Dear Dr. Roseth:

Manuscript ID SODE-09-0006 entitled "Preschoolers' Bistrategic Resource Control, Reconciliation, and Peer Regard" which you very kindly submitted to Social Development, has now been reviewed. The comments that I received from two external reviewers are included at the bottom of this letter, and I have also read your manuscript very carefully myself.

As you will see, the reviewers have some very positive things to say about your manuscript, and therefore I think there is a good chance of eventual publication in Social Development. Nevertheless, the reviewers have also suggested some revisions, and you certainly need to think about these suggestions and probably modify the manuscript accordingly. Reading your manuscript with a relatively non-expert eye, additional points occurred to me, and I should like you to respond to these points too. In general then, my editorial decision is to invite you to revise your manuscript, and resubmit for further consideration by Social Development.

My three general points are as follows 1) I think that readers who do not share your relatively ethological perspective will need scaffolding into your concepts of prosocial and coercive resource control. What, for instance, does prosocial resource control add to prosociality per se, given the definition on P7/13, i.e. why is 'resource control' needed? And doesn't the definition imply that all behaviour that isn't coercive is prosocial? Help with the resource control construct would be useful in both the Abstract and the Introduction; 2) I have a number of issues around your analysis of 'reconciliation'. First is the PC vs. MC comparison as compelling as you suggest? Although you checked that the children were both present during the MC period, they would not necessarily have been as physically close to each other as they were during the PC period. Also, isn't it relevant that many observational studies of children's disputes have shown that arguments simply fizzle out? 3) Reviewer 1 asks about standardization of 'peer regard' measures, and I am afraid that I noted this too (before seeing the reviewer's comments). It's almost certain that you will need to standardize to comply with current conventions in this field, which sadly implies some re-analysis of data.

I also have a number of relatively specific points: 1) Please give ages rather than (or as well as) grades on, e.g., P5/53, to assist non-US readers, and tell us explicitly that your study was conducted in a midWestern town in the US in the Method section; 2) 'repeatedly' is probably better than 'continuously' on P6/11; 3) 'must be' is a little strong on P8/15, since there are undoubtedly other ways of addressing this issue; 4) The upper
age limit is said to be 59 months on P10 and 60 months on P11; 5) I'm not sure that you've given a sufficiently clear explanation of how missing data were dealt with; 6) On P12-13, please explain why scan and event sampling were prioritized as described; 7) I am unsure what is meant by 'interview questions were determined by the three research groups...' on P14/46. Superficially, this sounds rather casual; 8) 195 aggressive events in a total of 4925 (P16) is rather low for this age group, according to the literature on children's disputes in preschool environments. Does this require comment? 9) Tell us throughout the Results where tables and figures should be located, e.g. 'Insert Table X about here'. This will help the type-setter in the event of eventual acceptance; 10) P26/11 - 'complement', not 'compliment'

I do hope that you will be willing to incorporate the above points and those raised by the reviewers into a revised manuscript. Assuming that you will be, you need to log into http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/sode to start the process, and then enter your Author Center, where you will find your manuscript title listed under "Manuscripts with Decisions." Under "Actions," click on "Create a Revision." Your manuscript number has been appended to denote a revision. You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of the manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer. Please also highlight the changes to your manuscript within the document by using the track changes mode in MS Word or by using bold or colored text.

Once the revised manuscript is prepared, you can upload it and submit it through your Author Center. When submitting your revised manuscript, you will be able to respond to the comments made by the reviewers in the space provided. You can use this space to document any changes you make to the original manuscript. In order to expedite the processing of the revised manuscript, please be as specific as possible in your response to the reviewers. IMPORTANT: Your original files are available to you when you upload your revised manuscript. Please delete any redundant files before completing the submission.

We look forward to receiving your revised submission to Social Development within the next 6 months. If it is not possible for you to submit your revision within that time period, our electronic system may consider your paper as a new submission, so please get in touch if you experience any difficulties. In the meantime, can I thank you once more for submitting your manuscript to Social Development and say how much I look forward to receiving your revision.

Sincerely,
Prof. Christine Howe
Co-Editor, Social Development
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Reviewers' Comments to Author:
Reviewer: 1
This manuscript reports an interesting study of the relations between behavioral processes of bistrategic resource control, social dominance, and peer status in preschoolers. Overall, the paper is well-written, and has multiple strengths including the use of a longitudinal research design, multi-method assessment (observations, teacher reports, peer reports), and advanced statistical analyses. Results on the developmental trajectories of coercive and prosocial resource control have the potential to make a significant contribution to the current literature. My concerns and questions are listed below.

Introduction
The authors’ use of the terms “group”/“group formation” (p.4, p.9) is inconsistent with how the observational data in the present study were coded. My understanding is that you only coded behaviors in the context of dyadic interactions (i.e., involving a focal child and a target child). The use of the term “group” throughout the paper is confusing at times as it implies that you also assessed interactions at the group level (i.e., three or more individuals). It would be helpful for the authors to provide clarification on this.

The section on pp. 7-9 could be strengthened by including information on whether reconciliation between former opponents may depend on the nature of the relationship between the pair of children in question. For example, is reconciliation more likely between special friend pairs versus dominant-subordinate friend pairs? Is there a way to code for relationship status, initiation of reconciliation, and success of reconciliation for each member of the dyad? This may provide more detailed information on whether underlying behavioral processes that help to account for the link between social dominance and peer regard may be moderated by relationship status.

Did you expect any gender differences on social dominance?

Method & Results
Were the total number of positive (like to play with) and negative (don’t like to play with) sociometric nominations for each child summed and then standardized within each class? Were cross-gender nominations permitted?

On p. 15, the authors should clearly identify the sociometric nomination items that correspond to the various subtypes of aggression that are presented in Table 6 (“Someone who hits or pushes” represents physical aggression etc.)

Did you run any models that included gender as a predictor? Considering that girls may be more likely to engage in dyadic interactions/cooperative play, whereas boys may exhibit more group interactions/competitive play, I would expect to see some gender differences in the strategies used for access and sustained control of resources.

The authors should provide a clear explanation for all symbols included in the various model equations.
Is there any particular reason that social dominance scores were dichotomized (p.19) as opposed to including high, moderate, and low social dominance groups in Figure 1?

Discussion
On p.23, the authors attempt to explain the non-significant association between social dominance and the linear increase for prosocial resource control. The authors focus primarily on social-cognitive factors that may be relevant. I would like to see some discussion of physical characteristics that have been linked to social dominance (e.g., physical size, physical attractiveness), and how this may affect the maintenance of resource control.

It might be informative for the authors to address whether the nature of their sample may have affected the interpretation of their results. I would expect that rates of coercive control (aggressive behavior, specifically) would generally be lower in University laboratory classroom settings. Thus, it is possible that the pattern of results (i.e., decrease in coercive resource control, increase in prosocial resource control, and increase in reconciliation from Fall to Spring) may reflect changes in conflict resolution skills due to external factors (experience in the classroom over time including the influence of teachers, greater familiarity with peers, and the development of close friendships) rather than internal factors (social dominance).

As mentioned earlier, the use of the term “group level” is confusing (p.24).

Reviewer: 2
A major contribution of this paper concerns the crossing of borders between behavioural biology and child social development in their assessment of the implications of social dominance. The conceptual framework is very wide-ranging, actual and most of all very heuristic. First, by demystifying the negative role of agonistic behavior and dominance relationships typically assumed when conceptualizing social competence. Secondly, by studying children use of coercive and prosocial resource control in relation to the history of group formation rather than focus on “what some children do some of the time”. Such choice was critical in order to evaluate how coercive and prosocial interaction processes may relate to dominance structure stabilization and subsequent decrease of aggression between group members, as well as to the increasing importance of cohesive social resources. Thirdly, for introducing reconciliation (post-conflict affiliation) as a possible palliative for the costs of aggressive competition and to consolidate the explanation of how coercive and prosocial strategies may relate to children social dominance. Finally, for predicting distinct patterns of relations between social dominance, reconciliation and sociometric nominations respectively to the Fall and Spring stages of group formation.

The multi-informant and multi-method data collection used in this study must also be praised, particularly the wide (also expert and rigorous) use of direct observation to assess how theoretically relevant social processes were associated with the social dominance construct. Such approach is very important given that the social dominance is
based on a teacher-rating scale. Coupled with an exceptional 8 points longitudinal design, the subsequent use of a GENMOD to overcome classical GLM requirements afforded possibilities of testing the major hypotheses concerning the nature of change trajectories for rates of children coercive and prosocial resource control.

The presentation and discussion of the results is very appropriate and detailed. Succinctly, the obtained findings support the major argument about resource control theory as both types of resource control change in function of social context. The expected decrease of coercive resource control depended on social dominance even after controlling for age. Although not entirely linear the brief increment before the final decline corresponded with the return from the Spring break, a plausible period of social dominance renegotiation. The rates of prosocial resource control increased across the year as expected. Social dominance was related to higher rates of prosocial control even after controlling for age, although their linear increase was not related to social dominance as hypothesized. The interpretations advanced for this pattern are also plausible and supported by relevant literature (in our opinion, attraction processes related to the affiliative structure/network – i.e. see Strayer, 1980, already cited in the present study – rather than dominance structure stabilization per se may also have contributed to the observed results). The correlational analysis of social dominance, observed reconciliation and sociometric also supported the initial predictions. Concluding (and despite the limitations mostly related to the small size of the sample), together with promoting the study of children reconciliation inspired by comparative research, the overall methodology and analytic demarche in this study of social dominance is very pedagogical and may foster the so needed arrival of newcomers to this neglected field of research.

There are some minor changes to this manuscript that we propose in order to strengthen its already very good quality. These changes are specifically related to the reconciliation analysis:
- First, in pg 20, lines 18-41, it is recommendable to compute and present the corrected conciliatory tendency \[CCT = 100 \times (AP-DP)/(AP+DP+NP)\] (Veenema et al. 1994, see Verbeek or Fujisawa already cited in this study). The overall value for this study is 0.27. Although still consistent with the previous literature cited (pg 24, line 11) this value is in the lower end of them all. Probably due to the mixed-age composition of 4 of the 5 groups, this result should anyway be commented with more detail. Its computation by classroom should also be presented, to appreciate its potential variation, and particularly in the case of the younger same-sex group.
- Secondly, Aureli’s et al. (1989) ‘time rule’ method (see Verbeek already cited in this study) should also be applied. Briefly, to determine for each PC and MC observation the minute in which the first affiliative contact between opponents occurred. Then, the temporal distribution of these first contacts in PC and MC observations should be compared using a Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. Only if the ‘time-rule’ method does not reveal significant differences between distributions, the reconciled conflicts can be defined as those in which an attracted pair occurred. This is an important detail given the use of attracted pairs as the measure of observed reconciliation in the correlational analyses.
In third place, there should be made at least a more complete commentary concerning the testing for reconciliation (pg 15, line 20 to 37). From pg 20 we learn that there are 100 PC-MC samples, however, no more information is given about the percentage of the total children involved. If the pattern is similar to the one reported in pg 16 concerning aggressive competition (74 children - 86% of the children involved), then probably very few children will be present in more than one PC-MC pair. Coming to the point, if this is actually true, there is no problem with possible distortions conveyed by overrepresentation of some children in the Wilcoxon signed-rank test at the dyadic level. If not, then a similar test should be conducted at the individual level. Our guess is that the author(s) are aware of that problem, nevertheless, they do not have at least 2 to 3 PC-MC samples per child to make that test. In any case, this issue needs clarification.

Finally, if we are correct and most children contribute only to one PC-MC pair, there are less than 10% of the possible dyads represented in the reconciliation analysis (we arrived to this number just dividing the total number of children by 5 groups and subsequently calculating the number of dyads). It seems adequate to comment such limitation in the interpretation of the results concerning reconciliation and also discuss the relation of group structure, social dominance and reconciliation with more prudence.