

Parental Practices and the Development of Maladaptive Schemas

Amy L. Guntty and John R. Buri, Ph.D.

University of St. Thomas

The relationship between Young's (1999) Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMSs) and several parental variables was investigated. Regression analyses revealed that parental practices predicted some of the categories of EMSs [e.g., Disconnection/Rejection (77 percent) and Impaired Autonomy/Performance (63 percent)] much better than others [e.g., Impaired Limits (30 percent) and Other Directedness (22 percent)].

For over a century, psychologists have argued that numerous parental behaviors have wide-ranging and significant influences on the thoughts, behaviors, and emotions of children (Maccoby, 1992, 2007). It is believed that these influences can be beneficial or costly for the children and can constrict or widen the possibilities for children's futures (Bugental & Grusec, 2006). While the theories explaining this relationship have shifted historically with the psychological paradigm of the time, the conviction has remained that parenting behaviors influence many aspects of children's internal and external lives.

The order of the authors' names is fortuitous. This research was supported by University of St. Thomas Young Scholar's Research Grant, 2007. Paper presented at the 20th Annual Meeting of the Association for Psychological Science, Chicago, May, 2008. Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Amy Guntty (guntty004@umn.edu OR 952-913-1776) or John Buri (University of St. Thomas [Mail JRC LL56], 2115 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105 OR jrburi@stthomas.edu OR 651-962-5032).

Within this context, Piaget (1954) and Bowlby (1969, 1973) posited that parental practices contribute to the early development of internal working models (schemas) of reality. These schemas serve as an organizational framework for the way people make sense of their lives (Leahy, Beck, & Beck, 2005). The schemas also act as lenses in a person's life, influencing the way one selects, interprets, organizes, and evaluates experiences (e.g., Beck, 1995; Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979; Persons, 1989).

Stemming from the concepts of this schema theory (e.g., Beck, 1976), Jeffrey Young (1999) developed a theoretical framework and understanding of 18 core maladaptive schemas. These are called Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMSs), which Young asserts are stable and enduring lenses that contribute to the way a person perceives the self, the world, and others. Young purports that these schemas are formed throughout childhood and last into an adult life. These schemas are associated with a great range of mental health problems, such as depression (Calvete, Estévez, López de Arroyabe, & Ruiz, 2005), eating disorders (Cooper, 1997), substance use disorders (Ball & Cecero, 2001), and anxiety (Stopa, Thorne, Waters, & Preston, 2001). The 18 EMSs are divided into five general categories: (a) Disconnection/Rejection, (b) Impaired Autonomy/Performance, (c) Impaired Limits, (d) Other-Directedness, and (e) Overvigilance/Inhibition. (For further explanation of Young's Early Maladaptive Schemas, please see Appendix A.)

One way to approach the relationship between parenting and EMSs is to look at research that has been done examining findings concerning the relationship between parenting and depression. Many researchers have demonstrated that different parenting characteristics are clearly associated with levels of depression in children (e.g., Dallaire,

Pineda, Cole, Ciesla, Jacques, LaGrange, & Bruce, 2006), adolescents (e.g., Brennan, Le Brocque, & Hammen, 2003), and adults (e.g., Bok & Taris, 1997). Some of these characteristics are inversely related to depression, such as parental nurturance (Garber, Robinson, & Valentiner, 1997; Eisenberg, Gershoff, Fabes, Shepard, Cumberland, Losoya, Guthrie, & Murphy, 2001) and authoritative parenting (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996). Other parental characteristics are positively related to depression, such as parental authoritarianism (Simons & Conger, 2007), parental psychological control (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006; Garber, Robinson, & Valentiner, 1997), parental overprotection (Denollet, Smolderen, van den Broek, & Pederson, 2007), parental intrusiveness (Martin, Bergen, Roeger, & Allison, 2004), and parental divorce (Marquardt, 2005).

Based upon Beck's (1976) theoretical and empirical framework for depression, many researchers have linked depression with the presence or absence of certain schemas. Included in such research, depression has repeatedly been associated with a stronger presence of EMSs (e.g., Welburn, Coristine, Dagg, Pontefract, & Jordan, 2002; Riso, Froman, Raouf, Gable, Maddux, Turini-Santorelli, Penna, Blandino, Jacobs, & Cherry, 2006), demonstrating that those who are depressed commonly look at the world through this particular set of maladaptive lenses.

Because of the substantial links between parenting and depression as well as between depression and EMSs, it is reasonable to expect that parenting styles would also be associated with a stronger or weaker presence of these schemas. Thus, children who experience negative parenting (defined as those types of parenting continually associated with higher levels of depression and other mental illness) should demonstrate a stronger

presence of EMSs. In a similar way, children who experience positive parenting (defined similarly as those types of parenting continually associated with higher levels of functioning) should experience a weaker presence of EMSs.

One additional factor that has been investigated by researchers is inconsistency in parenting styles. Constantine (1986) found that families that have this inconsistency are also characterized by unpredictability within the family. There is evidence that this unpredictability is unhealthy and can lead to greater presence of depressive symptoms (Scaf-McIver & Thompson, 1989), increased risk-taking (Hill, Thompson Ross, & Low, 1997), more antisocial behavioral problems (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989) and increased self-criticism (McCranie & Bass, 1984). Recently, Marquardt (2005) has expanded upon such a conceptualization. When looking at children of divorced families, she has demonstrated that an important characteristic of such families is increased perceived inconsistency between the mother and father. Such families are also associated with less satisfaction in life and more psychological distress in the adult children of the family. Thus, inconsistency between parents may have detrimental effects on children. We hypothesize that this detrimental effect may come through in the examination of EMSs.

The present study looked at college students' perceptions of various parenting variables as being predictive of the presence of maladaptive (EMSs) schemas in the student. It is hypothesized that positive parenting characteristics (parental nurturance and authoritativeness) will be inversely related to EMSs, and that negative parenting characteristics (authoritarianism, inconsistency, family intrusiveness, parental

psychological control, parentification, parental overprotection, and parental divorce) will be positively related to EMSs.

It is important to note a couple of reasons for looking at students' perceptions of parenting rather than at other measures of parenting. First, Piaget's theory of schema development states that schemas are constructed by the individual, and thus are influenced only by what the individual perceives (Wadsworth, 1996). Secondly, viewing this study in the light of symbolic interactionist theory may be very helpful. Symbolic interactionists (e.g., Cooley, 1902) suggest that one's view of the self and of the world is more influenced by how one perceives interactions with others than by the interactions themselves. Therefore, an individual's schemas (i.e., his or her perceptions of the self, the world, and others) will be influenced more by how the individual perceives interactions with family members than the interactions themselves. It is with this in mind that the present study aims to make connections between perceived parenting behaviors and maladaptive and adaptive schemas.

Method

Participants

Participants were 79 undergraduate university students recruited through various lower-level psychology classes. Some received credit or extra credit in a psychology class for participation. Data for seven participants were discarded due to incomplete questionnaires. For the remaining participants, 17 were from non-intact families and 55 were from intact families. Twenty males and 52 females provided data. The mean age was 22 years old.

Materials

Parental Nurturance. This variable was measured by the Parental Nurturance Scale (PNS; Buri, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988) which consists of 24 statements to which participants were asked to respond on a Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The statements, such as “My mother is easy for me to talk to,” or “I don’t feel that my mother enjoys being with me” (reverse scored), are used in order to measure the extent to which the participant perceives his or her relationship with his or her mother as being close, warm, accepting, and nurturing.

Each participant completed two forms of this scale, with one measuring the perceived nurturance of the participant’s mother and the other measuring the perceived nurturance of his or her father.

Parental Authority. The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, 1988) was used to measure Parental Authority. This scale consists of 30 statements to which participants were asked to respond on a Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These statements evaluate the type of authority exercised by the parents. There are three categories of parental authority measured in this questionnaire: permissiveness (low control), authoritarianism (rigid control with little reasoning), and authoritativeness (flexible control with a good amount of reasoning). One statement measuring parental permissiveness is, “As I was growing up, my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her.” An example of a statement measuring parental authoritarianism is, “As I was growing up, my mother let me know what behaviors she expected of me, and if I didn’t meet those expectations, she punished me.” One of the statements measuring parental authoritativeness is, “As the children in my

family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.”

Participants completed two versions of this scale, one evaluating the parental style of the participant’s mother, and the other evaluating the parenting style of the participant’s father.

Family Intrusiveness. The measure for this variable was the Family Intrusiveness Scale (FIS; Gavazzi, Reese, & Sabatelli, 1998) which is composed of 13 statements to which the participant responds on an interval scale with responses ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). These statements, such as, “Family members tell me what I should be doing with my career,” measure the extent to which the participant’s family intrudes in his or her personal affairs.

Psychological Control. The Psychological Control Subscale of the Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965) was used to measure psychological control. This is a 10-item subscale that measures the amount of psychological control a parent employs when dealing with a child. Psychological control is mostly composed of emotional manipulation. Items such as “My mother is a person who, if I have hurt her feelings, stops talking to me until I please her again,” are responded to on a scale composed of 1 (not like her), 2 (somewhat like her), and 3 (a lot like her).

Participants completed two versions of this scale, one measuring the psychological control employed by the participant’s mother, and the other measuring the psychological control employed by the participant’s father.

Parental Overprotection. The Parental Bonding Instrument: Overprotection Subscale (PBI-O; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979) measured parental overprotection. This subscale is a collection of 13 statements of parental attitudes and behaviors. The statements are meant to measure the extent to which parents did not allow the individual freedom and/or independence. One such statement is, “My mother invaded my personal privacy.” The participant was then asked to rate the extent to which the statement is like his or her mother on a scale from 1 (not like her) to 4 (exactly like her).

Participants completed two versions of this scale. The first measured the overprotection of the participant’s mother. The second measured the overprotection of the participant’s father.

Parentification. This variable was measured by a modified version of the Parentification Scale (PS; Mika, Bergner, & Baum, 1987) which includes 30 descriptions of behaviors and responsibilities that one may be expected to shoulder as a child. One such statement is, “One parent would come to me to discuss the other parent.” Participants were asked to rate the frequency of the behavior or responsibility before age 16 on a five-point scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The goal of this scale is to get a measure of how much the participant was asked to act like a parent while he or she was still a child.

Early Maladaptive Schemas. This variable was measured by the Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ-L3, Young, 1999) which consists of 232 items to which participants respond on a scale ranging from 1 (completely untrue of me) to 6 (describes me perfectly). This questionnaire is used in order to measure the extent to which participants

possess each of the 18 Early Maladaptive Schemas. (For examples of the statements for each schema, please see Appendix B.)

Demographic Information. Participants also provided information about their age, gender, and parents' marital status.

Procedure

Participants were given a packet containing all of the questionnaires, which had been counterbalanced, and asked to complete the packet and return it to the researcher within a week. Participants were instructed to complete all questionnaires with their first response. They were told that their data were anonymous and they were asked to answer all questions honestly. Participants were reminded that it was important to complete every questionnaire and not to spend too much time on any one item.

Results

Parenting variables were entered into multiple regression analyses as predictors of the strength of schemas for the research participants. Rather than employing the more typical criterion of the strength of the bivariate correlations as the sole basis for entry of the independent variables in the regression equations, in the present analyses, the parenting factors were broken into three groups: (a) the non-nurturance variables, (b) the nurturance variables, and (c) inconsistencies between the mother and father in the parenting variables. These three groups were then used for the order of entry of the individual variables into the regression analyses (i.e., non-nurturance variables first, then the nurturance variables, and lastly, the inconsistency scores). Within each group, variables were entered based upon the strength of the bivariate correlations.

The group of non-nurturance variables included the authority variables (permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritativeness), parental overprotection, parental psychological control, family intrusiveness, and parentification.

The second group of variables consisted of maternal and paternal nurturance. This group was saved to be entered into the regression analysis second in an effort to avoid an exaggeration of the influence of parental nurturance in the explanation of the maladaptive schemas. Admittedly, all of the variables employed in the present study have a subjective element to them (since all measurements were based upon the personal perspective of the participants themselves). But participants' assessments of parental nurturance may be especially problematic in this regard since the measurement of several of the individual maladaptive schemas incorporates evaluations of parents' attention and affection. Therefore, the nurturance variables were entered into the regression only after the non-nurturance variables were entered.

The third group consisted of inconsistencies between the mother and the father. Inconsistencies were evaluated for all variables for which participants completed separate scales for mother and father: authority, psychological control, overprotection, and nurturance. Inconsistency in authority was calculated as the absolute value of the mother's authoritarianism score minus the father's authoritarianism score (i.e., |mother's score – father's score|). The authoritarianism scores were used for two reasons: (1) this difference (among the authority differences) was most strongly correlated to the total for the students' schemas and (2) the nature of authoritarianism in a parent is such that it is strongly inversely related to permissiveness and authoritativeness, so that differences between mothers and fathers in authoritarianism will also take into account differences

	M Per	M Tar	M Tat	F Per	F Tar	F Tat	M PC	F PC	PTF	M OP	F OP	FI	M Nur	F Nur	D Nur	D Auth	D PC	D OP
Total Mal	.011	.310*	-.364**	-.180	.434**	-.396**	.503**	.497**	.311*	.338*	.419**	.631**	-.535**	-.723**	.262	.600**	.406**	.320*
D/R Schemas	-.015	.253	-.472**	-.187	.359*	-.545**	.496**	.519**	.315*	.328*	.412**	.636**	-.638**	-.802**	.304*	.652**	.428**	.318*
IA/P Schemas	-.025	.221	-.386**	-.046	.220	-.332*	.533**	.430**	.174	.423**	.372**	.681**	-.563**	-.661**	.310*	.564**	.454**	.373**
IL Schemas	.064	.272*	-.25	-.155	.335*	-.327*	.259	.347**	.106	.176	.373**	.407**	-.208	-.432**	.270*	.216	.187	-.023
O-D Schemas	-.073	.240	-.143	-.006	.239	-.047	.368**	.118	.202	.283*	.054	.325*	-.291*	-.402**	.064	.320*	.119	.160
OI Schemas	.091	.319*	-.184	-.271*	.582**	-.255	.394**	.527**	.371**	.209	.463**	.519**	-.372**	-.566**	.141	.557**	.395**	.369**

M Per: Mother's permissiveness; M Tar: Mother's authoritarianism; M Tat: Mother's authoritativeness; F Per: Father's permissiveness; F Tar: Father's authoritarianism; F Tat: Father's authoritativeness; M PC: Mother's psychological control; F PC: Father's psychological control; PTF: parentification; M OP: Mother's overprotection; F OP: Father's overprotection; FI: Family Intrusiveness; M Nur: Mother's nurturance; F Nur: Father's nurturance; D Nur: Difference in nurturance (M Nur-F Nur) D Auth: Difference in Authority (M Tar-F Tar) D PC: Difference in psychological control (M PC-F PC); Total Mal: Total Maladaptive Schemas; D/R: Disconnection/Rejection IA/P: Impaired Autonomy/Performance; IL: Impaired Limits; O-D: Other-Directedness; OI: Overvigilance/Inhibition

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 1. Bivariate Correlation Coefficients

between parents in permissiveness and authoritativeness. Inconsistency in psychological control, overprotection, and nurturance were all calculated with the absolute value of the mother's score minus the father's scores. These inconsistency variables were entered last into the regression analysis because it seemed most efficacious to look at the variance such inconsistencies explained beyond the variance explained by variables that are more commonly studied.

Table 1 exhibits bivariate correlation coefficients between schemas and parenting variables. As hypothesized, negative parenting characteristics are significantly correlated with stronger maladaptive schemas. Additionally, positive parenting characteristics are significantly correlated with a weaker presence of maladaptive schemas.

Multiple regression analyses were performed with the parenting variables that yielded significant bivariate correlations with the schemas. Independent regressions were executed for each grouping of schemas (i.e., Disconnection/Rejection, Impaired Autonomy/Performance, Impaired Limits, Other-Directedness, and Overvigilance Inhibition).

variable	Δr^2	p
Family Intrusiveness	.399	<.001
Mother Psych Control	.013	<i>ns</i>
Father Psych Control	.024	<i>ns</i>
Father Authoritarianism	.058	<.05
Father Overprotection	.010	<i>ns</i>
Father Authoritativeness	.036	<i>ns</i>
Mother Authoritativeness	.002	<i>ns</i>
Mother Overprotection	.001	<i>ns</i>
Mother Authoritarianism	.031	<i>ns</i>
Parentification	.000	<i>ns</i>
Father Nurturance	.112	<.001
Mother Nurturance	.004	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.008	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Psych Control	.031	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Overprotection	.004	<i>ns</i>

Table 2. Multiple regression for total presence of EMSs.

A summary of the multiple regression analysis with the total presence of maladaptive schemas in participants as the dependent variable is found in Table 2. Family intrusiveness accounted for 39.9% ($p < .001$) of the variance in the total presence of maladaptive schemas. Two other parenting variables increased the predictive ability of the regression equation: father authoritarianism added 5.8% ($p < .05$) of explained variance, and father nurturance an additional 11.2% ($p < .01$). The total variance in the overall presence of maladaptive schemas was 56.9%.

variable	Δr^2	p
Family Intrusiveness	.404	<.001
Father Authoritativeness	.141	<.001
Father Psych Control	.002	<i>ns</i>
Mother Psych Control	.033	<.10
Mother Authoritativeness	.005	<i>ns</i>
Father Overprotection	.000	<i>ns</i>
Father Authoritarianism	.016	<i>ns</i>
Mother Overprotection	.002	<i>ns</i>
Parentification	.000	<i>ns</i>
Father Nurturance	.131	<.001
Mother Nurturance	.002	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.026	<.05
Difference in Psych Control	.021	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Overprotection	.001	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Nurturance	.000	<i>ns</i>

Table 3. Multiple regression for Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

A multiple regression analysis of parenting variables as they account for the variance in participants' Disconnection/Rejection schemas is summarized in Table 3. Family intrusiveness explained 40.4% ($p < .001$) of the variance in the presence of the Disconnection/Rejection schemas, father authoritativeness an additional 14.1% ($p < .001$), father nurturance an additional 13.1% ($p < .001$), and inconsistency in authority an additional 2.6% ($p < .05$). In addition to these variables, mother's psychological control approached significance in the regression equation, adding 3.3% ($p < .10$) of explained

variance. With this included, the parenting variables accounted for 73.5% of the variance in the presence of the Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

variable	Δr^2	p
Family Intrusiveness	.464	<.001
Mother psych control	.013	<i>ns</i>
Father psych control	.001	<i>ns</i>
Mother authoritative	.023	<i>ns</i>
Father authoritative	.008	<i>ns</i>
Mother overprotection	.007	<i>ns</i>
Father nurturance	.085	<.01
Mother nurturance	.003	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.034	<.05
Difference in Control	.007	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Overprotection	.000	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Nurturance	.011	<i>ns</i>

Table 4. Multiple regression for Impaired Autonomy/Performance schemas.

The variance in participants' Impaired Autonomy/Performance schemas was examined in a multiple regression analysis summarized in Table 4. Family intrusiveness accounted for 46.4% ($p < .001$) of the variance of Impaired Autonomy/Performance schemas. Father nurturance added 8.5% ($p < .01$) of explained variance and inconsistency in authority an additional 3.4% ($p < .05$). Altogether, 58.3% of the variance in the presence of Impaired Autonomy/Performance was explained in this analysis.

variable	Δr^2	p
Family Intrusiveness	.166	<.01
Father Overprotection	.058	<.10
Father Psych Control	.001	<i>ns</i>
Father Authoritarianism	.023	<i>ns</i>
Father Authoritativeness	.019	<i>ns</i>
Mother Authoritarianism	.001	<i>ns</i>
Father Nurturance	.014	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.020	<i>ns</i>

Table 5. Multiple regression for Impaired Limits schemas.

A summary of a multiple regression analysis examining parenting variables as predictors of Impaired Limits schemas is found in Table 5. Intrusiveness accounted for

16.6% ($p < .01$) of the variance in Impaired Limits schemas. Additionally, father overprotection approached significance, adding 5.8% ($p < .10$) explained variance. With this included, 22.4% of the variance in the Impaired Limits schemas was accounted for by this analysis.

variable	Δr^2	p
Mother Psych Control	.135	<.01
Family Intrusiveness	.013	<i>ns</i>
Mother Overprotection	.003	<i>ns</i>
Father Nurture	.057	<.10
Mother Nurturance	.014	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.007	<i>ns</i>

Table 6. Multiple regression for Other-Directedness schemas.

A summary of a multiple regression analysis of the presence of Other-Directedness schemas is presented in Table 6. Only mother's psychological control was predictive of the presence of Other-Directedness schemas, accounting for 13.5% ($p < .01$) of the variance. Father nurturance approached significance, adding 5.7% ($p < .10$) of explained variance. Together, 19.2% of the variance in the presence of the Other-Directedness schemas was explained by this model.

variable	Δr^2	p
Father Authoritarianism	.338	<.001
Father Psych Control	.044	<.10
Family Intrusiveness	.093	<.01
Father Overprotection	.009	<i>ns</i>
Mother Psych Control	.018	<i>ns</i>
Parentification	.000	<i>ns</i>
Mother Authoritarian	.034	<.10
Father Permissiveness	.002	<i>ns</i>
Father Nurture	.027	<i>ns</i>
Mother Nurture	.001	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Authority	.006	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Psych Control	.006	<i>ns</i>
Difference in Overprotection	.024	<i>ns</i>

Table 7. Multiple regression for Overvigilance/Inhibition schemas.

Finally, a summary of the variance in participants' Overvigilance/Inhibition schemas as explained by parenting variables is represented in Table 7. Father authoritarianism explained 33.8% ($p < .001$) of the variance in Overvigilance/Inhibition scores. Family intrusiveness added 9.3% ($p < .01$). Two other variables approached significance: father psychological control, adding 4.4% ($p < .10$) explained variance and mother authoritarianism, adding 3.4% ($p < .10$) explained variance. In total, 50.9% of variance in the presence of Overvigilance/Inhibition was accounted for.

Discussion

As the results demonstrate, the hypotheses were supported. Negative parenting variables were predictive of a higher presence of maladaptive schemas. Additionally, positive parenting variables were predictive of a lower presence of maladaptive schemas. The relationships between specific parenting variables and specific groups of schemas are quite interesting.

Schemas are formed when an individual encounters an event that he or she needs to interpret, organize, or classify. If an individual experiences an event for which he or she does not have an applicable schema, the individual will form a new schema or will strive to make that experience fit into existing cognitive frameworks. When an individual uses an existing schema in the interpretation of an event, that schema is then strengthened. As a schema is strengthened, it becomes more generalizable and more difficult to change. Since children have numerous daily encounters with their parents, the schemas through which the children interpret their relationships with their parents are continually strengthened. It is understandable, then, that parenting variables are so predictive of various schemas.

Family Intrusiveness

Family intrusiveness was the single most powerful variable in the explanation of variance in the overall presence of schemas, accounting for nearly 40% of the variance in the total presence of the maladaptive schemas. Additionally, it was significantly predictive of four of the five sub-categories of maladaptive schemas: Disconnection/Rejection (40.4%), Impaired Autonomy/Performance (46.4%), Impaired Limits (16.6%), and Overvigilance/Inhibition (9.3%). Looking at the nature of family intrusiveness enables formation of reasonable connections between Family Intrusiveness and the various schemas.

Throughout the Family Intrusiveness Scale is an underlying theme of separateness. It is the child versus the rest of the family, producing the conceptualization of family as “them and me” rather than “us.” This separateness from one’s own family could then contribute to the idea that relationships are not trustworthy or that people will continually find a reason to reject the individual. The implicit connection is something like, “If my own family rejects me, why would the rest of the world do differently?” This thought pattern can then become the set of Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

Additionally, family intrusiveness sends the message, “You cannot make decisions without our help.” Over time, then, this message may become ingrained into the individual’s thoughts: the more experience one has with hearing this message, the more the message will become internalized and generalized. The individual may begin to tell himself or herself that he or she is unable to function without the help of others, and may thus doubt his or her autonomy or ability to perform even daily tasks. This can contribute to the presence of the Impaired Autonomy/Performance Schemas.

Further, the nature of family intrusiveness is such that it does not matter what the individual does; his or her family will never be satisfied. People who experience this facet of family intrusiveness may then assume that since their families will not be satisfied no matter what, they should be able to do whatever they want. This could then contribute to the presence of the Impaired Limits schemas. This connection is a little more tentative, which may explain why family intrusiveness has a comparatively smaller predictive value (16.6%) for this set of schemas.

Additionally, there is a limitation to this study that may be particularly visible in the relationship between family intrusiveness and the Impaired Limits schemas. The study was done with college students. College students are typically at a point in their lives (i.e., for many out of their parents' houses for the first time) when there may be a presence of "rebellion" against intrusive families. This "rebellion" may fade as the individuals move through life. Therefore, this relationship may not necessarily hold as people get older.

The connection between family intrusiveness and the Overvigilance/Inhibition schemas seems fairly clear. The intrusive family is constantly undermining the individual's decisions and actions, thus the individual is held to high (and typically undefinable) standards while at the same time being constantly reminded of his or her failures and shortcomings. These cognitive outcomes are characteristic of the Overvigilance/Inhibition schemas, and thus as the experiences are internalized, the schemas may develop.

Paternal Variables

There are a number of characteristics of individuals' early relationships with their fathers that explain significant variance in the presence of certain groups of schemas. These variables include nurturance, authoritativeness, and authoritarianism.

Father nurturance is significantly predictive of both Disconnection/Rejection schemas and Impaired Autonomy/Performance schemas. Father nurturance involves the father's acceptance and recognition of, warmth toward, and interest in the child. The child is connected to the father and accepted by the father. Thus the child may see that he or she is acceptable and able to connect with people. This can then protect the individual from developing the Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

Additionally, when the father is very nurturing, the child is recognized as an individual and the father shows pride in the child's accomplishments. This can contribute to a sense of autonomy and confidence in one's ability to perform different tasks, which may explain the value of father nurturance in predicting the presence of Impaired Autonomy/performance schemas.

Father authoritativeness is significantly predictive of the presence of Disconnection/Rejection schemas. A big part of parental authoritativeness is the consideration of the thoughts and opinions of the children, particularly when making big decisions. Here, the children are valued as individuals with important contributions to the family. Thus, children feel respected and important, which may explain connection to the Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

Father authoritarianism often involves the presence of severe punishments and belittling of the child. When a father ascribes to an authoritarian exercise of control, it is very difficult for the child to gain approval and respect from his or her father. This can

produce thoughts (either implicit or explicit) about what the individual's father will do or say if the individual makes decisions that are contrary to what the authoritarian father may want or expect. This can be a basis for the development of the Overvigilance/Inhibition schemas.

Maternal Variables

Only one characteristic of the participants' mothers were significantly predictive of maladaptive schemas in this analysis, namely psychological control.

The presence of Other-Directedness schemas is significantly predicted by the mother's psychological control. A mother employing psychological control sends the message that it is the mother's wants and needs that matter and not the child's. She says, in actions and reactions, "If you don't do what I want, you must not love me." This manipulation oftentimes induces guilt in the child, who then may strive to avoid the pain of disappointing his or her mother. Children may then learn at an early age that it is the needs and wants of others that matter, rather than their own needs. This then may build the foundation for the development of Other-Directedness schemas.

Inconsistency in Authority

Some have explained that when a mother and father exercise authority differently from each other, a child is left to work to bridge the gap between the mother and the father in his or her own experience (e.g., Marquardt, 2005; Love & Robinson, 1990). In healthy families, it is the job of the parents to reconcile their differences behind the scenes and present a united front. When the parents do not accomplish this, the child may feel torn between the two parents, needing to figure out where he or she belongs. This

lack of a sense of belonging in the family unit can then lead to development of the Disconnection/Rejection schemas.

Additionally, Love and Robinson (1990) assert that when children experience inconsistency between their mother and father, they can become overly attached to one or the other. This excessive attachment typically has very negative effects on the child, including a belief that he or she is not able to function apart from the parent. This then can create a firm and solid base for the development of the Impaired Autonomy/Performance schemas.

Future Directions for Research

The characteristics found to be predictive of maladaptive schemas and optimism are different for mothers and fathers. In every multiple regression analysis in the present research, mothers and fathers have very different contributions (even on the same variable, e.g., authoritativeness). It is extremely interesting that this is the case since some have claimed that in intact families, parents are seen as a unit rather than as individuals (e.g., Marquardt, 2005). More research is needed to examine why it is that fathers and mothers have such different impact on an individual's schemas (i.e., what mechanisms are contributing to this difference).

Additionally, the contributions of parental variables are distinct for each group of schemas. For example, family intrusiveness is not predictive of Other-Directedness schemas, while it is predictive of all the other schemas; additionally, mother psychological control is significantly predictive only of Other-Directedness schemas. While theoretically, this makes sense, a more systematic empirical evaluation of these

phenomena would be useful in order to determine the contributions of parents to different schemas.

Also, some groups of schemas (e.g., Impaired Limits) have less variance explained by the parenting variables studied in this research. More research is needed to examine other variables that may contribute to the explanation of the presence of these schemas. According to Jeffrey Young (1993), any early childhood experiences can influence the formation of these maladaptive schemas. Experiences not studied here may include sibling relationships, early schooling, early childhood social functions, or experiences of success and failure in early childhood.

It is interesting, also, that while the relationships examined and discussed in this paper hold generally across the board, there are some individuals for whom they do not hold (e.g., some individuals have experienced high family intrusiveness and yet have a low presence of maladaptive schemas; for other individuals, this relationship is even stronger than expected). It seems there must be some variable(s) that either protect an individual from the insidious effects of negative variables or exacerbate the effects of such variables. Examining these variables would give increased awareness and understanding of the nature of the relationships between parenting and maladaptive and adaptive schemas.

References

- Ball, S. A., & Cecero, J. J. (2001). Addicted patients with personality disorders: Traits, schemas, and presenting problems. *Journal of personality disorders, 15*(1), 72-83.
- Bean, R. A., Barber, B. K., & Crane, D. R. (2006). Parental Support, Behavioral Control, and Psychological Control Among African American Youth: The Relationships to Academic Grades, Delinquency, and Depression. *Journal of Family Issues, 27*(10), 1335-1355.
- Beck, A. T. (1976). *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*. Oxford, England: International Universities Press.
- Beck, A. T. (1995). *Cognitive therapy: Past, present, and future*. New York, NY, US: Springer Publishing Co.
- Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. New York: Guilford.
- Bok, I. A., & Taris, T. W. (1997). Steun van de ouders, sekse, en het verloop van de schoolloopbaan: een retrospectieve studie. / Parental support, gender, and the development of the educational career: A retrospective study. *Pedagogische Studiën, 74*(1), 33-45.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Disruption of affectional bonds and its effects on behavior. *Canada's Mental Health Supplement, 59*, 12.
- Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss*. New York, NY, US: Basic Books.
- Brennan, P. A., Le Brocque, R., & Hammen, C. (2003). Maternal Depression, Parent-Child Relationships, and Resilient Outcomes in Adolescence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 42*(12), 1469-1477.

- Bugental, D. B. & Grusec, J. E. (2006). *Socialization Processes*. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Buri, J. R. (1989). Self-esteem and appraisals of parental behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 4*(1), 33-49.
- Buri, J. R., Louiselle, P. A., Misukanis, T. M., & Mueller, R. A. (1988). Effects of parental authoritarianism and authoritativeness of self-esteem. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 14*(2), 271-282.
- Calvete, E., Estévez, A., López de Arroyabe, E., & Ruiz, P. (2005). The Schema Questionnaire—Short Form: Structure and Relationship with Automatic Thoughts and Symptoms of Affective Disorders. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 21*(2), 90-99
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902.
- Cooper, M. (1997). Cognitive theory in Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa: A Review. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy, 25*(2), 113-145.
- Dallaire, D. H., Pineda, A. Q., Cole, D. A., Ciesla, J. A., Jacquez, F., LaGrange, B., et al. (2006). Relation of Positive and Negative Parenting to Children's Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 35*(2), 313-322.
- Denollet, J., Smolderen, K. G. E., van den Broek, Krista C., & Pedersen, S. S. (2007). The 10-item Remembered Relationship with Parents (RRP¹-sup-0) scale: Two-factor model and association with adult depressive symptoms. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 100*(1-3), 179-189.
- Eisenberg, N., Gershoff, E. T., Fabes, R. A., Shepard, S. A., Cumberland, A. J., Losoya, S. H., et al. (2001). Mother's emotional expressivity and children's behavior problems

and social competence: Mediation through children's regulation. *Developmental Psychology*, 37(4), 475-490.

Garber, J., Robinson, N. S., & Valentiner, D. (1997). The relation between parenting and adolescent depression: Self-worth as a mediator. *Journal of Adolescent Research. Special Issue: Adolescent Socialization in Context--the Role of Connection, Regulation, and Autonomy in the Family, Part I*, 12(1), 12-33.

Gavazzi, S. M., Reese, M. J., & Sabatelli, R. M. (1998). Conceptual development and empirical use of the Family Intrusiveness Scale. *Journal of Family Issues. Special Issue: Family Privacy*, 19(1), 65-74.

Hill, E. M., Thomson Ross, L., & Low, B. S. (1997). The role of future unpredictability in human risk-taking. *Human Nature*, 8(4), 287-325.

Lamborn, S. D., Mounts, N. S., Steinberg, L., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62(5), 1049-1065.

Leahy, R. L., Beck, J., & Beck, A. T. (2005). *Cognitive Therapy for the Personality Disorders*. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Maccoby, E. E. (1992). The role of parents in the socialization of children: An historical overview. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(6), 1006-1017.

Maccoby, E. E. (. (2007). *Historical Overview of Socialization Research and Theory*. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Marquardt, E. (2005). *Between two worlds: The inner lives of children of divorce*. New York, NY, US: Crown Publishing Group/Random House.

- Martin, G., Bergen, H. A., Roeger, L., & Allison, S. (2004). Depression in young adolescents: Investigations using 2 and 3 factor versions of the Parental Bonding Instrument. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 192*(10), 650-657.
- McCranie, E. W., & Bass, J. D. (1984). Childhood family antecedents of dependency and self-criticism: Implications for depression. *Journal of abnormal psychology, 93*(1), 3-8.
- Mika, P., Bergner, R. M., & Baum, M. C. (1987). The development of a scale for the assessment of parentification. *Family Therapy, 14*(3), 229-235.
- Parker, G., Tupling, H., & Brown, L. B. (1979). A parental bonding instrument. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 52*(1), 1-10.
- Patterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, B. D., & Ramsey, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on antisocial behavior. *American Psychologist. Special Issue: Children and their development: Knowledge base, research agenda, and social policy application, 44*(2), 329-335.
- Persons, J. B. (. (1989). *Cognitive therapy in practice: A case formulation approach*. New York, NY, US: W W Norton & Co.
- Parker, G., Tupling, H., & Brown, L. B. (1979). A parental bonding instrument. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 52*(1), 1-10.
- Piaget, J. (1954). *The construction of reality in the child*. Oxford, England: Basic Books.
- Radziszewska, B., Richardson, J. L., Dent, C. W., & Flay, B. R. (1996). Parenting style and adolescent depressive symptoms, smoking, and academic achievement: Ethnic, gender, and SES differences. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 19*(3), 289-305.

Riso, L. P., Froman, S. E., Raouf, M., Gable, P., Maddux, R. E., Turini-Santorelli, N., et al. (2006). The Long-Term Stability of Early Maladaptive Schemas. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 30(4), 515-529.

Schaefer, E. S. (1965). Children's reports of parental behavior: An inventory. *Child Development*, 36(2), 413-424.

Scalf-McIver, L., & Thompson, J. K. (1989). Family correlates of bulimic characteristics in college females. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 45(3), 467-472.

Simons, L. G., & Conger, R. D. (2007). Linking Mother-Father Differences in Parenting to a Typology of Family Parenting Styles and Adolescent Outcomes. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28(2), 212-241.

Stopa, L., Thorne, P., Waters, A., & Preston, J. (2001). Are the short and long forms of the Young Schema Questionnaire comparable and how well does each version predict psychopathology scores? *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy. Special Issue: Developmental parameters for cognitive therapy with youth*, 15(3), 253-272.

Wadsworth, B. J. (. (1996). *Piaget's theory of cognitive and affective development: Foundations of constructivism (5th ed.)*. White Plains, NY, England: Longman Publishing.

Welburn, K., Coristine, M., Dagg, P., Pontefract, A., & Jordan, S. (2002). The Schema Questionnaire-Short Form: Factor analysis and relationship between schemas and symptoms. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 26(4), 519-530.

Young, J.E. & Klosko, J.S. (1993). *Reinventing your life*. New York, NY, US: Dutton.

Young, J. E. (1999). *Cognitive therapy for personality disorders: A schema-focused approach (3rd ed.)*. Sarasota, FL, US: Professional Resource Press/Professional Resource Exchange.

Appendix A

Description of Young's Early Maladaptive Schemas

Disconnection/Rejection: This category of schemas reflects negative beliefs about relationships that may influence expectations in existing relationships as well as conceptualizations of possible (present or future) relationships. At the core of this group of schemas is the belief that relationships are untrustworthy, unreliable, and/or unavailable. This group of schemas also reflects deeper beliefs about inherent characteristics of the individual that cause others to reject or avoid connection with him or her. This category of schemas includes: (1) Abandonment/Instability (the perception that those close to the individual will die, leave, or be unavailable), (2) Mistrust/Abuse (the perception that people are out to hurt, cheat, humiliate, manipulate, or take advantage of the individual), (3) Emotional Deprivation (the perception that the individual's emotional needs will never be met), (4) Defectiveness/Shame (the perception that the individual is inherently flawed and thus unwanted), and (5) Social Isolation/Alienation (the perception that the individual is different from others and is thus isolated from the world).

Impaired Autonomy/Performance: This group of schemas centers primarily on beliefs about the self as a weak, ineffectual, or helpless human being. These schemas have a detrimental effect on one's confidence in many areas of life. This category of schemas includes: (6) Dependence/Incompetence (the perception that the individual is helpless or unable to function on a daily basis without help from others), (7) Vulnerability to Harm or Illness (the perception that something catastrophic is about to take place), (8) Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self (the perception that the individual does

not have worth or an identity apart from the important people in one's life), and (9) Failure (the perception that the individual has failed, is failing, and/or will inevitably fail).

Impaired Limits: This group of schemas deals with the acknowledgement of, evaluation of, and adherence to boundaries in everyday life and includes: (10) Entitlement/Grandiosity (the perception that the individual is inherently better than others and deserves special rights and privileges) and (11) Insufficient Self-Control (the perception that the individual does not have power and/or strength to control his or her actions).

Other-Directedness: This group of schemas focuses on the belief in relationships that it is only the other person's needs, wants, and/or feelings that matter. In many ways, this group of schemas represents a rejection of the self apart from others. This group of schemas includes: (12) Subjugation (the perception that others do not care about the individual's needs and wants, and that he or she is coerced into denying those needs and wants), (13) Self-Sacrifice (the perception that in order to be a person of worth, the individual must put others' needs and wants ahead of his or her own needs and wants), and (14) Approval-Seeking/Recognition-Seeking (the perception that the individual's worth comes from external approval and/or recognition).

Overvigilance/Inhibition: This group of schemas involves unrealistic standards combined with a tendency to focus more on negative than positive situations, outcomes, and behaviors. Thus, people for whom this group of schemas is strong will form unreachable standards which will cause perceived failure, both for themselves and for those around them. This constant presence of perceived failure is then exacerbated by the

tendency to focus on the negative rather than the positive in life. This group of schemas includes: (15) Negativity/Pessimism (the perception that the negative aspects of life outweigh the positive aspects of life), (16) Emotional Inhibition (the perception that the individual must inhibit his or her emotions, especially if these emotions are negative), (17) Unrelenting Standards (the perception that people must meet excessively high internal standards for their behavior, thoughts, and performance), and (18) Punitiveness (the perception that people, including oneself, ought to be severely punished for making mistakes).

Appendix B

Examples of Items from the Young Schema Questionnaire

“People have not been there to meet my emotional needs,” was a statement used to measure the Emotional Deprivation schema. The Abandonment schema was measured by statements such as, “In the end, I will be alone.” Statements like, “I am quite suspicious of other people’s motives,” were used to measure the Mistrust/Abuse schema. “I’m fundamentally different from other people,” is an example of a statement measuring the Social Isolation schema. The measurement of the Defectiveness/Shame schema included statements such as, “I’m unworthy of love, attention, and respect of others.” The Failure schema measurement included the statement, “I’m incompetent when it comes to achievement.” “I don’t feel confident about my ability to solve everyday problems that come up,” was included in the measurement of the Dependence/Incompetence schema. The Vulnerability to Harm schema was measured by statements including, “I can’t seem to escape the feeling that something bad is about to happen.” The Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self schema was composed of statements such as, “It is very difficult for me to maintain any distance from the people I am intimate with; I have trouble keeping any separate sense of self.” Characteristic of the measurement for the Subjugation schema was, “I worry a lot about pleasing other people, so they won’t reject me.” The Self-Sacrifice schema measurement included items such as, “If I do what I want, I feel very uncomfortable.” “I find it embarrassing to express my feelings to others,” was one of the statements included in measuring the Emotional Inhibition schema. The Unrelenting Standards schema was measured with items such as, “Almost nothing I do is quite good enough; I can always do better.” An example of a statement

measuring the Entitlement schema is, “I feel that I shouldn’t have to follow the normal rules and conventions other people do.” The Insufficient Self-Control schema was measured with statements such as, “I often do things impulsively that I later regret.” “Lots of praise and compliments make me feel like a worthwhile person,” is an example of a statement measuring the Approval/Recognition Seeking schema. “You can’t be too careful; something will almost always go wrong,” is an example of a statement measuring the Negativity/Pessimism schema. The Punitiveness schema was measured with statements including, “I ‘beat up’ on myself a lot for things I screw up.”