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The Social Ecology of Parenting: Systematically Modeling The Antecedents of Supportive and Intrusive Parenting

Julie A. Schluterman

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Julie A. Schluterman entitled "The Social Ecology of Parenting: Systematically Modeling The Antecedents of Supportive and Intrusive Parenting." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.

<div align="right">Brian K. Barber, Major Professor</div>

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Greer Litton Fox, Suzanne B. Kurth, Hoan Bui

<div align="right">Accepted for the Council:</div>

<div align="right">Carolyn R. Hodges</div>

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THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF PARENTING: SYSTEMATICALLY MODELING THE
ANTECEDENTS OF SUPPORTIVE AND INTRUSIVE PARENTING

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Julie A. Schluterman
December 2007

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Ryan whose support made my graduate degree possible,

and to my daughters, Eliza and Sophia, who made this dissertation ever so difficult to

write, but even more worthwhile to complete.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

One of the significant contributions of this study is its inclusion of the role of social contextual factors in determining parenting. I built on the ecological model proposed by Belsky (1984). As such, the parenting model tested in this dissertation included individual level determinants of parenting: 1) parent characteristics (e.g., developmental history), and 2) child characteristics (e.g., behavior problems). Yet, rather than include a social context domain as described by Belsky, I distinguished between *within family* context (e.g., interparental hostility) and *external to family* context (e.g., work-family conflict, neighborhood disorganization) as social contextual sources of stress and support to the parent-child relationship.

A second significant contribution of this study is attention to parent gender. I included assessments of both mother and father parenting and specifically test for hypothesized differences in how the predictive model might operate differently depending on the parent's gender. It is important to note further that the accomplishment of this examination of parent gender involved the use of a methodology that is itself an important contribution to the existing work. Specifically, my methodology involves simultaneous testing of mother and father data, something that has not typically been done in past studies. Critically, this methodology controls for any overlap or similarity between mother and father parenting and thereby allows for a better test of the uniqueness of mother and father parenting and of patterns of predicting mother and father parenting.

This study employed parent reported data from the NIMH-funded Ogden Youth and Family Project, a longitudinal, sequential-cohort study of families with adolescent

children (N = 933). Using structural equation modeling, we found that the model adequately fit the data while direct and indirect effects on parenting were found. The individual level parenting determinants of child behavior problems and parental depression were significantly directly associated with parenting, particularly for fathers. The *within family* contextual variable of covert marital conflict was directly associated with father parenting, and directly and indirectly associated with mother intrusive parenting through maternal depression. As risk factors *external to the family*, work-family conflict was not significantly related to parenting, and neighborhood disorganization was indirectly related to intrusive mothering (but not her supportive parenting or to father's parenting), through elevated levels of marital conflict and depression.

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Chapter I: Statement of the Problem

It has long been understood that parenting practices play an important role in the socialization process. Parents are viewed as responsible for the functioning of future generations. This includes not only taking care of children's physical needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, but also ensuring that children acquire desirable values and norms that will help them to be productive and beneficial members of society.

Consistent with the significance placed on parenting in the socialization process, much research has focused on differentiating and describing various parenting practices and typologies, with particular attention given to exploring the effects of parenting on child characteristics and development. The general consensus from this work is that competent parenting is related to favorable child outcomes, such as academic achievement and decreased likelihood of exhibiting behavioral problems, while lower quality parenting is related to less favorable child outcomes, such as behavioral problems and poor psychological development (e.g., Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Rollins and Thomas, 1979).

Of particular interest to this dissertation is the relatively recent and, thus, less-well-developed emphasis on identifying determinants of parenting. Empirical investigations of antecedents of parenting suggest that many factors are related to poor parenting practices, including: parental depression (Fox and Gelfand, 1994; Grossman et al., 1980; McLearn et al., 2006; Radke-Yarrow et al., 1988), marital dissatisfaction and conflict (Buehler and Gerard, 2002; Conger et al., 1992; Easterbrooks and Emde, 1988; Goldberg and Easterbrooks, 1984), difficult child temperament (Park et al., 1997; Petit et al., 2001; Scaramella et al., 2002), and stressors such as economic problems and

employment instability (Conger et al., 1984; Conger et al., 1992, 1993; Lempers et al., 1989; Lim and Loo, 2003).

The common approach to studying the determinants of parenting has been the ecological perspective of family relationships (Bronfrenbrenner, 1979), whereby the parent-child relationship is viewed as multiply determined by interactions between individual characteristics and multiple social contexts. Such an approach demonstrates the complexity of parenting practices in that parenting is not a simple product of a few variables. Instead, it is to be understood as a multidimensional social interaction that exists within a network of complex interrelationships that include the psychological characteristics and personal resources of the participants as well as the many contexts in which their relationship occurs. This dissertation builds on the ecological approach to antecedents of parenting in that the proposed parenting model recognizes the complexity of the parent-child relationship as existing within ecological niches and explores these multiple ecological contexts for their associations with parenting practices.

While the ecological approach is valuable to understanding determinants of parenting in that it identifies the various relevant ecologies, it does not provide adequate information about how these determinants are interconnected. Therefore, this dissertation has also been guided by two, additional theories that assist in identifying the interrelationships among these variables: family systems theory and family stress theory. Family systems theory describes a family as a system in which various subsystems (e.g., self systems, relationship dyads, etc.) are interdependent upon one another. Therefore, difficulties with one part of the system interrupt the performance of other system parts (parent-child relationship) (Gelles, 1995; Margolin et al., 2001; Minuchin, 1985). Given

that one part depends on the functioning of other parts of the family system, risk or problems in the social context of the family can be viewed as disrupting the functioning of other relationships in the family system, particularly the parent-child relationship (Margolin et al., 2001; Minuchin, 1985).

Relatedly, family stress theory posits that stressors and demands, as well as their accumulation over time, interact with resources and capabilities and with meanings that individuals attach to the stressors to influence family functioning (Boss, 1988; Dennis, 1996; Lavee, McCubbin, and Patterson, 1985; McCubbin and Patterson, 1983; Patterson, 2002). From this approach, families are perceived to be continually in the process of balancing demands and capabilities in an effort to create family adjustment and thus, to perform basic family functions (e.g., nurturing, socializing). Distress resulting from difficulty balancing demands and making adjustments interrupts the performance of basic family functioning because parents focus their resources and capabilities on dealing with the distress instead of on their parenting.

Together, ecological, family systems, and family stress theories recommend the need to explore multiple ecological contexts as sources of risk factors that have detrimental effects on parenting practices. Family systems and stress theories, in particular, have been useful in providing information about the process by which components within the family system (i.e., the marital relationship) and components of the family's external context (neighborhood and work) can possibly influence the parent-child relationship. Since these approaches imply that difficulties and problems in these contexts can negatively impact parenting, this dissertation focuses on the risk factors within these domains.

BASIC LIMITATIONS IN EXTANT RESEARCH

There are two basic limitations of the current research on determinants of parenting that this dissertation addresses. First, although socio-ecological theory has been invoked in much of the work, and in the basic conceptual model that has guided most of that work (see Belsky's process model in figure 1), attention to the broad social ecology of parenting has actually been quite limited. Instead, most of the work has focused on more psychological processes, such as characteristics of parents and children. Serious attention has not be placed on the sociological conditions existing outside the family that impact how parents function in their various family relationships, including parenting. In this dissertation, I have intended to contribute to understanding the determinants of parenting in three specific ways, all of which are focused on sharpening the focus on social context.

The first two contributions are made possible by distinguishing social contexts that exist within the family and those external to the family. The first contribution focuses on the marital relationship as a key context within the family. While some work has attended to the role of marital functioning when studying parenting, I extend that work by differentiating two types of marital conflict (i.e., overt and covert) and by testing for both direct and indirect effects on the parenting of both mothers and fathers. The second intended contribution incorporates contexts external to the family into the investigation of determinants of parenting. Specifically, I measure the intersection between the work and family roles and the neighborhood context, asserting hypotheses about how these contexts both directly and indirectly impact parenting.

The third intended contribution addressed the lack of attention in work on the

antecedents of parenting to parental gender. Like the bulk of the work on parenting in general, most studies of the determinants of parenting have focused on mothers, or, if they have included both mothers and fathers in their samples, they have not tested for gender differences. In this dissertation, I include assessments of both mother and father parenting and specifically test for hypothesized differences in how the predictive model might operate differently depending on the gender of the parent.

It is important to note further that the accomplishment of this third contribution has involved the use of a methodology that is itself an important contribution to the existing work. Specifically, the methodology I have employed involves the simultaneous testing of mother and father data, something that has not typically been done in past studies. Critically, this methodology controls for any overlap or similarity between mother and father parenting and thereby allows for a better test of the uniqueness of mother and father parenting and of patterns of predicting mother and father parenting.

SUPPORTIVE AND INTRUSIVE PARENTING

Before proceeding to describe the predictive model to be tested in this dissertation, it is important to first clarify the aspects of parenting that will be investigated. From the multitude of different conceptualizations and measurements of parenting, I have selected two general domains of parenting to investigate - supportive parenting and intrusive parenting – both of which are likely significantly impacted by the socio-ecological risk factors that make up the predictive model for this study. Supportive parenting refers to a set of parental behaviors (e.g., warmth, acceptance, nurturance, etc.) that has consistently been found to be promotive of the psychosocial well-being of

children and adolescents (e.g., Maccoby and Martin, 1983; Rollins and Thomas, 1979). Further, much of the past work on antecedents of parenting has focused on some form of supportive parenting and findings are consistent that these forms of parenting decline in the presence of the parent and family risk factors that have been tested (Conger et al., 1993; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1998). Because this dissertation intends to expand the current modeling of antecedents of parenting, it is important to include this standard domain of parenting so that the contributions this dissertation will make will be evident.

Intrusive parenting (i.e., typically measured as parental psychological control) refers to parental behaviors that violate the self and identity development of children via constraining, invalidating, and guilt-inducing behaviors (Barber, 2002). This dimension of parenting is relevant to study not only because of the intense attention it has been receiving over the past decade in studies of parenting across the world (see Barber, Stolz, and Olsen, 2005 for a review), but because it has been suggested that variations in this form of parenting might be particularly susceptible to the psychological and social functioning of parents. For example, rather than being a parent control strategy that is rationally selected by parents to affect some positive change in their children (as some other forms of more behavioral control appear to be), it has been postulated that the use of psychologically controlling strategies reflect parental deficits in psychological well-being or relational competence (e.g., with their spouses and children) whereby, for example, "the parent's psychological status and relational position to the child is maintained and defended at the expense and violation of the child's development of self." (Barber and Harmon, 2002, p.46). To date, there has been very little empirical investigation of the antecedents of parental psychological control, but the little that there

is has been generally supportive of this notion, in that problematic forms of both parents'

psychological status (e.g., perfectionism; Soenens et al., 2005) and marital difficulties

(e.g., Stone, Buehler, and Barber, 2002) have been shown to predict higher levels of

parental psychological control. This work needs to be expanded.

THE TRADITIONAL MODEL OF DETERMINANTS OF PARENTING:

SHORTCOMINGS AND NEED FOR ENHANCEMENT

In selecting the determinants of parenting to be examined in the dissertation,

attention is first given to the predominant conceptual model that has guided the study of

parenting antecedents - Belsky's (1984) process model of antecedents of parenting – in

order to set a foundation upon which this dissertation could build. (A fuller description

of this model is found in chapter two.) In that model, Belsky included a social contextual

domain that he described as parents' sources of stress and support. However, he did not

thoroughly elaborate on this social contextual domain. Rather, he appeared to place

emphasis on certain other portions of the model as the most influential on parenting of all

the domains: namely, parent characteristics and child characteristics. As a result, much of

the ensuing work that has tested his model has focused on parent and child

characteristics, with less attention to the social contextual variables. The absence of

appropriate attention to the sociological components of parenting determinants in much

of the published literatures represents a substantial limitation of this work, effectively

ignoring as it does the reality that individual and family processes occur in critical social

and economic contexts. Accordingly, this dissertation intends to address this limitation by

explicitly integrating key sociological issues with the on-going work of understanding the

determinants of parenting by further elaborating, refining, and extending Belsky's

concept of social context.

Belsky's (1984) original model described social context as "contextual sources of

stress and support" that impact parenting behaviors, including "marital relations, social

networks, and occupational experiences of parents" (p. 83-84). I propose that further

examination of types of social contexts that are theoretically and empirically suggested to

be linked to parenting is necessary to add to our current understanding of antecedents of

parenting. As noted above, I have distinguished between contexts within the family (the

marital relationship) and those external to it (the work-family interface and the

neighborhood). These social contexts, both within and external to the family, are

examined as interrelated sources of risk factors that impact parenting practices that can

directly and indirectly influence parenting practices in conjunction with the traditionally

examined effects of parent and child characteristics. As mentioned, the model to be

tested represents a further contribution in that attention is given to another key contextual

factor: namely, parental gender. Because most of the work that is available to inform the

construction of my predictive model has not differentiated between mothers and fathers, I

proceed first to build the predictive model without a focus on gender differences. After

constructing the model, I will then assert expectations of gender differences that can be

derived from the relatively little work that has defined such differences.

AN ENHANCED MODEL OF DETERMINANTS OF PARENTING

In this section, I briefly review each of the constructs of the enhanced model that I

have constructed in this dissertation. Because of my desire to extend past work, I begin

the model building with the constructs that have typically been the focus in studies on antecedents of parenting: 1) child characteristics and 2) parent characteristics. I follow these with coverage of the constructs this dissertation adds to that basic model: 1) marital conflict, 2) work-family conflict, and 3) neighborhood disorganization, and then propose parent gender-related hypotheses. A fuller review of the relevant literatures is found in chapter two, as well as further development of the hypotheses for each construct.

Child Characteristics

Consistent with the then recent acknowledgement that the parent-child relationship is not unidirectional from parent to child (e.g., Bell, 1979), Belsky (1984) included child characteristics as a main domain in his original model of parenting antecedents. He described it as "forces emanating from within the individual child (child characteristics of individuality)" and discussed such measures as child's temperament and parent's rating of difficulty raising this particular child (p. 84). Those studies that have explored this domain have concentrated on some aspect of child temperament (e.g., Kendler et al., 1997; McBride et al., 2002; Rubin et al., 1998). Generally, these studies conclude that a child's temperament influences the parenting that he or she receives.

Rather than focus on child temperament, in this study I assess child behavior problems (e.g., externalizing behavior and internalizing behavior) as an antecedent to parenting practices. Family systems theory contends that child behavior problems represent difficulty in one part of the family system, and thus has the potential to interrupt the functioning of the parent-child relationship. In addition, from family stress theory a child with behavior problems is viewed as a stressor that places demands on the family's

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resources and capabilities. As such, experiences of child behavior problems create family

distress that in turn is perceived to disrupt the parent-child relationship. Family systems

theory, family stress theory, and empirical findings of these relationships suggest

negative effects of child behavior problems on effective parenting. Accordingly, the

enhanced model to be tested in this dissertation includes a direct effect of child problem

behaviors on less effective parenting (i.e., decreased support and enhanced intrusiveness).

Parent Characteristics

In Belsky's (1984) original model, parent characteristics was one of the main

domains of determinants of parenting. He described it in a variety of ways including

"personal psychological resources," "forces emanating from within the individual parent

(personality)," and "general psychological well-being" (p. 83-84). Belsky (1984)

proposed parent characteristics to be one of the more significant determinants of

parenting, affecting parenting both directly and indirectly. Of interest to this dissertation

is parental depression as a determinant of parenting, because, while research assessing

characteristics of the parent include measures of mental well-being, self-esteem,

personality (e.g., neuroticism and extraversion), and problem behaviors (e.g., alcohol and

drug problems), the majority of the studies have examined parental depression or

negative mood as antecedents of parenting. The general consensus of these studies is that

parental depression hinders interpersonal interaction and is therefore associated with less

effective and less optimal parenting practices (Conger et al., 1984; Eamon and Zuehl,

2001; Jones et al., 2002; Kotch et al., 1999; Lyons-Ruth et al., 2002; Simons et al., 1990;

Simons et al., 1993). Similar to child behavior problems, parental depression is viewed

from family systems theory as a difficulty in one part of the family system, and thus has the potential to interrupt the functioning of the parent-child relationship. In addition, from family stress theory parental depression is viewed as a stressor that has the potential to create family distress, and in turn disrupt the parent-child relationship. Consistent with family systems theory, family stress theory, and available empirical findings, there is evidence that parental depression has negative implications for parenting practices. The enhanced model articulated in this dissertation, therefore, includes direct effects of parental depression on less effective parenting (i.e., lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting).

Contexts Within the Family

A central purpose of this dissertation has been to enhance the understanding of antecedents of parenting by more seriously and thoroughly consider the social contextual domain as a determinant of parenting practices. In this regard, I first distinguished between stresses that stem from *within* the family and those that derive from sources *external* to the family. In terms of within family contextual stressors, I focused on marital conflict as a social risk factor to parenting adequacy.

Marital conflict. Both family systems and family stress theories predict that difficulties in the marital dyad will negatively impact the functioning of the parent-child dyad. From family systems theory, problems in the marital subsystem will negatively impact the functioning of the parent-child subsystem. From family stress theory, problems in the marital relationship represent stress that places demands on resources and capabilities to function in family responsibilities, including parenting

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A variety of propositions have been invoked to more explicitly explain the process of this interdependence among family system dyads. Most empirical attention has addressed the *spillover model,* in which "the affective tone of the marriage spills over into the parent-child relationship" (Fincham and Hall 2005 p. 210). Thus, mothers and fathers who fight and argue with one another and otherwise have a poor relationship with one another would have similarly poor relations with their children. Generally, the empirical findings suggest that dissatisfaction with the marital relationship and high levels of marital conflict are associated with poor parenting practices (Buehler and Gerard, 2002; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Melby, 1990; Volling and Belsky, 1991). There is also evidence that distinguishing between types of marital conflict (e.g., overt conflict and covert conflict) provides further clarification of the relationships between marital conflict and parenting (Buehler et al. 1998; Stone et al. 2002).

Beyond the direct effects of marital conflict on parenting, there is also a need to examine its indirect effects. For example, for decades it has been understood that there is a relationship between poor marital relations and parental depression (Briscoe and Smith, 1973; Burke, 2003). This association is consistent with both family systems theory, which purports that depression interferes with one's functioning in the marital relationship, and with family stress theory which suggests linkages between stress in the marital relationship and disruption of parental psychological health (Burke, 2003; Cummings, 2005; Cummings et al., 2000; Downey and Coyne, 1990; McElwain and Volling, 1999; Whisman, 2001). These theoretical assumptions, coupled with evidence linking parental well-being to parenting (Conger et al., 1984; Eamon and Zuehl, 2001; Jones et al., 2002; Simons et al., 1990), lead to my proposition that levels of parental

depression mediate, at least in part, the effects of marital conflict on parenting practices. The hypothesized parenting model advanced in this dissertation, therefore, enhances the traditional, psychological approach to assessing determinants of parenting by including the marital relationship as a social contextual domain that directly and indirectly influences parenting practices.

Contexts External to the Family

It is a central contention of this dissertation that the current parent-child relationship research lacks an adequate emphasis on the broader social context when investigating the determinants of parenting practices. Therefore, I enhanced further the mostly psychological models of parenting to include assessments of stress that occur in two external contexts: 1) the work/family context and 2) the neighborhood context.

Work context. Parents' work context is social realm that interacts importantly with the family system. Much of the literature examining this relationship has focused on the multiplicity of roles parents have as worker and as family members. Theoretically, there are a variety of ways to understand the impact of functioning in multiple roles. For example, role enhancement theory posits that occupying multiple roles is a positive experience in that managing multiple roles creates rewards and privileges that enhance one's psychological well-being. More consistent with the risk focus of this dissertation, role strain theory, on the other hand, suggests that occupying multiple roles is a stressful experience due to increased demands of time and resources and to incompatibilities of roles and is thus related to increased psychological distress (Goode, 1960; Voydanoff, 1989).

Although there does not appear to be an established literature linking role strain

and parenting, it is consistent with the ecological, family systems, and family stress

approaches informing this dissertation to expect that the stressors inherent in balancing

work and family demands would impact other aspects of the family system including

parenting. Specifically, therefore, the determinants of parenting model to be tested in this

dissertation is enhanced by estimating direct effects of work/family conflict on parenting,

as well as its indirect effects via elevated levels of marital conflict and parental

depression.

　　　　Neighborhood context. A basic sociological understanding is that one's position

in the social structure influences his or her resources and life chances. This is evidenced

in decades of research indicating more problems and difficulties in families in lower

social classes. Where one lives is strongly correlated with one's social class, and,

accordingly, much attention in recent years has been placed on the effect of neighborhood

characteristics on families. This work has generally found that disadvantaged

neighborhoods, such as concentrated poverty, concentrated affluence, and residential

instability, are associated with risk factors for families, such as: lower expectations for

shared child control, lower levels of intergenerational closure among members of a

community, as well as increased levels of premarital childbearing (Sampson, Morenoff,

and Earls, 1999; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; South and Crowder, 1999).

　　　　Consistent with a family stress theory approach, these characteristics of a

disadvantaged neighborhood can be viewed as stressors or demands on one's resources

that produce distress. Family stress theory provides that this creation of family distress

from living in a stressful, disadvantaged neighborhood negatively impacts other parts of

the family, including marital relations, parental mental health, and parenting practices. Framing the effects of neighborhood problems under the umbrella of family stress theory is compatible with other approaches to understanding neighborhood influences, such as social disorganization theory's focus on the lack of a neighborhood structural organization system to encourage a shared value system and the absence of strong relationships between neighbors as risk factors linked with poor family outcomes (Sampson, 1997; Sampson and Groves, 1989). Further, empirical findings evidencing linkages between negative neighborhood context and poor family functioning are also supportive of this approach (Hill, Herman-Stahl, 2002; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan 1994).

Accordingly, the hypothesized parenting model examined in this dissertation includes an assessment of neighborhood disorganization and posits both direct and indirect, negative effects on effective parenting.

Summary

In sum, the first two intended contributions of the model constructed for this dissertation enhanced the prevailing – mostly psychological – model of determinants of parenting by including more adequate attention to the social contexts that inform parenting. These include the marital relationship and two key contexts external to the family: the work and neighborhood contexts. Consistent with ecological, family systems, and family stress theories, all of these contexts can be seen as potentially including significant stress or risk components that impact family functioning, including parenting. The enhanced model of determinants of parenting to be tested in this dissertation

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specifies relevant direct and indirect effects of measures of these contexts on supportive and intrusive parenting behaviors.

GENDER OF PARENT

The third intended contribution of the dissertation involved attending specifically to parental gender, a critical sociological factor that has been largely ignored in existing work on the determinants of parenting. Most of the relevant literature has either focused explicitly on mothers, or has not examined gender differences. Further, those studies that assess parenting irrespective of parent gender, most likely are actually assessing mothering in that it is typically mothers who provide reports of parenting. However, scholars have demonstrated that parental gender plays a significant role in parenting experiences (e.g., Craig, 2006; Fox and Murry, 2000; McBride et al., 2005; Stolz et al., 2005; Wood, 1995). This work has lead to an increasing interest in examining fathering in particular and exploring if and how mothers and fathers differ in their experiences as parents and in their parenting styles.

Overall, this literature suggests that mothers and fathers have different experiences as parents and that they parent differently. The social constructionist approach suggests differing images of motherhood and fatherhood, described as "reveal[ing] our shared ideals, standards, beliefs, and expectations regarding women and men as parents" (Thompson and Walker, 1989 p. 859; Arendell, 2000). This approach to gender provides that these socially constructed images of motherhood and fatherhood not only play a significant role in shaping mothers' and fathers' activities and experiences as they attempt to meet the expectations and standards, but that they also have an effect on

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parenting practices indirectly through effects on women's and men's self-perceptions.

While there are differences in the societal expectations for mothering and fathering, there is also empirical evidence that parenting activities differ in quantity and quality for mothers and fathers. Despite evidence that fathers are becoming more involved, the bulk of child care responsibilities still rests with mothers (Craig, 2006; McBride et al., 2005; Stolz et al., 2005), while gender differences in parenting quality evidences that in the parenting of older children "fathers tend to be more directive and instructive than are mothers…children perceive their fathers as more powerful and more autocratic than their mothers…children perceive mothers as more sympathetic and responsive" (Thompson and Walker, 1989 p. 261). Therefore, in addition to the social constructionist approach indicating differences in societal expectations of men and women as parents, the empirical evidence of gender differences in quantity of parenting time and quality of parenting practices supports the need to examine antecedents of mothering and fathering practices. In general, I am proposing that the risk factors specified in this parenting model negatively impact parenting for mothers and fathers, but that the risk factors will have more of a negative effect on mothering than fathering. An elaborated discussion of parent gender as well as hypotheses concerning potential gender differences in the model are presented in chapter two.

Modeling Mothers and Fathers Simultaneously

In facilitating this third contribution of attending to parent gender, the parenting model tested in this dissertation further contributes importantly by employing a methodology that simultaneously examines mothering and fathering. While theory and

some research on parental gender has provided some insight into potential differences in mothering and fathering practices, as well as the effects of each on child outcomes, it is also apparent that in two-parent families mothering and fathering do not occur independently from one another. Some research has indicated, further, that at some levels there are similarities or overlap in how mothers and fathers parent (Fletcher, Steinberg, and Sellers, 1999; Simons, et al., 2007; Steinberg, et al., 1994).

By using dyadic data, that is by testing simultaneously the parenting of both mothers and fathers in two-parent families, I have been able to formally test the similarity of mothering and fathering. Importantly, this simultaneous assessment of mothers and fathers controls for any such similarity and thereby results in measures of parenting that are unique to each parent. Thus, the predictive associations tested in these analyses reflect purer estimates of gender-unique parenting than those studies that do not control for this overlap.

SUMMARY

In recent years, attention has been given to exploring those factors that influence parenting practices with a focus primarily on psychological characteristics of parents and children, at the expense of concentrating adequately on the social context of the family. Nevertheless, both theory and empirical findings clearly suggest the importance of social contextual variables as key determinants of parenting. Taking an ecological approach, this dissertation plans to integrate sociological issues into current developmental psychological models of parenting by refining and expanding existing, underdeveloped conceptualizations of social context, and by including other, explicitly sociological

domains into the predictive model to be tested. Family systems theory and family stress theory guide hypotheses concerning pathways within the model, specifically bringing attention to risk factors that exist within the family (e.g., marital relations) and those that exist external to the family (e.g., neighborhood and in the interface between work and family).

In addition to a lack of attention to social context, the current work on antecedents of parenting has been insensitive to parental gender differences with most of its focus having been placed on mothers, or ignoring possible gender differences in samples that include both mothers and fathers. In this dissertation, I take into account the importance of parent gender by including assessments of both mother and father parenting, specifically testing for hypothesized differences in how the predictive model might impact mothering and fathering, similarly and differently. Importantly, this attention to parental gender will be accomplished using dyadic data by which I will simultaneously model the parenting of married mothers' and fathers'

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 2, the review of the literature, begins with an introduction to Belsky's (1984) determinants of parenting model as the predominant model of parenting antecedents to lay out the ground on which this dissertation intends to build. Next, this chapter reviews the theoretical frameworks that have guided the creation of the enhanced model of parenting antecedents that is being advanced in the dissertation.

The chapter proceeds to review the empirical research relevant to all of the components of the enhanced model, ending each review section by articulating specific

hypotheses that will be tested in the dissertation relative to the reviewed variable (and illustrating them graphically). I begin the set of review by focusing on those elements that have received the most attention in the traditional modeling of antecedents to parenting (e.g., child characteristics and parent characteristics). I next review the empirical evidence for the role of the social contextual variables that are the substance of the enhancements to the traditional modeling of parenting determinants that this dissertation asserts, dividing them according to those that exist *within the family* and those that are *external to the family*. Throughout this review of the literature explicit attention is given to how inclusion of these elements will enhance the prevailing model of determinants of parenting (e.g., by adding critical determinants to either directly predict parenting and/or indirectly via other elements of the prevailing psychological model), and to how analysis of parent gender will contribute to this literature.

Finally, I conclude chapter two by graphically re-presenting the enhanced, ecological model of parenting antecedents that incorporates the findings from these extensive reviews. This is useful in moving beyond the incremental presentation of the model's components to communicate that the enhanced model tested in the dissertation is broadly ecological in its scope and systemic in the proposed interconnections (e.g., hypothesized direct and indirect effects) among the model's components.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the dissertation, including details about the data set to be used for this dissertation. The data come from the NIMH-funded Ogden Youth and Family Project (OYFP), a longitudinal, sequential-cohort design that surveyed 933 families with adolescent children between 1994 and 1997. This dissertation will use parent-reported data from the second year of the study (1995) because in that year all of

the variables of interest were included. Chapter 3 will also provide details about the dyadic nature of the data set, the specific measures to be employed to assess all of the model's variables, and the plan of analyses.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analyses. For these data analyses SPSS and the structural equation modeling (SEM) statistical package in Amos 7.0 will be used. This chapter will first report results of bivariate correlation analyses. I will then report results of the fit of the model to the data using measures of fit indicated by the literature. At this juncture I will describe the parameter estimates for significant relationships, which will allow me to speak to the issue of which variables are significant predictors of mothering and fathering, followed by an assessment of hypotheses concerning parent gender.

Chapter 5, the Discussion section, will briefly reiterate the purpose, expectations, and findings of the dissertation. It will then interpret the findings as to how they did or did not support the hypotheses and, overall, how both the method and the gender-differentiated, socio-ecological model invoked in the dissertation has contributed to the understanding of the determinants of parenting.

Chapter II. Literature Review

This chapter will provide the theoretical and empirical basis for modeling, and eventually testing, an enhanced model of the antecedents of supportive and intrusive parenting. After briefly reviewing the predominant model for the study of determinants of parenting (i.e., Belsky's 1984 process model of parenting) in order to clarify the ground upon which this dissertation builds, I next discuss the central theoretical approaches I have used to inform this dissertation's enhancements to the traditional model. Essentially, the model to be tested is informed by ecological, family systems, and family stress theory in identifying key social contexts within (e.g., the marital relationship) and outside (e.g., work and neighborhood) the family that are hypothesized to directly and indirectly impact parenting quality. In addition to developing this focus on the social contexts of work and neighborhood, I review theory relevant to parent gender differences to address the lack of attention in existing work on potential gender differences in parenting and its determinants.

Next, I provide reviews of the empirical literature for the set of determinants of parenting that the enhanced model includes. I have organized these reviews to begin with the most commonly studied determinants (child and parent characteristics) and then to be followed by reviews of relevant empirical work on the social contextual domains that are of key interest to this dissertation: the marital relationship, the work context, and the neighborhood context. At the end of each review section, I advance one or more hypotheses as to how the variable under review will function in the model to be tested.

Within each of the sections of literature review, I attend to empirical evidence of predictors of both positive and negative parenting, with particular attention to findings

concerning those parenting practices that are the focus of this dissertation (supportive parenting and intrusive parenting). Since relatively little work has been done on predictors of intrusive parenting (e.g., psychological control), I include reviews of studies of parenting practices and styles that have been shown to be conceptually or empirically similar to psychological control (and thus possibly have similar antecedents) (e.g., authoritarian parenting and parental emotional abuse/psychological maltreatment; Barber, Bean and Erickson, 2002). I begin each section with a review of antecedents of supportive parenting, followed by a review of studies related to intrusive parenting.

Another key objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the need for an examination of parental gender in the antecedents of parenting literature. As such, I highlight whether the samples included mothers and fathers, mothers only, or fathers only, as well as whether gender differences or couple relations were examined.

BELSKY'S "PROCESS MODEL OF THE DETERMINANTS OF PARENTING"

Much of the work examining predictors of parenting practices builds on the "process" model proposed by Belsky (1984). (See figure 1.) This model examined three domains of family life for their influence on parenting: 1) parent characteristics, 2) child characteristics, and 3) social context. The parent characteristics domain includes aspects of the parent such as the developmental history of the parent (i.e., the parenting she received) and parent personality. The child characteristics domain covered aspects of the child such as the child's temperament, age, and behavior problems. The social context domain was defined by Belsky as parents' sources of support. This domain included such factors as marital relations, work relations, and social network relations.

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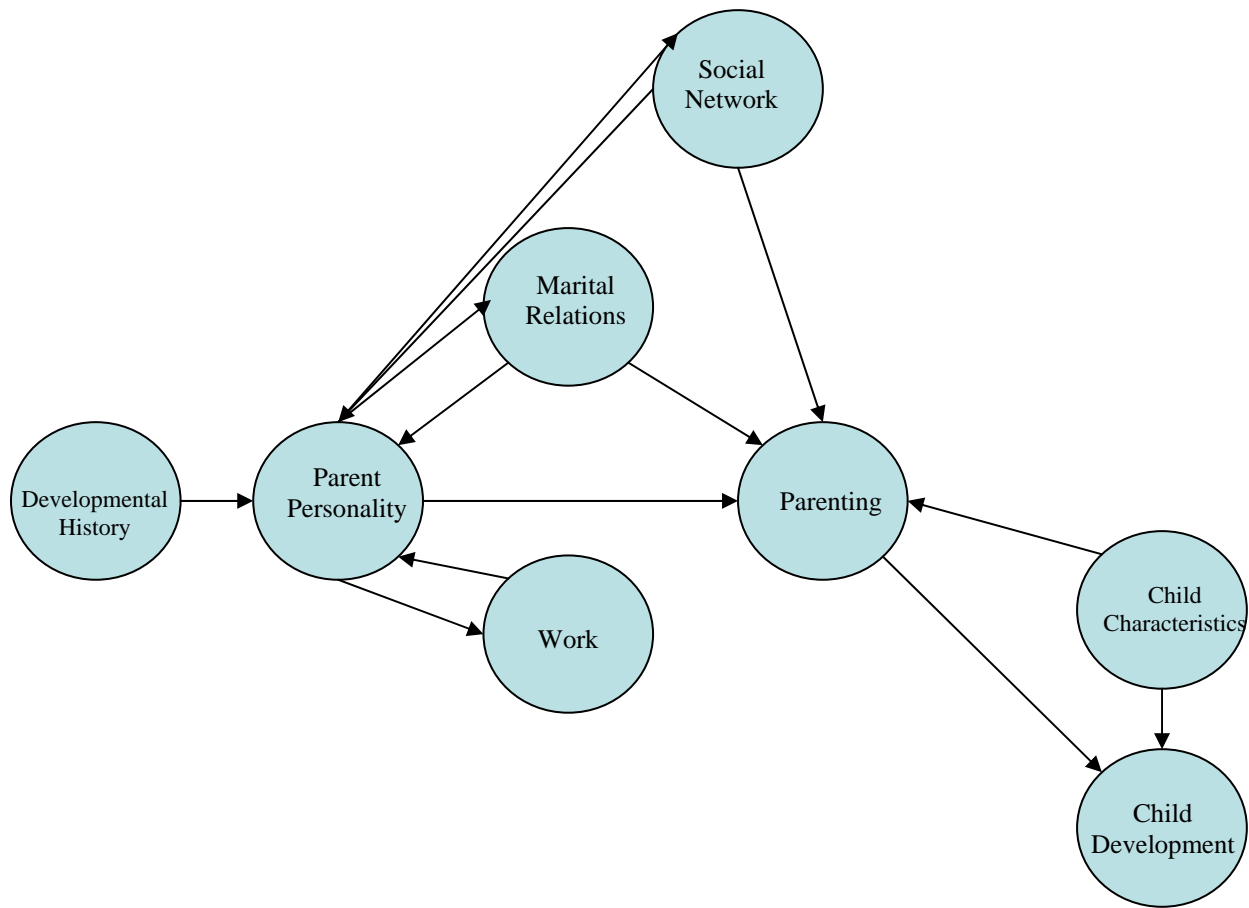
Figure 1. Belsky's (1984) Process Model of the Determinants of Parenting

In his initial model, Belsky made the following three assumptions about the predictors of parenting:

1. parenting is multiply determined
2. with respect to their influence on parenting, characteristics of the parent, of the child, and of the social context are not equally influential in supporting or undermining growth-promoting parenting; and
3. developmental history and personality shape parenting indirectly, by first influencing the broader context in which parent-child relations exist (i.e., marital relations, social networks, occupational experience) (p. 84).

Thus, while this model depicts parenting as a product of a multiple factors, it also purports the significance of parent and child characteristics as the central determinants of parenting, and often as mediators of other social-contextual factors.

Abidin (1992) argued that Belsky's model, as well as other models (e.g., behavioral parenting models and transaction models), did not consider the motivations and goals of parents. He also suggested that models of the determinants of parenting move beyond a (stimulus-response) behavioral perspective and incorporate sociological and cognitive-psychological approaches with behavioral approaches. Abidin (1992) built upon Belsky's model by making a variety of adjustments, adding to the model such constructs as commitment to the parenting role and parenting stress to the model. Despite such assessments, most scholars addressing antecedents of parenting begin with an examination of Belsky's original process model and his formulations about predictors of parenting.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

As described in chapter one, the theoretical foundation guiding the creation of the hypothesized parenting model in this dissertation is the ecological perspective, while

family systems theory and family stress theory provide additional direction relative to the nature of and the interconnections among the components of the model.

Ecological Theory

In responding to the child development literature focusing on psychological characteristics of individuals and characteristics within the family as determinants of child development, the ecological perspective emphasizes that children develop within a series of interrelated contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). These include those within the family as well as those external to the family. In Bronfenbrenner's (1986) review of the literature he points to the influence of "external environments" on family functioning, and includes such factors as school, neighborhood, work, and social networks. This theoretical perspective also provides that these "external environments" not only influence child development directly, but that they are also interconnected to one another.

Accordingly, as is most of the work on antecedents of parenting, this dissertation is informed by the ecological perspective (Belsky, 1984; Grogan-Kaylor and Otis, 2007; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1998). Specifically, the proposed parenting model views the parent-child relationship as existing within "external environments" – i.e., ecological niches or social contexts - and recognizes that the parent-child relationship is influenced by these contexts, as well as by the complex patterns of interrelationships among these contexts. Unfortunately, the ecological approach is not very thoroughly elaborated as to why and specifically how the various contexts are interconnected. Neither does it focus particularly on identifying which aspects of the relevant contexts might portend specific risk for family functioning. Since understanding how contexts jointly impact parenting

are of particular interest to me - particularly aspects of contexts that potentially

compromise effective parenting - I have found it useful to be guided by two other, related

theoretical approaches.

Family Systems Theory and Family Stress Theory

While the ecological perspective is used as the overarching approach in this

dissertation, the hypotheses concerning paths within the model are further guided by

family systems theory and family stress. These theoretical frameworks enhance the

ecological perspective in that they suggest possible pathways by which the social

contexts are interconnected, and by which they influence parenting. Family systems

theory and family stress theory are also useful in that they draw specific attention to

stress or risk factors that disrupt family functioning in its variety of systems.

Family systems theory describes a family as a system in which various parts, or

sub-systems, are interdependent upon one another. Therefore, difficulties in one part of

the system (e.g., the marital relationship) interrupt the performance of other system parts

(e.g., parent-child relationship) (Gelles, 1995; Margolin et al., 2001; Minuchin, 1985).

Input from outside of the family system, such as from the broader social ecology in which

the family is situated, is also considered relevant to the functioning of family systems.

Relatedly, family stress theory posits that stressors and demands, as well as the

accumulation of stressors and demands over time, interact with resources and capabilities

and with meanings that individuals attach to the stressors to influence family functioning

(Boss, 1988; Dennis, 1996; Lavee, McCubbin, and Patterson, 1985; McCubbin and

Patterson, 1983; Patterson, 2002). From this approach, families are perceived to be

continually in the process of balancing demands and capabilities in an effort to adjust and perform basic family functions (e.g., nurturing, socializing). Family distress is viewed as an interruption to the performance of basic family functioning because parents focus their resources and capabilities on dealing with the distress instead of on parenting. Family stress theory is explicitly employed in the dissertation in order to propose effects of the social contextual variables on parenting in that stress or excessive demand on parents creates distress which in turn interrupts their functioning as parents.

Consistent with both of these theoretical frameworks, as well as with the body of extant empirical investigations of parenting, the model that I have constructed includes two stress-producing elements of family functioning at the individual level (child behavior problems and parental depression) as predictors of lower quality parenting. Further, the model focuses on marital conflict as a social contextual problem *within the family* that represents a risk to effective parenting, which I hypothesize to be both directly and indirectly predictive of impaired parenting via its effect on parental depression. As social contextual problems *external to the family,* I include measures of work-family conflict and neighborhood disorganization as yet further social contextual predictors of lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting practices, that, likewise, are hypothesized to be both directly and indirectly predictive of lower quality parenting via their impact on other elements of the family system: marital conflict and parental depression.

With regard to the risk factors external to the family, the family systems and family stress approaches are concordant with other important theoretical insights. In the case of work-family conflict, role theories are relevant. Role-strain and role-enhancement are two competing approaches to explain the effects of such issues on psychological well-

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being. Role enhancement theory posits that occupying multiple roles is a positive experience in that managing multiple roles creates rewards and privileges, such as occupational prestige, that enhance one's psychological well-being (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). In contrast, role strain theory suggests that occupying multiple roles can be a stressful experience due to increased demands of time and resources and to incompatibilities of roles and is thus related to increased psychological distress (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979; Goode, 1960). Family systems and family stress theories extend this effect to negatively impacting parenting.

The parenting model to be examined in this study will follow the role-strain approach because the measure available in the data set explicitly defines strain: "*How often do the demands of your work interfere with your family life? How often do the demands of your family life interfere with your job?*" Accordingly, I expect that experiences of role conflict will be predictive of less effective parenting (e.g., lower supportive parenting and greater use of intrusive parenting). Moreover, as indicated above, I expect that, compatible with family stress theory and role strain theory, at least part of the expected impact of work/family conflict will be transmitted to poorer quality parenting through heightened parental depression. Thus, for example, the multiple, competing demands of work and family can be stressful and may leave some parents vulnerable to fatigue, frustration, and self-criticism that may heighten levels of depression.

In part, the interest in neighborhood context as a determinant of parenting emerged from an initial interest in the relationship between social class and family functioning. Being that social stratification reflects society's distribution of resources, a

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basic sociological premise is that a family's position in the social structure creates

limitations and opportunities for that family. Thus, families in lower class levels receive

fewer resources, such as income, education, and occupational prestige, as well as limited

life chances to share in the available goods and services. While for decades sociologists

have pointed to links between social class and family well-being and outcomes (e.g.,

marital conflict, parenting practices, adolescent delinquency, out-of-wedlock births,

educational attainment) (Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Elder, Nguyen, and

Caspi, 1985; Woodworth, Belsky, and Crnic, 1996), it has become apparent that these are

indirect links mediated by a variety of factors. Due to significant correlations between

social class and where a family lives, one such factor that has been explored for its effects

on family outcomes is neighborhood quality.

In the case of the neighborhood context, there are a variety of theoretical

approaches to examining the impact of neighborhood on individual family members

(especially children and youth) that are compatible with the family ecological, family

systems, and family stress frameworks that guide this dissertation. Instead of focusing on

such individual level behaviors as crime and adolescent delinquency, as has much of the

work on neighborhoods thus far, this dissertation focuses on neighborhood's impact on

individual parents' behaviors, specifically their supportive and intrusive parenting

practices. Thus, while sociological theory relative to the impact of neighborhood is most

directly focused on the behavioral outcomes of children, I argue that much of that

theorizing can be read to implicate also the effect of neighborhood risk on parental

behaviors.

For example, in identifying five means by which neighborhood characteristics are

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related to individual outcomes (e.g., child behavioral outcomes), Jencks and Mayer (1990) included adult role models as one avenue through which neighborhood conditions affect children. That conclusion is compatible with major theories of the role of neighborhoods in invoking adults as mediators of neighborhood's risk to children. These theories include Wilson's (1987, 1996) theory of the effects of concentrated poverty that emphasizes a lack of positive role modeling, and social disorganization theory that focuses on the lack of a structural organization system to encourage a shared value system and strong relationships between neighbors (Bursik, 1988; Kornhauser, 1978; Sampson, 1997; Sampson and Groves, 1989).

Sampson and colleagues (1997, 1999) extend social disorganization theory to point to collective efficacy as mediating the effects of neighborhood disadvantage on neighborhood violence and, as I argue, creating positive parenting environments. For example, Sampson et al. (1999) describe reciprocal exchange, a dimension of neighborhood-level social organization, as "…the intensity of interfamily and adult interaction with respect to child rearing...social capital is reinforced by interactions such as the exchange of advice, material goods, and information about childrearing…Reciprocated (or relatively equal) exchange leads to social support that can be drawn upon…not just by parents but by children themselves as they develop" (p. 635). Further, Sampson et al., (1999) define collective efficacy for children as "…a task-specific construct that relates to the shared expectations and mutual engagement by adults in the active support and social control of children" (p. 635).

Later, I discuss in more detail how I believe these neighborhood social organization dimensions affect supportive and intrusive parenting specifically. But, for

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the general purposes of this theoretical section, I argue that these theories of

neighborhood context have in common a presumption that neighborhood characteristics

can be risk factors to individual and family development and that they therefore are

compatible with the theoretical approach of this dissertation (i.e., ecological approach,

family systems theory, and family stress theory.

As for relevant research, most of the empirical work on neighborhood effects has

also focused on child outcomes directly, particularly juvenile crime. However, there are

also many studies that invoke parenting behaviors as mediators of neighborhood effects

on children (Chuang et al., 2005; Gephart, 1997; Furstenberg and Hughes, 1997). In

addition, there are a number of studies that also directly link the neighborhood context to

parenting practices, with findings indicating that aspects of disadvantaged neighborhoods

(e.g., poverty, residential instability, unemployment) are related to poor parenting

practices (Furstenberg et al., 1993; Hill and Herman-Stahl, 2002; Pettit et al., 2001;

Simons et al, 1996). In acknowledging the importance of parenting when charting

neighborhood effects, Sampson (1997) explicitly suggested the need to expand grand

theories of neighborhood context to include the role of parenting practices:

> …community level variations in informal social control in all likelihood have an
> indirect influence on individual-level variations in delinquent outcomes as
> mediated by family management practices. In particular, the monitoring of youth
> activities and time spent with peers, networks between parents and their children's
> friends and parents, and the effective and consistent discipline of children are
> hypothesized to be fostered in neighborhoods characterized by high levels of
> social cohesion and informal social controls (p. 241).

While I recognize that family management practices, which typically refer to

forms of parental behavioral control, are not synonymous with the supportive and

intrusive parenting practices that are of interest to this dissertation, it is clear the Sampson

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was highlighting the role of parent behaviors as key mediators of neighborhood risk. There is no reason to think that other forms of parenting, particularly those as central as support and intrusiveness, would not also be impacted by neighborhood disadvantage. Thus, for example, it is likely that supportive parenting would be encouraged by intergenerational closure and reciprocal exchange among members of a neighborhood, which Sampson and Morenoff (1999) describe as providing social support to parents and children. Parents who are connected and networked with other parents in their community, and thus receive social support from neighbors, may experience less distress and be able to be more supportive of their children. It is also possible that parents in socially disorganized neighborhoods may be encouraged to practice intrusive parenting out of fear for children's safety. Parents who do not know others in their community or who have low expectations for shared child control may feel their children are in more danger (e.g., Ceballo and McLoyd, 2002; Hill and Herman-Stahl, 2002). As a result, they may try to exert more control over their children including psychologically controlling them.

Empirical research has not specifically addressed *how* neighborhood qualities affect parenting. There are likely many ways to understand the impact of neighborhood risk on parents. For example, some parents may respond to the danger in their neighborhood by becoming hyper vigilant and thus increase their involvement in and monitoring of their children's activities (Hill and Herman-Stahl, 2002; Ceballo and McLoyd, 2002). Otherwise, family stress theory suggests an indirect relationship via the creation of parental distress. As a result of families' continual process of balancing demands and capabilities in an effort to create family adjustment, family distress is

viewed as an interruption to the performance of basic family functioning, because parents focus their resources and capabilities on dealing with the distress instead of on parenting. Considering Sampson's suggestion of a link between neighborhood and parenting, I employ family stress theory to hypothesize indirect links between neighborhood context and parenting through parental psychological well-being and marital conflict, such that stressors in the neighborhood will be associated with diminished parental well-being (i.e., higher levels of depression) and with conflict in the marital relationship, both of which, in turn, systemically, will negatively impact the parent-child relationship, in this case decreased use of supportive parenting and increased use of intrusive parenting.

Gender of Parent

Very limited attention has been given to parental gender in the literature on antecedents of parenting. Instead, most studies have either focused explicitly on mothers, or have not tested for parent gender differences in samples that include both mothers and fathers. Addressing this substantial limitation is another significant, intended contribution of this dissertation. In contemplating the issue of parental gender differences, I rely on gender role theory, particularly the social-role and sex-role hypotheses. While I propose that stress at these various levels (i.e., individual and social contextual) will have negative impacts on parenting for both men and women, I propose hypotheses concerning gender differences in the strength of these effects.

Gender role theory takes the approach that gender is a social role with sets of expectations for behaviors, and as such women and men are viewed as enacting gender (Fox and Murry, 2000). The social-role and sex-role hypotheses stem from gender role

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theory. The social-role hypothesis suggests that there should not be gender differences in the effects of role stress due to the inherent stress of each role regardless of gender. Yet, the sex-role hypothesis suggests that sex roles differentially expose men and women to variables associated with distress or render women and men unequally vulnerable to role-related stress (Fox and Murry, 2000; Voydanoff, 1989). In the interest of the effect of marital conflict on parenting, I employ the sex-role hypothesis and expect that mothering would be more strongly (negatively) affected by marital conflict than fathering due to gender differences in roles as spouse and parent. Specifically, the role as wife includes expectations for more sensitivity to relationship quality, and thus will have more impact on her parenting abilities.

The sex-role hypothesis is also particularly useful in understanding the work-family interface. I employ the sex-role hypothesis to propose that there are gender differences in the relationship between role accumulation and psychological distress, such that there should be a stronger positive relationship for women. As an example, what is expected of a woman as worker is different than what is expected of man as worker, and the same goes for role as parent. As a result, I hypothesize that because of gender differences in role expectations for men and women, mothers, as compared to fathers, will be more strongly negatively impacted by the stress of occupying multiple roles. This hypothesis is further supported by evidence that women still have more responsibility for family work, such as child care and household chores, in addition to work responsibilities, and that women are given roles with less perks such as occupational prestige or opportunity for advancement (Craig, 2006; McBride et al., 2005; Spitze, 1988; Voydanoff, 1990).

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Finally, there is one further area of parent gender difference that is relevant to explore given the dissertation's methodology of using couple data. This has to do with the relative similarity or dissimilarity of mothering and fathering. Traditional images of mothering describe mothers as having "natural instincts" towards parenting. The traditional image of fathers, in contrast, shows fathers as assisting mothers in parenting practices (Arendell, 2000; Thompson and Walker, 1989). As previously described, these socially constructed, traditional images of motherhood and fatherhood play a significant role in shaping mothers' and fathers' activities and experiences as parents attempt to meet the expectations and standards prescribed to each image. In doing so, the responsivity of a father to his wife's parenting would lead to the expectation that the couple's parenting styles would be positively correlated. Further, given the relatively basic forms of parenting studied here, it is likely that there would be some commonality in the parenting of mothers and fathers.

Summary of Theoretical Approaches

To summarize the theoretical frameworks guiding this dissertation, the model to be proposed in this dissertation is informed firstly by an ecological approach to antecedents of parenting that has been fundamentally useful in both justifying the emphasis on social context and in specifically identifying relevant contexts. In predicting how and why these contexts impact parenting, I have looked to family systems theory and family stress theory, both of which assert fundamental interdependence among social, particularly family, systems and highlight the potential impairing impact of risk conditions in these contexts. Finally, my thinking relative to potential gender differences

in parenting and its determinants has been informed by the gender role theory, particularly the sex-role and social-role hypotheses.

REVIEW OF DETERMINANTS OF PARENTING

In the balance of this chapter, I proceed to review relevant empirical literatures, successively for each of the major components of the enhanced determinants of parenting model that I am proposing. Each section of review ends with the articulation of hypotheses and their graphical representation. The reviews begin with the traditional components of parenting antecedents and then focuses on the social contexts that represent the enhancements that the dissertation makes.

Child Characteristics

Belsky's (1984) process model included a component of child characteristics as one key determinant of parenting. He described it as "forces emanating from within the individual child (child characteristics of individuality)" and discussed such measures as child's temperament and parent's rating of difficulty raising this particular child (p. 84). Those studies that have explored this domain often examine some form of child temperament, such as difficulty in raising a particular child, finding that a child's temperament influences the parenting that he or she receives (e.g., Kendler et al., 1997; McBride et al., 2002; Rubin et al., 1998). Others have included assessments of children's psychological functioning, problem behaviors and personality. Much of the findings from these studies resemble the findings from the parent characteristics review (see below), such that a child's healthy psychological functioning and more favorable personality characteristics are associated with more effective and optimal parenting

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practices (e.g., Belden and Luby 2006; Flouri 2004; Moore, Whaley, and Sigman 2004).

This review focuses on those studies that examine how child behavior problems (e.g., externalizing behavior and internalizing behavior) impact parenting. As mentioned in chapter one, I have chosen this characteristic of children in an attempt to further develop our understanding of the effects of child characteristics past child temperament. This decision was also informed by recent empirical findings indicating a positive association between children's externalizing and internalizing behaviors and less optimal parenting practices (Bor and Sanders, 2004; Pettit et al., 2001; Pettit et al., 2002).

In particular, there are empirical findings suggesting associations between children's externalizing problems and less use of supportive parenting, as well as associations between internalizing behavior problems and more use of intrusive parenting (Barber et al., 2005; Morris et al., 2002). Other studies have found associations between externalizing behaviors and intrusive parenting (Pettit et al., 2001; Pettit and Laird, 2002). Further, in their longitudinal study of the development of adolescent delinquency, Scaramella, Conger, Spoth, and Simons (2002) reported that children's antisocial behavior had a negative effect on parents' use of nurturant and involved parenting. They included mothers and fathers, but did not examine gender differences. Studies employing samples of mothers only, find that reports of a child's externalizing behavior at a young age is related to use of psychological control of the child as an adolescent (Petit and Laird 2002; Petit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, and Criss 2001).

These studies are consistent in finding that child behavioral problems negatively impact effective parenting practices, results that are consistent with family systems theory in that dysfunction in any one part of the family system can disrupt the functioning of

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other parts of the family system. Therefore, as depicted in figure 2 I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: C*hildren's externalizing and internalizing behavior problems will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting.*

Parent Characteristics

Characteristics of the parent was one of the central domains of determinants of parenting in Belsky's (1984) model. He proposed parent characteristics to be one of the more significant determinants of parenting, affecting parenting both directly and indirectly through marital relations and social network. This domain of antecedents is particularly important when considering parental psychological control because of assertions that it, in contrast to parental support or behavioral control, implicates the psychological functioning of parents (Barber et al., 2002). Due to his broad descriptions of this construct (e.g., "personal psychological resources," "forces emanating from within the individual parent (personality)," and "general psychological well-being"), scholars have explored a variety of dimensions of parent characteristics (p. 83-84). These studies suggest that *psychological distress* and poor *mental health* have negative impacts on positive parenting practices, such that distressed parents and those with poor mental health show less warmth and support, less involvement, and use more firm and inconsistent control (Brody et al., 2002; Conger et al., 1984; Gondoli and Silverberg, 1997; Kwok et al., 2002; Leiferman et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2002; Torquati, 2002; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1998).

Findings indicate that higher *self-esteem* and parental *extraversion* are associated
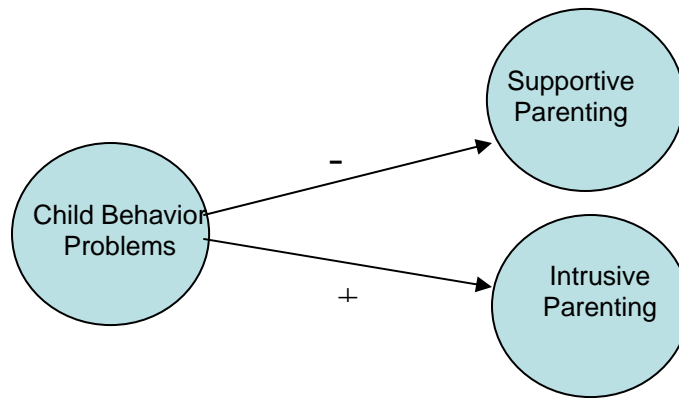
Figure 2. Hypothesis 1: Direct associations between child behavior problems and parenting

with more warm and supportive parenting, more involvement, more effective behavioral control, and more authoritative parenting practices (Aunola et al., 1999; Clark, Kochanska, and Ready, 2000; Mangelsdort et al., 1990; Menaghan and Parcel, 1991; Torquati, 2002; Volling and Belsky, 1991; Woodworth, Belsky, and Crnic, 1996). Other studies have shown that parental *neuroticism* is negatively associated with parental warmth, nurturing, and involvement (Belsky, Crnic, and Woodworth, 1995; Bogenschneider, Small, and Tsay, 1997; Galambos and Turner, 1999; Feldman, Greenbaum, Mayes, and Erlich, 1997; McClure et al., 2001; Moore, Whaley, and Sigman, 2004; Soenens et al., 2005).

There are also a variety of parent characteristics that have been explored when predicting negative parenting. Findings from such studies indicate that, as examples, poor *anger management* (Jackson et al., 1999; Rodriguez and Green, 1997), poor *mental health* (Hunter et al., 1978; Torquati, 2002;), low levels of *self-esteem,* and an external *locus of control* (Aunola et al., 1999; Mondell and Tyler, 1981; Stevens, 1988; Torquati, 2002) are associated with negative parenting practices, such as harsh discipline, intrusiveness, and psychological control. There is also evidence that parents who exhibit *problem behavior*, such as alcohol and drug problems, engaged in more negative parenting behaviors (DePanfilis and Zuravin, 1999; Locke and Newcomb, 2004; Merrill, Hervig, and Milner, 1996). Negative parenting practices have also been predicted by less favorable parent *personality* characteristics, such as neuroticism and low agreeableness (Belsky, Crnic, and Woodworth, 1995; Bogenschneider, Small, and Tsay, 1997; Greenbaum, Mayes, and Erlich, 1997; McClure et al., 2001; Moore, Whaley, and Sigman, 2004) parental temperament (Galambos and Turner, 1999) perfectionism (Soenens et al., 2005).

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Despite this variety of assessments of parent characteristics relevant to parenting, the bulk of studies has focused on the association between *parental depression* and parenting behaviors. My review focuses on an examination of empirical studies exploring parental depression as an antecedent of positive parenting (e.g., supportive) and negative parenting (psychological control and similar parenting practices). While Vondra, Crnic, and Belsky (2002) note that it is possible that many of these studies of parental depression are actually assessments of neuroticism, it is not possible to make that determination and therefore I review the depression studies separately here.

A large proportion of the studies that have assessed parental depression as a determinant of positive parenting have included samples of mothers only with findings indicating that maternal depression negatively impacts such positive parenting practices as *emotional availability, providing a nurturing environment, maternal sensitivity*, and *child-centered parenting* (Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Burt et al. 2005; Carter et al. 2001; Fox and Gelfand 1994; Goldstein, Diener, and Mangelsdorf 1996; Jackson and Scheines 2005; Longellow, Zelkowitz, and Saunders 1982; Lyons, Henly, and Scherman 2005; McLearn et al. 2006). Those studies that examined mothers and fathers either did not examine gender differences (Kendler, Sham, and MacLean 1997), or reported that there were no gender differences in the relationship between parental depression and nurturing and supportive parenting (Conger et al. 1992; Conger et al. 1993; Cummings, Keller, and Davies 2005). As such, these findings establish evidence that parental depression impairs such positive parenting behaviors as warmth and involvement for both mothers and fathers.

Findings from studies that have investigated determinants of negative parenting

practices parallel those above for positive parenting practices. Again, most of the studies have investigated mothers only. In these studies, maternal depression has been found to be associated positively with such outcomes as: *authoritarian* parenting (i.e., power based, non-responsive; Hoffman and Youngblade 1998; Chen and Luster 2002) and parental *psychological control* (Cummings, Keller, and Davies, 2005).

While the majority of empirical evidence suggests that parental depression is related to lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting practices, it should be noted that some studies have found no such association. These include Rodgers-Farmer's (1999) study of harsh, rejecting parenting of women who were parenting their grandchildren and Kendler, Sham, and MacLean's (1997) study of *authoritarian parenting practices.* Also, McElwain and Volling (1999) reported depression to be associated with *less* intrusive parenting for mothers and fathers. Overall, however, the evidence appears fairly clear that (particularly maternal) depression is a risk factor for effecting parenting. Accordingly, I hypothesize that:

> Hypothesis 2: *Maternal and paternal depression will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting* (See figure 3.)

As indicated earlier, the social context was included in Belsky's (1984) model of the determinants of parenting. However, the treatment of social context was rather unspecified and undifferentiated. Accordingly, the central contributions I have intended to make in this dissertation related to more thoroughly assessing the role of social context, particularly its risk properties, in determining parenting. In so doing, I have
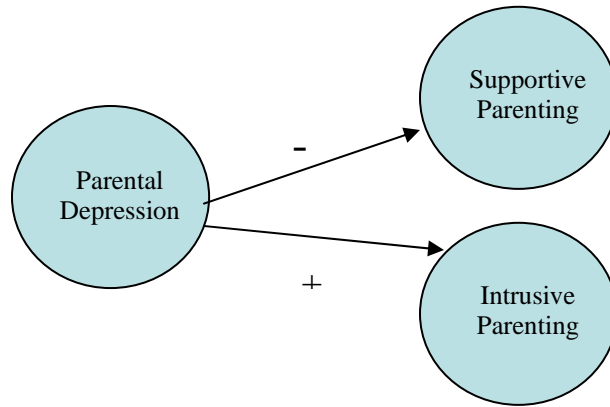
Figure 3. Hypothesis 2: Direct associations between parent depression and parenting

found it useful to differentiate between stresses that occur in contexts *within the family* and those that occur in contexts *external to the family* unit.

Within-Family Context: The Marital Context

In elaborating on the relevance of social context to parenting, the first contribution of the dissertation is a precise focus on the marital context given that it is a critical subsystem of the family, risk properties of which have been shown to impair parenting.

For the most part, studies examining the relationship between marital relations and parenting practices have explored marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, and/or marital conflict as indicators of general marital quality. The findings from studies of marital satisfaction or adjustment and parenting behaviors are mixed. Some suggest that satisfaction with the marital relationship is associated with positive parenting practices and dissatisfaction with negative parenting practices (Elder, Nguyen, and Caspi, 1985; Lindahl, Clements, and Markman, 1997; Simons et al., 1990; Stoneman, Brody, and Burke, 1989; Volling and Belsky, 1991; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1998). Other studies have found no significant relationships (DeVito and Hopkins, 2001; Easterbrooks and Emde, 1988; Grossman, Pollack, and Golding, 1988). Overall, however, the empirical findings suggest that dissatisfaction with the marital relationship and high levels of marital conflict are associated with poor parenting practices (Buehler and Gerard, 2002; Katz and Gottman, 1996; Kitzmann, 2000; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000; Lindahl and Malik, 1999; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Melby, 1990; Stone, Buehler, and Barber, 2002; Volling and Belsky, 1991; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1998).

In explaining this link between the marital relationship and parenting, Fincham and Hall (2005) propose three models. The *compensatory model* suggests a negative relationship between marital quality and parenting quality. In this model parents make up for poor marital relations by practicing positive parenting. In the *model of compartmentalization*, parents are able to keep marital relationship separate from parenting, and thus marital relations do not affect parenting practices. Most empirical attention has addressed the third of Fincham and Hall's (2005) models: the *spillover model,* in which "the affective tone of the marriage spills over into the parent-child relationship" (p. 210). Thus, mothers and fathers who fight and argue with one another and otherwise have a poor relationship with one another would have similarly poor relations with their children.

Because of the relatively consistent evidence of its role as a "spill over" risk factor for parenting, I have focused in the dissertation on marital conflict (as opposed to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction). Accordingly, I review below the empirical studies exploring relationships between marital conflict and positive and negative parenting behaviors.

Direct Associations between Marital Conflict and Parenting. A negative impact of marital conflict on parental warmth and a positive association with parental psychological control have been documented in a number of studies that have not attended to potential gender differences (Doyle and Markiewickz 2005; Easterbrooks and Emde 1988; Vandewater and Lansford 1998). Because marital conflict inherently involves mothers and fathers, however, most studies have attended to parental gender. While some empirical evidence from such studies suggests that fathers' marital problems

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spillover into the parent child relationships, but that mothers appear to compensate for marital problems by practicing more positive parenting behaviors (e.g., Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, and Volling, 1991; Brody, Pellegrini, and Sigel, 1986; Goldberg and Easterbrooks, 1984; McElwain and Volling, 1999), the majority of studies find that marital conflict is negatively relate to competent parenting for both parents.

As for studies that investigated the association between marital conflict and *warm, supportive, and involved parenting*, some have found that marital conflict significantly predicted such positive parenting for both mothers and fathers (Buehler and Gerard 2002; Conger et al. 1992). Others have found that the negative effect of marital conflict was only significant for mothers (Flouri 2004; Lindahl, Clements, and Markman 1997; Margolin, Gordis, and Oliver 2004).

As for those studies exploring marital conflict as a predictor of negative parenting, the majority employed samples of both mothers and fathers. Those studies that examined gender differences report that for mothers only marital conflict is related to increased use of negative parenting practices. For example, Lindahl, Clements, and Markman (1997) found that for mothers only conflictual marital communication was linked to more *emotional invalidation* of the child (e.g., emotional insensitivity, withdrawal, and negative affect). In a study by Margolin, Gordis, and Oliver (2004), husband-to-wife aggression was associated with maternal *negative affect* toward a child (e.g., withdrawal and negative movement). McElwain and Volling (1999) demonstrated that for mothers only marital conflict had a significant, positive effect on her *intrusive parenting* (e.g., parent-centered parenting). Finally, in studying mothers only, Fauber, Forehand, Thomas, and Wierson (1990) found increases in marital conflict to be related

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to increased use of *parental rejection/withdrawal* and *psychological control*. In addition to these studies that have documented effects for mothers, Webster-Stratton and Hammond (1999) found that for both mothers and fathers marital conflict was significantly related to increased use of *negative affect* (e.g., criticism, rejection, low emotional responsivity).

One recent refinement in studying marital conflict has been distinguishing between overt and covert forms of interparental hositility or conflict (Buehler, 1998; Buehler and Gerard, 2002). An overt conflict style has been defined as "hostile behaviors and affect that indicate direct manifestations of negative connections between parents," including "belligerence, contempt, derision, screaming, insulting, [and] slapping" (Buehler, 1998; p. 120). A covert conflict style has been defined as "hostile behaviors and affect that reflect indirect ways of managing conflict between parents," including "triangling children" and "scapegoating the child" (Buehler, 1998; p. 120). In studying a general measure of marital conflict and these two specific forms of marital conflict, Stone et al. (2002) reported that parental psychological control was significantly predicted by both the general measure of marital conflict and the index of covert marital conflict (but not by overt marital conflict).

In sum, the consensus of findings is that marital conflict can be viewed to "spill over" into the parent-child relationship as indicated by its relatively consistent associations with less effective parenting for (mostly) mothers and fathers. Accordingly, consistent with a family systems perspective, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3: *Overt and covert marital conflict will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting*

of mothers and fathers; and there will be a particularly strong relationship

between covert conflict and intrusive parenting.

(See figure 4.)

Indirect Associations between Marital Conflict and Parenting: Parental

Depression. Both family systems and family stress theory would suggest that the effects

of marital conflict be evident broadly throughout the family, and thus that they might

impact parenting indirectly as well as directly. One logical intervening variable would be

parental depression. As reviewed in the previous section, parental depression has been

found to negatively impact parenting practices. In turn, other empirical findings

document a direct association between marital conflict and depressed mood of parents

(Beach, Katz, Sooyeon, and Brody 2003; Dehle and Weiss 1998; Fincham and Bradbury

1993; Liu and Zeng-yin Chen 2006). As before, most of the documentation of this effect

has been for mothers. Also, some work has shown that poor marital relations might affect

women more strongly than men (Dehle and Weiss 1998; Heim and Snyder 1991). (See

the following section on gender hypotheses for a reflection of this potential gender

difference.)

Coupling these findings of the direct association between marital conflict and

parental depression and the findings of the direct association between parental depression

and impaired parenting, I hypothesize further that:

Hypothesis 4. *Marital conflict (both overt and covert) will be associated with*

lower levels of supportive and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct

association with parental depression.

(See figure 5.)

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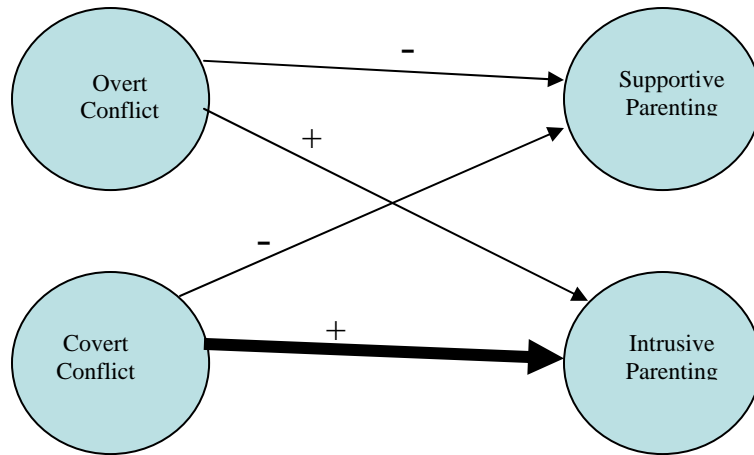
Figure 4. Hypothesis 3: Direct Associations between marital conflict and parenting
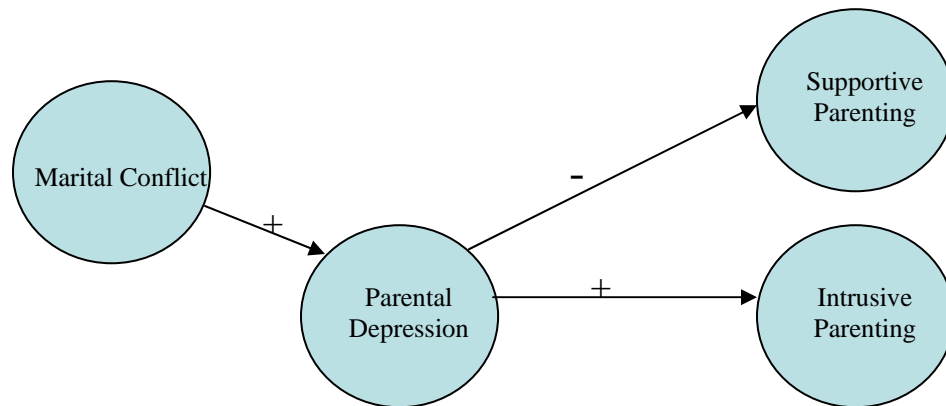
Figure 5. Hypothesis 4: Indirect association between marital conflict and parenting via parental depression

Social Contexts External to the Family: Work and Family

The second intended contribution of this dissertation has been the focus on contexts external to the family. Very little previous work on the determinants of parenting has taken seriously the critical role of the broader social contexts in which families exist. I chose to focus on two such contexts: the work sphere and the neighborhood.

The sphere of employment is a key social context outside of the family, but one that has important intersections with family life. Employed parents occupy multiple roles – as parents, spousal partners and workers (whether employed or self-employed) - that intersect and can complicate each other producing role strain (see theoretical discussion above). Empirically, there is a long history of studying the impact of parents' work on various family processes and outcomes. However, only a few of these studies have focused on the impact of parental employment experiences on their parenting.

Some of these studies report mixed findings concerning the effects of *employment status* and *work hours* on parenting, with some finding that being employed and working more hours had a positive effect on mothers' parenting and a negative impact on fathers' parenting (Alessandri, 1992; Coltrane, 1996; Crouter et al., 1999; Goldberg & Easterbrooks, 1988; Hoffman & Youngblade, 1998; Menaghan & Parcel, 1991; Pederson et al., 1982; Pleck, 1997; Schubert et al, 1980; Schwartz, 1983; Wood & Repetti, 2004), while others have found no differences in parenting based on employment status and work hours (Caldwell and Bradley , 1987; Zaslow, Peterson, Suwalsky, Cain, Anderson, and Fivel, 1985). Others find the *nature of the work* (e.g., work complexity, work involvement) and one's *satisfaction* with his or her job had beneficial effects on parenting

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practices (Greenberger et al., 1994; Grossman et al., 1988; Menaghan & Parcel, 1991).

Attention has also been given to the effect of *work instability* on parenting practices with

findings overall suggesting that work instability was indirectly related to less effective

parenting practices through economic distress and hardship (Conger et al., 1992; Conger

et al., 1993; Lim & Loo, 2003; Simons et al., 1992; Whitbeck et al., 1991). Assessing

stress from work in a variety of ways (i.e., "trouble on the job," work-family stress),

others have found that stress associated with work context has a negative impact on

effective parenting practices (Repetti, 1994; Taylor, Roberts, and Jacobson, 1997;

Volling and Belsky, 1991). Crouter and McHale (2005) have helped to clarify this

association by noting that in addition to providing stress, which is most often the focus of

this literature, some aspects of work may serve to "encourage parents to structure

childrearing in qualitatively different ways" (p. 281).

Since there are so few studies that have investigated work-family conflict per se

(the variable to be measured in this dissertation), the following review covers work that

has assessed a variety of work stress variables as antecedents of parenting. Also, even

though the literature is nuanced by distinctions between work-family conflict (i.e., one's

role as employee conflicts with one's role in the family) and family-work conflict (i.e.,

one's role in the family conflicts with one's work role), the measure available in the data

set does not permit testing this distinction.

Direct associations between work-family conflict and parenting. In contrast to

most other studies of parenting, the majority of the studies that have assessed work-

family conflict on parenting have included samples of fathers. Defining work-family

stress as "the extent to which the frustration and tension associated with a man's work

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interfered with his role as father and spouse," Volling and Belsky (1991) found that reports of work-family stress significantly predicted less positive interaction with their children and reported fewer responsibilities to childcare. Similarly, Repetti (1994) found that fathers who experienced higher levels of stress at work were less *interactive* with their children at the end of the workday. In contrast, Belsky and Crnic (1996) found that work spillover ("spillover of emotional experience between work and family" (p. 685)) was not significantly predictive of fathers' *negative affect* and *intrusiveness*.

Several studies have found that stress stemming from occupational experiences (e.g., job insecurity, work hours, and role overload) are negatively predictive of effective parenting (e.g., authoritarian parenting style, support and involvement) (e.g., Conger et al. 1992; Conger et al. 1993; Crouter, Bumpus, Head, and McHale 2001; Lim and Loo 2003; Simons et al. 1992; Whitbeck et al. 1991).

As for gender differences in links between occupational experiences and parenting, the findings are mixed. While a number of studies explored fathers' work-family conflict and fathering, some have also investigated mothers. Taylor, Roberts, and Jacobson (1997), found that mothers' work-related stress (e.g., "trouble on the job") predicted lower maternal acceptance of their adolescent children (via lower levels of mothers' self-esteem). In contrast, McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, and Borquez (1994) found no effect on maternal harsh parenting (e.g., scolding, hitting, threatening to hit, etc.) of mothers' work interruption (lapses in employment in the past year lasing longer than two months). Lim and Loo (2003) studied both mothers and fathers and found that for fathers there was a positive association between job insecurity and use of authoritarian parenting practices, but for mothers this association was negative.

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Although the findings relative to the impact of work-family conflict on parenting are mixed, they are adequate to warrant hypothesizing a direct negative effect. Accordingly, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5: *Work-family conflict will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting.* (See figure 6.)

Indirect relationships between work-family conflict and parenting: depression. Considerable attention has been given to demonstrating that such social context constructs as economic hardships (i.e., work instability, inability to pay bills, financial stress) and negative life events (i.e., change in residence, loss of employment, illness in family) are indirectly related to poor parenting practices through effects on depressed mood (Conger et al. 1992; Conger et al. 1993; Jones, Forehand, Brody, and Armistead 2002; Lim and Loo 2003; Lyons, Henly, and Schuerman 2005; Simons et al. 1992; Whitbeck et al. 1991). Similarly, others have found such employment characteristics as work status, lack of work complexity and stimulation, and work stress (e.g., "trouble on the job") to be indirectly related to lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting behaviors through such parent characteristics as self efficacy, self-esteem, and mood (Greenberger, O'Neil, and Nagel 1994; Jackson and Scheines 2005; Taylor, Roberts, and Jacobson 1997).

Most pertinent to my interest in work-family conflict, empirical evidence evidences a link between difficulty balancing work roles and family roles and poor psychological well-being, including depression (Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton 2000; Barnett, Brennan, Raudenbush, Pleck, and Marshall 1995; Frone 2000; Frone, Russell,

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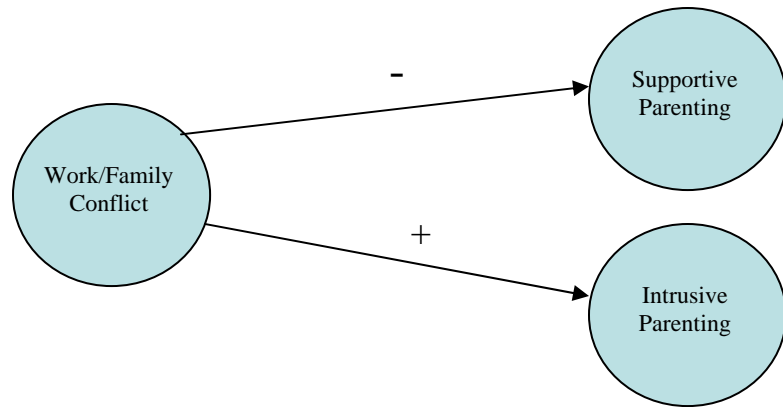
Figure 6. Hypothesis 5: Direct associations between work-family conflict and parenting

and Cooper 1992; Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, and Shafiro 2005; MacEwen and Barling 1994; Stephens, Franks, and Atienza 1997).

Indirect associations between work-family conflict and parenting: marital relations. In addition to the work reviewed above supporting an indirect effect of work-family conflict via parental depression, many studies have also linked increased work-family conflict or occupational stress to poor marital relations such as lower marital satisfaction and increased marital conflict. For example, Crouter et al. (2001) found that fathers' reports of feeling "overwhelmed by multiple commitments and not having enough time for themselves" was related to reports of less love and more conflict in the marital relationship (p. 409). While more of these studies investigate male-only samples, those that include men and women report similar effects. For example, Story and Repetti (2006) reported that occupational stress was related to greater anger and withdrawal behaviors with one's spouse for both mothers and fathers. Similarly, Matthews, Del Priore, Acitelli, and Barnes-Farrell (2006) reported that perceptions of conflict between one's work role and one's role in the relationship was related to relationship tension for both men and women.

Given plentiful evidence that men and women have different work experiences (Desai and Waite 1991; Greenstein 2000; Hochschild and Machung 1989) and the increasing number of dual earner families (Bond, Thompson, Galinksy, and Prottas 2003), it is clear that it is important, consistent with the sex-role hypothesis, to investigate the experiences of both women and men.

In light of the research reviewed above linking work-family conflict or stress with impaired parental psychological well-being and with marital difficulties, coupled with the

earlier reviewed risks to effective parenting of both parental depression and marital conflict, I hypothesize further, consistent with the family systems approach, that:

Hypothesis 6: *Work-family conflict will be associated indirectly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive associations with parental depression and marital conflict.* (See figure 7 below).

External Contexts: The Neighborhood

Consistent with the ecological approach guiding this dissertation, much sociological research has demonstrated the effects of the neighborhood context on a wide variety of family characteristics. As indicated earlier, although most of this work has not focused explicitly on parenting as the family outcome of most interest, parenting has nevertheless been implicated as a mediator of the effect of neighborhoods on other elements of family functioning (e.g., child problem behaviors).

Direct relationships between neighborhood context and parenting. Research has indicated that parents in disadvantaged neighborhoods practice less effective parenting practices. For the most part, studies have only explored such effects on mothering. Much of the research has measured broad socioeconomic features of neighborhoods such as concentrated poverty, residential instability, unemployment levels, and percent of female headed households, (Coulton, Korbin, Su, and Chow 1995; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan 1994; Simons et al. 1996; Simons et al. 1997). Other work has focused more precisely on such characteristics as safety, community risks, and community disorganization, often using self-assessments of crime, adolescent delinquency,
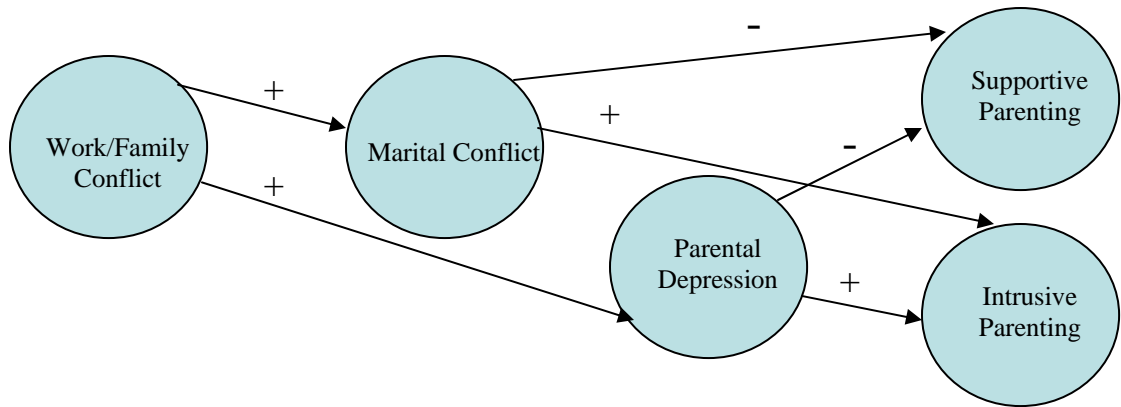
Figure 7. Hypothesis 6: Indirect associations between work-family conflict and parenting via parental depression and marital conflict

satisfaction with schools and police protection, etc. For example, consistent with social

disorganization theory (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson, 1997; Shaw and McKay,

1942, 1969), Simons et al. (1997) measured community disorganization (i.e. "the extent

to which their community is characterized by economic and business problems, poor

schools, inadequate public and social services, and low morale and involvement" (p.

215)). Studies of this kind have found that that parents reporting more dangerous and

disorganized neighborhoods also use poor parenting practices (e.g., harsh discipline,

withdrawal of relations with child, verbal aggression, low warmth and supportive

parenting) (Earls, McGuire, and Shay 1994; Hill and Herman-Stahl 2002; Simons et al.

1997).

While there is some contrary evidence (e.g., Jones, Forehand, Brody, and

Armistead (2002) found no association between community risks such as gangs, physical

fighting, shootings, drug use and parental monitoring), overall the literature suggests that

disorganized neighborhoods pose risks for effective parenting. Accordingly, I

hypothesize that:

> Hypothesis 7: *Neighborhood disorganization will be associated directly with*
>
> *lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting.*
>
> (See figure 8 below.)
>
> *Indirect relationships between neighborhood context and parenting: depression.*

Viewing neighborhood as a social context that is external to the family, there is reason to

believe that it influences a variety of aspects of the family that in turn influence

parenting. One potential indirect pathway is through parental depression. A number of

findings suggest that living in disadvantaged neighborhoods is associated with

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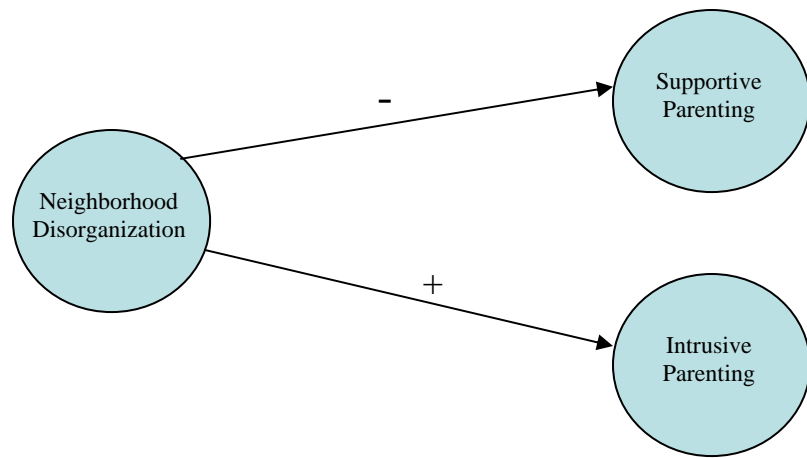
Figure 8. Hypothesis 7: Direct associations between neighborhood and parenting

depression. While some of these studies examine the socioeconomic aspects of neighborhoods (i.e., percent living below poverty, unemployment rate, percent of female headed households) (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan 1994; Robert 1998), others report similar effects examining the subjective, organizational aspects of neighborhoods (Ross 2000; Simons et al. 1997). For example, in addition to the direct effects of community disorganization on supportive and intrusive parenting, Simons et al. (1997) also found community disorganization to be indirectly related to parenting through maternal depression.

Indirect relationships between neighborhood context and parenting: marital relations. The marital relationship is another potential intervening variable in the association between neighborhood context and less effective parenting. There are a variety of ways in which neighborhood characteristics might, or have been found to impact parenting. First, to the degree that a disorganized neighborhood context reflects economic strain, various studies indicate relationships between low socioeconomic status and financial stress and low marital quality (Conger et al. 1990; Cutrona, Russell, Abraham, Gardner, Melby, Bryant, and Conger 2003; South and Spitze 1986). In examining marital conflict specifically, Conger, Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, and Whitbeck (1993) found that economic stress was positively related to reports of marital conflict, which in turn was related to lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting behaviors.

There are also studies that have specifically examined neighborhood quality and its association with marital qualities. These studies indicate links between disadvantaged neighborhood characteristics and such marital concerns as premarital childrearing and marital transitions (Massey and Shibuya 1995; South and Crowder 1999, 2000). Mannon

and Brooks (2006) reported positive relationships between neighborhood "family-friendliness" (e.g., subjective assessments of neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood assessment) and marital satisfaction for men and women, and a negative relationship between neighborhood "family-friendliness" and marital burnout for men.South (2001) found a relationship between disadvantaged neighborhood socioeconomic characteristics and marital instability.

Consistent with family systems and family stress theories, the literature reviewed above relative to the impact of neighborhoods on parental depression and marital conflict, coupled with the earlier reviewed evidence of the risk of parental depression and marital conflict to parenting effectiveness, I further hypothesize:

Hypothesis 8: *Neighborhood disorganization will be indirectly associated with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive association with parental depression and marital conflict.* (See figure 9.)

Gender of Parent

The third main intended contribution of this dissertation has been to address the inattention to parental gender in the study of the determinants of parenting. Relevant theory was presented above and has led me to assert several gender-related hypotheses to further refine the enhanced model that was tested here.

In accordance with family systems theory, the spillover hypothesis proposes that marital problems spillover in to the parent child relationship creating poor parenting practices, while the compensation hypothesis proposes that an individual compensates for

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a poor marital relationship by being an outstanding parent.
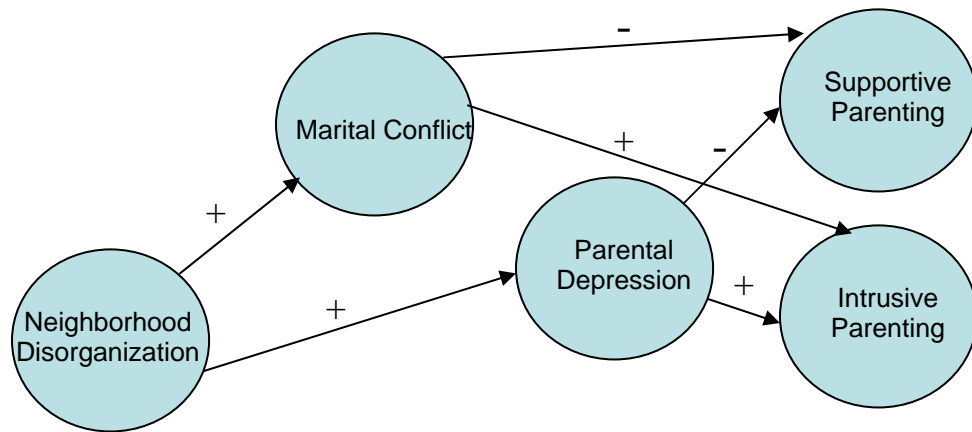
Figure 9. Hypothesis 8: Indirect associations between neighborhood disorganization and parenting via parental depression and marital conflict

While some empirical evidence suggests that fathers' marital problems spillover into the parent child relationships, while mothers compensate for marital problems by practicing more positive parenting behaviors (e.g., Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, and Volling, 1991; McElwain and Volling, 1999), the overwhelming majority of findings do not support such a gender difference in this relationship (e.g., Buehler and Gerard, 2002; Conger et al., 1992; Flouri, 2004). Rather, findings support a spillover hypothesis for both mothers and fathers. As such, I hypothesize that:

> Gender Hypothesis 1: Marital Conflict (overt and covert) will be directly related lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting by mothers *and* fathers.

Social learning theory proposes that behavior is a product of socialization experiences, and as such studies suggest that men and women have different socialization experiences (Burgess, 1979; Burgess and Youngblade, 1988; Gelles and Straus, 1979; Straus, 1983; Straus et al., 1980). One distinction proposed by this theory between men's and women's socialization experiences is that women are encouraged to be more sensitive to relationship experiences than are men. Accordingly, I propose that:

> Gender Hypothesis 2: *T*he *direct associations between marital conflict (overt and covert) and supportive and intrusive parenting will be stronger for mothers than for fathers*.

The social-role hypothesis and the sex-role hypothesis extend research of work-family interface by addressing the links between gender and the balancing of multiple roles. The social-role hypothesis suggests that there should not be gender differences in this relationship due to the inherent stress of each role despite gender (Voydanoff, 1989).

Yet, the sex-role hypothesis proposes that there are gender differences in the relationship between role accumulation and psychological distress, such that there should be a stronger positive relationship for women.

Empirical studies of indirect effects of work-family conflict on parenting report mixed findings concerning gender differences. Some find work-family stressors (i.e., work-family time constraints, work and financial difficulties, time pressure from work load) to be more detrimental to mothers (Nomaguchi, Miklie, and Bianchi, 2005), some more detrimental to fathers (van Emmetik and Jawahar, 2006), and others find it impairing for both parents (Conger, Lorenzo, Elder, Simons, and Ge Xo, 1993). Given empirical evidence that men and women vary in the amount of time devoted to work and family responsibilities, as well as in the type of work and family responsibilities they have (Greenberger et al. 1994; Greenstein, 2000; Hughes and Galinsky, 1994), I expect to find gender differences in the relationship between role conflict and parenting practices as suggested by the sex-role hypothesis. Specifically, I hypothesize that

> Gender Hypothesis 3: *The direct associations between role conflict and*
> *supportive and intrusive parenting, as mediated by parental depression, will be*
> *stronger for mothers than for fathers.*

Finally, mothering and fathering coexist in two-parent families. Those few studies that address relationships between mothering and fathering practices in two-parent families tend to examine effects of "similar" versus "inconsistent" parenting on child outcome and to focus on parenting typologies rather than parenting practices (Fletcher, Steinberg, and Sellers, 1999; Simons, et al., 2007; Steinberg, et al., 1994). It is possible that parents attempt to compensate for other parents' parenting practices (e.g.,

the father is too lax, so the mother parents strictly), or that mothering practices and fathering practices are unrelated to one another and thus do not affect one another. Another alternative is that parents attempt to parent similarly to one another, or that one parent may follow the lead of another (e.g., both are supportive or both are intrusive). Interested in how links between mothering and fathering affect adolescent outcomes, Simons and Conger (2007) assessed parenting styles (e.g., authoritative and authoritarian) and found evidence that for most families mothers and fathers used similar parenting styles. Drawing on the findings of Simons and Conger (2007), I hypothesize that:

Gender Hypothesis 4: *Mothers' parenting practices will be positively related to fathers' parenting practices.*

Control Variables

Due to empirical and theoretical evidence linking parental education level and family income to a number of variables in this model, I control for the effect of these variables. In this section I review the findings of studies examining socioeconomic status-related variables of parents' education level and income.

In general, those studies assessing a combination of income and education as indicators of socioeconomic status indicate that lower socioeconomic status is associated with less positive parenting practices (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, and Duncan 1994; Lyons-Ruth, Lyubchik, Wolfe, and Bronfman 2002) and with more negative parenting practices (Egami, Ford, Greenfield, and Crum 1996; Woodworth, Belsky, and Crnic 1996). Parents with more education employed more positive parenting practices (Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda 1999; Bogenscneider 1997; Kendler, Sham, and

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MacLean 1997) and less negative parenting practices (McElwain and Volling 1999; Middlemiss 2003; Simons, Johnson, Conger, and Lorenz 1997; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Melby 1990).

Hoffman and Youngblade (1998) reported social class differences in the relationship between depression and parenting style. For working class mothers they found a significant effect of depression on mother's parenting. They reported that "depressed mothers were more authoritarian, more permissive and less authoritative than less depressed mothers" (p. 401). Yet, for the middle class mothers, depressive mood was only related to authoritative parenting. Middle class depressed mothers were less authoritative. They also reported that for the middle class mothers education and parental commitment acted as buffers of the negative effect of depression on parenting orientation.

Generally, studies examining income alone indicate that parents with lower income levels use less positive parenting practices (Conger, Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, and Whitbeck 1992; Simons, Lorenz, Conger, and Wu 1992) and more negative parenting practices (Conger, McCarthy, Yang, Lahey, and Kropp 1984; Eamon and Zuehl 2001).

The focus of much of this research has been on antecedents of warm, supportive and involved parentings indicating that the more favorable structural contexts are those in which parents are the most warm, supportive and involved. Families with higher incomes are more warm and supportive, while families with lower incomes, less education, and lower socioeconomic status exhibit less warm and supportive parenting behaviors. Similarly, those studies focusing on negative parenting practices that have

characteristics similar to psychological control, reported that parents with less education and parents with lower socioeconomic status (combination of education, income, and/or occupation) were more likely to use parenting practices similar to psychological control, such as rejection, intrusiveness, and authoritarian parenting.

The findings of these empirical studies suggest that such socioeconomic factors as parental education level and family income play a role in parenting practices, indicating that parents with less education and lower income practice less effective parenting behaviors. Due to these findings, I will control for these factors in my hypothesized model so as to limit their impact and focus on the effects of the other variables that are of interest to this dissertation.

SUMMARY

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to contribute to the parent-child relationship literature in understanding antecedents of parenting. I propose a parenting model that employs an ecological approach to parenting by recognizing the parent-child relationship as existing within ecological niches (marital relationship, work context, and neighborhood context), and that applies family systems and family stress perspectives to parenting by exploring these ecological niches as interrelated sources of risk factors for parenting practices (See figure 7). The emphasis in this dissertation is on those ecological niches *within the family* and *external to the family* that are understood to be sociological factors ignored by the bulk of parenting models focusing on factors more psychological in nature.

The empirical findings reviewed in this chapter provide further evidence for the

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need to examine these social contextual factors as risk factors for parenting behaviors, in addition to psychological characteristics of parents and children. Stresses and strains resulting from conflicts between spouses and between work and family roles are related to lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting behaviors, while families in less optimal neighborhoods demonstrate less positive parenting practices and less favorable outcomes. As a result, the hypothesized model to be tested in this dissertation includes these social contextual risk factors and examines mothering and fathering, and thus addresses the three basic limitations of the parenting literature cited earlier. By way of summary, below is a list of all of the hypotheses to be tested in the dissertation. These are graphically depicted in the hypothesized parenting model in figure 10.

1. Children's externalizing and internalizing behavior problems will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting.

2. Maternal and paternal depression will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting.

3. Overt and covert marital conflict will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and with higher levels of intrusive parenting of mothers and fathers; and there will be a particularly strong relationship between covert conflict and intrusive parenting.

4. Marital conflict (both covert and overt) will be associated indirectly with lower levels of parental support and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive association with parental depression.

5. Work-family conflict will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive

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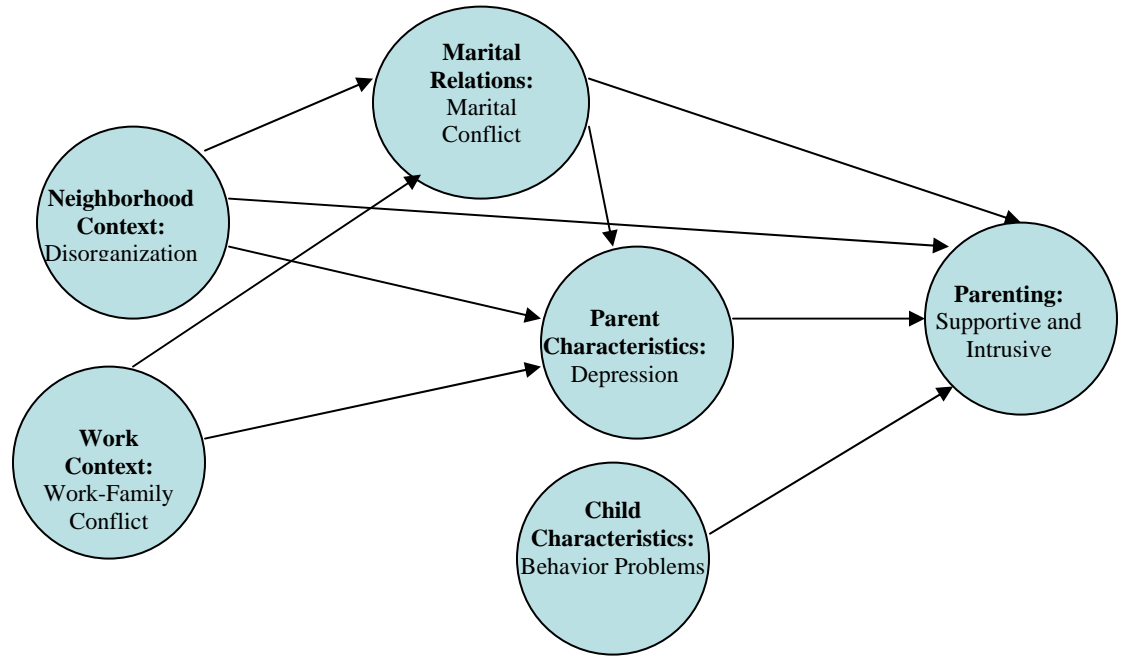
Figure 10. Conceptual parenting model

parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting.

6. Work-family conflict will be associated indirectly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive associations with parental depression and marital conflict.

7. Neighborhood disorganization will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting.

8. Neighborhood disorganization will be associated indirectly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive associations with parental depression and marital conflict.

The following is a list of hypotheses concerning effects of gender in the proposed parenting model:

1. Marital conflict (overt and covert) will be directly associated with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting for both mothers and fathers.

2. The direct associations between marital conflict (overt and covert) and supportive and intrusive parenting will be stronger for mothers than for fathers.

3. The direct associations between role conflict and supportive and intrusive parenting, as mediated by parental depression, will be stronger for mothers than for fathers.

Mothers' parenting practices will be positively associated with fathers' parenting practices.

Chapter III. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology of this study, including a description of the sample and details about the dyadic nature of the data set. The specific measures to be employed and the plan of analyses are also provided in this chapter.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

This dissertation employed data from the NIMH-funded Ogden Youth and Family Project (OYFP), a longitudinal, sequential-cohort study of families with adolescent children (Barber et al., 2005). The initial sample of 933 youth came from a random sampling of 5th and 8th grade classrooms in Ogden, Utah. The sample was half female, 71% White, and 84% middle income. In the first wave of data, adolescent self-reports were obtained in classrooms and surveys were mailed to parents. In subsequent waves, all data collection was done by mail to the family's home. The average response rate across the waves of data was 80%.

Of specific interest to this dissertation are parents' reports collected during the second wave of the project in 1995 because in that year all of the variables of interest to the dissertation were reported on by parents. In this wave of the data, a total of 1,190 mothers and fathers responded. Due to my interest in the relationships between marital conflict and parenting practices, I examined only those parents who reported being currently married (N = 942; 79%) or separated (N = 34; .03%). This sub-sample of 976 parents of an adolescent child was almost evenly split between men and women, with men making up 53% of the sample. Over half of the sample (54.6%) reported receiving

some college or a college degree, while the majority reported working full time (80.6%).

Of those who reported working part time, the majority were women (85.9%). The

majority of these parents were White (82.5%) with the next largest ethnicity group being

Mexican Americans (10.4%). Half of the sample reported an annual income of $24,999

or less, with 10% reporting $50,000 or more a year.

In order to examine couple effects (i.e., parent A and parent B within each

family), parent A and parent B were matched on family ID numbers and combined into a

single observation. Thus, rather than having mother reports and father reports as

individual cases, this transformation of the data set brought married partners together into

one case, and within each case distinguished between those variables provided by parent

A and those provided by parent B. As such, the number of cases was reduced to 550,

each containing reports by mother and reports by father. Further explanation of this

reduction in sample size is found in the discussion of handling missing data at the end of

this chapter. The use of dyadic data allowed me to recognize that in two-parent families

mothering and fathering does not occur independently, but are most likely related to each

other. Hence, the dyadic nature of the data allowed me to estimate any such similarity

between mothering and fathering. As a result of controlling for similarity, or overlap,

between mothering and fathering, the parenting variables reflected more purely parent-

specific parenting, i.e., that which was uniquely mothering and that which was uniquely

fathering.

MEASURES

In order to assist in making measurement decisions for the model, descriptive analyses were conducted for all of the measures. Means, standard deviations, and ranges for all of the measures are reported in Table 1. Based in part on these analyses, in the eventual model some of the constructs were latent and others were observed. For the latent variables, the goal was to use the raw items whenever possible. Further, some of these latent variables were gender specific (i.e., a separate variable for mother- and father-reported data), while others were not parent specific and were therefore indicated by both a summed score for mothers and for fathers. Decisions were made about which type of latent variable to use based on the goals of the analyses: for example, for constructs where the gender of the parent was critical (e.g., parenting, depression, marital conflict, and work-family conflict) separate mother and father measures of the construct were created. For constructs where having parent-specific variables was not critical (i.e., there were no hypotheses proposed concerning gender differences; e.g., for neighborhood disorganization, child characteristics), latent variables were created using summed scores across mother- and father-reported data as long as this was justified by the correlation analyses (i.e., if parent A's and parent B's responses were highly correlated).

Sample items are reported for all of the specific measures described below. A complete list of items for each scale described below is included in the appendix A.

As is evident in table 1, the measures are non-normally distributed. Specifically, the measures are skewed in a positive direction, indicating that the families participating in this study reported relatively low levels of marital conflict, depression, child

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for study variables

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Mothers	Supportive Parenting	2.55	.38	1-3
	Psychological Control	1.24	.27	1-3
	Depression	.309	.29	0-3
	Internalizing	.373	.47	0-2
	Externalizing	.203	.29	0-2
	Overt Marital Conflict	1.94	1.16	1-7
	Covert Marital Conflict	1.45	.78	1-7
	Work-Family Conflict	4.78	1.49	1-8
	Neighborhood Disorganization	.20	.30	0-2
	Education	14	2.29	7-18
	Income	16,586	12,450	2,999-50,000
Fathers	Supportive Parenting	2.32	.44	1-3
	Psychological Control	1.26	.30	1-3
	Depression	.23	.26	0-3
	Internalizing	.33	.46	0-2
	Externalizing	.18	.29	0-2
	Overt Marital Conflict	1.77	1.01	1-7
	Covert Marital Conflict	1.32	.69	1-7
	Work-Family Conflict	4.83	1.41	1-8
	Neighborhood Disorganization	.21	.33	0-2
	Education	14	2.6	7-18
	Income	32,072	13,376	2,999-50,000

behavioral problems, neighborhood disorganization, work-family conflict, and intrusive

parenting. They also reported high levels of supportive parenting

In attempting to understand why the data are skewed, I have considered several

possibilities. Given that the samples were drawn carefully to represent the major, urban

school district in Odgen, it is unlikely that the skewness can be attributed to an

uncharacteristically, privileged sample. Further, Ogden, Utah itself is not a particularly

advantaged city. According to the 2000 U. S. Census Bureau, Ogden, one of the four

largest metropolitan areas in Utah, had a population mostly made up of White (79%) or

those of Hispanic origin (13%). Married couples living together made up 48% of all

households, with 13% of households comprised of a female householder with no husband

present. The median income for a family was $38,950 and 12.6% of families were below

the poverty line. Moreover, a review of FBI Report of Offenses Known to Law

Enforcement data from the year 2003 (the closest report year to the date of the study)

does not provide evidence of a population skewed in such an advantageous direction. For

example, violent crime, such as forcible rape, was .82 times the national average and

property crime, such as larceny or theft, was 1.36 the national average. Therefore,

without any evidence of an unusually advantaged sample or population, I am left to

conclude that the non-normal distribution of these measures is most likely the result of

reporter bias or social desirability whereby participants provide positive and optimistic

responses about themselves and their families (See Reynolds, 1982 and Wentworth, 1993

for discussions of social desirability bias). Such positively skewed data is common in

studies of children and families that utilize self-reported data (e.g., Littell and Girvin,

2006; McDonell, 2007; Scott and Straus, 2007). In the plan of analyses section, I discuss

the robustness of structural equation modeling to handle such non-normality.

Parenting

      Supportive Parenting. Mothers and fathers provided reports of their supportive parenting practices using the ten-item Acceptance subscale from the Child Report of Parent Behavior Inventory, adapted for parent reports (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965; Schludermann and Schludermann, 1970). Sample items from this scale included: "makes my child feel better after talking over her/his worries with me," "smiles at her/him very often," and "makes her/him feel like the most important person in my life." Parents reported how well each statement described one's relationship with his or her child with responses ranging from *not like me* (1) to *a lot like me* (3). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for mothers' supportive parenting was .872 and for fathers .887. In the structural equation modeling, supportive parenting was operationalized as gender specific latent constructs with all 10 items as indicators for each parent.

      Intrusive Parenting. Parents provided reports of their parental psychological control using the 8-item Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR; Barber, 1996), adapted for parental reports. Sample items from this scale were: "changes the subject whenever s/he has something to say," "blames her/him for other family members' problems," and "is less friendly with her/him, if s/he does not see things my way." Parents reported how well each statement described one's relationship with his or her child with responses ranging from *not like me* (1) to *a lot like me* (3). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for mothers' intrusive parenting was .718 and for fathers' .756. As with supportive parenting, psychological control was assessed in the subsequent

structural equation modeling with all 8 items of the scale as indicators of the latent variable for each parent.

Parent Characteristics

Parental Depression. Mother and father depression was assessed with the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; (Beck, Steer, and Brown, 1996)), a 21-item instrument whereby respondents choose from a set of four statements the one statement that best describes his or her feelings during the past week, "including today". Two sample sets of items are: (1) "I do not feel sad." (2) "I feel sad or blue." (3) "I am sad or blue all the time and I can't snap out of it." (4) "I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it;." and (1) " I am not particularly dissatisfied." (2) "I don't enjoy things the way I used to." (3) "I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore." (4) "I am dissatisfied with everything." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for mothers was .877 and for fathers .879. For the structural equation analyses, I used mean depression scores for mothers and fathers. Scores ranged from 0 to 1.55; the mean for mothers was .325; the mean for fathers was .244. As I will examine maternal and paternal depression individually, I allow maternal depression and paternal depression to covary considering findings indicating that depression is often related to depression in one's spouse (Burke, 2003).

Marital Relations

Overt Marital Conflict. Buehler (1998) defined an overt conflict style as "hostile behaviors and affect that indicate direct manifestations of negative connections between parents" that include "belligerence, contempt, derision, screaming, insulting, [and] slapping," (p. 120). Mothers and fathers responded as to how often during a

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disagreement they do the following three behaviors in front of their child: "threaten each other," "yell at each other," and "insult each other." Responses ranged from *never* (1) to *everyday* (7). The Cronbach's alpha for mothers was .841 and for fathers .842. Mean scores were created using mothers' and fathers' reports to indicate parent-specific overt marital conflict. At the bivariate level, these scores were significantly, positively correlated (mothers r = .66; fathers r = .74) suggesting that mothers' and fathers' mean scores of overt marital conflict could be used as indicators of a latent measure of parent overt marital conflict.

        Covert Marital Conflict. Buehler (1998) defined a covert conflict style as "hostile behaviors and affect that reflect indirect ways of managing conflict between parents" that include "triangling children" and "scapegoating the child" (p. 120). Using the same instrument, mothers and fathers responded as to how often during a disagreement they do the following three behaviors in front of their child: "send a message to your spouse/former spouse/partner through this child because you don't want to talk to this person," "insult the other parent in front of this child," and "try to get this child to side with one of you." Responses ranged from *never* (1) to *everyday* (7). The Cronbach's alpha was .637 for mothers and .652 for fathers. Mean scores were created using mothers' and fathers' reports to indicate parent-specific covert marital conflict. Higher scores on these measures indicate more covert marital conflict.

Child Characteristics

Externalizing Behavior Problems. A subset of 12 items from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991) was used to assess child problem behaviors. Parents

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responded to these items using a scale ranging from *not true* (0) to *very true or often true*
(2). Ten of these items assessed externalizing behavior problems, including, as examples:
"hangs around with kids who get in trouble," "uses illegal drugs and alcohol," and
"threatens people." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for mother reports was .868 and for
father reports .870. At the bivariate level, the summed scale scores were significantly,
positively correlated (r = .712; p ≤ .01), recommending that scale scores for the mother-
and father-reports of child externalizing behavior be used as indicators of a parent-
reported latent measure of externalizing behavior.

Internalizing Behavior Problems. The remaining two of the items from the Child
Behavior Checklist assessed child internalizing behavior problems: "complains of
loneliness," and "unhappy, sad, or depressed." For two-item measures, it is more appropriate
to report correlations among the items than to calculate reliability. The two items were
significantly correlated for mother reported data (.475; p ≤ .01) and for father reported data
(.459; p ≤ .01). At the bivariate level, the summed internalizing problem behavior items were
correlated significantly and positively across parent gender (.434; p ≤ .01), recommending
that these summed scores for mothers' and fathers' reports of child internalizing behavior
could be used as indicators of a latent, parent-reported variable of internalizing behavior.

Work Context

Work-Family Conflict. Parents responded to two items about the frequency with
which their work and family roles conflict with responses ranging from *never* (1) to *often* (4).
The two items were: "How often do the demands of your work interfere with your family
life?" and " How often do the demands of your family life interfere with your job?" The

items were significantly correlated for mother reported data (.505; $p \leq .01$) and for father reported data (.372; $p \leq .01$). At the bivariate level, the summed work-family conflict items were correlated significantly and positively across parent gender (.137; $p < .05$). Although significant, this correlation is low, and, furthermore, given in the interest in gender differences in this variable, mother and father scores were not combined to form a parent variable as above. Instead, work-family conflict was operationalized as two parent-specific observed constructs, each measured by a score made up of the sum of the two items.

Neighborhood Context

Neighborhood Problems. Participants responded as to the degree that a series of 17 problems that arise in neighborhoods were viewed by parents as problems. The items were taken from the work of Raudenbush and Sampson (1999) and had a response scale from *not a big problem* (0) to *big problem* (3). Sample items included: "litter or trash on the sidewalks and streets," "graffiti on buildings and walls," and "police not caring about our problems." The Cronbach's alpha for mothers was .917 and for fathers .939. Bivariate correlation analyses revealed significant, positive correlations between summed scale scores for mother- and father-reported neighborhood problems (.595; $p < .01$), recommending that these scores be used as indicators of a parent-reported latent measure of neighborhood disorganization.

Control Variables

Consistent with recommendations from the empirical literature, I controlled for family annual income and the education level of the parents. Using each parent's report of his or her annual income, I created a summed score reflecting the combination of

mothers' and fathers' annual incomes. I also created a summed score of parental

education. This measure indicates a total number of years of education mothers and

fathers in each family achieved.

THE MODEL

The model that was examined using structural equation analyses in this study is

illustrated in Figure 11. It depicts the hypothesized relationships between parenting,

parent characteristics, child characteristics, and social contextual risks within the family

(marital conflict) and those external to the family (work conflict and neighborhood

disorganization) along with the two control variables. Specifically, the model consists of

four endogenous variables: maternal supportive parenting, paternal supportive parenting,

maternal psychological control, and paternal psychological control. These four

endogenous variables are latent constructs assessed with all of the individual items

making up the parenting variables.

The model also includes four intervening endogenous variables: overt marital

conflict, covert marital conflict, maternal depression, and paternal depression. These are

all latent constructs, constructed with parent-specific, scale scores as indicators. Finally,

the model consists of seven exogenous variables: work-family conflict for mothers and

fathers, neighborhood problems, two child problem variables, family income, and family

education level. Neighborhood problems and both child problem behavior variables are

latent constructs, indicated by parent-specific scale scores. The remaining variables were

observed variables, each indicated by a single scale score derived from computing the

mean of the relevant items.
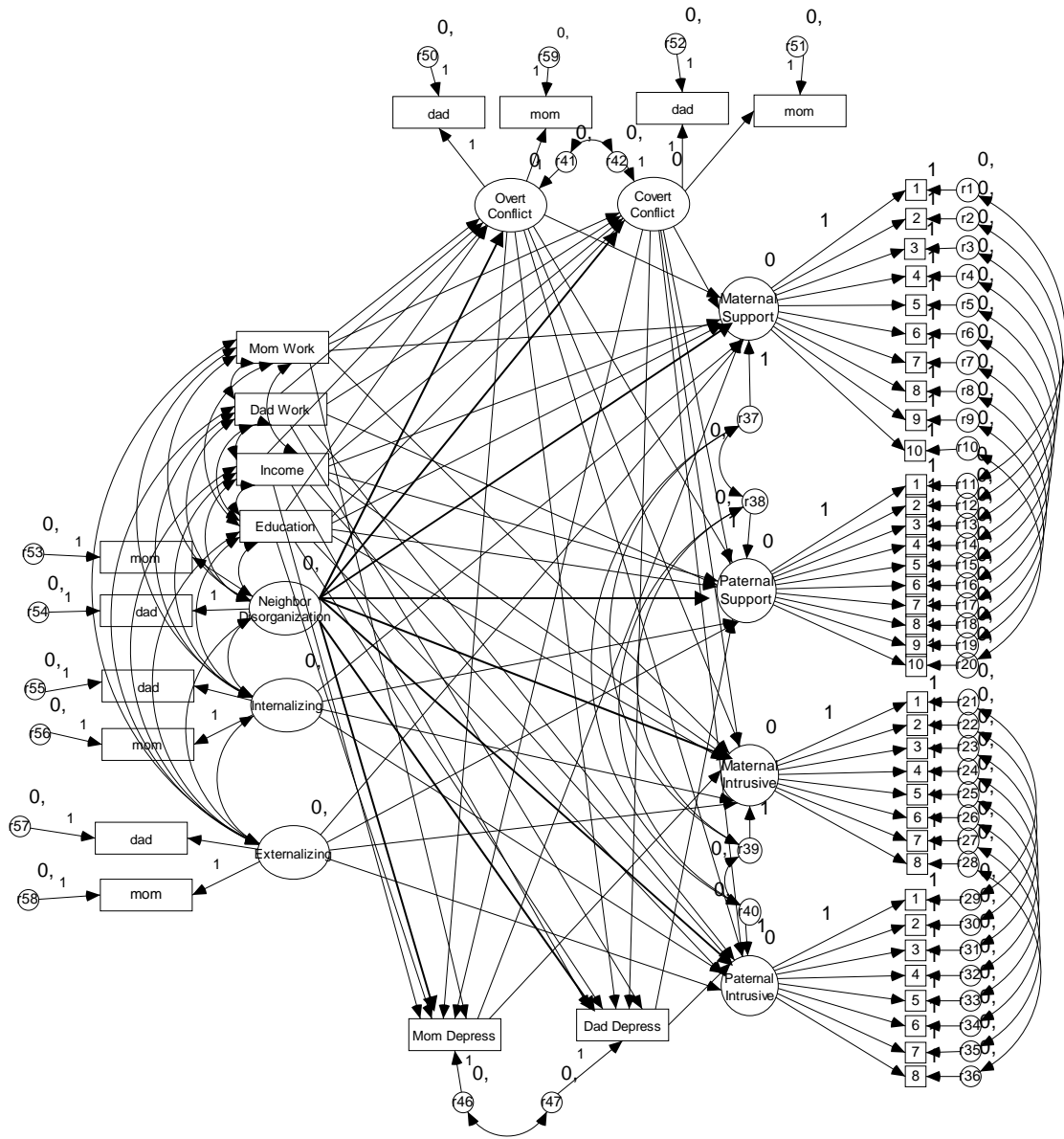
Figure 11. Hypothesized parenting model

PLAN OF ANALYSES

As indicated above, initial descriptive analyses were conducted in advance of establishing the measurement model for the structural equation analyses (SEM). The SEM analyses were conducted using SPSS and the SEM statistical package in Amos 7.0 (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1995). Three types of analyses were conducted using SEM. First, correlations among all of the model's variables were calculated and reported. Second, the measurement model was examined to determine the adequacy of the measurement strategy. Finally, the fit of the parenting model and the hypothesized associations among the model's constructs were estimated in the structural component of the SEM analyses.

Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling is described as "a family of statistical procedures for testing whether obtained data are consistent with a theoretical model (and) are particularly useful when the phenomenon under investigation involves a complex system of interrelationships among variables" (West et al., 1991 p. 460). The use of structural equation modeling was preferred for this dissertation because of its use of covariance as its basic statistic. Covariance, defined as "represent[ing] the strength of the association between X and Y and their variabilities," conveys more information than a correlation matrix (Kline, 1998 p. 10). Also, structural equation modeling allows for the distinction between latent and observed variables, as well as allowing for evaluation of entire models making possible a wider variety of hypotheses (Kline, 1998).

As mentioned previously, a number of the measures employed in this dissertation

were skewed such that the bulk of the cases were below or above the mean. Technically, Amos utilizes a maximum likelihood method for computing parameter estimates which assumes normally distributed variables. Yet, many variables in social science research are skewed, and some experts conclude that the maximum likelihood method is reasonably robust to modest violations of the normality assumption (see Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999; Hoyle, 1995; Kline, 1998 for discussion on this topic).

Model Fit. In essence, a model is described as fitting the data well based on two requirements: 1) reproducing the observed variances and covariances as closely as possible, and 2) doing so with as few parameters as possible. The structural equation modeling literature suggests multiple ways to determine fit, and thus the AMOS output provides a series of measures of model fit. While there is no consensus in the literature about which set of measures is best to inform model fit, the measure of model fit most often referenced is the chi-square. The chi-square indicates whether there is a statistically significant difference between the observed and implied variances and covariances. Thus, when interpreting the chi-square, the hypothesis is that it is non-significant (i.e., the data do not differ significantly from the hypothesized model). Two-tailed tests were used to determine the significance of the chi-square. The fit of the measurement models and the full hypothesized structural model was determined using several additional fit indices as indicated by the literature, including: the CMIN/DF, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Hoelter's Critical N (HOELTER).

The CMIN/DF is the product of dividing the chi-square by the model's degrees of freedom. This measure takes into account the model's complexity. The literature suggests a ratio less than 3 indicates a good fitting model. The RMSEA is often

employed when there is a large sample size. It attempts to correct for the tendency of the chi-square to reject any model specified when the sample is large. The RMSEA indicates a good fit in the range of .05 to .08. AMOS gives the probability associated with the test that RMSEA is less than or equal to .05. This is the PCLOSE. If PCLOSE is greater than .05 then the model is acceptable. The Hoelter's Critical N reports the largest sample size for which the null hypothesis of no difference between observed and implied variances/covariances can be accepted. A critical N of 200 or more on the Hoelter's Critical N (HOELTER) indicates a satisfactory fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) indicates the proportion of improvement in fit of the hypothesized model over that of the null model. Scores range between 0 and 1 with scores of .90 or higher indicating good fit of hypothesized model.

HANDLING MISSING DATA

In the original version of the data, less than 1% of the data were missing. However, in the transformation of the data set into dyadic data, missing data became an issue. Of the 976 married or separated parents, there were 124 parents whose spouse report was missing (13%). The majority of those missing were father reports (74%). In order to transform the data set into dyadic data, it was necessary to create dummy cases for those parents' whose spouse was missing. A discussion of and the steps taken to create dyadic data can be found at http://davidakenny.net/kkc/c1/c1.htm . The creation of the 124 dummy cases increased the sample size to 1,100. These dummy cases then created a problem of missing data, as now 10% of the data was missing. Due to missing data and its patterns of missing values, AMOS was unable to fit an independence model to the data. The independence model is one that fits only the means and variances of the

variables and restricts all the covariances to be zero. The inability to fit an independence

model restricted the number of fit indices AMOS was able to report for the hypothesized

model, and did not allow for a test of the significance of hypothesized indirect effects.

As a result, I chose to use multiple imputation of the data set to handle the missing data,

and thereby obtain more measures of model fit and test indirect relationships.

While there are a number of methods for handling missing data (e.g., listwise and

pairwise deletion, mean substitution, and full information maximum likelihood), multiple

imputation is considered preferable for a number of reasons. It is preferable to listwise

and pairwise deletion because it avoids the wasting of information. It is preferable to

mean substitution and full information maximum likelihood methods because it increases

variability by avoiding dependence on a well-defined model to produce the missing value

estimates.

Multiple imputation was accomplished for this dissertation using Amelia II

software (www.gking.harvard.edu/amelia/). The Amelia program was created to handle

missing data with less bias and more efficiency. Amelia II is unique to other multiple

imputation programs in its use of the Emis algorithm to compute the missing values.

Honaker, Joseph, King, Scheve, and Singh (1999) argued that the Emis algorithm "is

between dozens and hundreds of times faster than the leading method recommended in

the statistics literature, gives the same answer, and requires no special expertise to use"

(p. 2). Using formulas provided by Ruin (1987), the five data sets that were created by

Amelia were combined in an excel spreadsheet.

The additional model fit indices and estimates of indirect effects were obtained

from the tests of the 5 imputed data set. I report model fit indices for each imputed data

set, and the range of indirect estimates across the data sets. Obtaining the significance of the indirect effects required combining the imputed data sets. This was done using an excel spreadsheet that averaged the imputed estimates from the five imputed data sets and produced slope estimates, standard errors, t ratios, degrees of freedom, and p-values for the combined data set.

Chapter IV. Results

This section is divided according to the three types of analyses conducted with the SEM procedure: correlations among the latent and observed variables, measurement properties, and hypothesized associations among the latent variables.

BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS

Table 2 reports the correlation matrix for the study variables. Most of the correlations are significant and in the expected directions confirming the expected associations between lower supportive and higher intrusive parenting and negative parent and child characteristics, and stress and conflict within the social contexts measured. Specifically, mother and father supportive parenting was associated negatively with parental depression, child's externalizing and internalizing behaviors, marital conflict, and neighborhood disorganization. Mother and father intrusive parenting was associated positively with parental depression, child's externalizing and internalizing behaviors, marital conflict, and neighborhood disorganization. Contrary to hypotheses, neither mothers' nor fathers' work-family conflict was significantly related to parenting. Both overt and covert marital conflict were positively associated with parental depression, as was work-family conflict. For mothers only, work-family conflict was positively related also to overt marital conflict. Neighborhood disorganization was positively associated with parental depression and overt and covert marital conflict.

In addition, as expected, maternal supportive parenting was significantly and positively correlated with paternal supportive parenting, and both parents' scores on intrusive parenting were also significantly and positively correlated.

Table 2. Correlation matrix

		1		2		3		4		5		6	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1. Supportive	M		.299**	-.297**	-.144*	-.143**	-.146**	ns	ns	-.095*	ns	ns	ns
	F			-.132**	-.288**	-.176**	-.212**	-.232**	-.267**	-.145**	-.201**	-.116*	ns
2. Intrusive	M				.327**	.256**	.166**	.132*	.120*	.266**	.165**	ns	ns
	F					.149**	.327**	.251**	.316**	.160**	.265**	ns	ns
3. Depression	M						.420**	.375**	.378**	.283**	.280**	.107*	.174**
	F							.317**	.333**	.130**	.218**	ns	ns
4. Overt Conflict	M								.700**	.661**	.489**	ns	ns
	F									.479**	.739**	ns	ns
5. Covert Conflict	M										.401**	ns	ns
	F											ns	ns
6. Work-Family Conflict	M												.137*
	F												
7. Neighborhood Disorganization	M	-.132**	ns	.153**	.156**	.165**	.184**	.190**	ns	.154**	ns	ns	ns
	F	Ns	ns	.102*	.151**	.165**	.184**	.177*	.166**	ns	.160**	ns	ns
8. Externalizing	M	-.222**	-.230**	.270**	.284**	.281**	.229*	.210**	.277**	.127**	.218**	.126**	ns
	F	-.176**	-.263**	.146**	.411**	.207**	.270**	.248**	.285**	ns	.215**	ns	ns
9. Internalizing	M	-.194**	-.167**	.226**	.159**	.334**	.296**	.217**	.177**	.122**	.100*	.170**	ns
	F	Ns	-.211**	.174**	.242**	.232**	.330**	.127**	.254**	ns	.208**	.120*	ns
10. Income		.119**	ns	Ns	-.132**	-.175**	-.205**	-.204**	-.144**	-.114*	-.100*	ns	.176**
11. Education		.093*	ns	-.130**	-.220**	-.101*	ns	-.150**	ns	-.124**	-.094**	ns	.218**

Note. M = mothers; F = fathers; ns = non-significant.

*p < .05, **p < .001

Table 2, continued

| | | 7 | | 8 | | 9 | | 10 | 11 |
		M	F	M	F	M	F		
7. Neighborhood	M		.595**	.184**	.130*	.215*	ns	-.322**	-.200**
Disorganization	F			ns	.142**	ns	ns	-.292**	-.172**
8. Externalizing	M				.712**	.350**	.211**	-.145**	-.181**
	F					.172**	.416**	-.118*	-.099*
9. Internalizing	M						.434**	-.145**	ns
	F							-.152**	ns
10. Income		-.306**	-.314**	-.132**	-.098*	-.129**	-.112*		.586**
11. Education		-.206**	-.248**	-.163**	-.111*	ns	ns		

Further inspection of the bivariate correlations revealed that the correlations between *overt* marital conflict and *covert* marital conflict were quite high (r = .66 for mothers; r = .74 for fathers). Because of the particular interest in the associations between *covert* marital conflict and intrusive parenting, overt marital conflict was removed from further analyses to avoid distortion of path coefficients linking covert conflict to parenting that could result from the high association between overt and covert marital conflict.

MEASUREMENT MODEL

Prior to testing the hypothesized associations among the constructs of interest, it is necessary to evaluate the adequacy of the strategies used to measure the constructs: specifically, to test the significance of the factor loadings for all indicators of latent variables. This was accomplished via confirmatory factor analysis through AMOS. Separate confirmatory factor analyses were made for the set of endogenous (parenting) variables and next for the set of predictor variables. The fit of the models was determined using several different measures as indicated by the literature.

Overall, the fit indices showed that each measurement model adequately fit the data. The chi-square statistic was significant and, therefore, did not evidence a good fit for the outcome measurement model (989.90; p < .000). However, several other tests of fit did. The x^2/df ratio was less than 3 (1.74) indicating a good fit, while the Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) was greater than .8 (.82) indicating a good fit. Further, the Hoelter's Critical N (HOELTER) scores were above the critical N of 200 (362; p < .01) also indicating a good fit. The chi-square for the predictor model was also significant

(84.44; p < .000), but the NFI score of .926 suggested an adequate fit to the data as well.

All of the hypothesized factor loadings for indicators of the latent variables for both the outcome and predictor measurement models were statistically significant at the .001 level (see Table 3). No recommendations for modifications to improve model fit were suggested by the analyses for either the outcome or predictor measurement models.

FITTING THE MODEL

As described in chapter 3, the use of multiple imputed data was necessary in order to achieve a full array of fit indices for the structural model. These indices included: chi-square, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Hoelter's Critical N (HOELTER). Two tailed tests were used to determine the significance of the chi-square. These fit indices for the hypothesized structural model are listed in table 4. While the chi-square statistics and the CMIN/DF do not provide evidence of good fit, the other measures do. All of the RMSEA range between .05 and .08 with the scores on the PCLOSE all greater than .05. Further, the HOELTER scores across the imputations are all above the critical N of 200.

STRUCTURAL MODEL

Controlling for family income and parents' education, I examined the standardized path coefficients from the SEM analysis to assess hypothesized relationships. Two-tailed tests were used to assess the significance of a pathway. (A summary of all the path coefficients and indirect effects reported in these analyses are found in appendix B.)

Due to missing data issues, as described above, analyses for direct effects and

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Table 3. Standardized Factor Loadings for Latent Constructs

		Maternal Support	Paternal Support	Maternal Intrusiveness	Paternal Intrusiveness	Internalizing	Externalizing	Neighborhood Disorganization
Supportive Parenting	Item1	.696	.674					
	Item 2	.596	.616					
	Item 3	.628	.721					
	Item 4	.476	.615					
	Item 5	.728	.731					
	Item 6	.692	.705					
	Item 7	.620	.639					
	Item 8	.643	.705					
	Item 9	.614	.691					
	Item 10	.589	.628					
Intrusive Parenting	Item 1			.451	.487			
	Item 2			.536	.606			
	Item 3			.465	.586			
	Item 4			.311	.430			
	Item 5			.569	.646			
	Item 6			.544	.630			
	Item 7			.489	.400			
	Item 8			.567	.483			
Mother Report						.747		
Father Report						.668		
Mother Report							.869	
Father Report							.875	
Mother Report								.835
Father Report								.766

Note. All factor loadings are statistically significant; p<.001

Table 4. Fit Measures of Parenting Model: Range of Scores Across Imputations

	X^2	P	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	PCCLOSE	HOELTER .05	HOELTER .01
Imputation 1	2595.88	.000	2.39	.050	.411	247	254
Imputation 2	2647.85	.000	2.44	.051	.214	242	249
Imputation 3	2668.18	.000	2.46	.052	.155	240	247
Imputation 4	2527.84	.000	2.33	.049	.703	253	261
Imputation 5	2625.98	.000	2.42	.051	.289	244	251

those for indirect effects were different. For examination of the direct effects, the original

dyadic data was used, with the missing data handled using full information maximum

likelihood (FIML) found in the AMOS software. This method is considered superior to

other methods because it uses all available data points to estimate means and covariances,

and because it allows computation of model fit and standard errors without deletion of

cases or imputation of missing values (Carlson, 2001; Chen et al., 2001). For examination

of the indirect relationships, it was necessary to use the imputed data sets due to the

inability of AMOS to determine significance of indirect effects using FIML. Therefore, the

parameter estimates were examined using each imputed data set. Hence, rather than

reporting a single parameter estimate I report the range of parameter estimates across the

five imputed data sets. In order to determine the significance of each indirect effect, I

followed the guidelines provided by Rubin (1987) to combine the results of the five

imputed data sets by inputting the formulas into an excel spreadsheet. These calculations

averaged the imputed estimates and then produced slope estimates, standard errors, t ratios,

degrees of freedom, and p-values for the entire data set. The t-statistics were then used to

determine whether the indirect effects were statistically significant. The discussion of these

findings first includes results of the control variables and is then organized by the three

levels of antecedents: individual, within family, and external to family.

Control Variables

Family income demonstrated a significant negative association to dad depression,

such that an increase in family income was related to a decrease in fathers' depression

levels. Yet, family income did not significantly predict any of the other constructs in the

parenting model. As for family education, it had a significant, negative association to father's use of intrusive parenting. Fathers in families with more education used less intrusive parenting. Family education did not demonstrate significant paths to any of the other model variables.

Individual Predictors of Parenting

The first two hypotheses concern the traditionally explored antecedents of parenting at the individual level: characteristics of the child and characteristics of the parent. The results for child and parent characteristics are depicted in Figure 9 below.

Hypothesis 1: *Child behavioral problems (internalizing and externalizing) will be directly associated with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting*.

This hypothesis was partially supported. As predicted, child externalizing problem behavior predicted lower levels of both fathers' (ß = -.178, p < .010) and mothers' supportive parenting (ß = -.143, p < .05). Child externalizing problem behavior also predicted higher levels of fathers' intrusive parenting (ß = .405, p < .001), as hypothesized, but it was not predictive of mothers' intrusive parenting. In contrast to child externalizing problem behavior, child internalizing problem behavior was only predictive, negatively, of fathers' supportive parenting (ß = -.155, p < .05). There were no significant associations between child internalizing behavior and maternal supportive parenting or intrusive parenting of either parent.

Hypothesis 2: *Maternal and paternal depression will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting*.

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(See figure 12.)

This hypothesis was mostly supported. As predicted, fathers' depression significantly predicted lower levels of his supportive parenting (β = -.101, p < .05) and higher levels of his intrusive parenting (β = .228, p < .001). For mothers, as hypothesized, depression significantly predicted her intrusive parenting (β = .159, p < .010), but not her supportive parenting.

Within Family Predictors of Parenting

The next two hypotheses focused on social contextual factors *within the family*, in this case marital conflict. See Figure 10 below for a graphic depiction of the findings relevant to these two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3: *Marital conflict (both overt and covet) will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting, and there will be a particularly strong relationship between covert conflict and intrusive parenting.*

This hypothesis was largely supported regarding covert conflict. (Recall that overt conflict was eliminated from the analyses, and thus there are no findings relative to overt conflict.). Specifically, covert marital conflict was predictive as expected (positively) of the intrusive parenting of both mothers (β = .231, p < .001) and fathers (β = .192, p < .001). It was also predictive as expected (negatively) of fathers' supportive parenting (β = -.133, p < .010), but not so of mothers' supportive parenting. Because overt marital conflict was eliminated from the model, I was unable to test the second part of this hypothesis about the relative strength of prediction between overt and covert conflict on parenting.

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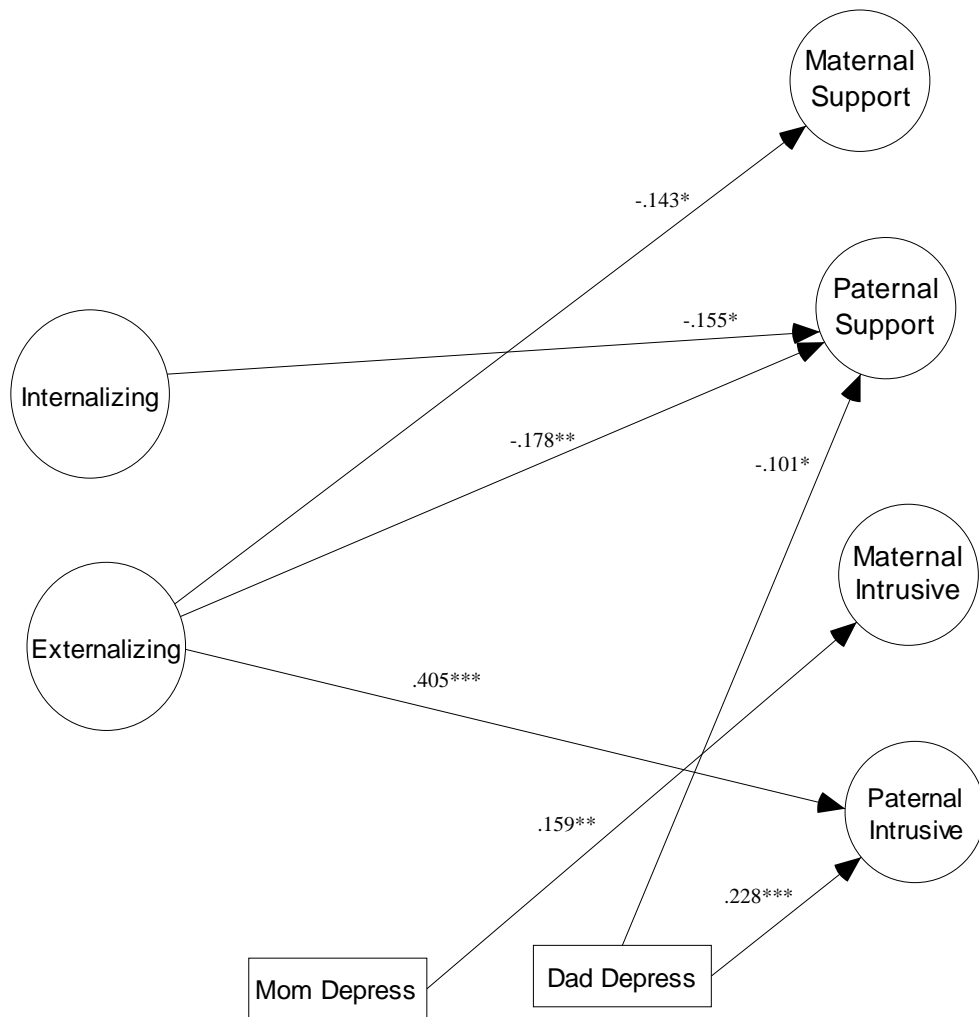
Figure 12. Direct effects of child and parent characteristics on parenting

Hypothesis 4: *Marital conflict(overt and covert) will be predictive of lower levels of supportive and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive association with parental depression.*

This hypothesis was partially supported. As hypothesized, there was a significant indirect effect of mother-reported covert conflict on her intrusive parenting (ß range from .011 to .012 across the 5 imputations; $t = 2.722$, $p < .010$). Given the direct effect of mother-reported covert conflict on her depression (ß = .226, $p < .001$; see Figure 10), it is apparent that the significant indirect effect of mother-reported covert conflict on her intrusive parenting was due to increases in her levels of depression. Contrary to the hypothesis, there were no significant indirect effect of mother covert conflict on her supportive parenting, nor were there any significant indirect effects of father-reported covert conflict on either his supportive or intrusive parenting.

Extra-Familial Predictors of Parenting

Hypotheses five through eight addressed the social contextual factors *external to the family* (i.e., work-family conflict and neighborhood disorganization). See figures 13 and 14 for graphic presentations of the findings relative to these hypotheses.

Hypothesis 5: *Work-family conflict will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive and higher levels of intrusive parenting.*

This hypothesis was not supported. Consistent with the bivariate findings, neither mothers' nor fathers' reports of work-family conflict were significantly related directly to either supportive or intrusive parenting.
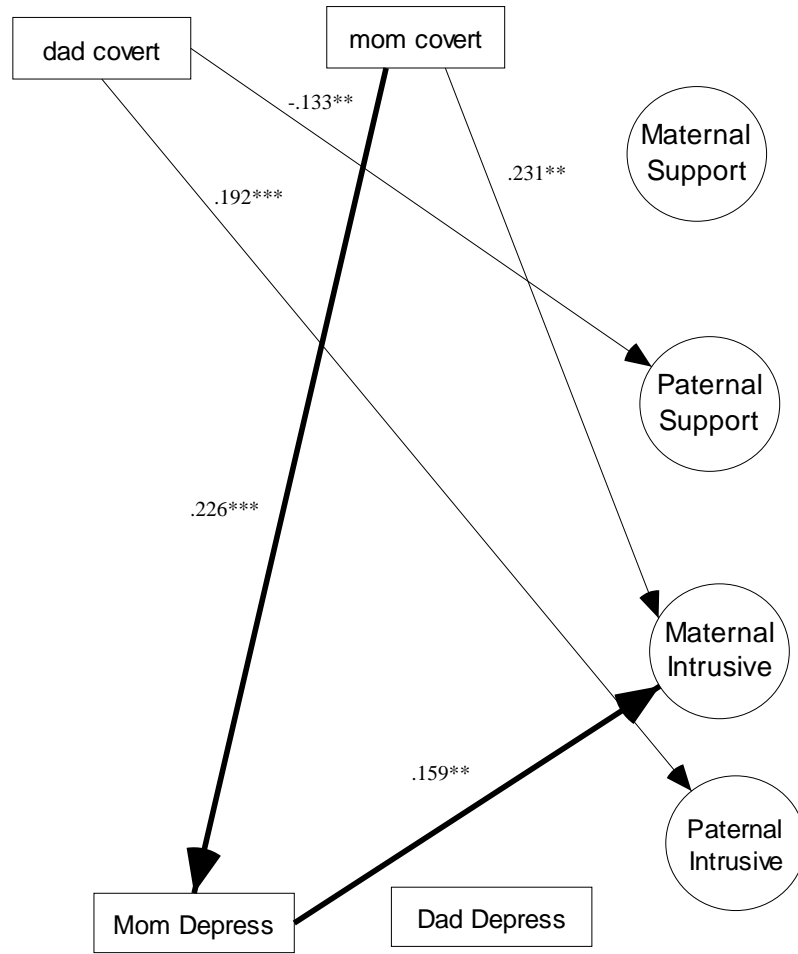
Figure 13. Effects of within family social context on parenting

Note: only significant paths are demonstrated;
bold lines represent significant indirect pathways
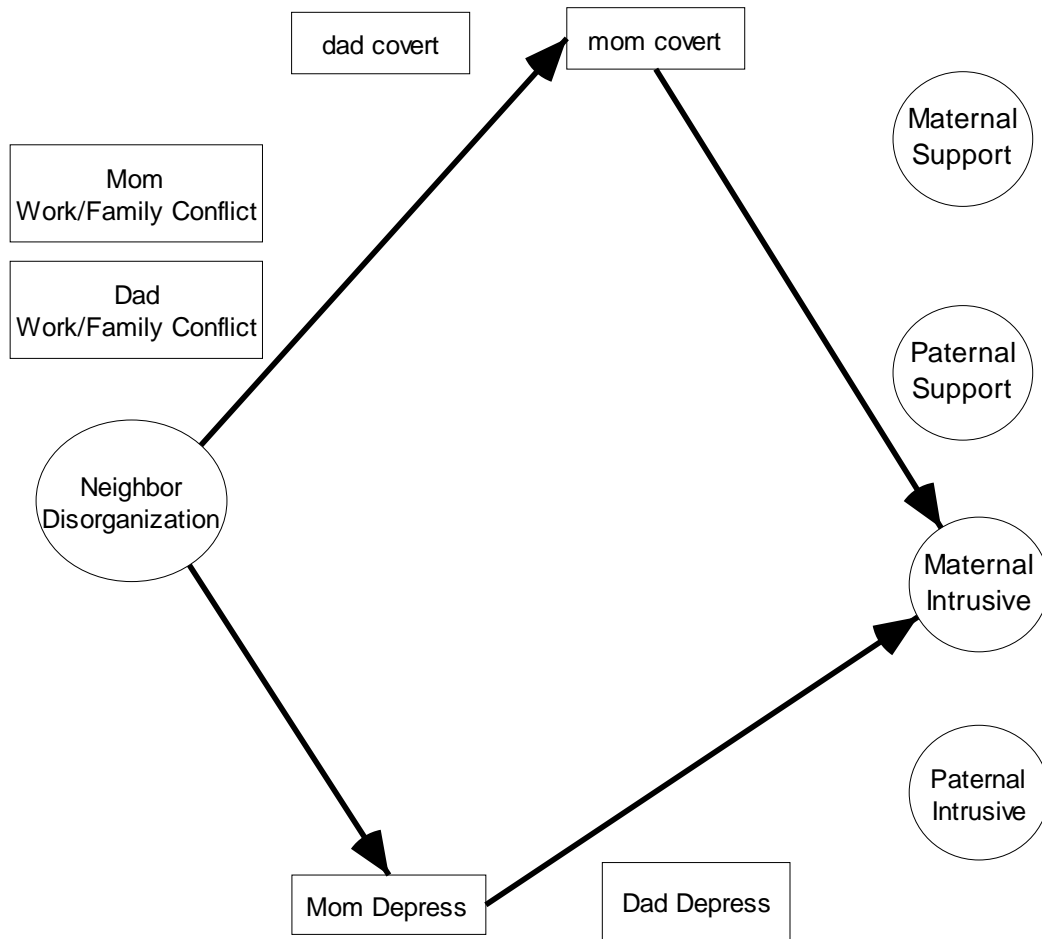
Figure 14. Effects of social context external to family on parenting

Note: Only significant paths are demonstrated;
bold lines indicate indirect pathways

Hypothesis 6: *Work-family conflict will be indirectly predictive of lower levels of supportive and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive associations with parental depression and marital conflict.*

This hypothesis was not supported. There were no significant indirect effects of work conflict-family conflict on the parenting of either mothers or fathers.

Hypothesis 7: *Neighborhood disorganization will be associated directly with lower levels of supportive parenting and higher levels of intrusive parenting.*

This hypothesis was not supported. There were no significant direct associations between neighborhood disorganization and the parenting of either mothers or fathers.

Hypothesis 8: Neighborhood disorganization will be indirectly predictive of lower levels of supportive and higher levels of intrusive parenting via its direct, positive associations with parental depression and marital conflict.

This hypothesis was partially supported. A significant indirect effect was found between neighborhood disorganization and the intrusive parenting of mothers (ß range from .062 to .073 across the 5 imputations; t = 3.168 p < .005; see Table 5). As hypothesized, it is apparent that this indirect effect of neighborhood disorganization can be explained by the direct, positive effects of neighborhood disorganization on mother-reported covert marital conflict (ß = .158, p < .010) and mothers' depression (ß = .226, p < .001). Contrary to the hypothesis, no significant indirect effects were found between neighborhood disorganization and maternal supportive behavior or paternal supportive or intrusive parenting.

Table 5. Indirect Effect Coefficients Across Five Imputations

	Covert Marital Conflict on Supportive		Work-Family Conflict on Supportive		Neighborhood Disorganization on Supportive		Covert Marital Conflict on Intrusive		Work-Family Conflict on Intrusive		Neighborhood Disorganization on Intrusive	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
Imputation 1	-.005	-.006	-.002	-.005	-.03	-.056	.011	.013	.004	.004	.072	.060
Imputation 2	-.008	-.005	-.001	-.003	-.039	-.036	.012	.007	.002	.003	.067	.041
Imputation 3	-.008	-.012	-.001	-.005	-.043	-.075	.012	.012	.002	.004	.072	.058
Imputation 4	-.007	-.013	-.002	-.008	-.031	-.067	.011	.019	.004	.006	.062	.066
Imputation 5	-.008	-.007	-.002	-.005	-.038	-.054	.012	.020	.003	.009	.073	.097
t-statistic	-1.332	-1.337	-1.372	-1.658	-2.004	-1.714	2.722*	1.851	1.316	1.378	3.168***	1.968

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Effects of Gender of Parent

Hypotheses were also made concerning the role of parental gender in both the prediction of parenting and in the relative similarity of parenting patterns across gender.

Gender Hypothesis 1: *Marital conflict (overt and covert) will be directly related to lower levels of supportive parenting and to higher levels of intrusive parenting by mothers and fathers.*

This hypothesis was not supported. As indicated in Hypothesis 3 above, father-reported covert marital conflict was predictive both of his supportive parenting (β = -.133, p < .010) and his intrusive parenting (β = .192, p < .001), such that increased levels of conflict were related to less effective parenting. However, mother-reported covert marital conflict was predictive of higher levels of her intrusive parenting (β = .231, p < .001), and not of her supportive parenting. It appears therefore that covert marital conflict was more broadly related to father parenting than to mother parenting.

Gender Hypothesis 2: *The direct associations between marital conflict (overt and covert) and supportive and intrusive parenting will be stronger for mothers than for fathers.*

This hypothesis was not supported. Since marital conflict was not directly predictive of mothers' supportive parenting, this hypothesis was only examined for intrusive parenting. This was accomplished by comparing the fit of a model where the paths between parental covert marital conflict and intrusive parenting were freed (as reported above) versus a model in which the paths between parental covert marital conflict and intrusive parenting were constrained to be equal. An insignificant CMIN

(.072) indicated that the fit of these models were not significantly different from one another. Thus, regarding intrusive parenting, there was no evidence of gender-based effect strength differences in the prediction from covert marital conflict. Regarding supportive parenting, a finding opposite to hypothesis was made. Covert marital conflict was, in fact, not predictive of mothers' supportive parenting, but it was significantly predictive of fathers' supportive parenting.

Gender Hypothesis 3: *The direct associations between role conflict and supportive and intrusive parenting, as mediated by parental depression, will be stronger for mothers than for fathers.*

No support was found for this hypothesis, in that work-family conflict did not exhibit significant effects on depression or supportive and intrusive parenting. As such, there was no examination of gender difference.

Gender Hypothesis 4: *Mothers' parenting practices will be positively associated with fathers' parenting practices.*

This hypothesis was supported. Using the original dyadic data set, the covariances between mothers' and fathers' supportive parenting (.038, p < .001) and between mothers' and fathers' use of intrusive parenting (.017, p < .01) were both significant.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Figure 15 below was constructed to assist in summarizing the findings of the SEM analyses relative to all of the hypotheses that were tested in this study. In brief, the traditionally examined parenting determinants of child behavior problems and parental

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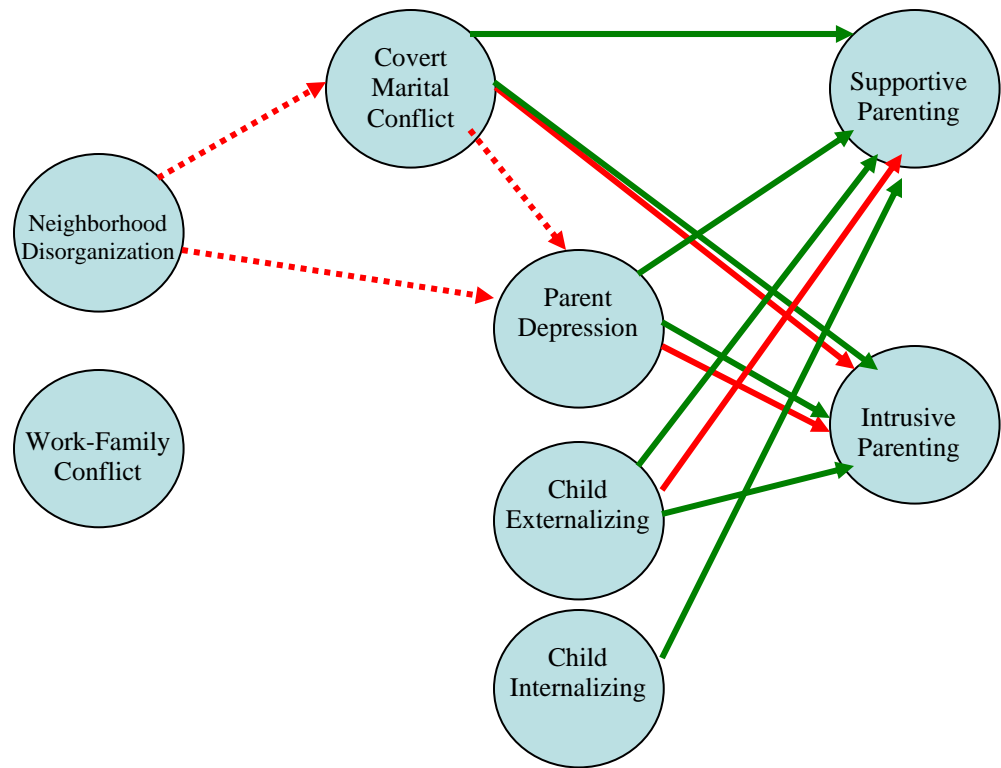
Figure 15. Findings for Mothers (Red) and Fathers (Green)

Note: Dashed lines are indirect effects on mothers' intrusive parenting

depression were significantly directly associated with parenting, particularly for fathers. The within the family contextual variable of covert marital conflict was directly associated with father parenting, and directly and indirectly associated mother intrusive parenting, through maternal depression. As risk factors external to the family, work-family conflict was not significantly related to parenting as hypothesized, and neighborhood disorganization was indirectly related to intrusive mothering (but not her support or to father's parenting), through her elevated levels of marital conflict and depression.

Chapter V. Discussion

Parenting is a critical and complex part of the socialization process. The extensive study of parenting over the past many decades has concentrated mostly on identifying parenting behaviors or types and on linking them to child development. This dissertation focused on a more recent element of the study of parenting, namely: its determinants. The dissertation was guided by ecological, family systems, and family stress theories, and it intended to make three primary contributions to the growing literature. All had to do with expanding the focus to more adequately capture relevant socio-ecological contexts of parenting - those within the family and those external to the family – and parent gender.

The first intended contribution concerned better specializing the social context of the family. Specifically, although some of the work on antecedents of parenting has indicated, either theoretically or empirically, that parenting behaviors are in part influenced by other aspects of the family, such as the marital relationship, more elaboration is needed. In this regard, the dissertation employed a differentiated operationalization of marital conflict as a risk factor for effective parenting, and advanced hypotheses relative to its direct and indirect effect on parenting.

The second intended contribution was to incorporate social contexts external to the family. The literature on determinants of parenting has in fact paid very little attention to the broader social contexts that impact family life. To address this key limitation, the model that was tested in this dissertation included assessments of the risk properties of two external contexts - conflict between work and family roles and neighborhood disorganization – and asserted both direct and indirect associations with less effective parenting.

The third intended contribution of the dissertation was to focus on the gender of parents, since past work on the determinants of parenting, contrary to available theoretical and empirical work, has not adequately acknowledged or tested for similarities and differences in mothering and fathering or in how they might differentially be predicted.

Finally, the modeling and analytic methods that were used to allow for these gender-sensitive analyses represented itself a further contribution to the work on determinants of parenting. Specifically, the simultaneous modeling of data reported by mothers and fathers not only allowed for the estimation of the similarity of mothering and fathering, but by so controlling for this overlap, the resultant findings more truly represented effects unique to mothering and unique to fathering. Since this basic feature of the model is relevant to virtually all of the findings (i.e., not simply to those that stem from the specific hypotheses relative to parent gender), reference will be made throughout the discussion to follow to the implications of this modeling feature.

As noted throughout the dissertation, my intent has been to build on, or to enhance, the existing work on antecedents of parenting. Thus, as earlier, I begin the discussion of findings with the portions of the model that are consistent with past work. I then follow with a discussion of the results relative to the specific contributions or enhancements that the dissertation intended to make to this work.

PARENT AND CHILD CHARACTERISTICS

The results of the analyses for the traditional components of the model – parent and child characteristics as predictors of parenting – were very consistent with past work.

Generally, child behavior problems and parental depression were significantly predictive of lower levels of parental support and higher levels of intrusive parenting. What the findings add beyond this basic confirmation of past work is the evidence that, at least in these data, these aspects of the family system pose particular risk for both mothers and for fathers. In other words, even after controlling for the overlap between mothering and fathering, child behavior problems and parental depression still uniquely predicted the parenting of mothers and that of fathers.

It is interesting to note further that child behavior problems and parental depression uniquely predicted fathering more consistently than mothering (i.e., across types of parenting and types of child problem behaviors). Since it is clear from the bivariate findings that child behaviors problems and parent depression were significantly related consistently to mother parenting as well as father parenting, it would be inappropriate to conclude that the findings presented here are inconsistent with past work that has shown, for example, that mothering is negatively impacted by her depression (e.g., Fox and Gelfand, 1994; Lyons, Henly, and Schuerman, 2005). Rather, what the findings stemming from the multivariate analyses conducted for this dissertation indicate is that father parenting was particularly sensitive to levels of child behavior problems and his depression. That is, even after controlling for whatever part of mothering and fathering that is commonly explained by child problems and parent depression, there were further portions of fathers' parenting that were additionally explained by both of these predictors.

The simultaneous measurement of two, correlated types of parenting (i.e., support and psychological control) represents a further advantage of the dissertation's modeling

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that could be relevant to these parent gender differences. No past studies of parenting determinants have simultaneously modeled supportive and intrusive parenting. Thus, controlling for the overlap between these two types of parenting might have permitted the more differentiated prediction. With specific regard to parental psychological control, these findings of the sensitivity of this form of intrusive parenting to risk factors in the family system represents a significant contribution. This is the case both because of the evidence that both mother and father psychological control was predicted uniquely by parental depression, and also because father psychological control was further uniquely predicted by child externalizing behaviors.

Finally, I note that the findings that child internalizing problems were less uniquely predictive of parenting than were child externalizing problems is not entirely consistent with past work (e.g., Barber et al., 2005; Morris et al., 2002). This could again be partly explained by the multivariate nature of the analyses conducted here or by the limited, two-item measure of child internalizing problems that was available in the data. To note, however, is that when the child internalizing problems variable was predictive, it was for father parenting (i.e., lower support). (See below for a discussion of this gender pattern.)

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF PARENTING

The three central intended contributions of the dissertation were to more thoroughly address the social context of parenting by incorporating risk factors from (1) the family social context (marital relations), (2) two contexts external to the family (work-family conflict and neighborhood disorganization, and (3) by considering parent

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gender. In so doing, using ecological, family systems, and family stress theory as guides, the enhanced model tested in the dissertation extended well past the mostly psychology based traditional models of parenting determinants.

Detailed discussion of the specific findings for each of these contexts follows, but at the broadest level, it can be concluded that the findings provided good support for the utility of incorporating the social context when studying the determinants of parenting. This was evident firstly in the broad relevance of marital conflict both directly and indirectly to parenting via its prediction of parental depression. Secondly, one of the two external contexts – neighborhood disorganization – also significantly predicted parenting, and, more precisely, indirectly, via its association with marital conflict and parental depression. Both these direct and indirect effects evidence the value of the ecological framework guiding the dissertation (in identifying relevant social contexts) and the family systems and family stress perspectives in documenting significant joint effects of these social contexts. The lack of salience in the model of the second external context – work-family conflict – will be discussed below.

Marital Conflict

The findings of the dissertation pertaining to marital conflict were consistent with previous research that has consistently found that marital conflict has a negative impact on effective parenting practices. These findings further substantiate this relationship in that even after controlling for the overlap between mothering and fathering, marital conflict still uniquely predicted the parenting of mothers and that of fathers.

As with parent and child characteristics, I find that marital conflict uniquely

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predicted fathering more consistently than mothering. In other words, the direct effects of marital conflict on parenting were most consistent for fathers (i.e., across types of parenting). While the bivariate findings indicate that marital conflict was significantly and consistently related to mother parenting as well as father parenting, the findings stemming from the multivariate analyses conducted for this dissertation indicate that father parenting was particularly sensitive to marital conflict. That is, even after controlling for whatever part of mothering and fathering that is commonly explained by marital conflict, there were further portions of fathers' parenting that were additionally explained by marital conflict.

In contrast to the salience of marital conflict directly to father parenting, covert marital conflict was indirectly predictive of mothering, but not fathering. Once again, bivariate analyses indicated significant associations among marital conflict, depression, and fathers as well as mothers, but the multivariate analyses permitted the detection of unique indirect effects for mothers. Thus, at least in these data, depression helps explain the risk that marital conflict poses for parenting in mothers' experience, but not in fathers. (See below for a discussion of this gender pattern).

Specific attention is given in this dissertation to the relationship between covert marital conflict and intrusive parenting. While the elimination of overt marital conflict from the analyses prevented me from comparing the strength of effects on intrusive parenting, the significant effects of covert marital conflict on intrusive parenting are in line with the findings of Stone et al. (2002). They proposed that this link is due to the similar nature of covert marital conflict and intrusive parenting in that both are largely insidious and passive relational properties. As suggested by Barber et al. (2002), this

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finding is evidence for the possibility that intrusive parenting has roots in the personal and relational difficulties of parents.

Neighborhood Disorganization

While neighborhood disorganization was not directly predictive of parenting in these analyses, it was indirectly associated with less effective parenting through marital conflict and depression, again, only for mothers. At a general level, this finding evidences the value of looking to sociological contexts outside the family when trying to understand family processes, and underscores the reality of the systemic properties of family relationships. The finding contributes more specifically in validating Sampson's (1997) call for grand neighborhood theories to include parenting as an aspect of family process that helps explain neighborhood effects. In particular, those interested in associations between juvenile delinquency and neighborhood context, for example, may find parenting to serve as a useful explanatory link in that association.

As was the case with covert marital conflict, the indirect effects of neighborhood disorganization on parenting were evident only for mothers. Moreover, the indirect effect of neighborhood disorganization was distinct to intrusive mothering.

Work-Family Conflict

For the most part, the findings of this dissertation were in line with expectations. Yet, contrary to hypotheses, no effects of work-family conflict were evident, either at the bivariate or multivariate level. This is not consistent with family stress theory that contends that the stress that arises from occupying multiple roles creates psychological distress which negatively impacts parenting, or with family systems theory that implies

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indirect effects through difficulties in the marital relationship.

Given this theoretical support and the empirical findings reviewed earlier, it makes sense to be skeptical about the adequacy with which this construct was measured in this data set. Apparently, the two items used to measure frequency of role conflict did not tap into the type, or level, or breadth of role conflict that should negatively impact family functioning. It may be that to ask questions about frustration and anxiety due to role conflict in combination with a frequency measure would better gauge the experience. As an example, Volling and Belsky (1991) found that work-family stress, measured as "the extent to which the frustration and tension associated with a man's work interfered with his role as father and spouse" (p. 466), negatively impacted fathers' parental involvement. Including such aspects of frustration and tension associated with work-family conflict in their measure, they found that fathers reporting more work-family stress were observed to engage in less positive interaction with their children and reported less responsibilities to child care.

GENDER

Another contribution of this dissertation was that it attended to parent gender by analyzing both mothering and fathering simultaneously and by hypothesizing potential difference. There are several aspects of the findings relative to parent gender that warrant discussion.

The first has to do with the relative similarity or difference between levels of mother and father parenting. As mentioned previously, there are a number of arguments for difference (e.g., compensate for one another's parenting) and no effect, yet another

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alternative is that parents attempt to parent similarly to one another, or that one parent

may follow the lead of the other. Based on the socially constructed traditional images of

mothers and fathers, I hypothesized that a father will tend to parent similarly to his

child's mother due to expectations that parenting is the mother's domain. As predicted,

mothers' and fathers' parenting variables were positively correlated. In addition to

providing support for socially constructed images of motherhood as "natural instinct" and

fatherhood as "assisting mothers" (Thompson and Walker, 1989; Arendell, 2000), this

finding is consistent with Simons and Conger (2007) who proposed that such similar

parenting is a product of assortative mating, where similar individuals marry, and

influence each other's parenting.

It is important to note, however, that the correlations between corresponding

parenting measures were actually relatively small (i.e., .299 for parental support and .327

for intrusive parenting). Thus, it appeared that in these data mothering and fathering were

actually mostly distinct. This finding supports theoretical and empirical evidence citing

gender differences in quantity and quality of parenting (Craig, 2006; McBride et al.,

2005; Stolz et al., 2005; Thompson and Walker, 1989).

As noted above, gender differences were evidenced also in the different pattern of

prediction of mother and father parenting from the various individual and social variables

included in the model. One pattern appeared to be that father parenting was uniquely and

directly more consistently predicted than was mother parenting. One possible explanation

for this might come from role theory, which suggests that social roles consist of norms

and expectations for behavior. Given the priority traditionally given to mothering, norms

for fathering might prescribe that his parenting is relatively more voluntary than that of

the mother (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb, 2000; Hosley and Montemayor, 1997). To the extent that this is true, it may be that because of this lack of a sense of obligation to parent, stressors (e.g, child problem behaviors, depression, marital conflict) might deter or discourage fathers more strongly than mothers.

Contrary to this focus on fathers, another gender pattern in the findings highlighted mothers in that for them there were more indirect effects on parenting than for fathers. Thus, instead of identify a series of direct predictors, for mothers, compared to fathers, the model provided more insight into the pathways by which certain determinants made their way to mother parenting. Notably, mothers' depression figured regularly in these indirect effects. This is sensible given that depression is particularly evident among women, and there are findings indicating that compared to men, depression is more chronic and recurrent among women (Burke, 2003; Keitner, Ryan, Miller, Kohn, and Epstein, 1991; Winokur, Coryell, Keller, Endicott, and Akiskal, 1993). Thus, it may be that more indirect effects are demonstrated for mothers, because depression is a particular issue for women.

Finally, a further pattern of parent gender difference was that for mothers it appeared that her intrusive parenting was more sensitive to the determinants tested in the model than was her supportive parenting. In contrast, both fathers' support and intrusive parenting were implicated. To the degree that such findings would be replicable in other data sets, they demonstrate the value of assessing multivariate models that include both parents and multiple types of parenting. By way of explanation, it may be that socially constructed images of motherhood, which have at their core supportive and nurturing caring, are so strongly engrained in women that their supportive behavior of their

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children is more resilient to the individual and social stresses they face (Arendell, 2000; Thompson and Walker, 1989).

LIMITATIONS

Although this study provides valuable insight in to understanding antecedents of parenting, there are several limitations to the study. One limitation is the use of cross-sectional data. The hypothesized parenting model implied causal paths but these would need to be tested with time-ordered variables that would be best examined using longitudinal data. Further, to fully test the correspondence between mothering and fathering, cross-lagged, longitudinal tests would be necessary.

Despite the complexity of the model that was tested, it still did not attend to other clearly relevant variables, such as child gender. There is ample literature indicating the importance of considering mothering of sons versus mothering of daughters (Flouri, 2004; Jenkins, Rasbash, and O'Connor, 2003; Wood and Repetti, 2004), thus this parenting model could be improved with the incorporation of child-parent dyads.

While this wave of the data set (1995) was chosen due to the range of variables available, it could be argued that the data is not representative of current patterns of family life, now more than a decade later, and thus not currently relevant to family research. It is also unfortunate that this sample was not racially diverse so as to allow for adequate examination of the role of race or ethnicity in antecedents of parenting. There is evidence that race plays a significant role in determining family processes (Bogenschneider, 1997; Lyons-Ruth, Lyubchik, Wolfe, and Bronfman, 2002), and thus this study could be improved with such an inclusion. Relatedly, half of the sample was

Mormon, a religious group that has particularly strict and patriarchal ideologies about family. Thus, it might be that the findings salient to fathers in this study may not be generalizable. The model assessed here should be tested for any differences by religious affiliation, although several past efforts comparing Mormon family functioning with non-Mormon functioning have not found meaningful differences (Barber et al., 2005; Heaton, Goodman, & Holman, 1994).

An additional limitation of this study is its focus on married parents. Because a significant focus of this study was on the influence of marital conflict on parenting practices, this restriction was made intentionally. It is important to recognize, however, that this means the findings of this dissertation cannot be generalized to unmarried or single parents. There is empirical evidence suggesting that single parents have distinct experiences and troubles as compared to married parents. For example single parents receive less support and assistance as do married parents and they also experience higher levels of psychological distress than parents in two-parent families (Acock and Demo, 1994; Aseltine and Kessler, 1993; Coombs, 1991). Such findings suggest that the parenting of single parents may be even more strongly affected by the non-marital risks explored in this model.

CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion, this dissertation took an ecological approach to determinants of parenting, and in doing so reasserted the significance of key sociological issues into traditional, mostly psychology informed, models testing for determinants of parenting. The findings highlight the value of viewing the parent-child relationship as

existing within an ecological framework of complex, intersecting social relationships and

contexts. Importantly, it also acknowledged and affirmed the critical role of gender as a

social construct that impinges on multiple facets of family functioning, most particularly

in this case, the parent-child relationship.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Measures

Supportive Parenting

(CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965; Schludermann and Schludermann, 1970)

I am a person who…

1. Makes my child feel better after talking over her/his worries with me

2. Smiles at her/him very often

3. Is able to make her/him feel better when s/he is upset.

4. Enjoys doing things with her/him

5. Cheers her/him up when s/he is sad.

6. Gives her/him a lot of care and attention.

7. Makes her/him feel like the most important person in my life.

8. Believes in showing my love for her/him.

9. Often praises her/him

10. Is easy to talk to.

Response Format: (1) Not like me; (2) Somewhat like me; (3) A lot like me

Intrusive Parenting

(PCS-YSR; Barber, 1996)

I am a person who…

1. Is always trying to change how s/he feels or things about things.

2. Changes the subject whenever s/he has something to say.

3. Often interrupts her/him.

4. Blames her/him for other family members' problems.

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5. Brings up her/his past mistakes when I criticize her/him.

6. Is less friendly with her/him, if s/he does not see things my way.

7. Will avoid looking at her/him when s/he has disappointed me.

8. If s/he has hurt my feelings, stop talking to her/him until s/he pleases me again.

Response Format: (1) Not like me; (2) Somewhat like me; (3) A lot like me

Parental Depression

(BDI; Beck, Steer, and Brown, 1996)

Here are groups of four statements. Please read each group of statements carefully.

Mark the one statement in each group that best describes the way you have been feeling

during the PAST WEEK, INCLUDING TODAY.

A.   I do not feel sad.

        I feel sad or blue.

        I am sad or blue all the time and I can't snap out of it.

        I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it.

B.   I am not particularly pessimistic or discouraged about the future.

        I feel discouraged about the future.

        I feel I have nothing to look forward to.

        I feel that the future is hopeless and that things cannot improve.

C.   I do not feel like a failure.

        I feel I have failed more than the average person.

        As I look back on my life, all I can see is a lot of failures.

        I feel I am a complete failure as a person (parent, husband, wife, etc.).

D.   I am not particularly dissatisfied.

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I don't enjoy things the way I used to.

I don't get real satisfaction out of anything anymore.

I am dissatisfied with everything.

E. I don't feel particularly guilty.

I feel bad or unworthy a good part of the time.

I feel quite guilty.

I feel as though I am very bad or worthless.

F. I don't feel I am being punished.

I feel I may be punished.

I expect to be punished.

I feel I am being punished.

G. I don't feel disappointed in myself.

I am disappointed in myself.

I am disgusted in myself.

I hate myself.

H. I don't feel I am any worse than anybody else.

I am critical of myself for my weaknesses or mistakes.

I blame myself for all my faults.

I blame myself for everything bad that happens.

I. I don't have any thoughts of harming myself.

I feel I would be better off dead.

I have definite plans about committing suicide.

I would kill myself if I had the chance.

J.   I don't cry anymore than usual.

      I cry now more than I used to.

      I cry all the time now.

      I used to be able to cry, but now I can't even though I want to.

K.   I am no more irritated now than I ever am.

      I get annoyed or irritated more easily than I used to.

      I feel irritated all the time now.

      I don't get irritated at all the things that used to irritate me

L.   I have not lost interest in other people.

      I am less interested in other people than I used to be.

      I have lost most of my interest in other people and have little feelings for them.

      I have lost all of my interest in other people and don't care about them at all.

M.   I make decisions about as well as ever.

      I try to put off making decisions.

      I have great difficulty in making decisions.

      I can't make decisions at all anymore.

N.   I don't' feel I look worse than I used to.

      I feel that I look old or unattractive.

      I feel that there are permanent changes in my appearance and they make me look

      unattractive.

      I feel that I am ugly or repulsive looking.

O.   I can work about as well as before.

      It takes an extra push to get started at doing something.

I have to push myself hard to do anything.

I can't do ay work at all.

P.   I can sleep as well as usual.

I don't sleep as well as I use to.

I wake up 1-2 hours earlier than usual and find it hard to get back to sleep.

I wake up several hours earlier than usual and cannot get back to sleep.

Q.   I don't get more tired than usual.

I get tired more easily than I used to.

I get tired from doing most things.

I get too tired to do anything.

R.   My appetite is no worse than usual.

My appetite is not as good as it used to be.

My appetite is much worse now.

I have no appetite at all anymore.

S.   I haven't lost much weight, if any, lately.

I have lost more than 5 pounds.

I have lost more than 10 pounds.

I have lost more than 15 pounds.

T.   I am no more worried about my health than usual.

I am worried about physical problems such as aches and pains; or upset stomach;

or constipation.

I am very worried about physical problems, and it's hard to think of much else.

I am so worried about my physical problems that I cannot think about anything

else.

U.   I have not noticed any recent changes in my interest in sex.

I am less interested in sex than I used to be.

I am much less interested in sex now.

I have lost interest in sex completely.

Child Behavior Problems: Externalizing

(Achenbach, 1991)

Below is a list of items that describe children. For each item that describes your child now or within the past 6 months, please mark the 2 if the item is very true or often true of your child. Mark the 1 if the item is somewhat or sometimes true of your child. If the item is not true of your child, mark the 0.

1. Destroys his/her own things

2. Destroys things belonging to others.

3. Disobedient at school.

4. Hangs around with children who get in trouble.

5. Physically attacks people

6. Steals outside the home.

7. Swearing or obscene language.

8. Threatens people.

9. Truancy, skips school.

10. Uses alcohol or drugs for nonmedical purposes.

Child Behavior Problems: Internalizing

(Achenbach, 1991)

Below is a list of items that describe children. For each item that describes your child now or within the past 6 months, please mark the 2 if the item is very true or often true of your child. Mark the 1 if the item is somewhat or sometimes true of your child. If the item is not true of your child, mark the 0.

1. Complains of loneliness.
2. Unhappy, sad, or depressed.

Marital Conflict: Overt Conflict

(Buehler, 1998)

When you and your spouse disagree, how often do either of you do the following in front of this child (so she/he can see or hear)?

1. Send a message to your spouse/former spouse/partner through this child because you don't want to talk to this person.
2. Insult the other parent in front of this child.
3. Try to get this child to side with one of you.

Response Format: (1) Never; (2) About once a year; (3) About every few months; (4) About once a month; (5) Every couple weeks; (6) At least once a week; (7) Every day

Marital Conflict: Covert

(Buehler, 1998)

When you and your spouse disagree, how often do either of you do the following in front of this child (so she/he can see or hear)?

1. Threaten each other.
2. Yell at each other.
3. Insult each other.

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Response Format: (1) Never; (2) About once a year; (3) About every few months; (4) About once a month; (5) Every couple weeks; (6) At least once a week; (7) Every day

Work-Family Conflict

1. How often do the demands of your work interfere with your family life?

2. How often do the demands of your family life interfere with your job?

Response Format: (1) Often; (2) Rarely; (3) Sometimes; (4) Never

These were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated more interference.

Neighborhood Disorganization

(Raudenbush and Sampson, 1999)

Here are some problems that arise in neighborhoods. In your neighborhood, how much of a problem is each of the following:

1. Litter or trash on the sidewalks and streets.

2. Graffiti on buildings and walls.

3. Alcoholics and excessive drinking in public.

4. Vacant or abandoned houses on storefronts.

5. Different racial or cultural groups who do not get along with each other.

6. Vandalism, buildings and personal belongings broken and torn up.

7. Little respect for rules, laws, and authority.

8. Abandoned houses.

9. Sexual assaults or rapes.

10. Burglaries and thefts.

11. Assaults or muggings.

12. Drug use or drug dealing in the open.

13. Groups of teenagers hanging out in public places making a nuisance of themselves.

14. Teenage pregnancy.

15. Police not caring about our problems.

16. Unsafe being on the streets during the day.

17. Poor schools.

Response Format: (1) Not a big problem; (2) Somewhat of a problem; (3) Big Problem

Income

How much income did you earn at your job last year before taxes, that is?

1. Under 3,000

2. 3,000-4,999

3. 5,000-6,999

4. 7,000-8,999

5. 9,000-10,999

6. 11,000-12,999

7. 13,000-14,999

8. 15,000-16,999

9. 17,000-18,999

10. 19,000-24,999

11. 25,000-34,999

12. 35,000-49,999

13. 50,000 and over

14. Not employed

Education

What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

1. Did not complete gradeschool

2. Completed gradeschool (grade 8)

3. Completed some highschool

4. Graduated from high school or GED

5. Graduated from a vocational or trade school

6. Attended a 2 year college (but did not graduate)

7. Graduated from a 2 year junior or community college (AA degree)

8. Attended a four year college or university (but did not graduate)

9. Graduated from a four year college or university (bachelors degree)

10. Completed a master's or doctorate degree

Appendix B: Summary of Direct and Indirect Effects (N = 550)

Direct Paths		ß Coefficient	T-Statistic
Externalizing	→Mom Support	-.143*	
	→Dad Support	-.178**	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	.405***	
Internalizing	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Dad Support	-.155*	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	ns	
Mom Depression	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	.159**	
Dad Depression	→Dad Support	-.101*	
	→Dad Intrusive	.228**	
Mom Covert	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	.231***	
	→Mom Depression	.226***	
Dad Covert	→Dad Support	-.133**	
	→Dad Intrusive	.192***	
	→Dad Depression	.141***	
Mom Work Conflict	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Mom Covert	ns	
	→Mom Depression	ns	
Dad Work Conflict	→Dad Support	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Covert	ns	
	→Dad Depression	ns	
Neighborhood Disorganization	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Dad Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	ns	
	→Mom Covert	.127*	
	→Dad Covert	.161**	
	→Mom Depression	.227***	
	→Dad Depression	.174**	
Income	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Dad Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	ns	
	→Mom Covert	ns	
	→Dad Covert	ns	
	→Mom Depression	ns	
	→Dad Depression	-.164**	
Education	→Mom Support	ns	
	→Dad Support	ns	
	→Mom Intrusive	ns	
	→Dad Intrusive	-.176**	
	→Mom Covert	ns	
	→Dad Covert	ns	
	→Mom Depression	ns	
	→Dad Depression	ns	

Indirect Paths (range across five imputations)			
Mom Covert	→Mom Support		ns
	→Mom Intrusive	.033 to .039	2.72**
Dad Covert	→Dad Support		ns
	→Dad Intrusive		ns
Mom Work Conflict	→Mom Support		ns
	→Mom Intrusive		ns
Dad Work Conflict	→Dad Support		ns
	→Dad Intrusive		ns
Neighborhood Disorganization	→Mom Support		ns
	→Mom Intrusive	.071 to .084	3.17**
	→Dad Support		ns
	→Dad Intrusive		ns

Note. ns = non-significant

* p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

VITA

Julie Ann Schluterman is a native of Paris, Arkansas. She completed her bachelor's degree at Arkansas Tech University in 1997 in psychology. She earned a Master's degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2002, and a doctoral degree in 2007 from the sociology department with an emphasis in family sociology. Upon completion of her degree, Julie attained an assistant professor of sociology position at Arkansas Tech University. She and her husband, Ryan Mikles, have twin daughters, Eliza and Sophia.