approach is employed.

Phenomenological method. Essentially, the qualitative phenomenological method involves emphasis on a particular phenomenon as it reveals itself to the experiencing individual (Giorgi, 1960, 1976). According to this view the phenomena must be approached with a minimum of presuppositions in order to allow the meaning to reveal itself (Giorgi, 1960). This approach consists of an attitude of openness to whatever is significant for proper understanding. Due to this openness the following aims

emerge as being characteristic of the phenomenological approach: (1) apprehension as completely as possible of the structure of the phenomena, (2) concern for the origins or foundations of the phenomena, and (3) an emphasis on the perspective through which the phenomena is known (Giorgi, 1960, 1976). Therefore, the content is the data of experience, its meaning for the individual.

The actual form and processes involved in a phenomenological analysis are integrally related to the subject of investigation and thus vary considerably. Giorgi (1976) offers a general description of the process of phenomenological analysis which has been modified somewhat for the present study. The basic principle involves the processes of description and reflection. After a description of the phenomena is obtained and transcribed, the process more specifically involves the following steps: (1) the entire transcript is read in order to get a sense of the whole, (2) the entire transcript is read in order to delineate transitions in meanings where a series of meaning units or constituents are obtained, (3) redundancies are eliminated and the remaining meaning units are further clarified or elaborated by relating them together or to the sense of the whole, (4) then the meaning units, in the form of the everyday language of the individual, are transformed into the language of psychological science. That is,each unit is systematically interrogated for what it reveals about the phenomena in that situation for that subject. At this point the transcript is interpreted for psychological relevancy. (5) Finally, the insights acheived are synthesized and integrated into a consistant description of the meaning of the phenomena for that individual.

Present quasi-phenomenological analysis. The phenomenological analysis utilized in this study generally follows Giorgi's model. However, there are some variations from Giorgi's model due to the specific

questions being investigated. More specifically, after the interviews were taped and transcribed, the analysis was broken into two main stages. The first staged involved examination of the individual's conceptualization or meaning units of punishment. In this stage, (1) each transcript was read in its entirety in order to get a sense of the whole. (2) Then, for each subject, each question was broken down according to the main identified theme or themes. Articulation and detail constituents were elaborated for each theme. Essentially, this process is similar to the steps two through five mentioned by Giorgi (1976) in the preceding discussion.

This initial breakdown then served as the basis for the second stage of the analysis where individual responses (descriptions) were contrasted for each question in order to discover if there were any common or contrasting patterns and/or conceptions. The second part of the analysis specifically deals with the consideration of the potential relation between general child rearing practices to child abuse. In this second stage, the breakdowns obtained from the first analysis, that is, the main themes and detail constituents by question, were coded by subject and separated by question for all 14 questions. All the responses for each question were then read together to get a sense of the entire range of responses for that question. The responses were then examined in order to delineate transitions in meanings or patterns of meanings. Usually by this time patterns had begun to stand out, so categories more or less formed themselves. Answers were then arranged according to these identified categories. These answers coded by subject were then recorded onto one chart according to the delineated patterns or categories of the question. Color coded lines were used to easily identify clusters of answers. Phenomenological sketches with represen-

tative quotes were prepared for each of the 14 questions from the emerging themes revealed on the charts. This procedure was followed for each question, yielding 14 charts and 14 phenomenological sketches or characterizations of response patterns.

Another feature of the analysis involved characterization of extreme thoughts and attitudes on punishment of children which was developed from the second stage of analysis. Two of the most extreme interviews were distinguished in depth with respect to these characteristics. This analysis was included in order to gain understanding of the range of feelings, rationales and reported actions occurring in the sample interviewed, that is, the degree to which parents were extreme either in the direction of mild or permissive punishment, or in the direction of severe or intense punishment. The dimension of intensity was selected because it seemed very relevant to concrete problems of child abuse and discipline in general. This dimension was also included because it might provide insight into the relationship between acceptable force in the parent-child interaction and more extreme cases of force.

The original analysis plan called for content analysis following the phenomenological analysis because it was not clear whether the phenomenological analysis would yield systematic information useful for any type of quantitative analysis. The method of content analysis, according to Gardner and Aronson (1968, p. 601) is "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages." In fact, this information was available from the phenomenological analysis and the additional content analysis was dropped when it became clear that it would add nothing to the results.

Comparison to traditional phenomenology. In the present study the

data is gathered in the traditional phenomenological way. But, the actual analysis is somewhat different from the traditional phenomenological analysis because, here, responses from all the parents are grouped or examined by question, rather than the responses to all the questions being examined separately for each individual. The purpose of the present approach is not to examine separately individual meanings of punishment, but rather to explore the range of possible meanings. Since the existing information on punishment and discipline is confusing and inadequate, the approach of getting at the general pool of meanings, rather than unique individual meanings appears most valuable for a clear and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of punishment. This approach is also valuable in providing direction for future research of more specific form, such as examination of unique individual meanings.

Although, the aspect of the analysis involving comparison of extreme or intense attitudes is also different from traditional phenomenology, it is included in the study because it contributes further to the understanding of the range of meanings of punishment.

Reliability

The purpose of the study is to get at the meaning of the response patterns, that is conceptualizations of punishment. The themes or meanings regarding conceptualizations of punishment are obtained from the patterns of responses that emerge from the data, and thus, anyone reading these responses should be able to see these themes directly for themselves. However, all of the essential themes, were corroborated in detail with a colleague who agreed with the meanings.

Coder reliability, as such, is not determined here, as is done in the objective technique of content analysis because it has no relation to the

meaning of the data. In contrast, the phenomenological analysis of data allows the meanings of the phenomena to emerge, that is, the response patterns arise from the data and are not imposed or structured as expected categories by the investigator.

Design Summary

This study was designed to include both qualitative and quantitative analyses of parental practices, attitudes and feelings on punishment of children. An individual phenomenological analysis was employed and applied to the responses to each question in order to explore the range of feelings, practices and justifications on punishment. In addition to examining parental feelings on discipline, this study was designed to test the modified phenomenological data analysis as a new methodology for gaining information about complex social psychological problems. In this connection, the data are gathered following the tradition of phenomenology, but analyzed in a more conventional empirical way.

The questions to be investigated include: (1) Questions aimed at examination of the general influence of the various dimensions of punishment, including historical, affectional, behavioral, symbolic and perceptual dimensions. (2) Examination of how extreme the range of intensity of punishment is within the university community sample. This question is answered by looking for the most extreme cases in the sample and making a comparison between them. (3) Direct inquiries are made as to whether there is a relationship between parental feelings and discipline practices independent of the child's behavior. (4) The question of whether or not there are any distinctions between males and females in their discipline practices is also investigated in this study and analyzed by the chi square technique. The sample was designed to get equal male/female

ratios to permit such an analysis. This variable is investigated because of the argument advanced in the child abuse literature that mothers are more prone to use violence on their children due to the fact they spend more time with them and because the research by Gelles (1977) also indicated that females were more likely to be the users of violence in the parent-child relationship.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The results are arranged in two parts. Part I focuses on the phenomenological analysis of response patterns for each question. Statistical analyses comparing responses according to sex and for one question education are also included here. Part II of the results includes a characterization of extreme positive and negative attitudes on punishment. In this section two interviews representative of extreme attitudes on punishment are examined in terms of the characterization presented.

Phenomenological and Statistical Question Analysis

Questions were developed for the interview guide to explore several dimensions of individual conceptualizations of punishment pertinent to the parent-child relationship. These dimensions, as previously described, include: historical, affectional, behavioral, perceptual and symbolic dimensions. The actual questions are combined according to three sections. The first section includes: general and specific comparisions between past and current punishment practices, discussion of the factors which may have influenced punishment practices, and individual descriptions of experiences being disciplined. These areas generally represent the historical dimensions. The second section includes rationales, actions and feelings on punishment (parental variables). These areas represent affectional, behavioral and symbolic dimensions. The third section includes individual descriptions of perceptions of the influence of the child's age, sex and birth order upon punishment practices. These areas generally represent the perceptual dimension, but also influence the behavioral, affectional and symbolic dimensions.

In order to further analyze the response patterns of each question,

statistical analyes were conducted. Since all of the data consist of nominal frequencies, the chi square technique was used throughout for significance testing. Figures were prepared on the basis of total frequencies in the identified categories.

Historical Dimension

Comparison of past and current practices. As an introduction to the subject matter of the interview respondents were first encouraged to express their more general views on how disciplinary practices had changed from their past. In response to the first question: " As compared with what you remember when you were a child, how do you feel children are punished today?" a majority (21 of 27) indicated discipline was more permissive today. Factors such as: parental control, understanding, consideration of the child, in addition to the amount and severity of punishment, were mentioned as explanations for the ways discipline had changed.

A minority (6 of 27) suggested that current and past punishment could not be compared because of tremendous changes in discipline techniques, limited experience and observation of punishment and the confusion felt from the diverse techniques and definitions of punishment.

Specifications explaining how punishment was more permissive today were given. The first category (4/21) emphasizes increasing consideration of the child. Responses here include the following ideas: (1) Today parents think more about the child's feelings. (2) Parents allow children to express themselves more today. (3) There are more older parents today who are more patient and rational in their discipline. (4) Parents today are more relaxed and intimate with their children.

In the second category (8/21) punishment was mentioned as occurring less often and was less severe in form. One of the respondents suggested parents were more concerned about the adverse effects of severe punish-

ment.

In the third category (6/21) permissiveness was characterized as a lack of parental control. Permissive parents were described as: (1) afraid to say no to their children, (2) letting their children get away with anything, (3) not punishing their children at an early enough age, or (4) threatening punishment, but not following through.

Of the remaining respondents, two indicated that parents were more permissive, but offered no further discussion. A third suggested there were too many outside forces telling parents what they should do, and as a result parents were afraid to "take kids to the woodshed," because of possible interference by the authorities.

Generally, the majority of respondents perceived children as punished more permissively today. However, permissive punishment implied quite different meanings, for example increased consideration of the child, decreasing severity and amount of punishment, or a lack of adequate parental control. More than half of the respondents (12) describing punishment as more permissive, revealed an awareness that punishment can have undesireable effects. (See Appendix B, Figure 1, for the phenomenological chart to question 1.)

Statistical analysis. Table 1 presents the chi square analysis used to test the relationship between the sex of the respondent and the ways parents are seen as more permissive today. The relationship was significant ($\chi^2 = 9.16$, d.f.=2, $p < .05$) showing that males describe permissive punishment more in terms of its decreasing severity and frequency of occurrence, whereas females generally either discuss greater permissiveness today as indicative of increased concern over the child's needs, or involving a decline of parental control.

TABLE 1

Chi square analysis of the response pattern of the ways punishment is more permissive today, stated in answer to question 1: "As compared with what you remember when you were a child, how do you feel children are punished today?

How punishment is more permissive today

by sex of respondent

	Categories of Response Frequency		
Group	Greater concern over child's needs	Less severe and frequent punishment	Decline in parental control
Male (n=9)	0	7	2
Female (n=9)	4	1	4

χ^2=9.16, d.f.=2, p<.05

Two potential explanations are offered for these results. The fact that males stated more quantitative descriptions on the form of punishment, while female descriptions of permissive punishment centered more on the affectional state of the parent, indicates that the responses may reflect general differences in thinking between males and females due to their sex role acculturation. However, since no additional significant male/female distinctions were found in the statistical analyses of the remaining questions, a second explanation seems more likely. This explanation is based solely upon the statistical consideration that no more than twenty percent of the expected chi square frequencies should be less than five. In this analysis all the expected frequencies are less than 5, and thus, the observed frequencies can not be symmetrically distributed around the expected frequencies. Therefore, results may be due to violation of the assumption of the normal distribution of observed and expecteds, which is a result of too small a sample size.

Past disciplinary experiences. In order to provide a more complete picture of the individual's past and its potential influence on current practices, respondents were asked to describe their most severe disciplinary encounter and also to describe generally the types of behaviors their parents disciplined.

Question 2. The second question: "In what ways do you think things were harder when you were a child?" explores the nature of remembered past hardships. Most respondents (22/27) indicated that life was harder in the past. In this connection several respondents (8/22) mentioned economic hardships, while discipline was mentioned by others (14/22). A few respondents (4/27) said that although life was much harder in the past, it was possibly better due to the greater time parents spent with their children. (Figure 2, Appendix B, presents the complete breakdown of response patterns.)

The dominant theme describing past life as harder in terms of discipline fluctuated between explanations involving (a) heavier responsibilities and work loads for children, (b) less freedom of expression and choice, (c) inflexible rules, (d) less time spent with children, and (e) harsher discipline. One respondent specified the lack of understanding of childhood and adolescence as a reason for the harsher discipline techniques. Bed wetting was offered as an example of a behavior punished harshly in the past, but currently viewed by many as a behavior over which the child may not have control.

The second theme emphasized economic hardships such as: poorer quality and shortages of food, money problems resulting in less purchasing power, transportation problems, necessity for both parents to work and larger families.

The third theme depicted the past as better. A main contention here was that parents spent alot more time with their children in the past. One person maintained there were not as many experts in the past telling parents they were doing a bad job. As a result, parents had more confidence in their own ability. Another indicated people were content with less in the past, making do with what they had. In addition, parents showed their children what they had done wrong instead of just scolding them for misbehavior. It was also noted that no illegal drugs were available to children in the past.

Generally, responses to this probe fluctuated in terms of how life was harder or easier in the past. On the one hand an image was portrayed of the hard old days economically and socially in the form of harsher norms for discipline and child rearing in general. Quite in opposition to this, a few respondents described the past as the good old days, where parents spent more time with their children and people were content with less.

It is interesting that the majority of respondents perceived their past as involving harsher discipline, yet this harshness was viewed by some as having positive effects while others saw it as having negative effects.

Statistical analysis. The relation between sex of respondent and the ways life was harder in the past was not significant (χ^2=.78, see Table 2, Appendix C).

Question 3. The third question: "What was the most severe punishment or the worst thing that you can remember that happened to you when you were a child?" investigates severe or traumatic past experiences. A majority described punishment in various forms as the worst childhood experience they could remember. Physical punishment was most commonly cited (16/22); scolding, grounding and denial of privileges were also mentioned (8/22). One person said that the death of a friend and a dog was their worst experience. Two parents contended that although they had been spanked as children, they could not remember any experiences as severe.

The dominant theme, physical punishment, generally involved descriptions of the physical punishment and the misbehavior. Punishments were described as: spankings and whippings by belt, hand and yardstick, slapping in the face, and beating. One respondent recalled being whipped until almost blistered. Another described hiding under his bed, trying to avoid a whipping by his enraged mother. A variety of misbehaviors were mentioned including: sassing back, refusing duties, playing in the street, running away, sneaking food, coming in late, jumping and breaking a bed, stepping in wet cement, throwing snowballs, destroying furniture, and pouring new cologne on a new mattress. Five respondents could remember being spanked, but not why.

A mixture of forms of punishment other than physical were described

(8/22). These punishments included: grounding for a week; being put to bed in the middle of the day; priviledges denied; severe and constant scolding; being forced to eat an entire batch of cupcakes with nothing to drink for licking the icing off of one cupcake; not receiving a birthday present because of foolishly spending some found money; seeing a psychiatrist because of stealing; and dealing with a drunk father who was threatening with a gun.

The majority reported physical punishment as the most severe experience remembered from childhood. Misbehaviors punished varied from verbal disobedience to physical destruction of property. Several respondents indicated being punished regardless of their intentions. A surprising number (5) could not remember why they had been disciplined severely. Several described their parents as being too severe and unjustified in their punishment. Others stated they could now understand why their parents had been severe. One respondent reported never forgetting his fear at seeing his mother lose control. (Figure 3, Appendix B, presents the complete breakdown of response patterns.)

Statistical analysis. There was no significant difference between sex of parent and most severe childhood experience (χ^2=.79, see Table 3, Appendix C).

Question 4. The fourth question: "What types of things did you get in trouble for when you were a child?" probes for problem behaviors resulting in punishment. There was no one central or common response pattern for this question. Rather, most respondents reported getting in trouble for a variety of behaviors. Categories of behaviors mentioned include: talking back, coming in late, problems with siblings, destructive behavior and not doing work. (Figure 4, Appendix B, presents the complete breakdown of response patterns.)

Two transgressions mentioned most frequently were talking back and coming in late. Nine respondents reported getting in trouble for talking back. Two mentioned that being impudent was the worst sin in their house. Nine also indicated not getting home on time was a problem behavior.

A third category of behaviors for which one could be in trouble was problems with siblings (8). These problems included fighting, tattling, or generally mistreating siblings. Destructive behavior was also mentioned (5). These behaviors indicate destruction of property usually was cause for punishment whether intentional or not.

Several other behaviors included: making messes, spillings things, fidgeting or stomping feet (4), not telling the truth, even if unintentional (2), bad sportsmanship (1), not doing chores or school work (4), stealing (1),and dangerous acts like jumping off of the barn roof (1).

In sum, several different types of behaviors were described as troublesome and handled by discipline. The majority of respondents reported being disciplined for more than one type of behavior. Major categories of misbehavior included talking back, coming in late and problems with siblings. Less frequently mentioned were destructive behaviors and behaviors where one avoided doing their work. Only a few mentioned behaviors involving stealing, lying and dangerous acts. Generally,the main types of behaviors eliciting punishment involved breaking family norms of respect and obedience.

Statistical analysis. No significant relationships between sex of the respondent and type of punished behavior were found in question 4 (see Table 4, Appendix C).

Question 14. Sources influencing parental attitudes on punishment are described in response to question 14: "From where would you say your position on punishment originates?" Positions on punishment were des-

cribed as originating from several different sources by each respondent. The major sources included: family, observation and experience, books, religion, relations with spouse, and television.

The respondent's own family was the most frequently cited source of views on punishment (19). The actual influence of the family varied. Eight respondents reported their parents had been too harsh. These respondents maintained they were not as harsh or strict with their own children as their parents had been with them. One respondent described his father's unjust use of a rubber hose to punish. Another respondent described slapping and whipping her children just because that was the way her parents had disciplined. However, this respondent reported that she had changed her practices. Another respondent mentioned only using spanking as a last resort which was quite different from her parents' discipline.

Three respondents reported adopting their parents' methods. Their parents were described as very positive and understanding in their approach to discipline, using very little punishment if any. The remaining respondents reported adopting their parents' views which ranged from strict to permissive (8).

The second most commonly mentioned source was observation and experience (16). Six respondents reported learning from the poor job they had observed others doing with their children in terms of discipline. Others mentioned the influence of education, working with mentally retarded, experience with their own children, and observing discipline in other cultures.

Books were the third source mentioned (9). Several of the books included works by Dobson, Spock, Salk, Newton and Gesell. One respondent reported reading everything she could get her hands on when she

was pregnant. She described the sections on punishment and discipline as quite inadequate. Magazines and journals were also mentioned in this category.

Religion was another source mentioned (5). One parent stated he tried to bring up his children as good christians, with respect for their elders. Another advocated the verse "spare the rod, spoil the child." This respondent stated that if the child did not follow or accept something obediently, then as an adult they would not be able to accept Christ.

Discussions with the spouse were another source cited (5). One parent reported that discussions were mainly theoretical. Another respondent reported discussing appropriate discipline, who would discipline, and evaluations of past situations with her spouse.

Television was also cited as a source of influence (2). Both respondents contended that television showed the right way to discipline. One reported television was the best source of information on disciplining for him. The other respondent described a particular show that had influenced him, 'Leave it to Beaver.' This respondent stated this was the best show and that he really wanted to be another Ward Cleaver, the typical father.

One respondent maintained that punishment was actually an instinct, in that it was a way of providing for the young. That is, punishment was the way to teach children right from wrong, in order that they could later exert their own self discipline. This respondent reported the main problem was finding the right type of discipline. Another respondent reported having no idea where his views originated.

In summary, respondents reported that a variety of sources influenced their disciplinary practices. The most commonly mentioned source was the family. The second major source was observation of others and experience. Most of these respondents described others as doing an inade-

quate job disciplining their children. It is interesting that the family had a variety of effects on viewpoints, and that a sizeable number reported rejecting some of their parents ideas and practices. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 14, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. Chi square analyses on both sex of respondents and educational background influences were done on this question. No significant relations were found between sex and influencing factors, nor between educational background and influencing factors (see Tables 14A and 14B, Appendix C). Generally, 11 of the females did report their family was an influential source, while only 8 of the males mentioned their families. Nine of the males described observation as an influencing their practices and attitudes, while only 8 of the females mentioned this influence. The family was most frequently cited by individuals of all educational backgrounds, except for individuals at the master's level who indicated that books were the most influential factor upon their attitudes and practices.

Affectional, Behavioral, and Symbolic Dimensions

This next group of questions tap parental feelings, rationales and punishment practices which are the central focus of this study.

Question 6. Parental ideas concerning when punishment is appropriate is explored in question 6: "Under what circumstances do you feel it is necessary to punish children? Under these circumstances what did you actually do?" Scenarios of the misbehavior and form of discipline were described by all respondents. Two main types of situations reported as requiring punishment involved: either violations of family norms or situations where the welfare of the child or another individual was in danger. In several responses (4) both of these situations were mentioned,

These types of behaviors were reported as being punished by a variety of methods including physical and verbal punishment and denial of attention and priviledges.

Punishing for violation of the family's norms was the major response (24/27). The types of norms supported by families varied. Generally, the family norms can be subdivided into rule following norms or norms of intentionality. Violation of situational or rule following norms included: any behavior displayed that was deemed inappropriate, disobedience such as not coming in when called or touching forbidden decorations, problems with siblings, being inconsiderate of others, not taking care of household responsibilities, being noisy, demanding behavior, watching too much television, not displaying proper etiquette, destruction of property, not asking for things, racing the car and not practicing the piano (18). Norms of intentionality included: stealing, lying and deliberate violations of rules clearly delineated (6). However, intentionality on the child's part cannot always be clearly distinguished and is judged at the parent's discretion, thus indicating that rule following norms and norms of intentionality are not so clear cut. Defacating in pants and playing on the stairs were two examples of behaviors parents reported which they had warned their children not to do. One respondent reported that while it was irrational to punish for accidents or unintentional behaviors, she had, nevertheless, done so.

The types of punishment administered for these misbehaviors included: spankings (on the bottom and/or the hands, 11), scoldings (6), reasoning (4), physical restraint (3), and the loss of priviledges (6). Several respondents reported the types of discipline used actually depended upon the personality and age of the child. Many respondents also reported using several different methods, and at times a combination of methods.

One respondent indicated that she felt as if her children forced her to beat them when they persisted in disobeying her. Another respondent indicated the actual form of discipline utilized depended upon factors such as her irritability or mood, and the nature of the situation.

The second theme involved the welfare or the safety of the child or others (6). Punishment was considered appropriate and necessary if potential for harm to the child or others existed. Punishment for this behavior also varied from physical to verbal methods and loss of privil-edges. Two respondents indicated that one should do whatever is necessary to intervene and stop the inappropriate behavior.

Only one respondent contended that there were no circumstances or situations where punishment was necessary. He maintained parents often punish because of a bad mood or because they are angry, and that parents often did not understand what the child was feeling. However, later this respondent hedged on this statement stating that maybe when children were older they needed punishment.

In summary, the majority described violation of family norms as requisite for punishment. Generally, these were situational or rule violation norms varying between families and occasionally arbitrary within families. Spanking was the one most frequently mentioned form of punishment. Only a minority described situations where the child was harming himself/herself or another as justification for punishment. This question stimulated a variety of discussions concerning the cir-stances and appropriate forms of discipline. The complete phenomeno-logical response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 6, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relationships were found between the sex of the respondent and the circumstances under which punishment is appropriate (see Table 6, Appendix C).

Question 7. The parent's most recent punishing situation is examined in question 7: "Can you remember the most recent experience you have had disciplining a child? What did you do to handle the situation?" The types of situations mentioned involved either the welfare of the child or others, or violations of family norms. The majority (14) described recent violations of family norms and the method of discipline. Situations affecting the welfare of the child or others were mentioned only by a minority (4).

The dominant theme, violation of family norms, was described by a variety of different situations including: disobeying authority and inappropriate social behaviors.

Disobedience of authority was most commonly reported (10). Disobedience was manifest in numerous forms including: talking back to teachers, refusing to go to school, not doing school work, refusing to turn off the television, trouble with the police, not meeting household responsibilities, persisting in not staying in bed for a nap and refusing to sleep in own bedroom over several nights. These behaviors were handled by spanking, verbal threats, loss of privilidges or physically taking the child to school or putting in bed.

Inappropriate social behaviors were also mentioned as violations of family norms and involving discipline (4). One respondent reported verbally rebuking her child for opening a neighbor's door and peeking in windows. Another described her child throwing a tantrum in a store. This respondent handled the situation by picking up the child and leaving the store.

The second less common theme mentioned involved the welfare of the child (2) or welfare of another (2) being in danger. The situations included: eating paint, jumping on the bed, cutting a brother's hand with scissors, slapping a sibling who had been sleeping due to illness. These.

situations were handled by spanking or verbal reprimands.

Three respondents reported the child had exhibited physiologically troublesome behaviors. Two described their children as cranky because they were tired. In these situations one child was threatened with spanking and the other was left alone. One subject also described his son's continual crying all night and his repeated attempts to get him to sleep which were very frustrating. This question was not applicable to six respondents who reported their children were either too young or were no longer at home.

In sum, a majority mentioned violation of family norms, especially disobedience to authority as the most recent disciplinary encounter. A variety of behaviors were described as indicative of disobedience. These behaviors were disciplined by physical spanking, verbal threats or loss of priviledges. These situations can be characterized as uncomfortable or upsetting for the parent, but it is not clear in some cases if they are uncomfortable because the behavior is inappropriate, the punishment is inappropriate or because the parents lost their temper. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Table 7, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relationships were found between sex of the parent and the behavior disciplined ($\chi^2 = 5.4$, see Table 7, Appendix C).

Question 5. The next four questions specifically examine parental feelings. The parent's more general coping mechanisms are described in responses to question 5: "How do you typically react when you are angry?"

The majority (16/27) reported their expression of anger depended upon different factors such as the situation, person involved and age of person involved in the interaction. Anger was described as being exp-

ressed in the following forms: withdrawn behavior, verbal reactions, and/or physical reactions.

Various kinds of verbal reactions were most frequently reported (20). Withdrawn behaviors were also frequently described (15). Physical reactions were mentioned less frequently (8).

Among the sixteen people saying that the expression of anger depended upon different factors, most reported that the person involved is the crucial factor. One group (5) maintained they were more withdrawn, holding in their feeling with their spouse, but reacted quite verbally or physically with their children. Several others maintained that the person and situation influenced their expression (3). One respondent described his emotions as surfacing much quicker in his home, than they do on the job. He described being more physical with his daughter because she was unable to verbalize. Another parent reported generally being too nice, but then really exploding with his children, reacting to each child differently. Another indicated expressing anger differently with each child. One respondent described acting angry more openly with people she felt secure and being withdrawn in situations when she felt insecure. Another group reported their expression of anger had changed over the years (5). One respondent described the change from a withdrawn crying reaction to shouting. Two others described a positive change in their ability to control their anger. One respondent reported suppressing her anger as a child, and trying to change this as an adult to verbally assertive reactions. This parent stated that expressing anger had always been a problem. The remaining respondents mentioned that their expressions of anger varied but did not provide any further detail.

Two respondents reported withdrawn behaviors as general reactions

when angry. Another group described expressing anger verbally (5) or physically (1). Two respondents mentioned both verbal and physical reactions. Verbal responses included: yelling, cussing and talking. One parent reported never losing his self control and becoming angry. He described always being able to reason and talk about the problem. Another respondent attributed her quick temper to her Irish background. Physical reactions mentioned included: spanking, throwing things, taking a walk, cleaning, and pounding the desk.

Generally, a majority of respondents (16) indicated that different factors including the situation, person involved and/or their age influenced their expression or the form of their anger. These expressions of anger included verbal, withdrawn and/or physical behaviors. Most of the respondents indicated that they felt freer to express anger openly, either physically or verbally with their children than with anyone else. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Table 5, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relations were found between the sex of the parent and modes of expressing anger. Table 5, Appendix C, indicates that 7 of the females and 9 of the males keep their anger inside under some circumstances. Verbal reactions are reported by 12 of the females and 9 of the males. Physical responses are reported by 4 of the males and 5 of the females. Generally, the trend appears that males may resort to more withdrawn behaviors, where females generally respond more verbally.

Question 8. Extreme occurrences of force in the parent-child relationship are investigated in question 8: "Have you ever punished your children too much? That is, have you ever lost your temper or been too extreme?"

The prevailing theme elicited by this question (17/27) was that par-

ents had lost their temper or been too extreme physically with their children. This response pattern was generally described in the context of the child's misbehavior, parent's emotional state and the physical reaction to the situation. The second related theme (5/27) was that parents may have lost their temper with their children, but not in a physical manner. The third theme (5/27) indicated that these parents had never lost their temper or been too extreme with their children.

The response patterns of the dominant theme, extreme physical reaction, included three types of descriptions: an explanation of the parent's emotional state, and/or an explanation of the child's misbehavior,and/or a general description of the physical reaction. The extreme physical reaction in 13 of 17 responses was reported as a result of parental loss of emotional control for such reasons as: inadequate sleep, physical exhaustion, illness, general irritation or bad mood and/or frustration from not understanding what was wrong with the child. Responses describing physical reactions included: spanking on the buttocks and seeing handprint, spanking and not changing diaper, shaking the baby, screaming, spanking and throwing kids into their rooms, pinning the child to the bed and hitting with a belt, spanking too hard or too much, physically forcing the child into bath water, and slapping in the face. Descriptions of child's misbehaviors included: not taking nap, not taking bath, waking up early and playing in crib, crying and making snide remarks. In this connection one respondent indicated his concern with the relationship between loss of temper and child abuse.

Five parents reported losing their tempers but not in a way that hurt the child physically. Three of the five described extreme verbal overreactions, yelling too much, and saying things they should not have or did not mean. Two respondents stated they had never struck their child-

ren too hard. One respondent described his spouse as being too extreme verbally and physically on one occasion, but according to this respondent this did not harm the child.

The third response pattern included parents who reported never losing their temper or being too extreme. One parent explained he had not lost his temper in 20 years. Another respondent reported he had only punished his children by spanking their bottoms, which had not bothered the children, but had hurt his hand. The remaining parents responded briefly by stating they did not think they had ever been too extreme.

Themes of the response patterns vary along a continuum ranging from extreme physical and verbal reactions to the absence of any extreme reactions. The majority of the parents reported losing their temper and physically hurting their children in a wide variety of ways. For the most part, they blamed personal stress for their outbursts. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 8, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relationship between sex of the parent and incidence of extreme punishment was found (see Table 8, Appendix C).

Question 9. General parental feelings over punishment incidents are examined in question 9: "Generally, how do you feel when punishing?" A majority (20/27) reported feeling bad, angry or uncomfortable when punishing. The remaining respondents (6/27) discussed their social responsibility to punish and did not indicate their feelings. This question was not applicable for two respondents because their children were too young.

Several themes emerged from the descriptions of how respondents felt when punishing. One theme (3) indicated punishment hurt the parent worse than it did the child. These respondents described mental anguish in

punishing the child. They also expressed uncertainty over whether the punishment was done properly.

A second general theme specified angry feelings when punishing. Two respondents reported they punished because they were angry. A second group reported feeling bad about punishing because they felt they had just been releasing their own anger (6). These respondents mentioned reacting to the immediate situation, going further than intended, perhaps because something else was bothering them. One respondent stated that she always felt bad after physically punishing her child.

A third theme centered around justification for punishment. More specifically, respondents maintained that the punishment of their children was a social responsibility (12). Five of these parents indicated that they felt bad or uncomfortable punishing but it was still a responsibility. One respondent indicated feeling bad if the punishment was out of anger, but feeling justified if she was in control. Another described punishment as necessary to be a good parent. Others indicated that punishment was beneficial and for the child's own good. One parent contended that while hating to punish, hating worse not to punish. This parent reported never letting her children see her indecision about punishing for fear they might take advantage of it. Another respondent stated he wanted his children to be good citizens. The remaining six respondents did not discuss their feelings while punishing, but rather their sense of responsibility in training their children. One parent stated punishment was necessary to train children to live in society, even though society's rules changed. Another described punishment as something that had to be done. Punishment was compared to doing the dishes, something this parent preferred not to do, but a necessary part of the mothering job.

Two respondents described the anger they felt while punishing. These respondents reported feeling angry initially, then after the punishing

feeling guilty.

In sum, the majority reported not feeling good about punishing. A major theme (12) indicated that punishing was a part of a parent's social responsibility. Several parents acknowledged punishing out of anger and not necessarily because the child's behavior was inappropriate. Several also described punishing as more painful for them than for the child. Generally, most respondents viewed punishing as a social responsibility, necessary for training the child, and for the child's own good regardless of their own feelings. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 9, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. Chi square analysis of the relation between sex of parent and the parent's feelings when punishing revealed no significant differences (see Table 9, Appendix C).

Question 10. Further analysis of parental feelings are explored in question 10: "Do you ever regret having punished?" The majority (15/24) reported regretting punishing under certain circumstances. Several main types of circumstances were mentioned including punishing because of a general bad mood, or punishing too harshly or severely, or making a mistake punishing, like punishing the wrong child. Nine respondents had no regrets over punishing. This question was not applicable for three respondents because their children were too young.

Utilizing inappropriate forms of punishment was the main regret mentioned (7). Inappropriate forms of punishment included harsh or severe punishment like not feeding a child or spanking too severely. One of these respondents reported trying not to show her children when she felt badly about punishing.

Another main regret reported was punishing out of anger or a bad mood (6). One parent mentioned really understanding what was meant by child

abuse when she punished out of anger. Another respondent stated there had been a period in her life when she was punishing all the time out of irritability because of other pressures. One parent maintained that if punishment out of anger was not a usual occurrence it was not too bad on the child because children are so resilient. This parent disagreed strongly with the statement that one punished out of love.

The third circumstance involving regrets was punishing the wrong child or punishing for an accident (4). Several of these respondents stated that apologizing had not been easy.

The second category was having no regrets for punishing (9). Several respondents stated feeling justified in punishing for persistant behaviors. One stated that punishment was a necessary evil.

In sum, a surprising majority indicated regrets for punishing under circumstances where they had used an extreme form of punishment or had punished out of anger. However, a considerable number reported no regrets in punishing. An awareness of the potential for child abuse was also mentioned by several parents. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 10, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relations were found between parent's sex and if the parent regretted punishing (see Table 10, Appendix C).

Perceptual Dimension

This last group of questions explores the relation between several child variables, including age, sex and birth order of the child and parental disciplinary practices.

Question 11. Divergent viewpoints on the relation between the child's age and parental punishment are revealed in responses to question 11: "Have you made any distinctions between punishing your children at diff-

erent ages?" All respondents reported making distinctions in punishing their children at different ages (27). Even those respondents with young babies speculated they would make distinctions. Several different philosophies of punishment were described including: younger children needed physical punishment, while older children needed reasoning types of discipline. A variation of this idea was that younger children should not be physically punished, but older children should, and that if the problem exhibited was related to the child's age, so should the form of discipline. Several respondents also stated that distinctions in punishing should be based upon the child's personality. Two respondents maintained that the only distinctions they made were based on their children's personalities.

The most commonly described viewpoint suggested physical punishment was the most effective disciplinary tool for younger children (13). Many respondents described physical punishment as necessary to get the child's attention and the only form of punishment that the child could relate to. Since older children can be reasoned with, other forms of punishment are much more effective with them such as loss of priviledges or restrictions, according to these respondents. Several respondents also mentioned that the child's personality influenced the type of punishment utilized. One respondent contended that parents needed to get their bluff established early and make their children afraid of something. According to this respondent, if this was not done all the talking and reasoning would do no good. Another stated that discipline should be harder when children are younger so they can 'learn the ropes.' The actual age when physical punishment was no longer necessary varied considerably from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 years.

A viewpoint opposite to physical punishment for younger children was reported (6). These parents suggested that severe or physical punish-

ment might harm the child. Also, since the child did not know why he was being punished at an early age, it was foolish to punish physically. Two respondents mentioned that children should only be spanked when they are older and can understand what they have done wrong.

The remaining respondents indicated making distinctions in punishing at different ages because different types of problems behaviors were exhibited (6). Age was also mentioned as influencing the child's ability to understand what was wrong. Several respondents reported holding different expectations developmentally which influenced the form and amount of punishment used.

In sum, all respondents reported making distinctions in punishing their children at different ages. Most respondents suggested physical punishment was necessary for younger children and the only way to get their attention. Whereas, different techniques of punishment can be used with older children because they can reason. The age of reason where physical punishment was no longer necessary was quite arbitrary, ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10. A few respondents mentioned that the distinctions they made in punishing resulted entirely from the interaction between the child's age and personality. The most interesting and surprising finding was a rationale opposite to the most common response pattern, that is, younger children should not be punished physically because they cannot reason, but physical punishment may be appropriate with older children. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 11, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relations were found between sex of the parent and punishment practices related to the child's age (see Table 11, Appendix C). The use of physical punishment on younger children was reported by 7 of the males and 6 of the females.

Question 12. The effect of children's birth order upon punishment practices is explored in question 12: "Have you made any distinctions in punishing your children based on their birth order?"

Responses were divided almost equally between yes and no. Twelve respondents reported making distinctions based on birth order, but the type of distinctions varied. Ten respondents reported not making any distinctions at all in punishing their children based on birth order. This question was not applicable to five respondents who only had one child.

While 12 respondents indicated making distinctions, the type of distinctions varied. One group (4) reported disciplining their first born less. One respondent described being too permissive with her first child in not punishing often enough. Another indicated that with each additional child, she found herself punishing more. One respondent mentioned that she had disciplined her second child for more things and more harshly, but explained that this might have been due to not wanting this child.

A second group described an opposite trend. These respondents (5) maintained they had been harder and punished their first born more than their second. Two respondents indicated observing the same trend in their own family. Several respondents indicated they had expected too much from their first child. One reported expecting less with each successive child.

The three remaining respondents acknowledges making distinctions in punishing their children based on birth order but did not describe any type of pattern. One reported learning from the first child and as a result tried to be more understanding with the second child.

Ten respondents reported not making any distinctions in punishing

based on birth order. Four maintained only making distinctions based on personality differences. Two reported trying to treat their children equally. One stated that she tried to 'hand it to her second child just as much as she did with the first, even though it would be easier to let things slide with the second.'

In sum, these responses are almost equally divided between having and not having made distinctions in disciplining children as a result of their birth order. The interesting pattern here involves disciplining the first born either more or less strictly. Respondents mentioned they had either expected too much from their first born or not enough. Generally, most respondents described making changes in their disciplinary practices. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented it Figure 12, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. No significant relationship was found between the sex of the parent and distinctions in disciplinary practices arising from the children's birth order (see Table 12, Appendix C).

Question 13. Whether or not parents are aware of making distinctions in disciplinary practices based upon the child's sex is examined in question 13: " Do you make any distinctions in how you discipline your female children as compared with your male children?"

All respondents (15) with children of both sexes reported they had not made any distinctions in disciplining based on the child's sex. This question was not applicable to 12 respondents because they either only had one child or all their children were of the same sex. These respondents did speculate, however. Four indicated that their children might exhibit different types of behaviors because of their sex and so their discipline of these behaviors might be somewhat different. The remaining respondents (7) did not think they would make any distinctions in disci-

plining. One respondent described being strongly motivated toward nonsexist child rearing.

Six respondents mentioned their female children had exhibited different types of behaviors than their male children, but these behaviors were not disciplined any differently. One respondent reported that females were less mobile than males and responded to stimuli differently. Several respondents indicated that the differences in their children were actually a result of their personality and not their gender. One respondent stated that she expected her children to mind whether they were male or female. Another indicated observing others treating male children more harshly than female children and responded that he thought that this was unfair.

Generally, this probe did not differentiate respondents. Several respondents reported an awareness of nonsexist literature and its effects on their thinking and discipline. All respondents indicated that they would not discipline any differently on the basis of the child's sex. The complete phenomenological response pattern breakdown is presented in Figure 13, Appendix B.

Statistical analysis. Since this probe did not differentiate respondents, no statistical analysis was conducted.

General Summary

Generally, as was suggested from the literature review, the questions revealed quite divergent rationales, feelings and punishment practices. Close examination of parental feelings reveals that the affectional states of parents as a result of stress, frustration, etc., may play as great a role in the disciplinary encounter as the child's behavior. Statistical analysis between response patterns to the questions and the parent's sex produced nonsignificant results.

Characterization of Extreme Attitudes on Punishment

A characterization of extreme attitudes toward punishment of children was derived from the group data. The characterization of intensely punitive attitudes may be represented as follows (1) The parent shows little or no concern for the child as an independent human being entitled to fundamental rights and respect. (2) The parent upholds absolute rules, regardles of the child's ability to understand these rules. (3) Punishment depends upon the parent's mood, level of frustration, irritability, etc. The child is, thus, an object of the parent's feelings and actions regardless of the behavior exhibited. (4) Punishment is viewed as the only proper method to mold, train and control the child. (5) Punishment itself is seen as a value, that is, a necessary parenting activity for the child's good. (6) More concern may be expressed over other's perception of this parent's control of his/her child, than over the child's needs. (This may result because the child is viewed as an extension of that parent and/or because of the parent's need to be in good standing with others.) (7) The parent views the child primarily as an object to be controlled or manipulated to suit parental needs and/or the demands of society. Very little, if any, empathy is expressed for the child.

On the other hand, characterization of extremely mild or permissive attitudes toward the punishment indicates quite different considerations (1) The parent's primary concern is for the child as a worthy human being. (2) The parent tries to understand and act in accord with the child's developmental limits; that is, the parent does not demand that the child function beyond its developmental stage or capacity. (3) The parent believes that the child needs clearly delineated rules and

guidelines for his/her safety or welfare. (4) The parent incorporates his/her understanding of the child into the actual discipline and structure of these rules, and thus does not reify the rules. (5) The parent does not view punishment as the sole method for controlling the child. (6) The parent is flexible and introspective in evaluating the utility and benefit of established rules and methods of discipline. (7) Sensitivity and empathy are expressed for the child and his/her needs which is reflected in disciplinary practices. The parent-child relationship is viewed as supportive and nurturant.

The previous descriptions reveal two quite opposite viewpoints on children and punishment. The resulting constructions do not necessarily characterize how a particular individual thinks about punishment, but rather are a blend of rationales and approaches.

To provide insight into how different attitudes on punishment may be reflected in, and influence the nature of the parent-child relationship and disciplinary practices, two interviews determined as representing the most extreme attitudes on punishment are described and examined for their relevancy to the preceding constructions.

Parent 1

In this interview (Code #9) the parent expressed extremely intense attitudes on the punishment of children.

Subject description. This subject is a thin 28 year old housewife, mother of two children (male 7 months, female 3) who reported attending college for over two years. Her husband was currently in graduate school and affiliated with the military. During the interview this parent was feeding her youngest child, and constantly watching her older daughter's activities. The baby was repeatedly reprimanded verbally and physically for touching objects. The little girl was quite quiet and asked if she

could be asked some questions. This parent generally conveyed an aura of confidence and authority on the subject matter. She was quite articulate and appeared to enjoy the forum for discussing her views on child rearing, as reflected in her initial statements when contacted.

General substantive characterization. This parent-child relationship might be appropriately described as a rivalry for control between the parent and her children. Children are viewed as requiring punishment in order to develop into well adjusted and mature adults with respect for authority. Disciplinary practices are related to the parent's affectional state. Little awareness is expressed of the child's developmental capacities.

This respondent's general attitudes on others and society provide a compelling and complete picture of her conceptualization of punishment. In discussing other parents and their children, she contends that their parent-to-child relationships are frightening. Other parents are depicted as too permissive; not having proper control of their children and not starting discipline young enough with their children. Predictions are interjected that neighbor children will turn into "problem teenagers." Most of the children this woman baby sits are described as quite impudent, with their parents to blame. According to this subject "they (other parents) are raising a bunch of little monsters and do not realize what they are doing." Reading too many baby books is blamed as the source of other parents' problems. She states "I personally feel, that is what is wrong with some of the little monsters running around here, their parents have read too many baby books...it's a real shame what parents are doing with their children."

This parent comments that child abuse is the thing that upsets her the most. She offers as a solution that the parents ought to have their

children permanently removed from them and in addition be "strung up and sterilized so they can't have any more children." According to her, "Anybody that could actually physically abuse a child, now spanking is something else, but beating or getting mad and not feeding a child for a certain period of time, now that is horrible."

Generally, with respect to others and society this parent appears hostile towards anyone with different values than her own. The world is filled with uncontrollable and frightening people.

In this subject's description of her own parents' discipline, several basic conceptual attitudes of punishment emerge. The concept of punishment as a value and as the only method of controlling children seems clear from her rationalization of her parents' practices. Also, she indicates that obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues for a child. The subject's parents are reported as being much stricter than she is with her own children. "...Psychology you just didn't use at all evidently, with post war babies right off the bat. It was either you minded or get spanked. It (spanking) is just good training. If you don't teach them respect for some kind of authority when they are little, it is just a little late to start when they get older. A child who doesn't have respect for anything will not be a well adjusted adult."

She described one severe incident at the age of four, where she was whipped until "nearly blistered" by her father. In this incident she had poured a new bottle of cologne on a new mattress because she wanted "to make it smell good for them (her parents)." She ruined the mattress, wasted all the cologne and money her parents had saved to buy it, according to her description. Also she stated: "I thought he was going to beat me half to death before he quit. At the time I didn't think I deserved it. I couldn't understand, but I understand it now. I don't harbor any real

feelings toward my dad about it. I can understand since I have had my own. The urge to quote "kill," does exist in parents."

Throughout this discussion of attitudes and practices, several of the identified categories of negative attitudes are identified. Obedience and respect for authority, and punishment as a value and sole method of discipline are constantly repeated themes. Physical punishment is described as the only method one can use to make a point with younger children. This rationale includes: "Because if you can't get your bluff in on them and make them afraid of something, then later on you can talk until you are blue in the face and they don't have a fear in the back of their mind of some kind of punishment, then all the talking and reasoning is not going to do any good." Rules are upheld despite the child's inability to understand them. This is indicated when the parent states:"I like to do my physical punishing while they are younger and by the time they are two and a half, three, then I can reason or threaten if I have to..."

Descriptions of inappropriate behavior reveal any rule violation (which is arbitrary) may result in punishment which is unrelated to the child's ability to understand. According to this respondent, the hands and the bottom are the only two places- "made to spank, mostly for not doing what I tell them to... If something is a 'no-no,' touching the nicknacks that I have sitting around, there is going to be some form of punishment... I don't ask them to do something unless it is for a good reason. Now a baby, practically, everything is 'no' for the youngest since he is just learning." The baby (7 month old son) is described as more 'pigheaded' than the daughter. The parent reports: "He will do something like going back until his hands are nearly blistered and it does not seem to bother him too much."

In response to the question, if the parent has made any distinctions

punishing her children, the subject states: " I try to hand it to my son just as much as I did my daughter... I think I am running a pretty tight race." The subject maintains that it might be easier to let things slide with the second child, but that would not be fair to the parent and child.

Responding to how she feels about punishing, she maintained that while she hated to punish,she hated worse not to because she did not want other people to think that she could not control her children. It is interesting that she does not express any concern here for the child. Social acceptability and perception are primary concerns expressed. The child is a reflection or extension of the parent in the social situation and thus, social approval of the child is crucial. The subject reports: "I never let them (children) see my indecision because that defeats the whole purpose of it... They may want me to change my mind or think that I will get tired of doing something to them... They are smarter than we are, I am a firm believer of that."

The parent described a situation where she lost her temper and felt she was too extreme with her son. She states she was sorry she did it, but it was really too late. The incident involved the son waking up for approximately two weeks at four in the morning and playing. The parent states: "He normally sleeps until 8...I just simply lost my temper a couple of days ago... I turned him over at four, and I was mad. I paddled him and wouldn't even change his pants... I just made him lay there in wet pants and cry himself back to sleep."

In sum, children are a symbol of the enemy, trying to con or manipulate their way. The parent states: "letting children run all over you is just not using common sense... One does not know how he will react with kids, unless you have lived with a child and know their way of getting away with things, which can look perfectly innocent to someone else,

and yet you know they are conning you." Briefly then, it seems that this subject is intolerant of any ambiguities in the parent-child relationship. Hostility is expressed toward anyone with different values other than her own. Children are primarily objects to be controlled or manipulated to suit the parent's needs, and for the demands of society.

Parent 2

This second interview characterization reflects more positive attitudes on punishment.

Subject description. This subject is a 65 year old professor. She had been divorced for approximately twenty-five years, raising three children virtually on her own. Attractively dressed and groomed, she appeared as much younger than 65. The interview was very relaxed. She communicated a sense of calm introspective thinking and described a democratic, sort of grass roots philosophy about children. Her analogies and descriptions were quite enjoyable.

General substantive characterization. This parent expressed interest and concern for children as individuals. The parent-child relationship was described as being democratic, where children were guided by well delineated rules. As they became older they shared responsibility in assessing the rules and appropriate discipline. Discipline practices were geared to the child's stage of development.

She was aware of the problems parents encounter disciplining their children and expressed concern over the confusion created by the abundance of different child rearing philosophies. This becomes apparent in the the following statements: " I think many people are uptight themselves. They are quite confused by all the different approaches and statements made by experts in the literature, etc. There is alot lacking in alot of parents in knowing what children are like. Many people just seem to

be confused about what is right, or the best thing to do which could be understandable by the abundance of different positions... In the past there weren't as many experts. People had more confidence in their own ability. Now, everyone is telling parents they are doing a bad job. It takes alot of time and some aren't giving their children the time."

According to this subject one problem that many parents create arises from the use of too many rules. Using driving as an analogy, she stated that if there were stop signs at every block pretty soon everyone would begin ignoring them.

Her own parents were described as "fairly permissive," utilizing a democratic philosophy. She states: " I think it all goes back to a democratic philosophy, each according to his ability and certainly a sense of justice and fair play... My father was a very gentle person... Liking children and knowing what they are like you aren't going to make too many mistakes. One should expect a certain amount of childishness in children."

On the topic of the most severe disciplinary experience with her parents, she was unable to remember ever being spanked. Being put to bed in the middle of the day was cited as the most severe punishment experience. She does remember seeing one of her siblings being spanked and recalled being quite scared.

The subject described punishment as necessary when " the safety or welfare of the child is in danger, or when the child willfully disobeys rules that have been clearly delineated." Grounding was the main form of punishment utilized when the children were older. She states: " I tried to set the limits ahead of time. Sometimes I would end up lecturing. I think that sometimes they might have rather had a spanking. As they had gotten older I tried to explain why they could not do or have a particular thing." The subject also reports letting the children have a

role in decisions of discipline and priviledges. Car accidents involving the children were reported as causing her the most concern.

She reported that she did use spanking a few times when language did not work. She explained: "It is an insult to a child to spank after a certain age. It is really an affront to their dignity and wrong to punish in front of a friend. I hate to see children embarrassed. My feelings on children acting up in front of their parents are, that I usually let them let off feelings in the home. I'd rather have them let off steam at home, rather than do it someplace else."

This parent also mentioned her awareness of others' perceptions of her disciplinary practices, but did not base or alter her practices as a result. She reported: "My friends said that I was too easy with my children. But, anything that I felt firm about I enforced."

She described physical activity like cleaning, pounding the desk, taking a walk or swearing a little as typical reactions when she was angry. Although she reported: "I don't get angry too many times any more. It is usually at an injustice to someone else. As I have gotten older some things just don't seem as important."

She described one incident where she lost her temper with her son (at age four) and spanked him, seeing her handprint on his buttocks. She reported being so upset that she just sat down and cried. Describing general feelings about punishing she reported: " I felt bad most of the time because I felt I hadn't given good limits or guidance and I didn't like to punish. Sometimes when I did, I was maybe angry and maybe something else was bothering me. I really felt guilty about those cases where my anger just happened to come out. The children are pretty resilient, and if it isn't a usual thing it isn't too bad. I don't agree with the saying that 'I'm punishing you because I love you.' "

Generally, this parent stated: "... As children grow older they should assume more responsibility for themselves and then parents should let them have it. The best way of knowing whether a method works is by examining how the children turn out. Fortunately, I think mine turned out well... They are all very responsible and independent which is what I was trying to help foster."

This parent's attitudes on punishment indicate an interest in what is appropriate for the child, that is, a sensitivity to the child's developmental stages. A democratic philosophy in punishing is described where different methods are utilized and rules are flexible.

General Summary

From the constructed characterizations and related interviews, the quality and range of attitudes on punishment are generally represented. These attitudes appear to bear a direct relationship to the reported child rearing practices according to these parent's descriptions. This suggests the importance of understanding these attitudes because of their pervasive influence.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

In general, the material gathered in the interviews offers dramatic support for the idea that punishing children is a complex activity that creates ambiguous dilemmas for virtually every parent. Even the few parents interviewed who appeared to have very firm ideas on the subject, revealed deep-seated ambivalence about the way they justified their convictions. More impressive yet is the fact that most individuals did not have firm convictions, but expressed beliefs that varied inconsistently as a result of personal experience, social pressures, etc.

Thus, as noted in the introduction and theoretical review, despite all the how-to books and research, punishment and/or disciplining children remains a profoundly individual experience reflecting the uniquely individual life history of each parent. It seems clear that the chaotic and confusing literature is matched by the chaotic and confusing experiences of parents.

The ambiguities in practices and attitudes appear to run so deep that no outstanding distinctions were observable in this study with respect to demographic variables such as age, sex or level of formal education. There is a non significant tendency for males to endorse harsher attitudes. However, in relation to the entire material there are no clear differences when it comes to reported punishing behaviors. Indeed, the one parent identified as most severe was a female.

In the following sections of this chapter the three main dimensions of punishment: (1) past disciplinary experiences and influential factors, (2) the feelings, actions and rationales for punishing, and (3) characteristics of the child, will each be taken up in turn. Major findings concerning these dimensions are summarized in connection with the develop-

ment of some general notions on punishment, thus providing insight into the substantive or apparent meanings of punishment. In addition to this relatively concrete discussion of findings a final concluding discussion and interpretation of the implications of these findings suggests directions for further research and practical action.

It bears mention that responses did not always follow the sort of logical order outlined above. The reason for this as indicated by Rappoport (personal communication) in his study of Vietnam veterans, is that whenever intensely emotional and meaningful material is being discussed individuals do not calmly follow the protocol. They tend to start ventillating their tensions immediately. This is almost like a projective and or clinical situation. Such reactions were especially obvious in this study when individuals spontaneously discussed the feelings associated with their punishment practices.

Past Experiences Being Disciplined

It seems quite clear that in child discipline activities individuals are reliving their own personal history by attempting to either react against it or by adopting familial practices. This is suggested throughout the responses relating to what these individuals experienced as children. More specifically, 19 of 27 parents specified that their own family experiences had exerted a major influence upon their practices and attitudes. A little over one third of these individuals protested against their parents' practices stating they had modified their own actions to be less harsh, while the others reported they had modeled their practices after those of their parents. Some individuals maintained they could now understand why their parents had been severe with them, while others reported still remembering the fear and apprehension they felt over their parent's loss of control. Even here, ambivalence and confusion are obvious.

One of the most revealing examples of the ambivalence individuals feel toward their parents as a result of past disciplinary experiences is expressed in a kind of Freudian slip. After describing a disciplinary encounter with her father, where one parent states: "I thought that he was going to beat me half to death," she continued by adding: "I don't harbor any real feelings toward my dad about it." It seems as though she was probably expressing a very negative sense of no feeling or indifference toward her father, because she described the situation with a great deal of emotion, as if it still carried strong affect for her.

Additionally, while a majority of parents asserted their past had involved harsher discipline they were ambivalent about whether the "old days" were good or bad. A fair number did think the past was better but it was unclear whether this was in spite of or because of the harsher disciplinary practices. Also, most parents stated that disciplinary practices were more permissive today as compared with their past. However "permissive" discipline implied a variety of different meanings, suggesting either that practices had improved due to increased concern over the child's welfare or deteriorated as a result of weakening parental control.

Generally, contrasts between individual background experiences and influences were quite pronounced. Yet, no matter how different these experiences were they all seemed to lead people to similar kinds of existential dilemmas. For example, the two parents characterized as expressing extreme opposite attitudes on punishment both described dilemmas arising from concern over others' perceptions of their disciplinary practices. Specifically, the parent identified as being least punitive disclosed her concern over several of her friends telling her she was "too easy with her children." Even though she maintained that the

pressure of her friends had not influenced her to alter her practices, and despite the fact that her children were grown, she still apparently saw this as a very significant or salient aspect of her experience.

On the other hand, the parent characterized as expressing harsh attitudes and practices described an analogous dilemma in punishing. For this parent conflict arose because while she hated to punish her children, she hated worse not to because she did not want others to think that she did not have control of her children. Additionally, she maintained that she could not let her children see her indecision for fear they might take advantage of her.

In sum, individually and collectively all the parents expressed a kind of general existential dilemma, because their experiences were intense and had mixed meanings. That is, their dilemmas were not one dimensional, but complex, reflecting a multiplicity of dimensions.

The confusion and ambivalence individuals may feel about their own childhood experiences become quite obvious as they raise their own children. When deciding on appropriate disciplinary and/or punishment practices, and trying to agree on disciplinary actions before and after the fact, parents are forced to confront and compare their values. Thus, in disciplining and/or punishing, dilemmas arise because the individual's entire value system may be at stake. Moreover, parents are constantly encountering contradictions between ideal goals or values and more immediate considerations.

Reflecting back for a moment on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, it is striking to see little or no discussion of the value problems and emotional tensions which really comprise the core of punishment dilemmas facing parents. The closest thing in the literature to a discussion of values and their relationship to practices is in the work of Bronfen-

brenner (1961) and Baumrind (1966). Bronfenbrenner's work suggests that the method of punishing utilized can be more or less effective in instilling values. More specifically, parents using "lax or severe" methods had less influence on the values of their children than parents who used moderate control. In Baumrind's research an authoritative disciplinary approach is advocated. She suggests that the parents can produce conformity with group values in their children without any loss of the child's autonomy or assertiveness. Practically and theoretically, the utility of this information is questionable, pointing to the need for more comprehensive examination of values and discipline.

Rationales, Feelings and Reported Punishment Practices

The dilemmas parents experience in dealing with their children are expressed in their rationales for punishment, the descriptions of their feelings, and the practices followed when punishing. Confusion is obvious throughout these descriptions, but especially manifest in rationales or justifications of punishment.

At a general level, parents reported punishment was appropriate or necessary in situations where the welfare of the child was in danger and/or violations were made of family norms. However, most of the punished behaviors reported were violations of family norms. While some parents also talked about the welfare of the child, it seemed that what they really were concerned with and talking about was the welfare of the family.

Generally, the same types of transgressions (like disobedience to authority, talking back, coming late or problems with siblings) parents remembered from their own experiences being disciplined were identified as requiring punishment with their own children. It is noteworthy that these parents were replaying the same sorts of punishment they received on the same types of misbehaviors. This is in keeping with psychoanaly-

tic, sociological and historical literature. One explicit example of the literature is deMause's (1974) theory which specifically suggests that child rearing practices are actually passed from generation to generation, and procedes at different rates in different family lines, varying according to a number of different influences.

The actual forms of punishment reported as employed by parents included both physical and verbal techniques ranging from spankings to scoldings and/or the loss of priviledges. A number of individuals did describe using several different methods or combinations of methods (multiple controls) to contain inappropriate behavior. This directly supports Clifford's (1959) contention that parents generally use multiple controls during any one disciplinary encounter. However, while parents reported using several different methods, physical punishment (spanking) was the most frequently mentioned technique.

When describing their disciplinary practices many parents also disclosed that their feelings influenced and at times dominated their disciplinary practices. As an illustration of this, one parent went so far as to state that there actually were not any circumstances under which the physical punishment of children was justified. According to this parent, physical punishment only occurred as a result of parents being under stress. Another parent reported that the actual form of punishment she employed depended upon her mood and that she was more likely to use physical punishment when upset, tired or in a bad mood. Generally, these disclosures suggest that a close and complex relationship exists between feelings and disciplinary practices.

Of considerable interest are these reports by several parents that they were more likely when upset or frustrated to be extreme or harsh and use physical punishment on their children when disciplining. In

many instances practices, therefore, seemed to be a direct manifestation of the parent's feelings. That is, as long as the feelings aroused by the child in a specific situation were not too extreme, the parent's behavior was more rational and controlled. But as more extreme feelings were aroused parents seemed less aware of their choices, thus, punishment became more a reflexive non-thinking reaction. Consequently, the use of extreme or unreasonable force in the parent-child encounter apparently has more to do with the parent's emotional state quite apart from the child's specific misbehavior.

While originally intended for the third section on characteristics of the child, reports of the influence of the child's age upon disciplinary practices are included in this section because of the diverse rationales disclosed for punishing. These rationales or justifications provide considerable insight into contrasting conceptualizations of the child's developmental abilities. Specifically, all the parents reported making distinctions in punishing their children at different ages, but the nature of these distinctions varied. That is, most parents suggested physical punishment was necessary for younger children because it was the only way to relate to them or "get their attention." Physical punishment was thus, unnecessary with older children because of their reasoning abilities. However, an opposite rationale was also suggested by a substantial number of parents. According to this rationale, younger children should not be punished physically because of their inability to reason or understand what they had done wrong and because of potential adverse effects. Children should only be spanked when they are older and can understand what they have done wrong. These two opposing rationales are quite representative of the confusion mentioned earlier and are perhaps, indicative of widespread misunderstanding of developmental

psychology. Indeed, nothing in this entire project is more revealing of existing contradictions and parental dilemmas than the fact that individuals come up with logically impeccable rationales that are completely opposite to one another. And as far as is known, these contrasting justifications for physical punishment are not discussed nor substantiated anywhere in the literature. Additionally, the view advanced by a substantial number of parents: that physical punishment is an appropriate disciplinary technique for the younger child because it is the only effective way to communicate with them or control their behavior suggests that younger children, including babies, are more vulnerable or susceptible to physical punishment, and thus, perhaps extreme physical force. The age range identification of those children at risk or more vulnerable to physical punishment, surprisingly enough, coincides with statistics from cases of child abuse indicating that the most vulnerable age range for physical abuse is for children under the age of 5, and more specifically, under the age of one (Helfner and Kempe, 1968; Ferguson, D., Fleming, J., & O'Neill, D., 1972; Gil,D,. 1970).

Some of the most striking findings in the study center around the practice of physical punishment. One salient idea pervading many responses is the contention that physical punishment is essential for discipline. The view that physical punishment is a necessary and beneficial part of parenting is striking because of the apparent controversies over the appropriateness and effectiveness of physical punishment that have existed for some time. Also, the idea that a relationship exists between "ordinary" physical punishment and the more extreme occurrences of force in the parent-child relationship gains substantial support throughout discussions of feelings and descriptions of extreme disciplinary encounters. This relationship may be most appropriately rep-

resented as on a continuum where child abuse, the most extreme case or "tip of the iceberg" of more commonly practiced and accepted forms of force is located at one end.

While individuals generally mentioned expressing their anger or frustration either verbally, physically or by withdrawing from the situation, a variety of different factors were cited as influencing the mode of expression. The most noteable factor was the person involved in the situation. A considerable number of parents indicated feeling freer to express their anger openly, either physically or verbally, with their children than anyone else. This seems to be a very important finding because it suggests that less restraint is maintained with children than with anyone else. That is, this suggests that when these parents were angered,control or restraint was more consciously exercised with other adults,perhaps from fear of legal action or retaliation. This phenomena introduces profound considerations for understanding the occurrence of physical force in the parent-child interaction. That is, the use of "ordinary" and/or extreme physical force is safest with children because of their lack of power physically and socially.

Regarding the actual occurrence of extreme or unreasonable force in the parent-child relationship, 81% of the parents indicated they had lost their temper or been too extreme with their children at least once. And, 77% of these parents reported being physically extreme with their children. The majority of parents who had been physically extreme blamed personal stress or their affectional state for their unreasonable or inappropriate reactions, not the child's behavior. These results, interestingly enough, are very similar to those reported by Gelles (1977). His study of violence in the family, based on a nationwide representative sample, showed that 73% of the parents with children between the ages of

3 and 17, mentioned at least one violent occurrence in the course of raising the child. Gelles' general contention is that violence is an extreme and common phenomena in the U.S.. However, his study does not examine additional contributing factors in the disciplinary encounters of force such as the parent's affectional state or rationale for punishing.

General summary. Most generally, findings from the present study suggest that abusive parents are not necessarily people lacking in love or concern, but only lacking in their capacity to reliably maintain consistent self restraint with their young children. For example, the man who reported shaking his 16 month old baby out of frustration over her prolonged crying, the woman who spanked her child for waking up at 4 a.m., or the woman who physically threw her children in their rooms, all of these individuals indicated that their actions resulted from failure of self restraint.

One of the primary concerns expressed before this study was conducted was whether parents would admit to using inappropriate, unreasonable or severe forms of punishment. Several different explanations may account for the number of individuals who responded candidly. One is that parents may have admitted these actions because they felt they were acceptable or tolerable ways of bringing up children. The normative acceptability of hitting one's child was suggested by Gil (1970, see Chapter 2, page 18) to be a major factor contributing to the high levels of parent-child violence. However, another explanation for individual reports of extreme or unreasonable punishment practices is that individuals were seeking confirmation that their dilemmas were not unique, i.e., that other parents were having comparable difficulties and conflicts in disciplining. Indeed, several parents did inquire directly if other parents had similar experiences or feelings. This can be interpreted as yet another sign of

the insecurity and uncertainty parents feel. Awareness that other individuals are having the same problems ("misery loves company") may be the only source of reassurance available. Surely this phenomena also suggests why there is so much conformity in child rearing, and why individuals are so concerned with the opinions of others. Furthermore, it certainly explains the consistent appeal and high sales of how-to books, from Spock to Dobson, etc. That is, individuals are desparately seeking reassurance, as was frankly stated by one mother who commented that she and her husband read every book they could find on child rearing and discipline when expecting their first child. This parent emphasized that she was especailly disappointed by the inadequate information on discipline and punishment.

In specifically discussing their feelings when punishing,a majority of parents reported not feeling good about punishing because of losing their temper or punishing inappropriately. In addition, a sizeable number described their conviction that punishment was a social responsibility, necessary for proper training of the child. In general, while most parents reported they did not like to punish for a variety of reasons, they did adhere to the principle of punishment as a necessary disciplinary technique.

In sum, with respect to themes on how past experiences influenced present practices, it seems that individuals generally attempted to relive their own personal experiences by either modifying or rejecting their parent's practices, or by modeling their practices after those of their parents. And while individual background experiences contrasted sharply, all respondents seemed to experience similar kinds of dilemmas in punishing. Themes analyzed under the heading of rationales, feelings and practices, clearly indicated that practices and feelings were so interrelated that the

artificial breakdowns according to these different headings did not work. The most noteable conclusion is that extreme practices grew out of extreme feelings. The more extreme feeling aroused, the more likely it became that self restraint would be weakened and that practices would become violent.

Child Characteristics

The most important characteristic of the child that clearly determines the form of punishment used is the child's age. According to a majority of parents, the older the child the less frequently physical punishment is used. This finding is supported by the literature (Clifford, 1959). On the other hand, 6 of the parents said that physical punishment is more effective when the child is older. This second rationale is not substantiated anywhere in the literature, but certainly merits investigation to determine if it is a commonly held belief by the general population or just specific to the present study. Additionally, the age of reason- the pivot point where practices change- was mentioned by respondents as being anywhere between $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10. This indicated the arbitrariness and variability of common views concerning child development.

Birth order of the child was another general factor that related to punishment practices. A considerable number of parents reported that discipline with the first child was either more or less strict than it was with the later borns. Uncertainty over punishing, discipline and child rearing may be reflected by parents with their first child by either over or under reacting in their general disciplinary approaches. One illustration of a parent's conscious attempt not to differentiate in discipline is revealed in the statement that "I try to hand it to the second child just as much as I did with the first child."

The rationale that the first child is disciplined less strictly than the second child does not fit the evidence in the literature which suggests the first child is generally disciplined more harshly (Schaller, 1977). However, in the present study almost an equal number of parents cited disciplining the first child more or less strictly (5 more strictly, 4 less strictly). The idea that the second child is punished less harshly is usually seen as evidence that the parent is less anxious. Several parents did mention that their expectations had been altered toward leniency by their experiences with their first child. However, it may also be that by the sheer force of repetition, a sort of gradual deescalation or diffusion of the anxieties that tended to create stress occurred. Moreover, as parents mature, it seems likely that they may become better able to cope with their own emotional ups and downs. This material implies that the first child may be more vulnerable to extreme or abusive treatment. As far as is known, this hypothesis has not been investigated in any of the child abuse research.

The child's personality, in the sense of how the parent construes the child, was a third characteristic identified by parents as affecting their disciplinary practices. Parents were not questioned directly about the child's personality, but a substantial number spontaneously identified this as a major factor influencing their discipline. That is, parents repeatedly stated that their disciplinary practices differed depending upon the child. For example, one male reported that when angry or upset he reacted physically more often with one of his daughters who he described as "really obnoxious at times." The fact that the child may be construed in line with the parent's cumulative experiences is vividly revealed in one respondent's explanation of her uncaring attitudes and disciplinary practices with her son. She described becoming pregnant with her son after

being raped by her first husband. She was aware of using harsh and unreasonable discipline with him because she had not wanted him and because when she looked at him he reminded her of this traumatic experience.

Other parents said they were more severe with one of their children because that child seemed to only be able to respond or understand physical punishment. Also, some parents stated that their children would not respond to physical punishment because they were either too sensitive or insensitive, i.e., the children did not care what was done to them. However, none of the parents reported that the sex of their child had any effect upon their disciplinary practices. This finding does not correspond with other work (Gelles, 1977) which reported definite differences in discipline practices applied to males and females. One tentative explanation for this result may be that parents are responding to the increased emphasis and publicity on nonsexist child rearing practices and thus, are reflecting socially desired responses. On the other hand, the differences that parents may be making between males and females, if occurring, may be so subtle or ingrained they are unaware of them.

Conclusions and Implications

The contributions of the present work are fourfold. First, as suggested in the literature review, there has been little or no systematic effort to integrate or interpret studies with respect to how parents think and feel about punishing. Therefore, a major aim of this project was to critique prior research on punishment and child abuse, identifying the gaps and thus,the resulting confusion that exists for parents at the practical level. Additionally, some general notions on punishment were developed as reflected in reports of feelings, rationales and practices providing insight into the apparent or substantive meaning of punishment. In sum, the literature provides no adequate theoretical framework for

analyzing punishment. What does exist is a great deal of material on what may best be called the "technology" of punishing, but which seems virtually useless for practical purposes, as has been shown by the results of this study.

Second, this study offers some concrete answers to some fairly concrete questions. For example, responses to the question concerning whether there is a relationship between parental feelings and discipline practices independent of the child's behavior indicated that many times parental practices were a direct manifestation of their feelings. Also, while the responses did not demonstrate that the relation between child abuse and "ordinary" force is a continuum, it does suggest that if there is any dichotomy here, it is very hard to define. Inquiries into distinctions between male/female discipline did not reveal any significant results. And responses to the general questions aimed at examining the various dimensions of punishment suggested that diverse punishment practices reflect a combination of complex rationales, characteristics of the child and background experiences.

A third contribution of this work is that it has yielded a fairly substantial phenomenology of the dilemmas parents face in this critical aspect of child rearing. Punishing children is one aspect of child rearing where parents do have discretion. Areas such as feeding, educating, etc., are all more or less entailed, whereas when punishing the parent has a variety of behaviors or reactions at his/her disposal. Thus, there is real existential dilemma, because there is real existential choice.

The fourth contribution of this study is methodological. That is, the quasi-phenomenological analysis of in-depth interviews was successful in providing concrete information on the feelings, rationales and justifi-

cations that parents are currently operating under in dealing with their children, that could not have been ascertained through observational techniques and/or administration of attitude scales or inventories. More specifically, a valuable contribution of this method arises from its open-ended framework that permits individuals to identify or suggest the areas or problems that are important for them. Individuals were not constrained by the investigator's particular emphasis on areas in the interview, but encouraged to discuss any additional areas of concern. The fact that individuals would identify additional concerns is supported for example by identification of the personality of the child as an additional child characteristic that influenced their practices. In addition, individuals did not respond to the artificial breakdowns between practices and feelings, which suggested that the two areas are closely related.

The approach of allowing individuals to identify what is significant for them is especially valuable in an area where the existing information is confusing and inadequate. That is, it is valuable in providing direction for future research at the applied level. In addition, it contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence or are related to this particular phenomena, punishing children, at the theoretical level.

In general, the present study can be seen as laying the groundwork for future research with a more specific form. Especially important would be development of an appropriate theoretical framework and more detailed investigation of the value dilemmas arising in punishment. More specifically, the following research problems appear promising: investigation of rationales or attitudes concerning the influence of the child's age and birth order, and the relationship between child abuse and birth order.

The present work is limited because it deals with self reports

(nonobservational technique). Questions of interviewer bias and whether or not respondents actually told the truth can not be ignored or explained away. Yet, it seems doubtful that many parents would report being too severe or extreme with their children when they were not. That is, it seems safe to assume that social desireability considerations would lead people to minimize more serious expressions of force or violence.

Another limitation of the phenomenological approach employed for this study lies in the potential for distortion in the verbal responses of the participants and the interpretations of the investigator. But the internal consistency in the patterns of the results obtained gives considerable assurance that if such distortions did occur, they were not extreme. Furthermore, by submitting the analyses to another professional psychologist for independent review, the possibilities of investigator distortion were also reduced. Clearly, however, this study could have been improved if more time were spent observing parents with their children.

This study is alos limited because it does not employ a large or representative sample. But sampling a relatively small number of individuals does not seem to have curtailed the meanings that were the focus of the study. That is, the findings about the thoughts, actions and feelings involved in punishing children seem to provide a useful inventory of how punishment is construed by many parents. Actually, it seems that every possible thought, action and feeling involved in punishing has been described. Therefore, while the study is limited in terms of <u>individuals</u> sampled, the <u>meanings of punishment</u> available to most people are represented in considerable detail.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for Parental Attitudes, Feelings and Reported Actions

Introduction. As I explained, I am doing research for my thesis on how parents deal with their children. Today we often hear from experts and others that parents use excessive punishment on their children or that parents are too permissive with their children. That is, they do not use enough discipline with their children. What I am interested in finding out is what a sample of people from Kansas State University think about dealing with children. Because I want you to speak as freely as possible and because often times statements can be misinterpreted all of your responses will be confidential. Each questionnaire will be coded by number only, not name. (Give subject informed consent form to read and sign while obtaining background information.)

Background information.

Code #

Age

Sex

Educational background

Occupation

Spouse's Occupation

Sex of children and ages

Questions.

1. As compared with what you remember when you were a child how do you feel children are punished today? (If the question is unclear it can be rephrased as do you think children are punished more harshly or more permissively today?)
2. In what ways do you think things were harder when you were a child?
3. What was the most severe punishment or the worst thing that you can remember that happened to you when you were a child?
4. What types of things did you get in trouble for? (Probe for concrete example.)

5. How do you typically react when you are angry? (Describe in detail.)

6. Under what circumstances do you feel it is necessary to punish children? Under these circumstances what did you actually do? (Probe for concrete example.)

7. Can you remember the most recent experience that you have had disciplining a child? What did you do to handle the situation?

8. Have you ever punished your children too much? That is, have you ever lost your temper, etc., or been too extreme?

9. Generally how do you feel when punishing?

10. Do you ever regret having punished? (Explain)

11. Have you made any distinctions between punishing your children at diffrern ages? (Probe, do you think there should be distinctions made between disciplining a four year old, for example, as compared with a much younger or much older child?

12. Have you made any distinctions in punishing your children based on their birth order? That is, do you remember disciplining your first born any differently than the middle or the youngest child?

13. Do you make any distinctions in how you discipline your female children as compared with your male children?

14. From where would you say your position on punishment originates? (Example)

15. Interviewer's impressions.

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APPENDIX B

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSES

FIGURE 1

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 1:
As compared with what you remember when you were a child,
how do you feel children are punished today?

	Code #, Sex		Themes	
More permissively				
1.	10,	F	leans to more permissive	a. today, parents think before they say no, not so in past b. think about the child's feelings
2.	27,	F	more permissive today	a. better relationships, in the past the young did not talk, express things to adults b. healthier now to see children express self c. afraid of own father, not the case today with kids
3.	29	F	more permissive, rational	a. past and own treatment very similar, except not get as angry with own children as parents did b. population as a whole-trend people older as parents, more patient, not forced into childrearing, tend to be more rational
4.	6,	F	today more relaxed	a. own parents strict, friend's parents were balanced attitudes b. felt stifled and insecure, always was threat of punishment c. before discipline can work, has to be relationship
5.	22,	M	more permissive	a. children today not punished as often, discipline less severe
6.	5,	M	more permissive	a. can't really remember about past, except think people beat children, now there is not too much of that
7.	24,	M	more permissive today	a. less severe today even when drunk, pretty much same with own fam.
8.	19,	M	more permissive	a. people in class aware of, are more concerned about adverse effects of severe punishment, so more permissive
9.	25,	M	more permissively	a. in general children are not disciplined as much, own family same degree strictness
10.	8,	M	more	a. today use physical punishment less, physical punishment less harsh b. while abuse prevalent, less in terms of percent
11.	14,	F	more permissive	a. difficult generalize-own family different types of things strict b. punish own children more permissively than parents punished me
12.	21,	M	generally more permissive	a. however, have observed some cases children punished very harsh-exception rather than the rule
13.	13,	F	more permissively	a. too many examples parents not exert control, don't remember children in past as rowdy or uncontrollable
14.	11,	F	more permissively	a. parents afraid to say no, take'i don't love you seriously' b. have to start at an early age, upset with way parents raising
15.	4,	M	more permissively	a. alot parents do not discipline like we do, just let kids go b. used to be that parents disciplined if did something wrong
16.	9,	F	more permissively	a. neighbors very permissive, have alot of problems b. people do not start young enough with kids disciplining c. not afraid to take own children anyplace
17.	2,	F	more permissively	a. today kids much younger with social life, get more expensive things- get away with much more with parents
18.	18,	M	more permissively	a. past family more strict, except still expect alot from own kids b. too many parents threaten punish, do not punish- should carry through
19.	23,	M	too permissive	a. the acceptable has changed so radically, kids used to know what they could and could not do, were not as many outside forces b. now too much permissive education-how to handle children c. also too much meddling by outside forces- people afraid to take their children to be handled like they need to do
20.	7,	F	too permissive	a. can't think of any particular reason why
Can not compare				
21.	26,	F	tremendous range in discipline practices	a. observations some strict, some lenient b. can not say some are permissive because varies so much
22.	17,	M	depends upon viewpoint	a. punishment varies in different segments of society b. punish same with own kids as was punished
23.	1,	F	depends	a. some parents are very hard b. with own children sometimes prefers to be hard, other times not so harsh
24.	15,	M	depends, how define punishment	a. same amount of discipline with own kids as past, also similar with friends, actually a value judgment, also depends upon what the child requires-some need more punishment than others b. permissive and punishment are not opposite
25.	20,	F	people are more uptight about discipline today	a. own parents permissive b. today parents confused by all the different statements and approaches of the experts- alot parents lacking knowledge of what kids are really like- people generally confused
26.	16,	M	uncertain	a. not much difference b. some cases parents are more permissive
27.	12,	F	don't know	a. have not seen too many other parents b. those has seen do not spank their children outside difficult to determine if they are too permissive or not

FIGURE 2

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 2:
In what ways do you think things were harder
when you were a child?

Themes Code #, Sex			
Not sure harder			
1. 20,	F	not sure things harder	a. fewer competing interests in past, parents spent more time with kids b. weren't as many experts, people more confidence in own ability c. now everyone telling parents doing a bad job, take alot time raise
2. 10,	M	not sure anything harder	a. children today have got more money, have to deal with drugs today b. males and females have relationships earlier
3. 23,	M	not sure harder	a. didn't have as much as children do now, no money, were content with less, made own fun, quite a different society, worked for family b. today, see parents trying to discipline by telling not to do things instead of showing positive ways.
4. 29,	F	doesn't think harder	a. never punished unjustly, parents good reason b. parents not give up things to be parents, not resent children
Economics			
5. 8,	M	less variety stimuli	a. not alot food, not alot parental guidance, lack parental controls b. in past parents had more time to be home, not so today
6. 5,	M	now better food	a. food, different variety, son will grow with better health
7. 11,	F	less money	a. parents never had alot money, nothing extra, no candy, toys b. today parents have alot more money-buy kids everything
8. 13,	F	financially things harder	a. as result weren't able to do as many things b. both parents worked
9. 21,	M	depression	a. father lost job, things rough at home, folks were not harsh, but strict
10. 4,	M	economic, size family	a. large family, strain parents, both worked, took out on kids, tired
11. 16,	M	less money, harder	a. economically, monetary resources not great, poor transportation b. now better t.v., positive attitudes toward handicaps, more expected today c. today more interaction between children, methods changed, different expectations
12. 2,	F	financially & socially	a. parents not make much money, brothers younger & sisters got more, b. protective socially, & strict demanded know everything, expected more
Discipline			
13. 22,	M	held accountable, more tasks, responsibilities	a. worked more around house than kids today, more freedom talk today
14. 24,	M	more work, less freedom expression	a. alot work, work helped toward discipline, now difficult find work kids b. more freedom talk today, past think thoughts but not say
15. 10,	F	not allowed express self	a. parents wouldn't listen, cut & dried- no extenuating circumstances
16. 19,	M	less open communication	a. in past alot misunderstanding of children, given less chance to reason
17. 27,	F	freedom	a. as teenager felt had very little freedom, not dare do anything against
18. 14,	F	parents weren't flexible	a. had rules & had to follow, not give in, too many etiquette rules
19. 1,	F	parents made decisions for children	a. wanted children to grow as they liked, father pushed hard, would not let choose interests- problems
20. 9,	F	parents stricter	a. child either minded or spanked, spanking good training, need teach respect for authority
21. 7,	F	stricter	a. parents exercised more authority over children, always accepted no
22. 25,	M	degree discipline	a. economically sane, wife's parents more harsh, permissive now
23. 6,	F	not given concept self worth	a. not through parents, etc. emotional problems at home, father alcoholic b. mother conveyed duplistic attitude toward father, parents tired, large family, days when ironed pillow cases, etc
24. 17,	M	harder discipline	a. lack understanding complexities childhood, parents treated bedwetting as misbehavior, because knowledge child development see problem differently
25. 15,	M	severe criticism in family	a. father dead, large family, extreme criticism over duties b. not inflict same thing on own children
26. 12,	F	things harder	a. father disciplinarian, spanked bottom
27. 26,	F	things harder	a. economic considerations, but no idea how things harder b. experience involves not thinking about how life was in 40's

FIGURE 3

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 3:
What was the most severe punishment or worst thing
you can remember that happened to you as a child?

Themes Code #, Sex				
Physical punishment				
1.	2,	F	spanking in front of friends	sassing back
2.	4,	M	hard spanking & yelling	
3.	5,	M	beat by father	playing out in the street
4.	8,	M	slapped & roughed at school	sarcastic, refused duties
5.	9,	F	whipped until nearly blistered	put new cologne on new mattress
6.	11,	F	spanking, paddling	run away, sneak food
7.	12,	F	slapped by father	dating someone not allowed, home late
8.	14,	F	whipped with belt, father	jumped and broke bed
9.	17,	M	whipped with yardstick by mother	stepped in cement, humiliated & feared
10.	19,	M	spanked with belt	not remember why
11.	24,	M	spanking, verbal chewing out	
12.	25,	M	whipped by father	threw snowball at a car
13.	26,	F	hit by belt, father	not remember why
14.	27,	F	whipped on legs, mother	not remember why
15.	29,	F	father hit with belt	(Was bad tempered child) took knife and cut plastic kitchen furn.
16.	22,	M	good spank	can't recall anything more severe father strict demanded alot, forgotten bad
Other forms punishment				
17.	7,	F	grounded for a week	not in on time
18.	13,	F	made eat entire batch of cupcakes	with nothing to drink for licking the icing off of one
19.	20,	F	put to bed in the middle of the day	not remember what did wrong
20.	1,	F	denied privileges	
21.	6,	F	father was drunk and came at with gun	no apparent reason
22.	23,	M	being scolded	never whipped, but had tongue lashings, father unless father scolded so much each day, didn't think he was doing his job as a father
23.	21,	M	father didn't give birthday present	spent found money, father said should been more frugal
24.	15,	M	dealing with a psychiatrist	father dead mother felt needed see shrink for a strong authoritarian figure, abused, berated
25.	18,	M	tragedy, friend & dog died	all punishment bad, but not equate with worst worst thing friend died
No severe experiences				
26.	10,	F	parents weren't physical	nothing severe, parents did spank
27.	16,	M	nothing severe	parents did spank

FIGURE 4

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 4:
What types of things did you get in trouble for when you were a child?

Code #,Sex	Categories				
Problems with siblings	Talking back	Not telling where going home late	Destructive Behavior	Not doing work	Misc.
1. 4,M treated siblings bad					
2.26,F fighting					
3. 7,F fighting	back talking	not meeting curfew			
4. 2,F tattling	sassing back	out too late		not make bed	stomp feet
5. 8,M	refuse do work profane language	not home on time	destructive home		
6.18,M	direct disobedience	not home on time		put off chores not do chores	
7.10,F tattling					
8.24,M fighting				not do work on time not do work	
9.20,F		not tell where going late			
10.14, F			destroying property table, window		
11.11, F	anything told not to never talk back				
12. 9, F	talking back sassing				
13.19,M fighting			destructiveness		
14. 1,F				not doing school work, beat	
15.12,F	disobeying	not home on time			
16. 6,F	not minding talking back	not telling where going home late			make mess spilling
17.16,M		away too long			
18.17,M	threaten misbehavior				spill milk fidget in church
19. 5,M		not home on time			play in streets
20.22,M			destructiveness		bad sportmanship
21.29,F			cut & dented furniture		being antisocial
22.13,F fighting					even unintentional not tell truth
23.15,M					stealing
24.21,M					not tell truth
25.27,F					climb, jump daring behavior
26.23,M					coach thought doing something wasn't
27.25,M					pretty good as kid

FIGURE 5

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 5:
How do you typically react when you are angry?

Categories

Code #, Sex	Depends	Withdrawn	Verbal Reaction	Physically
1. 21,M		hold anger, get over it		
2. 4,M	person	tries to keep inside, signs wife, withdrawn, quiet	son, verbal reaction curses	
3. 13,F		cry, want to be left alone		
4. 1,F		sometimes won't eat quiet, not like talk,		
5. 16,M			voice gets louder, more cross, not violent	
6. 11,F			temper tantrum scream & yell	have thrown things at husband
7. 29,F			verbally tell why angry	
8. 22,M	person	spouse quiet	daughter, talk strong temper but not violent	
9. 15,M			yell, scream, react immediately explosive,never carry resentment	
10. 9,F			yell, overt hostility	
11. 7,F	are	past cried alot	now yell, feel like fool after	
12.20,F			swear a little	clean house, pound desk physical activity
13.12,F				with son, spank when mad
14.23,F	kind anger	personal hurt, withdraw	distrust, speak out	
15. 5 M	person, sit.	other people, hold inside	son, verbal shout	sometimes physical son
16. 6,F	person, sit.	job sit back takes bottled up	with husband and son straightforward	
17. 8,M	person, sit.	hold in and analyze now	wife, verbal	
18.17,M	person, sit.	job more patient and controlled with family emotions surface quicker		since can't verbalize with daughter, more physical
19.26,F	mood, range of responses			
20.25,M	sit. person	usually try to cover up	then explode, overreact	physical with one daughter
21.14,F	person	spouse, keep to self	child, more verbal	
22.24,M	person	clam up, hold in each child different	children more verbal	
23.10,F	sit.		will react verbal	will react physically
24.27,F	changed	as a child suppressed	now try express assertively	
25. 2,F	changed	before let temper fly now better control	yell	
26.19,M	changed	seldom angry, go and cool off		past physically
27.18,M	never angry	lose control	try to reason and talk	

FIGURE 6

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 6:
Under what circumstances do you feel it is necessary to punish children?
And under these circumstances what did you do?

Categories

Code #, Sex	The welfare or safety of the child or another is in danger		Violations are made of family norms	
1. 14,F	hurt each other	deprive dessert isolate		
2. 17,M	eat paint harm self, or other	verbal reprimand physical slap, squeeze		
3. 18,M	hazardous welfare	explain first, then adopt what is appropriate for child	violate values	do whatever approp.
4. 19,M	play in street, hit hurt self, others	reasoning hand spanking	rules made for own protection, decisions	hand spank
5. 20,F	safety, welfare danger	ground lecture	child willfully disobeys rules that have been delineated	
6. 26,F	play street, high places, dangerous to self	do whatever it takes to stop situation, restraint, hit, lock up		
7. 15,M			have rules, formal sometimes cross streets	punish. depends upon child's personality, talk
8. 1,F		(defacate, play stairs)	not doing what told, and shown, if repeat- punish, kids force beat	harm punishment beat, act angry
9. 4,M			tell be quiet	bad looks, verbal physical restraint
10. 9,F			not doing what told, touch knic-knacs, verbal disobey	depend on child, shame verbal, spank
11. 13,F			not clean rooms intentionally disobey	talk, spank, ground sit chair
12. 27,F			not follow orders, come when called, practice piano	lose priviledges
13. 10,F			flagrant abuse family rules fight siblings	withhold allowance, driving priviledges
14. 23,M			demanding behavior	lost allowance
15. 21,M			not tell truth stealing	restitution spanking
16. 7,F			age & problem related slow get ready school	ground, spank with hand
17. 2,F			not doing what supposed do out late, clean rooms, manners	spank, ground pay dues
18. 11,F			not applicable, baby too young children inconsiderate	spank
19. 12,F			interupt inconsiderate	spank bottom explain why wrong
20. 24,M			any time violate basic rules, no hard fast rules, clean, not fight	discuss spank
21. 22,M			any time go beyond limits, t.v. bedtime, ready school time	spank
22. 6,F			violate principles respect, etiquette, spank when upset	form discipline depends time day, mood, irritabil
23. 8,M			go beyond established limits, depends development, bedtime	slap hand, remove object take away privil. what
24. 16,M			deliberate violation rules manners, drinking	reason, spank talk
25. 29,F			deliberate, some things accident irrational to punish for those	spank, verbalize talk
26. 25,M			race car in cemetary	deprive priviledges depends child, more physi.
27. 1,M	There are no circumstances under which it is appropriate to punish children. Parents do get upset and punish, but this is because they are upset. Parents can not feel what the child is feeling.			

FIGURE 7

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 7:
Can you remember the most recent experience you have had disciplining a child? What did you do to handle the situation?

Themes Code #, Sex	Situation	Punishment
Welfare of child or another in danger		
1. 17, M	child harm self, ate paint	verbal remrimand
2. 13, F	jumped on bed, harm self	spank bottom
3. 26, F	fighting with scissors, cut sibling	spanking, discussion
4. 1, F	woke sibling from nap, hit & slapped him	angry, hard talk
Violate Family Norms		
5. 7, F	not take nap, out of bed for the fifth time	spanking
6. 21, M	wouldn't sleep in own room took back room for fifth time	spanking
7. 15, M	evening, daughter trouble doesn't behave as well- tired, son angry with mother	threatened to spank, sent to room shouted
8. 5, M	son cried all night	let sleep- took outside milk, played
9. 29, F	daughter cranky	left alone left situation
10. 12, F	son peeked in neighbor's window, opened door	explained why inappropriate
11. 6, F	threw tantrum in store, fell in heap brother was getting new shirt, child on antibiotics	picked up son, left store, gave book in car
12. 14, F	argued over toy, take away not sharing	sent to room
13. 9, F	fighting over toy, warned not sharing,	took away toy for a day
14. 8, M	left coat and lunch box on floor	told to put up note to remind threatened with loss of bike for day
15. 10, F	not taking care of household responsibilities rooms not being cleaned	threatened withhold allowances
16. 18, M	talked back to teacher	discuss why wrong (belt makes alot noise) if happened again would spank with belt
17. 25, M	daughter was ill at school, refused go home severe confrontation	realized old enough make decisions said o.k. did not punish
18. 22, M	resisted discipline, kept t.v. on after repeated warnings	spanking
19. 25, M	raced car in the graveyard, trouble with police refused to go to school	lost driving priviledges ultimatum thing, worked out with counselor
20. 16, F	get daughter back to school, had been ill	had to take to school
21. 2, F	son had brought home bad school papers, meant had not been doing work	had do school work at home stayed inside to play after work was done

22. 27. Responses were not applicable. Children were either too young, too old or children were not punishing age

FIGURE 6

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 6:
Have you ever punished your children too much? That is,
have you ever lost your temper or been too extreme?

Themes Code , Sex		
No		
1. 18, M	No	
2. 5, M	No	
3.21, M	don't think so, tried to avoid	
4.19, M	don't think so	haven't lost temper in 20 years
5.12, F	no	only thing done spank bottom, just hurt own hand didn't seem to bother the child
6.22, M	don't think so	may have lost temper, but not taken it out on child not been extreme, though some might disagree
7.29, F	don't think so	Was a time when empathized with child abusers, daughter would cry and want to haul off and hit, been verbally too extreme, tell something was awful when really wasn't
8.13, F	been too harsh, but not mistreat	never struck too hard probably yelled too much
9.27, F	lost temper, not punish in physical way	may have said things shouldn't, later been sorry never could hit in anger, not even a dog
10.16, M	no but wife has	if you get too severe they will react against you, wife too extreme, son drinking, yelled & hit too much, but didn't harm
Yes	misbehavior	form of discipline
11.20, F yes	son not take nap, daughter crossed street	spanking, preg. at time, saw handprint on buttocks, sat down and cried
12. 9, F yes	son waked up 4 a.m., two weeks & playing, normally sleeps until 8	turned over, paddled & wouldn't change diaper, made lay there in wet pants, cry self back to sleep, struck bottom anger
13.17, M yes	frustrated & not know what was wrong with baby, crying	shook baby, concern with relationship loss temper & control and child abuse, not sure where line is, loss emotions-abuse
14. 6, F yes	physical exhaustion, parent's state upset, not enough sleep	shrieking, spanking, throwing into rooms, was under alot pressure, when punished was irritable in general
15.26, F yes	parent's state, sick not feel in control	younger children can't understand when can't take care of them loss temper, hit with something think will impress, ex. get out belt, pin down to bed & hit, makes alot noise not hurt
16.14, F yes	can't remember misbehavior	pulled down diaper & spanked, too harsh felt bad after now trying to reason, take away privileges
17.15, M yes	irritated over too little quickly	spank, once twice, hard and strong, wife gets general bad mood wife spanks and goes on and on, have to tell her to stop
18.23, M yes	snide remark at dinner table	spanked, suffered, decided never lay hand on child again, set up a barrier, took weeks get over, more harm than good
19. 4, M yes	can't remember misbehavior	got mad because of bad mood, went too far
20. 8, M yes	not take a bath	picked up and carried screaming into bath water realized meaning giving to water so put down, over reacted
21.10, F yes	series events not stop not remember specific event	probably hit on rear harder than i intended what normally swat, ended up 1-2 hard hits
22.11, F	cried for 3 days recent son fussy, not know why	thought I would hate him forever, blamed it on him, wanted him to just shut up, later found out he had been teething
23. 2, F yes		yelled so much I got red in the face slapped children in face, saw how scared they were of me I quit
24 1, F yes		sometimes don't lose temper but acts as if then lose temper and try act quiet
25.24, F yes	have lost temper but never extreme	spanked kids when younger, now difficult spank because of size now take something severe to be handled by spanking
26.25, M yes		tendency not to punish enough then lose temper, extremes
27. 7, F sure have		can't think of an example

FIGURE 9

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 9:
Generally, how do you feel when punishing?

Themes Code #, Sex		
1.	23,M hurts me more than it does them	bothers whether did it right,know deserve be corrected, but how do it properly, alot quick punish
2.	21,M hurts me more than did child	rine mental, child's is a physical hurt
3.	18,M hurts me worse than the children	mental anguish suffered, difficult want children be happy, but also want be good citizens, difficult to force self to punish, don't want to hurt kids
4.	7,F like a clod, creep	because they don't like it, feel too hard on them
5.	20,F bad, didn't like punish	hadn't given good limits or guidance, sometimes when did punish maybe angry, something else bothering feel guilty about cases where anger just came out
6.	24,M don't like to do it	always feel just primarily releasing own anger reaction to immediate problem, handled by other means
7.	10,F not very good	realize went further than wanted, pulled into sit. tried to avoid,feel on child's level
8.	12,F never feel good about it	always guilty afterwards, physical
9.	27,F uncomfortable	difficult thing to do don't know why isn't easy
10.	5,M at this age, feel like done something wrong	maybe when they get older feel different sometimes punishment needed
11.	6,F depends on how feel	if in control, self righteous, set limits and have to enforce, but if out of irritability, don't feel good
12.	13,F mixed, love guilt, for own good	or wouldn't have to do it
13.	22,M don't like	feel in own interest feel performing positive role,benefit child
14.	1,F uncomfortable but necessary	situation pushed to do so, feel have to if want to be a successful mother, try be consistant
15.	9,F hate to do it, but hate worse not to	other's perception of control, punishing good training rather not, never let kids see indecision, might defeat purpose, think change my mind, are smarter than us
16.	26,F something taking care of feel justification or responsibility toward	most of the time it is something that has to be done in order keep out of danger, or explain approp. beh.
17.	19,M responsibility of training process	social responsibility, have train live in society have rules follow-may change, younger physical, older deprive
18.	29,F neither happy nor unhappy	something that has be done, behavior has be corrected way feel when doing dishes, rather not do, but is a part of the mothering job, sometimes too tired to dis. but important do so, have understand constancy
19.	25,M rather not be doing it	rather be doing something else
20.	8,M want make it effective	supposed lead to behavior change
21.	16,M trying to correct rather than punish	
22.	17,F varies, generally not like do situation not isolate event, but continuum	pre, buildup, necessary action to correct behav. during try not go overboard, post vary,remorse-satisfac.
23.	2,F range feelings	at first angry, then sorry started punishing sad did something that upset me in the first place
24.	14,F uncertain how feel,not happen that often,	I guess angry they usually stop if I raise my voice
25.	15,M pissed off	that's why punishment being meted out
26.	4 Not applicable children too young	
27.	11 Not applicable children too young	

FIGURE 10

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 10:
Do you ever regret having punished?

Themes Code #, Sex		
Yes		
1. 9,F	yes, when punished in anger	not punish in anger that often, have be provoked long period of time, nothing be ashamed, certain point can't be pushed
2. 10,F	yes, when anger getting uncontrollable	not category child abuse, could see and understand though what talking about in terms of child abuse
3. 6,F	yes, when punished out of irritability	ex. worked half time, felt guilty about working, alot pressure felt unfit mother, now doing better, still yell& spank
4. 27,F	yes, regret	when didn't give son any supper, pushed sister down & hurt sent bed without supper, bothered all these years
5. 14,F	yes, spanked daughter age two	physical, sometimes disagrees with husband
6. 1,F	yes, feels bad	especially if punished hard don't like show children feels bad
7. 23,M	yes, occasion physically punished daughter	set up barrier much better talk with child, not scold
8. 21,M	yes, one time	forgotten circumstances, happened immediately asked forgiveness
9. 8,M	sure there have times	nothing stands out as damaging
10. 29,F	when misinterpreted motives yes, coincides with bad mood	sometimes just too harsh verbally with oldest, look at motives and actions, feel bad when misinterpret
11. 13,F	yes, discipline one child for other's beh.	have to humble self, and say sorry, not easy
12. 2,F	yes, when have take away priviledges	if already granted, usually give in and let do go & apologize, ask if going to apologize to me
13. 20,F	yes, but didn't do too much	children resilient, if isn't usual thing then isn't too bad, don't agree with saying am punishing because love
14. 15,F	yes, occasionally, but normally not	not usually feel remorse about anything, are coupled occasions have punished was sorry, made up immediately
15. 17,M	yes, depends upon the situation	if situation could have been handled differently then regret, not if only thing could do, relationship important
No		
16. 25,M	no regrets	is a necessary evil
17. 24,M	no regrets	only regret not punish sufficiently or not taking action should have, are legitimate reasons to spank
18. 12,F	no	never felt shouldn't have done it whenever got spanking it was necessary
19. 22,M	not occurred	generally before punishing she has persisted sometime
20. 7,F	no	
21. 18,M	no	
22. 26,F	no	
23. 16,M	no, don't think so	
24. 19,M	don't think so	
25. 5,	not applicable- child too young	
26. 11,	not applicable- child too young	
27. 4,	not applicable- child too young	

FIGURE 11

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 11:
Have you made any distinctions between punishing
your children at different ages?

Code #, Sex		
1.	24,M yes, younger-spanking is an effective tool	also depends upon child, son needs spanking get his attention, daughter sensitive-scolding
2.	25, M yes, less physical punishment when older	younger don't have that many things can relate to-except physical, older take away privileges reason
3.	11, F yes, spanking more appropriate younger	hard reason younger, know what spanking means approx 9-10 can reason, restrict
4.	9,F yes, younger physical punishment only way get pt. across	hard reason when younger, 2½-3 can reason need get bluff in early, make afraid something
5.	4,M yes, younger discipline harder	ex. 4 yr. old just learning, discipline harder get them learn ropes, punish for as much as do
6.	23,M yes, younger need get attention physically	get attention- pat rump, appalled child abuse different way handle every age, also depends on the kid, harsh words adequate sometimes
7.	22,M yes, younger physical, older less physical	prefer older not have resort spanking over 6-7 prefer stop entirely, other forms effec.
8.	7,F yes, younger physical, older different forms punish.	spank younger older other forms more effective, grounding
9.	17,M yes, younger physical, older logic and intellect	depends upon child also also depends upon relationship, better relation
10.	19,M yes, younger physical	process movement to where can reason, as older less physical, after 7 physical not necessary, also need open relationship
11.	20,F yes, younger can't use language, physical spank	young child no judgement safe/unsafe, use spank when language doesn't work, affront dignity spank after a certain age, let off feelings home
12.	27,F yes, when older can't use physical punishment	with older child can use verbal control
13.	26,F yes, younger physical, older reason	ex. grab small child out of street, older tell remove sharp object from small child, older tell
14.	21,M yes, distinctions have to be made	when younger can do some reasoning older deny privileges
15.	29,F yes, can't expect from younger same as older	
16.	16,M yes, different problems at different ages	can reason with older not let younger children get ahead of you
17.	10,F yes, age and the cause of the problem related	age makes difference in child's ability to understand what doing wrong,
18.	12,F yes, make distinctions	depends upon the child, different children exhibit different behaviors
19.	6,F yes, different expectations developmentally	technique whatever it takes at the time, diff. expec. 2 year old can distract, 4 yr. old play word games
20.	2,M yes, depends upon the child	not same with daughter as did with sons, son learned harder than daughter, also not as much patience, have tried to change
21.	15,M yes, different ages do understand more	younger not understand some things, oldest may be able to understand and benefit from punishment, tried keep treatment same for both
22	18,M no, depends upon the child entirely the child is an extension of the parents	do what works each child, more problems finding right type discipline, not discipline any child until old enough to understand why, younger not punish, watch closely keep from trouble
23.	5,F yes, don't punish when young	less than one year, severe punishment might hurt can't recognize what wrong, about 4 might benefit
24.	13,F yes, understand things differently at different ages	can't expect same from younger and older child older know, understand what spanking for and why
25.	1,F yes, younger children punished less	with smaller child can talk and do as like older punish, more hard- because verbally know
26.	8,M definately not punish infants	with their early needs for trust, respond to them with love and security
27.	14,F uncertain	don't punish baby, not spank the 2 yr. old take away privileges from oldest

FIGURE 12

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 12:
Have you made any distinctions in punishing your children
based on their birth order?

Themes Code #, Sex		
1.	10,F	yes, less discipline with first born — discipline with each child reflects their attitude life, daughter sensitive, attributes of personality
2.	7,F	yes, disciplined oldest less — was young and dumb, with four children makes alot difference, find self disciplining more
3.	12,F	yes, oldest more permissive — children different, spanked second more
4.	2,F	yes, has to do with how felt toward child — son unwanted, raped by first husband pregnant with son didn't seem to care what did, didn't beat, but not good
5.	14,F	yes, stricter with first born — since then tried change things give in more, wanted be too perfect, after second child realized too strict, could see this in all the first's behaviors etc.
6.	24,M	yes, disciplined the first born more — same trend in own family, new parents thought the child ought to tow the line, with experience realized not important
7.	20,F	yes, harder with first — expected more, same own family
8.	23,M	yes, expected more from first — expected less with each child, expected first be too perfect, also depends upon personality child
9.	16,M	yes, but not too much difference — some differences just in one being first and the other being second, different problems with female
10.	6,F	yes, based on personality & experience — learned from the first, didn't think second awful different personality, first minded better
11.	8,M	yes, based on several diff. factors — learned from first, youngest completely different kid also different household
12.	18,M	yes, disciplined different but not unequal — different personalities, all parents tend expect more from first, punished more severely, with second learned how to handle situations
13.	24,M	not sure ought be treated same — many things different try treat equal
14.	9,F	try discipline both the same — try to hand it to the second just as much as first, easier let things slide with second, not fair
15.	26,F	no, only difference depends development — oldest treated age, and do what is appropriate for their age, stage development
16.	19,M	difference depends upon their personality — second more stubborn, put up with more both get the same type of punishment
17.	25,M	difference depends upon personality — not birth order, different dispositions one sweet respond not physically, other belligerant at times obnoxious- physical
18.	15,M	difference depends upon personality — are different people, spanking not effective with son can talk and reason with him but not with daughter has to spank
19.	29,F	don't think so — are disciplined for fighting
20.	1,F	no, treat the same — their age difference is not that great
21.	27,F	no — sons accused us of letting youngest get away with anything but don't think we did
22.	13,F	no
23.	4	not applicable-only one child
24.	22	not applicable-only one child
25.	5	not applicable-only one child
26.	11	not applicable-only one child
27.	17	not applicable-one child

FIGURE 13

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 13:
Do you make any distinctions in how you discipline your female children as compared with your male children?

Themes Code #, Sex		
1. 24,M	no, is a distinction between children but not related M/F	personality
2. 27,F	no, male, female exhibit different types behaviors	boys fight, separate girls asked things couldn't have generally no diff. way handled problems
3. 1,F	are differences in the kids' behaviors, but not sex differences	son tough daughter delicate
4. 18,M	differences in behaviors, but not way disciplined	girls respond different stimuli, females less mobile
5. 15,M	are differences in behaviors but not way handled	only diff. based on personality son fastidious, daughter dirty
6. 9,F	no	too young now
7. 20,F	no	as older more concerned with girls getting in trouble
8. 23,M	no	only personality
9. 19,M	no	try make no distinctions in roles things around define roles sufficiently
10. 10,F	no	tried treat as individuals,no sex diff,
11. 21,M	don't think so	When small spank didn't matter M/F older didn't think spanking thing do
12. 13,F	no	expect to mind whether M/F
13. 14,F	no	
14. 2,F	no	
15. 16,M	no	some people think have to beat up boys & treat girls kinder, need treat alike
Not applicable speculative		
16. 5,M	aren't any differences, but may want to keep m/f restraints	
17. 25,M	might exhibit different kinds of behaviors not think of anything specific	
18. 17,M	speculate- would be difference in what think and what happens	sex should not have anything to do with discipline but might
19. 8,M	style discipline same, but might exhibit different types of behaviors	
20. 22,M	no distinctions	
21. 29,F	strongly motivated toward nonsexist child rearing	
22. 4,M	no	
23. 6,F	hope not	some say females respond differently, have a different soul
24. 7,F	doubt it	changed generations, strict stereotyping
25. 12,F	not applicable	
26. 26,F	not think make distinctions	personality and age only not put alot thought into it
27. 11,F	trend changed not as strict with stereotypes	alot people let boys get away with more

FIGURE 14

Phenomenological Analysis of Response Patterns for Question 14:
From where would you say your position on punishment originates?

Code #, Sex	Categories						
	Parents	Observation Experience	Books	Religion	Relation with Spouse	T.V.	Misc.
1. 2,F	too harsh what learned from own family not punish like parents						
2. 21,M	family,father too harsh (principle discipline must be acted out)	observation others					
3. 7,F	parents, grounding hurt alot,						
4. 27,F	parents harsh, not as harsh as parents						
5. 11,F	appreciate what parents did	friends doing bad job,not let own kids get away with as much					
6. 22,M	parents show some disciplire beneficial	observation others & behavior of their children					
7. 25,M	parents,adopt their views	observation- way people fit into society					
8. 1,F	parents,follow their advice	observe friends with children own experience					
9. 9,F	family, brought up strict house (common sense not let kids run all over you)						
10. 8,M	family lack structure,observations, experience with own children		books, religion free from				
11. 12,F		experience working retarded	books child rearing, Dr. Spock				
12. 6,F			books (Spock,Benson,Etc,) when pregnant read everything could get hands on				
13. 20,F	parents good psycholo-gists, democratic philo,		books, education				
14. 16,M	parents didn't believe severe punish,	exp. in school	books, Dr. Spock	religion, bring up children high principles			
15. 24,M	family, just as strict			religion, try bring up as good christians, respect elders			
16. 13,F	different from family not spank like			religion, verse spare rod spoil child, if accept nothing will not be able accept Christ	relation with spouse, not dis-agree front kids		
17. 19,M		observation,many punish at own convenience, bad for child					
18. 26,F	reaction with parents good	awareness other cultures experience			with spouse discuss how strict, lenient, etc.		
19. 29,F	same philos. as family,education have children enjoy living with		reading		with spouse discuss theoretical		
20. 23,M	family strongly influenced education by positive att. of mother						
21. 4,M	family, strict punish fighting					T.V. show right way, want be another Ward Cleaver, taught right	
22. 10, F		experience		religion, church	developed basic philo, with spouse		
23. 5, M		education & obs.	journals magazines			t.v. better	
24. 17, F		experience	readings research all go out window with 16 mo. baby				
25. 18,M							instinct teach young live
26. 15,M					with spouse discuss approp,		just discipline no idea
27. 14,F	parents, slapped just like them because that was the way it was done, tried change	experience	books, magazines				

APPENDIX C

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

TABLE 2

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 2:

"In what ways do you think things were harder when you were a child?"

How life was harder in the past by sex of respondent

	Categories of Response Frequency		
Group	discipline	economically	life not harder
Male (n=13)	6	5	2
Female (n=13)	8	3	2

N.S.

TABLE 3

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 3: "What was the most severe punishment or the worst thing that you can remember that happened to you when you were a child?"

Parent's most severe punishment

Categories of Response Frequency by Sex of Respondent

Group	physical punishment	other forms of punishment	no severe experience
Male (n=13)	8	3	2
Female (n=14)	8	5	1

N.S.

TABLE 4

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 4: "What types of things did you get in trouble for when you were a child?

Types of Behaviors Parents Report Getting in Trouble for When Younger by Sex of Parent

	Frequency Reporting Behavior		
	Male (n=13)	Female (n=14)	χ^2
1. Problem siblings	3	5	N.S.
2. Talking back	3	6	N.S.
3. Not home time	4	5	N.S.
4. Destructive behavior	3	2	N.S.
5. Not doing work	2	2	N.S.
6. Misc.	8	5	N.S.

TABLE 5

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 5:

"How do you typically react when angry?"

Types of Parental Reactions when Angry by Sex of Parent

	Frequency Used Mode of Expression		
	Male (n=13)	Female (n=14)	χ^2
1. Keep anger inside	9	7	N.S.
2. Verbal reaction	9	12	N.S.
3. Physically	4	5	N.S.

Table 6

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 6: "Under what circumstances do you feel it is necessary to punish children? And under these circumstances what did you actually do?"

Circumstances under which Punishment is appropriate by Sex of Parent

	Frequency Reporting Circumstance		
	Male (n=13)	Female (n=14)	χ^2
1. child's welfare in danger	3	3	N.S.
2. violation of family rules	11	12	N.S.
3. no circumstances	1	0	N.S.

TABLE 7

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 7: "Can you remember the most recent experience that you had disciplining a child? What did you do to handle the situation?"

Most recent disciplinary situation by sex of respondent

	Categories of Response Frequency	
Group	dangerous to welfare	violation of family norms
Male (n=9)	1	8
Female (12)	3	9

N.S.

TABLE 8

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 8: "Have you ever punished your children too much? That is, have you you ever lost your temper or been too extreme?"

Experience Being Extreme by Sex of Respondent

	Categories of Response Frequency	
Group	no	yes
Male (13)	6	7
Female (14)	4	10

N.S.

TABLE 9

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 9:

"Generally how do you feel when punishing?"

Feelings about punishing by sex of respondent

Group	Categories of Response Frequency: Bad for variety of reasons	Social responsibility	Range of feelings
Male (n=12)	7	4	1
Female (n=13)	10	2	1

N.S.

TABLE 10

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 10:

"Do you ever regret having punished?"

Regrets over punishing by sex of respondent

	Categories of Response Frequency	
Group	yes	no
Male (n=10)	5	5
Female (n=14)	3	11

N.S.

TABLE 11

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Pattern for Question 11: "Have you made any distinctions between punishing your children at different ages?"

Distinctions Made on Basis of Child's Age by Sex of Parent

	Frequency Made Distinction		
	Male (n=13)	Female (n=14)	χ^2
1. Use physical punishment when child is younger	7	6	N.S.
2. Not use physical punishment on younger child, but older	2	4	N.S.
3. Distinctions based on developmental differences	3	4	N.S.
4. No distinctions	2	0	N.S.

TABLE 12

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 12: "Have you made any distinctions in punishing your children based on their birth order?"

Distinctions in Punishment on the Basis of Birth Order by Parent's Sex

	Categories of Response Frequency	
Group	No	Yes
Male (n=9)	4	5
Female (n=13)	6	7

N.S.

TABLE 14 A

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Patterns for Question 14:
"From where would you say your position on punishment originates?"

Sources Cited as Influencing Punishment Attitudes and Practices by Sex of Parent

	Frequency Reporting Source		
	Male (n=13)	Female (n=14)	χ^2
1. Observation	9	8	N.S.
2. Family	8	11	N.S.
3. Books	4	5	N.S.
4. Misc.	6	5	N.S.

TABLE 14 B

Chi Square Analysis of the Response Pattern for Question 14:

"From where would you say your position on punishment originates?"

Sources Cited as Influencing Punishment Attitudes and Practices by Educational Background

	Frequency Reporting Source				
	Ph.D. (14)	Masters (3)	Bachelors (6)	High School (4)	χ^2
1. Observation	9	2	3	2	N.S.
2. Family	10	1	4	4	N.S
3. Books	4	3	1	1	N.S
4. Misc.	6	2	2	1	N.S

PUNISHING CHILDREN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF RATIONALES, FEELINGS AND REPORTED PRACTICES

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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The purpose of this study is multifaceted. First, since there are no clear cut "scientific" guidelines for child rearing at the level of discipline and control, and folklore or the prevailing social norms are contradictory and unclear, prior research on punishment and child abuse was reviewed in order to identify sources of confusion. Second, individual feelings, rationales and reported actions of parents were examined through in-depth interviews. It was anticipated that this procedure allowed exploration of the different techniques used to discipline children. Parental feelings, rationales, and reported actions were also explored for their implications to child abuse. A modified phenomenological method was employed to analyze results.

Twenty-seven parents, 13 males and 14 females, each from a separate family were randomly selected from the Kansas State University community so that diverse professional and educational backgrounds could be represented. Subjects were interviewed in-depth with questions designed to explore various dimensions of punishment including its historical, affectional, behavioral, perceptual and symbolic meanings.

A quasi-phenomenological data analysis was conducted on the transcribed interviews. Initially in this analysis, individual responses were broken down according to their central themes. Then individual responses were contrasted for each question to explore common or contrasting conceptualizations or patterns. Here, the potential relationships between general child rearing practices and child abuse were examined. Chi square analyses were utilized to test for significant differences between male and female respondents.

In general, the material from the interviews offers dramatic support

for the idea that punishing children is a complex activity that creates ambiguous dilemmas for virtually every parent. The ambiguities in practices and attitudes appear to run so deep that no outstanding distinctions were observable in the study with respect to the demographic variable of sex. The chaotic and confusing literature, which seems practically useless at the applied level, is matched by chaotic and confusing experiences as reported by the parents.

Generally, the study suggests that diverse punishment practices reflect a combination of complex rationales, characteristics of the child and background experiences. The study also suggests that there is a close relationship between parental practices and emotional feelings having little to do with the child's behavior. Also, while the study does not demonstrate that the relations between child abuse and "ordinary" force is a continuum, it does suggest that if there is any dichotomy it is very hard to define or distinguish.

Methodologically, the quasi-phenomenological analysis of in-depth interviews was successful in yielding a good description of the types and qualities of meanings that parents associate with punishing children.