

# Police's Mediating Role in Participating Coercive Parenting Control on Young Adults in China: A Case Study to Analyze the Law against Domestic Violence

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## Abstract

Criminal justice systems often tend toward using mediation for family violence-related issues, with criticisms aimed at policing discretion. To address the critics, this purpose of this paper is to analyze the law against domestic violence, coercive parenting control, and meditation policing. To this end, this paper used the methods of a case study of an adult daughter leaving her parental house in China while having some dependencies on them and showing some symptoms of mental disorders. By analyzing the reactions of the worrying parents and the dilemmatic mediating role of police, it reached the result that mediation in China is used as a compromise methodology, focused less on discretion and more on balancing response needs while maintaining political and social harmony. The conclusion is despite its universal policing trend for family violence, mediation may be insufficient in meeting the complex needs of stakeholders to reach a satisfactory agreement. The findings suggest practitioners and policymakers that responding to family violence issues needs to be genuinely holistic rather than simply stifling the case.

## Keywords

Coercive Parenting, Policing, Meditation Policing, Discretion, Social Stability, China

## 1. Introduction

In 2016, the Chinese top legislature approved the nation's first law against

domestic violence, which regulates that the following behaviors should all be regarded as domestic violence: “*physical, psychological and other harm inflicted by family members with beatings, restraint or forcible limits on physical liberty, recurring invectives and verbal threats listed as examples*” (The State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2016). This law is a great step in addressing domestic violence, as physical abuse was not accepted even for divorce before 2001. For a long time, law enforcement hesitated to intervene, treating it as a private issue, unless serious injuries occurred, such as disabilities (Mennicke & Ropes, 2016).

The anti-domestic violence law provides a great legal framework for protecting family members from abuse, but the challenges exist on how to practically perform the regulations. In Chinese culture, the elderly one within a family usually enjoys the right of punishment and discursive power over younger members (Chao, 1994). Control is defined as structural forms of deprivation, exploitation, and command that indirectly compel obedience (Stark, 2007), while coercion means a dynamic process linking an explicit or implicit demand with a credible threatened negative consequence for noncompliance (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). In this conceptualization, the maintenance of control is primarily concerned with parenting power and modes of patriarchal authority.

Furthermore, previous studies on coercive parenting lack an explanation for why police prefers using legal intervention to mediate rather than directly addressing the issue. By investigating abusive and controlling behaviors toward children, Lux & Gill (2021) revealed that law enforcement, in practice, does not seriously consider parents’ controlling behavior until divorce-related custody. Nonetheless, it is unclear why police in China perceives this sample case as natural for parents to continue controlling their adult children and believe that coercive parenting is not a criminal offense but rather a family affair.

To address the issues and bridge the gap, this study aims to use a specific case study to investigate the challenges of performing the law against parent’s coercive control in Chinese society with its specific cultural characteristics. Unlike other related research, this study noticed an even minority group: the legally adult but financially dependent offspring. The novelty of this article lies in the analysis of this specific sample to reveal a more large-scale mismatch but disregarded policing issues in their response to domestic violence. The contradiction is sharper in this case as law enforcement directly faces the conflict between legal regulations and Chinese parenting norms, requiring a deep exploration. The findings of investigating this case can help regulators and legislators how to revise and improve the subsequent editions of the law against domestic violence. In addition, they can guide police and lawyers on how to perform and treat cases categorized under this law.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

When coercive parenting meets Chinese tradition norms, related issues are usually deconstructed as the conflict of modern lifestyle with traditional norms. From

the legal perspective, however, a more practical standpoint is to locate the link between the definition of coercive control from parents, a kind of regulated domestic violence, with Chinese family's management authority. Meanwhile, the previous studies neglected a group, i.e., the young adults who live dependently with their family who is a group that have full legal rights but live in the gap in domestic violence studies.

### 2.1. Coercive Parenting in China

Coercive parenting in China has always been underestimated due to the traditional cultural and legal recognition. On one hand, [Chao \(1994\)](#) stated that the Chinese term for parents, *Jiazhang*,<sup>1</sup> signifies the member who holds power within the family, i.e., one who decides the fate of the children. This term tries to induce the concept of “we know what is best for you” among children who feel abused as purely out of love and care ([Qiao & Chan, 2005](#)). This concept has introduced a complete and well-accepted theory authorizing the elder members to correct and take punitive actions against the children in need, interpreted as care and love. Denial of this theory entailed the blame of “not responsible for children”, even for police who know the law.

Moreover, [Qiao and Chan \(2005\)](#) described abuse in Chinese families as a “yet-to-be-known” problem in current legal regulations. After releasing the guiding ideology of ending violence in the domestic violence law, physical harm and concrete injuries are strictly prohibited. However, in practice, there are not often reports of law enforcement intervening in non-physical domestic violence. In China, the law on domestic violence also criminalizes mentally harmful behavior, including threats and mental abuse. Nonetheless, the traditional Chinese discursive power rule hinders the identification of domestic mental abuse for both victims and law enforcement, but the side effect of the domestic mental abuse from parents, here called the coercive parenting, has been long neglected.

Police in most countries commonly respond to domestic violence following a framework that evaluates the severity of abuse by applying a calculus of physical harm to these incidents ([Stark, 2012](#)). Some countries refer to this as the violence incident model. However, [Stark \(2012\)](#) showed that this model has failed to evaluate low-level and ongoing violence, including coercive violence. From another perspective, [Hester \(2006\)](#) indicated that domestic violence often struggles to pass through the criminal justice system, which explains why police do not always view family affairs as criminal cases. These findings all indicate that violent behavior within families can be challenging for law enforcement to recognize.

### 2.2. Neglected Young Adult in Coercive Parenting

Although the concept of domestic violence has persistently involved every member of the family, the number of protection orders given by courts indicates an

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<sup>1</sup>Jiazhang, literally refers to the elderly (zhang) in a family (jia), according to Chao, indicate who enjoys the authority, they can access control over children through “training” and “education”.

increasing awareness of self-protection year by year since the release of the Chinese domestic violence law.<sup>2</sup> Data in reports and a large proportion of studies reflect the following narrow perception of domestic violence in China: victims of domestic violence are somehow limited to people in intimate relationships and children under 18. Understandably, domestic violence or any kind of mental abuse would not suddenly stop after children reach 18, but studies consider this age as a sudden turning point with extremely rapid transformations. For example, [DeGarmo and Jones \(2019\)](#) suggests that coercive parenting can cause serious problems in children's mental health, but harm lays in their intimate relationships. In addition, many studies assume that adults are able and enlightened in their own lives; hence, they are more curious about their childhood and the impacts of their experiences ([Howell et al., 2016](#); [Lloyd, 2018](#)).

In China, children tend to leave their parents' home after marriage or start working or studying in another city, rather than reaching the adults' legal age. This norm creates a gap because, despite legally reaching adult age, they are considered kids (Xiaohai) if they live dependently. Moreover, kins are expected to act in accordance with kinship norms when interacting with their parents, as parents are perceived to act out of love ([Chen-Bouck & Patterson, 2017](#)). Thus, the concept of adulthood is weakened in the Chinese family context and replaced by the relationship between parents and their offspring.

This perception has been so widely accepted as a social norm that it is used without hesitation by law enforcement to circumvent the illegality of coercive parenting's mental and physical harm. [Jeffries \(2016\)](#) confirmed the underestimation of coercive control within families in the criminal justice system to maintain the integrity of the family. This standpoint goes beyond culture and jurisdiction. While this perspective is relatively reasonable for families with children under 18, it provides a poor excuse for the police to play a coordinator role, as adults enjoy different legal rights from juveniles.

By uncovering the reasons and facts behind the police's reaction, this research adds to the literature on police responses to young adults under family coercive control by empirically investigating the Chinese model of family control and the lived experiences of individuals and authorities involved in this conflict and compliance. In this way, it helps understand the meaning of family coercive control for newly grown-up individuals, the responses, and the impacts on all involved individuals in China.

### 3. Methodology

This paper follows two steps (1—access and 2—information collection and analysis) to analyze the law against domestic violence, its consequences, and the challenges of its performance, based on my volunteer experience with an autonomous

<sup>2</sup>According to report, by December 2019, the courts in China had issued 5749 protection orders for domestic violence victims, and the number of protection orders has increased, year by year, from 687 in 2016 to 2004 in 2019.

domestic violence aid group. **Figure 1** displays the two steps of the method employed to analyze the case study on the mediating role of police in a parent's coercive control over their adult daughter in China from April to July 2023. Regarding **Figure 1**, the two steps involve access and information collection & analysis.

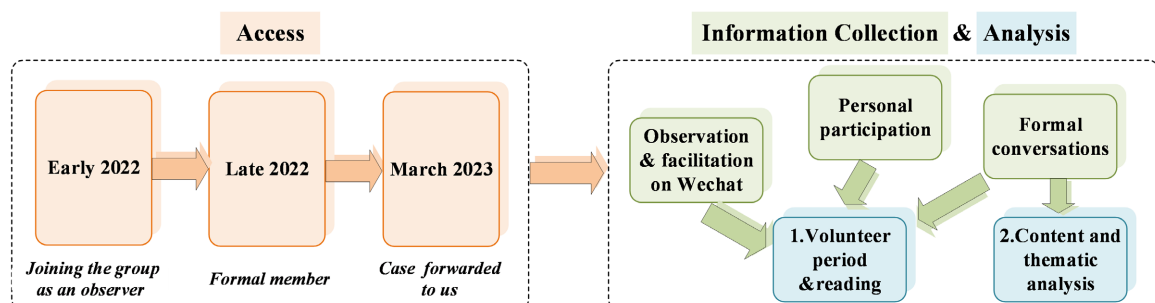
### 3.1. Access

The case comes from our autonomous domestic violence aid group (AD group), which aims to aid females who need suggestions and support in domestic violence. Most supplicants suffer from physical abuse and mental threats from their partners, the most common situation in domestic abuse in China. Our AD group provides mental care, physical support from professional psychological counselors, and legal advice including gathering evidence and communicating with police for stronger legal support. In addition, it accompanies them when facing third parties including authorities, and provides temporary shelter and financial aid. Moreover, it approves using the case and supplicants for this research, while hiding the real names and personal information to protect privacy.

By joining the AD group in 2022, I Initially participated in three different cases as an observer to learn and gain knowledge through meetings with various case teams. In late 2022, I became a formal member, organizing several case teams. In late March 2023, another group forwarded us this specific sample case with a 19-year-old age, called JN (pseudonym), leaving her family for over three months. She stated that her parents had ordered her to return home or she would not be allowed to take the college entrance examination. She also mentioned being threatened, detained, and surveilled by the police, who were called by her parents. I was assigned as the case manager and formed a four-member team with an additional supervisor. My responsibilities included maintaining contact with JN, writing case briefs, and managing team meetings to respond to JN's requests.

### 3.2. Information Collection and Analysis

The information was collected in the following three ways: 1) observation and facilitation on a chatting app (WeChat) with supplicants, specifically young adults seeking help to avoid coercive control from their families, 2) the author's personal



**Figure 1.** Low chart of the research method.

participation and experience in this case, 3) formal conversations with three police officers in city H (not the one in charge of this case), a volunteer team member with a supervisor, and updates to the case report.

The analysis of the case has two stages. The first stage occurred in the volunteer period when the author continued to engage in volunteer work while analyzing previous materials and conducting further reading of related literature and theory. The second stage involved content and thematic analysis. All chat conversations are digitally preserved in computer files.

#### 4. Description from the Reporter

JN left her family at the beginning of 2023, not long after reaching her 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. According to her statement, she suffered long-term abuse from her parents, including physical and verbal abuse, and they refused to take her to the hospital for depression. After being diagnosed with clinical depression during her hospitalization, she found that her parents still denied her mental illness and considered it as an excuse for disobedience. Hence, she moved to city H, over 800 kilometers away, refusing her parents' repeated requests to return home. She blocked her parents' phone number and deleted all her relatives from chatting apps, except for a female cousin-in-law.

Her parents tried various means to persuade her to come back home, including changing her password for the college entrance examination account, locating her phone address through the unclosed children's custody extension in her phone, and contacting her using a new phone number.

JN described her feelings as follows:

"They want me back home not because they worry about me, I think they just felt shame about my mental disease (depression) so they don't want me to go out ..... they made me terrified, I don't understand why they keep on texting me and call me by strange number? I have blocked all unknown numbers, but I CAN feel strangers look at me and hear them talk about me when I walk on the street, sometimes I even wonder if they are spies sent by my parents or if they see through me and think I'm crazy." (consult230403)

In this case, JN's statement clearly aligns with the assumptions of [Katz et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Anderson \(2008\)](#). [Katz et al. \(2020\)](#) showed that children who suffer coercive control in childhood from parents can experience severe post-trauma, including fear and distress in adolescent. [Anderson \(2008\)](#) associated violence on adolescent with greater psychological consequences, including depression. JN also expressed her experienced feelings of suspicion, fear, and nervousness, with trust issues that made her suspicious of everything and everyone around her. These emotional issues prevented her from finding a part-time job in city H to support herself. Moreover, these emotional issues made it difficult for her to objectively respond to people's actions or control her temper. with the clinical depression diagnosis provided by her parents, she felt even more passive when facing law enforcement.

#### 4.1. Parents' Reactions

The contradictory attitude of JN's parents toward her depression reflects their core concern: maintaining control over their child. They denied her illness out of fear of criticism and losing control over her mental behavior. Using her illness to try to bring her back home is another way for them to regain control over the runaway girl.

In late March, JN's parents called the police in city H, claiming that their daughter "suffers from mental illness, with depression, incapacitated, tried to commit suicide and ran away from home" and requested for locating and bringing her back to their hometown. Suicide is a serious policing issue in China, especially for women and children, leading to extensive paperwork and social security concerns (Abraham & Sher, 2019). Consequently, police prevent people from committing suicide and send them to psychiatric hospitals for security reasons (Chen et al., 2021). Therefore, upon receiving the report of a suicide attempt from JN's parents, the police quickly located her via her cell phone number and brought her to the police station, where she received treatment to prevent further attempts.

Upon the volunteers' arrival at the police station, they found JN's parents discussing sending her back to their hometown with the police. Meanwhile, JN was kept in a detention room with two other police officers for several hours, during which she experienced a state of panic, screaming, and crying. This behavior led the police to become concerned about her serious mental illnesses. When the volunteers arrived, one of them spoke with the police:

Volunteer: Why she was kept in the detention room? I think it is for criminal suspects.

Police: To keep her safe, don't you see she just lost control? We were afraid she would hurt herself or people pass by.

Volunteer: But this room made her more panic.

Police: Then, I should assume her parents are right (that she is crazy and incapacitated). (recall230328)

JN had a challenging situation at the police station. The police were concerned about her mental state, but she refused to speak and insisted on calling a lawyer. This occasional behavior further confused the police about her mental condition. However, the volunteers tried to explain to the police that depression does not equate to madness or incapacity. Moreover, the parents could not compel the police to bring JN back against her will since she was a legal adult. When JN's parents arrived, she was taken out of the detention room, and allowed to leave with her parents. However, the police asked JN to sign a "Would Not Commit Suicide Guarantee", due to concerns about the possibility of her attempting suicide.

#### 4.2. Police Role: The Dilemma

Many East Asian people consider hitting kids or physical punishments by parents as an accepted principle (Sudo et al., 2023). However, only through this case did I



realize that police can face a dilemma when dealing with parenting issues like this: a young adult can be extremely challenging for the police when they receive a report for his/her parents' behaviors. Legally, these young adults are independent, but in reality, they are not much different from teenagers. Thus, this contradiction highlights the hardest and most ambiguous issue about how police should respond to them without breaking the law.

Willis and Wells (1988) found that the police's decision on reports of illegal domestic behavior largely depends on their definition and perception of the behavior as serious and criminal. At their sole discretion, the police decide if the case warrants a reaction from law enforcement. By studying the police's role in the relationships of parents and minor children in the United States of America (USA), Schut et al. (2020) indicated that police often act as a mediator in verbal disagreements within families, in contrast with the common assumption that considers the USA as a country with the strictest legal regulations on domestic violence. This practical fact highlights its importance in evaluating the role of police in cases like JN's:

On that day, when police helped JN's parents find her, they asked whether police could help them bring JN back to their hometown, and the police responded with the following impressive statements.

"Definitely, we cannot do that, .....no, not because of the insufficient police force. I think you should know she is over 18, she is practically an adult, and if you want to bring her home, either you can give me any medical certification to confirm me she is incapacitated and I would like to contact the police of your hometown to bring her back, for free, or you family together leave this police station, and talk about it yourselves, I'll leave you along and it would not be my business." (recall230328)

The police's actions presented a certain degree of dilemma. They refused to force JN back home or to the police station due to her adult age. While the decision to locate and bring back JN could be explained by the police's concerns about a potential suicide-related public security issue, keeping her in the detention room for several hours until her parents arrived seemed to go beyond criminal justice regulations. However, the police appeared to have difficulty refusing JN's parents' requests. Even after providing JN's safety, the police still attempted to keep her in custody until her parents arrived, while refusing JN's parents' demands since neither the police nor JN's parents could force her to do anything against her will.

## 5. Analysis of the Case: Mediate-Oriented Policing

The confusing actions of the police reflect a certain degree of conflict in policing goals. In China, mediation is used as a police technique known as the Fengqiao Model (Fengqiao Jingyan), which emphasizes emotional work in social governance. This model is being promoted nationwide to improve the quality and kindness of policing (Li et al., 2021). It is akin to restorative justice, which treats crime



as a violation of people and relationships rather than merely a legal affair (Bazemore, 1998; Zehr, 1990). Zhang (2021) stated that police tend to act as watchmen in people's mediation since the maintenance of harmonious rhetoric and social stability is the central organizational goal. This mechanism is believed to prevent minor conflicts at the earliest point (Deng & Xu, 2014; Halegua, 2005; Zhang, 2013). Since the release of the Guidance for Public Order Mediation of the Public Security Bureau in 2007, the mechanism of using persuasion and education has been further promoted to encourage individuals to take accountability and reach agreements voluntarily.

### 5.1. The Invisible Inequality in Plain Sight

Widely accepted, children are vulnerable members of society, while parents always act in their best interests (McMullen, 2003), but with an inherent inequality within families. This viewpoint proposes that children should obey their own parents' orders since they are always right and act out of love. This notion implies that children belong somehow to their parents as they are under their control (Montgomery, 1988), providing parents with a superior position to their children. However, the prevalence of coercive parenting has been underestimated in China since reports can be recorded as quarrels or arguments among family members by the police, which implies an underlying assumption that people enjoy equality in their family life. Yang (2023) interpreted this kind of inequality as the police moralizing victims' choices, urging them to forgive each other.

The interview with the police from city H also supports this assumption:

"In China, we do not often use the term 'domestic violence', not to mention 'coercive parenting'. We don't have this concept because, you know, they are your parents, and they act out of love. How can you describe your parents' management as control? That is so much lack of conscience. ... if there is physical violence, especially if someone needs to go to the hospital, it would be recorded as a quarrel or fight, confirming the existence of fighting back or verbal interactions. Then, it is not a one-sided harmful behavior but rather a discord within a family, which should be should be resolved harmoniously."  
(interview230702)

Refusing to use "violence" or "abuse" to describe parents' coercive control over their offspring is an invisible form of inequality among family members. In Chinese culture, parents enjoy a high level of discursive power, naturally assumed to be the ones with devotion (Wu & Chao, 2011). This grants them priority rights over their offspring, which are often taken for granted and not open to refusal. Consequently, children's understanding and acceptance are moralized as the only correct choice. Similarly, police who play a mediating role in non-criminal social issues widely accept this concept in China, not treating parenting issues differently from other family violence (i.e., domestic violence in intimate relationships). They may even underestimate it more because they consider issues between parents and

their children as private without any serious happenings (Rowe, 2007; Sun et al., 2012). This kind of ignorance greatly influenced the mediation theory in police coercive parenting. Police subconsciously regard young adults as belonging to their parents, while legally being independent adults. Facing this conflict, an easy way for law enforcement, nevertheless, would be simultaneously calming and threatening both sides.

## 5.2. Decriminalization of the Conflict

Millar (2021) stated that law enforcement nowadays bears a larger proportion of routine works on social service and public protection than they are trained for. Chinese police face an extremely high burden of caseloads, with one of the lowest public-police-citizen ratios in the world. They are required to adhere to the “must respond” policy, and the policing operation system emphasizes a relatively high proportion of case closure (Zhang, 2021). Therefore, police may choose to decriminalize conflicts to reduce the severity and close cases rather than provide problem-solving-oriented responses. The Chinese people have long believed that behavior is guided more by moral values than by laws and fear of punishment (Li, 1979). According to Cloke (1987), mediation is a creation of social justice that indoctrinates the ideology of normativity and politics.

However, domestic violence is a criminalized behavior in China different from other ‘easily mediatable’ cases. Police have to ensure that their responses conform to legal norms while addressing potential public security issues. In China, if these two tasks come into conflict, the interpretation process by the police can be pivotal and qualitative for the entire case (Schaefer & Tewksbury, 2018). In the deconstruction process, the quality of mediation is key for the police to demonstrate that their actions comply with the law.

Police usually disassemble a case by interpreting the situation as “not that serious”:

“What we, as police, need to do is to try not to escalate these situations. Quarrels happen in every family, and some people may call the police when they are angry or scared. We, as law enforcement, understand this and never turn our back on any report. However, people usually get over these moments and emotions very soon, especially when they are family, for example, between parents and children. So, if we strictly adhere to the law in these cases, they might come back later and blame us for damaging their relationship. This goes against our philosophy of promoting harmony; right?” (interview 230702)

This interview largely explains the core idea of police mediation in cases. Case stakeholders in China often believe that they are “real victims” and their requests are correct, influenced by the following famous slogan in China: Where there are hardships, there are police officers (Zhang, 2021). People think that the police will solve their problems and provide a satisfactory answer. Thus, street-level police

have to respond to a huge number of case reports, whereas they do not want to further follow up on most of them. The challenge lies in explaining their decisions to stakeholders and convincing them that the police's response is in accordance with the law. Therefore, police often describe the conflict using a decriminalized discourse system, making both sides believe that, rather than a legal matter, it is a family affair. This allows the police to close the case without uploading into the system.

### 5.3. Stifle the Case

The conclusion of a case at the street-level bureau police is one of the most idealized and welcomed practices in criminal justice in China. It not only indicates the practice of harmonious ideology but also contributes to the official statistics of crime decline (Xu, 2018). Manning (2015) explains this orientation as police being asked to focus on "what they can/have to do" rather than examining the moral, political, and social consequences of their actions. In China, this is expressed as adherence to the authority's political ideology and slogans (Hoyle & Sanders, 2000; Lo et al., 2010). Wang (2015) understands it from the perspective that police in China experience a high level of social service role strain but a low level of psychological empowerment, which implies disregarding the emotional understanding and evaluation of the case.

However, as mentioned above, family violence is not considered a determined case in the eyes of police in most countries. Law enforcement in many countries has used "out-of-court" solutions to deal with various types of family violence. Westmarland et al. (2018) referred to this as "under the radar" action to indicate that it has been approved by the legal system. It goes beyond simply closing the case to achieve a high level of completion, but rather a combination of closing it and avoiding further legal entanglements.

"Physical injury is something no one can deny, including a normative process in crime procedure law. For example, if you call the police, saying you've got hit and broken bones, then it might be a criminal case (if medical certification proves it is an injury). If police find so, the follow-up process would basically be beyond your personal will, no matter if they are your partner or parents or children... however, the so-called coercive parenting is something different: control is a vague concept, especially when it happens among parents and kids." (interview230708)

Physical violence is easily identifiable, like body harm, which is straightforwardly regulated in legal regulations. If serious consequences occur, the case usually moves into the criminal justice system. However, control can be a vague concept in China's criminal law. In practice, police is criticized often have more discretion in the execution of the law than people suppose (Myhill, 2019; Meyers & Nielsen, 2012; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). But Lin et al. (2021) stated that police-related issues in China are driven by experience; the more experience police have,

the less likely they are to intervene. In China, the lack of a clear concept of coercive control is a realistic problem for law enforcement, pushing police to make judgments based on their own values. Police in China, greatly driven by traditional social moral values and superior's support, are unwilling to "break established custom", ignoring the comprehension and evaluation of specific cases, but sticking to "what we police always do".

Police in China operate under a "must respond" policy, which is part of the broader "mass-line" ideology that emphasizes serving the masses (Zhang, 2013). Police have fewer choices but have to find an excuse to worry about her suicide and take her back to the police station regardless of whether the issue falls within their scope of duty or the rationality of the request. Meanwhile, the police are empowered with the legal right to interpret situations. Similar to the "must respond" requirement, the quality of their response is also a reflection of policy rather than a simple application of the law. Hence, they would choose to interpret the action of JN's parents as an action out of care rather than a long-term domestic abuse.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

Criminal justice systems often tend toward using mediation for family violence-related issues, with criticisms aimed at policing discretion. This study analyzes coercive parenting control, an issue under the law against domestic violence. For a deeper analysis, it explores the mediation policing in China using a case study on the police's reaction to a parent's report of an adult girl called JN, who ran away home for three months. Police's reaction in this case presented a typical "mediation ideology" that aims to stifle the case and reaches a certain harmonious consequence. Accordingly, they responded to the request of locating JN and brought her back to the police station. However, after the arrival of the parents, police refused any further follow-up and asked them to talk privately.

The analysis shows that mediation is used in China as technological means to stifle the case and a response to harmonious social ideology rather than the discretion policing policy. The mediation focused less on discretion and more on balancing response needs while maintaining political and social harmony, which are informed by Chinese family norms and the practical needs of social control. Police in China, as enforcer of legal regulations, wields significant discursive power to interpret the situation in responding to reports. This power is a form of knowledge that is not based on truth or falsehood, but rather determined by specific social groups or institutions to enable the exercise of power, consistent with (Foucault, 1979). The intersection issue created by the mismatch of legal regulation and empirical reality needs implicates that current Chinese legal regulations on adult's rights and domestic violence are sometimes mismatched with Chinese norms on family relationships. To fulfill their response task and reconcile justice, mediation becomes the best choice for law enforcement. This analysis indicates that, despite its universal policing trend for family violence, mediation may be insufficient in meeting the complex needs of stakeholders to reach a satisfactory

agreement.

The findings of this research suggest legislators, lawyers and family members that a comprehensive measure should be established to cope with coercive parenting, as police is not always the first choice in dealing with certain hardships. In addition, they recommend practitioners and policymakers that responding to family violence issues needs to be genuinely holistic rather than simply stifling the case. Although police's and lawyers' performance should adhere to social norms and policy needs, it should meet legal regulations. Meanwhile, legal regulators need to consider revising and improving the subsequent editions of the law against domestic violence to further adapt it with current Chinese policing and norms, for example, adding and admitting the coercive parenting as a kind of domestic violence in legal regulations, and promoting evaluation standards for law enforcement to make effective judgments in practice.

In conclusion, this paper using a coercive parenting case in China of an adult daughter leaving her parental house, pointed that the mediating attitude in dealing with coercive parenting in China is a path-dependent practical routeway with in-depth cultural origins. The political necessity of social stability and harmony catalyzed the Chinese police's decriminalized attitude on family-related issues rather than handling conflicts from a legal perspective. The limitation of this paper lays in only considering a case study with its specific characteristics. Hence, the results of the study need further investigation to reach a comprehensive acceptance and consensus. To bridge this gap, future research can explore more inclusive approaches.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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