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11 Goals and Goal Pursuit in the Context of Adolescent-Parent Relationships

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Abstract

This chapter describes research on adolescent-parent relationships as studied from the framework of social domain theory. Age-related changes in adolescents' and parents' conceptions of the boundaries of legitimate parental authority are described. Research is discussed indicating that adolescents' desires for greater autonomy over personal issues may lead to adolescent-parent conflict, as is research on adolescents' nondisclosure and management of information about their activities. Consideration is given to how focusing on adolescents' and parents' goal pursuits could extend current research on adolescent-parent relationships.

A basic premise in the literature on adolescents' self-regulation is that successfully striving to achieve one's goals involves a series of steps. Individuals must first set goals and become committed to them, and then they must plan and enact them effectively (Bargh, Gollwitzer, & Oettingen, 2010). Furthermore, the content of goals is influenced by individuals' intrinsic needs, such as their needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996). Research on parenting and adolescent-parent relationships, however, presents a challenge to these assumptions.

Developmental research on goals typically has focused on *parents'* goals for their children's development and how they become instantiated in parenting practices (and in turn, their influence on children's self-regulation and various developmental outcomes). Researchers have noted that a major goal of socialization is for children to learn to regulate their own behavior, or "to act without explicit directives or demands, to engage in socially prescribed behaviors in the absence of adult supervision, and to do all of this in a flexible, nonconflictual manner" (Grolnick & Farkas, 2002, p. 90). Thus, it is often (implicitly, if not explicitly) assumed that with development, children's and adolescents' goals become more closely aligned with those of their parents. For instance, Kochanska and her colleagues (Kochanska, Aksan, & Koenig, 1995) have asserted that successful socialization is characterized by "committed compliance," in which the child eagerly embraces and endorses the parents' point of view. More recently, some researchers have acknowledged that parents may have other goals besides compliance, and have examined the contexts or situations that lead parents to pursue one goal over another and to settle for behaviors other than total compliance (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). This is an important advance, yet it does not include a consideration of adolescents' goals in their interactions with parents. Recent research has shown that adolescents have much more agency than traditional socialization theories have assumed.

In this chapter, I describe research on adolescent-parent relationships from what has been termed a social-cognitive domain perspective (Killen & Rutland, 2011; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2002, 2006, 2011; Turiel, 1983, 2006), which provides a constructivist account of social development. In my research, I have brought this theoretical perspective to bear on the different (and often conflicting) meanings parents and adolescents bring to their social interactions. As the research discussed here illustrates, adolescents often have very different goals, beliefs, and intentions than do their parents, leading to conflicts and even subversion in their relationships.

The first section of the chapter provides a brief overview of current research on adolescent-parent relationships. The following sections present the theoretical tenets of social domain theory and its contributions to our understanding of adolescent-parent relationships, including conflict, parenting, and disclosure. Then, implications for the central concerns of this volume are considered, including how research that considers adolescents' and parents' goal pursuits could extend the current literature on adolescent-parent relationships. Some of the challenges of applying this

perspective also are discussed. Some concluding thoughts are contained in the final section of the chapter.

Adolescent-Parent Relationships: An Enduring Concern

The nature and quality of adolescents' relationships with parents has been, and continues to be, one of the most heavily researched topics in the literature on adolescent development (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006, 2015; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Contrary to the popular culture view, developmental scientists consider it to be a settled matter that adolescent moodiness, storm and stress, and rebellion and alienation from parents are the exception, not the norm (Smetana et al., 2006, 2015; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Extremely conflicted relationships with parents occur in only a small proportion of families – typically those that experienced negative interactions and difficulties prior to adolescence. Nevertheless, parent-child relationships and communication do go through significant transformations during adolescence, as research on normative changes in adolescent-parent relationships has shown.

Conflict and Disagreement

Research has shown that bickering and disagreements over everyday, mundane issues (like doing chores around the house, doing homework, or the adolescent's appearance) typically increase during early adolescence. A meta-analysis (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998) demonstrated that conflict frequency peaks in early adolescence and then declines, whereas conflict intensity increases from early to middle adolescence. Although this meta-analysis was conducted with primarily white, middle-class families (reflecting the available research up to that point), subsequent studies examining American families of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds as well as youth in other cultures (reviewed in Smetana, 2011; Smetana et al., 2015) have confirmed that regardless of culture or ethnicity, conflicts appear to increase in frequency in early adolescence, although at somewhat lower rates among youth in non-Western cultures and in ethnically diverse U.S. adolescents than among European-American youth (Fuligni, 1998; Smetana, 2011; Smetana et al., 2015). Thus, there is general agreement that conflict in early adolescence is a normative and temporary perturbation that helps transform family relationships from a more hierarchical organization to more egalitarian relationships in late adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Warmth and Closeness

In addition, there is consistent evidence that warmth, support, closeness, and intimacy with parents, assessed both objectively through observed family interactions and in terms of adolescents' perceptions, decline during adolescence (see Smetana et al., 2006, 2015 for a review), although relationships may improve once adolescents leave home. Like research on adolescent-parent conflict, similar developmental trajectories in warmth and closeness have been found among ethnic minority and majority youth in the United States, although closeness typically declines at later ages among minority than majority youth (Fuligni, 1998; Tsai, Telzer, & Fuligni, 2013).

Parents' Knowledge of Adolescents' Activities

For decades, researchers have assumed that greater parental monitoring facilitates adolescent adjustment and reduces adolescents' norm breaking and delinquency. However, in two groundbreaking papers, Kerr and Stattin (2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000) demonstrated that in most of this research, measures of parental monitoring – parents' attempts to surveil and control their offspring's behavior – were confounded with measures of parents' knowledge of their adolescents' activities and that most studies of parental monitoring have measured the latter rather than the former. Kerr and Stattin (2000) demonstrated that parents obtain their knowledge of adolescents' activities, whereabouts, and associates primarily from adolescents' willing disclosure rather than from parental monitoring and control. Furthermore, parental knowledge of adolescents' activities normatively declines during adolescence (Masche, 2010) and secrecy increases (Cumsille, Darling, & Martinez, 2010; Keijsers, Branje, Frijns, Finkenauer, & Meeus, 2010). Adolescents rarely fully disclose about their activities to parents. In their qualitative study, Bakken and Brown (2010) found that adolescents who initially reported that they fully disclosed to parents subsequently admitted that they only told parents what they thought parents needed to know – and typically, that did not include all of the details.

These normative trends are all seen as reflecting adolescents' needs for greater autonomy in their relationships with parents. In my research, I have examined how adolescents' and parents' interpretations of their interactions, particularly around issues of adolescent-parent conflict, parenting beliefs and practices, and adolescents' information management, contribute to the development of autonomy and adolescents' attempts to carve out a unique identity. This research has been informed by social domain theory, described in the following section.

Social Domain Theory

Social domain theory originated in research on moral judgment development and initially focused on children's ability to distinguish *moral* concepts (defined as prescriptive judgments of right and wrong pertaining to justice, welfare, and rights) from *social conventions*, or the agreed-upon social norms that facilitate social interactions in different social contexts (Turiel, 1983). The claim is that morality and social convention constitute distinct conceptual and developmental domains of social knowledge. They develop from qualitatively different types of social interactions and follow distinct pathways of development. Turiel drew on moral philosophy and psychological research to examine the criteria that children and adolescents used to distinguish moral from conventional concepts in their judgments of hypothetical, prototypical issues. But increasingly, research has shifted to examine how different concepts are identified and coordinated in children's and adolescents' judgments of complex, multifaceted situations (like inclusion or exclusion from social groups or judgments of controversial social issues) that involve conflicting or overlapping concerns (see Killen & Rutland, 2011; Killen & Smetana, 2015; Smetana, 2006, 2011; Turiel, 2006).

Both moral and conventional issues are seen as legitimately regulated by rules, laws, and social expectations, but for different reasons. Moral violations (for instance, stealing another's property or hurting others) are wrong because they have intrinsic consequences for others' welfare, rights, or fairness. Therefore, moral rules and laws are derived from the acts themselves, whereas social-conventional acts are wrong because rules, laws, or customs define them as such. Social conventions are functional in providing individuals with expectations about correct behavior in specific contexts.

Not all issues are socially regulated, however. Nucci (1981, 1996, 2001) has claimed that some issues (referred to as personal) are beyond the scope of societal regulation and moral concern because they pertain to self, identity, and psychological functioning. More specifically, personal issues pertain to privacy, control over one's body, and personal preferences and choices (e.g., among Americans, choice of leisure activities, friends, appearance, and career choices). The breadth and content of the personal domain change developmentally and vary across cultures, as well as within cultures (for instance, according to social class). Gender roles and hierarchies also may lead to differences in how broadly (and to whom) personal concepts are applied (Turiel, 2002). Nevertheless, consistent with the notion of autonomy

and volitional functioning as a universal need (Deci & Ryan, 1985), it is proposed that individuals in all cultures establish a sphere of personal issues, because this is necessary for the establishment of self, identity, and personal agency (Nucci, 1981, 1996). Research has shown that from early childhood on, children treat a set of issues as personal and beyond the bounds of legitimate parental or adult authority. And, as discussed in the following sections, my research has shown that beliefs about the boundaries of children's personal domain expand during adolescence.

Adolescents' and Parents' Beliefs about Parental Authority

As one aspect of my research, and stemming directly from Nucci's (1981, 1996) claims, my students and I have examined adolescents' and parents' beliefs about legitimate parental authority concerning everyday moral, conventional, and personal issues. These studies also have included two additional types of issues. Prudential issues pertain to individuals' comfort, safety, and health (e.g., whether one diets or exercises, wears warm clothes in the winter, or smokes cigarettes; Tisak & Turiel, 1984). Like moral issues, prudential issues involve potential harm, but whereas moral issues pertain to harm to others, prudential issues pertain to harm to the self. Thus, they are also similar to personal issues. Consistent with this, children and adolescents typically classify prudential behaviors as personal matters or as "acceptable but foolish" (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991). Prudential issues are of particular interest during adolescence, because many of the risk behaviors of concern to parents and the broader society (such as underage drinking or experimenting with illegal drugs) are prudential matters.

Earlier in the chapter, I alluded to the fact that research from the social domain theory perspective has increasingly focused on complex, multidimensional issues. In research on beliefs about parental authority legitimacy, we have included a set of issues that we have referred to as multifaceted. These are issues that overlap the domains and may include conflicting concerns with social conventions, prudence, and personal issues. For instance, choice of friends and music, TV, and movie preferences typically are seen as personal choices for North American adolescents, but when adolescents choose friends that parents do not like or when movies include too much violence or sexually explicit content, they may also raise prudential concerns (i.e., they may harm the child), particularly for parents. Peer, friendship, and romantic issues also can be seen as multifaceted and involving a mixture of personal, prudential, conventional, and psychological concerns (Daddis & Randolph, 2010; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Thus, multifaceted issues may

involve multiple or overlapping domain attributions, both within and across individuals. Social domain theory thus provides a theoretically compelling framework for examining the different types of social knowledge that individuals bring to bear on social events, while recognizing the complexity of social life and the importance of individuals' interpretations of different situations and contexts.

Legitimate Parental Authority

Moral and Conventional Issues. In our studies, parents and adolescents have been asked to rate hypothetical moral, conventional, personal, prudential, and multifaceted issues in terms of the legitimacy of parental authority and parents' duty or obligation to make parental rules. Studies of North American families have shown that parents and adolescents strongly agree that parents have the legitimate authority to regulate moral and conventional issues throughout adolescence (although there are limits on what adults can legitimately expect children to do; Helwig & Jasiobedzka, 2001). Although many of our studies have been cross-sectional, a five-year (three-wave) longitudinal study of middle-class African-American families using latent growth curve modeling confirmed that there were no changes over time in adolescents' and mothers' beliefs about parents' legitimate authority to regulate moral and conventional issues (Smetana, Crean, & Campione-Barr, 2005). Moreover, we also have found that middle-class, primarily European-American parents and their adolescents believe that adolescents are strongly obligated to obey rules about moral and conventional issues, although slightly less so for conventional than for moral issues (Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

Prudential Issues. Adolescents and their parents also strongly endorse parents' legitimate authority to regulate prudentially risky issues, such as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or experimenting with illegal drugs (Smetana, 1988, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994). Although we might expect to see some declines in these beliefs in late adolescence, the evidence is mixed. In one study, we found that primarily European-American parents of 12th-graders ceded more authority over risky prudential behaviors (but still not much) to adolescents than did parents of 9th-graders (Smetana, Metzger, Gettman, & Campione-Barr, 2006). And research on a large sample of Chilean youth (Darling, Cumsille, & Martinez, 2007) found that adolescents' endorsement of parents' legitimate authority to make rules about substance and alcohol use declined substantially over a four-year period. In our longitudinal study of African-American middle-class families

(Smetana et al., 2005), however, judgments of parents' legitimate authority to regulate these issues did not decline among either adolescents or parents, even though some of the youth in the sample had graduated high school and moved out of their parents' homes. And a further study showed that European-American mothers overwhelmingly believed that parents have an obligation to make and enforce rules about prudential issues, although teenagers were significantly less likely to endorse such an obligation or see themselves as strongly obligated to comply with parents' prudential rules, once established (Smetana & Asquith, 1994). This was because adolescents viewed them as primarily personal and under their jurisdiction. Overall, then, the available evidence suggests that parents are seen as retaining significant authority over prudential behaviors across adolescence.

Adolescent Control over Personal Issues

Personal Issues. In contrast to these findings, research has consistently shown that as adolescents grow older, they reject parents' authority to regulate prototypical personal issues and, instead, view them as theirs to control (Smetana, 1988, 2000; Smetana & Asquith, 1994; Smetana, Metzger et al., 2006). Parents also believe that adolescents should have some control over personal issues, but typically less than teenagers do – and less than adolescents typically want. Although parents grant adolescents more personal jurisdiction over personal issues as teens grow older, parents consistently lag behind their children in their beliefs that personal issues are legitimately up to teenagers rather than parents to decide.

Our five-year longitudinal study (Smetana et al., 2005) showed that African-American mothers were somewhat more restrictive of adolescents' personal domains than European-American parents typically are (Smetana et al., 2005). The majority of mothers believed that it was permissible for them to regulate early adolescents' personal domain, although more so among mothers with younger than older early adolescents. However, these parental beliefs were found to decline over time. And although African-American culture emphasizes respect for authority and obedience to parents, African-American adolescents did not agree with their mothers' views. Across the five years of the study, teens consistently claimed that they, not their parents, should control their personal domains. Therefore, divergences between African-American mothers' and teenagers' beliefs were greatest in early adolescence (co-occurring with the age at which the frequency of parent-adolescent conflicts typically peaks; Laursen et al., 1998), and mothers' and adolescents' beliefs became less discrepant over time.

Multifaceted Issues. Numerous studies have shown that judgments regarding multifaceted issues fall in-between those regarding moral, conventional, and prudential issues (where parental authority is consistently upheld) and personal issues (where parental authority is typically rejected). Parents believe that they have more legitimate authority to regulate nonsocial multifaceted issues (like getting a tattoo or watching violent or sexually explicit movies) and friend- and peer-related multifaceted issues than do adolescents. Thus, we found that both African-American mothers' and adolescents' beliefs that parents should retain authority over multifaceted issues declined over time in a parallel fashion, although adolescents consistently wanted more control over these issues than parents believed acceptable (Smetana et al., 2005).

Darling et al.'s (2007) longitudinal study of Chilean youth found similar developmental patterns in adolescents' judgments (they did not include parents in their study). That is, adolescents' views of parents as legitimate authorities, as well as their beliefs that they were obligated to obey their parents, declined sharply with age from early to middle adolescence and then less dramatically from middle to late adolescence. Declines were greatest for prudential issues (like alcohol use) and least for multifaceted issues, with personal issues falling in-between. Similar domain-related differences in judgments of parental authority have been found in a range of cultures, including rural and urban youth in China (Zhang & Fuligni, 2006), youth in Chile, the Philippines, and the United States (Darling, Cumsille, & Peña-Alampay, 2005), in Arab refugee adolescents displaced due to political conflict and living in Jordan (Smetana, Ahmad, & Wray-Lake, in press), and in a diverse sample of Iranian mothers of 14-year-olds in three cities in Iran (Assadi, Smetana, Shahmansouri, & Mohammadi, 2011). Furthermore, Iranian mothers' judgments of parental authority differed by domain but not by sociodemographic background, although mothers varied greatly in degree of modernity (from traditional to modern), educational background (from having no schooling to college-educated), and poverty status (from poor to wealthy).

Adolescents' claims to personal jurisdiction reflect their desires to obtain greater autonomy from parents. Interview studies using a similar protocol with mothers from different cultures and of children at different ages (reviewed in Smetana, 2002) clearly indicated that mothers also believe that it is important for children to become independent and that scaffolding their children's autonomy is an important parenting goal. Mothers reported restricting children's and adolescents' choices in particular

situations, however, because they viewed those choices as unsafe or unreasonable, because the environment was seen as too dangerous, or because they believed the child was not yet competent or responsible enough to make sensible choices (Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Smetana & Chuang, 2001). For African-American parents, concerns with racism and prejudice also come into play. They may view their teens as competent to make good decisions but be concerned with how others will interpret their teens'– and particularly their sons' – behavior and thus the attendant risks to the child (Smetana, 2011).

Influences on Authority Beliefs. Daddis (2008, 2011) has provided compelling evidence that U.S. adolescents use their friends as guides in determining how much autonomy is appropriate. In interviewing best-friend dyads, his research has demonstrated that adolescents compare themselves to their close friends to gauge how much freedom they should have over personal and multifaceted issues. In contrast, they primarily use their parents to guide their beliefs about appropriate control over conventional and prudential issues. Other research has shown that teenagers also look to their siblings (Campione-Barr & Smetana, 2009, discussed in Smetana, 2011) for guidance about how much autonomy to expect. Because at any point in time, older siblings typically have more autonomy than younger siblings do (reflecting their older age), younger siblings typically expect to gain autonomy at earlier ages than their firstborn siblings. In other words, younger siblings observe the freedoms their older siblings enjoy and want some of it for themselves.

Implications for Adolescent Adjustment

This research demonstrates that there are both convergences and discrepancies in adolescents' and parents' beliefs about the boundaries of parents' authority legitimacy, and these have consequences for adolescents' adjustment. In both concurrent and longitudinal analyses over two years, Smetana and Daddis (2002) found that adolescents' beliefs that parents have less authority legitimacy over personal and multifaceted issues, along with parents' greater restrictive control over these issues, were associated with adolescents' ratings of their parents as intrusive and psychologically controlling. But perceptions of parental psychological control were not associated with legitimacy beliefs and parents' control over moral and conventional issues. Furthermore, among both Japanese and American adolescents, perceived parental overcontrol of their personal domains (and for Japanese youth, multifaceted issues) was associated with greater internalizing

distress (Hasebe, Nucci, & Nucci, 2004). However, greater parental control over prudential and conventional issues was not associated with negative youth outcomes. These findings highlight the domain-specific impact of parental control on adolescent adjustment.

Although adolescents' autonomy in family decision making increases across adolescence, autonomy also proceeds at different rates for different types of issues (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004); at different developmental periods, both too much and too little autonomy can have deleterious long-term effects on adolescents. For instance, research indicates that when early adolescents make personal decisions alone without any parental input and guidance, they are at risk for both internalizing (e.g., anxiety and depression) and externalizing (conduct problems and substance use) symptoms, but increases in autonomous decision making about personal and multifaceted issues from middle to late adolescence are associated with better self-worth and fewer internalizing problems (Smetana et al., 2004). Although there are minor variations according to ethnicity, culture, and the ethnic and racial composition of the community in the timing and degree of autonomy adolescents attain, research suggests that these patterns are broadly generalizable (Gutman & Eccles, 2007; Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996; Qin, Pomerantz, & Wang, 2009).

Adolescent-Parent Conflict

Adolescents' and parents' conflicting views of the boundaries of parents' legitimate authority also lead to conflicts in adolescent-parents relationships. In our research, we have individually interviewed adolescents, mothers, and fathers to identify conflicts in their relationships and their interpretations of those conflicts. That is, they justified their perspectives on conflicts and also reasoned from the other's perspective (referred to as counterarguments). These were coded in domain-relevant justification categories. The studies demonstrate that ethnically diverse adolescents in the United States, as well as adolescents in other cultures (reviewed in Smetana, 2002, 2011), reason about the majority of everyday conflicts as issues of personal choice or jurisdiction. They argued that disputes (over issues such as getting their homework or the chores done, cleaning their room, whether they can date, or their afterschool activities) primarily are personal matters, up to them to decide, and not their parents' business. In contrast, parents primarily viewed these same disputes as prudential matters of health and safety or as social-conventional issues (of authority, social nonconformity, needs for politeness or respect, and social coordination). Except for conflicts over

sibling disputes, conflicts were rarely about moral issues. And when adolescents treated conflicts as social conventions, they referenced peer, not parental, norms.

Adolescents' counterarguments demonstrated that teens understand parents' conventional or prudential perspectives on conflicts but that they reject these views as wrongheaded or misguided (e.g., "she thinks my room is part of the house and so I should clean it up, but she's wrong – it's my room, and I can do what I want"). Likewise, parents understand perfectly well that teenagers want more personal jurisdiction over the issues in question but did not view this as developmentally appropriate or reasonable in the particular situation ("he says he should be able to decide, but as long as he lives in my house, he needs to follow my rules"). Thus, reasoning does not reflect failures in perspective taking; it reflects adolescents' and parents' divergent goals and needs in their social interactions.

In our view, this reflects adolescents' attempts to increase the scope of their personal jurisdiction. A study explicitly examining European-American adolescents' retrospective accounts of their goals in conflicts with mothers provides some support for this interpretation (Lundell, Grusec, McShane, & Davidov, 2008). The researchers identified six goal categories drawn from the peer literature. The majority (62%) of the younger adolescents and many (43%) of the older teens stated instrumental and autonomy goals, which can be seen as personal concerns. A smaller percentage pertained to relatedness needs (dyadic concerns and emotional support). Considering their ages, the increase in relatedness goals among the older group is consistent with the finding that warmth and closeness increases once teens leave home.

Thus, our findings show that adolescents seek more control over issues they believe ought to be personal and up to them to decide, but parents believe otherwise because they seek to protect their adolescents, keep them safe, and socialize them into cultural, religious, and family norms. In an interpersonal sense, much of the reasoning about conflicts can be seen as multifaceted and reflecting disagreements that occur over where the boundaries of parents' legitimate authority and adolescents' personal jurisdiction should be drawn. These broad goals become instantiated in specific issues of disagreement. The content or topic of those disagreements shifts over the course of adolescence (for instance, from bedtimes, the cleanliness or state of adolescents' rooms, and dress and appearances in early adolescence to dating, curfew, and interpersonal issues in middle adolescence; Smetana, 2011). But the dynamic of conflicts – the ongoing negotiation over what adolescents claim to be personal and what

adults view them as competent to control – remains relatively stable across adolescence.

Conflicts may lead to gradual transformations in the boundaries of parental authority. Although adolescents push for greater autonomy, research has shown that parents, not children, guide how much autonomy adolescents attain. A three-year longitudinal study of middle adolescents' and mothers' expectations about the desired pacing of autonomy indicated that mothers' (but not adolescents') autonomy expectations (assessed in terms of the ages at which they believed autonomy should be attained) influenced how much autonomy in family decision making teens subsequently had (Daddis & Smetana, 2005). For personal and prudential issues, these effects were domain-specific (e.g., expectations for autonomy in one domain predicted greater decision-making control only in that domain). In contrast, mothers' expectations regarding the desired pacing of autonomy over personal issues influenced adolescents' later autonomy over multifaceted issues. Therefore, conflicts can move parents to reconsider their limits and provide an opportunity to examine whether their expectations are developmentally or situationally appropriate or whether adolescents have developed sufficient maturity or competence to permit alterations in their rules.

Researchers have moved away from defining autonomy as involving separation, detachment, or distancing from parents to embrace more relational definitions, often referred to as autonomy-relatedness (e.g., Allen, Hauser, Bell, & O'Connor, 1994). Although moderate levels of conflicts do lead to gradual transformations of family relationships, disagreement and conflict may not be very effective in achieving adolescents' goals in the short term. Indeed, the vast majority of conflicts – among American adolescents of different ethnicities as well as among adolescents in other cultures – are resolved in terms of adolescents' giving in to parents (Smetana, 2011). Thus, adolescents may eventually change their parents' minds – or wear them down – but overt conflict or disagreement may not lead to the immediate outcomes that adolescents desire.

Furthermore, open conflict may pose some risk in terms of short-term disruption in their relationships with parents, although because family relationships are bound by kinship, they are less vulnerable to disruption than are relationships outside the family (Collins & Laursen, 1992). As adolescents also have intrinsic needs for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985), they must balance their needs for autonomy with their desire to maintain positive relationships with parents (or to have parents think well of them). Furthermore, in ethnic groups or cultures that place a strong emphasis on

harmony or interdependence in interpersonal relationships, open expression of disagreement may be discouraged. Thus, in the short term, when adolescents' needs for autonomy and relatedness conflict, adolescents may be able to stay in their parents' good graces while achieving the freedom they seek by managing the information they provide to parents about their activities.

Adolescent Information Management

As noted previously, parents primarily obtain their knowledge of adolescents' activities from adolescents' willing disclosure (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000), and this is more likely when parents are authoritative and parent-adolescent relationships are warm, responsive, and trusting (Darling, Cumsille, Caldwell, & Dowdy, 2006; Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Smetana, Metzger et al., 2006; Smetana, Villalobos, Tasopoulos-Chan, Gettman, & Campione-Barr, 2009).

In our studies, we have examined adolescents' and parents' beliefs about parents' right to know and adolescents' obligations to disclose about activities in different domains (Rote & Smetana, 2015; Smetana, Metzger et al., 2006), as well as how much adolescents disclose to parents about those issues, adolescents' justifications for nondisclosure, and their strategies for managing information. We have found that even when adolescents see parents as having a strong right to know about their activities and view themselves as highly obligated to disclose (as is the case for risky prudential issues), they may choose not to (Rote & Smetana, 2015; Smetana, Metzger et al., 2006), primarily because they fear parental disapproval or punishment. Adolescents also disclose less when they view their behavior as personal matters, not harmful, and not their parents' business (Smetana et al., 2009; Yau, Tasopoulos-Chan, & Smetana, 2009). Because adolescents are not required to disclose about personal issues, however, willingness to disclose to parents about these issues is more closely associated with better parent-adolescent relationships than is disclosure over other issues (Smetana et al., 2009).

In cultures, ethnic groups, or families where open conflict is discouraged, adolescents may conceal their activities from parents. Keeping secrets allows for greater autonomy while preserving family harmony and relatedness to parents. Indeed, secrecy has been found to be greater among American ethnic minority than majority youth, particularly when certain types of activities (such as dating and romantic involvement) violate cultural values or expectations (Bakken & Brown, 2010), or, as is the case for Chinese-American youth, when adolescents perceive that parents do not care, would

not listen, or would not understand (Yau et al., 2009). Although most of the research to date on these issues has focused on teenagers living in Western countries, nondisclosure, secrecy, and information management have been found in Palestinian youth living in refugee camps in Jordan (Ahmad, Smetana, & Klimstra, 2014) and Japanese teenagers living in Japan (Nucci, Smetana, Araki, Nakaue, & Comer, 2014).

Adolescents typically view lying as unacceptable and as violating expectations of trust within their relationships (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2004; Rote & Smetana, 2014). However, they view acts of omission (such as omitting important details parents would want to know, or avoiding the issue) as relatively acceptable (and much more so than do parents; Rote & Smetana, 2014). They use these strategies frequently (Marshall, Tilton-Weaver, & Bosdet, 2005; Smetana et al., 2009), although their use is associated with poorer-quality family relationships and adjustment (Laird & Marrero, 2010; Rote & Smetana, 2014).

Implications for Self-Regulation

The research discussed in this chapter indicates that adolescents' and parents' different interpretations of conflicts reflect their different roles and goals in social interactions. Thus far, however, self-regulatory processes in adolescent-parent relationships have not been studied. We assert here that such research could illuminate the steps adolescents and parents take to achieve their goals successfully. Research has shown that individuals benefit from self-regulation strategies that foster goal pursuits. This includes mental contrasting of the desired future with present reality that helps commit to and pursue feasible goals (Oettingen, Pak, & Schnetter, 2001), and implementation intentions that help meet difficult challenges on the way to goal attainment (Gollwitzer, 1999). In particular, mental contrasting with implementation intentions (MCII) guarantees that individuals anticipate the future and identify the critical obstacles to reaching the desired future. It also helps individuals overcome these problems and stay on track and successfully deal with the threats and irritations that might obstruct their accomplishment.

To illustrate how these strategies may be used for easing adolescent-parent conflict, adolescents may think about a desired future – going to a party on Saturday night that all their friends are attending. They may use mental contrasting, as defined within fantasy realization theory (Oettingen, 1999, 2000, 2012), to think about how great the party is going to be and how sad they would be if they could not attend. Realizing how much they

want to go, they then may reflect on the critical impediments to their goal – parents' objections about coming home late, perhaps beyond the teen's curfew, and concerns about the possible presence of alcohol, as well as the need for transportation to and from the party. This, in turn, may spur them to create an effective plan (Gollwitzer, 1999): arranging a ride with a responsible friend, assuring their parents that the party will be supervised and alcohol-free, and giving their parents the host's parents' phone number to call.

Parents also may use mental contrasting. They may imagine a negative future, such as all of the potential risks to their teen (lack of parental supervision and the possibility of underage drinking and reckless or drunk driving) and what they may lose if their child was harmed (Oettingen, Mayer, Thorpe, Janetzke, & Lorenz, 2005). Thus they may generate a different plan (keeping their teen at home). But the teens' responsible behavior and forceful arguments may successfully persuade their parents that their fears are unfounded (Oettingen et al., 2005), leading to adolescents' successful goal realization (attending the party), satisfying both adolescents' needs for both autonomy and relatedness (Ryan et al., 1996) and parents' need to protect their offspring from harm while scaffolding their developing autonomy.

Analyses of these processes, including the roadblocks to successful goal realization and the extent to which parents and child use meta-cognitive processes such as mental contrasting, could illuminate how conflicts between adolescents and parents unfold, are negotiated, and are successfully resolved. As a first step, researchers should determine whether and how certain short-term and long-term goals are activated in conflict situations. Conflicts occur both over adolescents' desires for greater privileges (e.g., being able to go places or do things with friends or stay out later) as well as parents' expectations that adolescents fulfill their responsibilities (e.g., doing the chores or homework). Our studies show that adolescents typically agree that responsibilities need to be fulfilled, but not necessarily when and how parents expect. Thus, adolescents may be more planful primarily when trying to obtain greater privileges, as these goals are complex and difficult to attain, whereas they may respond more reactively when reminded of responsibilities.

Assuming that wishes or goals are activated, adolescents' use of self-regulatory strategies may lead to more constructive thoughts, feelings, and actions (Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2011; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2010). Thus, for instance, mental contrasting of future and present reality might help adolescents pursue more reasonable goals (e.g., pursuing baby steps rather than leaps toward autonomy) and discriminate between effective and ineffective

means to attain their goals. A similar approach could help parents think through their adolescents' competence ("well, she did call home last time she was late to let us know where she was and when she would be home"). Thus, teaching both adolescents and parents these self-regulatory strategies could lead to better communication and conflict resolution in the short term and, hence, better developmental outcomes down the road. Researchers also should examine how developmental processes influence adolescents' skills in goal pursuit and how parents' parenting styles influence theirs. Although mentally contrasting future and present reality leads individuals to consider whether desired future outcomes are feasible and likely (Oettingen, 2012; Oettingen et al., 2001), parents employing different parenting styles may have different desired futures and, therefore, different implementation strategies that vary in their effectiveness. For instance, authoritarian parents may consider psychological control to be an important part of their disciplinary arsenal, although it leads to negative outcomes for youth.

Research on self-regulation has focused primarily on individual goals (doing better in school, losing weight). However, the research discussed in this chapter has focused on clashes between adolescents' and parents' goals. Thus, adolescents may desire more autonomy, set plans in motion to attain it, and be able to navigate the steps outlined by Oettingen and Gollwitzer (2010; Gollwitzer & Oettingen, 2011; Oettingen, 2012), but they still may not successfully achieve their goals, because parents do not allow it. Social-psychological research in an experimental bargaining task has shown that dyads that use mental contrasting with implementation intentions achieve the most joint agreements (Kirk, Oettingen, & Gollwitzer, 2013). But research is needed to determine whether similar results would be obtained between parents and children, as these relationships are hierarchical, and parents hold more power than their offspring do.

As noted previously, adolescents may negotiate with parents, but parents typically decide how conflicts will be resolved. And this may be as it should be, because adolescents may not have the competence or maturity to make good decisions, or their goals may be developmentally inappropriate and thus may put them at risk. For instance, research has shown that too-early autonomy (Dishion, Nelson, & Bullock, 2004) or youth alone decision making in early adolescence can have deleterious long-term effects on adolescent adjustment (Smetana, 2011). Thus, the deployment of self-regulatory strategies may improve adolescent-parent communication and reduce the frequency and intensity of adolescent-parent conflicts. Even if they do not change the type of resolution achieved, both adolescents and parents may feel happier with the outcomes.

It also should be noted that adolescents may be very strategic about the information they share with parents and skillfully use their self-regulatory abilities, but in the service of concealment from parents. Indeed, concealment strategies (avoiding discussion, providing partial information, and lying to parents) all may be used to obtain greater autonomy from parents while staying connected or avoiding parental disapproval. And these strategies need to be deployed skillfully to avoid parental detection. But research has shown that use of concealment strategies is associated with negative consequences for adolescent adjustment and family relationships (Laird & Marrero, 2010; Rote & Smetana, 2014). Thus, successful use of self-regulatory processes is not enough to ensure healthy adolescent development; the developmental appropriateness of goals and the specific strategies chosen to attain them also must be considered. But adolescents' and parents' better use of self-regulatory strategies in the service of reducing conflicts in their relationships may also decrease the likelihood that adolescents need to resort to secrecy and concealment about their activities in their relationships with parents.

Conclusions

Research on adolescent-parent relationships discussed in this chapter highlights the importance of a developmentally sensitive and domain-specific approach to parenting, parent-adolescent relationships, and adolescent development. Adolescents in different ethnic and cultural contexts strive for greater autonomy while maintaining connections with parents. Parents also endorse the importance of developing autonomy but, consistent with their parental role, seek to keep adolescents safe and socialize them into the norms and values of their society. These competing goals normatively result in increases in both conflicts with parents over the everyday details of family life and nondisclosure to parents, as the boundaries of parents' legitimate authority are renegotiated toward greater adolescent personal jurisdiction. Considering how adolescents and parents pursue their divergent goals could help further illuminate these transactional processes and adolescents' developmental path toward successful adulthood.

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