RELATIONS BETWEEN GOD-IMAGES AND EARLY MALADAPTIVE SCHEMAS

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SUMMARY

Our God image not only determines the nature of our relationship with God, it also influences our personality, actions, self-concept, mindset and social relations. It acts within and through us. Although everyone has a God image - regardless of whether one is a believer or not - the ways in which we experience God's relation to us are manifold. It is not unusual that even believers of the same congregation give accounts of diverse God images. Schema is a widely used term in psychology. Schemas describe cognitive structures that filter, encode and interpret the stimuli affecting the person. They can influence the perception of reality, which later impacts the behavior and mood of the individual and in severe cases can result in pathology. The factors influencing the God image and early maladaptive schemas both have proven roots in early childhood and are impacted by the child-parent relationship. Our research focuses on examining the connection between maladaptive schemas and the God image and their relation to parental influence.

Key words: *religiosity - God image - early maladaptive schemas - attachment*

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INTRODUCTION

Defining religiosity

Psychology has long been interested in the definition and measurement of religiosity and in its impact on the human psyche. However, the field has been characterized from the beginning by a dual approach: while Freud (1913/2011) aimed to demonstrate, in a rather critical tone, the psychology of organized religion, James (1902) focused on the psychology of religious experience and the individual differences displayed therein. As opposed to Freud, who regarded religion as a delusion responsible for the formation of neurosis, Frankl (2003) claimed that religion may help individuals find meaning in life, a process that he considered crucial from the point of mental health. Maslow believed that a lifestyle emphasizing the transcendent is a form of self-actualization, which he regarded as the highest level need. Religion becomes a source of identity in Erikson's psychosocial development theory. While investigating the individual's religious practice along their internal motivation, Allport and Ross (1967) differentiated between mature and immature religiosity, introducing the terms of intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. Those with a mature or intrinsic religiosity regard religion as an internal, motivational force that determines their way of living, relationships, goals and decisions. Their lives are pervaded and controlled by their beliefs. On the other hand, immature or extrinsic religious orientation is a tool used for satisfying various psychological needs: the individual seeks safety, solace, mental and physical wellbeing through it. According to Allport, the extrinsically motivated individual uses religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated lives it.

God image

It is essential for a religious individual, especially in Christian civilization, to have a personal relationship with God, involving emotional experiences. Above all, our relationship with God is determined by the image we have formed of him. At the same time, our God image has an impact on our personality, actions, behavior and mindset. As it frequently lies behind our self-awareness, relationship and lifestyle-related issues (Béri 2016), the nature of the God image is an essential matter.

Fifty years ago, Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1970) made an attempt at the terminological clarification of the God image. According to her, *God image* is a subjective, intrinsic image we form of God, in which the emotional components are dominant. It is predominantly determined by our early childhood experiences; it influences and controls our lives, determines our feelings, thoughts and actions from the unconscious mind (Béri 2016). *God concept* is a cognitive knowledge of God, a result of learning and contemplation; it is predominantly conscious, involves only a few emotional components. It is the result of the philosophical and theological thought conveyed by the church and acquired in the course of catechism. There are instances where the God concept and the God image stand in opposition to each other. An example of this is when someone fears the intrinsic image of a judgemental, punishing and vindictive God (God image), while at the same time consciously accepting the view of God as kind and forgiving (God concept). Together these constitute the *God representation*. Everyone – with individual alterations, of course – has a God image and a God concept, regardless whether they are religious or not.

Factors influencing the God image

Several theories discuss the formation and operation of our mental representations of God. Rizutto (1979) grounds her developmental approach to the God image on the Object Relations Theory and primarily on Winnicot's views on development. According to Rizutto, our basic God image begins to develop at birth. It is affected by the parents' God image, whether they planned to have the child or not, whether they regard him as a blessing or as a burden. Later on, in order to form their own representations of God, the child utilizes other memories, primarily the ones connected to experiences with the primary caretaker. In case this specific experience is missing, the God image functions as a "transitional object": it exists on the border of the internal and external worlds, and the child can shape it relatively freely according to their psychological needs (Lawrence 1997, Hall 1998).

Early parent-related experiences undoubtedly influence the God image. Empirical studies have shown that a single process (such as projection) cannot account for the connection between the parent and the God image. It is rather the case that the parents have an impact on the child's God image through their actions and their own God image. But which parent has the more significant impact? Freud believed that the God image is simply a projection of the father image, but as opposed to this, several empirical studies have pointed to the role of both parents.

In their study (N=363) conducted with preschoolers, De Roos et al. (2004) noticed that the "loving" and "caring" mother image and "mother experience" were related to the children's "loving God" concept, whereas the concept's "punishing" dimension was connected to the mother's rearing practices. Birky and Ball (1988) compared the God image, the representations formed of the mother and father and the combined parental representations (formed with the merged mother and father images) of university students. They found that the combined parental image has the strongest correlation with the God representation, but the image closest to that of God is the one of the parent who the individual idealized the most as a child. Spilka and his colleagues (1975) studied the self-image, the images formed of the parents and the God image of 198 Catholic high schoolers. Their results show that if the girls formed a stronger bond with the father, then it was the father image that correlated with the God image, while this could not be demonstrated with the boys. In Kovács's (2013) study the loving God image correlated with the loving mother and father image, in the case of both genders, while the controlling image of God - also with both genders - showed a negative correlation with the loving mother image.

As mentioned before, parental rearing styles also have an effect on the children's developing God image. Those children whose parents used authoritarian paren-

ting methods (shouting, threats, punishment) considered God to be less caring than those whose upbringing was more "love-oriented" (Dickie et al. 1997). We can conclude that the experiences stemming from child-parent relations, the parents' actions, attitudes, rearing styles, mindsets and their approach to God all play a role in the formation of the child's God image.

God image and attachment

God-related representations in essence represent the individual's *relationship* with God, therefore attachment relationships play a vital role among the factors influencing the God image (Zahl & Gibson 2012). But can we regard the relationship with God as attachment and God as an attachment figure? The Bible refers to God's protective, defensive and caring role numerous times, among which Psalm 23, beginning with the words "The Lord is my shepherd" is the most well-known. This indicates that God has been present as an attachment figure for thousands of years in the experience of believers, as someone with whom they sustain an immediate, personal and emotionally charged love relationship.

Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990) also describe the relationship with God as an attachment relationship. According to Bowlby's model (1982), attachment is an inherent motivational system that regulates the distance between the baby and their caretaker and it also facilitates survival. The experiences are organized into an internal working model that influences the individual's expectations in later relationships and plays a role in the formation of the self-image and the image of others. The developed pattern has a significant impact on prospective relationships as well. By developing an assessment technique for attachment, Ainsworth and her colleagues differentiated secure and insecure (avoidant or ambivalent) attachment styles. Afterwards the typology was supplemented with the disorganized attachment style (Ainsworth 1978).

Kirkpatrick (1992) found that those who have a secure attachment to their parents also experience a similar attachment to God. Numerous studies have shown a positive correlation between the secure attachment to the parents and the loving God image (Kirkpatrick 1998, Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1992, Reinert & Edwards 2009, Reinert & Edwards 2014). Insecure attachment coincides with a distant and controlling God and shows a negative relationship with the loving image of God (Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1992).

The nature of the attachment to God displays individual variations: it can be secure, avoidant or anxious (Láng 2013).

The connections between the internal working models developed in early childhood and the relationship with God is explained by the *correspondence*, the *compensation* and the *social correspondence hypotheses*. The *correspondence hypothesis* claims that an adult's God image corresponds to the internal working model that has developed as a result of early childhood experiences. It

also hypothesize that children with secure attachments will be able to sustain an intimate relationship with God, while those with insecure attachments will have the same style of attachment to God as an adult. They will experience fear and anxiety (ambivalent attachment) or will not seek proximity to God at all (avoidant attachment). The *compensation hypothesis* claims that God can become a substitute attachment figure for those who did not experience secure attachment to the attachment figure of their childhood. These individuals can gain entirely new experiences in relation to God, as he can satisfy all their needs as a perfect attachment figure. Thus, religious conversion and the turn towards God can serve as a determining and meaningful "encounter" in terms of mental health. The *social correspondence hypothesis* states that one of the main roles of attachment is the adoption of the parents' religious models. Those who managed to form secure attachments are more likely to follow the religiosity of their parents, whereas those with insecure attachments tend to distance themselves from the person and the attitudes of the person with whom they have experienced anxiety or attachment traumas. If they undergo these experiences in relation to religious parents, they more readily turn away from a religiosity that has become discredited for them; whereas if the experience happens with a non-religious parent, then they tend to shift towards the safety of religion more easily (McDonald et al. 2005, Urbán 2018).

Early maladaptive schemas

Just as the formation of attachment is rooted in early childhood, the appearance and development of early maladaptive schemas also occur at the same stage. A healthy adult is able to satisfy their emotional needs in an adaptive manner. Young et al. (2003) claim that in individuals who are unable to do so experiences from childhood and adolescence have formed dysfunctional and self-destructive emotional and cognitive patterns that extensively affect their lives later on. We call these patterns schemas. The term "early" is justified by the schema's childhood roots, whereas "maladaptive" indicates its dysfunctional, self-destructive nature. The current definition of an Early Maladaptive Schema (EMS) is "a broad, pervasive theme or pattern, comprised of memories, emotions, cognitions, and bodily sensations, regarding oneself and one's relationships with others, developed during childhood or adolescence, elaborated throughout one's lifetime and dysfunctional to a significant degree" (Young et al. 2003).

With inspiration from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1977), Young et al. (2003) emphasizes that all individuals are born with core emotional needs which are present in all children with some variation: (1) Secure attachments to others, including safety, stability, nurturance, and acceptance; (2) Autonomy, competence, and sense of identity; (3) Realistic limits and self-control; 4) Freedom to express valid needs and emotions; (5) Spon-

taneity and play (Young et al. 2003). Based on these emotional needs, 18 specific EMSs were identified, and divided into five broader domains (see Table 1). Schemas influence the perception of reality, which impacts the functioning, mood and relationships of the individual and in severe cases can lead to mental health issues. We involuntarily sustain schemas and find them hard to change, as – among other things – with the distortion of reality we unintentionally produce the very circumstances that prove their validity. The severity and expansiveness of schemas can vary to a great extent. The more severe the schema is, the more it activates in various life situations and coincides with intense and persevering negative emotions. The formation of the most severe and most extensive maladaptive schemas can usually be traced back to childhood and it is predominantly connected to one or both parents. Every thought, emotion, behavior and life event that is relevant from the point of the schema either consolidates or weakens (heals) it (Young et al. 2003).

The relation of early maladaptive schemas to attachment and to the relationship with God Stefanovic and Nedelkovic (2012) studied the occurrence of EMSs in the attachment patterns of philosophy students. In accordance with the expectations of the authors, those with insecure attachments obtained the highest scores in the schema questionnaire, while the lowest scores belonged to those with secure attachments.

In the study of Bradshaw, Ellison and Marcum (2010) the secure attachment to God showed positive correlation with the positive God image, whereas this was realized less in those with insecure attachments. McDonald et al. (2005) compared the attachment to God with the love - caring and overprotection dimensions of the parental practices questionnaire. In terms of avoidant attachment to God they found a negative, moderately strong correlation with the mother's love-caring dimension and a weak, negative correlation with the father's. With regards to the father they also showed a positive, weak correlation with overprotection. The anxious attachment to God only displayed connection to overprotection, but in the case of both parents: with the mother there was a positive, moderately strong correlation, whereas with the father they found a positive, weak correlation.

Bosmans et al. (2010) also point to the interconnectedness of attachment and schemas in their study conducted with 289 students, in which they posited that if early experiences produce internal working models, then the maladaptive components of attachment should show a relation to cognitive schemas and psychopathological symptoms alike. The results of the study showed that the link between the anxiety dimension of attachment and psychopathological symptoms is mediated by the Disconnection and rejection and Other-directedness schema domains.

Table 1. Domains and Schemas

Basic emotional need	Schema domain	Early maladaptive schemas
Secure attachments to others, including safety, stability, nurturance, and acceptance	Disconnection and rejection	1. Abandonment / instability 2. Mistrust / abuse 3. Emotional deprivation 4. Defectiveness / shame 5. Social Isolation / alienation
Autonomy, competence, and sense of identity	Impaired autonomy and performance	6. Dependence/incompetence 7. Vulnerability to harm or illness 8. Enmeshment/underdeveloped self 9. Failure
Realistic limits and self-control	Impaired limits	10. Entitlement / grandiosity 11. Insufficient self-control / self-discipline
Freedom to express valid needs and emotions	Other-directedness	12. Subjugation 13. Self-sacrifice 14. Approval-seeking / recognition-seeking
Spontaneity and play	Overvigilance and inhibition	15. Negativity / pessimism 16. Emotional inhibition 17. Unrelenting standards / hypercriticalness 18. Punitiveness

Few studies have focused on the connection between the individual's God image and EMSs. Although in their book Aten et al. (2013) mention that maladaptive schemas can cause difficulties in relation to the God image, there are only two other mentions of this correlation study in the literature. In their study of individual schemas, conducted with 125 students, Radi et al. (2015) found significant negative relationship between the God image and the Social Isolation, Subjugation and Unrelenting Standards/Hyper-Criticalness schemas. This means that if individuals feel alienated from the world, feel like everything is out of their control and strive inordinately for perfection, while expecting the same from others, then they more readily form a negative God image, regarding him as a controlling figure. Furthermore, Rackley (2007) conducted a study with 596 people, in which he found a significant, positive relationship between early maladaptive schemas and the God image.

Similarly to EMSs, religiosity, the relationship with God and the God image are formed on the basis of childhood and early interpersonal experiences; the relationship with the parents (or with the primary caretaker) play a vital role in their development. Therefore, we can assume these to be interconnected. The overall objective of our research is to unravel the relationship between early maladaptive schemas, the God image and the rearing attitudes of the parents.

Just as in their relationships with others and with the world, where individuals identify and involuntarily re-enact painful childhood experiences, the same can apply to the relationship with God. In this respect we expect to see that the already formed schema influences the God image as well, because of its self-sustaining nature. According to our hypothesis, early maladaptive schemas show a negative correlation with the loving dimension of the God and a positive one with the controlling God image. Likewise, we expect to see a negative relationship

between the schemas and the loving mother-father and a positive one between the schemas and controlling or restrictive dimension of the mother-father image.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Participants

Altogether 1259 respondents (23.91% males with mean age of 39.83 [SD = 14.07], 76.09% females with mean age of 39.12 [SD = 14.06]) participated in our online quantitative research. Only psychologically healthy individuals over the age of 18 could take part in the study, who all received preliminary information about its aims and about their voluntary and anonymous participation. Majority of the respondent had at least a high school degree (99%). 26% of respondents were College or University students. Around 70% of the respondents belong to a religious (dominantly [99%] Christian) church, but around half of the respondents (47.10%) does not attend church regularly. 42% of the respondents reported being religious on their own way and only 32.54% followed religious teachings of a church. Some participants, who were not religious at all, failed to answer some of the religiosity questions. The response rate for the religiosity scales ranged from 88% (Attachment to God) to 100% (INSPIRIT Scales).

Measures

To measure spiritual or religious beliefs and experiences we used the Index of Core Spiritual Experience (INSPIRIT; Kass et al. 1991). This measure consists of six primary items referring to aspects of spirituality and spiritual practice. The seventh item provides a list of 12 possible spiritual experiences with a 4-point scoring system (1 = never had this experience, 2 = did not strengthen belief in God, 3 = strengthened belief in God, 4 = convinced me of God's existence).

To measure individual religiosity, we used the Religious Orientation Scale (also known as Intrinsic/ Extrinsic-Revised Scale), which was developed by Gorsuch and McPherson (1989); and is based on Allport's concept of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (Allport & Ross 1967). We used the Hungarian translation of the Scale by Murányi (2004). It has seven items measuring intrinsic religious orientation (e.g. „I enjoy reading about my religion."), six items for personally oriented extrinsic religious orientation (e.g. „I pray mainly to gain relief and protection") and six items measuring socially oriented extrinsic religious orientation (,,e.g. „I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends."). These questions are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of the particular religious orientation.

The Attachment to God Inventory (AGI, Beck & McDonald 2004) we used to assess the participant's tendency to have anxiety feeling or avoidance reactions in his/her relationship to God. The 28 items are scored on 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) complemented by a „not applicable" option (A sample item for the Anxiety scale is: „I often worry about whether God is pleased with me" and for Avoidance „I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God."). Higher scores reflect higher anxiety and avoidance reactions.

Participants' images of God were assessed with Benson and Spilka's (1973) semantic differential Loving and Controlling God scales (LCGS). On a bipolar scale ranging from 0 to 6, participants were asked to rate several characteristics they attributed to God. The Loving God scale consists of the following bipolar pairs of attributes: damning/saving, rejecting/accepting, loving/hating (reverse scored), unforgiving/forgiving, and approving/disapproving (reverse scored). The Controlling God scale includes the following adjective pairs: demanding/ not demanding (reverse scored), freeing/restricting, controlling/uncontrolling (reverse scored), strict/lenient (reverse scored), and permissive/rigid.

Images of mother and father: For the present research, with a slight modification of the Loving and Controlling God scale, we have administered the same items for the mother and father relationship of the participant, to gain comparable scores for parent figures and God using similar items.

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) asks respondents to recall how their parents acted towards them during the first 16 years of their life (Parker et al. 1979). The questionnaire consists of 25 items with each one of them being rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from 0 = very unlike to 3 = very like). Participants are asked to rate their mothers' (MBI) and fathers' (FBI) attitudes separately. According to the original scoring instruction, 12 items are intended to measure Care dimension (e.g.

"Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice", "Did not help me as much as I needed"), and 13 items are intended to measure Overprotection dimension (e.g. "Liked me to make my own decisions", "Did not want me to grow up"). However, on basis of factor analytic findings, the Hungarian version includes a third one. Throughout this study, we applied the Hungarian version of the PBI (Tóth & Gervai 1999). Thus 12 items measure Love and Care, 7 items measure Overprotection and 6 Restriction dimension.

The Hungarian version of the Young Schema Questionnaire Short Form (Young & Brown 2003) includes 95 items for assessing 19 early maladaptive schemas in 5 schema domains (See Table 1). Items are scored on 6-point scales (1 = Completely untrue of me, 6 = Describes me perfectly). Higher values indicate stronger schema valence, therefore a more maladaptive core belief.

Statistical analyses

Firstly, we have examined the relations between variables with correlational analyses. In order to reduce the number of variables, we have applied a series of factor analyses (unweighted least square method). Separate factor analyses were run for religiosity scales, for mother's rearing style scale and for father's rearing style scales. Lastly, we have run mediational analyses to examine the direct and indirect link between parenting rearing styles and different religiosity forms with the mediator variable of the total maladaptive schema composite score.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of our scales can be found in Table 2. It can be seen that most of the kurtosis and skewness values were in the range of -2 and 2, but some of the schema scales, especially kurtosis had somewhat higher values. However, Kim (2013) suggests that even these values can be accepted as normal distributions as in sample sizes above 300, an absolute kurtosis larger than 7 can be regarded as signs of non-normality.

Factor analyses

Given a group of different measures regarding relationship qualities, religiosity and schemas, we have run three consecutive factor analysis in order to reduce the number of examined variables, focusing on 1) attachment to God and religiosity scales, 2) relation to mother, 3) relation to father.

Attachment to God and religiosity scales were reduced to two factors with explained variance of 49.28. The loadings are presented in Table 3, and meaningfully an intrinsic religiosity factor with a loving God image and an anxious-extrinsic religiosity factor with controlling God image could be extracted.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and reliabilities of the scales

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach alpha
INSPIRIT God's presence	1259	3.00	12.00	6.60	2.42	0.25	-0.86	0.68
INSPIRIT God's closeness	1259	8.00	32.00	17.31	5.66	0.25	-0.76	0.83
INSPIRIT TOTAL	1259	11.00	44.00	23.91	7.75	0.23	-0.74	0.88
ROS Extrinsic	1155	10.00	46.00	20.43	6.04	0.19	-0.22	0.73
ROS Intrinsic	1162	7.00	35.00	20.41	8.38	-0.21	-1.19	0.90
ROS TOTAL	1138	17.00	73.00	40.96	12.77	-0.37	-0.74	0.83
AGI Anxiety	1107	14.00	93.00	30.57	13.60	1.30	1.79	0.86
AGI Avoidance	1108	14.00	91.00	47.95	15.12	0.00	-0.57	0.80
GOD loving	1258	0.00	34.00	24.36	6.80	-1.32	1.36	0.94
GOD controlling	1246	0.00	25.00	10.96	5.03	-0.26	-0.02	0.67
MOTHER loving	1256	0.00	34.00	23.71	6.43	-1.06	0.60	0.90
MOTHER controlling	1249	0.00	31.00	13.90	6.43	0.05	-0.21	0.80
FATHER loving	1253	0.00	34.00	21.53	7.39	-0.70	-0.21	0.92
FATHER controlling	1247	0.00	32.00	13.50	7.15	0.18	-0.45	0.84
PBI Father_Care	1259	0.00	36.00	22.42	9.25	-0.40	-0.72	0.93
PBI_Father_Overprotection	1259	0.00	21.00	4.45	4.26	1.16	1.04	0.81
PBI Father_Restrictive	1259	0.00	18.00	6.57	4.69	0.51	-0.43	0.90
PBI_Mother Care	1259	0.00	36.00	26.18	8.56	-0.93	0.14	0.94
PBI_Mother Overprotection	1259	0.00	21.00	6.08	4.76	0.79	0.01	0.84
PBI_Mother Restrictive	1259	0.00	18.00	7.29	4.43	0.41	-0.45	0.88
YSQ Emotional Deprivation	1259	5.00	30.00	10.73	6.50	1.12	0.31	0.87
YSQ Abandonment	1259	5.00	30.00	10.98	6.18	1.18	0.59	0.77
YSQ Mistrust / Abuse	1259	5.00	30.00	9.66	5.22	1.52	2.15	0.89
YSQ Social Isolation	1259	5.00	30.00	10.91	6.52	1.20	0.53	0.84
YSQ Defectiveness / Shame	1259	5.00	30.00	7.51	4.55	2.36	5.65	0.89
YSQ Social Undesirability	1259	5.00	27.00	8.23	4.27	1.69	2.61	0.86
YSQ Failure to Achive	1259	5.00	30.00	8.28	4.94	1.92	3.38	0.88
YSQ Functional Dependence / Incompetence	1259	5.00	30.00	7.42	3.82	2.19	5.27	0.75
YSQ Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	1259	5.00	30.00	8.24	4.51	1.93	3.81	0.86
YSQ Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self	1259	5.00	30.00	7.96	4.32	2.01	4.23	0.92
YSQ Subjugation	1259	5.00	29.00	9.16	4.90	1.63	2.50	0.86
YSQ Self-Sacrifice	1259	5.00	30.00	15.66	6.06	0.20	-0.69	0.93
YSQ Emotional Inhibition	1259	5.00	30.00	9.86	5.44	1.22	0.75	0.86
YSQ Unrelenting Standards	1259	5.00	30.00	15.93	6.58	0.13	-0.86	0.89
YSQ Entitlement	1259	5.00	30.00	12.07	4.97	0.74	0.11	0.85
YSQ Insufficient Self-Control / Self-Discipline	1259	5.00	30.00	11.54	5.45	0.89	0.37	0.82
YSQ Approval seeking	1259	5.00	30.00	11.13	5.62	1.00	0.40	0.86
YSQ Negativism pessimism	1259	5.00	30.00	11.26	6.03	1.05	0.37	0.92
Punitivness	1259	5.00	29.00	12.39	5.22	0.58	-0.27	0.84
YSQ Disconnection and rejection schema group (6 scales, 30 item)	1259	5.00	27.50	9.67	4.21	1.34	1.58	0.95
YSQ Impaired autonomy schema group (4 scales, 20 items)	1259	5.00	25.50	7.97	3.56	1.86	3.74	0.93
YSQ Impaired limits schema group (2 scales, 10 items)	1259	5.00	27.50	11.80	4.49	0.62	-0.05	0.84
YSQ Other directedness schema group (3 scales, 15 items)	1259	5.00	29.00	11.98	4.21	0.80	0.72	0.87
YSQ Overvigilance and inhibition schema group (4 scales, 20 items)	1259	5.00	27.50	12.36	4.42	0.60	0.12	0.91

Table 3. Factor loadings of attachment to God

	Intrinsic religiosity with loving God image	Anxious-extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image
ROS Intrinsic	*0.825*	0.312
INSPIRIT GOD closeness	*0.790*	0.000
INSPIRIT GOD existence	*0.758*	-0.008
AGI Avoidance	*-0.669*	-0.073
GOD Loving	*0.660*	0.003
AGI Anxiety	0.161	*0.670*
ROS Extrinsic	0.455	*0.523*
GOD Controlling	-0.176	*0.302*

Variables on attachment to mother and father were both reduced to a „loving" and to a „restricting" factor

(see Table 4). Explained variances became 64.44% for mother attachment, and 61.21% for father attachment. First, we have examined the relations between schemas and parental/ religiosity factors with correlational analyses (Table 5).

In general, most schemas were positively linked to restrictive parents and negatively to loving parents. Regarding relations between schemas and loving parents, all relations, except for self-sacrifice, became significant. However only 'Disconnection and rejection' schema group has yielded correlations above 0.3. The highest correlation was found in case of emotional deprivation schema (for loving mother: r=-0.47, for loving father: r=-0.36). Relations between restricting parents and schemas were lower, only 'Impaired autonomy' schema group had reached correlational coefficient of 0.2. The highest relation was found between restricting mother and undeveloped self (r=-0.29).

Table 4. Factor loadings of parents' rearing styles

	Mother Loving Factor	Mother Restricting Factor		Father Loving Factor	Father Restrictive Factor
Mother Loving	*0.956*	-0.300	Father Loving	*0.952*	-0.318
PBI Mother Care	*0.714*	-0.280	FBI Loving Caring	*0.727*	-0.186
PBI Mother Restrictive	-0.202	*0.824*	FBI Restricting	-0.141	*0.773*
Mother Controlling	-0.298	*0.671*	Father Controlling	-0.279	*0.686*
MBI Overprotection	-0.244	*0.559*	FBI overprotecting	-0.192	*0.536*

Table 5. Correlation between schemas and parental/ religiosity factors

	MLF	MRF	FLF	FRF	Intrin.	Anx.
Disconnection and rejection	*-0.31***	*0.16***	*-0.33***	*0.13***	*-0.17***	*0.29***
YSQ Emotional Deprivation	*-0.47***	0.17**	*-0.36***	0.16**	-0.07*	0.10**
YSQ Abandonment	-0.10**	0.10**	-0.19**	0.10**	-0.13**	0.27**
YSQ Mistrust/Abuse	-0.16**	0.11**	-0.21**	0.11**	-0.12**	*0.30***
YSQ Social Isolation	-0.28**	0.11**	*-0.30***	0.06*	-0.15**	0.17**
YSQ Defectiveness/Shame	-0.19**	0.11**	-0.21**	0.10**	-0.14**	0.25**
YSQ Social Undesirability	-0.13**	0.14**	-0.18**	0.06*	-0.16**	0.29**
Impaired autonomy	*-0.11***	*0.20***	*-0.15***	*0.10***	*-0.14***	*0.32***
YSQ Failure to Achive	-0.09**	0.11**	-0.12**	0.08**	-0.11**	0.25**
YSQ Functional Dependence/Incompetence	-0.09**	0.14**	-0.11**	0.06*	-0.10**	0.25**
YSQ Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	-0.09**	0.10**	-0.17**	0.05	-0.18**	0.27**
YSQ Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self	-0.10**	*0.29***	-0.09**	0.15**	-0.05	0.25**
Impaired limits	*-0.13***	*0.05*	*-0.18***	*0.00*	*-0.10***	*0.20***
YSQ Entitlement	-0.12**	0.03	-0.13**	0.01	-0.03	0.11**
YSQ Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline	-0.10**	0.05	-0.17**	-0.01	-0.14**	0.23**
Other directedness	*-0.14***	*0.19***	*-0.12***	*0.08***	*0.04*	*0.33***
YSQ Subjugation	-0.18**	0.20**	-0.15**	0.08**	-0.07*	*0.30***
YSQ Self-Sacrifice	-0.05	0.12**	-0.01	0.06*	0.16**	0.16**
YSQ Approval seeking	-0.10**	0.12**	-0.12**	0.06*	-0.04	*0.31***
Overvigilance and inhibition	*-0.12***	*0.14***	*-0.17***	*0.07***	*-0.13***	*0.36***
YSQ Emotional Inhibition	-0.13**	0.14**	-0.20**	0.04	-0.14**	0.24**
YSQ Unrelenting Standards	-0.06*	0.09**	-0.07*	0.06	0.03	0.20**
YSQ Negativism pessimism	-0.11**	0.12**	-0.13**	0.08**	-0.16**	*0.38***
YSQ Punitivness	-0.08**	0.09**	-0.11**	0.05	-0.14**	*0.29***

Legend: MLF - Mother Loving Factor;   MRF - Mother Restricting Factor;   FLF- Father Loving Factor;   FRF - Father Restrictive Factor;   Intrin. - Intrinsic religiosity with a loving God image;   Anx. - Anxious-extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image

Table 6. Correlations between parental attitude factors and religiosity factors

	Intrin.	Anx.
MLF	0.02	-0.04
MRF	0.08*	0.07*
FLF	0.09**	-0.04
FRF	0.03	0.10**

Legend: MLF - Mother Loving Factor; MRF - Mother Restricting Factor; FLF- Father Loving Factor; FRF - Father Restricting Factor; Intrin. - Intrinsic religiosity with a loving God image; Anx. - Anxious-extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image

Contrary, controlling God image factor has yielded much higher correlations, in case of four domains there were correlations reaching the level of 0.3. Most highly, this factor was linked to negativism schema (r=0.38).

We have also examined how parental rearing styles and different types of religiosity are related. Intrinsic religion was most highly related to loving father but with only a low correlational coefficient (r=0.09). Anxious religiosity was most highly related to restricting father, but also with a low correlational level (r=0.10) (Table 6).

Lastly, we have applied a mediational analysis in order to test if schemas mediate the relation between parents' rearing style and different types of religiosity. In order to form a composite (total maladaptive schema scores) we tested if schema domain scores constitute a single principal component. All component scores were above .6 and explained variance of the single principal component was 61.07. We have applied this principal component as a mediator variable (Table 7).

In all cases, there was a significant indirect effect between parenting style and religiosity type, but no direct effects arose. Parental loving was negatively linked to maladaptive schemas, which were positively linked to anxious religiosity and negatively linked to intrinsic religiosity. In turn, restricting parents were positively linked to maladaptive schemas, which were positively linked to anxious religiosity and negatively linked to intrinsic religiosity.

DISCUSSION

Our overarching aim was to examine the association between early maladaptive schemas, religiosity and parental rearing attitudes. Our main finding is that anxious-extrinsic religiosity, marked by a controlling God image, is linked to maladaptive schemas at a moderate level, with the highest correlation for the "Overvigilance and inhibition" domain. Most highly, the controlling God image was linked to negativism-pessimism schema. It is not surprising that for those who focus on the negative aspects of life (pain, death, losses, unsolved problems, abandonment), while disregarding its positive or hopeful perspectives, the God concept and faith are shaped by the same convictions. Buri and Mueller (1993) claim that the association between the God image and schemas may be explained by the self-schema, as the individual usually interprets and filters self-relevant information according to this. The self provides a cognitive frame of reference for processing and interpreting self-relevant information. A similar operation method is described by the Cognitive Consistency Theory, in which the individual accepts facts that are consistent with the self and refuses inconsistent information that would cause dissonance (Benson & Spilka 1973).

These findings also suggest that subjects definitely used their maladaptive schemas as frameworks of information processing in a religious setting, and a way of conceptualizing their religion. As schemas are maladaptive beliefs that lead to a distorted view of oneself, the relationships and the world, a person affected by these dysfunctional patterns, is more likely to „use" religion

Table 7. Schemas as mediators between parenting rearing style and religiosity types

Independent variable (IV)	Mediating variable (M)	Dependent variable (DV)	Effect of IV on M (a)	Effect of M on DV (b)	Direct effects (c')	Indirect effects (a x b)
Mother loving factor	Schema factor	Anxious extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image factor	-0.22**	0.32**	0.04	-0.07 (-0.10; -0.05)
Mother restricting factor	Schema factor	Anxious extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image factor	0.19**	0.31**	0.00	0.06 (0.04; 0.09)
Father loving factor	Schema factor	Anxious extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image factor	-0.22**	0.32**	0.04	-0.07 (-0.10; -0.05)
Father restricting factor	Schema factor	Anxious extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image factor	0.13**	0.30**	0.05	0.04 (0.02; 0.07)
Mother loving factor	Schema factor	Intrinsic religiosity with loving God image factor	-0.22**	-0.14**	-0.01	0.03 (0.02; 0.05)
Mother restricting factor	Schema factor	Intrinsic religiosity with loving God image factor	0.19**	-0.15**	0.11	-0.03 (-0.05; -0.02)
Father loving factor	Schema factor	Intrinsic religiosity with loving God image factor	-0.22**	-0.12**	0.06	0.03 (0.01; 0.05)
Father restricting factor	Schema factor	Intrinsic religiosity with loving God image factor	0.13**	-0.14**	0.05	-0.02 (-0.04; -0.01)

with external motivation, to gain social acceptance or reward (Bergin 1991); and much less for the purpose of meaning-making. This finding is in accordance with extrinsic religious which is one of the most common schemas, according to Young. Due to the schema's cognitive distortion, individuals believe to be unloved and unlovable; they feel that nobody cares for them and it is useless to trouble themselves with emotions. Restrictive parents show a weaker relation to the schemas, only 'Impaired orientation being related to lower well-being, higher levels of depression, and higher emotional instability in former studies (Maltby & Day 2003, Maltby 2005) and maladaptive schemas being linked to psychopathological symptoms (Young et al. 2003, Thimm 2017). Viewing religion in an instrumental way, individuals with an extrinsic religious orientation may seek a sense of security and safety from their religion, for the purpose of making friends, gaining support, or achieving recognition.

Correlational coefficients between religiosity and parental rearing attitudes were somewhat with 0.10 as the maximum correlational coefficient found between restricting father attitude and anxious-extrinsic religiosity with controlling God image. This result is in limited support of the correspondence hypothesis, indicating that negative God representations can originate from negative relationship experiences with the parents (Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1990). Also, Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2009) suggests that perception of authoritarian parenting can be associated with increasing level of general anxiousness, which can influence the pattern of experiencing religiosity. We can draw the conclusion from our results that neither the parent representation, nor the idealized parent image can account by itself for the characteristics of religiosity and the God image.

Studies on the connections between the image of the parent, parental love and EMSs have found a positive correlation between almost all schemas and the restrictive parent and a negative one with the loving parent. The negative relation to the loving parental attitude proved to be significant with all schemas, except for the self-sacrifice one. However only 'Disconnection and rejection' schema group has yielded correlations above .3 In the background of the schemas belonging to this schema domain we can usually find a cold, loveless or at least unpredictable family atmosphere; its formation is predominantly led by the unsatisfied need for secure attachment, acceptance and care (Young et al. 2003). To this end, these schemas are also referred to as schemas of attachment disorders. The highest correlation was found in case of emotional deprivation schema, autonomy' schema group had reached correlational coefficient of 0.2. Despite the weak relation, the results comply with preliminary expectations that were based on the important role of early working models in the development of the God image and schemas (Stefanovic & Nedelkovic 2012, Bosmans & Van Vlierberghe 2010, Roelofs et al. 2011, Young et al. 2003).

Our mediational analyses have yielded interesting results: parental rearing styles not directly linked to religiosity types, but an indirect link was confirmed through early maladaptive schemas. Highest indirect effects were found for the independent variable of loving mother/father and for dependent variable anxious-extrinsic religiosity with controlling God images. The highest effect sizes were found for the emotional deprivation schema. This means that emotional neglect (deprivation) is strongly linked to development of some early maladaptive schemas; which in turn, are linked to anxious-extrinsic religiosity. In their study, Hall et al. (2009) propose that individuals with insecure attachment as a result of less adequate parenting tend to use their religion for the purposes of affect regulation. As schemas result from unmet needs, the stronger they are, the more the individual is driven by the compensation of his or her deficits, and more likely it is for these unmet needs to appear in religious settings, leading to anxious-extrinsic religious motivation, less personal or intrinsic religious motivations, and less secure attachment to God.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The associations between early maladaptive schemas and religiosity's cognitive-emotional (relating to the God image) and behavioral (relating to religious practice) aspects could open numerous new pathways for psychological analysis. It would be beneficial to examine among new Christian converts, with the help of a longitudinal study, whether the individual God image and the presence of maladaptive schemas change, and if so, how, with the development of the relationship to God. If God, as a perfect attachment figure, is able to satisfy all the needs of the individual (Kirkpatrick & Shaver 1990), then this relationship, and all the experiences derived from it, might have therapeutic effects on the believer. The mindset change that coincides with religious conversion, the social support and acceptance of the congregation, the patterns and methods of religious problem solving, prayer and regular Bible study could play a role in the weakening (healing) of early maladaptive schemas. Furthermore, schema therapy – since it aims to overwrite the early maladaptive schemas that are identified as factors influencing the God image – can help those with schemas to see and experience God just as he revealed himself: 'I have loved you.' (Malachi 1:2)

Contribution of individual authors:

Andrea Ferenczi: design of the study and hypothesis, literature searches, interpretation of data, first draft, approval of the final version.

Zsuzsanna Kövi: statistical analyses, interpretation of data, approval of the final version.

Zsuzsanna Mirnics: literature searches, interpretation of data, approval of the final version.

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