The Personal Domain

by

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I do not like broccoli. And I haven't liked it since I was a little kid and my mother made me eat it. I'm President of the United States, and I am not going to eat any more broccoli. (George Bush, April, 1990).

The Personal Domain and Formation of the Individual

As a way of introducing the research we are about to discuss, let me ask you, the reader, to consider the following questions.

1. **Who** should be able to determine who your best friends are?

2. If you keep a personal diary, who should be able to read it, and who should be the person who makes that determination?

3. Who should decide how you style your hair?

In terms of the previous questions, why did you answer the way that you did? Or, to put it another way, why does it matter who determines or decides such things for you?

When I have asked these things of my undergraduates, they have invariably answered that **they, and they alone should be the ones to determine or decide such things for themselves**. In our work on values formation, and social reasoning, we have labeled such issues as content for what we refer to as the *personal* **domain**. The personal refers to the set of **actions that the individual considers to pertain primarily to oneself, and therefore, to be outside of the area of justifiable social regulation**. These actions are not subject to considerations of right and wrong, but to preferences and choice (Nucci, 1995). While there is considerable cultural variation in the specific content of what is considered personal, allowance from some area of personal choice appears to be culturally universal. These cultural issues are discussed

in more detail later. Examples of personal issues within contemporary American culture include the content of one's correspondence and self-expressive creative works, one's recreational activities, one's choice of friends or intimate associates, and actions that focus on the state of one's own body (Nucci, 1981; Nucci, Guerra & Lee, 1991; Smetana, (1982); Smetana, Bridgeman & Turiel, 1983).

By their very nature, personal issues are a circumscribed set of actions that define the bounds of individual authority. If you, the reader, responded in ways similar to my students, then you justified claims to control over the issues presented in my questions by asserting their importance to your ability to maintain personal integrity, agency, and individuality. The identification and maintenance of control over the personal serves to establish the social border between the self and the group. The exercise of choice within the personal permits the construction of what is socially individual or unique about the person as opposed to one's biologically inherited unique features (i.e., fingerprints, facial image), and serves as the instantiation of oneself as agent rather than scripted by socially inherited roles and contexts. **In sum, the personal represents the set of social actions that permit the person to construct both a sense of the self as a unique social object, what the classical American psychologist, William James (1899) called the "me," and the subjective sense of agency and authorship, or what James referred to as the "I."**

Emergence of the Personal in Childhood

The view of the individual being presented here is consistent with characterizations of self as heterogeneous rather than simply individualistic. The personal that is constructed is always situated and in dialogue others, with social norms and cultural metaphors (Hermans, Kempen & van Loon, 1992; Sarbin, 1996). Thus, the particular expression of the personal will be a function of the historical and cultural context. With regard to individual development, this is not simply a process of society shaping and molding the person, nor is it simply a matter of the child reconstructing at an individual level the tacit and overt social messages provided by society or socializing agents such as parents or teachers. **The child establishes personal borders through a process of interpersonal negotiation**. The child is active not only in the sense of interpreting input, but actively seeking to establish areas of choice and personal control within which to operate as an individual. The child's exercise of choice, however, often takes place in the context of relationships that are inherently asymmetrical. **Since children are dependent on adult protection, nurturance and teaching, a child's freedom of action is almost always at the mercy of adults**. This is especially the case in relations between children and parents, where issues of adult authority and responsibility are intertwined with parental tendencies to invest their own familial and personal identities in their children. A number of studies have

examined these issues within the family context, and it is to those studies that we will turn to next.

Family Interactions and Children's Personal Domain. The emergence of children's autonomy involves two interrelated factors. One is the development of the child's competencies, and the other is the child's establishment of boundaries between what is within the child's area of privacy and personal discretion, and what falls within the purview of normative regulation. With regard to the former, it is easy to see how newfound competencies, such as the ability to walk, provide the toddler with greater possibilities for autonomy than exist for the infant. Erikson (1963) was one of the first theorists to connect the emergence of competencies in early childhood with the child's assertion of personal authority over the self. The prevalence of children's noncompliance to parental authority within the "terrible twos", as Gesell (1928) referred to this period in development, was explained by Erikson (1963) as an expression of the child's efforts to establish bounded control over the self made salient by the child's emerging abilities to exert control over personal body functions (bladder and bowel control), and capacity to manipulate the environment through physical means (locomotion, manual dexterity) and by speech acts.

The key aspect of this period for Erikson (1963) was the child's negotiation of authority with the parent. According to Erikson (1963), failure to establish a balance between the child's areas of discretion and the parent's representation of societal regulation resulted in problems of psychological adjustment with far-reaching significance. Erikson's (1963) observations predated more recent depictions of the strivings for control over a personal sphere of actions as evident in early infancy (Mahler, 1973; Stern, 1985). It also preceded other work characterizing early and middle-childhood noncompliance as evidence of a continuing exchange between children and adult authority over children's assertions of control over their own lives (Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Stipek, Gralinski, & Kopp, 1990).

Running through all of this research and theory is a depiction of negotiation between children and adults as children strive to establish themselves as autonomous individuals. Yet, what is being negotiated is left unspecified in these accounts of individuation and the development of children's autonomy. Our contribution to understanding the development of children's autonomy has been to provide a theoretical framework within which to address the specific nature of the child's claims to personal discretion as they relate to collective norms, authority, and interpersonal moral obligations, as well as to examine the social-interactional forms that the development of autonomy take in early development.

These issues were explored in an observational study (Nucci and Weber, 1995) of the at-home interactions between 20 middle-class suburban mothers and their 3 or 4-year-old children. This particular sample was chosen because of the likelihood that the mothers would provide children opportunities to exercise personal choice. The parenting styles of the mothers fell within what Baumrind (1971)described as authoritative parenting. These mothers had a set of firmly established behavioral expectations, but were flexible in their disciplining of children.

The Nucci and Weber (1994) study built from prior domain theory based research on social interactions in the home pertaining to moral and conventional issues (Smetana 1989a) to examine how interactions pertaining to personal matters differed from interactions regarding issues of interpersonal regulation. In addition, the study looked at whether and in what ways interactions pertaining to personal issues differed from interactions pertaining to another class of actions Tisak and Turiel (1984) termed prudential. Prudential issues refer to actions that the child engages in that either result in, or have the potential to result in, harm to the child. Prudential actions are related to personal issues in that they pertain to the actor rather than to others. However, since such actions result in harm to the child, they fall within the scope of parental interests to foster the welfare of their own children (Smetana, 1989b, Tisak & Tisak, 1990). One would predict, then, that mothers would respond differently to such prudential matters than to other actions in the child's personal sphere.

Mother-child dyads were observed during four activity periods over a span of three days. Trained coders classified transcribed event sequences as moral, conventional, prudential, personal or mixed. These interaction sequences were then examined in two ways. First, the overall form of the interactions was classified as to whether the social messages directed at children contained explicit or indirect information about the social meaning of a given action, and whether the interaction resulted in negotiation involving some degree of concession by the mother. Second, the mothers' and children's individual statements and actions were assigned to behavioral categories. Analyses of the overall form of interactions indicated that the use of explicit social messages characterized 70 to 85 percent of events involving moral, conventional or prudential events. In contrast, less than a third of interactions about personal issues conveyed explicit social messages that the behavior in question was clearly within the child's authority. An example of such an interaction is provided by the following excerpt from a discussion between a mother and her daughter over the girl's hair style.

Mother: If you want, we can get your hair cut. **It's your choice**.

Child: I only want it that long - down to here. [Child points to where she wants her hair cut.]

More typically, the social messages mothers directed to children about personal issues were in the indirect form of offered choices such as illustrated in the following exchange:

Mother: You need to decide what you want to wear to school today.

Child: [Open a drawer.] Pants. Pants. Pants.

Mother. Have you decided what to wear today?

Child: I wear these.

Mother. Okay, that's a good choice.

Mother: How would you like your hair today?

Child: Down. [Child stands by the bed, and her mother carefully combs her hair.]

In the above interaction, the mother, through a set of offered choices, conveys the idea that dress and hairstyle are matters for the child to decide. The child might accordingly infer that such behavior is personal. **Through both the direct and indirect forms of communication, mothers evidence a willingness to provide children areas of personal discretion. The greater tendency for mothers to use direct messages in the context of moral, conventional, and prudential events than in the context of personal ones is in itself an indication that mothers view the former as issues in which the child needs to accommodate to specific external social demands and meanings, while the personal issues are for the child to idiosyncratically interpret and control**. This differential overall response pattern was carried through in mothers' tendencies to negotiate in response to children's resistances to the mothers' behavioral requests for a given social action.

Mothers almost never negotiated with children regarding moral, conventional, or prudential forms of conduct. On the other hand, nearly one quarter of the observed interactions around personal issues involved negotiation and concession on the part of the mothers.** What is also interesting is the degree to which negotiations took place in the context of mixed events. A mixed event is one in which there is overlap among the domain characteristics of the action. Over 90 percent of the observed mixed events involved overlap between conventions or prudential concerns with the personal domain. Mothers engaged in negotiation with their children in the context of such mixed events about half of the time. This type of interaction over a mixed issue is illustrated in the following.

Mother: Evan, it's your last day of nursery school. Why don't you wear your nursery sweatshirt?

Child: I don't want to wear that one.

Mother: This is the last day of nursery school, that's why we wear it. You want to wear that one?

Child: Another one.

Mother: Are you going to get it, or should I?

Child: I will. First I got to get a shirt.

Mother: [Goes to the child's dresser and starts picking out shirts.] This one? This one? Do you know which one you have in mind? Here, this is a new one.

Child: No, it's too big.

Mother: Oh, Evan, just wear one, and when you get home, you can pick whatever you want, and I won't even help you. [Child puts on shirt.]

This case presents a conflict between a dress convention (wearing a particular shirt on the last day of school) and the child's view that dress is a personal choice. The mother acknowledges the child's resistance and attempts to negotiate, finally offering the child a free choice once school is over. This example Illustrates several things. For one, the mother provided direct information to the child about the convention in question, "This is the last day of nursery school, that's why we wear it." At the same time, the mother exhibited an interest in fostering the child's autonomy and decision making around the issue. The child's resistance, which conveyed the child's personal interest was not simply cut off, but was guided by the mother, who linked it to the child's autonomy, "Are you going to get it, or should I?"..."you can pick whatever you, want, and I won't even help you." In the end, there is compromise. The child got to choose, but within a more general conventional demand (enforced by the mother) that he wear a shirt.

The verbal dance engaged in by the mother-child dyad in the above example is further illustration that the mothers in this study acted in ways that indicated an understanding that children should have areas of discretion and personal control. The excerpt also illustrates ways in which children, through their resistances, provided mothers with information about the child's desires and needs for personal choice. Analyses of the individual responses provided by children indicated that assertions of

prerogative and personal choice did not occur to the same degree across all forms of social interaction, but were disproportionately associated with events involving personal issues. **Assertions of prerogative and choice comprised 88 percent of children's responses in the context of mixed events, and 98 percent of their responses in the case of predominantly personal events. In contrast, such responses comprised less than 10 percent of children's statements in the context of moral or prudential events, and about 25 percent of their responses to conventional events.** These behavioral measures indicate that middle class preschool aged children have differentiated conceptions of the personal from matters of interpersonal social regulation. Interviews conducted with the children revealed that they viewed personal, but not moral or conventional behaviors as one's that should be up to the "self" and not the mother to decide.

This (Nucci and Weber, 1995) observational study provided evidence that middle-class mothers act in ways indicative of a conceptual differentiation between children's areas of personal choice, and matters of moral and social regulation and prudence. Mothers displayed systematic differences in their responses to children as a function of whether the issues in question were ones within the child's personal domain. The study also provided evidence that children play an active role in relation to their mothers, and provide feedback in the form of requests and resistances to their mothers that afford mothers information regarding the child's claims to areas of personal control. **This feedback is not simply a generalized resistance to adult authority** (Brehm and Brehm, 1981; Kuczinski and others, 1987), but a delimited set of claims to choice over a personal sphere. This is most evident in cases of mixed events, and suggests that mothers open to their children's feedback have direct access to information about their own children's needs for a personal domain. Smetana's (1989b) work on adolescent-parent conflicts indicates that similar types of child resistance to adult control over what children view as personal continues throughout development as children move away from status as dependents and subordinates to status as adults. We will take up these issues of adolescent development at later points in the chapter.

As already stated, the child's construction of the personal is not accomplished solely at the individual level, nor determined by the culture, but through reciprocal interaction between the child and members of society. Thus, we would expect adults to have some understanding of the child's need for freedom. This indeed, appears to be the case. In a follow-up to the Nucci and Weber (1995) investigation of mother-child interactions, an interview study was conducted within the same community and a neighboring suburb to obtain mothers' views of these issues (Nucci & Smetana, 1996). The study examined the beliefs of 40 mothers with children either four or six years-of-age. Subjects in the Nucci and Smetana (1996) study ranged in social class

from working to upper-middle class with annual family incomes from $20,000 to in excess of $100,000. Parental educational levels ranged from not having finished high school to having earned advanced professional degrees or doctorates. The interview was comprised of a set of open ended questions which focused on the mothers' conceptions of whether and around what sorts of issues children should be given decision making authority, and around which issues mothers should exert their authority. They were asked to explain the bases upon which they determined which behaviors to leave up to their children, and why they allowed or encouraged children to determine those things for themselves. Mothers were also queried about their sense of what issues generated conflicts between themselves and their children, how these conflicts were resolved, and what role they saw themselves playing in those mother-child exchanges. At the completion of the open-ended interview was a sorting task in which mothers were presented sets of hypothetical scenarios depicting children engaged in actions that exemplified transgressions of moral or conventional norms or prudential (safety) concerns, along with items depicting children engaged in actions that fit the definition of the personal domain, and issues that were multifaceted or mixed, in which prudential or conventional concerns overlapped with personal ones. For each item, mothers were asked to indicate whether the act was one the mother should control, was up to the child, or was negotiable and could go either way.

All of the mothers interviewed in this study supported the notion that children four to seven years-of-age should be allowed choice over some things and that children should be allowed to hold their own opinions. Mothers justified allowing children to exercise choice on the grounds that decision making fostered competence and that allowing children to hold opinions of their own fostered the development of the child's agency and self esteem. Thus, these mothers appeared to value permitting their children areas of freedom in order to foster their personal development and autonomy. Consistent with the findings observed in the sorting task, however, mothers placed boundaries around actions they left up to children to determine. Mothers stated that their children were allowed to exercise choice over such personal issues as play activities, playmates, amount and type of food, and choice of clothes. Conversely, **mothers stated that they placed limits on children's actions when they went counter to family or societal conventions and when they entailed actions that posed risks to the child or others**. The content of the issues mothers mentioned in Nucci and Smetana (1996) study was in line with the ways in which mothers responded to three and four-year-old children in naturally occurring at-home interactions as observed by Nucci and Weber (1995).

In addition to limiting children's activities when they conflicted with conventional, moral, or prudential considerations, mothers stated that they occasionally limited their children's activities in the very areas they had stated they allowed children to

determine or control. As observed in Nucci and Weber (1995), **mother-child conflicts over these personal issues often resulted in compromise by the adult**. In their interviews (Nucci & Smetana, 1996), mothers expressed a willingness to compromise over such issues in order to support the child's agency, self-esteem, and competence. Mothers viewed themselves as acting rationally and pragmatically in response to their perceptions of the child's personal competence and the risks a given act posed to the child. In the context of mother-child disagreements, mothers tended to see themselves primarily as educators, and less often as controllers or nurturers.

When placed in the context of the results of at home observations (Nucci & Weber, 1995), these interviews with mothers provide an integrated portrait of how mothers and preschool aged children across the broad range of the American middle-class establish and foster the emergence of the child's autonomy and sense of a personal domain of privacy and choice. **The picture that emerges is not one of across the board struggle and conflict, but rather of a shared and differentiated world view in which autonomy and choice is co-extant with obedience and conformity to common norms and rational moral and prudential constraints. Those conflicts which do arise are not random in nature, but generally fall within the range of issues at the edge of the child's competence to act in ways that are prudent (as viewed by the parent), or are at the intersection of the norms of the social order, and the child's arena of personal discretion.**

The Personal and Values Conflicts in Adolescence

As children move toward adult status they seek greater autonomy and independence from parents**. That move toward autonomy requires shifts in the relations between children and adults as young people begin to lay claim to decisions and areas of activity that had been determined by parents or other adults. The revealing quotation from former President, George Bush, at the opening of the chapter, illustrates how long such seemingly minor issues of control linger with us even, if as in the case of George Bush, we assume considerable stature and power. The quotation also illustrates another facet of such parent-child issues, namely, that parents generally attempt to exert control, and authority in the interests of their children. **One can almost hear Mrs. Bush explaining to her son the nutritional value of broccoli, and the need for a growing boy to eat his green vegetables**. One of the more interesting and fruitful lines of recent research on children's value formation has examined the pattern of changes that take place in terms of the types of issues and zones of behavior children appropriate as personal matters as they move into adolescence. This work by Judith Smetana and her colleagues at the University of

Rochester has helped us to understand the appropriate role of adult authority, and the sources of much of what transpires in the form of adolescent-parent conflict.

As was observed in the Brazilian context (Nucci, Camino & Sapiro, 1996), **the shift toward greater autonomy for adolescents is not simply the result of actions taken by children. It is due to a series of reciprocal adult-child exchanges. The shifts which do take place are not across the board, however, but are linked to the identification of actions as personal matters**. In general, adolescents view adults as retaining authority over moral issues (Smetana, 1989b; Smetana, Braeges & Yau, 1991; Smetana, Yau, Restrepot & Braeges, 1991). Moreover,**adolescents view parents as having a duty or obligation to regulate moral conduct, and view themselves as obliged to obey parental moral rules**. Accordingly, the Smetana group has found that **moral issues are an infrequent source of conflict in adolescent-parent relationships**. Adolescents also typically hold the view that parents have a duty or obligation to regulate the conventions within the family (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). However, the endorsement of obedience to convention appears to decline with age. A similar pattern appears to hold for prudential matters which touch on issues of the adolescent's health or safety. Younger adolescents (under the age of 15)generally maintain that parents have the authority, and even the obligation to regulate behaviors that impinge on the adolescent's safety or well-being (Tisak ?). As they grow older, however, adolescents tend to view such issues of personal welfare as falling within their own sphere of responsibility and personal jurisdiction (Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

As one might expect, adolescent-parent conflicts generally arise in the context of these areas of change. **Conflicts tend to occur over issues parents perceive as important to the conventions which serve to organize and structure family and household organization, and which adolescents see as interfering in their personal lives**. The kinds of issues which generate most conflicts in American households are such things as preferences for television programs or music, spending decisions (e.g., whether to spend allowance money on games), appearance (dress, make-up), activities (time spent talking on the phone), schedules (bedtimes, curfews), and range of motion (where the adolescent is permitted to go without seeking specific parental permission)(Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Parents justify their perspective on disputes with their adolescents about such issues by appealing to family or cultural norms, parental authority, the adolescent's role related responsibilities in the family (e.g., clean up their room, mow the lawn etc.), the need for politeness and manners in social discourse, and the perceived social cost of adolescent non-conformity (e.g., the parents' embarrassment, concern about others' misperceptions of the child). Adolescents, in turn, understand but reject their parents' social-conventional

interpretations of disputes and appeal instead to exercising or maintaining personal jurisdiction (Smetana, 1989b; Smetana, Brages, & Yau, 1991).

Far fewer family disputes arise over issues that concern risks to the adolescent's health or safety. This is because such prudential issues have an objective quality to them that is obvious to both parties. Nevertheless, the tendency of adolescents to engage in risk taking, and to believe in their own invulnerability is a potential source of aggravation and alarm to parents. In the case of prudential issues, there is a self evident jurisdictional overlap between the parents' role as nurturer and protector, and the adolescent's position as "master of his(her) own house." Matters of personal safety are by definition self referential, and parents of adolescents often find themselves in the position of shaking their heads as they watch their offspring engage in relatively harmless, but foolish actions (e.g., going to school without headgear in sub-zero winter weather) emblematic of their children's desire to take control of their own lives. For the most part such issues are conflict free owing to the fact that most adolescents do not engage in high risk behaviors. In other cases, however, adolescents do make foolish choices with long-term negative consequences. One measure of personal maturity is the degree to which one can make intelligent cost-benefit analyses of behaviors such as drug use which may be bring momentary pleasure, but long-term damage to the user. **Studies of adolescent concepts of drug use have reported a strong relationship between self reported drug use and the tendency to see the behavior as simply a matter of personal choice (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991). Adolescents who are not involved in drug use tend to see such behavior as wrong because of the potential harm such behavior can cause to oneself. Moreover, high drug users were much more likely than low drug users to endorse themselves, rather than parents or others as having legitimate authority over decisions to engage in drug use (Nucci et al., 1991**). However, even when adolescents view prudential issues such as drug and alcohol use as legitimately regulated by parents or teachers, adolescents view their parents as having significantly less authority over these issues than do parents (Smetana, & Asquith, 1994).

The general pattern that emerges from this work on adolescent-parent relations is that there is a gradual increase in the range of issues that adolescents assume as matters of personal choice rather than subject to parental authority. Parents generally lag behind temporally in their recognition of areas within which adolescents should have decision making, but nonetheless accord adolescents a wider degree of freedom than they give to younger children (Nucci et al., 1996; Smetana, & Asquith, 1994). This shift is also accompanied by a degree of adolescent-parent conflict. Smetana (in press) has recently pooled the data from her series of studies on adolescent-parent conflict to examine the overall patterns which emerge within normal families. **Her analysis looked at over 300 families, and included findings**

from her work with Chinese adolescents and parents in Hong Kong. In her report, Smetana (in press) notes that in addition to her own findings of prototypical, and in some cases intense adolescent-parent conflicts within her Hong Kong families, anthropological accounts of **adolescent-parent conflicts in 160 cultures provide evidence that such conflicts are widespread** (Schlegel & Barry, 1991). Smetana's work included observations of family interactions as well as interviews with individual family members.

On the basis of a statistical procedure called cluster analysis, Smetana identified three basic patterns of dealing with adolescent-parent conflict. The most prevalent pattern, labeled *Frequent Squabblers*, is one in which adolescents and parents engage in frequent, low intensity conflicts over everyday details of family life. A second, smaller, group comprised the *Placid* **families** who reported rare conflicts, and whose conflicts were of low or moderate intensity. The third group, labeled *Tumultuous* **families**, had frequent conflicts (though fewer than squabblers) which were very intense.

In terms of parenting patterns, these three family patterns did not differ in their rate of regulation of moral, conventional, or prudential issues. The differences which emerged were over the regulation of multifaceted and personal issues. *Tumultuous* and *squabbling* families had more rules than placid families over multifaceted issues**. Parents from *tumultuous* families were more likely to be divorced or remarried, and were lower SES than other parents. Parents in *tumultuous* families were more authoritarian, had more rules, were more restrictive of their adolescents' personal jurisdiction, and less likely to engage in compromise or negotiation than either of the other two family types. In these families parents felt more of an obligation to regulate personal issues, and were less likely to view personal issues as within the adolescents' jurisdiction. Smetana (in press) concluded that these families appeared to intrude more deeply than is developmentally or culturally appropriate in their adolescents' personal domains. **In other work, we have found that parental over-intrusion into adolescents' personal area is associated with symptoms of depression and hostility in the children (Nucci, Nucci & Hasebe, 1996).**

*P*lacid **families reported fewer conflicts, but were not conflict free**. These tended to be higher SES families in which parents were professionally employed. They engaged in more joint decision making than did other parents, were less restrictive, and were rated by their children as higher in warmth.

*S*quabbling families were in many ways similar to *placid* families in their willingness to engage in negotiation and compromise with their adolescent children. Like the *placid* families, **they displayed more warmth than the parents in *t*umultuous families**. Relative to *placid* families, however, *frequent squabblers*, tended to use a greater number of social-conventional rationales.

These findings indicate that a certain degree of adolescent-parent conflict is to be expected, and that it most likely reflects the normal process of realignment between parents and children as children move toward adult status. **What is important, and of interest is that this realignment is not in the form of an across-the-board negotiation of all moral and societal values, but the very specific adjustment of locus of responsibility for decision-making in the personal domain. This shift is not an invention of liberal parenting, or of western democratic culture, but an endemic aspect of human development.**

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Personal issues and the limits of legitimate school authority.

The scope of the school's authority in establishing conventional norms is bounded from the child's point of view by whether they encroach on areas of activity perceived by children as within the personal domain. This was illustrated in a study of children's positive and negative feelings about classroom rules (Arsenio, 1984). Arsenio reported that nearly 62% of all negative rule evaluations provided by fifth-grade boys involved undue teacher control of such non-academic activities as bathroom and drinking-fountain procedures, and restrictions on free-time activities.

Like the family, schools come into contact with children at different points in their development. Schools, however, are social institutions that place different sets of constraints on personal behavior than might exist in other social settings such as the family, and the general outside environment. **Thus, schools represent a rather unique context within which children must learn to negotiate and accommodate their own personal freedoms in relation to the organizational conventions imposed by the varying institutions of general society**. Research on first graders

has indicated that even young children understand that there are contextual differences in the boundaries of personal control (Weber, 1996). Weber's study indicated that in general children expect schools to place constraints on behavior that would be matters of free choice at home. They also do not expect teachers to negotiate with them as their mothers would, and do not anticipate that teachers will give in to children's requests as mothers would. However, as Arsenio's (1984) work has illustrated, children do not necessarily accept school constraints over their personal areas as legitimate. Given this dynamic, we might expect that the accommodations that children make to school regulations would become more strained as children enter adolescence.

This would appear to be the case. Smetana and Bitz (1995) explored shifts in students' attitudes toward school regulations of personal conduct among children in grades five (10-year-olds), seven (12-year-olds), nine (14-year-olds), and eleven (16-year-olds). Among the school rules included in the study were ones such as a ban on public displays of affection, such as kissing a boyfriend(girlfriend) that would be considered personal acts in other situations. Smetana and Bitz (1995) labeled such norms as **contextually conventional**. Smetana and Bitz reported that students generally granted schools the authority to regulate prudential, moral and conventional issues. They also discovered, however, that children draw boundaries around teacher authority, and maintain the view that teachers have no right to regulate actions they consider personal. Children were consistent in claiming personal jurisdiction over such issues as who to associate with, how to spend lunch money, and choice of hairstyle. As expected, adolescents were less likely than fifth graders to grant legitimacy to teacher authority regarding personal or prudential areas of conduct. Moreover, they were equivocal in their judgments of the legitimacy of contextually conventional school rules. About half of the adolescents in the study treated such issues as purely personal matters outside the legitimate purview of teacher authority. **Smetana and Bitz (1995) also reported that student misconduct (across a wide range of actions) was associated with tendencies to appropriate contextually conventional behaviors (e.g., school regulations regarding kissing a boyfriend/girlfriend at school) to the adolescent's personal domain**.

The implications for schools and teachers of this recent work on the personal domain are complex**. On the one hand, schools need to impose restrictions on student conduct in order to carry out their educative mission. On the other hand, schools are also a primary setting for the promotion of healthy psychological and social growth of children. Establishing necessary norms for the protection of student safety and well-being, and to allow for effective teaching should not result in overly intrusive regulation of student personal conduct. We have learned that adolescents who self report relatively high degrees of parental control over their areas of personal conduct

(e.g., choice of friends, bedtimes, choice of media) also display symptoms of depression, hostility, and general psychological disturbance (Nucci, Nucci, & Hasebe, 1997). Effective schooling in an era in which societies are endeavoring to balance democratization with economic productivity and social order will entail a careful examination of how these issues of school structure in relation to individual freedom are resolved.