

## Child training practices and violent conflict management

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**Abstract.** This paper discusses the findings of statistical tests of four hypotheses that link socialization patterns and violent or peaceful conflict management respectively. The sample was drawn from the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. The results provide strong support for the hypotheses that the lack of warmth and affection, frequent corporal punishment, and strong inculcation of aggression during late boyhood increase the likelihood of warfare and that the emphasis on cooperative behavior – i. e. inculcation of trust, honesty, and generosity – serve to make a society essentially peaceful.

The focus in this paper is on the following question: What are the relationship, if any, between child training practices and violent conflict management?

The cross-cultural investigations of socialization patterns and violent conflict by Russell (1972), Eckhardt (1975), Prescott (1975), Ember and Ember (1984, 1986), and Ross (1986) have presented different psychological explanations of warfare. I tested these hypotheses by methods of statistics for the societies of the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample. My aim was to discover *single* child training practices that predict higher frequencies of warfare. Here I want to present the main results from my correlation analysis.

Three theories have proved to be relevant to the explanation of war or peace respectively.

The first theory holds that: Children learn to be aggressive and violent, this causes them as adults to be more aggressive engaging in war more readily.

The second theory predicts that a lack of warmth and affection towards children is associated with hostile and aggressive reactions, which also determine adult behavior.

The third theory holds that: The emphasis on cooperative behavior serves to make a society essentially peaceful.

Turning now to the first theory the question is: How do children learn to be aggressive and violent? Here basically two different explanations have been put forward:

Social learning theorists have demonstrated that children acquire hostile modes of behavior merely by observing and imitating aggressive actions of adults. The children supposedly adopt the attributes of an aggressive, punishing socialization agent by transforming themselves from the victim to the agent of aggression.

An alternative explanation holds that aggressiveness is a trait which is inculcated in