

Parenting styles, aims, attitudes, and future orientation of adolescents and young adults

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One of the most important developmental tasks during adolescence and young adulthood is to orient towards future events and to set up future goals. Previous findings have shown that adolescents' and young adults' future oriented goals and concerns are influenced by the sociocultural context in which they grow up (Greene, 1990; Nurmi, 1987; Poole & Cooney, 1987). The aim of the present study was to investigate whether perceived parenting styles, aims and attitudes influence adolescents' and young adults' goals and hopes related to future education, occupation and future family. Adolescents ($N=130$, mean age: 16.6 years) and young adults ($N=140$, mean age: 21.6 years) filled in the Family Socialization Questionnaire (Goch & Dalbert, 1997) and the Future Orientation Questionnaire (Nurmi, Poole & Seginer, 1992). Results showed that subjects mentioned more frequently hopes related to future education, future work, family and self-relevant issues, and formulated the most descriptions for fears related to future education, work, family, their own health status and that of their parents. The more supportive mothers were, the more hopes subjects mentioned relating to future family. The more rule-oriented the family climate was, the less fears subjects formulated in relation to their future work. The more support adolescents got from their mothers, the more goals concerning future family they described. Among young adults an opposite tendency could be observed: those having a less supportive family climate had more hopes related to future family. The study also demonstrated age, gender and family structure differences in the perception of parenting.

One of the most important developmental tasks during adolescence and young adulthood is to develop orientation towards future events and setting up future goals.

Such goals in the developmental period play a very important role, as they prepare for adulthood and, moreover, influence later adult life as well (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Erikson, 1959; Poole & Cooney 1987; Seginer, 1988; Nurmi, Poole & Kalakovski, 1996).

Previous studies (e.g., Nurmi, Poole & Kalakoski, 1994) have shown that people set future oriented goals by comparing their individual motives to their knowledge and personal perceptions of future possibilities. Norman (1999) emphasized that future time orientation reflects at least four underlying factors that relate to one's motivation to attain his or her hopes for future selves or to avoid feared future selves: (a) the accessibility of future self; (b) the degree the future self is included in the present self; (c) the de-

gree the future self is integrated within itself; and (d) the degree of control the individual believes he or she has over the attainment or avoidance of future self. Results showed that the accessibility of the future goals and the perceived control are the best predictors of future orientation (Nurmi, 1994). Goals and concerns are very important factors in preparation for the future. If goals reflect threats for the future, they can provide a basis for generating coping behavior intended to handle the future. Personal goals can be conceived of future-oriented representations of what individuals are striving at in their current life situation and what they try to avoid in various life domains. Setting of personal goals is a very difficult process including a behavioral plan and associated instrumental activities. In order to be able to set up goals, people have to evaluate their own values, interests, needs, and also the feedback and expectations of the society. The structure of personal goals contains also a choice and a commitment. Commitment to goals has a positive effect on subjective well-being and mental health (Brunstein, 1993).

Several studies have already investigated how personal goals and conceptions change during the life span (Nurmi, 1992). In these studies the most commonly mentioned goals were related to future education, work and family

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life. Such goals always reflect the normative and social expectations.

How adequately adolescents and young adults prepare for their adulthood reflects in part in their future time perspective (FTP). Future time perspective refers to the individual's awareness of the structure of the future and the relationship between present activities, choices and later outcomes. FTP is associated with the individual's family context (Pulkkinen, 1990) and sociocultural environment (Seginer, 1988). Previous studies suggested that adolescents and young adults construct their future by two forms of future orientation (Seginer, 1995). First, by projecting a prospective life course which consists of several transitions to adulthood and adulthood life domains, e.g., higher education, work and career, and family; second, by developing non-specific goals and fears concerning the self, like significant others and collective issues. This type of future orientation is characteristic among those young people who shy away from addressing the perspective life domains.

Future orientation and future time perspectives are not simply individual characteristics. Societal and economical changes may have considerable impact on what kind of possibilities are given for those who grow up in a given society, what kind of education a person may attain, what the possibilities for future occupations are, etc. In order to be able to understand the development of future orientations, characteristics of the given society get primary attention.

I. The effects of societal and social changes on parenting

Societal expectations determine what the acceptable behavior, value - and rule-systems are that could predict an effective adaptation to society. In the macrosocial spheres changes at the societal level (e.g. political revolution) show up relatively rapidly and influence on societal level or on sections of society becomes very visible. In Hungary in socioeconomic spheres radical changes are more observable, because the development in economy was rapid. People wanted to make as money as possible, and moneymaking became the most important facet of their lives. Other interests and inner family life became less important (Dunovsky, 1996).

Nowadays, as consequences of individualization, the dominant tendencies are egocentrism and personal competition that reflect in parenting styles and also transform the self-concept of adolescents. The structure of the family has also considerably changed, compared to several decades ago. Traditionally, the family was regarded as a permanent unit containing a married couple and their children. The father was the breadwinner and the mother the homemaker and caretaker of children. But this situation has changed.

Due to the increase of divorces, the number of single-parent families increase, and there are a lot of other signs which show that the structure and function of families are under change. For example, mothers are also breadwinners and the traditional roles between husband and wife may become partly reversed.

These social changes are mediated also by socialising agents, like school, peers, mass media and parenting as well. In this study we shall focus on the role of parenting on the development of future orientation. Adolescents and young adults face very often with difficulties when they try to find their aims and aspirations for the future. Supportive family climate can help them in this process, because supportive parents give directions and assistance as for how to formulate their future goals and create stable conceptions about their future.

II. The relationship between parenting and the development of children's future orientation

In order to be able to explore the characteristics of future orientation of Hungarian youngsters, it is very important to describe the impact of parental education. There are few studies that investigate the relationship between parenting styles and future orientation, however, there are evidences that prove that different parenting styles play an important role in adolescents' and young adults' development (Schaffer, 1996). An authoritative family climate, for example, has positive consequences. In this family atmosphere higher level of achievement-motivation, autonomy, competence and self-esteem could be observed (Baumrind, 1971). Parents introduce their children various requirements of family life. Each family has its rules that children need to learn in order to adapt successfully to family life. These rules can be transmitted into the society and applied later to other life domains as well. The goals and hopes of parents play an important role during the process when youngsters formulate their own hopes relating to their future. Parents give directions, plans, and ideas which help adolescents and young adults to create concrete and stable images about their own future.

Studies provided evidence that family functioning in particular (the quality of relationships in the family, the quality of family communication) plays a role in the career development process in adolescence (Johnson, Buboltz & Nichols, 1999). In those families where there is a direct, open communication between adolescents and parents, adolescents have clearer and more stable conceptions about their future.

On the other hand, parental divorce has been associated with developmental difficulties for young adults. Additional findings indicate that family functioning may be a

more reliable predictor of young adult development than parental marital status, and family functioning dimensions are stronger predictors of career development than the socioeconomic status (Johnson, Buboltz & Nichols, 1999).

In her study, Pulkkinen (1990) found that future time orientation among 20-year-olds was related to positive retrospective appraisals of family life, and especially to the amount of interest that parents had shown in development and plans during adolescence. Young people who experience interest and input from significant adults tend to develop clearer and more positive and stable plans for their own adulthood. Conversely, young people who experience lack of interest and lack of guidance tend to develop weaker future time perspective. Scabini, Lanz and Marta (1999) showed the importance of family satisfaction in the development of future orientation of late adolescents. They emphasized that in satisfied families there is more effective communication between family members, decisions in family are based on sharing and support. In these families the father played a social mediator role.

Gender differences could be revealed in the study of Wall and his colleagues (1999), where for females, peers, family and teachers' support predicted perception of opportunity, but for males only family support was important.

The aim of the present study is, therefore, (a) to investigate whether perceived parenting styles, aims and attitudes have an impact on adolescents' and young adults' goals and hopes related to their future education, occupation and family life, and (b), to determine the age and gender differences in future orientation of youngsters. The following hypotheses were formulated: (a) subjects will more frequently mention in their descriptions goals related to future education, work and family; (b) their fears will be related mostly to education, work, and family; (c) in a rule-oriented, supportive family climate youngsters will typically mention clear and stable goals related to future education and occupation, because this family climate promotes stable goal-orientation; (d) subjects brought up in a conflict-ridden family atmosphere will mention more fears concerning their future work, education and future family. Regarding the impact of family status we hypothesized, (e) along with two previous studies (Rutter, 1996; Durkin, 2000), that subjects who were raised in one-parent families perceive their family climate as more conflict-ridden, and they formulate more fears related to their future family, while subjects from intact families characterize their family atmosphere as more rule-oriented and their parents' parenting style as more consistent, and create more positive goals related to their future family. Regarding gender differences we hypothesize that (f) girls mention more frequently family related goals compared to boys, because in the girls' future time perspective the importance of family relations emerge earlier according to

the socialization effects and gender stereotypes (Bussey, 1983; Durkin, 1984; Huston, 1983).

METHOD

Participants

Two hundred seventy-seven students (122 males and 148 females) took part in the study. 130 students (50 males and 70 females) took part in a secondary level of education and 140 students (72 males and 68 females) studied at different universities. There were 7 missing data. Adolescents ($M=16.6$ years; $SD=.59$) and young adults ($M=21.6$ years; $SD=1.7$) filled in the questionnaires at the end of their lectures anonymously as a part of a larger questionnaire study. Ninety nine adolescents lived in intact families and 31 lived in one-parent families. In the group of young adults, 115 lived in intact families and 18 lived in one-parent families. The status of the family was asked for at the time of the study.

Instruments

Young adults' and adolescents' perception of the parenting practices were measured retrospectively by the *Family Socialization Questionnaire* (Goch & Dalbert, 1997). The questionnaire contains 47 items and describes the family climate as well as parenting aims, attitudes, and styles. At the beginning of the questionnaire subjects were instructed to think back in time when they were about 12-14 years old, and fill in the questionnaire in line with their personal memories of their family at that time. Besides the climate dimensions (rule-orientation vs. conflict-ridden) each scale asked for mother and father with the same number and same kind of items. In case of one-parent families we considered the items only for the mother (because in all cases subjects lived only with their mother). Separate scales for the description of mother and father parenting were built only when the results of an a priori factor analysis indicated that it was necessary. The scales were calculated by averaging the items relating to a given scale. The following 13 dimensions were measured, which were taken from the original version of the questionnaire: *Rule-oriented Family Climate* (4 items, $\alpha=.78$; item e.g., "In our family rules should be relatively strictly kept."); *Conflict-ridden Family Climate* (5 items, $\alpha=.81$; item e.g., "There have been a lot of hassles in our family."); *Parenting Aim of Autonomy* (6 items, $\alpha=.79$; item e.g., "My mother/father wanted me to decide myself, how to spend my pocket money."); *Parenting Aim of Conformity* (8

items, $\alpha = .76$; item e.g., "My father/mother wanted me to write nicely."); *Consistent Parenting Attitude* (4 items, $\alpha = .58$; item e.g., "When my father/mother forbid me something, I could do whatever I wanted, he insisted on his opinion."); *Manipulative Parenting Attitude of the Father* (3 items, $\alpha = .67$; item e.g., "Sometimes my father complained that I made her/his life too hard."); *Manipulative Parenting Attitude of the Mother* (3 items, $\alpha = .74$; item e.g., "Sometimes my mother complained that I made her/his life too hard."); *Inconsistent Parenting Attitude of the Father* (2 items, $r = .679, p = .01$; item e.g., "My father punished me without knowing why"); *Inconsistent Parenting Attitude of the Mother* (2 items, $r = .648, p = .01$; item e.g., "My mother punished me without knowing why"); *Supportive Parenting Attitude of the Father* (3 items, $\alpha = .80$; item e.g., "My father/mother listened to my opinion also as an adult."); *Supportive Parenting Attitude of the Mother* (3 items, $\alpha = .72$); *Restrictive Parenting Attitude of the Father* (2 items, $r = .770, p = .01$; item e.g., "My father/mother was angry when I answered cheekily."); *Restrictive Parenting Attitude of the Mother* (2 items, $r = .504, p = .01$). The items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale with the endpoints 1 ('not typical at all') to 6 ('absolutely typical'). Ordering of the items was randomly determined.

Adolescents' and young adults' future orientation was measured with the *Future Orientation Questionnaire* (Nurmi, Poole & Seginer, 1992). Subjects were asked about their hopes and fears with the following open-ended question: "People often think about the future. In the lines below please write down the hopes/fears you have for the future." There were 10 numbered lines allowed for subjects to write down their hopes and 10 to write down their fears.

We used the content analysis categories which were developed by Nurmi, Poole and Seginer (1992). There were 13 categories and two independent raters classified the hopes and fears on the basis of their content: education, work/career, marriage/children, leisure/vacation, friends, relationship to parents, health, health of parents, military service, property, global/political issues, war/peace, and miscellaneous. Content analysis reliability, measured by the percentage rate of agreement between two independent raters, was 92% for hopes and 96% for fears. For further analyses, new relative frequency scores were calculated for each person, related to each content, by dividing the number of hopes related to each content category for the total number of hopes mentioned by the subjects. The same type of scores was also calculated for fears. The subjects who wrote less than 20 items were not excluded from the analysis, but the relative frequencies were calculated on the basis of the number of contents given by the subject (representing the number of items 100 percent). The demographic data were collected at the end.

RESULTS

I. Second order factor analysis of parenting practices

A second order factor analyses was conducted on parenting dimensions both for adolescents and young adults to reveal their interconnectedness (see Table 1).

Table 1
Second order factor analysis of parenting practices (factor loadings > .30)

Parenting Practice	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
	Adolescents	Young adults	Adolescents	Young adults	Adolescents	Young adults
Rule-oriented Family Climate	.64	.66				
Restrictive Parenting Attitude-Mother	.74	.66				.43
Restrictive Parenting Attitude- Father	.76	.76				
Parenting Aim of Conformity	.67	.76				
Consistent Parenting Attitude	.76	.77				
Conflict-ridden Family Climate			.78	.58		.52
Manipulative Parenting Attitude- Mother			.36	.82	.75	
Manipulative Parenting Attitude-Father			.40	.53	.66	.46
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude-Mother			.57	.89	.48	
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude-Father			.69			.75
Supportive Parenting Attitude-Mother			-.64	-.46		
Supportive Parenting Attitude-Father			-.83			-.79
Parenting Aim of Autonomy	-.34		-.38		.48	-.67

Factor loadings > .50 are depicted in bold.

Regarding adolescents, a 3-factor solution emerged, explaining together 57% of the variance. The first factor (Eigenvalue: 3.5), explaining 22% of the variance, described a rule-oriented family climate, where the father's and mother's parenting aim of conformity and reproofing attitude were characteristic. The second factor (Eigenvalue: 2.58), explaining 22% of the variance, described a conflict-ridden family climate, where mother's and father's inconsistent parenting attitude and the lack of the father's and the mothers' support could be observed. The third factor (Eigenvalue: 1.32), explaining an additional 12 % of the variance, described a family climate where father's and mother's manipulative attitude and parenting aim of autonomy were dominant.

Regarding young adults, a 3-factor solution emerged also, explaining 61% of the variance. The first factor (Eigenvalue: 4.45), explaining 21% of the variance, described a rule-oriented family climate where mother's and fathers' reproofing, consistent parenting attitude and the parenting aim of conformity were characteristic. The second factor (Eigenvalue: 2.16), explaining 19% of the variance, described a conflict-ridden family type where mothers' inconsistent and parents' manipulative attitude were characteristic, and the lack of mothers' supportive attitude were dominant.

The third factor (Eigenvalue: 1.29), explaining an additional 19% of the variance, described a family climate where the inconsistent parenting attitude of the father and the lack of father's supportive attitude could be observed. In this family climate parents did not support autonomy.

In the third factor we could observe differences between the two age groups. Regarding young adults, a very strict and inconsistent family atmosphere and the fathers' parenting were dominant. Regarding adolescents, in this family climate both parents were manipulative but they supported autonomy. This result reflects the changing parenting patterns from adolescence to young adulthood.

II. Perception of parenting among youngsters of different gender, age and family status

Three-way ANOVA (gender x age x family status) revealed the possible differences in parenting dimensions. The criterion variables were the different parenting practices.

Mean differences between the two age groups

Regarding conflict-ridden family climate, a significant main effect for age groups could be observed ($F(1,262)=9.43; p<.002$). Young adults considered their family climate as more conflict-ridden compared to the adolescents

Table 2
Age group differences

Parenting Practices	Young adults		Adolescents	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Conflict-ridden Family Climate	2.66	0.99	2.48	1.01
Restrictive Parenting Attitude- Mother	4.39	1.01	4.07	1.29
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude- Mother	2.15	1.21	2.06	1.22
Restrictive Parenting Attitude - Mother	4.42	1.01	3.98	1.35

(see Table 2). The restrictive parenting attitude of the mother also proved to be evaluated differently by age groups ($F(1,259)=7.12; p<.008$), as young adults perceived their mother's parenting more restrictive compared to adolescents (see Table 2). Young adults evaluated their mothers as more inconsistent ($F(1,262)=4.69, p<.031$) compared to adolescents.

Mean differences between the two family structures (intact vs. one-parent families)

Significant differences between subjects regarding their family status (intact vs. one-parent families) and conflict-ridden family climate ($F(1,262)=22.09, p<.000$) could also be revealed. Subjects growing up in one-parent families perceived their family climate as more conflict-ridden compared to those who grew up in intact families. Youngsters from one-parent families perceived their mothers' ($F(1,261)=4.30, p<.039$) and fathers' parenting attitude ($F(1,249)=5.15, p<.024$) as more manipulative compared to subjects growing up in intact families. A significant main effect regarding the inconsistent parenting attitude showed that ($F(1,262)=8.12, p<.005$) subjects from

Table 3
Family structure differences

Parenting Practices	Intact families		One-parent families	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Conflict-ridden Family Climate	2.46	0.94	3.08	1.12
Manipulative Parenting Attitude- Mother	2.47	1.08	2.79	1.15
Manipulative Parenting Attitude- Father	2.21	0.90	2.64	1.24
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude- Mother	2.03	1.19	2.46	1.29

one-parent families considered their mothers' parenting more inconsistent compared to those who were raised in intact families (see Table 3).

Mean differences between males and females

There were significant differences between males and females regarding the evaluation of the manipulative parenting attitude of the father ($F(1,241)=5.86, p<.016$). Males considered their fathers' parenting more manipulative compared to females (see Table 4). Regarding the parenting aim of conformity significant main effect of gender could also be revealed ($F(1,245)=8.47, p<.004$). Males perceived their parents' parenting aim of conformity as more typical compared to females. There were also signifi-

cant differences between males and females regarding supportive parenting attitude of the mother ($F(1,261)=3.98, p<.047$). Females reported that they receive more support from their mother compared to males (see Table 4).

III. Future hopes and feares of adolescents and young adults

There were no significant differences between adolescents and young adults regarding future oriented goals and fears. The most frequent hopes subjects mentioned were relating to future education, future work, family, properties, friends and self-relevant issues (see Table 5). The percentages in Table 5 show the most frequently mentioned contents.

Regarding fears, they mentioned future education, family, future work, their own health and health of the parents the most frequently (see Table 6). The percentages in Table 6 show the most frequently mentioned contents.

In order to test age, gender, and family structure differences three-way analyses of variance were carried out separately on the scores of goals and concerns related to each content category.

There were significant differences between males and females regarding friends related future goals ($F(1,61)=4.12, p<.047$). Males mentioned hopes and goals concerning friends more frequently ($M=0.27, SD=0.12$) compared to females ($M=0.20, SD=0.06$).

IV. Relation between parenting styles and future orientation

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to reveal the impact of age, gender and parenting on adolescents and young adults future orientation. Table 7 shows only the significant effects.

The regression equation (see Table 7) shows that the age group has a significant main effect on the hopes for future education, explaining 33% of the variance. In other words, adolescents formulated more goals related to their future education compared to young adults. Regarding hopes for future family, two significant main effects and an interaction effect were revealed, explaining together 10 per cent of the variance. The more restrictive fathers proved to be, the less hopes subjects mentioned regarding their future family. Age group has also produced a main effect on future family goals. Young adults formulated more goals related to their future family compared to adolescents. The interaction effect between age groups and the supportive parenting of the mother showed that, regarding adoles-

Table 4
Gender differences

Parenting Practices	Males		Females	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Manipulative Parenting Attitude- Father	2.42	1.02	2.14	0.91
Parenting Aim of Conformity	3.20	0.93	2.76	0.92
Supportive Parenting Attitude- Mother	4.73	0.84	5.04	0.98

Table 5
Most frequent mentioned hopes

Hopes	Adolescents (N= 130)	Young adults (N=140)
related to future education	87.7%	60%
related to future work	82.3%	65.7%
related to future family	80%	75.7%
related to friends	24.6%	21.4%
related to properties	20%	35%
related to self-relevant issues	10%	13.6%

Table 6
Most frequent mentioned fears

Fears	Adolescents (N=130)	Young adults (N=140)
related to future education	61.5%	12.9%
related to future work	53.1%	27.1%
related to future family	28.5%	32.9%
related to own health status	24.6%	27.9%
related to their parents' health	15.4%	15.7%

Table 7
The impact of parenting on future orientation

Variables (criterion and predictors)	R	R ² - change	b	beta	t	p
<i>Hopes related to future education (F(1, 197) = 6,73; p<.01)</i>						
Agegroup	.18	.03	-6.41	-.18	-2.59	.01
(Constant)			41.59			
<i>Hopes related to future family (F(4, 201)= 5,51; p<.001)</i>						
Reproving Parenting Attitude of the Father	.18	.03	-1.55	-.20	-2.99	.003
Agegroup	.24	.06	23.19	1.12	3.10	.002
Supportive Parenting Attitude of the Mother	.25	.06	.88	.08	.88	.37
Agegroup × Supportive Parenting Attitude of the Mother	.32	.10	-4.08	-.99	-2.74	.007
(Constant)			30.05			
<i>Fears related to future family (F(2,74)= 7,24; p<.001)</i>						
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude of the Mother	.29	.08	-3.39	-.29	-2.69	.009
Parenting Aim of Conformity	.40	.17	-4.74	-.28	-2.68	.009
(Constant)			45.23			
<i>Fears related to future education (F(1,97)= 6,68; p≤.011)</i>						
Inconsistent Parenting Attitude of the Mother	.25	.06	-5.55	-.25	-2.58	.011
(Constant)			66.22			
<i>Fears related to future work (F(1,101) = 4,65; p≤.033)</i>						
Rule-oriented Family Climate	.21	.045	-4.10	-.21	-2.15	.033
(Constant)			51.35			

cents, the more support they get from their mother, the more hopes they formulate related to their future family ($b=.88$). For young adults, an opposite tendency could be observed, they mentioned more hopes related to future family in those family climate when they get less support from their mother ($b=-3.2$).

Regarding fears for future family, two significant main effect were revealed, explaining 17 per cent of the variance. The more inconsistent mothers were, and the parenting aim of conformity was emphasized, the less fears youngsters mentioned relating to future family.

Regarding fears for future education, the inconsistent parenting attitude of the mother proved to have a significant main effect: the more inconsistent mothers were, the less fears related to future family youngsters formulated.

The rule-oriented family climate has an observable effect on the fears related to future work, explaining 45% of the variance. The more rule-oriented the family climate was, the less concerns subjects formulated related to their future work.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the age, gender, and family type differences in the perception of parenting styles, and their impact on future orientation among Hungarian adolescents and young adults.

In sum, regarding the effects of age our study found that young adults considered their family climate as more rule-oriented, and their mothers' parenting style as being characterised with higher level of restrictiveness and inconsistency. This result reflects the rapid societal changes in Hungary, which shows that parents give their children during adolescence greater autonomy and encouragement of independence. Consequently, in line with these processes adolescents follow these norms and rules, and internalise these values which are acceptable in this rapidly changing society (Sallay & Dalbert, 2001/2002). Our study found that adolescents and young adults mentioned more goals relating to their future education, future work, and family,

in line with our first hypothesis. However, adolescents formulated more goals related to their future education compared to young adults. The reason for this could be that for adolescents the most important educational aim in their near future is the entrance exam to high schools and universities, and these goals are reflected in their self-concept stronger. Among young adults a higher proportion of future family related goals could be observed. This result was also not surprising, because in line with the developmental changes during young adulthood, one of the main life goals in this period is planning a family.

We could also observe that goals related to their friends, and properties were also very frequent among adolescents and young adults. The reason for that could be that during adolescence and young adulthood great changes occur in social relationships. The role of peer groups becomes more important, which is also reflected in their future self-concept. Regarding future oriented fears the results were very similar, but fears relating to their own health status, and their parents' health played also a great role in their descriptions. This result is in accordance with our second hypothesis.

We have also revealed an interesting interaction effect between age group and the supportive parenting style of the mother. Regarding adolescents, the more support they received from their mother, the more hopes they formulate relating to their future family. For young adults an opposite tendency was observed. This result may be interpreted as at the end of adolescence youngsters become more independent and they need less support from their mother.

Regarding the effects of family status the results showed that subjects growing up in one-parent families perceived their family climate as more conflict-ridden, and their fathers' parenting attitude as more manipulative, and mothers' parenting as more inconsistent compared to those who were raised in intact families. This was a clear proof of our fifth hypothesis. Previous findings have also suggested that changes in the societal level and in family structure have several impacts on the children's development (Schaffer, 1996). There is clear evidence that parental divorce or separation points to an increased psychological risk for the children, as both of these are stressful events, like parental remarriage (Rutter, 1996). Eisenberg (1996) have demonstrated that children growing up in single-parent families where the parents were never married, separated or divorced, have a double risk of dropping out of school, of being out of work or of becoming teenage mothers.

Regarding the effects of gender our hypothesis regarding future oriented goals has been proved, because the only significant difference between males and females was regarding friends related future goals was observed. However, our study demonstrated that the gender of the subject

may also influence how parent treat their children. Previous findings have shown that parents treat boys and girls differently. Parents use power-assertion, verbal hostility and physical punishment more frequently with their sons compared to their daughters (Chipman, Olsen, Klein, Hart & Robinson, 2000). On the other hand, daughters are typically the object of better parental control and supervision than are sons. Chipman and his colleagues argue "that mother-child interaction can be characterised with greater warmth and responsivity, "while father-child interactions might contain greater firmness and restrictiveness" (Chipman, Olsen, Klein, Hart & Robinson, 2000, p.7.). Our study showed that males considered their fathers' parenting more manipulative, and the parenting aim of conformity was more typical for females, who reported that they received more support from their mother.

According to our third and fourth hypothesis the results demonstrated that on the one hand, the more rule-oriented the family climate was, the less concerns subjects formulated relating to their future work. On the other hand, where fathers were restrictive, subjects mentioned less goals related to their future family life. This result is in line with previous findings (Holden, 1995) that demonstrate, that the more consistent and rule-oriented parents are with their 3-year-old children, the better intellectual achievement boys show during adolescence, and the better competence and self-confidence could be observed among girls during adolescence. In such a family climate where clear rules and norms are prevailing, and parents punish and reward consistently, adolescents can determine their personal goals related to their future education more easily, and they can cope with their fears related to their future work more successfully. The inconsistent parenting style of the mother had a negative effect on the fears related to future education, and on the fears related to future family.

It is very difficult to formulate a clear and concrete picture about future plans during adolescence and young adulthood, thus supportive parenting plays a very important role in this process. Parents can help solve problems, and avoid difficulties during setting goals which could reduce the level of stress and could promote effective coping strategies (Brunstein, Schultheiss & Maier, 1999).

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