

Adolescent–Parent Relationships: Progress, Processes, and Prospects

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Abstract

The nature of adolescent–parent relationships has been a topic of enduring concern in developmental science. In this article, we review theory and current research on several central topics. First, we define adolescence as a developmental period and briefly discuss current theoretical and analytical approaches. Then, we consider adolescent–parent relationship quality, including developmental trends and individual differences in negative interactions, positive relationships, and conflict resolution, as well as research that examines relationship quality within different family subsystems. Next, we discuss effects of emotional variability and flexibility on parent–adolescent relationships and review research on adolescents’ and parents’ beliefs about parental authority legitimacy. This is followed by a discussion of current research on parenting effects on adolescent–parent relationships, including approaches that provide greater specificity in defining parental control and its links with relationship quality, as well as research on parental monitoring and adolescent information management. We conclude this article with directions for future research.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Adolescent–parent relationships have been a persistent topic of fascination for novelists, historians, and philosophers for centuries, in part because these relationships have been regarded as tumultuous and fraught for both parents and teens. Although this topic has a comparatively shorter history in developmental psychology, the nature of adolescent–parent relationships has been discussed and debated from the field’s inception (e.g., Hall 1904). Although providing a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this article, our aim is to identify various strands of research that have been central in the developmental science literature on adolescent–parent relationships and to discuss new findings and research directions. In the following sections, we first focus on adolescent–parent relationship quality, examining research on negative, conflictive interactions, positive relationships, and conflict resolution, as well as family systems theory research that links relationship quality across different family subsystems. Next, we consider research on emotional regulation, variability, and lability in adolescent–parent relationships. This is followed by a section on social–cognitive approaches to beliefs about the legitimacy of parental authority and its links with parenting and adolescent adjustment. Then, we discuss research examining associations between parenting and adolescent–parent relationships, as well as research on parental monitoring and knowledge and adolescent information management. We conclude this review with final thoughts and directions for future research.

Before proceeding to the main focus of this review, however, we set the stage (and the scope of our contribution) by considering several topics that frame our discussion. Thus, we briefly discuss the definition of adolescence and who is (and is not) being studied in current research, as well as the major conceptual and methodological approaches in the field.

Defining Adolescence

Adolescence is often described as beginning in biology and ending in culture. This is because the transition into adolescence is marked by the dramatic biological changes of puberty, but the transition to adulthood is less clearly demarcated (Smetana et al. 2006a) and is subject to cultural factors and historical change. Therefore, it is important to recognize some of the demographic, cultural, and historical forces shaping families at the start of the third decade of the twenty-first century, as they have implications for how adolescence is conceptualized.

Developmental researchers usually divide adolescence into three periods: early adolescence (typically ages 10–13 years), middle adolescence (ages 14–17), and late adolescence (18 until the early twenties). The onset of adolescence is relatively straightforward to describe, either chronologically (at ages 10 or 11) or biologically (in terms of pubertal maturation). Adolescence is generally viewed as a developmental period of preparation for adulthood; thus, sociological markers of the transition out of adolescence—role transitions such as marriage and family formation, completion of education, and entrance into the labor force—are often considered paramount. For youth in many contemporary societies, however, these transitions are occurring at later ages than ever before, extending the length of this preparatory period. This has led to the proposition that the years between age 18 and the mid- to late twenties constitute a distinct developmental period, called emerging adulthood (Arnett 2015). Emerging adulthood is characterized by instability in life circumstances, diversity in attaining the various sociological markers of adulthood, and an increase in identity exploration, all of which are more likely during this time than at earlier and later developmental periods. There is ongoing debate as to whether emerging adulthood is a new developmental phase or “a pleasure for the privileged” (Galambos & Loreto Martínez 2007, p. 109)—that is, an opportunity only available to those living in more advantaged circumstances, who have the option to explore different identities and lifestyles. We do not engage in these debates here, but rather focus primarily on the second decade of life.

Who Is Being Studied?

In research conducted within the United States, great strides have been made in extending research beyond largely European American middle-class samples to more diverse populations of youth that better reflect the nation’s changing demographic landscape. Moreover, when families from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are studied, they are often described with greater specificity (e.g., distinguishing between Mexican American and Puerto Rican youth rather than simply identifying them as Latinx). There also has been an increasing focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth, although, as we describe below, this research is more limited than research on family relationships in ethnic and racial minority youth.

Studies conducted outside the United States have likewise become more diverse and inclusive, and there has been a noticeable uptick over the past decade in studies employing international samples. As commentators have noted, however, developmental research, like psychological research more generally (Henrich et al. 2010), is limited in its reliance on WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) samples (Nielsen et al. 2017). Studies employing samples from non-WEIRD countries (particularly from Africa and the Asian subcontinent) remain underrepresented in research on adolescent–parent relationships, limiting the generalizations that can be drawn.

In addition, the past two decades have seen an unprecedented worldwide increase—49% since 2000—in international migration (UN Dep. Econ. Soc. Aff. Popul. Div. 2017). Reflecting these trends, the experiences of and potential stresses on adolescent–parent relationships in

immigrant families living in the United States and elsewhere have become an important focus of research. Despite the dramatic increases in their numbers and the large humanitarian crisis they face (UNICEF 2016), however, families of refugee, asylum-seeking, and forcibly displaced youths, including teenage migrants who are unaccompanied by adults, both in the United States and around its borders, as well as around the world, have received far less attention from developmental scientists.

Theoretical and Methodological Innovations

Ecological approaches to human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2006), which have dominated the field for several decades, have made significant contributions to our understanding of individual differences and contextual variability in adolescent–parent relationships. But, as noted in a previous review (Smetana et al. 2006a), they have also led to a body of research that has become markedly less developmental. However, relational meta-theory (Lerner & Hilliard 2019, Overton 2015), which proposes an integration of contextual and organismic meta-theories, is gaining traction in developmental science, leading to renewed attention to both developmental processes and intraindividual change during adolescence. In particular, and as discussed in several sections below, dynamic systems theories (Witherington 2007) have provided novel conceptual and methodological approaches to studies of adolescent–parent relationships (e.g., Granic et al. 2003). Research informed by family systems theory (Kerig 2016, Minuchin 2002) has also furthered our understanding of adolescent–parent relationships in the context of different family subsystems.

In addition, the types of methodological and statistical approaches employed to study adolescent–parent relationships have expanded considerably. While a full accounting of this expansion is beyond the scope of this review, we briefly describe several salient trends. First, over the past decade, the sophistication of longitudinal modeling techniques used to study adolescent–parent relationships has improved significantly (Keijsers & van Roekel 2018). Researchers are increasingly likely to avail themselves of techniques such as latent growth modeling to study normative change over time or to use mixture modeling or latent trajectory analyses to study individual differences in developmental trajectories.

Second, there has been a larger discussion in psychology about the appropriateness of cross-lagged panel models (CLPMs) for making assumptions about causal processes. Such discussions, which have called attention to the importance of separating within-person processes from between-person differences in longitudinal research (Berry & Willoughby 2017, Hamaker 2012, Hamaker et al. 2015), have begun to take root in research on parenting and adolescent–parent relationships. These arguments begin with a rather commonsense claim that families are not all alike, nor can they be considered stable over time. As viewed within perspectives that consider families as dynamic systems, this idea suggests that the statistical relations found at the between-person level may differ from the processes that operate at the within-person level and that these should be disentangled (Keijsers 2016). Several studies have provided persuasive evidence that well-accepted findings using traditional CLPMs demonstrating bidirectional relationships operating over time between parents and children (e.g., in adolescent secrecy or in links between parental monitoring and delinquency, or between parental solicitation of information and adolescent disclosure) reflect a mixture of within- and between-person variances and that, therefore, these two levels must be distinguished. Moreover, the striking finding is that when researchers have done so, the within-person processes are quite different from earlier findings using CLPMs (Dietvorst et al. 2018, Keijsers 2016, Keijsers et al. 2016, Villalobos Solís et al. 2015).

Because of its very nature, research on adolescent–parent relationships (often) seeks responses from both adolescents and parents, and researchers typically expect or desire convergence among

these different informants. But adolescents' and parents' reports on their relationships rarely converge strongly; rather, their correspondence typically is low to moderate. Some researchers have proposed that, rather than viewing these discrepancies as nuisance or measurement error, they may be interesting and worthy of study in and of themselves, and that variability in the degree (and direction) of discrepancies between parents and adolescents can illuminate family dynamics and adolescent adjustment (De Los Reyes et al. 2019). This claim has led both to methodological recommendations about how to analyze and model discrepancies and to a robust body of research examining the extent and direction of adolescent–parent discrepancies and their implications for adolescent functioning.

De Los Reyes & Ohannessian (2016) have outlined a theoretical model of the conditions in which high levels of convergence or divergence can be associated with adaptive and maladaptive adjustment, sometimes in complex ways. For instance, one study found that congruent mother and early adolescent reports of negative interactions—but only when at low levels—were associated with low levels of teen depressive symptoms. When both mothers and early adolescents viewed their interactions as highly negative, youths reported high levels of depressive symptoms (Nelemans et al. 2016). De Los Reyes et al. (2013, 2019) suggest that contextual differences are one important source of discrepancies—for instance, different informants observe adolescents in different contexts such as home versus in school. Furthermore, Rote & Smetana (2016) note that discrepancies among reporters may be a function of the extent to which behaviors are objective and involve shared experience and knowledge. For instance, behaviors such as positive support may be directly observable, whereas other beliefs and behaviors (e.g., beliefs about parents' right to know about teens' activities) must be inferred. And there are other behaviors, such as parents' knowledge of teens' activities, where informants may have differential access to the information. Using person-centered analyses of these three examples of family constructs, Rote & Smetana (2016) found moderate consistency in mother–adolescent discrepancies and different individual and family correlates of the three types of profiles, supporting the notion that discrepancies may be a function of both the particular dyad and the type of family construct being considered. These researchers also stressed the need to distinguish between adolescent–parent discrepancies that arise due to normative differences between generations and those that reflect more problematic adjustment or relationships.

ADOLESCENT–PARENT RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

Conflict and Negative Interactions with Parents

In his early treatise on adolescent psychology, Hall (1904) described adolescent–parent relationships as tumultuous and conflictive, a view that was mirrored in Anna Freud's [1966 (1937)] influential description of adolescence as a period of “developmental disturbance.” Regardless of relationship quality during childhood, adolescent–parent conflict and distancing from parents were viewed as an inevitable result of the biological changes of puberty. Other psychoanalytically oriented followers of Freud focused on more positive adaptation to pubertal maturation, such as youths' individuation from parents (Blos 1962). The importance of moving beyond family bonds in the service of reproduction also is reflected in the evolutionary approach to conflict (Steinberg 1989).

According to the social relations perspective (Laursen & Collins 2009), relationships are characterized by substantial continuity from childhood to adolescence. Nevertheless, developmental periods such as early adolescence, which are characterized by rapid transitions across multiple domains, are regarded as resulting in misalignments in parents' and teens' expectations for adolescents' behavior, leading to conflict. Likewise, the social–cognitive perspective (Smetana 2011)

suggests that parents' and adolescents' different roles and goals lead to clashing interpretations of conflicts. Reflecting their needs for greater autonomy, adolescents generally view conflicts as issues of personal jurisdiction, whereas parents' concerns with teens' safety and their desire to socialize social norms lead them to view conflicts as largely prudential and social-conventional, respectively. Notably, these findings have been replicated (with some slight variations) both cross-culturally, in societies that are considered more collectivist, as well as among ethnic and racial minority youth in the United States (Smetana 2011). We note that both the social relations and social-cognitive perspectives stress normative generational discrepancies in adolescents' and parents' conceptions of their relationships, and both propose that conflicts subside and autonomy increases as conflicts are negotiated. Unlike individuation theories (such as those of Blos and later research on emotional autonomy), which emphasize parents' and teens' emotional separation, these perspectives view connections to parents as largely maintained across adolescence and emphasize both autonomy and relatedness.

These different views have informed decades of research, and several key conclusions have emerged. For example, highly conflictive adolescent-parent relationships, as initially proposed by the psychoanalytic perspective, are not the norm. Rather, they reflect problematic relationships in childhood and are associated with a wide range of indices of adolescent maladjustment (Rutter et al. 1976, Steinberg 1990). However, mild conflicts with parents, typically over the mundane irritants of family life, such as how teens keep their room, how they dress, and where they go after school, are normative during adolescence—and, some would argue, are functional for adolescent development, particularly when parents are highly supportive and conflicts are not very intense (for reviews, see Branje 2018, Collins & Steinberg 2006, Laursen & Collins 2009, Meeus 2019, Smetana 2011, Smetana et al. 2006a).

An influential meta-analysis, now more than 20 years old and including mostly cross-sectional studies of primarily middle-class European American (or European) samples (Laursen et al. 1998), concluded that conflicts increase in frequency from late childhood to early adolescence and then decline, whereas conflict intensity increases in middle adolescence. Since then, numerous longitudinal studies have confirmed that anger, negative emotions, conflict, and tensions increase over time in early adolescence (Kim et al. 2001, McGue et al. 2005; for reviews, see Meeus 2016, 2019) and that conflict intensity increases in middle adolescence (although faster for girls than boys) and then declines from middle to late adolescence (De Goede et al. 2009). Moreover, results from daily diary studies show that the negative emotions experienced during and after conflicts are a stronger predictor of mother-adolescent relationship quality, both concurrently and over time, than whether conflicts were resolved through compromise (Laursen et al. 2016).

These general conclusions about age-related trends in conflict are supported in research based on diverse samples, although there is some variability in the timing and degree of discord. Conflicts are more frequent and develop at earlier ages among European American versus ethnic minority youth (Chung et al. 2009; Fuligni 1998; for a review, see Smetana 2011), and similar trends have been observed in different regions of the world, including different Asian countries (Chen-Gardini 2012, Yamada 2009, Yau & Smetana 1996) and the Middle East (Assadi et al. 2011).

Moreover, much recent research has been devoted to immigrant youth in the United States. This research often examines whether an acculturation gap, reflecting that immigrant adolescents typically are better integrated into mainstream culture than are their parents, results in increases in adolescent-parent conflict (Juang et al. 2012b). Although some studies support this view (e.g., Lim et al. 2008), the overall conclusion is that it does not (for a review, see Fuligni & Tsai 2015). Research on Asian and Latino heritage families in the United States has focused primarily on acculturation-based conflicts, but an exception is Juang and colleagues (2012a), who studied acculturation-based and everyday adolescent-parent conflicts longitudinally in Chinese

American middle adolescents. They found that these two types of conflicts were related and that changes in frequency occurred in parallel over time. Moreover, higher levels of conflict were longitudinally associated with poorer adolescent adjustment, but differentially and uniquely associated by type of conflict. Moreover, for acculturation-based conflicts only, these links were mediated by poorer parenting and more distant and less warm family relationships (Juang et al. 2012b). Thus, the researchers suggested that more deep-seated, salient, culture-based clashes in values (i.e., acculturation-based conflicts) may lead to conflicts over everyday issues.

Despite variability, the evidence supports the notion that disagreements reflect a normative but temporary perturbation in adolescent–parent relationships that functions to transform families from the more hierarchical relationships of early adolescence to more egalitarian relationships at its end. In his review of longitudinal models, Meeus (2016) concluded that adolescent–parent relationships become more symmetrical during adolescence. He also noted the general absence of systematic gender differences in conflict frequency across adolescence. In keeping with these general conclusions, some research suggests that moderate levels of adolescent–parent conflict are associated with better adjustment than either the absence of or very frequent conflict (Adams & Laursen 2001), although both at an individual and at a daily level, conflict is associated with emotional distress among youths of different ethnicities (Chung et al. 2009). Note that Schlegel & Barry's (1991) analyses of ethnographic data from small-scale cultures around the world suggest that conflict may not serve the same function in cultures where youths do not leave home or where family members continue to rely on one another for economic survival.

Positive Interactions with Parents

Research on normative mean-level changes in the positive dimensions of adolescent–parent relationships provide a complementary picture. As studied in diverse samples of families, positive feelings toward parents, including closeness, warmth, support, intimacy, and cohesion, decline across early and middle adolescence, although, as found in research on negative interactions, at later ages in US ethnic minority youths than among European American youths (Fuligni 1998). These age-related trends have been supported in longitudinal analyses (Meeus 2016) and in studies using adolescents' and parents' reports (De Goede et al. 2009), as well as in observational studies of family interactions (Allen et al. 2003, Conger & Ge 1999, Pinquart & Silbereisen 2002). Moreover, supportive relationships with mothers were found to decrease the most (as assessed over a two-year period) among dyads who reported the most negative relationships at the onset of adolescence (Laursen et al. 2010).

In general, more positive adolescent–parent relationships are associated with greater adolescent well-being. Pearson & Wilkinson (2013) examined these associations among youth who reported same-sex versus opposite-sex romantic attraction. As expected, adolescent–parent closeness, parent involvement, and family support were associated with better well-being, but particularly among same-sex-attracted youth, and especially girls, poorer relationships with parents—and particularly less closeness—were associated with greater depressive symptoms as well as more involvement in drug use and binge drinking. These findings provided some explanation for why LGBTQ youth experience more problematic adjustment compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

A meta-analysis examining the role of adolescents' empathy in adolescent–parent relationship quality (Boele et al. 2019) found that empathy had stronger effects on positive dimensions of relationships, such as support and attachment, than on negative aspects, such as conflict and negative interactions (and, notably, stronger effects for peer versus adolescent–parent relationships). In addition, positive relationships were more strongly linked to teens' ability to take others' perspective (cognitive empathy) than to feeling concern for others (affective empathy). Thus, these findings

show that youths with a greater capacity to understand parents' perspectives have warmer, more supportive relationships with parents. Conversely, links between increases in adolescent–parent conflict in early adolescence and internalizing distress were uniquely accounted for by disruptions in adolescents' attachment behavior with parents (Martin et al. 2019).

There are also cultural differences in the values families place on various positive dimensions of adolescent–parent relationships and how they should be expressed. For instance, as Wu & Chao (2011) note, Chinese culture has distinctive norms relative to mainstream American culture that discourage the open and physical expression of warmth, other strong emotions, and open communication; rather, warmth is expressed through instrumental support. Therefore, these researchers hypothesized that the degree of discrepancy between Chinese American middle adolescents' ideal levels of warmth and communication in their relationships with parents and their perceptions of those actual relationship dimensions may vary as a function of their acculturation to American society. As expected, discrepancies were greater, with youths wanting more warmth and open communication than they perceived their parents as providing, among second-generation (i.e., U.S.-born) Chinese American youths than among first-generation Chinese American adolescents and, in turn, European American youths. Greater appreciation for Chinese cultural values regarding adolescent–parent relationships, such as devotion to parents and sacrifice (collectively referred to as *qin*), lessened the negative impact of these discrepancies on behavior problems, but only for second-generation Chinese American youths. Much like Juang et al. (2012a,b), discussed previously, the results of this study (and particularly the use of different comparison groups) highlight the need to distinguish normative generation gaps (as reflected, for instance, in everyday adolescent–parent conflict) from acculturation gaps and the conflicts and negative emotions that may result from them.

Relationships with parents generally improve after adolescence (Smetana et al. 2006a), especially for girls (De Goede et al. 2009), and particularly as teens leave home. Tsai et al. (2013) examined trajectories of parent–adolescent relationships into emerging adulthood using piecewise growth modeling in a large and ethnically diverse sample of US middle adolescents (ninth-graders), who were followed for eight years. Youths' relationships with mothers declined in adolescence and then rebounded in emerging adulthood, whereas cohesion with fathers continuously declined over this same period. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the pursuit of greater independence during adolescence does not cause long-term damage to family relationships and that emerging adults seek to maintain and strengthen their relationships (at least with mothers). A similar conclusion emerged from a study of middle-class African American families followed from early to late adolescence (Smetana et al. 2004b). Closer relationships with parents in early adolescence persisted over time, resulting in more supportive, less conflictive relationships with mothers five years later, when many of the youths had left home. Conflict reported in early adolescence, however, did not predict later relationship quality.

These studies demonstrate the value of studying both positive and negative dimensions of adolescent–parent relationships together, as not surprisingly, they are inversely related. De Goede et al. (2009) found negative associations in both early and middle adolescence in initial levels of conflict and support with each parent, as well as correlated changes in growth over time. Moreover, higher levels of support were linked with relatively smaller decreases in conflict.

The general reverse-U-shaped pattern of relationship quality across adolescence noted in the aforementioned studies (e.g., with relationships more contentious in middle versus early or late adolescence) also has been confirmed in person-centered analyses of two cohorts of youths: early and middle adolescents, followed over time (Hadiwijaya et al. 2017). Analyses of adolescents' ratings of support, negative interactions, and power in their relationships with parents yielded relationship quality profiles reflecting harmonious, authoritative, turbulent, and

uninvolved–discordant relationships. The prevalence of some of the different profiles changed over time but some also demonstrated significant stability. For instance, turbulent relationships, characterized by very low levels of support and high levels of power and negative interactions, were somewhat common in the early adolescent cohort and increased in prevalence from early to middle adolescence. In the middle adolescent cohort, however, turbulent profiles started high in prevalence but became considerably less common over time; many teens moved out of this profile but few moved in, suggesting that this relationship pattern was most characteristic of middle adolescence rather than earlier and later. And although harmonious relationships, characterized by high levels of support and low levels of power and negative interaction, were less prevalent during early to middle adolescence, middle adolescents often transitioned into this profile by late adolescence. Despite many youths transitioning between profiles over time, the most common pattern in the early adolescent cohort (and second only to transitions into harmonious interactions among the middle adolescent cohort) was actually no transition—that is, stability in profile type across the five years of data collection. These person-centered analyses complement the findings of much of the between-family-focused research cited above.

Conflict Resolution

There has been a resurgence of interest in studying how adolescents and parents resolve conflicts. In their longitudinal, observational study, Eisenberg et al. (2008) found that conflicts were less likely to be resolved when either parents or adolescents (or both) expressed more anger or had negative outbursts and verbalizations during conflict discussions. Moreover, persistent dispositional differences in these more negative styles of conflict discussion were related to adolescents' regulation and self-control. But beyond these individual differences, some evidence suggests that negative conflict resolution strategies peak in middle adolescence, much as has been found in studies of conflict intensity. That is, research shows a curvilinear increase (followed by decrease) in teens' report of conflict engagement—a style reflecting very angry, unregulated (e.g., losing control), and verbally abusive interactions—particularly with mothers (Van Doorn et al. 2011a). These researchers also found that adolescents' and fathers' reports of positive problem solving, which involves compromise and effective discussion of conflicts, increase linearly across adolescence (Van Doorn et al. 2011a). Thus, the angry outbursts and negative interactions observed in studies of both conflict and conflict resolution appear to be temporary and occurring against the larger backdrop of improving relationship quality and more constructive modes of conflict resolution across adolescence.

Numerous prospective, longitudinal studies from different countries have examined the impact of the quality of adolescent–parent relationships on later peer and romantic relationships, demonstrating the influence of parent–child relationships on adolescents' relationships outside of the family. For instance, adolescents' conflict resolution styles with parents spill over into adolescents' later resolution of conflict with friends (but not the reverse; Van Doorn et al. 2011b). Meeus (2016, p. 1975) concluded that “without a single exception...all studies found that the quality of parent–adolescent relationships prospectively predicted the quality of romantic relationships.” Notably, despite the very substantial support for this link, the evidence is largely from WEIRD countries, where adolescents spend a great deal of time with friends and where friendships are highly salient.

Family Systems Views

Increasingly, researchers are considering adolescent–parent relationships from a family systems perspective. From this theoretical framework, families are seen as an interactive system composed of multiple subsystems that determine the functioning of the family (Minuchin 2002). In the study

of adolescence, this perspective has led to interest in studying multiple siblings within the family and how their relationships with parents differ. Research has shown that the developmental trends observed for both adolescents' conflict and warmth with parents are moderated by siblings' ordinal position in the family. Combining their data from first- and secondborn largely European American siblings followed from late childhood through adolescence, Shanahan et al. (2007b) found, along with other research, that conflict frequency increased in early adolescence. But when first- and secondborn siblings were examined separately, different siblings' trajectories deviated from this pattern and differed from one another's. More specifically, conflict frequency increased as firstborns moved into middle adolescence and spilled over to secondborn siblings. Thus, increases in secondborns' conflicts with parents occurred at the same time as—and were connected to—the older siblings' transition to adolescence, rather than their own. In contrast, levels of warmth were found to be higher among firstborns than secondborns but declined from early through middle adolescence based on the child's own age (Shanahan et al. 2007a). Relationships with fathers were warmer at the onset of adolescence and then declined in the transition to middle adolescence faster among first- than secondborns.

These studies (and, indeed, most of the research on adolescent–parent relationships from a family systems perspective) have focused primarily on white (European American or European) families. Notably, Skinner & McHale (2016) employed a family systems perspective to examine African American youths' conflicts with parents. Using parents' and siblings' reports, these authors identified profiles reflecting low conflict across reporters (which constituted the large majority of families), families in which fathers reported high levels of conflict frequency, and families in which younger siblings reported high conflict relative to other family members. The last profile likely reflected the developmental stage of these youths, as they were early adolescents, but also not surprisingly, it also was associated with riskier behavior and depressive symptoms among both siblings over time. As other studies have suggested, these findings also demonstrated that the effects of conflicts in one dyadic relationship (mother–adolescent or father–adolescent) spill over to the other to influence ratings of parental acceptance, which were lower in the father high-conflict group and associated with greater maladjustment.

In addition, Stanik et al. (2013) studied gender differences in parental warmth in two-parent African American families from a family systems perspective. They examined parental differential treatment of sons versus daughters in families with two siblings but found no effects for the adolescents' gender. However, consistent with findings for European American families, African American mothers reported greater warmth toward their offspring than did fathers, and parents reported that their relationships with younger siblings were warmer than those with older siblings.

The often-reported decreases in conflict and increases in intimacy that occur when youths leave home appear to accurately characterize firstborns' experiences, but older siblings' transition out of the house also has implications for younger siblings' relationships with their parents. Whiteman et al. (2011) found that the left-behind secondborns reported increased conflict with both mothers and fathers (although this was less evident in parental reports). This observation suggests that secondborns may be more attuned than parents to changes in family dynamics resulting from the older siblings' departure from the home. Moreover, the U-shaped patterns in intimacy reported by youths in this and other studies also diverged from those of parents; parents report declines in acceptance of both of their siblings from early adolescence to early adulthood.

Other research has examined spillover from interparental relationships to adolescent–parent interactions. That is, research has demonstrated that both positive problem solving and conflict engagement in marital relationships are associated with adolescents' use of these styles in resolving conflicts with parents two years later (Van Doorn et al. 2007). Moreover, negative repercussions for adolescent–parent relationships have been observed when the boundaries between interparental

and parent–child relationships are violated. More specifically, one study found that adolescents who experienced more threat in response to interparental conflict become increasingly triangulated with parents over time, leading to declines in adolescent–parent relationship quality (Fosco & Grych 2010).

EMOTIONAL VARIABILITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND COREGULATION IN ADOLESCENT–PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

More than 2,300 years ago, Aristotle described adolescents as “changeable too, and fickle in the desires, which are as transitory as they are vehement” (Aristotle 1886, pp. 165–66). Although research has investigated this claim in terms of adolescents’ moodiness, recent research, primarily from a dynamic systems perspective, has examined variability and coregulation in adolescent–parent interactions, particularly in the context of conflicts (Lichtwarck-Aschoff et al. 2009; Lougheed 2019; Lougheed et al. 2016; Main et al. 2016; Van der Giessen et al. 2013, 2014, 2015).

The dynamic systems perspective describes relationships as temporal interpersonal emotion systems that consist of individuals’ interactions across different timescales ranging from momentary interactions to those spanning years (Lougheed 2019). This approach emphasizes the co-construction of emotions within individuals and between relationship partners over time. Repeated interactions are regarded as leading to stable emotional patterns that can facilitate or constrain subsequent interactions, thereby influencing socioemotional development (Lougheed 2019). Given that conflicts are a normative aspect of adolescent–parent relationships, it is assumed that individuals and dyads who are able to switch flexibly among a wide range of positive and negative emotional states in the context of conflictive interactions may be better able to handle such emotionally challenging situations. The ability to express and modulate emotions may allow for different opinions to be expressed and understood and for more constructive resolutions to be negotiated. This, in turn, may facilitate better adjustment in the face of the relational strains and autonomy demands characteristic of adolescence (Branje 2018, Lougheed 2019). Thus, emotional variability is viewed as assessing the flexibility of the adolescent–parent system and provides a mechanism for reorganizing adolescent–parent relationships towards greater autonomy.

Research using various methods across different timescales and focusing on both individual and dyadic interactions supports these claims. Several studies employing multiple measures (i.e., greater variability in expressed emotions, lower mean duration of emotions, and more changes among different emotional states) found that greater emotional variability was associated with less problematic adjustment over time, both when studied at the dyadic level (Van der Giessen et al. 2013) and when examined individually in both mothers and middle adolescents (Van der Giessen et al. 2014). Greater emotional variability also has been linked to higher levels of disclosure to parents in early adolescence and to relative declines in maternal control from early to late adolescence (Van der Giessen et al. 2015). Likewise, middle adolescent girls’ daily diary reports of emotional variability in the context of conflictive interactions with mothers revealed a curvilinear relationship such that more emotional variability was associated with a greater number of conflicts reported over a year, but only up to a point. When there was a high number of conflicts, the number of different emotional states evident in the diaries decreased (Lichtwarck-Aschoff et al. 2009). Moreover, girls showing low levels of emotional variability had much more variation in topics than girls who demonstrated more flexibility in the emotions they reported. In other words, more emotionally rigid girls brought the same emotional states to many different conflicts, suggesting that they were getting stuck in similar conflict patterns and that these feedback loops did not allow them to move on.

Other research has examined parents' scaffolding, or adolescent–parent coregulation of adolescents' emotions. For instance, one study investigated whether middle adolescents' and their mothers' observed positive and negative affect in the context of a laboratory problem-solving task influenced the other person's observed and self-reported affect (Mancini et al. 2016). Cross-lag panel analyses revealed bidirectional effects, but only for negative affect. Moreover, adolescents' observed negative affect led to declines in mothers' reported negative affect, suggesting some transmission of emotions. Mothers' socialization of emotions, observed in the context of laboratory discussions of conflicts between mothers and their early and middle adolescent daughters, has also been studied (Lougheed et al. 2016). Mothers' supportive responses to girls' negative and positive emotions increased over the two-year study period but were more likely for girls with earlier pubertal maturation. These findings led the researchers to speculate that mothers may be trying to upregulate positive emotions in response to the adjustment difficulties that early-maturing girls often experience.

Other researchers have used nonlinear methods drawn from dynamic systems approaches to examine concurrent or time-lagged synchrony in the positive and negative emotions observed in a laboratory conflict discussion task (Main et al. 2016). The results were consistent with Lichtwarck-Aschoff et al.'s (2009) notion that family members may get stuck in particular emotional patterns. Rather than observing that one partner's emotional expression preceded the other's, these researchers found that the most frequently occurring pattern reflected concurrent synchrony between mothers' and adolescents' expression of both positive and negative emotional states. Moreover, dyads who had higher levels of mutual negative emotions reported being less satisfied in their conflict discussions, suggesting that not only the degree of negativity in adolescent–parent interactions but also the timing of negative emotional displays may contribute to their harmful effects. Unexpectedly, synchrony in positive emotions did not contribute to participants' perceptions of satisfaction with the discussions, but the temporal patterning—a time-lagged pattern reflecting turn-taking in emotion states that reflected validation and interest in the other's perspective—was associated with greater satisfaction with the discussion. Moreover, a shorter delay, suggesting a tighter temporal association between these responses, was associated with the greatest satisfaction. Thus, emotional variability is regarded as assessing the flexibility of the adolescent–parent system and provides a mechanism for reorganizing adolescent–parent relationships. The approaches described in this section provide great promise for understanding the momentary dynamics of adolescent–parent relationships and their implications for adjustment over time.

ADOLESCENTS' AND PARENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT PARENTAL AUTHORITY LEGITIMACY

Another body of research has examined social–cognitive processes, specifically, beliefs about parental authority legitimacy, as a mechanism of change in adolescent–parent relationships. Numerous studies have shown that adolescents' and parents' evaluations of parental authority legitimacy vary systematically according to the type of issue being considered (Smetana 2018). They show that both parents and youths generally agree that parents have legitimate authority throughout adolescence to regulate moral issues (pertaining to others' welfare and fairness), conventional issues (the arbitrary norms that regulate appropriate behavior in different contexts), and prudential issues (regarding personal comfort, health, and safety). Although there are cultural, developmental, and individual variations in beliefs about where the boundaries of parental authority legitimacy should be drawn, individuals across cultures view a set of issues—typically pertaining to privacy, control over one's body, and choices and preferences regarding such issues as recreational choices and appearances—as personal and up to the individual to decide. This is because these issues are

considered necessary for the establishment of self, identity, and individuality (Nucci & Lee 1993; Nucci & Smetana 1996; Smetana 2002, 2011), which researchers from different theoretical perspectives have viewed as universal needs (Deci & Ryan 2013).

The boundaries of the personal domain expand with age (Nucci & Smetana 1996, Smetana et al. 2004a) through reciprocal adult–child interactions rather than through a strictly top-down process of parental autonomy granting. The claim is that adolescents push for more autonomy over personal issues. This may be spurred in part by social comparisons with peers. Adolescents’ interactions with peers may allow them to observe the freedoms that their friends have and want them for themselves (Daddis 2008, 2011). Adolescents’ desires for more autonomy can be achieved by negotiating with parents over rules, through successful resolution of adolescent–parent conflicts, or, as discussed in the following section, by engaging in desired behaviors but keeping them secret from parents.

Domain differences in adolescents’ and parents’ beliefs about parental authority legitimacy have been observed cross-sectionally in diverse samples within the United States, including Asian, African, Mexican, European, and Filipino heritage youth (Fuligni 1998, Smetana & Asquith 1994, Smetana et al. 2015), and in different regions of the world, including South America, Asia, and the Middle East (Cumsille et al. 2006, Milnitsky-Sapiro et al. 2006, Smetana et al. 2015). Longitudinal research on different US samples and in different cultures has shown that beliefs about parental authority legitimacy over moral, conventional, and prudential issues remain stable as adolescents grow older but that there are age-related increases in beliefs that adolescents should gain more control over personal issues (Cumsille et al. 2009; Darling et al. 2007, 2008; Hasebe et al. 2004; Smetana 2000; Smetana et al. 2004a). Adolescents consistently desire more authority over these issues than parents are willing to grant. This is because, although adolescents desire more control, parents need to decide whether adolescents have the competence and maturity to make sound decisions. Adolescents may “put the pedal to the metal’... [but] parents are often putting on the brakes” (Smetana 2011, p. 89). Studies of family decision making have shown that even when parents believe that adolescents should be able to control personal issues, middle-class African American adolescents report higher levels of well-being and better adjustment when parents have some rather than no parental input or supervision (Smetana et al. 2004a), perhaps because having no input reflects uninvolved parenting or detachment.

There are risks, chiefly around deviant behavior, for early adolescents who have too much behavioral autonomy, particularly over issues that parents ought to control, just as there are potential consequences for maladjustment in having too little autonomy in late adolescence over issues that are considered personal. In addition to demonstrating that there are normative developmental increases in what is thought of as part of adolescents’ personal domain, researchers have examined the role of demographic variables such as socioeconomic status (Cumsille et al. 2009, Nucci et al. 1996), parenting, and individual characteristics that are associated with variations in parental authority legitimacy beliefs (Darling et al. 2008, Kuhn & Laird 2011; for a more detailed review, see Smetana 2018). As one might expect, positive aspects of parenting, such as greater supportiveness and more monitoring, as well as lower levels of adolescent involvement in problem behavior, are associated both concurrently and longitudinally with adolescents’ greater endorsement of parental authority legitimacy. These factors are also associated with teens’ stronger beliefs in their obligation to obey parents regarding prudential and personal issues, as well as issues that involve domain overlaps (Darling et al. 2008). Greater endorsement of parents’ authority legitimacy has also been linked to greater compliance with rules (Kuhn et al. 2014). Therefore, research on adolescents’ and parents’ beliefs about parental authority legitimacy provides important insights into developmental changes and individual differences in adolescents’ interpretations of parental rulemaking and control and, in turn, how this may influence both their behavior and their adjustment.

PARENTING EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENT-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

As might be expected, parenting practices and parenting styles (constellations of parenting practices) have a tight intersection with adolescent-parent relationships more generally (Darling & Steinberg 1993). Firm behavioral control, high support, and low psychological control are related to more positive adolescent-parent relationships and adolescent adjustment (Barber et al. 2005, Hair et al. 2008, Scharf & Goldner 2018). Such findings are reflected in large cross-cultural and meta-analytic studies on parenting styles. These studies show that authoritative parenting (as a mixture of high behavioral control and high responsiveness) is associated with more adolescent-parent cohesion and lower conflict, greater adolescent disclosure to parents, fewer adolescent internalizing and externalizing problems, and better academic achievement (Bi et al. 2018; McKinney & Renk 2011; Pinquart 2016, 2017; Pinquart & Kauser 2018; Sorkhabi & Middaugh 2014). Authoritarian parenting (high behavioral control and low responsiveness) generally has opposite effects, although there is some cultural variability (Pinquart & Kauser 2018).

Parental Control

The general trend among parenting researchers has been to focus on unique parenting dimensions rather than aggregate styles (Smetana 2017). Of these dimensions, parental control has been of frequent interest, given its intersection with key developmental tasks of adolescence (e.g., autonomy development, negotiations regarding parental authority). The next sections highlight variations in the forms of control parents exert and the meaning of such control for adolescents.

Forms of control. In the last decade, researchers have elaborated on earlier work (e.g., Barber et al. 2005), drawing distinctions in how power is asserted or communicated and how these differences are reflected in adolescents' reactions to parental control and the overall adolescent-parent relationship. For instance, Baumrind (2012) specified that authoritarian and authoritative parents differ not only in their level of responsiveness but also in the form of the behavioral control they use. She found that authoritarian parents typically utilize coercive power assertion, which is arbitrary, domineering, peremptory, and status oriented. It typically takes the form of verbal hostility, arbitrary discipline, psychological control, and severe physical punishment. In contrast, authoritative parents are characterized by their use of confrontive power assertion, which is reasoned, negotiable, and outcome oriented. It is characterized by confronting disobedience, enforcing rules, and using negative sanctions, combined with providing explanations and reasoning. Just as authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles more generally are associated with better adolescent-parent relationships, so parental confrontive control in adolescence is concurrently associated with better—and coercive control with worse—parent-child relationships (defined by levels of conflict, adolescent disclosure, and parental knowledge; Sorkhabi & Middaugh 2014).

These findings are consistent with a long line of research showing that specific elements of coercive control, such as parental psychological control, both reflect and produce more hostile adolescent-parent interactions during adolescence (Barber et al. 2012, Weymouth & Buehler 2016). Such parenting appears problematic particularly because it disrupts adolescents' ability to balance their needs for autonomy and relatedness with parents (Soenens & Vansteenkiste 2010). Indeed, Grolnick & Pomerantz (2009) argued that the term "control" should be applied only to the more coercive and status-oriented practices Baumrind (2012) described, whereas the term "structure" better fits the clear and consistent rules and messages that bolster children's competence and are characteristic of confrontive control.

Parsing parental control differently, researchers drawing on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci 2000) have argued that parental prohibitions can be communicated in an autonomy-supportive versus controlling manner and that this communication style affects the way adolescents respond (Grolnick 2003, Vansteenkiste et al. 2005). Similar to distinctions between autonomy support and control more generally, an autonomy-supportive communication style involves giving meaningful explanations and demonstrating awareness of the child's perspective, whereas a controlling communication style involves emotional manipulation and threats of punishment. Using hypothetical vignettes, Van Petegem et al. (2016) demonstrated that adolescents reported more internalization and less oppositional defiance toward maternal prohibitions when they were communicated in an autonomy-supportive rather than controlling way, even when the resulting consequences to the child were the same. Inversely, Mageau et al. (2018) used hypothetical vignettes to show that altering consequences to have a more direct link with the transgression itself can enable parents to exert control in a more autonomy-supportive manner. Supporting these findings, Helwig et al. (2014) and Rote & Smetana (2017) found that adolescents disapproved more of maternal guilt induction when mothers focused on indirect harm to themselves or to the family instead of harm to the immediate victim of the act; Rote & Smetana (2017) also found this to be true when mothers criticized the child as a person (as opposed to criticizing the child's behavior).

Variable meanings of control. The last decade has also witnessed an increased focus on situational, cultural, and individual variability in the meaning and impact of parenting practices for adolescents and the adolescent–parent relationship. In a theoretical article, Soenens et al. (2015) argued that research on parenting must take into account the functional significance of a parenting behavior for the child—that is, the child's appraisals of a parenting behavior as supporting or constraining their autonomy—in order to balance universal principles of growth-promoting parenting with individual relativism. Such theorizing is not new; it builds upon a number of forerunners, including Grusec & Goodnow's (1994) research highlighting the importance of youths' perceptions of parental messages and Lansford and colleagues' findings (Gershoff et al. 2010, Lansford et al. 2005) that the meaning and impact of parental discipline depend on cultural norms. Important here, however, is that Soenens et al. (2015) focused not only on how adolescents' appraisals of parenting behaviors affect their long-term adjustment but also on how these appraisals alter the way adolescents cope with such parenting behaviors in the moment (e.g., whether youths respond with defiance or negotiation). Furthermore, these appraisals depend both on cultural norms and on the quality of the adolescent–parent relationship. For instance, Van Petegem et al. (2017) demonstrated that adolescents with more autonomy-supportive adolescent–parent relationships appraised hypothetical maternal requests as more autonomy supportive and less controlling, particularly when those requests were communicated in an autonomy-supportive manner. Adolescents from a more autonomy-supportive background also reported that they would respond with less oppositional defiance in general and with more negotiation to parenting requests conveyed in a controlling manner. Patrick & Gibbs (2016) likewise showed that adolescents who feel more accepted by parents rate both power-assertive and autonomy-supportive (i.e., inductive discipline) parenting practices as more acceptable and feel more positive emotions in response to inductive discipline.

Comparable results have been found cross-culturally; both American and Chinese adolescents who experience more authoritarian and coercive parenting report less approval of those practices and a greater belief that they are not done for the child's benefit (Camras et al. 2017). Indeed, research increasingly demonstrates that links between parenting practices and adolescent adjustment or relationship quality are more similar than different across cultures (e.g., that there are

universal needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence and that parenting that supports these needs is more functional; Soenens et al. 2015). However, consistent with Soenens and colleagues' (2015) call for applying the principle of "universalism without uniformity," the forms of parenting that feel controlling or autonomy supportive to youths are somewhat culturally variable, as are their responses to felt control. For instance, Chen et al. (2016) found that Chinese, but not Belgian, adolescents reported more felt control and psychological need frustration when parents were overtly controlling than guilt inducing, and that only Chinese adolescents reacted to such need frustration with more compulsive compliance and less negotiation (both groups responded with oppositional defiance). Soenens et al. (2018) argued that collectivism may explain these differences; in a sample of Korean adolescents, youths scoring higher on collectivism differentiated less between autonomy support and control in their felt need satisfaction and reported more submissive compliance and less oppositional defiance regardless of parenting practice.

Research drawing on social domain theory (Smetana & Daddis 2002, Smetana et al. 2004a) has shown that the functional significance of parenting behaviors also depends on variations in the situations (or domains) over which parents exert control. For instance, Kakihara & Tilton-Weaver (2009) showed that adolescents view parental attempts to set limits or discipline behaviors in the personal domain as equivalent to psychological control (intrusive, unacceptable, and autonomy limiting) even when such prohibitions are communicated no differently than prohibitions about behaviors in other domains. Rote & Smetana (2016) likewise found that adolescents evaluate maternal guilt induction as more disrespectful and intended to cause psychological harm when mothers induce guilt over personal than moral or other issues, regardless of how they communicate such disapproval. Finally, Van Petegem et al. (2016) and Robichaud & Mageau (2019) found that, no matter how parents conveyed their expectations or how strongly they linked the consequence to the youth's misbehavior, adolescents reported greater perceived legitimacy and less oppositional defiance to prohibitions over nonpersonal issues.

ADOLESCENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Parenting behaviors and adolescent–parent relationships also intersect in research on parental monitoring and adolescent disclosure or secrecy, a topic that has garnered much attention over the past two decades. In the early 2000s, Stattin & Kerr (2000) demonstrated that researchers had been measuring parental monitoring primarily with questions assessing parental knowledge of teen behaviors. Furthermore, Kerr et al. (2010) showed that such knowledge mainly stemmed from adolescent voluntary disclosure of information rather than active parental monitoring strategies such as solicitation or rule setting. This led to a proliferation of research examining precursors and correlates of adolescent disclosure and secrecy (also termed adolescent information management). A recent meta-analysis of longitudinal research demonstrates that normatively over the course of adolescence, families in Western cultures experience moderate decreases in parental control, small to moderate decreases in parental knowledge and solicitation, small decreases in adolescent disclosure, and small to moderate increases in secrecy (Lionetti et al. 2018). Less is known about normative changes in monitoring-related behaviors in non-Western samples, and relatively few studies have examined these issues in immigrant and ethnic/racial minority families in the United States. Evidence suggests that overall levels of disclosure are somewhat lower and that avoidance or omitting information is somewhat higher among adolescents from non-Western cultures (Bakken & Brown 2010, Nucci et al. 2014, Yau et al. 2009). Typically, these differences are theorized to stem from cultural norms regarding acceptable conflict and emotional expression or acculturation clashes. However, patterns of change over time in these behaviors and justifications need further examination.

Between-Family Links with Parenting

Despite some cultural variability in levels of overall parental monitoring and adolescent information management, one of the most robust findings in this literature is that adolescent decisions to disclose or conceal information strongly depend upon parenting behaviors and reflect the quality of the adolescent–parent relationship (Crouter & Head 2002, Laird et al. 2010). Cross-sectional studies show consistent positive associations between warm or supportive parenting and adolescent disclosure (Smetana et al. 2006b, Stattin & Kerr 2000, Vieno et al. 2009, Yau et al. 2009). This is true for both parent- and adolescent-reported parenting (Dotterer & Day 2019), for disclosure of routine information (i.e., observable facts; activities and whereabouts) and self-disclosure (i.e., private information; thoughts and feelings; Milaković et al. 2018; Tilton-Weaver et al. 2014), and for adolescents from multiple cultures (Qin & Pomerantz 2013, Yau et al. 2009, Yun et al. 2016). Inversely, across reporters and cultures, negative parenting behaviors (e.g., snooping, psychological control, negative reactions to adolescent communication) and felt alienation within the relationship are cross-sectionally associated with less adolescent disclosure and more secrecy (Hawk 2017, Rote & Smetana 2018, Soenens et al. 2006, Tilton-Weaver et al. 2010). Similarly, higher levels of prior parental acceptance and lower levels of prior parental rejection are strong predictors of LGBTQ youths' decisions to disclose their sexual orientation to parents (D'Amico & Julien 2012).

Recently, longitudinal models have clarified the direction of effects between parenting practices or adolescent–parent relationships and adolescent information management. Not surprisingly, there is some evidence for bidirectional associations. For instance, in both China and the United States, adolescent disclosure to parents and feelings of family obligation positively predict increases in the other over time (Qin & Pomerantz 2013). Likewise, parental solicitation predicts more adolescent disclosure, and adolescent disclosure predicts more parental solicitation over one year (Keijsers et al. 2010). Although more specific to disclosure regarding sexual identity, work examining LGBTQ youth shows a similar pattern: Positive relationships with parents predict disclosure, and disclosure of sexual identity, in turn, predicts increases in relationship quality (with fathers) over time (D'Augelli et al. 2010). Parenting may be a better predictor of adolescent information management than the reverse, however. Tilton-Weaver (2014) showed that adolescent-reported parental support significantly predicted increases in adolescent disclosure and decreases in secrecy over one year, but that adolescent disclosure and secrecy did not significantly predict changes in parenting. Likewise, Keijsers & Laird (2014) showed that parental solicitation predicted decreases in secrecy but not the reverse.

Further research has examined potential processes underlying and moderating these associations. Tilton-Weaver et al. (2010) showed that the effects of parenting (negative and positive reactions to prior youth disclosure) on changes in secrecy and disclosure two years later operated through changes in teens' feeling overly controlled and connected to parents in the interim period. Milaković et al. (2018) similarly found that parental behaviors that facilitate disclosure (initiating conversation, support and respectful guidance) and those that inhibit disclosure (intrusiveness, unavailability, diminishing the importance of child feelings, punishment) appear to do so through satisfying or undermining the adolescents' psychological needs for relatedness and autonomy. LaFleur et al. (2016) expanded on Tilton-Weaver et al.'s (2010) research by demonstrating that the adolescent–parent relationship moderates links between parenting and processes underlying disclosure. Specifically, they found that parental monitoring (control through rules, forced disclosure, solicitation) was significantly associated with adolescents feeling more controlled and invaded (behaviors linked with disclosure; Tilton-Weaver et al. 2010) only for families low in parental warmth.

Within-Family and Dynamic Links with Parenting

Paralleling other areas of developmental psychology, there has been a growing trend toward examining links between parenting or adolescent–parent relationships and adolescent information management in more momentary and dynamic frameworks. Studies generally show that the associations between positive parenting and adolescent information management observed between people in cross-lagged panel models are replicated at a within-person level (when examining associations between daily variation in these same constructs within families; Berry & Willoughby 2017, Keijsers et al. 2016, Villalobos Solís et al. 2015). For instance, in a sample of ethnically diverse middle adolescents examined daily across two weeks, Villalobos Solís et al. (2015) found that adolescent disclosure was higher than average and secrecy lower than average on days when mother–adolescent relationships were better; likewise, adolescent disclosure was higher than average when mothers solicited information more than usual. However, mirroring between-person findings about contextual variability, daily associations between relationship quality and disclosure were only apparent for information containing personal elements. Likewise, better relationship quality was only associated with less secrecy about bad behaviors. Keijsers et al. (2016) found similar results when examining within-person variation across a much longer time span (15 assessments over five years): Adolescents typically disclosed more than average during weeks when relationship quality or maternal solicitation were higher than average or maternal control was lower than average, although there was significant variability in this. However, highlighting the importance of such analyses, some within-person processes appear to function opposite to those seen at the between-person level. In particular, parental solicitation above a family's own norm on a given day is associated with more, rather than less, secrecy on that day (Villalobos Solís et al. 2015).

The within-person processes just discussed reflect only correlated change (simultaneous increases or decreases in variables around their average). These processes not only may differ from between-family processes, but also differ from those that examine time-lagged processes within families. Dietvorst et al. (2018) showed that apparent positive reciprocal associations between adolescent secrecy and privacy invasion over time were explained by a strong positive relationship between privacy invasion and secrecy between families (i.e., families with more privacy invasion also have more secretive teens, and these things generally increase in tandem). Once these between-person processes were controlled, greater secrecy (above the child's own average) at one time point predicted decreased parental privacy invasion (below the parent's own average) three months later.

A similar divergence from between-person findings appears when researchers examine parenting behaviors likely to promote disclosure within a single parent–child interaction or discussion. Using survival analysis, Main et al. (2019) examined which maternal behaviors led most quickly (e.g., were most closely paired temporally) to adolescents disclosing their emotions during a parent–teen conflict conversation. They found that older adolescents (but not younger adolescents) disclosed more quickly when mothers were either validating or expressing negative affect. The authors argued that a mother's expression of negative affect may communicate to older adolescents that the topic is significant and that she views the adolescent as an equal who is capable of responding appropriately to her concerns. This may promote more disclosure later within a single conversation. Somewhat similarly, Disla et al. (2019) showed that maternal validation and interest in response to adolescent disclosure in a conversation produce the shortest lag time to subsequent disclosures in that conversation. However, negative affective responses produced a shorter lag time than neutral reactions. Thus, parental emotions may serve somewhat different functions for encouraging adolescent disclosure when considered at a broad (family or even daily) level versus within a single conversation or when considered in terms of correlated change rather than causal sequences within a family over time.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Great strides have been made over the past decade in understanding adolescent–parent relationships. There have been an increasing number of longitudinal studies using sophisticated methods to tease out between- and within-family effects over time. There has also been increasing attention to increasing the diversity of samples, although it must be noted that the increases in longitudinal research and the attention to more diverse samples are not well linked—too few longitudinal studies include diverse samples in different cultures, let alone immigrant and refugee families and families in non-WEIRD countries.

In addition, as noted a decade ago (Horn et al. 2009) and in a recent review (Mills-Koonce et al. 2018), very few studies have examined the role of adolescent–parent relationships (and, indeed, the family context more generally) among LGBTQ youth. Although there has been an uptick in such studies, the available research is limited in scope. LGBTQ adolescents may acknowledge their sexual identity to themselves, act on their attractions, or come out to others at different ages. Thus, not surprisingly, the available studies have focused primarily on parental support, acceptance, or rejection of adolescents' sexual identity. However, some research has shown that sexual identity development and adolescent–parent relationships are transactional processes; better adolescent–parent relationships are associated with coming out at earlier ages (D'Amico et al. 2015), leading to further improvement in the quality of these relationships (and, no doubt, adolescent adjustment). These processes require further study. More research also is needed on the distinctive features of adolescent–parent relationships for sexual minority and gender nonconforming youth compared to their heterosexual peers. This is particularly important in light of the downward trend in age at coming out, from age 20 in the 1970s to age 14 in the 2000s (Mills-Koonce et al. 2018).

Furthermore, studies of adolescent–parent relationships still focus primarily on mothers and do not include fathers. Although researchers often note this as a limitation of their research, it is time for researchers to take this seriously and heed the call. In addition, adolescents are growing up in diverse families. Indeed, as Murry & Lippold (2018) note, what is often considered the prototypical family—married, heterosexual, two-parent households—no longer reflects the majority of families, but they continue to be treated as the referent against which other family structures are compared. Research has focused primarily on comparisons of single-parent (divorced or never-married) families, two-parent biological families, and stepparent families. However, there are many other family structures: families with cohabiting, nonmarried parents; same-sex families; adoptive and foster families; extended families; and multigenerational families, including adolescents being raised by grandparents (often in the absence of parents). Their numbers are increasing, and the nature of adolescent–parent relationships and parenting in these different family structures requires further investigation. Studies also need to move beyond comparisons of outcomes in different family structures to consider the processes within different types of families that contribute to youth well-being (Murry & Lippold 2018). Furthermore, adolescents often experience transitions as families (of different types) form, dissolve, and reform, and the effects of these transitions on adolescent development and adjustment also should be examined.

Studies employing dynamic systems theories have yielded novel information regarding processes of change across different timescales in families with adolescents, and these approaches hold great promise for furthering our understanding of family dynamics, particularly as methods for conducting such analyses improve and analysis software becomes more widely available. Likewise, studies employing family systems models reveal the complexity of family relationships by considering different subsystems within the family. Far too few studies include multiple siblings within the family, although the findings emerging from these studies provide some

challenges to the generality of our views of normative development. Likewise, little research has examined the role of coparenting during adolescence (Baril et al. 2007).

Moreover, studies of negative family relationships (conflictive relationships, hostile parenting, parental overcontrol) and their contributions to adolescent dysfunction continue to dominate the literature. This emphasis needs to be better balanced by greater attention to the parenting and adolescent–parent relationship factors associated with adolescent well-being and positive developmental outcomes, such as greater prosociality and civic involvement. More generally, the field would be advanced by greater precision in defining the particular adolescent–parent relationship and parenting dimensions that are associated with specific adolescent outcomes.

One of the most dramatic changes in adolescents’ and parents’ lives is the increasing presence of new technologies. Research has focused on the different styles that parents employ to monitor adolescents’ use of different social media and their effects on adjustment (Padilla-Walker et al. 2012, 2016), and the increased time youths spend on smartphones and social media has been well documented. Little research, however, has examined how changes and innovations in technology influence adolescent–parent relationships. For instance, parents are spending increasing amounts of time on smartphones. While there is mounting evidence that so-called connected parenting undermines parental responsiveness and positive parent–child interactions in infancy and childhood (Kildare & Middlemiss 2017), little is known about the implications of this behavior for adolescent–parent relationships. In addition, the increased popularity and presence of voice-assisted and smarhome devices, as well as the increased availability of various apps to monitor teens’ activities, have implications for how much information family members are able to obtain about one another, both with and without the participants’ consent or knowledge. This has the potential to both facilitate and undermine healthy adolescent autonomy development. Furthermore, technology and social media use provides a new subject for adolescent–parent conflict and negotiation (Hiniker et al. 2016), one that necessitates setting limits not only on adolescent behavior but also on parents’ sharing of their children’s private information on social media (especially without their consent; Lipu & Siibak 2019). At the same time, teens’ nearly universal use of smartphones and wearable technologies is a boon for researchers and (along with associated advances in software) can make collecting ambulatory assessments of adolescents and their relationships with parents easier and more cost-efficient (van Roekel et al. 2019). It is likely that these technological innovations will lead to exciting new directions for research and interventions.

In summary, there have been important theoretical and empirical advances in recent years in understanding adolescent–parent relationships, but many challenges remain. The focus on diversity in all its forms has advanced the field substantially. We must continue to expand our focus to include youth in understudied areas of the world but also consider the generalizability of our science and the principles and findings that transcend the diverse samples and contexts we study (e.g., see Meeus 2019, Soenens et al. 2015). In addition, it is increasingly imperative that we address the implications of global changes in social conditions, including growing income inequality, climate change, and human migration, and technology for adolescent–parent relationships. These changes may provide many new threats and challenges for youths and their parents (see Sanson et al. 2019) but also opportunities for research and interventions that build on our understanding of the complexity of adolescent–parent relationships and adolescent development.

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