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Abstract

Using the General Theory of Family Communication Patterns (FCPT) and Emotion Regulation Theory (ERT) of Meta-emotion, Parenting, and Child Outcomes, this dissertation sought to investigate adults' emotion socialization in their family of origin through an examination of multiple family schemata. Furthermore, the interactions of parental meta-emotions, family communication patterns, and family communication environments were investigated. Two surveys were used in this study. First, 228 adult-children across two universities in the western United States responded to items retrospectively describing the family communication patterns and family communication environments within their home of origin during their adolescence. Additionally, adult-children described the meta-emotion philosophies of their parents during the adult-child's adolescence. Analysis of the data revealed a positive association between emotion coaching (EC) and conversation orientation, as well as positive associations between emotion dismissing (ED) and both conversation and conformity orientations. In examining meta-emotion philosophies across FCP family types, unique interactions were observed across levels of EC, ED, conversation orientation, and conformity orientation. Notably, conversation and conformity orientations acted as reciprocal suppressor variables of ED within consensual families. Further, ED was undifferentiated across pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire families. Levels of EC were undifferentiated between consensual and pluralistic families, and levels of EC were also undifferentiated between protective and laissez-faire families. Expressiveness and conflict avoidance were both predictive of EC, while all three family communication environments were predictive of ED. A second survey compared the perspectives of 63 adult-children recalling how they were parented against the perspectives of their primary caregivers recalling how they parented their child during adolescence. Adult-child and caregiver perspectives were undifferentiated in how they recalled levels of ED, however, caregivers recalled higher levels of EC than their adult-children. These results indicate the complexity of family schemata and how they influence family communication. Moreover, explaining levels of ED versus EC may be more complex than describing family expressivity or levels of interaction amongst family members. Lastly, the overall investigation of family schemata offers a unique description of family emotional environments. The implications of the results for FCPT, ERT, and family communication research, limitations, and directions for further research were also discussed.

Document Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Ph.D.

Department

Human Communications

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Keywords

Emotion regulation, Emotion socialization, Family communication environments, Family communication patterns

Subject Categories

Communication | Interpersonal and Small Group Communication | Psychology

Publication Statement

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PARENTED EMOTION: A STUDY OF ADULT-CHILDREN'S EMOTION
SOCIALIZATION AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

A Dissertation

Presented to
the Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Joseph G. Velasco

June 2011

Advisor: Mary Claire Morr Serewicz

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Acknowledgements

The writing of this dissertation, the research behind it, and the inspiration for it would not have been possible without the help, encouragement, and sacrifice of several people. My advisor, Dr. Mary Claire Morr Serewicz, and committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Suter and Dr. Erin Willer challenged me to meet high standards of rigor while cheering me on through each important stage of the process. Several instructors in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Denver as well as Sul Ross State University allowed me to recruit participants in their classes. I am especially indebted to Tiffany Baldwin for assisting me with recruiting participants in Denver while I continued to work in Texas.

My research, in general, is inspired by the people whom I love. My father, Froylan Velasco, who died during my first week of classes at the University of Denver, never got to see me become Dr. Velasco, and continues to be an inspiration in parenting and wisdom. My mother, Billie and my brother, Froylan Jr., have celebrated my accomplishments and continue to support my endeavors. My in-laws deserve special recognition for stimulating discussions and their genuine expressions of pride in me. My children, Landon and Isla, inspire me every day as a parent and as a scholar of family communication. They are likely not aware of the many sacrifices they have made so that I could earn a doctorate. Someday they will read this and know that their daddy is thankful and proud of them. Most of all, I'll never be able to fully explain how much my wife, Jessica, has sacrificed so that I could further my education. I am constantly grateful for and humbled by her support. Jessica, you are the most special person in the world and certainly the smartest person in our family. Thank you for being by my side.

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Chapter One: Rationale

Interviewer: *What emotions are still hard for you?*

Father: *Anger, I would say anger 'cause I can still have a violent moment. And I can, you know, go out and do something. That's probably my worst. If I've ever get to that point—if anger finally got me I was so mad at something I'd go out and probably would hurt somebody. I wouldn't hurt Susan. I'd go out at the source, find out who it was.*

Interviewer: *OK. How do you make sure that you don't feel angry that often if it's something you don't like to feel? How do you keep it out of your life?*

Father: *Ah, that's a hidden secret in my head. Um [pause] I really don't know. I'm just sayin that the intelligent half of my head talks to it. It says, "All right, you jerk, don't screw up." Talk, you know, "You're gonna go out, and you're gonna do something dumb, you're gonna get in all kinds of trouble, embarrass your family, and slow down and stop." I never, I guess I never let my mind get angry anymore. That's all. It's just that they do something dumb or they or I do something dumb, most of the time if I do get angry, it's because of me. I'll do something stupid. But, um, I usually just think it over, think it out. Talk, you know, start, start bringing it out and see, and then finally after, after, I have a very fast relief valve. If I do get angry now which is seldom it Ssssss quickly. I'm back. I'm out of it then. And that's probably what it is. I just don't let it, I just don't keep it in me very long.*

This father's difficulty with anger was reflected in a dismissing approach to his child's anger.

Father: *[Laughs.] Jackie being mad? Ann, when's the last time...I laugh.*

Interviewer: *You think it's cute?*

Father: *I think, yeah, it is.*

Interviewer: *Uh-huh.*

Father: *She, she, she'll, "Gosh Darn It." And she'll walk away like a little midget human. It's so funny.* (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996b, p. 289, italics added)

The above interview was obtained during seminal research leading toward a new theory of emotion socialization. In this interview, the father demonstrates an awareness of his anger as well as his efforts to control his negative emotion. Further, the father demonstrates an awareness of his internal emotional state having external consequences (i.e. "I'd go out and probably would hurt somebody"). When asked about his child's

anger, the father's response exhibits a lack of empathy for his daughter's emotional state, which further indicates a dismissal or disconfirmation of his daughter's feelings. This example of a father relating to his daughter's emotion highlights a body of literature that explores the socialization of emotion, particularly by parents. Research by Gottman et al. (1996a, 1997) suggests that parental beliefs and orientations toward their own and their child's emotions (e.g., meta-emotions) represent cognitive schemas which influence the parenting of their child's emotions, thereby socializing the child into similar meta-emotions. Copious research has documented the existence of parental emotion socialization and its effects on several psychosocial outcomes. While much of the literature examines emotion socialization in children and adolescents in relation to psychosocial outcomes, work specifically examining family communication associated with family of origin emotion socialization is sparse.

An examination of emotion socialization implies attending to cognitive processes associated with family interaction. Two theories describing multiple family schemata are employed in this dissertation to examine the complexities of both family cognition (e.g., socialization) and family communication. Schemata are most commonly understood as mental structures that people use to organize current knowledge and provide a framework for future understanding (Brewer, 1981). Therefore, schemata represent belief systems which guide human behavior. Examples of schemata include social scripts, worldviews, and archetypes. Schema theorists (e.g., Armbruster, 1996; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b; Young, Klosko, & Weishaar, 2003) tend to agree that schemata often do not interact in predictable ways. Rather than producing main effects, interacting schemata often generate unique systems of beliefs which, in turn, may lead to unique behaviors.

This dissertation has two purposes: (1) to investigate adults' emotion socialization in their family of origin and (2) to examine the interaction of parenting types and family communication patterns. Three distinct reasons warrant the examination of this topic: First, understanding the interactions of multiple family schemata in adults will address theoretical questions from Emotion Regulation Theory (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997) and Family Communication Patterns Theory (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). Second, the investigation of this developmental life-stage contributes to the literature regarding family communication in general and research in family emotion socialization in particular. Finally, a need exists for greater understanding of how family communication patterns impact parental emotion socialization of the child. Each of these reasons is elaborated below.

First, this study is grounded in Gottman et al.'s Emotion Regulation Theory of Meta-emotion, Parenting, and Child-outcomes. According to this theory, parents' beliefs and behaviors regarding emotion, that is, their *meta-emotion philosophy* and emotion parenting behaviors, are associated with important life outcomes for children, family cohesiveness, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and marital quality. This useful, but broad, theory defines parents' meta-emotion philosophy as the set of thoughts and approach to their own and their children's emotions.

Two types of meta-emotion philosophies have been described, and these are *emotion coaching* and *emotion dismissing* (Gottman et al., 1997). An emotion coaching philosophy is marked by parents' awareness of low intensity emotions in themselves and their child and their use of negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching. Parents who provide emotion coaching also validate children's emotions, assist

them in verbally labeling their emotions, and help children problem-solve in emotion-eliciting situations. The emotion-dismissing philosophy is characterized by the belief that negative emotions are harmful for children and the motive to change these negative emotions as quickly as possible. Parents' meta-emotion style gives us some sense of the parents' underlying philosophy of emotions, but does not directly tap children's meta-emotions or parents' emotion-related socialization behaviors. Dunsmore and Halberstadt (1997) proposed that parents' beliefs about emotion and emotionally expressive behavior work together to help children create self- and world-schemas. Eisenberg, Cumberland, and Spinrad (1998), in their review of the literature, also proposed that parental expression of emotion influences the socialization of children's emotion through a number of pathways, including how children understand the significance of a particular event, as a direct model of emotional expression, and shaping how children feel about themselves. Still, the impact of parental meta-emotions on child meta-emotions is unclear. Moreover, we know even less about the impact of parental emotion socialization on the adult-child.

In addition, this research contributes to the understanding of family communication. Characteristic of a family communication perspective, this study defines family through interaction and as constitutive of communication between members (Whitchurch & Dickson, 1999). In other words, "communication is the central process through which people construct and maintain themselves as a family" (p. 687). Also characteristic of a family communication approach, this study emphasizes a micro-level approach to studying families by focusing on family units and dyads (e.g., parent/adult-child). This dissertation meets these criteria. First, in this project, family membership is

defined by members' perceptions and demonstrated in reported family interactions, rather than simply by biological (thereby excluding adoptive families, for example) or legal definitions of family (e.g., marriage). Second, although the adult-child's perceptions constitute much of the data for this investigation, the study is concerned with the adult-child's family of origin in general and the parent-child relationship in specific. It is notable that this investigation does compare the adult-child's perceptions of their parent's meta-emotions during their own adolescence and their parent's perception of their own meta-emotion philosophy at the time of the adult-child's adolescence. Therefore, the focus of the investigation is on the perceived relationship between the participant and the family unit.

Research on family communication has emphasized the importance of understanding communication in family life-cycle transitions. In a family communication perspective, family transitions are demarcated not through the oldest child's age. Rather, communication is the central process that defines transitions and, thus, the exploration of family communication during the transitional processes is very informative in "defining the nature of interaction within the family" (Whitchurch & Dickson, 1999, p. 695). The child reaching adulthood represents one such family transition. Moreover, after examining Emotion Regulation Theory, Cupach and Olsen (2006) noted the absence of research on this criterion, suggesting that future researchers address this gap in the literature, and positing that parental meta-emotion structures that affect children should continue to exert their influence as the child becomes an adult. This investigation addresses parental emotion socialization embedded in family communication from the adult-child's perspective.

Beyond addressing family life cycle transitions and family membership, this research also adds to the understanding of family communication and parental emotion socialization. Consistent with social theorists Berger and Luckmann (1966), communication theorists O'Keefe and Delia (1985) contend that "...in the process of socialization, individuals come to share a common view of reality with other members of their culture" (p. 57). Everyday family communication practices can bring about the socialization of social-cognitive schemas and practices associated with interacting with others (Burlleson, Delia, & Applegate, 1995; Burlleson & Kunkel, 2002). Communication researchers have shown that parents and peers do socialize young adults' cultural and communicative practices (Burlleson, Delia, & Applegate, 1992; Burlleson & Kunkel, 2002). The nuclear family is commonly thought of as a primary site of socialization for children, so socialization research has focused primarily on parent-child interactions (e.g., Baumrind, 1980; Burlleson et al., 1995; Eisenberg & McNally, 1993; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Interest in emotion has increased concern with the study of what has been labeled the *socialization of emotion* (see Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998a). Much of this body of research, as well as the present study, conceptualizes the socialization of emotion in line with Buck's (1989) developmental-interactions perspective that defines emotion socialization as a joint-process through which individuals influence each other's cognitive structures of emotion through communicative interaction.

Research on family emotion socialization has primarily focused on parental emotion socialization of the child from the parent's perspective (Eisenberg, et al., 1998a). This dissertation complements existing literature by continuing the investigation of

parental emotion socialization, but considering the emotion socialization of the adult-child from the perspective of the adult-child. Research on the socialization of family-related cognitive schemas (e.g., Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1994) also investigates the consequences of family communication patterns. This investigation, then, approaches the impact of emotion socialization by attending to family communication patterns. In these ways, this dissertation advances research in family communication.

Finally, understanding how family communication patterns impact the family system and the socialization that occurs between parent and child will allow researchers greater insight into the communicative environment and the ways that parents affect their child's emotions. In their foundational research leading to and establishing Emotion Regulation Theory, Gottman and colleagues (1996, 1997) interviewed parents about their views of their own and their child's emotions. In addition, they observed parent-child interactions. Their coding of parental messages partially embodies the meta-emotion philosophies that were found and later described as parenting-types. Though half of their overall investigation is rooted in parental messages, their construct does not offer researchers much insight into the cognitive structures that influence family communication. Rather, parental meta-emotions are constitutive of messages that are coded as representative of these philosophies of emotion. In a sense, parental meta-emotions reify themselves in successive investigations by a flexible codebook. It stands to reason, then, that attending to family communication outside of Gottman et al.'s (1996a, 1997) heuristic may provide researchers with new insight as to how family communication impacts emotion socialization.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

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Emotion Socialization

The role of emotion socialization in parenting. Emotions serve a crucial role in the processing and understanding of experience. They are often primary motivators of behaviors and are vital to interpersonal relationships. Rules about the experience, expression, and acceptability of emotions are often taught both explicitly and implicitly in the context of parenting from an early age (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996a; Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). This occurs through emotion socialization, defined by one research group as a set of behaviors enacted by caregivers that affect a child's incorporation of lessons regarding all aspects of emotions (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Cumberland, 1998b). These practices, when conducted effectively, help children to develop a number of important emotional competencies, including emotion knowledge, facility and appropriateness of emotional expression, and regulation of emotions (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998a; Saarni, 1997). Moreover, they impact children's awareness of their own emotional state, recognition of others' emotions, empathy, and ability to have authentic emotional interchanges (Saarni, 2000).

The impact of emotion socialization on children's emotional regulation may be especially important, as good emotion regulation capabilities have been shown to

correlate with a number of positive outcomes. Children with superior emotion regulation have been shown to be more sympathetic to others (Eisenberg et al., 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1995) and more able to control their inner distress and engage in prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Karbon, Smith, & Maszk, 1996b); they also generally possess greater social competence (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reiser, 2000a). They have fewer negative emotion expressions (Eisenberg et al., 1994; Eisenberg et al., 1996a) and have greater understanding of both their own (Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Havighurst, Harley, & Prior, 2004) and others' (Barth & Bastiani, 1997; Melnick & Hinshaw, 2000) emotions. Finally, they display fewer internalizing and externalizing problems (Eisenberg et al., 2000b).

Through the processes of emotion socialization, parents have the potential to dramatically impact children's attitudes towards emotions, understanding and expression of emotions, emotion regulation, and indirectly, their psychosocial and psychological development.

Forms of emotion socialization. Emotion socialization is achieved through three primary channels (Halberstadt, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1998a): (a) In *emotion contingent socialization*, parents' reactions to children's emotional displays either reinforce or extinguish emotional expression; (b) in *modeling*, parents' own expression and regulation of emotions impacts children's attitudes towards emotions, expression of emotions, and emotion regulation; (c) in *emotion coaching*, parents openly discuss emotions and problem-solve to address negative emotions. It is important to note that although emotion coaching is oftentimes described as a separate emotion socialization practice, in its

broadest sense (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996) it may include the other two forms of emotion socialization, as described later in this chapter.

Emotion contingent socialization/Display rules. Emotion contingent socialization has a powerful impact on children's emotional expression from a very early age (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). This particular approach for theorists of emotion has largely focused attention on the rules for expressing emotion across varying contexts (i.e. emotion codes that fit a time, a place, and a relationship). Such rules are thought to influence emotional displays and people's descriptions of them (e.g., Clark, 1990; Ekman & Davidson, 1994; Hoschild, 1979). Hoschild (1979), for example, uses the phrase "feeling rules" to refer to socially shared (though often latent) understandings regarding emotions while Ekman and Friesen (1975) make use of the term "display rules" (see also Fineman, 1993). The results of this line of research imply not only that "emotion is a necessary link between social structure and social order" (Barbalet, 2001, p. 27), but that the display rules which influence emotional performances facilitate communication effectiveness by making social interaction more predictable (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Planalp, 1999). In this way, display rules are believed to be a key component of managing (or regulating) emotional expression.

Parents' positive reactions to emotional displays - such as responding calmly, acknowledging emotions, approaching the child, and taking a supportive stance towards emotional expression, as opposed to reacting negatively to emotional displays (i.e. by blaming and teasing the child or minimizing, neglecting, or punishing their emotions) - have been linked to a number of positive outcomes in younger children. These include:

greater emotional understanding and expression (i.e. Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997; Denham, Zoller, & Couchod, 1994b; Fuchs & Thelen, 1988), more constructive coping and positive affect (Eisenberg et al., 1996a; Gentzler, Contreras- Grau, Kerns, & Weimer, 2005), greater social competence, empathy, and positive attendance to peers' emotional expressions (Denham et al., 1997; Denham et al., 1994a; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1995), overall competence (Roberts & Strayer, 1987), and decreased problem behaviors and psychological distress (Eisenberg, Fabes, Shepard, Guthrie, Murphy, & Reiser, 1999; Garside & Klimes-Dougan, 2002). Parental support for the expression of negative emotions and assistance in finding positive coping strategies for emotionally stressful events are also protective of the effects of early physical maltreatment on later emotional development, including emotion expression, physiological arousal, and emotion regulation (Shipman & Zeman, 2001; Shipman, Schneider, Fitzgerald, Sims, Swisher, & Edwards, 2007).

Modeling. How parents respond to elements of their own emotional environment in the presence of their children, a process referred to in the literature as "modeling," is another powerful, though more passive and indirect, form of emotion socialization. Parents can effectively teach their children by their expressions, actions, and attitudes how to effectively address and regulate negative emotions, which children learn through processes such as imitation, identification, and social referencing (Denham, 1993; Feinman & Lewis, 1983). While parents who express a wide range of emotions have children with greater emotional understanding and expressivity (Denham & Grout, 1992), parents who model dysregulation of negative emotions tend to have children who cope

with emotions in maladaptive ways, have decreased social competence, and exhibit increased behavioral problems (Eisenberg et al., 2003). Similarly, parents who model positive expressivity tend to have children with greater empathic abilities (Michalik, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Ladd, Thompson, & Valiente, 2007). Research has also shown that parents' modeling of emotion regulation in dealing with their own emotions is directly related to children's emotion regulation, which, in turn, is a mediator between parents' emotion regulation and children's externalizing behaviors (Valiente, Lemer-Chafant, & Reiser, 2007).

Emotion coaching. In emotion coaching, parents not only respond thoughtfully to children's emotions and model an approach to emotion through awareness, expression, and modulation of their own emotions; they also take a more active and explicit role in guiding children's approach to emotions by talking about emotions with their children and collaborating to problem-solve around emotions (Gottman et al., 1996; Denham et al., 1994b). As described by Gottman and colleagues (Gottman et al., 1996; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997), emotion coaching includes a number of specific attitudes and skills: (a) awareness of children's low intensity emotions; (b) perception that negative emotions can be potentially constructive and create an opportunity for closeness and teaching; (c) willingness to discuss emotions; (d) listening, validating, and empathizing with emotions; (e) labeling emotions, which imposes rational language on emotional experiences; (f) awareness and expression of one's own emotions; (g) setting limits on behavioral expressions of emotions; and, finally, (h) problem solving.

An emotion coaching parenting style has been associated with a number of positive outcomes, primarily found in early and middle childhood (a review of effects on adolescents is presented later in this chapter). In their primary study of the emotion coaching construct, Gottman and colleagues (1996) found that emotion coaching is related to less derogatory parenting behavior, greater academic achievement, improved peer relationships, greater emotional self-soothing and emotion regulation (measured by vagal tone), reduced impulsive behavior and behavior problems, and better physical health. Their findings have been supported and expanded upon in a number of follow-up studies.

Specifically, parents with high emotion coaching attitudes display higher levels of positive emotion expressiveness and expressive encouragement, and fewer non-supportive coping behaviors (Hakim-Larson, Parker, Lee, Goodwin, & Voelker, 2006). Children whose parents are rated higher in emotion coaching attitudes and behaviors (or lower in dismissing and disapproving styles) have: (a) improved behavioral regulation (i.e. reduced impulsiveness and better inhibitory controls); (b) more pro-social behaviors and empathy (Laird, Pettit, Mize, Brown, & Lindsey, 1994; Lagace-Seguin & Coplan, 2005; Lunkenheimer, Shields, & Cortina, 2007); (c) more secure attachment and better attachment differentiation (Schwartz, Thigpen, & Montgomery, 2006; Yeh, Cheng, & Yang, 2005); and (d) better emotion regulation and knowledge (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991; Denham et al., 1997; Denham & Grout, 1992; Lunkenheimer et al., 2007; Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002; Shipman & Zeman, 2001). They engage in more positive sophisticated play (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004) and less rough and tumble

play (Lagace-Seguin & d'Entremont, 2006); they have fewer breakdowns in play, and fewer bouts of negative affect and unconstructive conversation (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004). Moreover, an emotion coaching attitude has been shown to be a protective factor in children living in homes with spousal domestic violence, obviating the effects of the domestic violence on child behaviors of withdrawal, aggression, depression, and anxiety (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2006).

In sum, parents provide emotion socialization through a number of channels, by responding to their children's emotion expression, modeling an approach to emotions by their own responses to emotional content, and actively engaging their children around their emotion expressions and attitudes. These behaviors have both immediate and long-term effects on children's social, emotional, and psychological development and are likely valuable targets for parenting interventions.

Emotion socialization with adolescents. Parental emotion socialization is especially important for adolescents as they undergo crucial development of emotion regulation (ER) skills during adolescence. While middle childhood is focused on the development of display rules, gender differentiation of emotions, and metacognition, adolescence is a time during which emotional expression and ER become more differentiated by person, motivation, and emotion type (see Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998a). Additionally, adolescents exhibit greater self-conscious emotions, learn to vary emotional expressivity by perceived expectation of support, and learn more autonomous control of emotions (Zeman, Cassano, Perry-Parrish, & Stegall, 2006).

Emotion regulation is an essential tool for adolescents, as adolescence is a time of enormous physical and social transitions which bring concomitant intense emotional arousal and greater emotional frequency and intensity (Silk, Steinberg, & Morris, 2003). For example, in studies by Larson and colleagues (Larson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Graef, 1980; Larson & Lampman-Petratis, 1989), adolescents were instructed to measure their emotional state throughout the day using pagers. The researchers found that adolescents had greater variation and extremes in mood states when compared to adults and greater dysphoric states and fewer positive emotional states when compared to preadolescent children. Modulating these intense and often negative emotions is crucial for successful functioning.

The importance of ER skills for adolescents is further buttressed by the relationship between ER and psychopathology and the increased prevalence of emotion related psychopathology (i.e. mood disorders) during adolescence (Silk et al., 2003). The relationship between ER and psychopathology is supported by theory, as inability to down-regulate negative emotions and up-regulate positive emotions has been theorized to mediate the presence of internalizing disorders (Cole, Michel, & Teti, 1994), while dysregulated affective processes are thought to be linked to externalizing disorders (Bradley, 2000). Empirical findings further support this relationship for adolescents. For example, Larson and colleagues (1990) showed that greater emotional lability and more intense negative affect (i.e. difficulties with ER) in adolescents are connected to greater depressive symptoms. Similarly, Silk et al. (2003) found that emotional intensity and

lability and use of ineffective ER, such as disengagement from emotions and rumination, are related to self-reported higher levels of depressive symptoms and behavior problems.

In a retrospective study (Zlotnick, Donaldson, Spirito, & Pearlstein, 1997) of adolescent suicide attempters, a higher proportion of ER problems were found in suicide attempters and were linked to history of suicide attempts and greater self-injurious behavior. Emotion regulation impacts other areas of adolescent functioning as well. In a study with middle-school age adolescents, Gumora and Arsenio (2002) found that both general and school-related negative emotions and ER abilities were related to school performance (GPA) even after controlling for academic achievement abilities.

Research has demonstrated that adolescents' development of coping mechanisms focused on improving their ER is associated with positive outcomes. In their examination of adolescents' coping styles in response to negative or stressful life events, Garnefski and colleagues (2002, 2005) demonstrated that negative coping strategies for dealing with emotional lability (i.e. self-blame, projection, rumination, and catastrophizing) are related to increased anxiety and depression. In contrast, more effective coping strategies of positive reappraisal (e.g., creating a positive perception of the negative event as a growth experience) and positive refocusing (e.g., thinking about pleasurable issues) are related to fewer depressive symptoms and externalizing behavior, respectively. Adolescents' use of coping mechanisms that aim to improve their ER results in increased positive emotions and parental support, and decreased stress and negative emotions, including irritation and sadness (Boekaerts, 2002). Moreover, the presence of successful ER buffers the effects of

maternal depression on adolescent internalizing symptoms (Silk, Shaw, Forbes, Lane, & Kovacs, 2006).

The importance of learning ER skills during adolescence is underscored by potential long-term implications. Neurological systems related to the experience and expression of emotions undergo huge growth and development during adolescence, which slow down with the onset of adulthood (Spear, 2000). The ER-focused coping strategies that individuals learn to prepare them for adulthood are primarily acquired during adolescence (Garnefski, Legerstee, Kraaj, van den Kommer, & Teerds, 2002), and researchers have posited that ineffective styles of coping with negative emotions are relatively entrenched by the end of adolescence (O'Neal & Magai, 2005; Zahn-Waxier, Klimes-Dougan, & Kendziora, 1998). Thus, there is a tremendous and relatively fleeting opportunity to shape children's neurologically hard-wired patterns of approaching and responding to emotions during this time by teaching them new skills.

Overall, adolescents' acquisition of emotion regulation skills and coping abilities are central goals for this time period, for a number of reasons. Adolescence is a developmental period rife with naturally occurring emotional upheavals and greater emotional lability. The development of good ER skills during this time period has been linked to a number of positive outcomes in adolescent functioning, while ER difficulties have been tied to emotional and behavioral dysfunction. Moreover, the ER skills learned during adolescence have long-term implications for children's functioning as adults.

Role of parents' emotion socialization practices with adolescents. While parents often expect their adolescent children to control their negative emotions more

effectively than younger children (Dix, 1991; O'Neal & Magai, 2005), research has demonstrated that they provide decreasing amounts of emotion socialization to adolescents (O'Neal & Magai, 2005; Klimes-Dougan, et al., 2007) and pay limited attention to their emotional management (Zeman & Shipman, 1997). Specifically, research suggests that as adolescents age, parents provide decreasing responses of comfort, empathy, and problem-solving to adolescents' negative emotions of anger, sadness, fear, and shame. In contrast, they are more likely to respond to adolescent negative internalizing emotions of sadness, fear, and shame by ignoring them (Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007; O'Neal & Magai, 2005).

Part of the reason parents have less influence with regard to emotion socialization during adolescence is that they have fewer opportunities to engage in socialization practices. Adolescents spend increasing amounts of time with peers, oftentimes sharing emotions with them (Youniss & Haynie, 1992), and thereby achieve greater autonomy from parents by creating a private social life (Klimes-Dougan & Zeman, 2007). In fact, some research suggests that adolescents express a preference for discussing emotional issues with peers over their parents (Saarni, 1988). However, this is balanced by reports that adolescents: (a) continue to turn towards parents for assistance in addressing negative emotions; (b) perceive continued unchanging emotional support from parents from middle-childhood into adolescence; and (c) expect fewer negative responses to emotional expressiveness from parents, as compared to peers, from early to late adolescence (Shipman, Zeman, & Stegall, 2001; Youniss & Haynie, 1992; Zeman & Shipman, 1997).

Another reason why parents may engage in decreasing amounts of emotion socialization during their children's adolescence is because of changes in the nature of the parent-child relationship across this time period. In a meta-analysis of 37 reports of nonparent-child conflict, Laursen, Coy, & Collins (1998) showed that while the rate of conflict steadily decreases from early adolescence to late adolescence, intensity and negative affect during conflicts increases from early to mid-adolescence, remaining relatively stable into late adolescence. Puberty may also introduce significant upheaval in the parent-child relationship. For example, researchers have found that during puberty, parents' negative affect increases in relationship to children's reaching of puberty and children expect less positivity in their relationship with parents (Montemayor, Eberly, & Flannery, 1993; Steinberg, 1988; Zeman & Shipman, 1997).

Despite adolescents' increasing autonomy, turning to peers, and intensity of conflict with parents, research demonstrates the important role parents play in assisting and guiding adolescents in dealing with emotional arousal (Barrett & Campos, 1987; Shipman et al., 2001, Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007) and contributing to their social-emotional competencies (Burlison, & Kunkel, 2002). As children's emotions become increasingly complex and intense, parents' responses to those emotions have the potential to soothe and regulate or, in contrast, to further intensify emotional arousal (Calkins & Bell, 1999). Moreover, as described earlier, parents have a real and fleeting opportunity to influence adolescents' emotion regulation, as emotion regulation coping styles are relatively established by the end of adolescence (Garnefski et al., 2002; O'Neal & Magai, 2005; Spear, 2000). It follows that "early adolescence is an emotionally vibrant, changing

time when the opportunity remains for parents to influence their children's developing emotion styles, despite more parent-child conflict" (O'Neal & Magai, 2005, p. 469).

It is important to note that parent emotion socialization with adolescents may differ by the child's gender. For example, parents generally provide more support to girls' expression of negative emotional experiences (especially sadness); while boys receive more punishing parental responses to their expressions of anger (Klimes-Dougan, et al., 2007; Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). However, this is balanced by studies that have found no differences in adolescents' expectations of parental responses to their expressed emotions (Zeman & Shipman, 1997) or in parents' use of an emotion coaching parenting style (Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007). Similarly, Stocker and colleagues (2007) found no difference between parents of adolescent boys or girls in their level of support and emotion coaching of adolescents' emotional expression or in parents' modeling of positive emotional expression. The above findings are, however, tempered by Brody's (2000) finding that although maternal caregivers' emotional socialization practices did not differ by gender, these practices impacted girls and boys differently.

Impact of emotion socialization on adolescents' functioning. Although most of the literature on emotion socialization has been conducted with children from early to middle childhood (Eisenberg et al., 1998b; Klimes-Dougan & Zeman, 2007), a number of studies have also demonstrated the direct and powerful impact of parents' emotion socialization practices and attitudes on adolescents' adjustment, functioning, and psychopathology. In a recent study with children ranging from ages 14 to 18 years old, Stocker and colleagues (2007) examined the impact of parents' emotion coaching

parenting style and negative emotional expressiveness on adolescent psychopathology. They found that parents' negative emotional expressivity and use of emotion coaching did not differ by the child's gender and that mothers used more emotion coaching with children when compared to fathers. In addition, they found that levels of emotion coaching were still in the moderate range in adolescence, demonstrating that parental emotion socialization is still quite active during that developmental period. Importantly, they found that parents' identification with an emotion coaching philosophy predicted fewer internalizing symptoms among adolescent children. Decreased parental negative emotional expressivity also predicted fewer internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Moreover, the variance accounted for by expressiveness and emotion coaching were found to be independent of each other.

Another study (Katz & Hunter, 2007) with somewhat younger children (ages 12-14) explored the impact of emotion coaching on adolescent depression, by comparing the level of parents' emotion coaching of a "low-depressed" (*t*-score at or below 50) versus a "high depressed" group (*t*-score above 63). They separately analyzed components of parents' meta-emotion philosophy, a term which Gottman and colleagues (1996; 1997) coined to refer to parents' attitudes and behavior regarding their children's and their own emotions. These components include maternal awareness and acceptance/expression of both parents' and adolescents' emotions, as well as use of emotion coaching. They found that parents' acceptance/expression of their own emotions (which taps parents' discernment of different emotions; successful, immediate, and comfortable sharing of their true emotion; and parents' understanding of the importance of expressing the

emotion) was linked to: (a) lower levels of depression in their children, (b) increased child self-esteem regarding academic success, social acceptance, physical appearance, athletic abilities, and behavior, and (c) fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Parents' acceptance/expression of their own emotions also successfully distinguished between the low- and high-depressed children. Furthermore, they found that parents' increased use of emotion coaching was linked to fewer internalizing problems. These findings underscore the importance of coaching adolescents' emotions and effectively modeling emotional expression.

Klimes-Dougan and colleagues (2007) studied the relationship between parents' responses to their adolescents' (11 to 16 years old) emotions (i.e. emotion contingent socialization) and adolescents' problem status, as determined by the presence of scores at or above the 90th percentile for internalizing or externalizing symptomatology. They found that parents of children of non-problem status used comparatively more positive emotion contingent socialization according to child report. Specifically, they responded with more Reward (which includes providing comfort, empathizing, and problem solving) to sadness and anger and more Override (dismissive or distracting behaviors) to sadness. While an Override response to sadness, such as telling the child to cheer up or not to worry may communicate discomfort with the emotion, in the context of the concomitant greater use of Reward to sadness it can also serve to temporarily soothe the child's intense feelings of sadness. Parents of children with significant psychopathology, in contrast, were more likely to use negative emotion contingent socialization. They responded to sadness with Neglect and to anger with Punishment (making fun of or

expressing disapproval), Neglect, and Magnification (responding with the same emotion as that of the child).

While the previous studies examined a primarily Caucasian sample, O'Neal and Magai (2005) examined the impact of emotion contingent socialization on an urban, primarily African-American, middle school sample, using the same categories for parental emotion socialization. They found that internalizing symptoms in adolescents were significantly related to increased Punishment, Neglect, Magnifying, and Overriding of children's general emotional expression, in addition to Reward of fear. Reward of all other emotions was related to fewer internalizing symptoms. Externalizing symptoms were related to increased general Punishment and Neglect of adolescents' emotions and Magnification of anger (i.e. responding with anger to child's expression of anger).

Further addressing the disparity in research examining emotion socialization in ethnic minority families, Cunningham, Kliwer, and Garner (2009) investigated the emotion philosophies of urban, African American mothers for their prospective relation to children's emotion understanding, emotion regulation, and adjustment. More specifically, the authors sought to determine if maternal emotion socialization practices would predict urban, African American school-age (9 to 13 years old) children's later understanding of emotions, emotion regulation ability, and psychosocial adjustment while considering the potential mediating roles of emotion regulation and emotion understanding. The authors also sought further understanding of the role of gender in the emotion socialization process for children. They found that among families living in low-income, high-violence areas, there appears to be considerable diversity in the emotion

socialization practices of maternal caregivers. Also, caregivers who were more aware and accepting of their own and their child's emotions, and who engage in emotion coaching have school-age children who seem to benefit directly and/or indirectly from these practices. Boys living in this context appear to have a greater benefit from competent emotion socialization than girls, but girls benefit as well. Finally, their finding that the pathways by which emotion socialization affected boys' and girls' adjustment differed suggests that gender needs to be considered more prominently in theorizing about the role of emotion socialization and resilience.

Despite the impact of parents' emotion socialization on adolescent functioning and psychopathology, a review of the literature showed that there are very few instances of interventions aimed at improving parents of adolescents' emotion socialization. In one exception, Keiley (2002; 2007) developed the Multiple Family Group Intervention to address behavioral problems in adolescent juvenile delinquents with conduct disorder. The program is designed to target negative emotional patterns between parents and children with conduct disorder with the intention of increasing attachment. The eight week program follows six steps that focus on improving: (a) awareness of one's own feelings, (b) toleration of intense feelings, (c) exploration of one's own more vulnerable feelings (i.e. sadness, fear) beneath feelings of rage, (d) perspective taking, (e) actual expression of vulnerable feelings, (f) reconnection between adolescents and parents. Parents proceed through these steps together with adolescents and as parents develop an altered modus operandi regarding emotions, changing both emotion-contingent socialization and modeling of positive emotional expression and emotion regulation, they

impact their children's attitude towards the experience of strong emotions. The intervention has been found to significantly reduce adolescent recidivism, externalizing and internalizing (latter is adolescent report only) behaviors, and functional emotion regulation, while increasing parent-adolescent attachment.

While the bulk of research on emotion socialization has been conducted regarding young children, a number of studies have shown that parents' emotion socialization has a powerful impact on adolescents' functioning. These studies demonstrate that parents' use of positive emotion socialization--such as empathizing and problem solving in response to children's emotion expression--is linked to better adolescent behavioral and emotional functioning, adolescent emotion regulation, as well as parent-child attachment. In contrast, parents' responses of punishing and ignoring emotional displays are connected to greater adolescent externalizing and internalizing symptomatology. These studies also support the beneficial impact of parental emotion coaching on adolescents, as parental reports of greater utilization of an emotion coaching style or components of emotion coaching are tied to fewer adolescent negative behaviors, lower depression, and fewer internalizing symptoms, as well as increased self esteem.

Parents' family of origin emotion socialization and current parenting. One area that has received relatively little attention in the emotion socialization literature is the impact of parents' family of origin emotion socialization on their current parenting. Theory suggests that parents' emotion socialization in their family of origin would shape their parenting style through modeling/imitation, direct teaching of values and attitudes regarding emotion, and/or by establishing display rules through parental reactions. If

theory holds correct, the emotion socialization adults receive in their family of origin would continue to impress its impact psychosocially (i.e. influencing adults'/parents' own emotion regulation). Consequently, research documenting psychological, communicative, and social evidence of family of origin parental emotion socialization in adults, in turn, might offer needed support for the theoretically claimed relationship between family of origin emotion socialization and current parenting practices (Baker & Crnic, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 1998a; Halberstadt, Crisp, & Eaton, 1999). Only a couple of empirical studies have examined the relationship between family of origin emotion socialization and current parenting. The results thus far suggest that there is a significant impact on parents' responses to children's emotions and modeling of emotion regulation. Due to a small number of studies addressing parental emotion socialization's effects into adulthood and the limitations present in these studies, further examination is needed to address this gap in knowledge.

Baker and Crnic (2005) examined the relationship between parents' family of origin emotional expressiveness and parents' current emotional expressiveness and emotion-scaffolding behaviors. Emotion scaffolding was assessed through observations of parents' interactions with their toddlers during a problem solving game in which mothers were told they could verbally help their child but not physically aid them. They found that parents' experience of more negative emotional expressivity in their family of origin related to reduced emotion scaffolding behavior with their toddlers, thus pointing to the impact of family of origin emotion socialization practices (e.g. through modeling) on current emotion socialization.

In another study, DeOliveira, Moran, and Pederson (2005) studied the impact of early attachment on parents' attitudes towards their children's emotions. Characterizing parents along dimensions of the Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996), they found, as supported by theory (Haft & Slade, 1989), that "dismissing" mothers (who repress, restrict, and ignore affect when speaking about childhood attachment, suggesting early emotion socialization of dismissing and neglect of emotion) were less aware of both their own and their children's internalizing affect and were less responsive to children's emotions of fear and sadness.

In summary, the small body of existing literature suggests that parents who received more negative emotion socialization in their family of origin have difficulties providing effective emotion socialization to their children and show significant discomfort with their own and their children's emotions in the context of parenting.

A particularly promising theoretical perspective to address emotion socialization is Gottman et al.'s (1996, 1997) emotion regulation theory of meta-emotion, parenting, and child-outcomes (ERT; noted above for contributing *emotion coaching* as a primary channel for socializing emotion). Their theory offers a powerful heuristic for explaining the quality of marital, parent-child, and sibling interactions. Moreover, emotion regulation theory directly implicates family communication as central to family processes. Lastly, because of its foundational assumption that cognitive schemata influence perceptions, expressions, and regulations of emotion, ERT is particularly useful as an explanatory model for family communication researchers.

Emotion Regulation Theory of Meta-Emotion, Parenting, and Child-Outcomes

Contemporary theorists and researchers have posited probable relationship between parents' beliefs and their socialization of emotion. For example, Gottman and colleagues (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997; Katz, Windecker-Nelson, 2006) proposed that parents' beliefs and behaviors regarding emotion, that is, their "meta-emotion theories and coaching," are associated with important life outcomes for children, family cohesiveness, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and marital quality. This useful, but broad, theory defines parents' *meta-emotion philosophy* as the set of thoughts and approach to their own and their children's emotions.

Two types of meta-emotion philosophies have been described, and these are "emotion coaching" and "emotion dismissing" (Gottman et al., 1997). With the assumption that families adopt similar meta-emotion philosophies, Gottman and colleagues describe emotion coaching families as having a belief that emotions are valued. In emotion coaching families, emotional expressions are encouraged, but barriers are often set to teach children appropriate expressions (i.e., "It's ok to be angry, but it's not ok to hit your sister."). Characteristic of emotion coaching parents is a desire to use emotion as moments for teaching as well as developing closeness and intimacy with their child. In this way, emotion is viewed as an opportunity for strengthening family bonds through validating the child's emotion and helping them to problem solve. Characteristic of children who are emotionally coached is the ability to verbally label their emotions.

In contrast, emotion dismissing families view emotions negatively, particularly sadness and anger (as were the primary focus of Gottman et al., 1996a, 1997). Emotion

dismissing parents tend to be uncomfortable with their child's expressions of emotion. They may want to be helpful to their children, but the discomfort associated with their child's emotions often leads emotion dismissing parents to ignore or deny their child's emotion. In response to their child's anger, emotion dismissing parents may also belittle their child. Teaching moments are not uncommon for emotion dismissing parents and their children, however, the lessons are quite different from those of emotion coaching parents. Where an emotion coaching parent might teach their child that they are a place where the child can go when they feel angry, an emotion dismissing parent might teach their child that anger should be expressed in private if at all.

Since the inception of emotion regulation theory (ERT; Gottman et al., 1997), evidence has accumulated in support of the importance of meta-emotion for children and families and how parents' styles of coaching their children's emotions reflects their goals for their children's experience and expression of emotion. A three-year longitudinal study, beginning when the children were 5 years old, supported the theoretical model that parental meta-emotion predicts child outcomes directly and via parenting (Gottman et al. 1997). At time 1, parents' beliefs or philosophy of emotional expression and emotional control, and their feelings, attitudes, and behavior about their children's anger and sadness were assessed through a meta-emotion interview designed by Katz and Gottman (1995). Parenting behaviors were observed during a parent-child interaction task, and the child's regulatory physiology (heart rate, skin conductance) while viewing emotion-eliciting films was also assessed. Three years later, at time 2, the children's teachers provided information on their behavior problems and peer aggression; mothers completed

measures of children's temperament, physical health (illness) and emotional regulation, and all children were given a standardized achievement test. Parental emotional awareness and emotion-coaching philosophy measured at time 1 was directly related to the child's regulatory physiology and to child outcomes including academic achievement and child-peer relations via children's emotion regulation abilities.

Maternal meta-emotion philosophy was also important in the relationship between children's conduct problems and their peer relations (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004). Maternal meta-emotion philosophy was assessed through interviews, and children were observed in interactions with a close friend. Mothers of children with conduct problems were found to be less aware of their own emotions and used less coaching with their children than mothers of children without conduct problems. Child aggression moderated the relationship between maternal meta-emotion and child peer play such that mother's awareness and coaching of emotion was associated with children's more positive peer play, and this was especially strong for nonaggressive children.

Parental meta-emotion was also recently examined in the context of community-dwelling families with low-frequency and low-severity domestic violence (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2006). Parents' overall level of emotion coaching did not differ between families with and without reports of domestic violence. Domestic violence was associated with less fear emotion coaching by fathers but only when the mother reported being the perpetrator of abuse. Parents' emotion coaching was also found to moderate the relationship between domestic violence and child adjustment. When mothers were low in emotion coaching, domestic violence was positively related to children's aggression,

social withdrawal, and anxiety-depression. When fathers were low in emotion coaching domestic violence was positively related to children's social withdrawal. Clearly, parents' meta-emotion philosophy matters for some child outcomes (Gottman et al., 1997; Katz & Windecker-Nelson 2004, 2006). Indeed, there are numerous ways to apply emotion regulation theory in an effort to advance knowledge of emotion, particularly within family contexts.

Emotion regulation theory offers a powerful heuristic for explaining the quality of marital, parent-child, and sibling interactions. Moreover, the abilities to regulate emotions that are cultivated within the family system have important consequences for interactions outside of the family. In fact, Gottman et al. (1997) consider a child's "ability to interact successfully with peers and to form lasting peer relationships" (p. 39) as the most important empirical outcomes in their program of research. Thus, emotion regulation theory reveals the importance of family communication in family processes (i.e., parenting, managing marital conflict, enacting sibling rivalry) and relational functioning outside the family. Future research could easily extend the concepts of emotion regulation theory to account for communicative competence in friendships, work relationships, and dating. The extensive, ongoing program of research by John Gottman and his team at the University of Washington, and the copious and intriguing findings it has yielded, evidence the heuristic value of the theory.

Despite many strengths, emotion regulation theory does demonstrate limitations. Perhaps the biggest limitation is that its empirical support has been derived from samples that are not representative of the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the larger

population. Thus, the predominantly traditional middle class sample of families does not contain extremes in family stress or poverty. Therefore, emotion regulation theory is based on research on families of a restricted range of parenting types which likely contributes to Gottman et al.'s (1997) weakened abilities to predict variation in child outcomes. It should also be noted that the restricted range of families does not account for families in poverty nor report data representing definitions of family that move beyond biological parameters (e.g., parent/child, grandchild) to include, for example, non-traditional legal definitions (e.g., adoption) or a family communication approach (e.g., families are defined, created, and maintained by interaction; see Whitchurch & Dickson, 1999). Aside from assessing the generality of the theory, this limitation in sampling could conceal (co-)cultural differences in meta-emotion structures.

An additional limitation belies the use of negative emotions as the primary source of evidence in support of emotion regulation theory. A vast majority of the data supporting and contributing to the development of emotion regulation theory relies on data about meta-emotions for anger and sadness only. Gottman (2001) indicates that his team is now studying fear, pride, love, guilt, and embarrassment. Still these do not address a need to balance our knowledge of meta-emotions with schemas of positive emotions.

Finally, although the meta-emotion interview does tap into some underlying beliefs that parents have about emotions, it does not directly assess what parents believe about children's emotions and it makes no distinction between beliefs, skills, and behaviors. Emotion regulation theory (Gottman et al., 1997) does not consider specific

beliefs about emotions that parents have and how they might differentially influence their parenting behaviors. Without a clear understanding of what different beliefs parents hold regarding their children's emotions, it is not possible to determine what specific beliefs lead to various parenting behaviors, which in turn contribute to child outcomes.

Scholars who study families generally agree that there are environmental variables both internal (e.g., rules, roles, power, conflict, family structure) and external (e.g., culture, media, socioeconomics, social networks) to the family system to consider in understanding family functioning. This perspective is, at least implicitly, recognized in the preliminary models for understanding family types (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979; Reiss, 1981). However, one theoretical perspective which is particularly fitting to the study of emotion socialization and family communication is Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002a) general theory of family communication patterns.

Family Communication Patterns Theory

The original framework of family communication patterns (FCP) was developed by McLeod and Chaffee (1972). Their program of research investigated primarily the extent to which parents and FCP influenced children's information processing. As mass media researchers, McLeod and Chaffee were largely focused on explaining how families construct and share social reality. Originally interested in the impact of mass media messages on youth socialization, McLeod and Chaffee developed the original Family Communication Patterns instrument (FCP) (1972), which used cognitive theory of co-orientation, or the idea that two or more persons focus on and evaluate the same object in their social environment, as the basis for the explanation of family communication as a

form of socialization. The two dimensions measured in the FCP are *socio-orientation* and *concept-orientation*. In their conceptualization of family communication patterns, McLeod and Chaffee (1972) describe the two dimensions of their measure as strategies families use to achieve agreement based on information processing resulting from exposure to media messages. Consequently, children are socialized differently based on the information processing strategies of the family of origin. Families with a socio-orientation achieve agreement through the maintenance of harmonious relationships by conforming to other family members' interpretations of meanings. Families with a concept-orientation achieve agreement by focusing on the environmental object and engaging each other in open discussions and expressions of ideas. Considering the socialization of children within such families, children of families that trend towards a socio-orientation rely on family members to interpret meanings of media messages, and children of families that trend toward a concept-orientation openly discuss concepts and ideas. The above strategies, then, are associated with different communication behaviors.

In recognition of the need to address family communication patterns directly and a need for a conceptual shift away from mass media processing, Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) developed the Revised Family Communication Patterns instrument (RFCP; see Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Further, they, along with Ritchie (1991), challenged the assumption that family members agree about communication norms, demonstrated they do not agree, and developed a revised measure of FCP which measures "individual family members' perceptions of family norms" (Ritchie, 1991, p. 560). The authors reconceptualized and renamed McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) underlying dimensions

(e.g., socio-orientation, concept-orientation) to shift from the co-orientation perspective to one that addresses communication behaviors specifically. Thus, socio-orientation became the *conformity orientation* because behaviors encouraged in such families centered around conforming toward the views and beliefs of their parents; and concept-orientation became *conversation orientation* because behaviors in such families include family discussions through which children are encouraged to express, defend, and explore meanings.

Conformity orientation. A conformity orientation is defined as “the degree to which families create a climate that stresses homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 60). Families on the high end of this dimension are characterized by interactions that emphasize compliance toward parental authority. Uniformity in beliefs and attitudes are also characteristic of families scoring high on this dimension. Typically, families with a high conformity orientation experience conflict avoidance, interdependence of family members, and a focus on maintaining harmony. Parent-child interactions typically reflect obedience to parents and other adults. Families scoring low on this dimension are characterized by a focus on heterogeneous attitudes and beliefs as well as an emphasis on the individuality of family members and their independence from each other. In parent-child interactions, communication typically reflects the equality of all family members. To this end, children are often involved in decision-making.

Conversation orientation. A conversation orientation is defined as “the degree to which families create a climate where all family members are encouraged to participate

freely in interaction about a wide array of topics” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 60). Families on the high end of this dimension interact with each other often and communicate openly regardless of topic. Family members openly share their thoughts and feelings and talk for extended lengths of time. Family activities are highly coordinated among members, and involvement is high among all members when making decisions. Families on the low end of the conversation orientation dimension have very little interaction amongst members. Few topics are openly discussed, and opportunities to openly express feelings and thoughts are few. During decision-making, few perspectives are communicated, considered, or heard.

The interdependency of conversation and conformity dimensions (see Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002a) requires the researcher to examine the relationship of how the two dimensions interact. In order to predict the influence of family communication patterns on family outcomes, four different family types emerged through the intersection of both orientations (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002a). The four styles are created from combinations of high and low on the two continua.

FCP family types. *Consensual families.* Consensual families are those that are both high in conversation orientation and in conformity orientation. This results in a family that values open communication. This family-type believes the parent should make the decisions for that family, but only as a result of listening to the children and after the parents spend time explaining their decisions. Their communication is characterized by pressure to agree even as they encourage differing viewpoints. Children

in these families usually learn to value family conversations and adopt their parents' values and beliefs. In consensual families, conflict is generally regarded as negative. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) state that the parents in this typology "hope that their children will understand the reasoning behind the parent's decisions and adopt the parents' belief system" (p. 57). This typology puts an emphasis on the comprehension of values developed for the family as well as the motive behind the decisions made. This family type encourages children to think through the issues and voice their opinions to their parents. Considering the emphasis placed on conversation, the ability the children have to voice their opinion as well as hear reasoning behind the decisions made, children learn motives behind choices.

Pluralistic families. Pluralistic families are those that are high in conversation orientation but low in conformity orientation. Pluralistic families are characterized by an open communication climate and are emotionally supportive. Parents in these families do not feel the need to be in control of their children or to make all the decisions for them. Because of their emphasis on open communication without the pressure to conform or to obey, pluralistic families openly address their conflicts with one another and are low in conflict avoidance. The pluralistic family is characterized by large amounts of conversation and discussion that covers a wide array of topics. Very little pressure is put on the children to socially conform, and parents feel as though they don't need to micromanage every decision their children make (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). The high amounts of conversation encourage children to think through their actions to make the

most beneficial decision. This, coupled with a lack of pressure to abide to social expectations, allows the child to truly make decisions based on their own reasoning.

Protective families. Protective families are those that are low on conversation orientation but high on conformity orientation. Protective families are characterized by their strong emphasis on obedience to parental authority. In addition, protective families avoid any open conflict through overt compliance to parental authority. This family emphasizes parental authority and there is little explanation for decisions that are made. The parents make decisions for the entire family and do not consult the children or explain their reasoning to them. This stresses the importance of abiding by socially developed standards without questioning the reasoning behind those practices.

Laissez-faire families. Laissez-faire families are those low in both conversation and conformity orientation. Characteristic of laissez-faire families is little parent-child interaction. Conflicts are rare due to the combined effect of lack of involvement amongst members and a tendency toward conflict avoidance. The laissez-faire typology is characterized by little discussion and little pressure for conformity. There are few family interactions, and those that do exist involve a limited number of topics. Family members make their own decisions and parents pay very little attention to their children's decisions. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) showed that children who grow up in laissez-faire homes come to question their ability to make decisions, therefore succumbing to the standards that are socially accepted at that time.

Family communication schemata. A major shift toward a general theory of family communication patterns (e.g., Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002a) occurred when

Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1994) argued that Fitzpatrick's (1988) typology of married couples and Ritchie's (1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) re-conceptualization of family communication patterns, in combination, reflect underlying family communication schemas. In their (1994) investigation, Fitzpatrick and Ritchie conceptually and empirically merged the family types identified in the FCP literature with the marital types identified in Fitzpatrick's (1988) program of research. Their results revealed that husband-wife and parent-child schemata interact in systematic ways, and they advanced a new measure, the Family Communication Environment Instrument (FCEI), to assess three dimensions of the family communication environment: expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance. As Baxter et al. (2005) noted, the expressiveness dimension bears a close resemblance to the conversation dimension of the RFCP. Likewise, structural traditionalism and conflict avoidance represent two dimensions of a conformity orientation in the family (Schrodt, 2005), with the former emphasizing conformity as a function of a family's authority structure and the latter as a function of suppressing the discussion of unpleasant topics.

In identifying three key dimensions of family communication environments, Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (1994) revealed that when family members do share the same schema for family communication they also tend to demonstrate agreement on a number of other dimensions of family life. For example, families who shared a family communication schema were more likely to have children who reported a desire for the same level of expressiveness, structural-traditionalism, and conflict avoidance in their future marriage as modeled in their parents' marriage.

It is important to note that researchers employing the FCEI have found similar patterns of results (i.e., in terms of direction) for the three dimensions of the family communication environment (e.g., expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and avoidance) as those previously reported for conversation and conformity orientations using the RFCP, though some minor distinctions have been made between structural traditionalism and conflict avoidance (Baxter et al., 2005; Caughlin, 2003; Schrod, 2005). Consequently, although this generation of FCP research has evolved conceptually as a function of merging both marital and parent-child communication schemata, empirically, the RFCP and the FCEI represent relatively similar measures of the same underlying constructs of conversation and conformity orientation. To date, only four studies have used the FCEI (i.e., Baxter, Bylund, Imes & Scheive, 2005; Caughlin, 2003; Koesten, Schrod, & Ford, 2009; Schrod, 2005; see Schrod, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008). For example, Baxter et al. (2005) examined possible relations among the FCE dimensions of expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and avoidance, and rule-based social control on healthy lifestyle choices in parent-offspring relationships in families. They found that expressiveness was negatively related to rule compliance, rule articulation, and rule sanctioning. Structural traditionalism was positively related to rule similarity, and they found avoidance to be positively related to rule scope. The authors concluded that expressive families may rely more on parental modeling or situation-specific conversations in which parents discussed with their adolescents appropriate actions that produce healthy outcomes. Important for the viability of the FCEI measure,

Baxter et al. (2005) were able to distinguish among all three dimensions using confirmatory factor analysis.

Of interest to the literature on family conflict and discipline is Caughlin's (2003) analysis of standards for excellent family communication. In this study, Caughlin reported that all three dimensions of family communication environments were associated with different standards of family communication. In particular, structural traditionalism was positively associated with standards for positive discipline, whereas conflict avoidance was inversely associated with standards for the expression of affection, the use of humor and sarcasm, and regular routine interaction.

Synthesis of FCP research. Collectively, the above body of research contributed to the formulation of Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002a) family communication patterns theory, through which the authors argued that family members have internal working models of family communication and relationships that are behaviorally manifested in family communication environments. Their view is that family communication environments result from cognitive schemata – knowledge structures that represent the internal world of the family and provide a basis for interpreting what family members say and do. Each schema has its own set of beliefs, attitudes, and philosophies about family life and each is characterized by very specific communication behaviors. In their own words Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002a) summarize that the information contained in a family relationship schema:

[I]s based on direct experiences within the family on other socializing factors and applies to all relationships a person has with family members. It is accessed whenever there is no relevant information contained in the relationship-specific schema for a given information-processing problem. Beliefs contained in the

family relationship schema include, at a minimum, beliefs about intimacy, individuality, affection, external factors, conversation orientation, and conformity orientation. (p. 88)

Family communication schemata, then, influence attention and perception, memory for messages, inferences communicators draw from behaviors, and psychosocial outcomes (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2004).

Since the re-conceptualization of family communication patterns (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1990; Ritchie, 1991) and the inception of family communication patterns theory (FCPT; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a), scholars have devoted substantial attention to documenting the influence of family communication patterns on several behavioral and psychosocial outcomes, including conflict avoidance (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997), cognitive complexity (Koesten & Andersen, 2004), interpersonal skill in romantic relationships (Koesten, 2004), children's mental health and well being (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007), communication competence in the parent-child relationship (Schrodt & Ledbetter, et al., 2009), self-esteem (Rangarajan & Kelly, 2006), and communication apprehension (Elwood & Schrader, 1998), among others.

For example, Schrodt et al. (2007) examined the extent to which parental confirmation and affection mediate the associations among family communication patterns and young adult children's mental health and well-being. Based on a sample of 567 young adult children, they found that parental confirmation and affection partially mediate the influence of conversation orientations, and fully mediate the influence of conformity orientations, on children's self-esteem and perceived stress. Generally, their results demonstrated the importance of parental confirmation on children's health and

well-being. Notable are their reported positive associations between family conversation orientations and children's health and well-being, alongside a negative association between conformity orientation and children's health and well-being. The authors attribute the high-stress environment of families that avoid conflict as well as stress obedience (e.g., families high in conformity orientation) as contributing to their findings.

Similarly, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (1997) investigated the influence of conformity and conversation orientations on adolescents' coping with conflict. Using data collected from thirty-five families, significant correlations were observed between conformity orientation and conflict avoidance ($\beta = .21, p = .04$) and venting of negative feelings ($\beta = .36, p = .002$). Contrary to Floyd, et al.'s (2007) findings, conformity orientation was not significantly associated with children's anxiety. Further, this study supported the existence of FCP family-types and further supported their hypothetical orientations toward conflict (as described above).

In summary, family members develop schema for how to interpret their family communication environments and interactions with each other. These schemas may shape how emotion is experienced, socialized, expressed, and regulated. Each unique family system may create (or socialize) expectations for emotional communication, particularly when engaging in conflict. Finally, FCPT serves as a framework for investigating varying family perceptions of emotional communication through the two dimensions of conversation and conformity orientation.

Research questions and hypotheses. In this study, adult-children's family of origin emotion socialization was investigated by examining relationships between

Gottman et al.'s (1996, 1997) parental meta-emotion styles (e.g., emotion coaching, emotion dismissing) and Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002a) family communication patterns. Questions arising from intersecting these two schema-based perspectives are addressed below.

Meta-emotion and FCP/FCE. In this investigation, specific relationships between meta-emotion parenting types, FCP family types, FCP dimensions and FCE dimensions were of interest. First, examining the relationship between conversation orientations in families that have an emotion coaching philosophy, based on the review of literature, is likely to reveal a positive association given that emotion coaching parents tend to value understanding their children's emotions and families with a conversation orientation are partially characterized by their value of expression. Conversely, emotion coaching should be inversely related to conformity orientation, which emphasizes homogeneity of values and beliefs amongst family members, perhaps limiting parental efforts to understand their child's emotions. Therefore, the first hypothesis is put forth:

H1a: Adult-children's experience of emotion coaching in their family of origin is positively associated with conversation orientation.

H1b: Adult-children's experience of emotion coaching in their family of origin is inversely associated with conformity orientation.

Because emotion-dismissing families are partially characterized by a belief that negative emotions are harmful, it stands to reason that the expression of emotion in general and the expression of negative emotion in specific could be viewed as harmful as well. Because families low in conversation orientation tend to experience limitations in

expressing feelings and openly discussing a wide array of topics, it stands to reason that higher levels of emotional expression in general and the expression of negative emotions in particular (e.g., characteristics of an emotion coached family) could be discouraged in families with a low conversation orientation. Hypothesis 2a and 2b address the possible associations of an emotion dismissing philosophy with a conversation orientation and a conformity orientation.

H2a: Adult-children's experience of emotion dismissing in their family of origin is inversely associated with conversation orientation.

H2b: Adult-children's experience of emotion dismissing in their family of origin is positively associated with conformity orientation.

Following the above reasoning, pluralistic families (e.g., families high in conversation and low in conformity orientations) and protective families (e.g., families low in conversation and high in conformity orientations) should demonstrate similar interactions between meta-emotion philosophy and FCP orientation. However, because interacting schemata do not always exhibit main effects (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b) directional hypotheses regarding differences in meta-emotions across protective and pluralistic families may be presumptive. To test for differences in meta-emotion philosophies across pluralistic and protective families, the next two hypotheses follow:

H3: Levels of emotion coaching will differ significantly between pluralistic families and protective families.

H4: Levels of emotion dismissing will differ significantly between pluralistic families and protective families.

In consensual (e.g., families that are both high in conversation and conformity orientations) and laissez-faire families (e.g., families that are both low in conversation and conformity orientations), the relationships with meta-emotion philosophies have no clear theoretical reasoning for hypotheses. Further, there are no clear theoretical reasons for any additional differences across FCP family-types with the exception of that addressed in hypotheses 3 and 4, between pluralistic and protective families. Therefore, the first two research questions are asked:

RQ1: How does emotion coaching differ across all FCP family-types?

RQ2: How does emotion dismissing differ across all FCP family-types?

Fitzpatrick and Ritchie's (1994) three dimensions of family communication environments help researchers to further understand family communication schemata by combining marital type dimensions (Fitzpatrick, 1988) with FCP dimensions. Though expressiveness closely resembles conversation orientation, conformity orientation particularly may be explicated through its conceptual bifurcation into structural traditionalism (representing conformity in authority structure) and conflict avoidance (representing the suppression of unpleasant topics). Despite the above reasoning, researchers have yet to test the unique and combined contributions of all three dimensions of family communication environment to parental meta-emotion philosophies. Such information may prove useful as family practitioners and counselors seek to address parenting behaviors while accounting for family communication patterns. Thus, to explore this issue the following research questions are put forth:

RQ3: How do family communication environments (i.e., expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance) contribute to emotion coaching?

RQ4: How do family communication environments (i.e., expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance) contribute to emotion dismissing?

Finally, no study to date has examined parent's perspectives of their own meta-emotions in comparison to their child's perspective of their own parent's meta-emotion philosophy. Such data is badly needed to test ERT thereby examining ERT's usefulness in explaining and describing the socialization of emotion across generations. Thus, the final research question is set forth:

RQ5: How do the perspectives of parental meta-emotion differ across parents and their children?

Chapter Three: Methodology

Sampling Plan

This study has two purposes: (1) to investigate adults' emotion socialization in their family of origin and (2) to examine the interaction of emotion-parenting types (e.g., meta-emotion philosophies) and family communication patterns. Similar to Morman and Floyd's (2006) notation of the commonality of sonhood across all males, every person in effect has experienced childhood. To narrow the sample to adult-children, this investigation will target college students on the grounds that the effects of age on emotional expressiveness across the family life-cycle have demonstrated non-significant discrepancies between college-aged individuals and older adults (Halberstadt & Eaton, 2002). Therefore, in a study targeting adults to report on emotion schema, college students and their individual primary caregiver satisfy this sampling goal.

Recruitment. Undergraduate college students and their primary caregivers on two separate campuses (e.g., University-A, University-B) in the western United States were sampled. Participants were recruited via convenience sampling, primarily through presentations made in introductory human communication courses. In each course, the lead researcher or a trained research assistant (RA) gave a short presentation describing the study and distributed handouts describing the recruitment criteria, instructions to the questionnaire, and researcher contact information. The handouts informed students and their primary caregiver that participation is voluntary and that extra credit would be

offered for the completion of research instruments by both the adult-child and their primary caregiver. Each adult-child questionnaire was numbered and paired with a corresponding version of the MESQ to be completed by each student's primary caregiver. No identifiable information was asked of the student or primary caregiver on the research instrument or any other materials submitted to the lead researcher or administering RA. Therefore, this study should be considered anonymous. Students were be informed that fabricating data is considered to be a serious violation of the university's academic integrity policy.

Students wishing to participate were instructed to complete the adult-child questionnaire in class. Upon completion, students were asked to return their completed questionnaire to the presenter (i.e., the lead researcher or RA) and were given a copy of the primary caregiver instrument numbered to match the corresponding adult-child questionnaire submitted by each respective student. Students were instructed to solicit the participation of one person whom they consider to be their primary caregiver. Students were instructed to inform their primary caregivers that the primary caregiver instrument could be submitted through mail or completed online through SurveyMonkey.

For students to receive extra credit in the course in which survey was administered, primary caregivers were provided a space on both versions of the primary caregiver instrument (e.g., electronic and paper-copy) to write the name of their child. This information would be used only by the lead researcher in formulating a list for course instructors of students whom should receive extra credit for their "complete participation" (e.g., both he or she and his or her primary caregiver participating). In no

way was the name-sheet, when given to the course instructors, linked with responses on the research instrument. Only the lead researcher had the ability to match student names with responses. Again, the primary caregiver questionnaires were assigned corresponding numbers to be later matched with the applicable students (e.g., student #37 with primary caregiver #37). In this way, participation was recorded for each student. To improve response rate, each primary caregiver had the choice of completing a paper-copy of the questionnaire or completing an electronic version through SurveyMonkey. Instructions for online submission were provided on the paper copy of the primary caregiver questionnaire issued to the student. Out of a total of 228 completed questionnaires on both campuses, 63 students were eligible for extra-credit in their respective courses.

Pre-testing. Based on a pre-test of the research instrument, the estimated time for completing the instrument is 15 minutes. Surveys were administered to ten undergraduate students under the conditions that they kept and/or destroyed the research instrument after completing it. Further, the students were informed that this trial test was to inform the lead researcher of the time needed to complete the survey. Participants in this trial test individually reported their times in minutes ($Mn = 14.8$, $M = 14.5$) to the lead researcher. The purpose of the trial run was to demonstrate the viability of students completing the research instrument in-class immediately following the presentation of the study (as described above).

Demographics. Participants were divided into two groups: adult-children (i.e., students) and primary caregivers. Adult-children were further divided into two groups based on where they were sampled: University-A and University-B. A private university

in the western United States, University-A yielded 78 adult-child participants. There were more women ($n = 51, 65.4\%$) than men ($n = 27, 34.6\%$) in this sample. At University-A, adult-child participants ranged in age from 18 to 26 years, with an average age of 20.1 years ($SD = 1.74$ years). Further, adult-children from University-A identified themselves according to their respective year in school. Freshmen ($n = 29, 37.2\%$) represented the largest group, followed by seniors ($n = 20, 25.6\%$), sophomores ($n = 18, 23.1\%$), and then juniors ($n = 11, 14.1\%$) comprising the smallest group.

A public university in the western United States, University-B yielded 150 adult-children participants. There were slightly more men ($n = 77, 51.3\%$) than women ($n = 73, 48.7\%$) in this sample. Their age ranged from 18 to 48, with an average age of 20.0 years ($SD = 3.99$). Students from University-B also indicated their year in school. Freshmen ($n = 58, 38.7\%$) made up the largest group, followed by sophomores ($n = 50, 33.3\%$), juniors ($n = 29, 19.3\%$), and seniors ($n = 13, 8.7\%$). Aggregating all student participants from both universities, there were more female students ($n = 124, 54.4\%$) than male students ($n = 104, 45.6\%$). Altogether, they ranged in age from 18 to 48, with an average age of 20.46 ($SD = 3.40$).

Participants responded to a fixed-alternative question about their own racial/ethnic background. Most participants from University-A identified as White/Euro-American ($n = 58, 74.4\%$), with smaller proportions describing themselves as Asian ($n = 10, 12.8\%$); Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic ($n = 5, 6.4\%$); Black/African-American ($n = 4, 5.1\%$); and Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian ($n = 1, 1.3\%$). Most of the students from University-B identified as Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic ($n = 78, 52\%$), with

smaller proportions describing themselves as White/Euro-American ($n = 49, 32.7\%$); Black/African-American ($n = 18, 12\%$); Asian ($n = 3, 2\%$); and Native American or Alaskan Native ($n = 2, 1.3\%$). Altogether, the largest proportion of participants from both universities responded as White/Euro-American ($n = 107, 46.9\%$), with smaller proportions describing themselves as Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic ($n = 83, 36.4\%$); Black/African-American ($n = 22, 9.6\%$); Asian ($n = 13, 5.7\%$); Native American/Alaskan Native ($n = 2, 0.9\%$); and Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian ($n = 1, 0.4\%$).

Participants also responded to a fixed-alternative question about their total household income. In this way, household income was coded into 12 categories ranging from “less than \$10,000” to “\$150,000 or more.” The largest proportion of students from University-A reported a household income of \$150,000 or more ($n = 33, 42\%$), with smaller proportions reporting household incomes of \$100,000 to \$149,999 ($n = 16, 20.5\%$); \$90,000 to \$99,999 ($n = 6, 7.7\%$); \$80,000 to \$89,999 ($n = 6, 7.7\%$); \$50,000 to \$59,999 ($n = 5, 6.4\%$); \$60,000 to \$69,000 ($n = 3, 3.8\%$); \$40,000 to \$49,999 ($n = 2, 2.6\%$); \$30,000 to \$39,999 ($n = 2, 2.6\%$); \$10,000 to \$19,999 ($n = 2, 2.6\%$); \$20,000 to \$29,999 ($n = 1, 1.3\%$); and Less than \$10,000 ($n = 1, 1.3\%$). The largest proportion of students at University-B reported a household income less than \$10,000 ($n = 20, 13.3\%$), with the same proportion of participants also reporting incomes of \$10,000 to \$19,999 ($n = 20, 13.3\%$) and \$40,000 to \$49,999 ($n = 20, 13.3\%$). Smaller proportions of students reported household incomes of \$50,000 to \$59,000 ($n = 17, 11.3\%$), followed by \$30,000 to \$39,999 ($n = 15, 10\%$); \$20,000 to \$29,000 ($n = 14, 9.3\%$); \$70,000 to \$79,000 ($n = 9, 6\%$); \$80,000 to \$89,999 ($n = 8, 5.3\%$); \$60,000 to \$69,000 ($n = 6, 4\%$); \$100,000 to

\$149,000 ($n = 6$, 4%); \$150,000 or more ($n = 6$, 4%); and \$90,000 to \$99,000 ($n = 5$, 3.3%). It is notable that the 50th percentile for household income for University-A students fell within the range of \$100,000 to \$149,999 while the 50th percentile for University-B students fell within the range of \$40,000 to \$49,999.

Participants identifying as caregivers of participating adult-children were 63 adults ranging in age from 37 to 67 years with an average age of 51.59 ($SD = 7.50$). There were more female caregivers ($n = 51$, 81%) than men ($n = 12$, 19%). Caregivers responded to fixed-alternative questions asking them to describe their relationship to their child, their current marital status, and their marital status during their child's adolescence. Most participants described themselves as the biological mother ($n = 45$, 71.4%), with smaller proportions identifying as biological father ($n = 11$, 17.5%); adoptive mother ($n = 6$, 9.5%); and adoptive father ($n = 1$, 1.6%). Most caregivers are currently married ($n = 46$, 73%), with smaller proportions currently divorced ($n = 11$, 17.5%); currently separated ($n = 3$, 4.8%); never married ($n = 2$, 3.2%); and one person chose 'other' (1.6%). When asked about their marital status when their child was an adolescent most described themselves as married ($n = 50$, 79.4%), with smaller proportions reporting that they were not married ($n = 7$, 11.1%) and divorced ($n = 6$, 9.5%)

Caregivers also responded to questions about their household income and their own racial/ethnic background. Most caregivers reported that they are White/Euro-American ($n = 39$, 61.9%), with smaller proportions of caregivers describing themselves as Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic ($n = 14$, 22.2%); Asian ($n = 7$, 11.1%); and Black/African American ($n = 3$, 4.8%). Caregivers responded to the same question about

income that the adult-children responded to. The largest proportion of caregivers reported living in a household that earns \$150,000 or more per year ($n = 19$, 30.2%), with smaller proportions reporting \$100,000 to \$149,999 ($n = 11$, 17.5%); \$40,000 to \$49,999 ($n = 5$, 7.9%); \$60,000 to \$69,999 ($n = 4$, 6.3%); \$50,000 to \$59,999 ($n = 4$, 6.3%); \$20,000 to \$29,000 ($n = 4$, 6.3%); \$10,000 to \$19,999 ($n = 4$, 6.3%); \$80,000 to \$89,999 ($n = 3$, 4.8%); \$30,000 to \$39,999 ($n = 4.8%$); less than \$10,000 ($n = 3$, 4.8%); \$90,000 to \$99,999 ($n = 2$, 3.2%); \$70,000 to \$79,999 ($n = 1$, 1.6%). Notable is that more than half of caregivers report a household income of \$90,000 or more ($n = 32$, 50.9%) while over one-fifth of the caregivers report a household income of less than \$40,000 ($n = 14$, 22.2%). The 50th percentile of caregiver household income fell within the range of \$80,000 to \$99,999.

Instrumentation

This study employed two research instruments: (1) the adult-child instrument and (2) the primary caregiver instrument. The research instrument for adult-children consisted of four sections. Section-one asked participants for demographic information (as described above). In the second section, participants were asked to respond to items measuring the family communication environment of the participant's family of origin. Additionally, the second section measured family communication patterns, simply by adding seven items measuring conversation orientation from the RFCP. Thus, two related instruments (e.g., FCEI, RFCP) are merged into a 32-item section. However, this merger is not a conceptual merger; it is merely for the purposes of saving space in the research instrument. The incorporation of both measures' items is possible due to several items

being mutually identical. The third section provided items assessing family satisfaction in the student's family of origin. This data on family satisfaction was not used for this dissertation. Lastly, in the fourth section, participants were asked to respond to items measuring their perceptions of their parents' meta-emotion philosophy. The research instrument for primary caregivers consisted of two sections. Similar to the adult-child instrument, in the first section, primary caregivers were asked to indicate demographic information such as their age, biological sex, and racial, ethnic, or cultural background. Also in this section, primary caregivers were asked to indicate their relationship to their child (e.g., biological mother, adoptive mother, biological father, adoptive father, step-mother, step-father, or to indicate 'other'). Additionally, participants' current marital status (e.g., never married, now married, now separated, now divorced, now widowed, or 'other') and their marital status during their child's adolescence (e.g., married, not married, separated, divorced, widowed, or 'other') were sought. The last item in the first section asked primary caregivers to indicate their household income by selecting one of twelve fixed-alternative responses (e.g., less than \$10,000; \$10,000 to \$19,999; \$20,000 to \$29,999; \$30,000 to \$39,999; \$40,000 to \$49,999; \$50,000 to \$59,999; \$60,000 to \$69,999; \$70,000 to \$79,999; \$80,000 to \$89,999; \$90,000 to \$99,999; \$100,000 to \$149,999; \$150,000 or more).

Family communication environments. Family communication environments are operationalized using Fitzpatrick and Ritchie's (1994) FCEI. The FCEI is composed of 25 items assessing participants' perceptions of family communication schemas across three dimensions: expressiveness (ten items; e.g. "I usually tell my parents what I am

thinking about things,” “My parents encourage me to express my feelings”), structural traditionalism (nine items; e.g., “When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parent’s rules,” “My parents often say things like ‘A child should not argue with adults’”), and conflict avoidance (six items; e.g., “Some issues will disappear if two people can just avoid arguing about them,” “It is better to hide one’s true feelings in order to avoid hurting a family member”). A five-point Likert-type scale is used to solicit responses for each item ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree with each statement. For this study, the statements using the word “parents” were changed to “parent(s)” to be more inclusive to families with only one caregiver. For example, the statement “My parents encourage me to express my feelings” was changed to read “My parent(s) encourage me to express my feelings.”

The FCEI has been demonstrated to be a valid and reliable instrument with previous researchers reporting alpha reliabilities ranging from .71 to .94 for each of the three subscales (Caughlin, 2003; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Schrod, 2005; Koesten, Schrod, & Ford, 2009). Reliability of the expressiveness subscale was good ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 36.58$, $SD = 8.6$, $n = 228$). Reliability of the conflict avoidance subscale was also good ($\alpha = .71$, $M = 14.98$, $SD = 4.60$, $n = 228$). Finally, the subscale measuring structural traditionalism also demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 29.37$, $SD = 6.45$, $n = 228$). The reliability of the overall family communication environments inventory was good ($\alpha = .75$, $M = 80.93$, $SD = 11.29$, $n = 228$). The three subscales were all significantly correlated with each other at the $p < .01$ level, with correlation coefficients

ranging from $r = -.24$ to $r = .51$ ($n = 228$; see Table 1). Each subscale was also significantly correlated with the overall scale ($p < .001$), with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = .51$ to $r = .64$ ($n = 228$).

Family communication patterns. Family communication patterns are operationalized using Ritchie and Fitzpatrick's (1990) Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale (RFCP). The measure consists of 26 items assessing participants' perceptions of family communication along two dimensions: conversation orientation (15 items; e.g., "My parents often say things like 'You should always look at both sides of the issue,'" "My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular") and conformity orientation (11 items; e.g., "When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question," "If my parents don't approve of it they don't want to know about it"). Similar to the items used in the FCEI, statements using the word "parents" were changed to "parent(s)" to be more inclusive to families with only one caregiver.

Participants were asked to indicate how much they agree with each statement. Past reliabilities have been adequate for both scales (.84 and .76, respectively; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Reliability for the conversation subscale was good ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 53.02$, $SD = 12.60$, $n = 228$). Reliability for the conformity subscale was also good ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 32.99$, $SD = 7.61$, $n = 228$). The reliability of the overall family communication patterns scale was good ($\alpha = .83$, $M = 86.01$, $SD = 13.60$, $n = 228$). The two subscales were both significantly correlated with each other at the $p < .05$ level, with a correlation coefficient of $r = -.17$ ($n = 228$; see Table 1). Each subscale was also significantly

correlated with the overall scale ($p < .001$), with correlation coefficients of $r = .83$ for conversation orientation and $r = .41$ ($n = 228$) for conformity orientation.

Four family types (e.g., consensual, pluralistic, protective, laissez-faire) were derived by employing median splits along both subscales (see Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Of the adult-children sampled, most were coded as having protective ($n = 65$, 28.5%) and pluralistic ($n = 63$, 27.6%) families. Smaller proportions were found in the laissez-faire type ($n = 53$, 22.8%), followed by consensual families ($n = 47$, 20.6%).

Parental meta-emotion philosophy. Parental meta-emotion philosophy is operationalized using Legacé-Seguin and Copland's (2005) Maternal Emotional Styles Questionnaire (MESQ). The MESQ is a 14-item instrument designed to assess maternal meta-emotion-based parenting styles, that is, how mothers cope with their child's emotions of sadness and anger along Gottman et al.'s (1996, 1997) two dimensions of parental meta-emotions: emotion coaching and emotion dismissing. Lagacé-Seguin and Coplan reported good psychometric properties, including stability, convergent validity, and construct validity for the 2-factor (seven items each) MESQ. In the three studies they reported, Cronbach's alpha for the first factor, emotion dismissing (ED), ranged from .78 to .92, and for the second factor, emotion coaching (EC), from .81 to .90. Sample items for dismissing behaviors are "Childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry"; "I try to change my child's angry mood into a cheerful one." Examples of items endorsing coaching behaviors are "When my child is sad, it's time to get close"; "When my child is angry, I take some time to try and experience this feeling with him/her." In this study, adult-children reported on their perception of their primary

caregiver's meta-emotions. No items were altered. Participants were asked to "imagine you are your primary caregiver during the time of your adolescence" and to "indicate how much your primary caregiver would agree with each." Responses were solicited using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Primary caregivers were also administered the MESQ. No items are altered; however, primary caregivers are asked "imagining yourself when your child was an adolescent, please indicate how much you would agree with each statement." Similarly, responses to this version of the MESQ were solicited using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Reliability for the emotion coaching subscale was good ($\alpha = .84$, $M = 26.22$, $SD = 5.53$, $n = 291$). Reliability for the emotion dismissing subscale was also good ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 25.47$, $SD = 5.29$, $n = 291$). Reliability for the overall MESQ was good ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 51.69$, $SD = 9.35$, $n = 291$). The two subscales were both significantly correlated with each other at the $p < .001$ level, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .24$ ($n = 291$, see Table 1). Each subscale was also significantly correlated with the overall scale ($p < .001$), with correlation coefficients of $r = .90$ for emotion coaching and $r = .87$ for emotion dismissing.

Analyses

Hypotheses 1a and 1b propose a positive association between EC and conversation orientation and an inverse relationship between EC and conformity orientation. EC, ED, conversation orientation, and conformity orientation are all continuous variables. To test these hypotheses, Pearson product-moment correlations

were used to reveal any significant associations. Hypotheses 2a and 2b posit that ED is inversely related to conversation orientation and positively related to conformity orientation. These hypotheses were also tested with Pearson product-moment correlations.

Hypotheses H3 and H4 examine mean differences between meta-emotion philosophies between both pluralistic and protective families. Research questions 1 and 2 were posed to compare meta-emotion philosophies across all FCP family-types. In this study, FCP family-type was treated as a categorical independent variable, and meta-emotion philosophies (e.g., EC and ED) were treated individually as continuous variables. One-way ANOVAs were employed to compare differences in meta-emotion philosophies among family types.

Research questions 3 and 4 examined family communication environments by exploring their contribution to both EC and ED. To test these relationships, two multiple regressions were employed. At each step of the regressions, each dimension of family communication environments was tested for its contribution to either EC or ED.

Finally, research question 5 addressed the need to examine parent's perspective of their own meta-emotions while their child was an adolescent in comparison to their child's perspective of their own parent's meta-emotion philosophy while being parented by them during their adolescence. To test for differences in parent-child perspectives, two paired-samples *t*-tests were administered across all parent-child dyads.

Chapter Four: Results

Hypothesis 1

H1a stated that adult-children's experience of emotion coaching (EC) in their family of origin would be positively associated with a conversation orientation. H1a was supported. The relationship between the perception of EC in an adult-child's adolescence and the adult-child's perception of the presence of a conversation orientation in their family of origin was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation.

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a moderate, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .44$, $n = 228$, $p < .001$), with higher levels of EC associated with higher levels of conversation orientation.

H1b stated adult-children's experience of emotion coaching in their family of origin would be inversely associated with a conformity orientation. H1b was not supported. The relationship between the perception of EC in an adult-child's adolescence and the adult-child's perception of the presence of a conformity orientation in their family of origin was also investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a weak, negative correlation between the two variables ($r = -.02$, $n = 228$, $p = .72$), however, this association was not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2

H2a stated that adult-children's experience of emotion dismissing in their family of origin would be inversely associated with conversation orientation. H2a was not supported. The relationship between the perception of ED in an adult-child's adolescence and the adult-child's perception of the presence of a conversation orientation in their family of origin was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .18, n = 228, p < .01$), with higher levels of ED associated with higher levels of conversation orientation.

H2b stated that adult-children's experience of emotion dismissing in their family of origin would be positively associated with a conformity orientation. H2b was supported. The relationship between the perception of ED in an adult-child's adolescence and the adult-child's perception of the presence of a conformity orientation in their family of origin was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .24, n = 228, p < .001$), with higher levels of ED associated with higher levels of conformity orientation.

Table 1

Correlation Matrix for all Scales and Subscales

	Exp	Stru. Trad.	Conf. Avoid.	Conv.	Conf.	PEC	PED	EC
Expressiveness								
Structural Traditionalism	-.18**							
Conflict Avoidance	-.24***	.51***						
Conversation	.97***	-.15*	-.21**					
Conformity	-.21**	.94***	.69***	-.17*				
Parent Em. Coaching	.13 <i>ns</i>	.24**	.22 <i>ns</i>	.18 <i>ns</i>	.27*			
Parent Em. Dismissing	.10 <i>ns</i>	.33**	.35***	.11 <i>ns</i>	.42***	.35**		
Emotion Coaching	.43***	-.02 <i>ns</i>	.03 <i>ns</i>	.44***	-.02 <i>ns</i>	.15***	.06 <i>ns</i>	
Emotion Dismissing	.17*	.24***	.22**	.18**	.24***	.33**	.14 <i>ns</i>	.50***

Note: All correlations are statistically significant unless otherwise noted

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypotheses 3 and 4

H3 stated levels of emotion coaching will differ significantly between pluralistic families and protective families. H3 was supported. A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of all FCP family types on levels of emotion coaching. There was a statistically significant difference in emotion coaching scores for the four family-types [$F(3,228)= 17.28, p < .001$]. In addition to reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between groups was quite large ($\eta^2 = .19$). Post hoc comparisons of pluralistic and protective families across levels of emotion coaching using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for pluralistic families ($M = 28.13, SD = 4.83, n = 63$) was significantly higher than the mean score for protective families ($M = 23.82, SD = 5.76, n = 66$) at the $p < .001$ level.

H4 stated levels of emotion dismissing will differ significantly between pluralistic families and protective families. H4 was not supported. A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of all FCP family types on levels of emotion coaching. There was a statistically significant difference in emotion coaching scores for the four family-types [$F(3,228)= 7.49, p < .001$]. In addition to reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores of emotion dismissing between all four groups was moderate ($\eta^2 = .09$). However, post hoc comparisons of pluralistic and protective families across scores of emotion dismissing using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for pluralistic families ($M = 25.32, SD = 4.91$) was not significantly different ($p = .99$) from the mean score for protective families ($M = 25.52, SD = 5.08$).

Research Question 1

RQ1 was concerned with how levels of emotion coaching might differ across all FCP family-types. For the entire sample of adult-children, a one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the possible differences between consensual, protective, pluralistic, and laissez-faire families. As stated above, the differences between FCP family-types across emotion coaching was significant [$F(3,228)= 17.28, p < .001$] with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .19$). Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD were used to reveal differences between groups. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .001$ level in emotion coaching scores between consensual families ($M = 28.81, SD = 4.57$) and protective families ($M = 23.82, SD = 5.76$). Also significant ($p < .001$) was the difference in emotion coaching scores between consensual families ($M = 28.81, SD = 4.57$) and laissez-faire families ($M = 22.98, SD = 5.78$). The last pair of family types that demonstrated a significant ($p < .001$) difference in emotion coaching scores were pluralistic ($M = 28.13, SD = 4.82$) and laissez-faire ($M = 22.98, SD = 5.78$) families. Overall, consensual and pluralistic families were not significantly different from each other in levels of emotion coaching, with protective and laissez-faire families not significantly different from each other, as well. Both consensual and pluralistic families had higher levels of emotion coaching, however, than protective and laissez-faire families.

Non-significant ($p = .91$) was the difference in emotion coaching scores between consensual ($M = 28.81, SD = 4.57$) and pluralistic families ($M = 28.13, SD = 4.82$). The

difference in emotion coaching between protective ($M = 23.82, SD = 5.76$) and laissez-faire families ($M = 22.98, SD = 5.78$) also did not demonstrate significance ($p = .86$).

Research Question 2

RQ2 was concerned with how levels of emotion dismissing might differ across all FCP family types. For the entire sample of adult-children, a one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the possible differences between consensual, protective, pluralistic, and laissez-faire families. As stated above, the differences between FCP family-types across emotion dismissing was significant [$F(3,228) = 7.49, p < .001$] with a moderate effect size ($\eta^2 = .09$). Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD were used to reveal differences between groups. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .001$ level in emotion dismissing scores between consensual families ($M = 28.62, SD = 4.22$) and laissez-faire families ($M = 23.96, SD = 5.73$). Also significant ($p < .01$) was the difference in emotion dismissing scores between consensual families ($M = 28.62, SD = 4.22$) and protective families ($M = 25.56, SD = 5.05$). The last pair of family-types that demonstrated significance ($p < .01$) in their difference in emotion dismissing scores were pluralistic ($M = 25.32, SD = 4.91$) and consensual ($M = 28.62, SD = 4.22$) families. Overall, consensual families demonstrated the highest levels of emotion dismissing with no significant differences among pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire families.

Three pairs of family types demonstrated non-significant differences in their scores of emotion dismissing. Pluralistic families ($M = 25.32, SD = 4.91$) were not significantly different ($p = .99$; as stated in H3 and H4) in their emotion dismissing scores from protective families ($M = 25.56, SD = 5.05$). The second pair to demonstrate a non-

significant difference ($p = .48$) was pluralistic families ($M = 25.32, SD = 4.91$) and laissez-faire families ($M = 23.96, SD = 5.73$). Lastly, protective families ($M = 25.56, SD = 5.05$) and laissez-faire families ($M = 23.96, SD = 5.73$) did not differ significantly ($p = .34, ns$) in their scores on emotion dismissing.

Research Question 3

RQ3 is concerned with the impact of various family communication environments on the presence of an emotion coaching parenting style. RQ3 asks how family communication environments (i.e., expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance) contribute to emotion coaching. To address this research question, one multiple regression analysis was used to test whether family communication environments significantly predicted participants' adult-child reports of emotion coaching during their adolescence. The linear model was significant ($R = .45, R^2 = .20, F[3,224] = 18.52, p < .001, n = 228$). Two predictors were significant: expressiveness was a positive predictor of emotion coaching ($B = .31, \beta = .46, t = 7.41, p < .001$), as was conflict avoidance ($B = .18, \beta = .14, t = 2.00, p < .05$). Structural traditionalism was not a significant negative predictor ($B = -.01, \beta = -.01, t = -.14, p = .89$). The R^2 of .20 indicates that approximately one-fifth of the variability in emotion coaching is predicted by expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance.

For the two regression coefficients that differed significantly from zero, 95% confidence limits were calculated. The confidence limits for expressiveness were .23 to .39, and those for conflict avoidance were .003 to .36. As indicated by the squared semipartial correlations, expressiveness ($sr^2 = .44$) was much more important than

conflict avoidance ($sr^2 = .12$) in predicting an emotion coaching philosophy. Table 2 displays the correlations between the variables, the unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), and the semipartial correlations (sr_i^2).

Research Question 4

RQ4 is concerned with the impact of various family communication environments on the presence of an emotion dismissing parenting style. RQ4 asks how family communication environments (i.e., expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance) contribute to emotion dismissing. To address this research question, one multiple regression analysis was used to test whether family communication environments significantly predicted participants' adult-child reports of emotion dismissing during their adolescence. The linear model was significant ($R = .36$, $R^2 = .13$, $F[3,224] = 11.02$, $p < .001$, $n = 228$). All three predictors were significant: expressiveness was a positive predictor of emotion dismissing ($B = .15$, $\beta = .25$, $t = 3.84$, $p < .001$), as were conflict avoidance ($B = .21$, $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.56$, $p < .05$) and structural traditionalism ($B = .15$, $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.60$, $p < .05$). The R^2 of .13 indicates that approximately 13% of the variability in emotion dismissing is predicted by expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance.

For the three regression coefficients, 95% confidence limits were calculated. The confidence limits for expressiveness were .07 to .23, with those for conflict avoidance from .05 to .38, and structural traditionalism from .04 to .27. As indicated by the squared semipartial correlations, expressiveness ($sr^2 = .24$) was much more important than both

conflict avoidance ($sr^2 = .16$) and structural traditionalism ($sr^2 = .16$) in predicting an emotion dismissing philosophy. Table 2 displays the correlations between the variables, the unstandardized regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficients (β), and the semipartial correlations (sr_i^2).

Table 2

Standard Multiple Regression of Family Communication Environments on Level of Meta-emotions

Variable	B	$SE B$	β	sr_i^2
<i>Emotion Coaching</i>				
Expressiveness	.31	.04	.46**	.44
Structural Traditionalism	-.01	.06	-.01, <i>ns</i>	-.01
Conflict Avoidance	.18	.09	.14*	.12
<i>Emotion Dismissing</i>				
Expressiveness	.15	.04	.25**	.24
Structural Traditionalism	.15	.06	.19*	.16
Conflict Avoidance	.21	.08	.19*	.16

Note: Intercept for emotion coaching was 12.06, with 12.55 for emotion dismissing.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$

Research Question 5

RQ5 is concerned with comparing the perspectives of parents and their adult-children regarding the presences of emotion coaching and emotion dismissing in the parenting provided during the adult-child's adolescence. RQ5 asks how the perspectives

of parental meta-emotion differ across parents and their children. To address this research question, two paired-samples *t*-tests were administered across parent-child dyads. There was a significant difference in emotion coaching scores for parents ($M = 27.57$, $SD = 4.05$) and adult-children [$M = 25.90$, $SD = 5.41$; $t(63) = 1.96$, $p = .05$], however, the magnitude of the difference was small ($\eta^2 = .03$). The difference in emotion dismissing scores between parents ($M = 24.44$, $SD = 5.39$) and adult-children ($M = 24.56$, $SD = 5.08$) was not significant [$t(63) = -.12$, $p = .91$]. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to investigate the associations between parent and adult-child reports of meta-emotions. For emotion coaching, there was moderate, positive correlation ($r = .45$, $p < .001$) between parent and adult-child perceptions. For emotion dismissing, there was a moderate, positive correlation ($r = .39$, $p < .01$) between parent and adult-child perceptions. There was a moderate, positive correlation ($r = .41$, $p < .01$) between adult-child perceptions of emotion dismissing and parental perceptions of emotion coaching. Lastly, a significant association between adult-child perceptions of emotion coaching and parental perceptions of emotion dismissing was not found ($r = .09$, $p = .47$).

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate adults' emotion socialization in their family of origin and to examine the relationships between parental emotion socialization and family communication patterns and family communication environments. More specifically, this investigation sought to uncover relationships between family communication patterns and adult-children's perceptions of their parents' meta-emotions which could further be used to reveal relationships between parental emotion socialization, family communication environments, and communication-based family-types.

The two questionnaires used in this study solicited perceptions of parent-child interactions occurring during the adult-child's adolescence from the retrospective perceptions of both the adult-child and their primary-caregiver. Data from the questionnaires were then used to address research questions and hypotheses which addressed meaningful gaps in our knowledge of parental emotion socialization and family communication.

This study yielded several significant results. Correlation analyses revealed a moderate positive correlation between emotion coaching and conversation orientation. Interestingly, conversation orientation was also positively associated with emotion dismissing, although this correlation was weak. Moreover, emotion dismissing had a

weak, positive association with conformity orientation. ANOVAs explored the impacts of FCP family types on levels of meta-emotions. Post hoc comparisons revealed higher levels of emotion coaching in consensual and pluralistic families than in protective and laissez-faire families. For emotion dismissing, consensual families had higher levels compared to pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire families. Multiple regression analyses tested the contributions of family communication environments to emotion coaching and dismissing. Expressiveness was more important than conflict avoidance in predicting emotion coaching, with structural traditionalism not contributing significantly to the model. Interestingly, emotion dismissing was predicted by all three environments, with expressiveness demonstrating the most importance in predicting the model, followed by conflict avoidance and structural traditionalism. Lastly, this study revealed differences between parent and child perspectives when retrospectively reporting on the parenting of the adult-child during the child's adolescence. Generally, parents and their adult-children tended to agree on the levels of emotion dismissing while disagreeing on the levels of emotion coaching. Notably, parents perceived higher levels of emotion coaching than their adult-children.

Family communication patterns and parental meta-emotions. The first two hypotheses addressed the relationships between parental meta-emotions and family communication patterns. Relationships between emotion coaching and a conversation orientation (H1a), between emotion coaching and a conformity orientation (H1b), between emotion dismissing and a conversation orientation (H2a), and between emotion dismissing and a conformity orientation (H2b) were examined. In support of H1a and

H2b, emotion coaching was positively correlated with a conversation orientation and emotion dismissing was positively associated with a conformity orientation. Neither H1b nor H2a were supported in that emotion coaching did not significantly correlate to a conformity orientation, and emotion dismissing was positively associated with a conversation orientation. The unsupported hypotheses are surprising. Families with high conversation orientation tend to hold the belief that open and frequent communication is essential to a rewarding family life (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Further, parents who have a high conversation orientation tend to believe that frequent communication with their children is the primary means to educate and socialize them (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Parents who demonstrate a coaching meta-emotion structure have parent-child interactions consistently marked by open conversations concerning the child's emotional experiences and the child's expressions of those emotions (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). In contrast, parents exhibiting a dismissing meta-emotion structure often hold the belief that feeling and (especially) expressing emotions is equated with being out-of-control, or the parents are otherwise uncomfortable in the presence of their child's emotion and feel that it is something they as parents are forced to deal with. Therefore, emotion-dismissed children are theoretically less likely to be engaged in open conversation with their parents concerning their emotions. Rather, dismissing parents tend to ignore or deny their child's emotion in hopes that this strategy will make the emotion go away more quickly (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996a).

Taken together, it is surprising that emotion coaching would not be inversely associated with a conformity orientation. Families scoring high on conformity

orientation, among many characteristics, tend to focus their interactions on maintaining harmony and avoiding conflicts (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Based on the review of literature, emotion coaching parents tend to value understanding their children's emotions (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996b), while families with a conformity orientation are partially characterized by their emphasis on maintaining homogeneous values and beliefs amongst family members (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). For families scoring high on conformity, emphasizing homogeneous beliefs and values could perhaps limit parental efforts to understand their child's emotions by creating situations where parents want to avoid behaviors that may foster understanding their child's emotions particularly in situations where parents view emotion as associated with conflict in some way. It stands to reason then that emotion coaching, which partially involves parents seeking understanding of their child's emotion through talk, may be inversely related to conformity orientation due to its emphasis on homogeneity of values and beliefs as well as conflict avoidance. It is somewhat surprising, then, to see the association between emotion coaching and conformity was not significantly inverse ($r = -.02, p = .72$).

This could possibly be explained by other behaviors associated with conformity orientation. On the RFCP measure, 4 of the 11 items comprising the conformity subscale appear to tap issues of parent-child disclosures (e.g., "My parents often say things like 'There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about'"; "My parents often say things like 'My ideas are right and you should not question them'"; "If my parents don't approve of it they don't want to hear about it"; "My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs"). Most of these messages may be

centered on conflict avoidance rather than avoidance of disclosures of emotion (i.e., child's emotional expressions, child's feelings). Although some families may associate emotion with conflict (Gottman, 2001), this may not be the case for all families. Families who avoid topics may vary significantly on the range of topics that are avoided. That is to say, for some families high in conformity, emotion may be a topic to be avoided; for others scoring high in conformity, emotion may be a topic that is accepted. For families scoring high on conformity, then, varying levels of emotion coaching may occur due to how families associate conflict with emotion as well as how families treat emotion as a topic to be accepted or avoided. The relationship between emotion coaching and conformity orientation may be quite complex and is an indication of enigmatic interactions characteristic of associations among cognitive schemata. As Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b) note, when addressing family types, varying levels of conformity and conversation orientations do not simply produce main effects that appear in varying levels across family types. Rather, the unique combination of varying levels of family schemas produces unique interactions which may yield surprising family belief systems and unique behaviors.

It is also peculiar that conversation orientation is positively associated with both parental coaching as well as dismissing meta-emotions. This finding could partially be explained by the possibility that when it comes to talk about emotion amongst families that encourage open discussions and discuss topics regardless of agreement (both characteristic of a conversation orientation), some parents may use the climate of unrestricted interaction to reinforce their meta-emotion philosophies regardless of

whether they are dismissing or coaching. Further, the positive association of conversation orientation with both meta-emotions may be an indication of the contextual nature of family disclosures, particularly amongst families that encourage open communication of a wide range of topics regardless of family disagreement (characteristic of families scoring high on conversation orientation). For such families, emotion (i.e., emotion related disclosures, emotional expressions, talk about feelings, etc.) may be one topic that is discouraged, avoided, or dismissed. This is also an indication that items tapping a conversation orientation may be tapping disclosures outside of emotion-related disclosures.

To better understand the relationships between conformity and conversation orientations and emotion coaching and emotion dismissing, the following statements offer a summary thus far in this investigation. For all families tested, emotion coaching is not significantly associated with conformity orientation. Further, emotion dismissing is positively associated with both conversation and conformity orientations, yet has a stronger correlation with conformity orientation. The strongest relationship was a positive association between emotion coaching and conversation orientation.

Parental meta-emotions and FCP family types. To further explore the interactions between parental meta-emotion philosophies (as perceived by the adult-child) and family communication patterns, this study utilized two hypotheses (e.g., H3 and H4) and two research questions (e.g., RQ1 and RQ2) to investigate differences in parental meta-emotion philosophies amongst FCP family types (e.g., consensual, pluralistic, protective, laissez-faire). First, H3 put forth an expectation that emotion

coaching would differ significantly between pluralistic (high in conversation, low in conformity) and protective (low in conversation, high in conformity) families. Second, H4 considered that levels of emotion dismissing would differ significantly between pluralistic and protective families. H3 was supported and H4 was not supported. Pluralistic families demonstrated significantly higher scores of emotion coaching than protective families, with both groups exhibiting similar scores for emotion dismissing. These findings are consistent with the significant positive correlation between emotion coaching and conversation orientation (H1a), the non-significant relationship between emotion coaching and conformity orientation (H1b), and the positive correlations between emotion dismissing and both conversation (H2a) and conformity (H2b) orientations.

Next, differences between all FCP family types across emotion coaching (RQ1) and emotion dismissing (RQ2) were explored. Consensual and pluralistic families had the highest levels of emotion coaching, with lower levels found in protective, and laissez-faire. There were two non-significant differences amongst family types. Consensual and pluralistic did not differ significantly on levels of emotion coaching, nor did protective and laissez-faire families.

For emotion dismissing, consensual families displayed the highest levels, with lower levels found in protective, pluralistic, and laissez-faire. There were three non-significant differences amongst family types. Pluralistic, protective, and laissez-fair families did not differ significantly from one another on levels of emotion dismissing.

Initially, these results indicate that consensual families (high conversation, high conformity) experience high levels of both emotion coaching and emotion dismissing, while laissez-faire families (low conversation, low conformity) experience low levels of both meta-emotion philosophies. Interestingly, pluralistic (high conversation, low conformity) and protective (low conversation, high conformity) families have similar levels of emotion dismissing, with pluralistic families experiencing a significantly higher level of emotion coaching. In examining perceived parental meta-emotions across FCP family types, it appears that the presence of higher levels of conversation orientation is associated with higher scores on emotion coaching. This is supported by the significant correlation coefficient ($r = .44, p < .001$) found earlier between emotion coaching and conversation orientation (H1a). For conformity orientation, higher levels do not necessarily translate to higher levels of emotion dismissing despite their significant correlation coefficient ($r = .24, p < .001$). Though students from consensual families experienced more emotion dismissing than students in other types of families, the same was not true of students from protective families, though both consensual and protective families are high in conformity orientation.

Pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire families demonstrated no significant differences between each other in emotion coaching despite high levels of conformity in protective families and low levels of conformity in both pluralistic and laissez-faire families. However, pluralistic and consensual families do have higher emotion coaching scores on average than both protective and laissez-faire families. This indicates that

higher levels of conversation orientation are predictive of emotion coaching across FCP family types.

Surprisingly, the highest level of emotion dismissing was found in consensual families as compared with the other family types, and this difference was significant (all at the $p < .01$ level or stronger). It appears that when families adopt a high conversation orientation as well as a high conformity orientation, levels of emotion dismissing are at their highest compared to the other family types (e.g., pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire). Despite conversation orientation being positively correlated with a dismissing meta-emotion philosophy, the mere presence of high conversation in the presence of lower levels of conformity orientation (e.g., pluralistic families) does not predict the significantly high levels of emotion dismissing that are exhibited in consensual families. Conversely, the mere presence of conformity orientation in the presence of lower levels of conversation orientation (e.g., protective families) does not predict the significantly high levels of emotion dismissing that are displayed in consensual families. To be sure, it is only when conversation and conformity orientations are both at higher levels that families demonstrate the highest levels of emotion dismissing amongst all family types.

In this case, conversation and conformity orientations were examined for their contributions as suppressor variables according to the definitions put forth by Cohen et al. (2003). Because both conversation and conformity orientations correlate positively with emotion dismissing and are inversely associated with each other, both conformity and conversation orientations are acting as reciprocal suppressor variables when tested for their combined contribution to emotion dismissing. That is to say, in the context of higher

levels of both conversation and conformity orientation, emotion dismissing is predicted more fully than expected on the basis of adding the separate predictive abilities of both conversation and conformity orientations. This may be partially explained by examining characteristics of consensual families and the concept of *awareness* as described in the seminal work on emotion regulation theory (e.g., Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997).

According to Gottman and his colleagues (1997), a key factor that differentiated coaching parents from dismissing parents was their level of awareness of their children's emotions. Emotion-coaching parents demonstrated higher levels of awareness of the child's emotion. With this awareness, coaching parents tended to engage in problem-solving, labeling of emotion, and validation of emotion. In contrast, emotion dismissing parents demonstrated lower levels of awareness of their child's emotions. With their lack of awareness, emotion-dismissing parents may ignore the child's emotion, deny or invalidate their child's emotion, or (as was significantly demonstrated when responding to anger) belittle the child for expressing emotion.

Consensual families, high in both conversation and conformity orientations, are characterized by a tension to agree and preserve the hierarchy existing in the family and an interest in open communication in which new ideas are explored. Parents of consensual families tend to invest much time interacting with children, explaining their values and beliefs in hopes that the children will understand and adopt their parents' viewpoints. Additionally, children of consensual families tend to value conversation and are easily persuaded by their parents.

Taken together, emotion dismissing may be most prominent in consensual families (though emotion coaching scores were also high in this group) due to the heightened awareness of child emotion afforded by increased interaction and conversation between parents and children. For parents of consensual families, the desire to interact with their children may supersede the desire to ignore their child's emotion despite the parents' likely discomfort with their child's emotions (especially negative emotions). Rather, parents of consensual families may use various dismissing behaviors that necessitate interaction and conversation. Further, they may do so in amounts that supersede the dismissing levels of other family types because of the interest of consensual families in open communication amongst family members.

Impacts of family communication environments on meta-emotion

philosophy. This study also sought to investigate the impacts of various aspects of family communication environments (expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance) on the presence of an emotion coaching parenting style (RQ3) and an emotion dismissing parenting style (RQ4). In the first regression model, expressiveness and conflict avoidance were both predictors of an emotion coaching philosophy, with structural traditionalism offering no predictive power. Of the two significant predictors, expressiveness was much more important in predicting emotion coaching in parents. The stronger predictive power of expressiveness may be explained by the close resemblance of the expressive dimension to conversation orientation. Both tap communication between parents and children, however, the expressiveness dimension particularly emphasizes parental encouragement of expressions of emotion. Characteristic of an

emotion coaching philosophy, coaching parents tend to view emotion as an opportunity for intimacy or teaching, validating the child's emotion and helping them to solve problems (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Clearly, a communication environment that encourages expressiveness is likely to promote emotion coaching within a family.

That conflict avoidance is a predictor of emotion coaching is a more challenging task to explain. Compared to its conceptual origins in family communication patterns, conflict avoidance emerges as that part of conformity orientation in which family members avoid conflict by either enforcing conformity or suppressing unpleasant topics (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). Perhaps families that experience higher levels of emotion coaching tend to avoid certain topics. Those topics remain unknown, however, recent research on family communication environments may help illuminate family communication associated with emotion coaching which was previously not addressed through emotion regulation theory alone.

Parental meta-emotions in general are constituted by cognitive schemata that influence parental beliefs and behaviors related to emotion. Parental meta-emotions, then, contribute to the environment in which child emotions are socialized through three major channels (Halberstat, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1998a): parental responses to emotion expression (*emotion contingent behavior*), *modeling* an approach to emotions by their own response to emotional stimuli, and actively engaging children around their emotion expressions and attitudes (i.e., *coaching*). Through emotion contingent behavior, in particular, parents establish various rules governing emotions. In their investigation of family communication environments and health-related rule-based social control between

parents and their adolescent children, Baxter et al. (2005) found that conflict avoidance was positively related to *rule scope* (referring to how generalized or individuated a specific rule is in the family). Therefore family rules tended to apply to all members in families scoring high in conflict avoidance. Additionally, parents and children high in conflict avoidance tended to not agree in their identification of rules. Baxter et al. concluded that since families high in conflict avoidance avoid certain topics, the absence of talk on those topics may have contributed to divergent perceptions of family rules. In sum, how emotion coaching families establish rules for emotion is not currently known, although the predictive power of conflict avoidance amongst emotion coaching families in the present study does open up new possibilities for researching family communication amongst families and how they establish rules for communicating especially when it comes to topic avoidance, or exploring a related concept: privacy management (Petronio, 2002).

It is possible that conflict avoidance significantly predicts a coaching meta-emotion philosophy by emphasizing conformity amongst family members in ways other than suppressing unpleasant topics. Put more simply, some families may emphasize agreement amongst their members on several topics to promote family harmony and avoid conflict; however, many parents in such families may allow discussions of emotion-related topics to the extent that an emotion coaching philosophy may thrive. In families where conflict is avoided through an emphasis on conformity in beliefs, emotion (and emotional expressions) in such families may not be viewed as a topic to be avoided. It is possible that such families may emphasize conformity of an emotion coaching

philosophy as one way to avoid conflict (i.e., “In this family, we talk about our feelings so larger conflicts can be avoided.”).

Structural traditionalism was not predictive of emotion coaching. Structural traditionalism partly represents a conceptual half of conformity orientation (the other half being conflict avoidance) in addition to traditional marital beliefs (see Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). Both conflict avoidance and structural traditionalism suppress conflict and independence of opinion, but in different ways. Structural traditionalism emphasizes conformity to a family unit’s authority structure, whereas conflict avoidance emphasizes suppression of unpleasant topics. Because structural traditionalism was not predictive of emotion coaching, we can conclude that, although emotion coaching families may suppress conflict, they may do so to prevent unpleasant talk rather than to maintain or legitimate authority structures.

In the regression model testing for emotion dismissing, all three family communication environments were predictive. Expressiveness was the strongest predictor of emotion dismissing amongst parents, with lower levels of predictive power in conflict avoidance and structural traditionalism, respectively. It is surprising that expressiveness was the strongest predictor of emotion dismissing given that a dismissing meta-emotion philosophy is characterized by parental dismissing of emotional expressions and avoidance of talk about emotions. In previous analyses, conversation orientation, which is closely related to expressiveness, was also positively associated with emotion dismissing. In a study specifically interested in examining the interactions of multiple family schemata, the differentiation between conversation orientation and expressiveness is

conceptually significant. The subscale for expressivity is composed of 10 items, four of which tap either emotional expression (e.g., “My parents encourage me to express my feelings”; “In our family, we often talk about our feelings and emotions”; “We tell each other how much we love and care about each other”) or emotional support (“My family reassures and comforts me when I am feeling low”). In contrast, conversation orientation is measured by 15 items, three of which address emotional expression (“My parents encourage me to express my feelings”; “My parents tend to be very open about their emotions”; “In our family, we often talk about our feelings and emotions”). Therefore, 20% of conversation orientation items address communicating emotion compared to 40% of items measuring expressivity.

The results of this regression model indicate that families encouraging children (and other family members) to express their ideas and feelings are highly likely to have an emotion-dismissing philosophy. This finding complicates the overall view of parental meta-emotions put forth by Gottman and his colleagues (1996a, 1997). The interview data from their preliminary research suggests that emotion-coaching families are more expressive with their emotions than families that experience an emotion-dismissing philosophy. Notable, however, was Gottman et al.’s primary focus on parental reactions to only two emotions: anger and sadness. Valence of emotions tapped by each measure (e.g., RFCP, FCEI, & MESQ) may prove important in explaining how emotion dismissing is positively associated with both conversation orientation and expressivity.

Looking closer at the items testing for both conversation orientation and expressiveness (described above), the overall expression of both positive and negative

emotions may be tapped by the RFCP and the closely related FCEI. Therefore, a wider range of communication about emotion and emotional expressions (both positively and negatively valenced) may be accounted for by both the RFCP and the FCEI, which in turn may contribute to the positive associations between conversation orientation and expressivity with a cognitive schema (e.g., emotion dismissing) associated with avoidance of negative emotional expressions and avoidance of talk about negative emotions. Perhaps, just as Gottman et al. suggest, emotion dismissing is amplified by the expression of negative emotions in children. The present study did not test for this. This study does, however, allow for the possibility that positively valenced emotions may contribute to an emotion dismissing philosophy. Still, further research is needed to examine how emotion dismissing families view positive emotions and how their meta-emotion philosophy influences family communication of emotion.

Both conflict avoidance and structural traditionalism were predictive of emotion dismissing in families. This may be explained by research analyzing specific speech acts and their associations with family communication patterns. As stated previously, parents who adopt an emotion dismissing philosophy may show less interest in the emotions children are trying to communicate for various reasons including parental discomfort with the child's emotion or a perception that the child's emotion is not valid or worthy of attention.

Recent research on family communication patterns may explain why both structural traditionalism and conflict avoidance are predictive of emotion dismissing. In particular, Koerner and Cvancara (2002) found that conformity orientation is associated

with less empathy in messages sent from parents to their children. They concluded that conformity orientation actually furthers an orientation toward rules and norms. In their view, a low conformity orientation enhances empathic perspective-taking specifically due to less of a parental emphasis on maintaining rules and norms. That is, when communication is regulated by rules and norms (characteristic of structural traditionalism), it is unnecessary for family members to take the other's perspective, because all family members follow the same rules and norms. Similarly, families high in conformity orientation that avoid conversation based on discomfort with topics (characteristic of conflict avoidance as well as an emotion dismissing philosophy), may exhibit less parent-child empathy because family members follow the same rules governing topic avoidance.

Parent/child perspectives of parental meta-emotions. The last set of analyses were concerned with comparing the perspectives of parents and their adult-children regarding the levels of emotion coaching and emotion dismissing present in the adult-child's family of origin during their adolescence. That is, adult-children's perspectives of their parent's parenting were compared to the perspectives of their parents regarding their own parenting behaviors and beliefs. Generally, parents and their adult-children did not differ significantly in their perspectives of the levels of emotion dismissing during the adult-child's adolescence. Interestingly, their perspectives did diverge significantly regarding the levels of emotion coaching. In comparing their mean scores of their perceived emotion coaching levels during the adult-child's adolescence, parents perceived higher levels ($M = 27.57, SD = 4.05$) than their adult-children ($M = 25.90, SD$

= 5.41). This may be explained by several factors. This study asked adult-children to imagine their primary caregiver's parenting during the time of their (the adult-child's) adolescence. That there is disagreement in the perceptions of emotion coaching across parents and children is not all that surprising considering the consistent findings that parents and children do not tend to share similar views of the family particularly during adolescence (Paikoff, 1991; Steinberg, 2001). In consideration of how the adult-child's perceptions may have differed if asked to imagine the responses of a different caregiver (likely the other parent), there is reason to believe that the perception may have reflected findings that adolescents tend to perceive fewer distinctions between mother-child and father-child relationships while maternal and paternal perspectives tend to agree on the distinctiveness of their relationship with their children (Cook & Goldstein, 1993). In other words, where mothers and fathers see uniqueness in their relationship with their child, adolescents perceive an undifferentiated one.

Though children in this study were not adolescents, they were asked to recall their primary caregiver's parenting during their own adolescence. Still remaining is the question of how much this perception may have changed due to developmental and life-stage factors for the now adult-child. In regards to how parents and adult-children perceived levels of emotion dismissing, a significant difference was not found. The congruence of these perceptions does reflect studies which indicate that, over time, parent and child views of their relationship tend to converge (Collins, Laursen, Mortensen, Luebker, & Ferreira, 1997). Why parent and child perceptions diverged with emotion coaching and converged with emotion dismissing poses a difficult challenge to explain.

Parents' perceptions of higher levels of emotion coaching may reflect a self-serving bias. Research indicates that people tend to construct attributions that serve their own personal interests (Hamachek, 1992; Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008). Thus, people are more inclined to attribute their own positive actions to stable, personal causes. Meta-emotions represent belief systems (or philosophies) of emotion. Therefore, parents are more inclined to attribute emotion coaching behaviors of the past to a stable overall coaching meta-emotion philosophy. In contrast, adult-children remembering their adolescence may be less inclined to attribute specific instances of emotion coaching behaviors to an overall coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy held by their parents. Interestingly, perceptions of emotion dismissing appear to be free of a self-serving bias. Deserving consideration is the possibility that children recalling negative behaviors of their parents may also be influenced by a self-serving bias. It is possible that recalling negative parental behaviors binds the interests of both parent and child in a unique way such that it is in the interest of both parent and child not to (over-) attribute negative behaviors to parental beliefs. In this way, parents and children may both have a stake in perceiving the family unit in a protective, biased way.

Another explanation for a more positive parental perception of emotion coaching in this study is research suggesting that mothers, in general, tend to hold more optimistic views of the family, reporting more warmth and affection among family members than do children (Noller & Callan, 1988; Silverberg & Steinberg, 1990). In this study, 82% of parents participating were women.

In sum, research indicates that adolescent children diverge in their perceptions of family relationships from their parents; however, over time, these differences appear to lessen. This study may be an indication of either or a combination of both convergence and divergence in perspectives. Regardless, parents reported higher levels of emotion coaching in their past parenting behaviors than their adult-children recall; with both parents and adult-children demonstrating agreement in the levels of emotion dismissing that took place. Whether these findings are indications of parental overestimation of emotion coaching or an indication that adult-children underestimate their parent's emotion coaching behaviors is difficult to say. At the very least, the divergence and convergence of perspectives indicates the complexity of family relationships over time.

Across the four FCP family types, further interpretation poses an interesting challenge as all have been studied extensively for their unique theoretical differences. How the FCP family typology interacts overall with parental meta-emotions is particularly interesting in that parenting is considered within a larger context of family communication patterns. Further, parental meta-emotions and the family communication patterns of conformity and conversation orientation individually represent different mental structures (or schemata) that influence an individual's beliefs and behaviors. Examining the interactions of multiple schemata within the family context is a main goal of this dissertation as such an investigation stands to reveal unique interactions often not predicted by merely theoretical analyses. As is the case with conformity and conversation orientations, the effects that individual family communication schema have on actual family communication are often dependent on their interaction with other schemata. That

is to say, rather than having simple main effects on family communication, multiple family communication schemata may interact with one another such that the impacts of one schema may be moderated by the degree of one or more schema, and vice versa.

What follows is a general discussion of the theoretical contributions of this dissertation beginning with a discussion of the results as they inform emotion regulation theory, followed by a discussion of the results as they inform the general theory of family communication patterns.

Contribution to emotion regulation theory. Extensive research on parental meta-emotions contributing to the understanding of Gottman et al.'s (1996; 1997) emotion regulation theory (ERT) continues to support ERT's powerful heuristic value for explaining the quality of marital, parent-child, and sibling interactions. A criticism of this research, despite its prescriptive power, is that it leaves much unknown about how meta-emotions function to more fully describe everyday family interactions and patterns of communication amongst all family members. This may be beyond the scope of ERT, yet much remains to be revealed about how meta-emotions relate to other family schemata. It is the assumption of this dissertation that further understanding the socialized cognitive processes that belay family communication may reveal larger patterns of family cognition which can be used, most importantly, to further our understanding of socialized beliefs and behaviors and how they are related to family communication and various related family and individual outcomes.

Emotion Coaching. This dissertation further reveals the complexity of interacting schemata. Most notably are the additional understandings we gain by examining meta-

emotions interacting with more thoroughly understood family communication schemata. Through this examination we find a complex pattern of interactions across family types and family communication environments which indicate that a coaching meta-emotion philosophy is negatively associated with a conformity orientation overall; however, across FCP family types, one conformity-related schema (e.g., conflict avoidance) is significantly predictive of emotion coaching. Other findings related to emotion coaching are noted below in how they contribute to our overall understandings of family communication patterns theory.

Emotion Dismissing. Similarly, our knowledge of an emotion dismissing philosophy is furthered by examining its interactions with FCP schemata. Surprising was the finding that emotion dismissing was positively associated with both conversation and conformity orientations. Most surprising, yet ancillary to the hypotheses and research questions, were the demonstrated consistency of emotion dismissing across FCP family types. This may be an indication that emotion dismissing is more pervasive across families than perhaps thought.

Apart from the findings directly resultant of the research hypotheses and questions, this dissertation contributes significantly to the literature on Gottman et al.'s (1996; 1997) emotion regulation theory. Specifically, this study benefits from a more diverse sample based on race-ethnicity and socio-economic status than the original research by Gottman and colleagues as well as the samples leading to the development of the MESQ (Legace-Seguin & Coplan, 2005). Interestingly, the present study found lower scores on the subscale for emotion coaching ($M = 3.75, SD = .79$) and higher scores for

emotion dismissing ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .76$) than the previous authors (EC $M = 3.86$, $SD = .61$; ED $M = 3.27$, $SD = .64$). These differences may not be statistically significant, although, this may be an indication that culture associated with race and/or ethnicity as well as socioeconomics may contribute to differences in parenting emotions. To date, few studies have addressed parental meta-emotions in ethnic minority families. In their examination of dyads consisting of 101 African American mothers and one of their school-aged (i.e., 9 to 13 years old) children, Cunningham, Kliewer, and Garner (2009) administered Gottman et al.'s (1996) meta-emotion interview, coding for meta-emotion philosophies amongst mothers, and examining their children for emotion regulation, emotion understanding, and psychosocial adjustment. Because their study used the coded interview developed by Gottman and colleagues, comparing mean scores of emotion coaching and emotion dismissing is not possible. To date, studies using the MESQ have yet to address limitations in sampling that could address impacts of race/ethnicity or socioeconomics on parental meta-emotion philosophies. Extant research suggests differences in emotional expression based on race/ethnicity (e.g., Kochman, 1981; Nelson, 1996; see Planalp, 1999) and socioeconomic status (see Halberstadt, 1991), indicating the possibility of corresponding differences in emotion socialization based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and culture.

Further, this dissertation expands the current meta-emotions and emotion socialization literature by studying the emotion socialization of adult-children. Gottman et al. (1996; 1997) studied parental meta-emotion styles in elementary school-aged children (i.e., 5- and 8-year-olds). Parental influences on child behaviors are also evident

from preschool-aged children (Legace-Seguin & Coplan, 2005), 12- to 14-year-olds (Katz & Hunter, 2007), 9- to 13-year-olds (Cunningham, et al., 2009), and 14- to 18-year-olds (Stocker, et al., 2007). The current study addresses adolescent emotion socialization albeit from the retrospective perspective of the adult-child. That is, our entire sample of adult-children, by definition, was aged 18-years or older. The older sample addresses the need for a developmental perspective (Price, McHenry, & Murphy, 2000) on emotion socialization, and the current results are likely indicative of the sampling methods of this dissertation.

Contributions to the general theory of family communication patterns. This dissertation offers a more complex look into the cognitive and social lives of families. By combining two theoretical lenses governing family schemata, specifically emotion coaching, emotion dismissing, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance; this dissertation puts forth a more complex understandings of family communication and emotion socialization in general, and family communication patterns and environments, in specific. That is, this dissertation offers a cognitive approach to family communication that more fully describes what the author refers to as family emotional environments. This section first describes this dissertation's contributions to the knowledge of family communication environments and concludes with a synthesis of the research on family communication patterns in how it is informed by this dissertation through a discussion of the proposed family emotional environments.

Family Communication Environments. The following is a general description of the three family communication environments in terms of how each contributes, in conjunction with their related meta-emotions, to their respective family emotional environment. Notable is the conceptual merger of marital types (e.g., Traditionals, Independents, and Separates; Fitzpatrick, 1988) and family communication patterns (Ritchie, 1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) constitutive of family communication environments (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994). That is, any examination of family communication environments should account for the cognitive explanations derived from FCE schemata as having their origins in the combination of marital schemata and parent-child schemata (e.g., conversation orientation, conformity orientation) with the original purpose of explaining and describing family environments resultant of unique combinations of schemata which directly tap both marital and parent-child interactions.

Expressiveness. Expressiveness alone in families creates opportunities for both emotion dismissing and emotion coaching. Expressiveness contributes to an overall family emotional environment by creating opportunities for interaction amongst members, particularly parents and children. The more open a family is to communication, the more likely parental meta-emotions will be learned, taught, and reinforced by family members. While numerous positive effects have been linked to family expressiveness, these findings are tempered by the extant literature suggesting many negative psychosocial effects related to emotion dismissing, of which expressiveness is the strongest predictor amongst all aspects of family communication environments. Therefore, higher levels of expressiveness can afford families opportunities for intimacy

and teaching between parents and children while also contributing to an environment where parents dismiss, invalidate, or even shame their children for negative emotional expressions. Moreover, while families with higher levels of expressivity are more likely to help their children verbally label the emotions the child is having, other highly expressive families may deny and even ignore their child's emotions, avoiding talk about the child's feelings. That is, depending on the parental meta-emotions unique to a particular family, expressivity may contribute to a wide range of emotional environments.

Though parental modeling of emotional expressions is likely to increase with expressiveness, unhealthy emotional expressions (i.e., aggression and violence) may increase along with healthier emotional expressions. With recent research suggesting higher levels of family strength and family satisfaction associated with expressiveness (Schrodt, 2009), it is more likely that, in families with higher levels of expressiveness, parents model emotions that contribute to family strength and satisfaction. However, this likely is not due to the presence of expressiveness alone, but attributable to a unique combination of conflict avoidance, a coaching parental meta-emotion philosophy, and minimal levels of structural traditionalism. In contrast, less family strength and satisfaction may be attributable to a unique combination of emotion dismissing, expressiveness, conflict avoidance, and structural traditionalism.

Conflict Avoidance. The presence of conflict avoidance within families affords the opportunity for both emotion coaching and emotion dismissing. When families avoid conflict due to conformity or topic avoidance, the additional emphasis on maintaining hierarchy and an open communication environment is predictive of their adoption of a

dismissing meta-emotion philosophy. In contrast, when families avoid conflict due to conformity or topic avoidance, the absence of an emphasis on hierarchy combined with the presence of an open communication environment is predictive of emotion coaching. Regardless of a family's meta-emotion philosophy, conflict avoidance is likely to be present to some extent. Which meta-emotion philosophy is adopted seems to hinge on the presence of a traditional belief in maintaining hierarchy amongst parents and children. The ways conflict avoidance may contribute to different emotional environments is interesting.

Conflict avoidance significantly predicts a coaching meta-emotion philosophy by emphasizing conformity amongst family members independent of a structural traditional emphasis on maintaining hierarchy. Therefore, some families may emphasize agreement amongst their members on several topics to promote family harmony and avoid conflict; however, many parents in such families may allow discussions of emotion-related topics to the extent that an emotion coaching philosophy may thrive. For these families, conflict may be avoided by establishing rules that emotion dismissive behaviors are avoided as they are seen as fostering conflict amongst family members. Still, conformity in beliefs may be emphasized in general amongst conflict avoidant families. In such families, emotion (and emotional expressions) may not fall within the bounds of conformity. It is possible, then, that conformity of an emotion coaching philosophy is emphasized in such families (i.e., "In this family, crying is ok.").

Structural traditionalism. Structural traditionalism, the conceptual half of conformity orientation that emphasizes the maintenance of hierarchy within the family, is

only associated with emotion dismissing. It does appear to contribute to a dismissive environment when families encourage an open communication environment and avoid conflict (either due to conformity or topic avoidance).

Parents who believe highly in maintaining a traditional hierarchy between them and their children are simply less likely to be aware of their child's emotions. This lack of awareness could be due to their tendency to discourage emotion expressions, but it may also be due to the avoidance of talk about their child's feelings. How an emotion coaching philosophy interacts with structural traditional beliefs is largely unknown; however, parents emphasizing structural traditionalism may see openness to their child's feelings as a powerless act. Conversely, the expression of emotion and talk about emotion may be viewed as a demonstration of weakness. Therefore, acknowledgement and validation of child emotions and the expression of empathy with the child may be viewed by such parents as an expression of parental weakness. Moreover, intimacy or closeness (two separate but related concepts) may be viewed such that they only occur in the absence of negative emotions.

Based on the findings of this dissertation and the convergence of emotion regulation theory and the general theory of family communication patterns, I propose four family emotional environments that correspond to the family types put forth by the general theory of family communication patterns. Four emotional environments emerged from examining the parental meta-emotions reported across the four FCP family types: *Ambivalent-Uncertain*, *Expressive*, *Muted*, and *Trivial-Avoidant*. The following is a general description of each FCP family type in terms of the emotional environment

constitutive of each. The labels for the proposed typology of family emotional environments are listed in parentheses next to the FCP family type unique to each.

Family emotional environments: Family types. Consensual Families (Ambivalent-Uncertain). High in conversation and conformity orientations, consensual families are characterized by a tension between the pressure for family members to agree and a belief in open communication amongst all family members (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). The pressure for agreement is motivated by a belief in maintaining the existing hierarchy within the family, often resulting in higher pressure placed upon children to agree with parents (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). In this dissertation, consensual families demonstrated high scores in both emotion coaching and dismissing, with the levels of emotion dismissing significantly higher than those found in any other family type. The high levels of emotion coaching signify a desire for parents to openly communicate with their children about emotion; but the high levels of emotion dismissing indicate that consensual families may be open to expressions of only positive emotions, considering that the MESQ taps beliefs associated with negative emotions and that high scores of emotion dismissing may be an indication of negative beliefs associated with negative emotions (i.e., anger and sadness). Therefore, when it comes to family members (often children) expressing negative emotion, there may be a high pressure for family members to avoid expressions of negative emotions as consensual parents tend to dismiss, ignore, or shame other members.

High scores in both coaching and dismissing meta-emotions may also be an indication that consensual families, in their encouragement of family interaction, may be

sending many messages regarding negative emotions. Some of these messages may be characteristic of coaching their children through certain negative emotions under certain circumstances or contexts while other messages may be characteristic of a dismissive approach. That is to say, perhaps high scores on both ED and EC are indicative of parents being either unsure or ambivalent about their beliefs associated with negative emotions. Perhaps parents of consensual families want their children to be emotionally expressive, but they also do not want the conflict that may be associated with certain emotions in certain contexts within their family.

There is a lot of interaction within consensual families which might explain the higher levels of emotion dismissing compared to other families. The climate of otherwise open communication in consensual families may afford them more opportunities to encounter expressions of negative emotions. Therefore, children's emotions in consensual families are dismissed more than in any other family type. The numerous negative psychosocial effects of emotion dismissing may be most prominent in consensual families, however, the high levels of emotion coaching (likely of positive emotions) may buffer some of the negative effects of emotion dismissing amongst consensual families.

Parents in consensual families really do want to understand their children (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006), and this desire embodies their higher conversation orientation schema. At the same time, their children know that the parents make the decisions within their family. Allowing many topics for conversation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b), this tension is resolved by parents listening and spending extra time

with their children. When it comes to negative emotional expressions, however, consensual parents may experience great discomfort in those moments, but the decision to dismiss or to coach may be a difficult one. Children (older children especially) who are dismissed in these families are likely to understand why they are being dismissed as they tend to adopt their parents' values and beliefs, including their beliefs about emotions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004).

In consensual families, conflict is generally regarded as negative and harmful to the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Interestingly, consensual families are uncomfortable with unresolved conflict and may engage each other to resolve conflict. The indication that consensual families experience high levels of emotion dismissing (higher levels than those reported in other family types) complicates the current understandings of conflict within consensual families given the inverse association found between emotion dismissing and emotion regulation (Gottman et al., 1996, 1997) such that consensual families likely have children who demonstrate less emotion regulation. Less emotion regulation combined with a high conversation orientation may provide more opportunities for parents to dismiss or coach.

Consensual families also demonstrate high levels of emotion coaching, which may serve to temporarily soothe the child's intense feelings of sadness or anger (Klines-Dougan et al., 2007). The findings of this dissertation support Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (1997) report that consensual families experience many incidents of venting of negative feelings as well as an inclination to solicit social support. Koerner and Fitzpatrick suggest that closeness amongst consensual family members may not be endangered particularly

because of the abilities of consensual families to deal positively with negative aspects of conflict, noting that such behavior is characteristic of social support.

In consensual families, emotion may be viewed as either contributing to conflict, contributing to closeness (and conflict resolution), or both. The belief that family members should be open with each other and the belief that negative emotions should be avoided may interact such that emotional expressions are viewed as both productive and nonproductive (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997), increasing closeness and increasing conflict (Gottman, 2001). Thus, some family members may express uncertainty and confusion about the appropriateness of certain expressions of emotions, not knowing if they should express in private or with other family members. The tendency for consensual families to engage in high levels of emotion coaching may buffer many negative psychosocial outcomes (see Katz & Hunter, 2007).

Pluralistic Families (Expressive). High in conversation and low in conformity, pluralistic families are characterized by open, unconstrained discussions that involve all family members on a wide array of topics (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). In this dissertation, pluralistic families demonstrated high levels of emotion coaching with low levels of emotion dismissing. Parents in pluralistic families do not feel the need to be in control of their children by making decisions for them, nor do they feel a need to agree with their children's decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). While these parents do exhibit moderate discomfort with negative emotions, resulting in some dismissing behaviors, emotion coaching is predominant amongst pluralistic families. The reduced hierarchy amongst family members and the belief in open communication contribute to

an environment where child perspectives are validated and evaluated based on the merit of arguments rather than on which members espouse them (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Mostly positive but some levels of negative emotional expression are accepted and encouraged during family conflicts. The overall climate for conflict is very encouraging (especially for children) as pluralistic families emphasize a free exchange of ideas with minimal pressures to obey or conform their ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs to those of parents (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). A high degree of communication competence is characteristic of pluralistic families (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997) and this competence is likely to be associated with high levels of emotion coaching as numerous measures of social skill (e.g, Riggio, 1986) emphasize competence in communicating emotion. It is the association between emotion coaching and social skill (and, consequently, closer peer relationships) that Gottman et al. (1996; 1997) describe as amongst their most important findings. It is not surprising that pluralistic families would experience low expressions of negative feelings and low hostility (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997) given the high scores on emotion coaching and low scores on emotion dismissing reported in this dissertation. Combining the belief that conflicts should not be avoided with the beliefs that communication should be open (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990), family members should be able to express differing opinions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b), and emotions and emotional expressions are beneficial for families (characteristic of emotion coaching families), pluralistic families tend to create an emotional environment that is open to a wide range of emotional expression and discussion of a wide range of emotional topics.

Pluralistic family members, therefore, are more likely to be aware of their family members' emotions and engage each other more readily in response to their emotions.

Protective families (Muted). Low in conversation and high in conformity, protective families emphasize obedience to parental authority and have little concern for open communication amongst family members (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). While similar levels of emotion dismissing were found amongst pluralistic and protective families, the proportionately lower levels of emotion coaching offer less buffering potential (as to those of consensual families) to the negative effects associated with emotion dismissing. In protective families, conflict is highly discouraged likely due to a combination of the high discomfort with negative emotions and a lack of desire to talk. When protective families do engage, they have available to them a narrow range of topics that they are comfortable discussing (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). In particular, talking about and expressing emotions, especially negative emotions, are highly avoided as emotions tend to be viewed as non-productive and contributing to family conflict (Gottman, 2001). Though it may be easy to characterize protective families as having an emotionally chilly environment, it should be noted that these families function in a way that adheres to their beliefs. They may be emotionally dismissive, but this behavior is likely rooted in the belief that negative emotions threaten family satisfaction and closeness amongst family members (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Further, positive emotional expressions as well as emotion coaching behaviors are likely limited due to the little importance placed on open communication amongst family members in general.

Protective families face many problems as a result of their family schemata. With the low levels of emotion dismissing and low levels of emotion coaching, children are far more likely to experience conduct problems and aggression, particularly with peers (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004). With parents in protective families feeling discomfort with a wide array of emotional expressions (again, due to the combined effect of emotion dismissing levels and conversation orientation levels) and a general beliefs that negative emotions are harmful to the family, parents are far less likely to be aware of their children's feelings and emotions.

The high conformity scores of protective families may also contribute uniquely to low levels of both emotion coaching and emotion dismissing. Perhaps protective families avoid topics of emotion and avoid emotional expressions in certain contexts to both reinforce and maintain the family hierarchy or to maintain similarities in expressiveness, further fortifying standards for emotional conformity in an effort to minimize family discomfort and conflict. Therefore, protective families may mute their emotional expressions, limiting family members' exposure to such messages. Despite their efforts to actively avoid conflict, protective families develop hostility and negative feelings toward other family members, often expressed in short emotional outbursts (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Combined with little desire to interact with children, protective parents are less likely to be responsive to their children's emotions of fear and sadness and less likely to empathize with them. The lessened acceptance and awareness of adolescent emotion and the discouragement of communicating amongst family members also increases the

likelihood that children in protective families will experience depression (Katz & Hunter, 2007) compared to families with either higher proportions of emotion coaching or a more open communication environment. The higher levels of conformity, although found to be inversely associated with depression (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997) may not prove protective of depression especially with recent research suggesting that conformity orientations are inversely associated with children's mental health and well-being (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007).

Laissez-faire families (Trivial-Avoidant). Lower in both conversation and conformity orientations, Laissez-faire families are characterized by few and often lifeless interactions between family members that involve only a limited number of topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). In this study, Laissez-faire families demonstrated low levels of emotion coaching which were undifferentiated from protective families, and low levels of emotion dismissing which were undifferentiated from both pluralistic and protective families. Put more simply, across meta-emotion philosophies, protective families and laissez-faire families were not significantly different from each other. Crossing the meta-emotion schemata with each family type's respective family communication schemata, however, produces unique differences. For laissez-faire families, lack of interaction is compounded by the parental belief that hierarchy and obedience should not be enforced with children. That is, one difference between the emotional environments of laissez-faire families and protective families is the need for protective families to send messages that enforce and maintain family hierarchy. Laissez-faire families are not motivated to send such messages based on their beliefs that

hierarchy and family interactions are of little importance (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). These beliefs are evident in the lack of desire for parents to communicate with their children. Similarly, parents in laissez-faire families have little interest in what their children might want to say to them (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). As demonstrated by low levels of emotion coaching and emotion dismissing, parents particularly are not interested when it comes to discussing topics of emotion or experiencing emotional expressions by family members. In this way, emotions are viewed as trivial and unimportant. As with most communication amongst family members, messages of emotion are often avoided regardless of the valence of emotion. Therefore, family members avoid expressing emotions with other family members. Likewise, emotional communication is often dismissed or ignored by other family members when emotional expressions and other messages of emotion do occur.

Conflicts are rare with laissez-faire families, but they are not actively avoided (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). This may be partially due to the extreme discomfort that these families have with emotional communication. It is particularly interesting that, in their investigation of conflict within FCP family types, Koerner and Fitzpatrick found laissez-faire families to experience few incidents of venting negative feelings and appear to be emotionally divorced from family members. Further, unresolved conflicts did not seem to be emotionally taxing and, therefore, did not create the hostility expressed in other families (i.e., protective families). Therefore, despite undifferentiated meta-emotions, protective families and laissez-faire families likely experience different emotional environments particularly, in this case, due to the contributions of varying

levels of conformity orientation. As evidenced in the review of literature, issues of hostility (i.e., aggression and violence) have been the focus of research attempts to discern contributions of parental meta-emotions to child aggression (Gottman et al., 1997; Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2004) and family violence (Katz & Windecker-Nelson, 2006). A contribution of this dissertation is furthering our understanding of how multiple family schemata interact and contribute to family communication which may include hostility, aggression, and violence.

Children in *laissez-faire* families learn from their parents that there is little value in family conversation. Similarly, children also learn from their parents that there is little value in expressing emotion, in general, and communicating emotion with family members in specific. Because of their aversion to family conversation, *laissez-faire* parents may adopt emotion dismissive behaviors that ignore or deny their child's emotions in hopes that the emotion will go away quickly and family conversation can remain avoided. Similar to children in protective families, *laissez-faire* children are at risk for depression due to little parental awareness of their emotions and lower levels of emotion coaching (Katz & Hunter, 2007).

In the following section, limitations to this dissertation are discussed, followed by a discussion of future research.

Limitations

This study, as any study, exhibits several limitations based on research design. With any methodology there are strengths and limitations. In this section, I address limitation related to the use of surveys and sampling.

Survey methodology. Despite their efficiency and flexibility as tools for researchers, the use of surveys in this study presents limitations. First, the completion of the research instrument by the participants took place in the adult-child's communication class. Though completing the research instrument during class likely increased the response rate and afforded participants the opportunity to ask questions about the instrument and overall study, being in class in the presence of peers, course instructor, and lead researcher (or research assistant) may have provided added stress to students concerned with completing the survey in a timely fashion. In such cases, data could suffer from participants working at a self-imposed pace that is faster than they are comfortable. In the worst cases, responses could have been fabricated altogether.

Second, the use of retrospective surveys provides many challenges which may have limited the study. In this study, parents recounted their parenting beliefs and behaviors during their child's adolescence, with the adult-child recounting the beliefs and behaviors of their parents. That time may have skewed one or both of the retrospective accounts of the parenting that took place is quite possible. Particularly problematic is the solicitation and consideration of one parent's behaviors and beliefs. In many families, two parents are present and likely contribute to the overall family communication patterns and parental emotion socialization. Parents within the family do not necessarily have the same meta-emotion philosophy. Conflicting orientations may also become apparent when two families are blended as a result of parental remarriage. Little is known about the outcomes of these kinds of conflicts; however, it remains a limitation of this study that this was not accounted for.

Moreover, the perceptions of one family member, in this study, are interpreted as representative of the entire family in several analyses. Despite having insider information, the individual family member, in a sense, speaks for all of their family members and their perceptions. Therefore, the perceptual nature of self-report data compounded by the use in this study of only one family member (e.g., the adult child) for several statistical analyses, suggests that interpretations of future results should be read with caution. The inclusion of primary caregivers' self-reports of their meta-emotions during their child's adolescence did provide balance to the adult-child's perspective, and it is noteworthy that the parent's report differed from the adult-child's report. However, the perspectives of all family members were not solicited and, therefore, the results should be met with similar caution as any self-reports, as described above.

Sampling. In most studies, sampling can offer several limitations. The present study is no exception. First, by sampling only undergraduate college students, the range of age of participants was quite limited. Though a major goal of sampling was to obtain adult participants, data that uses primarily young adults may require further testing to further reveal individual life-stage differences as well as to further understanding of later stages in the family life-cycle (Whitchurch & Dickson, 1999).

A final limitation of this study is that it did not attend to gender differences in emotion socialization. Impacts of gender in emotion socialization practices have been documented. One particular longitudinal study found that mothers talked more about emotions, and, and about a greater variety of emotions, to their daughters than to their sons. By the age of 5 years, the girls talked more than the boys about a variety of

emotions and initiated more emotion-related talk (Kuebli, Bitler, & Fivush, 1995). Similar results were found in how mothers used fewer emotion words when interacting with their 18- to 24-month-old sons than with their same-aged daughters (Dunn, Bretherton, & Munn, 1987). Though attending to gender differences in perceptions of parenting was beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is certainly limited by not accounting for the gender of parents and their adult-children.

These and the above limitations should offer caution to interpretations of this study. Despite these limitations, this study offers an important glimpse into parenting that has previously not been observed.

Future Research

This investigation suggests many directions for future research. In addition to providing support for some predictions emerging from crossing two major theories of family communication, a portion of these findings stand to be addressed in future studies. Additionally, the design of the present study contributes to certain questions remaining to be answered.

This study, in part, examined parental emotion socialization of the adolescent child from the retrospective perceptions of the parent and the adult-child. Future research should consider other perspectives. In particular, researchers should continue to address meta-emotion socialization across life-stages through longitudinal investigations of families with young children and follow the family through life transitions, monitoring meta-emotions of family members over time. To date, researchers in family communication have not often dealt with the concept of flux and how the “ongoing

interplay of competing voices resists finalized meanings,” with dialogic meanings constructed at one point in time “likely to unravel, shift, or add additional layers at another point in time” (Baxter, 2006, p. 137). Along this vein, future research should compare parents and children over time to further multiple theories, including emotion regulation theory, addressing the socialization of emotion within family contexts. Theoretically, meta-emotions are socialized from parent-to-child. Once the child enters adulthood, the consistency of their meta-emotion philosophy over time is not well known. There are studies (e.g., Dickson, 2001) suggesting that shifts in meta-emotion philosophies occur into later adulthood.

Across meta-emotion philosophies, conflict avoidance appears to play a role in family functioning. Much is not known about the contributions of conflict avoidance to the overall emotional environment of families. In particular, future research may investigate differences in conflict strategies across family emotional environments, testing for contributions of meta-emotion schemata and family communication patterns to more effective conflict styles.

There are several future directions spurring from the existing literature of family communication patterns that, in light of examining parental meta-emotion schemata, are particularly intriguing for how current programs of research using FCP theory may be influenced by the consideration family emotional environments. One such program of research is conducted by Paul Schrodt and colleagues, which continues to examine family communication patterns and environments for increased understandings of family processes and their contributions to several outcomes including the following: family

strength (Schrodt, 2009), child mental health and well-being (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007), family functioning (Schrodt, 2009), parental confirmation (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007), parental affection (Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007), communication competence (Schrodt et al., 2009), information processing (Koesten, Schrodt, & Ford, 2009; Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008), and several other behavioral and psychosocial outcomes (see Schrodt, Witt, & Messersmith, 2008). By attending to family emotional environments, thereby adding a cognitive emotional approach to existing understandings of FCP schemata, the above and other family outcomes may be explained more fully.

The results demonstrating the differing contributions of structural traditionalism and conflict avoidance to emotion coaching suggest family emotional environments may be contingent upon how family members set and maintain boundaries for topic avoidance and privacy, further suggesting a need to apply different communication theories (e.g., communication privacy management theory; Petronio, 2002) to more fully investigate family emotional environments and the communication patterns therein. Recent research on emotional support communication amongst mothers and daughters (e.g., Fisher, 2010) demonstrates how emotion may function as a topic for privacy within families.

Deeper examinations of family communication processes are needed to address how messages of privacy contribute to family emotional environments. Moreover, examining family emotional environments and their related disclosure topics may inform upon our current knowledge of family privacy orientations across family transitions (e.g., Morr Serewicz & Canary, 2009). Much remains to be understood about how families discuss topics of emotion and express emotion within the family as compared to outside

the family (e.g., addressing internal and external privacy boundaries). To be taken up by future researchers, then, is the notion that emotional expressions may be considered by some families to be private information.

Future research may also address marital satisfaction as well as the transition to parenthood by examining meta-emotions, conversation orientation, and conformity orientation across couples. Similarities and differences across individual's family-related schemata may be examined for their contributions to marital satisfaction. Further, longitudinal studies may investigate how differences or similarities persist over time as well as how the combined family emotional environment moderates and/or buffers family stress. This line of work could particularly be interesting when applied to families in crisis. Recent research (Dickson et al., in press) indicates that, for homeless families, how families communicate emotion may play a vital role in family members coping with stress, particularly in the turning point of becoming homeless.

This dissertation may also be used for future examinations of gender differences in emotion socialization. Four decades of research has made the assertions that women are better at intimacy than men (Wood & Inman, 1993), males are less competent at friendship than females (Douvan & Adelson, 1966), females may be more socially competent than males (Hirokawa, Yagi, & Miyata, 2004), male friendships lack demonstration of emotional closeness (Williams, 1985), that men need to become more emotionally expressive (Tognoli, 1980), women are more affectionate than men (Floyd, 1997), women are more perceptive of nonverbal cues (Pearson, 1985), and are more accurate in decoding nonverbal cues than males at all ages (Camras, 1985; Hall, 1984;

McClure, 2000; Nowicki & Duke 1994; Rosenthal, Dimatteo, Rogers, & Archer, 1979).

It is not surprising that men are viewed as emotionally inexpressive given the weight of the literature that suggests such a characterization. Despite recent research that negates the image of the inexpressive male (e.g., Dickson, 2001; Ferris & Roper, 2002; Wood & Inman, 1993), further research is needed to address gender differences in emotional expression as well as the socialization of emotion across men and women.

Current research on emotion socialization examining gender differences does offer insight into differences between males and females, however, future research could further attend to family communication and family schemata to describe and explain gender differences and similarities in emotion socialization, perhaps offering deeper insight into the current literature. For example, parents generally provide more support to girls' expression of negative emotional experiences (especially sadness), while boys receive more punishing parental responses to their expressions of anger (Klimes-Dougan, et al., 2007; Fuchs & Thelen, 1988). However, this is balanced by studies that have found no gender differences in adolescents' expectations of parental responses to their expressed emotions (Zeman & Shipman, 1997) or in parents' use of an emotion coaching parenting style (Klimes-Dougan et al., 2007). Similarly, Stocker and colleagues (2007) found no difference between parents of adolescent boys or girls in their level of support and emotion coaching of adolescents' emotional expression or in parents' modeling of positive emotional expression. However, Stocker and colleagues did find that mothers used more emotion coaching with children when compared with fathers. The above findings are, however, tempered by Brody's (2000) finding that although maternal caregivers'

emotional socialization practices did not differ by gender, these practices impacted girls and boys differently.

Currently it is difficult to explain similarities and dissimilarities in the above findings without attending to family schemata. Future research should address this. Although the data from this dissertation does not address adolescents' expectations of parental responses to their expressed emotions, this data could be used to examine gender differences in how adult-children, retrospectively report the parental meta-emotion present during their adolescence. Perhaps sons and daughters perceive different levels of parental meta-emotions. The data gathered for this dissertation could address this in future examinations. Further, the current data could be used to address gender differences in emotion socialization based on parental reports. That is, the current data could contribute to the current body of literature which examines differences in emotion socialization between sons and daughters from the parent's perspective. Because the current data only obtained 12 fathers, comparisons between mothers and fathers cannot be made. Future research should examine fathers and mothers for differences in parental meta-emotion.

Future research should recruit more fathers to further examine the role of fathers by examining communication between fathers and their sons and daughters, particularly the communication of emotion. In general, fathers tend to talk more with daughters and engage in shared activities with sons (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Fink, & Buerkel, 1995). Daughters tend to be talked to about their emotions by their parents (e.g., mothers and fathers) more than sons, with mothers providing the most talk about emotion (Segrin &

Flora, 2005; Trad, 1995). Despite fathers spending one-third the time that mothers do talking with their children (LaRossa, 1998), fathers today may be engaging their children more in wider topics than in previous generations (Silverstein, 2002). This may explain why fathers report closer relationships with their sons than their fathers had with them (Morman & Floyd, 2002). Interestingly, sons perceive their fathers as less affectionate than their fathers perceive themselves (Morman & Floyd, 2005). Future research should examine parental meta-emotions of fathers and their impacts on family communication as well as their psychosocial impacts on sons and daughters. Perhaps research identifying different approaches to fathering based on involvement (e.g., Cooper, 2000) may be better understood when examined from the perspective of parental meta-emotions. In sum, examining the emotional lives of families in general and the contributions of fathers to family emotional environments, in specific, may require future research to continue to attend to family schemata, furthering understanding of how family beliefs influence family communication.

Future research may examine under-examined populations. A bulk of the literature on emotion socialization does not investigate populations allowing for statistical inferences regarding ethnicity/race/culture/class. This dissertation did sample a diverse population, but the current analyses have yet to fully examine the effects of this diversity. Future examinations of the current data as well as future research on emotion socialization, in general, ought to continue to seek broader understandings of emotion socialization in how it relates to differences in ethnicity/race/culture/class. For example, the current data should examine differences in emotion socialization across

race/ethnicity. In particular, future examinations of this data should investigate differences in emotion socialization between groups that were significantly represented in the total sample of adult-child participants. Specifically, differences between adult-children identifying as White/Euro-American ($n = 107$, 46.9%) and adult-children identifying as Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic ($n = 83$, 36.4%) should be examined. Research by Masako Ishii-Kuntz (1997) suggests cultural differences exist in how families express intimacy. In future analyses, the current data may uncover differences in meta-emotions between White/Euro-American families and Latino/a, Chicano, or Hispanic families. Further, future research may investigate differences in family emotional environments across race/ethnicity.

Coontz (2003) notes that social class also makes a difference in expressing intimacy, as working-class families are generally found to be less emotionally expressive than middle- and upper-class families. Future analyses of the data collected for this dissertation could address the need to further investigate differences in family communication based on social class, as this investigation sampled families from a wide range of household incomes. Specifically, future examinations of the data collected for this dissertation should investigate differences in adult-child perceptions of meta-emotions based on differing levels of household income. That socioeconomic class may be related to differing family belief systems about emotion (e.g., parental meta-emotions) is particularly interesting given that research on the topic is sparse. To this end, future research may investigate differences in family emotional environments across socioeconomic class.

Practical Implications

This dissertation offers several opportunities for addressing applications of communication scholarship. Two areas in which this dissertation may be practically applied are (1) interventions aimed at improving parents of adolescents' emotion socialization and (2) the teaching of communication and emotion.

Despite the impact of parents' emotion socialization on adolescent functioning and psychopathology, a review of the literature showed that there are very few instances of interventions aimed at improving parents of adolescents' emotion socialization. In one exception, Keiley (2002; 2007) developed the Multiple Family Group Intervention to address behavioral problems in adolescent juvenile delinquents with conduct disorder. The program is designed to target negative emotional patterns between parents and children with conduct disorder with the intention of increasing attachment. The eight week program follows six steps that focus on improving: (a) awareness of one's own feelings, (b) toleration of intense feelings, (c) exploration of one's own more vulnerable feelings (i.e. sadness, fear) beneath feelings of rage, (d) perspective taking, (e) actual expression of vulnerable feelings, (f) reconnection between adolescents and parents. Parents proceed through these steps together with adolescents and as parents develop an altered modus operandi regarding emotions, changing both emotion-contingent socialization and modeling of positive emotional expression and emotion regulation, they impact their children's attitude towards the experience of strong emotions. The intervention has been found to significantly reduce adolescent recidivism, externalizing

and internalizing (latter is adolescent report only) behaviors, and functional emotion regulation, while increasing parent-adolescent attachment.

The findings of this dissertation indicate that prescriptive approaches to family functioning and child well-being may be more complex than previously thought. In particular, this dissertation suggests that different family types (based on differing levels of family schemata) experience unique family emotional environments which are constitutive of and contribute to unique differences in family belief systems of emotion. Therefore, future developments of family interventions should account for the complexities of varying family emotional environments. Perhaps families need a better understanding of their own beliefs and the resultant emotional environments which they construct before changes can be made. Additionally, the research on family communication patterns does not implicate functionality, labeling one FCP family type as more functional than another (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Rather, family functioning is thought to be contextual. That is, the typology recognizes that families can be functioning well based on very different types of behavior. Therefore, there is reason to believe that differences in emotion socialization, based on the results of this dissertation, may be more difficult to describe in terms of functionality than previously believed (e.g., Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997).

Another practical application of this dissertation is in the teaching of communication and emotion. Currently, several communication textbooks approach emotion by taking a behavioral approach, emphasizing display rules (e.g., Fineman, 1993) and nonverbal expressions of emotion; or by emphasizing the communication of

emotion through other symbolic forms of interaction (e.g., affectionate communication). It appears that many communication textbooks are neglecting attending to cognitive approaches to communication which may be useful in further explaining and describing human communication of emotion. One scholar who emphasizes a three-pronged approach to emotion is Clifford Notarius (1996). Notarius identifies three key elements that influence satisfaction with long-term relationship: words, thought, and emotions. In his discussion, Notarius emphasizes the interrelationships between words, thought, and emotions. Put simply, our emotions are partly constructed through words, our thoughts are constructed by words, and our words are constructed by thoughts. Therefore, our understanding of emotion is predicated on an understanding of human cognition and symbolic interaction. This dissertation emphasizes that an understanding of human cognition improves our understandings of communication and emotion because of the unique relationships between behavior (i.e., emotion socialization), cognition (i.e., schemata), and emotion. In sum, this dissertation indicates that teaching human communication of emotion may be improved by emphasizing a cognitive approach to emotion as well as the traditional elements of behavior and symbolic interaction.

Conclusion

This dissertation investigated adult's emotion socialization in their family of origin. This investigation applied Emotion Regulation Theory (ERT) and Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) to an examination of interactions amongst family related schemata. The results of examining parenting through the intersected

perspectives of two schema-based theories offers unique insight into family cognition, parental socialization, and family functioning.

Understandings of both theories are expanded by the present study particularly because they both are founded on the notion that people, through social interaction, generate and develop schemata (e.g., mental structures used to process information). These schemata are representative of belief-systems which influence individual behaviors. Because schemata are socialized, family communication offers a unique site for examining the socialization of communication patterns. In this study, six schemata were examined: an emotion coaching philosophy, an emotion dismissing philosophy, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, expressiveness, structural traditionalism, and conflict avoidance. Further, FCP family types offered additional variables to examine interactions of schemata. Associations among schemata across family types were addressed through emerging hypotheses and research questions.

Results indicated the support of several hypotheses, however, there were equally as many surprises in how schemata interacted. Overall, this study indicates the complexities that arise when cognitive schema interact. As is noted by several schema theorists and researchers, the combination of varying levels of schemata do not simply produce crossing main effects. On the contrary, cognitive schemata produce unique interactions which can elude predictions even with the most stringent examinations of theory. The unique interactions demonstrated by examining parental meta-emotions, family communication patterns, FCP family types, and the family communication environments of expressiveness, conflict avoidance, and structural traditionalism suggest

that the above schemata interact to form an overall family emotional environment which embodies and constructs patterns of family communication.

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Appendix A: Student Informed Consent Form: University A

You are invited to participate in a study that will examine emotion socialization and family communication. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. The study is conducted by Joseph Velasco. Results will be used to explore relationships between emotion socialization and patterns of family communication. Joseph Velasco can be reached at joey.velasco@du.edu. This project is supervised by the dissertation committee Chair, Dr. Mary Claire Morr-Serewicz, Department of Human Communication, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, 303-871-4332, mserewic@du.edu.

Participation in this study should take about 15 minutes. Participation will involve responding to questions about your emotion experiences and your personal relationships. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the survey at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Please do not provide any identifiable information on the survey instrument as your responses are intended to be anonymous to conceal your identity. When you have completed the survey, please bring it to the research assistant (RA) administering the survey. The RA will then give a survey to take home to administer to your primary caregiver and submitted by them either through mail or electronically. Both your survey and that given to your primary caregiver should be numerically matched. Please make sure your numbers match. This will be used to match your responses to those of your primary caregiver.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the administration of this study, please contact Dennis Wittmer, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-2431, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please note, by completing a survey, you are expressing that you understand the above statement and are participating on your own free-will. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher (or attendant RA) any questions you have.

Appendix B: Student Informed Consent Form: University B

You are invited to participate in a study that will examine emotion socialization and family communication. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. The study is conducted by Joseph Velasco. Results will be used to explore relationships between emotion socialization and patterns of family communication. Joseph Velasco can be reached at joey.velasco@du.edu. This project is supervised by the dissertation committee Chair, Dr. Mary Claire Morr-Serewicz, Department of Human Communication, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, 303-871-4332, mserewic@du.edu.

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Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, Sul Ross State University might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this survey address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

When you have completed the survey, please bring it to the research assistant (RA) administering the survey. The RA will then give you a survey to take home to administer to your primary caregiver and should be returned by them either through mail or electronically. Both your survey and that given to your primary caregiver should be numerically matched. Please make sure your numbers match. This will be used to match your responses to those of your primary caregiver.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the administration of this study, please contact Dr. Jay Downing, Chair, Institutional Review Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 432-837-8163 or email him at jdowning@sulross.edu.

Further, if you feel that participating in this study caused you any discomfort or was otherwise upsetting, please visit the Counseling Center on the SRSU campus located in Ferguson Hall, Room 112, Alpine, TX, 79832. Counselors can also be reached at 432-837-8203.

You may keep this page for your records. Please note, by completing a survey, you are expressing that you understand the above statement and are participating on your own free-will. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher (or attendant RA) any questions you have.

Appendix C: Adult-child Research Instrument

Section 1

First, please answer the following questions about yourself and your family:

What is your age? _____ Years

What is your year in school? Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

What is your biological sex? Male Female

What is your racial, ethnic, or cultural background?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White/Euro-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic |

What is the relationship between your parents?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> They were never married to each other | <input type="checkbox"/> They are divorced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They are married to each other | <input type="checkbox"/> They were married until one spouse's death |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They are separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Please indicate how many siblings you have by type.

Full-bio _____	Step- _____	Other siblings _____
Half-bio _____	Adopted _____	

What is your total household income?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$89,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$99,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 to \$149,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or more |

Section 2

Please think about your family during your adolescence and indicate how much you agree with each statement by circling a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. My parent(s) often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My parent(s) often say things like "You should always look at both sides of the issue."	1	2	3	4	5
4. My parent(s) often say things like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."	1	2	3	4	5
5. My parent(s) encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
6. In our home, my parent(s) usually have the last word.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My parent(s) and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My parent(s) often say things like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making other people mad."	1	2	3	4	5
9. I usually tell my parent(s) what I am thinking about things.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My parent(s) feel that it is important to be the boss.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
11. My parent(s) often say things like “Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions.”	1	2	3	4	5
12. Some issues will disappear if two people can just avoid arguing about them.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I can tell my parent(s) almost anything.	1	2	3	4	5
14. When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parent’s rules.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I really enjoy talking with my parent(s) even when we disagree.	1	2	3	4	5
16. It is better to hide one’s true feelings in order to avoid hurting a family member.	1	2	3	4	5
17. My parent(s) encourage me to express my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My parent(s) often say things like “You’ll know better when you grow up.”	1	2	3	4	5
19. My parent(s) tend to be very open about their emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
20. In a family, it is better to avoid conflicts than to engage in them.	1	2	3	4	5
21. In our family, we often talk about our feelings and emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My parent(s) often say things like “My ideas are right and you should not question them.”	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
23. In our family, we often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.					
24. If my parent(s) don't approve of it they don't want to know about it.	1	2	3	4	5
25. In our family we often talk about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.	1	2	3	4	5
26. My parent(s) often say things like "A child should not argue with adults."	1	2	3	4	5
27. My family reassures and comforts me when I am feeling low.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My parent(s) sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs.	1	2	3	4	5
29. We tell each other how much we love or care about each other.	1	2	3	4	5
30. A woman should take her husband's last name when she marries.	1	2	3	4	5
31. My parent(s) like to hear my opinions, even when they don't agree with me.	1	2	3	4	5
32. We often talk as a family about things we have done during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3

Please think about your relationship with your family during your adolescence, and use the following words and phrases to describe it. For example, if you think that your relationship with your family during your adolescence was miserable, circle the number next to the word “miserable”. If you think it was very enjoyable, circle the number next to “enjoyable.” If you think it was somewhere in between, circle the appropriate number.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|
| 1. | miserable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | enjoyable |
| 2. | hopeful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | discouraging |
| 3. | empty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | full |
| 4. | interesting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | boring |
| 5. | rewarding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | disappointing |
| 6. | doesn't give me
much chance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | brings out the
best in me |
| 7 | lonely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | friendly |
| 8 | worthwhile | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | useless |

9 All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your relationship with your family during your adolescence? Circle the number that best describes how satisfied you were.

Completely Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Completely Satisfied
----------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-------------------------

Section 4

Imagine you are your primary caregiver during the time of your adolescence. Please indicate how much your primary caregiver would agree with each statement by circling a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child is sad, I am expected to fix the world and make it perfect.	1	2	3	4	5	
I help my child get over sadness quickly so he/she can move on to other things.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child gets angry my goal is to get him/her to stop.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child is sad, it's time to problem-solve.	1	2	3	4	5	
I try to change my child's angry moods into cheerful ones.	1	2	3	4	5	
Anger is an emotion worth exploring.	1	2	3	4	5	
I prefer a happy child to a child who is overly emotional.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child gets sad, it's time to get close.	1	2	3	4	5	
Sadness is something that one had to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child gets angry, it's time to solve a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	
Childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child is angry, it's an opportunity for getting close.	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child is angry, I want to know what he/she is thinking	1	2	3	4	5	
When my child is angry, I take some time to try to experience this feeling with my child.	1	2	3	4	5	

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form: Primary Caregiver

You are invited to participate in a study that will examine emotion socialization and family communication. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. The study is conducted by Joseph Velasco. Results will be used to explore relationships between emotion socialization and patterns of family communication. Joseph Velasco can be reached at joey.velasco@du.edu. This project is supervised by the dissertation committee Chair, Dr. Mary Claire Morr-Serewicz, Department of Human Communication, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, 303-871-4332, mserewic@du.edu.

Participation in this study should take about 15 minutes. Participation will involve responding to questions about your emotion experiences and your personal relationships. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the survey at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this survey address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

When you have completed the survey, please bring it to the research assistant (RA) administering the survey. The RA will then give a survey to take home to administer to your primary caregiver and submitted by them either through mail or electronically. Both your survey and that given to your primary caregiver should be numerically matched. Please make sure your numbers match. This will be used to match your responses to those of your primary caregiver.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the administration of this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

Further, if you feel that participating in this study caused you any discomfort or was otherwise upsetting, please visit the Health and Counseling Center on the University of Denver campus located at 2240 East Buchtel Blvd. Suite 3N, Denver, CO 80208. Counselors can also be reached by phone at 303-871-2205.

You may keep this page for your records. Please note, by completing a survey, you are expressing that you understand the above statement and are participating on your own free-will. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher (or attendant RA) any questions you have.

Appendix E: Primary Caregiver Research Instrument

Section 1

First, please answer the following questions about yourself and your family:

What is your age? _____ Years

What is your biological sex? Male Female

What is your relationship to your child?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Step-mother |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Step-father |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoptive Father | |

What is your racial, ethnic, or cultural background?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White/Euro-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Latino/a, Chicano/a, or Hispanic |

What is your current marital status?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never married | <input type="checkbox"/> Now divorced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Now married | <input type="checkbox"/> Now widowed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Now separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

What was your marital status during your child's adolescence?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> married | <input type="checkbox"/> divorced |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not married | <input type="checkbox"/> widowed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

What is your total household income?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$89,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$99,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$69,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 to \$149,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$79,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or more |

Section 2

Imagining yourself when your child was an adolescent, please indicate how much you would agree with each statement by circling a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree).

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
When my child is sad, I am expected to fix the world and make it perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
I help my child get over sadness quickly so he/she can move on to other things.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child gets angry my goal is to get him/her to stop.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child is sad, it's time to problem-solve.	1	2	3	4	5
I try to change my child's angry moods into cheerful ones.	1	2	3	4	5
Anger is an emotion worth exploring.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer a happy child to a child who is overly emotional.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child gets sad, it's time to get close.	1	2	3	4	5
Sadness is something that one had to get over, to ride out, not to dwell on.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child gets angry, it's time to solve a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
Childhood is a happy-go-lucky time, not a time for feeling sad or angry.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child is angry, it's an opportunity for getting close.	1	2	3	4	5
When my child is angry, I want to know what he/she is thinking	1	2	3	4	5
When my child is angry, I take some time to try to experience this feeling with my child.	1	2	3	4	5

NOTE: If you would rather complete this survey online, visit

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LV2LLK5>

If mailing, please mail to:

Joseph Velasco
P.O. Box C-43
Alpine, TX 79832

Appendix F: Feedback Sheet

The research in which you just participated was designed to examine family communication patterns and emotion socialization. This study is grounded in Gottman et al.'s Emotion Regulation Theory of Meta-emotion, Parenting, and Child-outcomes. According to this theory, parents' beliefs and behaviors regarding emotion, that is, their *meta-emotion philosophy* and emotion parenting behaviors, are associated with important life outcomes for children, family cohesiveness, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and marital quality. This useful, but broad, theory defines parents' meta-emotion philosophy as the set of thoughts and approach to their own and their children's emotions.

Two types of meta-emotion philosophies have been described, and these are *emotion coaching* and *emotion dismissing* (Gottman et al., 1997). An emotion coaching philosophy is marked by parents' awareness of low intensity emotions in themselves and their child and their use of negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching. Parents who provide emotion coaching also validate children's emotions, assist them in verbally labeling their emotions, and help children problem-solve in emotion eliciting situations. The emotion-dismissing philosophy is characterized by the belief that negative emotions are harmful for children and the motive to change these negative emotions as quickly as possible. Simply, these philosophies of emotion(ality) represent cognitive structures (e.g., schema) which are socialized through parent-child interaction.

Parents' meta-emotion style gives us some sense of the parents' underlying philosophy of emotions, but does not directly tap children's meta-emotions or parents' emotion-related socialization behaviors and messages sent particularly from parent to child. This study works from an existing heuristic of family communication (e.g., Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002) general theory of family communication patterns) which explains family communication patterns through cognitive schemas that, too, are part of a family's socialization processes. This study, therefore, examines the intersections of two schema-based theories of family cognition/communication.

Research on family emotion socialization has primarily focused on parental emotion socialization of the child from the parent's perspective (Eisenberg, et al., 1998a). This study will complement existing literature by continuing the investigation of parental emotion socialization by examining the emotion socialization of the adult-child from the perspective of the adult-child. Further, the adult-child's perspective of how they were parented will be compared to the self-reported meta-emotions from their primary caregiver.

The following articles bear directly on the study that you have just completed:

Gottman, J. M., Katz, L. F., & Hooven, C. (1997). *Meta-emotion: how families communicate emotionally*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Koerner, A. F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of family communication. *Communication Theory*, 12, 70-91.

Appendix G: Recruitment Script

Today you are invited to participate in a study that will examine your emotion socialization and family communication. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. The study is conducted by Joseph Velasco, a PhD Candidate at the University of Denver. Results will be used to explore relationships between emotion socialization and patterns of family communication. Participation is voluntary. You will not be penalized for not participating, but your course instructor has been asked to offer extra-credit for your complete participation.

Since “complete participation” requires you to also have your primary caregiver complete a survey, your receiving extra-credit hinges on both you and your primary caregiver completing surveys.

Students participating in this study are responding as adults, more specifically, as adult-children. This means that you MUST BE OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE to participate in this study. If you are younger than 18, your instructor has been asked to provide you an alternative for receiving the same extra-credit offered for participating in this study.

As adult-children, you will be asked a series of questions regarding your experience as an adolescent. Basically, you are asked to think back to your family experience as a child. I will soon hand out the consent form which is attached to your survey. You should read the consent form carefully. In it are specifics about how to contact the lead researcher as well as a description of the confidential nature of this study. So please read it. There are no signatures required, but your consent is implied if you complete a survey. You may stop participating at any time, especially if you feel any discomfort.

If you choose to participate, after you have completed a survey, return it to me so that I can hand you materials for you to take to your primary caregiver. Primary caregivers will have the choice of completing a paper-copy or completing an electronic survey through Survey Monkey. There is a link to the website on the back of the *Primary Caregiver Survey*, but if your caregiver would like to mail their materials to the researcher, addressed envelopes are available. Make sure the number on your survey matches the number on your caregiver’s materials. All surveys are coded so that they are matched during their analysis.

Please have your primary caregiver complete their materials as soon as possible. Your extra-credit rides on it.

I will now pass out copies of the survey with the consent form attached. Once you have read it and agree to participate, rip off the consent form and begin completing the survey. Once you are finished completing your materials, please come up to me so that I can give you materials for your primary caregiver. Again, make sure the number on your materials and the number on your primary caregiver’s materials MATCH.

[Pass out surveys.]

NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS ADMINISTERING THIS SURVEY: Please return all materials (completed or otherwise blank) to Tiffany Baldwin in the Department of Human Communication at the University of Denver. Make sure materials are returned within the provided envelope for your course. THANKS!

Appendix H: Email to University A

Hello HCOM grad students and faculty! Sometime this week, Tiffany Baldwin may place a large envelope in your box regarding a study that is being conducted by me. The data collected through the surveys in your packet will be used to complete my dissertation on family communication patterns and parental emotion socialization.

I am sending this message to kindly ask that you help me in gathering this data in the class(es) you are teaching. I am currently living in Texas where I am also collecting data. Your help in collecting this data would be greatly appreciated.

This study uses two research instruments: one for adult children (aka your students) and one for a primary caregiver.

If you choose to help me out with this, I ask that you read the provided Script to your students and have them complete their surveys in class. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete. As they finish, they can come up to you, turn in their completed survey and receive from you a primary caregiver survey which is numerically matched to their survey. They can take this home to recruit their primary caregiver.

Once your class is done, please return all materials (minus the primary caregiver surveys you handed out) sealed inside the provided envelope to Tiffany Baldwin or place your envelope(s) in a marked box located in the HCOM office.

I also ask that you offer some form of extra-credit to those who participate. I ask that extra-credit only be awarded to those whose primary caregiver also participates. To track this, I will generate a list of student names indicating that their primary caregiver has completed a survey. I will send this list back to DU so that you can award extra-credit to deserving students.

Please read the script for additional information regarding the details of administering this survey. I have attached a copy of the script. For those of you who would like to learn more about my research topic(s), I have provided a sheet which can give you a better idea about what this dissertation is concerned with. Again, I really would appreciate your help with this. I need your support!