

# From Authoritative Parenting Practices to an Authoritarian Context: Exploring the Person–Environment Fit

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This study examined whether authoritarian or authoritative parenting practices best prepare youth for coping with an authoritarian context (i.e., the mandatory military service of 18-year-old men in Israel) with specific reference to the issue of person–environment fit. A year before their conscription, 85 male adolescents ( $M$  age = 17.5) and their parents filled out questionnaires regarding their relationships; during basic training, they did so again regarding the new recruit's coping and adaptation. Two peers from each adolescent's basic training unit also rated their coping and adaptation. Findings demonstrated that authoritative parenting practices were advantageous with respect to coping and adaptation in an authoritarian context and that these associations were to some extent mediated through the adolescents' self-esteem. These results are discussed in light of claims of limitations to the general benefit of the authoritative parenting style.

Baumrind's (1971) typology of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting is one of the major current conceptualizations of parenting styles, though subject to different critiques (e.g., Lewis, 1981) and several revisions (Baumrind, 1983, 1991a, 1991b; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In general, authoritative parents are described as responsive and demanding; warm and involved; and consistent in establishing and enforcing guidelines, limits, and developmentally appropriate expectations and allowing and promoting autonomous behavior and decision making.

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These characteristics are seen as involving three core dimensions: acceptance, behavioral control or monitoring, and psychological autonomy granting (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). In contrast, authoritarian parents are described as demanding, using power-assertive practices and being low in responsiveness, whereas permissive parents are described as being somewhat responsive but not demanding.

Over several decades of research, authoritative parenting has proven to be related to a wide range of positive cognitive and socioemotional outcomes. For example, authoritative parenting has been associated with better academic achievement (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000); better adjustment (i.e., less psychological distress, fewer problem behaviors, better peer relations; Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, & Steinberg, 1993; Fuligni & Eccles, 1993; Slicker, 1998); higher levels of competence; and higher self-esteem, autonomy, and self-reliance (Baumrind, 1983; Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988).

Previous research examined authoritative parenting as a combined constellation of several parenting practices. However, recently Gray and Steinberg (1999) suggested unpacking the construct and examining the distinct contributions of the three core dimensions of authoritative parenting: acceptance, behavioral control, and psychological autonomy granting. They found that acceptance contributed to lower levels of behavior problems, better psychosocial development, lower distress, and higher academic competence. Similarly, autonomy granting contributed to all of these outcomes besides behavior problems, whereas behavioral control contributed mostly to lower levels of behavior problems.

During the last decade there have been several attempts to examine the general benefit of the authoritative parenting style. Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, and Dornbusch, (1991) examined a diverse sample of approximately 10,000 high school students in the United States. Grouping them according to ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), and family structure, they found that the positive correlates of authoritative parenting transcended these ecological factors. Nevertheless, a subsequent analysis showed that African American youngsters seemed not to benefit from authoritative parenting and were not harmed by authoritarian parenting in terms of their school achievement (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). Perhaps in an environment where the consequences of disobeying parental rules may be serious and harmful to self and others, a power-assertive authoritarian style might be as functional as other styles (see also Brody & Flor, 1998).

Chao (1994) suggested another limitation to the general benefit of authoritative parenting, namely, that its meaning may differ in different

cultural contexts. In line with this, Wang and Phinney (1998) found that for immigrant Chinese mothers in the United States, authoritarianism was positively associated with higher cognitive competence of their preschool children. Rudy and Grusec (2001) demonstrated that authoritarian parenting was linked with negative cognitions and affect in cultural groups that emphasized autonomy and independence, but not in those that emphasized interdependence and respect for authority. They suggested that it is not the authoritative or authoritarian behaviors per se that matter but the complex of cognitions, attributions, and affect that underlie these behaviors (e.g., Grusec, Rudy, & Martini, 1997; Hastings & Rubin, 1999).

The study reported here was an attempt to extend these efforts by looking at another possible limitation to the general benefit of authoritative parenting practices. Studies that have examined the positive outcomes of the authoritative parenting style have assessed outcome measures in authoritative contexts such as school or college (Strage & Brandt, 1999). Notwithstanding their variability, these contexts, mostly in North America, may be characterized as authoritative in that they demand and provide structure, yet they also promote autonomy by allowing some personal freedom and expression of desires and preferences (Hess & Holloway, 1984; Phillips, 1997; Sabo, 1995). Children from authoritative homes may succeed at school better than others because the authoritative climate at home prepares them to function well in authoritative contexts. This contention is based on the notion (related to the ecological systems theory; Bronfenbrenner, 1986) of a person–environment fit, namely, that people adjust better and are more satisfied in environments that match their attitudes, values, and experiences (Swanson & Fouad, 1999).

The main objective of this study was to examine the advantage or disadvantage of experiencing authoritative parenting practices for adolescents' coping with an authoritarian context. The Israeli context provides a natural milieu for a viable examination of this question. In Israel the great majority of the 18-year-old cohort of Jewish men (92%) leave their parents' home for 3 years' mandatory service in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The adjustment of young men to basic training in the initial phase of military service in Israel was examined as an example of coping and adaptation to an authoritarian context, to which adolescents with various parental experiences are exposed.

Although the coping and adaptation of females to basic training is also of great interest, we decided to focus on adolescent males. Males and females undergo different experiences during their military service. Most 18-year-old Jewish women in Israel (65%) perform 20 months' mandatory military service, which for most women is less demanding than that of men (Gal, 1986). Correspondingly, males' basic training is longer and

generally more arduous, physically and mentally, and with respect to the main objective of the study it is also more clearly authoritarian in terms of discipline and demands than females' basic training (Gal, 1986). Consequently, the males' context of military service presents a stronger test of the research question.

The army is a highly demanding, rigid, and authoritarian ecology, where the young recruits, especially during basic training, are under the very tight control of their commanders (Gal, 1986). Furthermore, as they enter military service they are stripped of part of their personal identity: They have to wear uniforms, obey orders, and perform duties even if these conflict with their personal desires. Basic training for men in the IDF usually lasts 4 to 12 weeks. Basic training in noncombat units is usually shorter and is less demanding than that in combat units in terms of physical hardship (Gal, 1986). In both cases, basic training is generally considered the most stressful period during military service by IDF mental health authorities (Gal, 1986). Although the military environment is difficult, it is by no means overwhelming for most soldiers. In fact, the large majority of young recruits, in combat as well as in noncombat units, successfully complete basic training, adjust to and cope well with its hardships, and find these experiences valuable (Mayselless & Salomon, *in press*).

Mixed results regarding the effects of parenting styles on adjustment to basic training were obtained in one study (Wintre & Ben-Knaz, 2000), which examined a group of young men ( $N = 144$ ) who served in a paratrooper combat unit of the IDF. Parenting style was assessed by Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) examining authoritative-ness, and by measuring parental support and reciprocal relationships between adolescent and parents. Zero-order correlations between parenting style and adjustment revealed a mixed picture. Whereas parenting style assessed by the PAQ was not associated with adjustment, parental support and perceived reciprocity were positively associated with some of the measures (e.g., self-esteem, social comfort, and commitment and motivation). When structural equation modeling was employed to assess direct and indirect effects, the combination of positive and negative (direct and indirect) effects resulted in a nonsignificant total effect. In that study only the adolescent's perspective was employed to assess coping and adaptation and parent-adolescent relationships, and the assessments were made at the military base during a break in routine training, with the cooperation of the IDF authorities. The participating soldiers were highly motivated young men, undergoing one of the most arduous and long periods (3 months) of basic training. They were constantly tested and under the scrutiny of their commanders, and the display of a firm and tough character was an expected norm (Gal, 1986). The young recruits

may have needed to present a rosy picture of their coping and an image of themselves as hardy, resulting in the operation of strong demand characteristics.

By contrast, a distinct benefit due to authoritative parenting practices emerged in another study (Mayselless & Hai, 1998). Participants were a group of adolescents serving in combat units of the Israel Navy ( $N = 143$ ), and the study employed only their perspective. Warm and autonomy-promoting relationships with parents, assessed 6 months before conscription and not in the context of military service, predicted better coping with basic training. Coping with basic training was assessed individually in the new unit to which each recruit was assigned after completing basic training; by then their responses, had they been passed on to the authorities, could not affect their placement. Thus, lower levels of demand characteristics might have operated in that study.

In light of the mixed findings of previous research, this study set out to investigate further the benefit or disadvantage of experiencing authoritative parenting practices for coping with an authoritarian context. We included a diverse sample of adolescents who served in different units (combat as well as noncombat) and used a diverse array of measures. We extended previous research by employing several reporters to assess parenting as well as coping and adaptation. The different perspectives of the reporters are not redundant, and although they may converge to some extent they also provide valuable and valid divergent perspectives on the same phenomena (Larson & Richards, 1994; Welsh, Galliher, & Powers, 1998). Thus, authoritative parenting practices were assessed using parents' (mothers' and fathers') and adolescents' perspective, and coping and adaptation was assessed from three perspectives: the adolescents, their parents, and their peers in basic training. In view of possible effects of demand characteristics, assessment of coping and adaptation by multiple informants in the current study was especially important. Furthermore, to circumvent the demand characteristics inherent in assessing coping and adaptation at the military base, we extended previous studies by assessing coping and adaptation to military service in the adolescents' homes. This was part of an independent investigation by a nonmilitary institution—the university—and was not under the auspices of the IDF.

In this study we focused on two of the core dimensions of authoritative parenting—acceptance and autonomy granting—and we did not assess behavioral control or supervision. In previous studies, the dimension of behavioral control was mostly associated with lower levels of delinquency and behavioral problems (e.g., Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, & Criss, 2001), aspects that we did not assess in our study, whereas both acceptance and autonomy granting were similarly implicated in predicting the outcomes

we assessed. Furthermore, the adolescents participating in our study were 18-year-olds who functioned moderately well, and behavioral control might be expected to be less informative with them. Nevertheless, in line with previous studies (Wintre & Ben-Knaz, 2000) we also employed the PAQ (Buri, 1991), which assesses the general composite construct of authoritative parenting.

We further wanted to explore possible mediating processes between authoritative parenting practices and coping and adaptation. If young men who have experienced authoritative parenting practices adjust better than others to an authoritarian context, why would such an effect occur? Previous conceptualizations and empirical findings pointed to several such mediators. Steinberg (2001) suggested that the combination of support, structure, and the promotion of autonomy characteristic of authoritative homes facilitates the development of self-regulatory skills, whereas McClun and Merrell (1998) indicated that the authoritative verbal give-and-take fosters cognitive and social competence. In line with this contention, children from authoritative homes were found to be more self-assured (Buri et al., 1988), to have more internal locus of control and self-efficacy (McClun & Merrell, 1998; Steinberg et al., 1991), and in general to evince greater well-being than others (e.g., Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Mantzicopoulos & Oh-Hwang, 1998).

These aspects (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy) echo the general concept of ego strength or a positive self-perception. Thus, young men from authoritative homes might cope and adapt better to the military environment despite its clear deviation from the context with which they are familiar because they have greater ego strength, namely, higher self-esteem and more internal control than others. Consequently, they would approach the stressful hardships with a more positive outlook (i.e., appraise the situation more positively and feel less overwhelmed by it) than others. These appraisals, as well as their better cognitive and social competence, are likely to promote more constructive coping and to contribute to better adaptation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Therefore, if authoritative parenting practices proved to be associated with better adaptation, we considered the possibility that the higher level of ego strength that is usually associated with experiencing such parenting would mediate these effects.

Finally, although the main focus of the study was to examine the association between authoritative parenting practices and coping with an authoritarian context, we also explored the association between authoritarian parenting assessed from the adolescents' perspective and their coping with basic training. The notion of person-environment fit might lead us to expect a positive association between experiencing authoritarian parenting and better coping and adaptation to authoritarian military

service, whereas the extension of the notion of the general benefit of authoritative parenting might lead us to expect a negative association between experiencing authoritarian parenting and coping.

## METHOD

### Sample

The study reported here was part of a longitudinal project examining parent–adolescent relationships in Israel in middle-class families during late adolescence and young adulthood. Participants were identified and recruited from published lists of high school seniors in middle-class neighborhoods of a metropolitan area in northern Israel. All the families with an adolescent son on these lists, which covered all the high schools in these neighborhoods (seven high schools including approximately 350 male seniors), were contacted by mail, and then by phone. They were informed about the research, and families that did not meet the research requirements (circa 40%; i.e., nonintact families [8%], son's conscription was deferred [26%], new immigrants [5%]) were screened out. The remainder were asked for their cooperation. Deferment of military service occurred because IDF authorities distribute the conscription dates throughout the year according to the adolescents' age. Because of the time constraints of the research project, we only included families in which the son's conscription was due up to a year following the first assessment. We limited our choice of participants to intact families for whom life had been stable to avoid diverse sources of variation. This constraint did not result in a highly skewed sample because divorce rates in Israel are much lower than in the United States (8.5% according to the *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 1996).

The active consent of each of the three family members (father, mother, and son) was required for a family to be included in the study. The final sample for Time 1 assessment included 88 families reflecting 41% consent by eligible families. As the current study required an investment of several hours in the research by each family member, most families who declined to participate did so because of time constraints. The current sample included 85 male adolescents and their parents for whom full data were available for the two times of assessment.

In Israel, parental level of education, ethnic origin, density of living quarters, and neighborhoods are considered better indices of SES than income (Dar & Resh, 1990; Smootha & Kraus, 1985). The families in our sample were for the most part educated (80% percent of the fathers and 74% of the mothers had at least college education), 70% were of Western origin (Europe or North America—the ethnic origin most prevalent in high SES),

and they had moderately low-density living quarters (a mode of one person per bedroom), indicating high level of SES. These features reflect the prevailing characteristics of families in the neighborhoods we sampled.

At the time of the first assessment, mothers' mean age was 45.89 years ( $SD = 3.91$ ,  $range = 37-55$ ), fathers' mean age was 47.69 ( $SD = 4.81$ ,  $range = 39-64$ ), and adolescents were 17 or 18 years old. Parents had been married on average 23 years ( $SD = 3.42$ ). Number of children in these families varied between two and five, with a mean of 2.93 ( $SD = .74$ ). About one third of the adolescents (37%) were first-born children, 43% were second-born children, and the rest third- and fourth-born. About 70% of the families described themselves as secular; the rest described themselves as keeping the religious tradition but not in an orthodox manner. None of these background variables was associated with the variables assessed in this study. In terms of military service, 59% of the adolescents were assigned to combat units and 41% were assigned to noncombat units. In the IDF, assignment to combat units is determined by an individual's physical fitness and is unrelated to his family relationships. Accordingly, these groups did not differ on any of the parenting and ego-strength measures. Additionally, the pattern of correlations presented in this study did not change as a function of the adolescent's type of military service.

## Procedure

The adolescents and their parents were interviewed and they filled out questionnaires assessing parenting practices about a year before the sons' enlistment, when the sons were high school seniors; the sons also completed measures of ego strength at this time. Halfway through the basic training period (approximately 5 weeks after conscription) parents were individually administered questionnaires regarding the son's coping and adaptation. In addition, approximately at the same time (i.e., 5-6 weeks after enlistment) when the adolescent went home for a weekend's furlough, he was contacted and asked to fill out questionnaires rating his coping and adaptation. Additionally, adolescents were asked to provide names and phone numbers of two peers from their basic training unit (i.e., "friends who serve with you in basic training and know you well"). These peers rated the focal adolescents' coping and adaptation by means of a phone interview. Because of logistical problems we were able to gather peers' data only for a subsample of the adolescents ( $n = 64$ ). There was no difference on any of the background variables or the different measures employed in this study between the subsample whose peers rated their coping and the subsample for which peer reports were not available.

## Measures

This study used a multimethod, multi-informant design. Some of the constructs, such as authoritative parenting practices, ego strength, and coping and adaptation to military service, were viewed as multidimensional and were assessed by several scales. For data-reduction purposes, one indicator of authoritative parenting practices was later created for each informant (adolescents, fathers, and mothers) and in addition one indicator of coping and adaptation was created for each source (adolescents, peers, fathers, and mothers). Table 1 presents the general overview of the measures included in this study laid out by the constructs assessed, time of assessment, and informant.

TABLE 1  
Measures Laid Out by the Time of Assessment, Constructs Assessed, and Informant

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Informant</i>			
	<i>Adolescent</i>	<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Peers</i>
Time 1 Parenting Practices				
Measures of authoritative parenting				
Mother's acceptance	+	+		
Mother's independence encouragement	+	+		
Mother's trust		+		
Father's acceptance	+		+	
Father's independence encouragement	+		+	
Father's trust			+	
Authoritative parenting (Buri)	+			
Measures of authoritarian parenting				
Authoritarian parenting (Buri)	+			
Time 1 Measures of Mediators (Ego Strength)				
Self-esteem	+			
Personal efficacy	+			
Time 2 Measures of Coping and Adaptation				
Appraisal of adolescent's coping		+	+	+
Perception of challenge	+			
Perception of threat	+			
Distress	+			
Coping effectiveness	+			

**Measures of parenting practices: Parent report (Time 1).** The Mother-Father-Peer Scale (MFP; Epstein, 1983) was employed in this study to assess two of the salient characteristics of authoritative parenting: parental acceptance and psychological autonomy granting (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). Only the mother and father parts of the scale were included. Because of time constraints, a slightly shorter version of the two scales of the original inventory was employed: parental acceptance/rejection (8 of the original 10 items, e.g., "My son could have always depended upon me when he really needed my help and trust") and parental independence encouragement versus overprotection (9 of the original 13 items, e.g., "I encouraged him to make his own decisions," "I encouraged him to try things his way"). Using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*), each of the parents filled out the scales with regard to his or her relationship with the adolescent. The inventory has shown good reliability and has been validated against several other measures of parenting (Crowell, Treboux, & Waters, 1999). Internal reliabilities (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) in the present study were adequate, as follows: parental acceptance reported by mother (.71) and by father (.60), and parental independence encouragement reported by mother (.64) and by father (.63).

Trust in child's capacity for autonomous, mature behaviors scale was devised specifically for this study to examine the promotion of autonomous and mature behavior. It included seven items reflecting the extent to which the parent trusted the adolescent in various domains and granted him behavioral autonomy<sup>1</sup> (e.g., "I trust my child to arrange his schedule so that he can accomplish his goals," "I trust my son in his choice of friends"). Parents were asked to report the extent to which each item reflected their relationship with the adolescent using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The scale showed moderately good internal reliability ( $\alpha = .74$  for fathers and  $\alpha = .83$  for mothers) and was associated, as expected, with other parenting scales. For example, Pearson's  $r$  ranged from .36 to .40 with the MFP scale of parental independence encouragement.

**Measures of parenting practices: Adolescent report (Time 1).** The PAQ (Buri, 1991) was filled out by the adolescent using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The adolescent was asked to report to what extent each item described his parents and their behavior as he was growing up. It is a 30-item inventory comprising three 10-item scales: authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive

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<sup>1</sup>Scales are available from the authors.

parenting. The scales show good internal and test–retest reliabilities (e.g., Smetana, 1995). For the present study, only the authoritative and authoritarian parenting scales were employed (for the authoritative scale, e.g., “My parents have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable,” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .79$ ; and for the authoritarian scale, e.g., “As I was growing up my parents did not allow me to question the decisions they made,” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .85$ ).

The short version of the scales from the MFP (parental acceptance and parental independence encouragement), which was filled out by the parents, was also filled out by the adolescents, separately for each parent. Items were reworded to reflect the adolescents’ appraisal. Internal reliabilities (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ) were adequate, as follows: maternal acceptance (.82), paternal acceptance (.80), maternal independence encouragement (.71), and paternal independence encouragement (.71).

**Measures of ego strength: Adolescent report (Time 1).** Two scales derived from questionnaires that were filled out by the adolescents at the first time of measurement were employed to assess ego strength: personal efficacy and self-esteem. These scales assess general personality, trait-like attributes that reflect a person’s general internalized psychological strength. The Personal Efficacy Scale from the Spheres of Control questionnaire (Paulhus, 1983) was employed to assess self-efficacy. The scale contained 10 items, and adolescents were asked to fill it out using a 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) Likert scale (e.g., “When I make plans I am almost certain to make them work”). It showed good internal and test–retest reliability, and its convergent and discriminant validity was demonstrated (for a more detailed description, see Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). In the present study, internal reliability was moderate (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .61$ ), with higher scores denoting greater internal control. In addition the Self-Esteem scale from Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI; Feldman & Weinberger, 1994) was employed (seven items, e.g., “I usually feel that I’m the kind of person I want to be,” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .73$ ). The scale showed good internal reliability and concurrent and predictive validity (e.g., D’Angelo, Weinberger, & Feldman, 1995).

**Measures of coping and adaptation: Multiple reporters (Time 2).** Four sources of information were employed to assess adolescents’ coping and adaptation: the adolescents themselves, their fathers, their mothers, and their peers from basic training (see the following discussion for the measures). The measures employed were worded to refer to the current

situation (i.e., military service) and assessed current state-like levels of coping and adaptation.

Adolescents' appraisal of their coping and adaptation assessment included four scales derived from two measures. The Cognitive Appraisal self-report questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1985) includes three scales tapping participants' appraisal of the threats and challenges implied by the stressful situation of military training: perception of challenge (three items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .75$ ; e.g., "To what extent do you perceive basic training as a challenge to your coping capacity in stressful situations?"), perception of threat (two items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .68$ ; e.g., "To what extent do you see the experiences in basic training as a threat to your self esteem?"), and evaluation regarding coping effectiveness (two items, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .63$ , higher scores denote more effective coping; e.g., "To what extent do you think that you succeed in coping with the stressful situations during basic training?"). The items were worded to refer to the basic training experiences and adolescents were asked to rate each item using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The questionnaire has shown good internal reliabilities and construct validity (e.g., Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). In addition, level of distress was assessed by the Mental Health Inventory (MHI; Veit & Ware, 1983), which is a self-report questionnaire that relates to feelings of psychological distress or psychological well-being. The questionnaire has shown high internal reliability and good test-retest reliability, as well as construct and discriminant validity (e.g., Florian & Drory, 1990). Because of time constraints, only nine items from the MHI questionnaire (e.g., feeling depressed, lonely, nervous, anxious, or in control) were chosen to reflect feelings frequently voiced by young recruits during their basic training (Gal, 1986; Lieblich, 1989). To tap current level of distress, adolescents were asked to answer each item in reference to their feelings during the previous 2 weeks in basic training, using Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*all the time*). A mean score was constructed (relevant items reversed) where high scores denoted high distress (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .76$ ).

To construct an index of the adolescents' appraisal of their current coping and adaptation, we computed a mean of these four scales after standardizing them: perception of challenge, perception of threat (reversed), evaluation regarding coping effectiveness, and distress (reversed). Intercorrelations among the scales were moderately high ( $M = .60$ , *range* = .55-.65), justifying such a procedure. The new scale had reasonably high internal reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .80$ ), with higher scores denoting better coping with the basic training.

Parents' appraisal of their son's coping and adaptation questionnaire includes seven items referring to the parents' evaluations of their son's

adaptation and coping during basic training.<sup>2</sup> Parents were asked to evaluate on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*) the extent to which they thought the specific situation posed a threat to their son, or was difficult for him, and the extent to which they perceived him as coping and adjusting well to military service (e.g., "To what extent do you think that your son copes well with stressful situations in basic training?"). Items were similar to those administered to the adolescents in the Cognitive Appraisal questionnaire but worded to reflect parental appraisal. For each parent, a general scale indicating parental appraisal of the son's adjustment was constructed (averaging across the seven items), with higher scores denoting better adjustment (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$  and  $.77$  for the mothers' and fathers' scales, respectively).

Note that most adolescents went home for a weekend leave at least twice between their conscription and Time 2 measurement. Furthermore, adolescents phoned home frequently (on average twice a week). Thus, the parents had first-hand information of their son's adaptation through direct report by the adolescent and through observation of his conduct in person and over the phone (mood, tiredness, tone of voice, etc.).

Peers' appraisal of coping and adaptation questionnaire is a scale frequently used by IDF authorities to assess adjustment and coping by different observers (Catz & Orbach, 1990). The questionnaire includes six items that tap the peers' evaluation of the new recruit's adjustment (e.g., "To what extent do you think that your friend succeeded in coping with the stressful situations during basic training?").<sup>3</sup> Two peers from basic training were asked to answer these questions using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). The mean of their responses for each item was computed. A general scale indicating peers' appraisal of the adolescent's adjustment was constructed (averaging across the six items), with higher scores denoting better adjustment (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .80$ ).

## RESULTS

### Associations Between Parenting Practices and Adolescent Adaptation to Military Service

We first examined zero-order correlations among the study variables (see Table 2). As expected, the intercorrelations among the reports regarding authoritative parenting practices for each informant were all positive and significant. Their magnitude was moderate, demonstrating their distinc-

<sup>2</sup> Scales are available from the authors.

<sup>3</sup> Scales are available from the authors.

TABLE 2  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among the Study Variables

Study Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Acceptance (M)																		
2. Independence encouragement (M)	.44***																	
3. Trust (M)	.29**	.39***																
4. Acceptance (F)	.11	-.07	.26*															
5. Independence encouragement (F)	-.06	.02	.33**	.47***														
6. Trust (F)	.18+	.16	.68***	.42***	.38***													
7. Mother acceptance (A)	.38***	.09	.35***	.13	.18	.32***												
8. Mother independence encouragement (A)	.17	.27**	.18	.03	.12	.22*	.44***											
9. Father acceptance (A)	.15	-.02	.15	.24*	.19+	.15	.45***	.32***										
10. Father independence encouragement (A)	.17	.05	.37***	.13	.41***	.40***	.39***	.55***	.50***									
11. Authoritative parenting (A)	.13	.14	.38***	.10	.11	.29**	.53***	.37***	.45***	.48***								
12. Authoritarian parenting (A)	-.18	-.05	-.21*	-.11	-.20*	-.25*	-.39***	-.38***	-.40***	-.52***	-.39***							
13. Self-esteem	-.04	.07	.21*	.05	.08	.20*	.39***	.33***	.44***	.33***	.41***	-.32**						
14. Personal efficacy	-.04	.09	.40***	-.05	-.04	.21*	.39***	.25*	.27**	.28**	.45***	-.15	.54***					
15. Coping and adaptation (M)	.25*	.32**	.24*	.08	.08	.15	.27**	.32**	.06	.17	.08	-.05	.30**	.05				
16 Coping and adaptation (F)	.04	.16	-.09	-.02	.12	.05	.04	.32**	.03	.21*	.01	-.15	.22*	.01	.34***			
17 Coping and adaptation (A)	.23*	.11	.20*	.09	.06	.19+	.32**	.43***	.31**	.35***	.31**	-.22*	.47***	.27**	.53***	.54***		
18. Coping and adaptation (peers)	.37**	.23	.28*	.20	.01	.29*	.24+	.39***	.37**	.46***	.20	-.27*	.29*	.27*	.57***	.47***	.60***	
M	4.38	3.94	4.28	4.49	4.12	4.29	4.22	3.64	4.12	3.86	3.60	2.57	4.10	5.22	3.98	3.95	3.86	4.16
SD	.57	.51	.59	.38	.48	.51	.58	.55	.57	.54	.55	.64	.63	.68	.65	.54	.51	.47

Note. F = fathers; M = mothers; A = adolescents. Parents' and adolescents' reports: N = 85; peers' reports: N = 64.  
\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

tiveness in assessing the different facets of authoritative parenting. The intercorrelations between the adolescents' reports regarding authoritative parenting practices and the corresponding report of each of the parents regarding authoritative practices (i.e., maternal acceptance reported by the mother and by the adolescent) were also positive and mostly significant though only small or moderate in magnitude. The reports by mothers and fathers for the corresponding dimensions (e.g., acceptance by father with acceptance by mother) were not significantly correlated except for their trust in the adolescent's capacity for autonomous, mature behaviors. This pattern of correlations has been previously noted (Smetana, 1995) and it reflects the unique perception of each family member who nevertheless together perceive a similar construct. As expected, the associations between the adolescents' report of authoritarian parenting and the reports of authoritative parenting practices by fathers, mothers, and the adolescents were negative and significant in most cases.

With regard to the main objective of the study, the following picture of correlations emerged. Mothers' reports of authoritative parenting practices, in particular their acceptance and trust in the adolescent's capacity for autonomous, mature behaviors, were in most cases positively and significantly associated with mothers', adolescents', and peers' (but not fathers') reports of adolescents' coping and adaptation. Nevertheless, mothers' report of their independence encouragement was less consistently associated with the assessments of coping and adaptation. By contrast, fathers' report of authoritative parenting practices was not significantly associated with reports of coping and adaptation except for the significant and positive association between fathers' report of trust in the adolescent's capacity for autonomous, mature behaviors and peers' reports regarding coping and adaptation. As expected, adolescents' reports of authoritative parenting practices were in most cases positively and significantly associated with adolescents' and peers' reports of coping and adaptation, and with mothers' report of coping and adaptation. However, only adolescents' reports regarding mothers' authoritative practices (not fathers' authoritative practices) were positively associated with mothers' report regarding coping and adaptation. Adolescents' report of independence encouragement by both parents was significantly associated with fathers' report of coping and adaptation. Otherwise, fathers' report of coping and adaptation were not significantly associated with authoritative parenting practices, not even with their own report of authoritative parenting practices. Finally, the adolescents' reports of authoritarian parenting practices were negatively and significantly associated with their own and their peers' reports of their coping and adaptation.

Thus, besides fathers' reports, which seem different from the reports of the others, this pattern of association points to an apparent advantage of authoritative parenting practices for coping and adaptation in the authoritarian military context. The most stringent examination of our main objective involves the inspection of the associations between parenting practices and coping and adaptation across different observers. In line with this contention, of special note are the positive and moderate significant correlations between authoritative parenting practices, as reported by the adolescents and by their mothers, and the peers' reports of the adolescents' coping and adaptation.

### Predicting Son's Coping and Adaptation

In light of the moderate sample size, and for data-reduction purposes, a composite scale denoting authoritative parenting practices was constructed for each informant (mother, father, adolescent). For mothers and for fathers separately, a mean was computed of the following three standardized scales: acceptance, independence encouragement, and trust in the child's capacity for autonomous, mature behaviors. The two aggregate scales of authoritative parenting practices (reflecting mother's report and father's report, respectively) had reasonably high internal reliabilities (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$  for each scale), with higher scores denoting higher levels of authoritative parenting practices.

For the adolescent, a mean of five standardized scales was computed: maternal and paternal acceptance, maternal and paternal independence encouragement, and authoritative parenting from the PAQ. Intercorrelations were moderate (circa .50). In particular, the authoritative parenting scale from the PAQ, which is a valid and acceptable measure of authoritative parenting, was moderately associated (circa .45) with each of the other scales assessing authoritative practices. Thus, the aggregation of these scales to create a composite measure of authoritative parenting practices seemed warranted. This new scale had reasonably high internal reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .80$ ), with high scores denoting higher levels of parental authoritative practices as perceived by the adolescent. Correlations among the three new aggregate scales were moderate (circa .30), rendering collinearity problems in the regression analyses unlikely.

Because the two previous studies that examined a similar research question relied only on recruits in combat units, we wanted to examine the possibility that the type of service and basic training (combat vs. noncombat) moderated these effects. We performed four hierarchical regressions with mothers', fathers', adolescents', and peers' appraisals of

coping and adaptation as dependent variables, and type of service as well as reports of authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices as predictors. In the first step we entered type of service, dummy coded (0 = noncombat, 1 = combat); in the second step we entered the three aggregate scales regarding authoritative parenting practices (as reported by mothers, fathers, and adolescents) and the adolescent's report of authoritarian parenting as a block; and in the third step we entered the four interaction terms between parenting measures and type of service.

As can be seen in Table 3, type of service made a significant contribution to appraisals of coping and adaptation by peers and fathers. Adolescents

TABLE 3  
Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Adjustment from Authoritative and Authoritarian Parenting

	<i>Adolescents' Report on Adjustment</i>			<i>Mothers' Report on Adjustment</i>		
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1						
Type of service	.17	2.29	.03	.14	1.56	.02
Step 2		5.88***	.23		3.55**	.15
Type of service	.17			.14		
Authoritative parenting (A)	.50***			.18		
Authoritative parenting (M)	.06			.32**		
Authoritative parenting (F)	-.04			-.01		
Authoritarian parenting (A)	.08			.14		
	<i>Fathers' Report on Adjustment</i>			<i>Peers' Report on Adjustment</i>		
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1						
Type of service	.22*	3.96*	.05	.30*	5.68*	.09
Step 2		2.00	.09		4.28**	.22
Type of service	.22*			.27*		
Authoritative parenting (A)	.20			.26*		
Authoritative parenting (M)	.19			.26*		
Authoritative parenting (F)	-.03			.01		
Authoritarian parenting (A)	.06			-.05		

Note. A = adolescents' report; M = mothers' report; F = fathers' report.  
\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

in noncombat units were perceived as coping and adapting better than those in combat units. However, none of the interaction terms with type of service significantly contributed to the explained variance; therefore, they were omitted from the table. The regression coefficients presented in Table 3 reflect the main effects model that did not include the interaction terms. When the three authoritative parenting aggregate scales were entered as a block, mothers' report of authoritative parenting practices was the only significant predictor of their report on coping and adaptation, whereas the adolescents' report of authoritative parenting practices was the only significant predictor of their report on coping and adaptation. However, both mothers' and adolescents' reports on authoritative parenting practices significantly predicted the peers' appraisal of coping and adaptation. Reflecting the pattern evident in the zero-order correlations, fathers' report on authoritative parenting was not significantly associated with coping and adaptation in any of these analyses. Authoritarian parenting did not add a unique prediction beyond the reports on authoritative parenting practices.<sup>4</sup>

### Examination of the Mediating Role of Ego Strength

In light of the positive association between authoritative parenting practices and son's coping and adaptation, we considered the possibility that ego strength mediated these effects. We examined the three conditions for mediation suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) and the additional condition suggested by Holmbeck (1997). The first condition suggested by Baron and Kenny requires that the independent variable (authoritative parenting practices) predict the mediator (scales denoting ego strength). This condition was met only for the adolescents' report on authoritative parenting. Specifically, the aggregate scale of authoritative parenting practices as reported by the adolescents was significantly correlated with self-esteem ( $r = .51, p < .001$ ) and personal efficacy ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ). The second condition requires that the independent variable (authoritative parenting) predict the dependent variable (coping and adaptation). This condition was satisfied for adolescents' reports on authoritative parenting with

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<sup>4</sup>In regression analyses conducted with the distinct parenting practices as predictors, a similar pattern of results emerged. In general, maternal and paternal acceptance and maternal and paternal encouragement of independence (as reported by adolescents and their mothers) significantly predicted coping and adaptation as reported by adolescents, mothers, and peers. Acceptance and independence encouragement were both significant predictors. By contrast, the perspective of fathers, either as reporters of parenting practices or as reporters of their sons' coping and adaptation, was not significantly implicated in any of these analyses.

adolescents', mothers', and peers' reports regarding coping and adaptation ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ;  $r = .46, p < .001$ ;  $r = .43, p < .001$ , respectively). Holmbeck requires in addition that the mediator predict the dependent variable. This was satisfied for self-esteem with all four indicators of coping and adaptation, and for personal efficacy with adolescents' and peers' reports on adjustment (see Table 2). Baron and Kenny's third condition for mediation requires that the mediator (self-esteem or personal efficacy) predict the dependent variable (coping and adaptation) when entered together with the independent variable (authoritative parenting) and that the impact of the independent variable drop relative to when it was examined alone without the mediator.

Following the inspection of the other conditions, we tested this condition only for adolescents' report on authoritative parenting practices and for the adolescents', mothers', and peers' reports on coping and adaptation. Consequently, three hierarchical regressions were conducted, with type of service (combat, noncombat) and adolescents' report on authoritative parenting entered in the first step, and self-esteem and personal efficacy entered in the second step. As can be seen in Table 4, self-esteem significantly predicted adolescents' and mothers', but not peers', reports of adolescent coping and adaptation. After the inclusion of the mediators in the regression model, the  $\beta$  coefficients of adolescents' report on authoritative parenting fell by 37% for the model predicting their report on coping and adaptation, by 35% for the model predicting their mothers' report on coping and adaptation, and by 21% for the model predicting their peers' reports. For the model predicting the adolescents' report of coping, the  $\beta$  coefficients remained significant; however, for the model predicting mothers' report of coping, the  $\beta$  coefficient became nonsignificant following the inclusion of the mediators. These results suggest that the positive association between authoritative parenting practices and son's coping is partially mediated by adolescents' self-esteem in the case of adolescents' reports of coping and is fully mediated in the case of mothers' reports of coping.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the association between authoritative parenting practices and adjustment to an authoritarian context: basic training at the beginning of mandatory military service in Israel. Our data demonstrated several consistent findings. First, indicators of authoritative parenting practices as reported by the adolescents or and their mothers were positively associated with better adjustment to the authoritarian context,

TABLE 4  
 Hierarchical Regression Predicting Adjustment from Authoritative Parenting: The  
 Mediation of Self-Esteem and Personal Efficacy

	<i>Adolescents' Report on Adjustment</i>			<i>Mothers' Report on Adjustment</i>		
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1						
Type of service	.16	13.04***	.24	.11	2.99*	.07
Authoritative parenting (A)	.48***			.23*		
Step 2		5.26**	.09		3.20*	.07
Type of service	.17			.10		
Authoritative parenting (A)	.30**			.15		
Self-esteem	.37**			.34**		
Personal efficacy	.04			.18		
	<i>Peers' Report on Adjustment</i>					
	$\beta$	$\Delta F$	$\Delta R^2$			
Step 1						
Type of service	.25*	10.03***	.25			
Authoritative parenting (A)	.42***					
Step 2		.78	.02			
Type of service	.27*					
Authoritative parenting (A)	.33*					
Self-esteem	.08					
Personal efficacy	.11					

Note. A = adolescents' report.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

the military. This was apparent from the young recruits' own perception of their adaptation, from that of their mothers, and from that of their peers in basic training. Second, authoritarian parenting as reported by the adolescents was negatively associated with their own and their peers' reports on coping and adaptation in bivariate analyses. Of special note are the associations between parenting practices as reported by the mothers or the adolescents and coping and adaptation as reported by peers. These associations represent a correlation across various sources; therefore, they are not subject to shared source bias.

Previous research on authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices (e.g., Steinberg et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1992) has assessed

adjustment in contexts that could be characterized as authoritative (e.g., high school, college). In such cases, the beneficial effects of authoritative parenting could be attributed to the congruence between the two contexts (person–environment fit). The findings of this study revealed that authoritative parenting practices were advantageous also in respect to adjustment to an authoritarian context, whereas authoritarian parenting was unfavorable. As such, our results support the claim for the general benefit of authoritative parenting (Steinberg, 2001). Despite the claims of limitations to the universal advantage of the authoritative parenting practices (e.g., Chao, 1994), several recent studies have demonstrated that authoritative parenting was associated with positive child outcomes not only in Western individualistic cultures but also in various collectivistic cultures, such as India (Carson, Chowdhury, Perry, & Pati, 1999), mainland China (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997), Korea (Mantzicopoulos & Oh-Hwang, 1998), and Hong Kong (Leung, Lau, & Lam, 1998; McBride-Chang & Chang, 1998). Our study, too, was conducted in a fairly collectivistic society (i.e., Israel; Katriel, 1991; Mayseless & Salomon, *in press*), and examining adjustment to an authoritarian context adds to this literature demonstrating the generalized and extensive benefit of authoritative parenting practices. By contrast, the claim of limitation on the general benefit of authoritative parenting, though appealing, has received only modest support so far (for a similar conclusion, see Steinberg, 2001; but see Chao, 2001).

Our results replicated the findings of a previous study, which examined adjustment of young men to military service (Mayseless & Hai, 1998) yet disagreed with some of the results of another (Wintre & Ben-Knaz, 2000). For example, Wintre and Ben-Knaz (2000) found a positive association between authoritative parenting and feeling stressed and depressed during basic training. As stated, these two previous studies employed only the perspective of the adolescent and examined only those in combat units. In the Wintre and Ben-Knaz study, the participating unit (a paratrooper unit) is especially known for its strong emphasis on presenting a hardy facade and minimizing the expression of difficulties (Gal, 1986). The assessments were conducted under the general supervision of the recruits' direct commanders. Though promised that their responses would not influence their army careers, respondents may have not been convinced (M. G. Wintre, personal communication, April 2000). In this context recruits from authoritative backgrounds may have felt more at ease admitting feeling somewhat stressed, whereas recruits from authoritarian backgrounds needed to present a rosier picture.

Our study benefited from the inclusion of a more diverse group of soldiers (serving in combat as well as in noncombat units), allowing the

examination of the moderating effect of type of service. Furthermore, we employed several sources to assess both parenting and adjustment. In addition, relationships with parents were assessed about a year before enlistment, and in particular the study as a whole was not conducted under the potentially biasing sponsorship of the military authorities. The results of this study presented a consistent picture in which authoritative parenting practices were positively associated with better coping and adaptation. Though such an association was not significant for all the informants (e.g., fathers) or for all the authoritative parenting practices examined, in none of the analyses did a negative relation emerge. This positive association was not moderated by type of service and was apparent across different informants (mothers, adolescents, peers). The consistency of the associations demonstrated in the present study further strengthens their validity. Similarly, we found that authoritarian parenting was negatively associated with coping and adapting to military service, but because the assessment of authoritarian parenting relied only on one source, the adolescents, the testing of its impact was weaker. Together, these findings suggest that parenting practices that involve responsiveness, warmth, and affection, along with the promotion of autonomous behavior and decision making, promote the capacity to adjust even to a harsh and difficult context that exposes the adolescents to physical, psychological, and social hardships. In contrast, parenting practices that use power-assertive control in the context of low responsiveness were associated with lower levels of the capacity to adjust to such an environment.

In our assessments of authoritative parenting we focused on two of the three major components of this construct: acceptance and autonomy granting (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). As in previous studies (e.g., Gray & Steinberg, 1999), which assessed comparable psychosocial outcomes, both parenting practices were similarly associated with better coping and adaptation to basic training. Though the third component (behavioral control or supervision) was assessed as part of the adolescents' report (the PAQ), mothers' and fathers' reports did not include this aspect. Thus, we cannot comment on the possible effects of behavioral control on coping and adaptation to military service. Note, however, that behavioral control has been previously linked mostly to delinquency (e.g., Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Kerr & Stattin, 2000), an adjustment indicator that was not assessed in our study and was less relevant to 18-year-olds and the context in which we assessed our participants' coping and adaptation. Furthermore, Kerr and Stattin (2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000) have recently demonstrated that the typical manner in which behavioral control or supervision has been assessed is problematic as it heavily reflects the child's willingness to

disclose rather than the parents' control efforts or solicitation of information. Future research may need to address the questions of how monitoring and supervision should be conceptualized and measured, and how the different facets of the construct (child disclosure, parental solicitation, parental control, parents' knowledge, feeling controlled) relate to acceptance and autonomy granting and to various outcomes, including adaptation to military service.

It should be noted that authoritative parenting co-occurs with other positive characteristics of family functioning, such as high cohesiveness and low levels of conflict. Each of these aspects may have contributed to better coping and adaptation of the adolescents. Child effects (e.g., easy temperament) might also have been operating. For example, an easy temperament in adolescents might have instigated their parents to employ more authoritative parenting practices, and the same temperamental qualities might have benefited their coping and adaptation to military service. These different effects need to be teased out in future research. Finally, whereas the current research examined carryover effects from the family to military service, other links may have also operated. For example, having belonged to other social institutions, which might have demonstrated different levels of authoritativeness (e.g., day care, neighborhoods, schools), might also have affected the adolescents in coping and adapting to the military. Future research should address these issues.

Our results do not accord with the notion of person–environment fit insofar as they do not demonstrate that coping and adaptation are less optimal when a mismatch between personal experiences and characteristics of the environment occurs. In a related study of person–environment fit, van Aken and colleagues (van Aken, van Lieshout, Scholte, & Haselager, 2002) found that resilient children were able to adjust well in a range of peer cultures, including those that are problematic. Some experiences, such as being reared by authoritative parents, may well equip children with resources (i.e., ego resiliency) that enable them to adjust well in a variety of contexts, including those that deviate from the one they had known.

Related to this possibility, the second question examined processes mediating the links between authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices and adolescents' coping and adaptation. Our findings suggest that aspects of the youngsters' ego strength, particularly their self-esteem, might have helped them adapt to basic training. Using several sources for evaluation of coping and adaptation, we found that the positive links between adolescents' reports regarding authoritative parenting practices and their coping and adaptation were mediated, albeit only to some extent, through the adolescents' self-esteem. Higher self-esteem may

contribute to better coping and adaptation by affecting processes of appraisal and by fostering use of better coping strategies such as problem-focused coping (Florian, Mikulincer, & Taubman, 1995). Note, however, that the regression analyses provided only partial support for mediation through self-esteem. Though the  $\beta$  coefficients of the parenting indicators fell when the mediators were added, they became insignificant (hence showing full mediation) only with mothers' report on coping and adaptation. Other characteristics of adolescents from authoritative homes, such as better emotion-regulation capacities, higher ego resilience, or better interpersonal capacities, might be implicated.

Fathers' reports regarding authoritative parenting practices were in most cases unrelated to the indicators of coping and adaptation, and similarly their reports regarding their son's coping and adaptation were for the most part unrelated to the indicators of authoritative parenting practices, including their own. The fathers' perception of the psychosocial processes examined in this study appeared to operate differently from the perceptions of other family members, as well as from those of the son's peers. Other researchers have also noted the discrete nature of the perceptions of different family members, particularly the fathers (Larson & Richards, 1994). In previous research fathers proved different from mothers in their involvement with the adolescent in the family; in particular, they seemed less drawn and less attuned to close relationships than mothers (Larson & Richards, 1994; Parke, 2002). These qualities of lower involvement and attunement may be related to the nonsignificant associations in our study regarding fathers' reports. Nevertheless, adolescents' perceptions of their fathers' acceptance and independence encouragement were significantly associated with their coping and adaptation as perceived by them and by their peers: Adolescents' perceptions regarding their fathers do seem to matter.

Similarly, whereas adolescents' perception of independence encouragement by their mothers was significantly associated with their coping and adaptation as assessed by all informants, mothers' report regarding their encouragement of independence was only associated with their own report of their son's coping and adaptation. For adolescents in their late teens, mothers' reports about encouraging independence may be colored by their need to present themselves as granting autonomy (Hock, Eberly, Bartle-Haring, Ellwanger, & Widaman, 2001); this reporting bias could have reduced associations with psychosocial outcomes. In addition, the stronger effects for the adolescents' perspective may be related to the importance of the adolescents' subjective perception regarding their relationships with their parents in predicting their coping and adaptation. Future research may need to examine more closely the factors that affect

the different perspectives of family members, in particular, the role of the fathers as informants of family processes.

This study was conducted within a specific cultural milieu, namely, the transition from high school to military service in Israel. Despite recent changes, Israel is more familial and more collectivist than North America (Katriel, 1991; Mayselless & Scharf, 2003). Accordingly, parent-adolescent relationships in Israel may reflect different dynamics from those in North America (e.g., Lieblich, 1989; Mayselless, Wiseman, & Hai, 1998); therefore, authoritative and authoritarian parenting might have different ramifications for 18-year-olds in Israel than for their contemporaries in other cultures. In addition, despite some recent developments, military service in Israel, though mandatory, is highly appreciated and favored by the youth because this service is regarded as necessary to preserve Israel's independence (Mayselless, 1993). Other authoritarian contexts, such as military service or the police force in countries where such service is less valued may engender different reactions in terms of adjustment. For example, authoritatively reared adolescents may not adjust well to an authoritarian context with which they do not identify and that they oppose. In such a context they may rebel and defy authority rather than accommodate to it.

Furthermore, our study examined two-parent, middle-class families and did not include families who had recently immigrated to Israel. This focus reflected our attempt to examine the research questions initially in a relatively normative sample. However, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles may have different ramifications depending on SES (e.g., Brody & Flor, 1998) and the existence of risk factors. In addition, the participation rate (out of eligible families) was moderate, probably reflecting the intensive investment of time required from each family member and the requirement that all family members agree to participate, a caveat that needs to be noted. All things considered, generalizations to less normative and less selective samples, other cultures, SES groups, and contexts should be made cautiously. Also, this study was conducted only with men; therefore, replication with women is required before these results can be generalized to the other sex. Nevertheless, because some of the findings of this study replicated previous results in other contexts (North American culture and the college context) and with both sexes, the external validity of the findings is partly supported.

All the information gathered from the participants of this study relied on self-report questionnaires. These are open to various biases, for example, toward a desirable self-presentation. Although we cannot rule out such a bias, the different sources converged in reporting the same constructs (i.e., authoritative parenting practices and coping and adapta-

tion), demonstrating a certain convergent validity of these accounts. Furthermore, for some of the measures in this study, we employed shorter, adapted scales, and in some cases internal reliabilities of the scales were only moderate. Future research may benefit from the inclusion of the full scales and possibly the use of observations of key constructs examined in this study.

We set out to examine the notion voiced by some parents that one needs to expose youngsters to harsh discipline “to prepare them to deal with real-life encounters as in the military, where no logic and no fairness are expected” (quoted from parents in our study). Our results suggest that children experiencing authoritative parenting do not become soft or spoiled and unable to cope with authoritarian regime. Rather, they seem to evince resiliency and are able successfully to cope with the harsh environment of basic training.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the families that participated in this study for their willingness to contribute their time and experience and for sharing with us some of their most precious moments. The authors further wish to thank the very dedicated group of undergraduate and graduate research assistants who were involved in various phases of the research project. Special thanks are due to Maxine Gallander Wintre, Anat Scher, Ruth Sharabany, the reviewers, and the associate editor for their helpful and valuable observations and suggestions regarding an earlier draft. The collection of data reported herein was partly supported by a research grant for the first author from the Faculty of Education, University of Haifa.

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