# "Because I'm still the parent, that's why!" Parental legitimate authority during emerging adulthood

**Laura M. Padilla-Walker**
**Larry J. Nelson**
**Darin J. Knapp**
Brigham Young University, USA

## Abstract
The current study sought to examine the discrepancies between parent and child reports of legitimate parental authority, to identify heterogeneity in college students' perceptions of parental legitimate authority, and to examine potential variables that might differ as a function of group membership. Participants ($M_{age}$ = 19.65, $SD$ = 2.00, range = 18–29) consisted of 438 undergraduate students (320 women, 118 men) and at least one parent (376 mothers, 303 fathers). Results suggested that parents reported higher levels of legitimate authority than did children. Results found three groups and group membership varied as a function of perceptions of adult status, parental financial support, parental control, and the quality of the parent–child relationship. Discussion focuses on the implications of these findings for the parent–child relationship.

## Keywords
Emerging adulthood, legitimate authority, parenting

Researchers have shown that the majority of emerging adult college students (individuals aged from 18 to the late 20s) do not consider themselves to be adults (e.g., Arnett,

---

**Corresponding author:**
Laura M. Padilla-Walker, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University, 2097 JFSB, Provo, UT 84602, USA.
Email: laura_walker@byu.edu

2000), nor do their parents (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Carroll, Madsen, Barry, & Badger, 2007). This results in a time period of not-yet-adulthood, which for many young people and their parents is challenging because neither parent nor child is completely sure what the role of parents should be. There is some evidence to suggest that emerging adults and their parents differ in their beliefs about what young people should be striving toward during emerging adulthood (e.g., Nelson et al., 2007), but there is little if any work examining the beliefs of emerging adult children and their parents regarding the domains in which parents have the "right" or authority to direct their children's actions during emerging adulthood. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was threefold. First, using a sample of emerging adults attending 4-year universities, we sought to understand the discrepancies between parent and child reports of legitimate parental authority in four domains (personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral). Second, using cluster analysis, we sought to identify heterogeneity in emerging adults' perceptions of parental legitimate authority across four domains, and, finally, we examined variables that might differ as a function of group membership.

## Social domains and legitimate authority

As children move into adolescence, they demand, and are granted by parents, greater autonomy in decision making (Collins, Gleason, & Sesma, 1997). However, conflict remains between children and their parents over the extent of control that each believes parents have over their adolescents' behavior (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). There is a well-established body of work demonstrating that parenting varies as a function of the domain into which the child's behavior falls (see Turiel, 2006, for a review) and adolescents believe that parents indeed have legitimate authority to exercise control or employ discipline in some domains but not others (e.g., Padilla-Walker, 2008). The social–cognitive domain perspective suggests that children's social world is heterogeneous and characterized by four different domains or social orientations (i.e., personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983). The personal domain is typically comprised of actions regarding privacy, choice of friends, choice of attire, choice of activities, or other individual concerns (Smetana, 2006). Social-conventional actions are contextually normative behaviors arbitrarily agreed upon and shared by a relative population, such as etiquette, manners, and acts that promote social order (raising one's hand in a classroom, not butting in line, etc.). Behaviors in the prudential domain are those related to safety or well-being focused on avoiding injury to oneself such as riding in a car without a seatbelt. Finally, the moral domain consists of actions that adversely impact or harm another's welfare, safety, and rights. Moral issues are thought to be universal in applicability, therefore demanding from individuals a high sense of obligation to follow these norms (Smetana, 2006).

Depending upon which domain children consider their actions or behaviors to reside, they perceive that others (i.e., parents) may or may not have the right to legitimately regulate those actions (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991). Researchers have found that as children enter adolescence, differences in parental response to moral issues arise (Cumsille, Flaherty, Darling, & Martinez, 2006; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2006; Smetana, 1995), and adolescents and parents often differ in acknowledgment of parental

legitimacy of authority over adolescent behaviors in various domains (Smetana, Crean, & Campoine-Barr, 2005). For example, the majority of adolescents grant parents legitimate authority in the prudential and moral domains (Cumsille et al., 2006; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2006), affirm parental authority in the conventional domain (Jackson, 2002; Smetana & Asquith, 1994), but reject overly intrusive parental involvement in the personal domain (Smetana, et al., 2005). Despite these adolescent beliefs, parents often restrict adolescents' personal domain more than adolescents would like (Smetana et al., 2005) and tend to make more decisions for their children rather than letting children maintain autonomy, regardless of domain (Cumsille et al., 2006).

These conflicting views over legitimate parental authority can affect the parent–child relationship. Studies suggest that adolescents see their parents more positively and have more positive outcomes when parents are able to maintain distinct boundaries between domains in their parenting practices (e.g., take more action in children's moral or prudential domains than in personal domains) than those parents without clear domain boundaries (Padilla-Walker, 2008; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2006). Indeed, adolescents' perceptions of parental control of the personal domain have been associated with parent–adolescent conflict (Smetana, 1995, 2006) and parental behavioral and psychological control (Smetana & Daddis, 2002).

Taken together, as adolescents' increasing desire for autonomy grows, it appears that a domain approach is helpful in understanding areas in which parents and children, respectively, believe parents have legitimate authority to exercise control in the lives of their children. Although an ever-increasing body of work is being accumulated on this topic in adolescence, we are not aware of any work that has been done from a domain perspective to examine beliefs about legitimate authority during emerging adulthood. Even more than adolescence, it is expected that emerging adults need and are granted greater autonomy. However, as noted previously, most parents do not yet see their emerging adult children as adults (Nelson et al., 2007), which may lead to some parental attempts to maintain control in certain areas. Given the importance of perceptions of legitimate authority in adolescence (Smetana, 1995; Smetana & Daddis, 2002) as well as the continued importance of the parent–child relationship during emerging adulthood (Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans, & Carroll, 2011; Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Madsen, & Barry, 2008), the current study sought to understand how emerging adult children's perceptions of parental legitimate authority in different domains were related to various indices of parental control as well as parent–child relationship quality.

## Emerging adulthood

As emerging adults experience various states of transition in several spheres of life, these changes affect their relationships with their parents (Aquilino, 1997; Nelson et al., 2011). Indeed, Aquilino (2006) points out that changing interests, abilities, transitions, and behaviors of emerging adults lead to a ''shake up'' (p. 193) within the family, especially within the parent–child relationship. The ''in-between'' (Arnett, 2004, p. 8) nature of emerging adulthood leads to a certain level of uncertainty regarding the child's status as an adult as well as the role that parents should now play

in their child's life. Many parents feel they still need and want to help their children navigate this period of experimentation and exploration, while at the same time allowing them the autonomy they want and need.

Indeed, parents who are able to successfully balance autonomy granting and support in their parenting during emerging adulthood appear to benefit their children. For example, there is a body of work, mostly with college students, showing that positive parenting (e.g., parental acceptance, support, warmth, open communication) is linked to child adjustment, including overall well-being and social integration (Campo & Rohner, 1992; Holahan, Valentiner, & Moos, 1994; Turner, Sarason, & Sarason, 2001), emotional adjustment (McKinney & Renk, 2008a, 2008b), academic performance (e.g., Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009), adjustment to university life (e.g., Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), and drinking behaviors (e.g., Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2009). In addition to aspects of parenting, the overall quality of the parent–child relationship appears to matter to the well-being of emerging adults. For example, a higher quality parent–child relationship or attachment has been found to be associated with higher levels of the emerging adult child's internal regulation (Barry, Padilla-Walker, Madsen, & Nelson, 2008), better psychological well-being (van Wel, ter Bogt, & Raaijmakers, 2002), a stronger sense of self-worth (Kenny & Sirin, 2006), better adjustment skills (Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), lower instances of criminal offending (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011), and fewer risk behaviors including drinking alcohol, using illegal drugs, or having risky sex (Padilla-Walker et al., 2008).

In contrast, there is evidence that some parents attempt to deny autonomy or to control their children during emerging adulthood, with negative consequences for both the relationship and the emerging adults' development. For example, emerging adults whose parents tend to deny them autonomy exhibit lower levels of social functioning (Allen, Hauser, O'Conner, & Bell, 2002). Nelson et al. (2011) found that mothers and fathers who scored high on indices of both behavioral and psychological control had children with the most negative outcomes in their study including the lowest levels of parent–child closeness, child self-worth, and kindness, and the highest levels of child depression, anxiety, and impulsivity. In another study of emerging adults and their mothers, maternal psychological control negatively predicted child satisfaction with the relationship with mother and child disclosure to mother, and positively predicted child participation in risk behaviors (Urry, Nelson, & Padilla-Walker, 2011). Finally, it has been found that emerging adults who experience psychological control or perceive low attachment to parents develop lower emotional regulation skills (Manzeske & Stright, 2009) and higher depressive symptoms (Kenny & Sirin, 2006).

Taken together, there appears to be a developmentally important task for parents and their emerging adult children, which includes parents needing "to acknowledge the adult status of their sons and daughters, relinquish control, and, at the same time, remain ready to provide the care and material support their offspring need to thrive" (Aquilino, 2006, pp. 195–196). Indeed, the evidence points to the presence of parental control as having an important direct and indirect (via the parent–child relationship during emerging adulthood) influence on child outcomes. However, the work extant in emerging adulthood has failed to examine the role that the context, or domain, of the child's behavior may have on the link between perceptions of the legitimacy of

parental control, and how this might impact the parent–child relationship. Work in this area is especially needed due to the possibly heightened tension that might exist in emerging adulthood between children's strivings for autonomy and parents not yet seeing their children as adults.

This question of just how much legitimate authority parents of emerging adults should have become especially blurry when the young people in question are college students. The term ''emerging adult'' refers to a broad range of young people in the third decade of life, of which college students are only a portion. However, the issue of legitimate authority may be particularly relevant for them because many of them do not reside at home and yet few of them are completely financially independent. As a result, there is a great deal of independent decision making and yet enough dependence on parents (e.g., finances, transportation, insurance, a place to return to for holidays and summers) to possibly be seen by parents and young people as only pseudoindependence. The lines of parental authority may be clearer for young people and their parents when the children are working full time and living on their own (legitimate parental authority would most likely be perceived as very minimal) or for those not going to school or working and who are living at home (legitimate parental authority would most likely be perceived as quite high). For college students, those boundaries are less clear, and, therefore, greater differences in opinion between college students and their parents may exist regarding the legitimate authority parents have in various domains.

Thus, using a sample of students attending 4-year universities, the current study sought first to understand the discrepancies between parent and child reports of legitimate authority in four domains (personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral). Given that parents and adolescents often do not agree about parental legitimate authority (Smetana, 2006), especially in the personal domain, we thought that that there would likely be discrepancies between child and parent reports of legitimate authority during emerging adulthood and that those discrepancies would be largest in the personal domain (Smetana & Daddis, 2002; Smetana et al., 2005).

Second, using cluster analysis, the current study sought to identify heterogeneity in children's perceptions of parental legitimate authority across four domains and examined potential predictors of group membership. Research on adolescents has distinguished between three groups of adolescents, namely those who believe parents have legitimate control in all domains, those who believe in joint or shared control, and those who believe parents do not have legitimate control in any domain (Cumsille et al., 2006). We expected that these three groups would be distinguishable in our study of college students as well.

Finally, expecting that the three groups would emerge, we sought in the current study to determine how group membership might be related to demographic variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity, age, parental financial assistance, and feelings of adult status), parental control (behavioral control, psychological control, and helicopter parenting), and aspects of the parent–child relationship (parent–child relationship quality and discrepancies between parent and child reports of legitimate authority). Based on research during adolescence, we expected that young people who subscribed to shared control would have the strongest parent–child relationships across numerous outcomes, and those who perceived parents as not having legitimate authority in any domain would have the weakest parent–child relationships (Smetana, 1995; 2006).

Although there is a large body of research suggesting the existence of discrepancies between parent and child reports of parenting, few studies examine interpretations of discrepancies. The few studies that do suggest that parent–child discrepancies are associated with higher levels of internalizing problems and lower levels of social competence in adolescent children (Guion, Mrug, & Windle, 2009), primarily due to a sense that it is indicative of problems when the shared reality between parent and child are so discrepant (Broderick, 1993). However, we thought in the case of legitimate authority, the interpretation likely depends on which party (the parent or child) views the parent as having higher levels of legitimate authority. Thus, we sought to better understand how discrepancies between parent and child reports of parenting (as one indicator of parent–child relationship quality) might distinguish between groups.

## Methods

### Participants

Participants for this study were drawn from a study of emerging adults and their parents entitled Project READY (Researching Emerging Adults' Developmental Years), which is an ongoing, collaborative, multisite study that is being conducted by a consortium of developmental and family scholars. Data used in the current study were collected during 2009–2010. The sample for the current study ($M_{age} = 19.65$, $SD = 2.00$, range $= 18$–$29$) consisted of 438 undergraduate students (320 women, 118 men) and at least one of their parents (376 mothers, 303 fathers; 241 participants had both parents participate; while 132 had only mother and 65 had only father). Mean age of mothers was 49.50 years ($SD = 5.02$) and mean age of fathers was 51.69 years ($SD = 5.82$). Participants were recruited from four universities across the US, including large public universities in the Western, Midwestern, and Southern US, as well as a private university in the Eastern US. Response rate varied by site (ranging from 50 to 71%), with an overall response rate of approximately 60%.

The majority of college students were European American (69% European American, 18% Asian American, and 13% other). Of them, 90% reported living outside their parents' home in an apartment, house, or dormitory; 10% reported living in their parents' home; 60% of fathers and 55% of mothers reported having a bachelor's degree or more; 23% of parents reported having a combined income of less than $50,000 per year; and 28% reported a combined income of over $100,000.

### Procedure

Participants completed the (Project READY) questionnaire via the Internet (see http://www.projectready.net). The use of an online data collection protocol facilitated unified data collection across multiple university sites and allowed for the survey to be administered to young people and their parents who were living in separate locations throughout the country. Participants were recruited through faculty's announcement of the study in undergraduate courses. Undergraduate courses were primarily Introduction to Psychology courses or large general education courses of the like in an attempt to

access a broad range of students. Professors at the various universities were provided with a handout to give to their students that had a brief explanation of the study and directions for accessing the online survey. Interested students then accessed the study website with a class-specific recruitment code. Informed consent was obtained online, and only after consent was given could the participants begin the questionnaires. Each participant was given a survey that took approximately 45 min to complete. Most participants were given a $20 Amazon gift code for their participation, while a small portion (17%) participated for extra credit. After participants completed the personal information, they had the option to send an invitation (via e-mail) to their parents to participate in the study. Parents completed a short questionnaire that took approximately 15 min, asking them to respond to many of the same questions as did their child, but from a parental point of view. Parents were each given a $10 Amazon gift code for their participation. It should be noted that although there were few missing data on individual measures (<5%), analyses that were conducted using mother and father report were only conducted for those families who had complete data from child, mother, and father.

## Measures

*Demographic variables.* Descriptive variables measured included age, gender, race, site, parent participation, residence, perceptions of adulthood, and parental financial assistance. Gender included male and female, and race included European American, Asian, and other. The site variable included the four geographic sites from which data were collected, and the parent participation variable compared those emerging adults who had both parents participate, those who had only mother participate, and those who had only father participate. The residence variable compared those who lived in the parental home to those who lived outside the parental home (in an apartment, house, or dormitory). Perceptions of adulthood were assessed by asking emerging adults: "Do you think that you have reached adulthood?" Response options included: *no*, *in some respects yes*, *in some respects no*, and *yes*. This method of adult–status classification has been used elsewhere and has demonstrated adequate face validity (e.g., Nelson & Barry, 2005). Parental financial assistance was measured with one item asking emerging adults, on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*75% or more*), how much financial assistance for the current year's educational expenses they received from family resources such as parents.

*Legitimate authority.* Parents' legitimate authority was assessed using child-, mother-, and father reports on nine-items assessing how acceptable it was for parents to have control over, or to make rules, in a number of areas of the child's life. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*inappropriate, this should be completely up to me/my child*) to 5 (*appropriate, my parent is/I am justified in controlling this*). Higher scores represented child-, mother-, and father reports (respectively) of legitimate authority in four domains: personal (two items, $\alpha$ = .68, .71, .68, e.g., "Who I (my child) date(s)"; "Which major I (my child) choose (s)"), social conventional (two items, $\alpha$ = .73, .87, .84, e.g., "How well I do (my child does) in class"; "Whether or not I (my child) attends class"), prudential (three items, $\alpha$ = .78, .85, .83, e.g., "Whether I (my child) smoke(s) or drink(s)"; "Whether I (my child) engage(s) in unprotected sex"; "Whether I (my

child) drive(s) too fast without a seatbelt''), and moral (two items, $\alpha = .86, .86, .83$, e.g., ''Whether I am (my child is) honest''; ''Whether I am (my child is) kind to others'').

*Parental control.* Behavioral control was assessed using five items assessing parents' tendency to control their child's friends, money, or activities (Kerr & Stattin, 2000). Emerging adults answered questions on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all like him/her*) to 5 (*a lot like him/her*). Sample items include, ''My parent tries to set rules about what I do with my free time,'' and ''My parent tries to tell me what I can and can't do on nights and weekends.'' Higher scores indicated higher levels of child-reported mother ($\alpha = .89$) and father ($\alpha = .87$) behavioral control.

Psychological control was assessed using eight items assessing psychological control in parenting (Barber, 1996). Emerging adults answered questions on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all like him/her*) to 3 (*a lot like him/her*). Sample items include, ''If I have hurt his/her feelings, my parents stops talking to me until I please him/her again,'' and ''My parent will avoid looking at me when I have disappointed her/him.'' Higher scores indicated higher levels of child-reported mother ($\alpha = .83$) and father ($\alpha = .81$) psychological control.

Helicopter parenting has been conceptualized as the degree to which parents make important decisions for their emerging adult children and act in a ''hovering'' manner or are overinvolved in their child's life (Fingerman et al., 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012). Emerging adults answered five questions from an established helicopter parenting scale (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all like him/her*) to 5 (*a lot like him/her*). Sample items include, ''My parent makes important decisions for me (e.g., where I live, where I work, what classes I take)'' and ''My parent intervenes in settling disputes with my roommates or friends''. Higher scores indicated higher levels of child-reported mother ($\alpha = .87$) and father ($\alpha = .84$) helicopter parenting.

*Parent–child relationship quality and discrepancies.* The parent–child relationship was assessed using four subscales (guidance/advice, disclosure, affection, and emotional support) from the Social Provisions Questionnaire (Carbery & Buhrmester, 1998). Emerging adults answered questions on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*little or none*) to 5 (*the most*). Sample questions include, ''How often do you depend on this person for help, advice, or sympathy?'' for guidance/advice (three items), ''How often do you talk to this person about things that you don't want others to know?'' for disclosure (three items), ''How much does this person like or love you?'' for affection (three items), and ''How often do you turn to this person for support with personal problems?'' for emotional support (three items). Because these four subscales were highly correlated (*r*s ranged from .39 to .80) and all examined the parent–child relationship, scores on all four subscales were averaged to create an overall relationship quality subscale for mothers ($\alpha = .85$) and fathers ($\alpha = .88$).

Parent- and child-reported discrepancies of parental legitimate authority were assessed by subtracting parent-reported legitimate authority from child reported, in that positive scores represented children who believed their parents had higher levels of legitimate authority than did their parents; and negative scores representing children who believed their parents had lower levels of legitimate authority than did their parents.

# Results

## Correlations and mean differences as a function of domain and reporter

Correlations were conducted between dependent variables (see Table 1) and suggested that for emerging adults' reports of mother variables, there were negative and weak correlations between relationship quality and the three types of control, and moderate correlations between the three types of control. For emerging adult reports of father variables, there were negative and weak correlations between relationship quality and the three types of control, and moderate correlations between the three types of control.

Correlations between legitimate authority and dependent variables as well as means and standard deviations of dependent variables are presented in Table 1. It should be noted that perceptions of legitimate authority (regardless of domain) were positively correlated with behavioral control, helicopter parenting, and parent–child relationship quality, although correlations varied as a function of reporter. Although correlations between parent and child reports of legitimate authority as a function of domain were not shown in Table 1 for parsimony, there were significant correlations between child and mother ($r$s ranging from .21 to .27, $p < .001$), child and father ($r$s ranging from .18 to .29, $p < .01$), and mother and father ($r$s ranging from .36 to .54, $p < .001$) reports of legitimate authority.

Legitimate authority was examined in two ways to gain an understanding of patterns and mean differences. First, repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were used to determine whether means differed as a function of domain (analyses were conducted separately for each reporter). Results of the repeated measures ANOVAs suggested that emerging adults rated the highest level of legitimate authority in the moral and prudential domains (which did not differ from one another), followed by the social conventional and the personal domains. Mothers and fathers rated the highest levels of legitimate authority in the prudential domain, followed by the moral, social-conventional, and personal domains (see Table 2, means in columns).

Second, to determine whether means of legitimate authority differed as a function of reporter, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; employing the MIXED procedure in SPSS) was used because of the dependent nature of the data. This approach was used to account for the clustering or nesting of individual respondents (emerging adults, fathers, and mothers) within families. Independent variables were respondent with child gender. Dependent variables were the four domains of legitimate authority. Results of the HLM suggested that, in all four domains, both mothers and fathers rated legitimate authority higher than did their emerging adult child. In addition, in the moral and social-conventional domains, fathers rated legitimate authority higher than mothers did (see Table 2, means in rows). It should be noted that there were no main effects of child gender and no interactions between child gender and reporter for any of the analyses.

## Cluster analysis of emerging adults' perceptions of legitimate authority

In an attempt to identify different groups of emerging adults as a function of their own perceptions of parental legitimate authority, a cluster analysis was conducted using the Ward method of agglomeration with squared Euclidean distance. This approach attempts to maximize the differences between clusters by treating each individual case

**Table 1.** Correlations between legitimate authority and dependent variables.

| | Maternal behavioral control | Paternal behavioral control | Maternal psychological control | Paternal psychological control | Maternal helicopter parenting | Paternal helicopter parenting | Maternal relationship quality | Paternal relationship quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moral legitimate authority (CR) | .16*** | .16*** | −.04 | −.04 | .25*** | .22*** | .21*** | .26*** |
| Prudential legitimate authority (CR) | .12** | .20*** | −.08 | .01 | .25*** | .25*** | .27*** | .18*** |
| SC legitimate authority (CR) | .19*** | .27*** | .01 | .07 | .30*** | .32*** | .15** | .20*** |
| Personal legitimate authority (CR) | .17*** | .23*** | −.08 | −.01 | .24*** | .26*** | .12* | .13** |
| Moral legitimate authority (MR) | .21*** | .22*** | .07 | .03 | .21*** | .24*** | −.01 | .10 |
| Prudential legitimate authority (MR) | .28*** | .25*** | .08 | .03 | .22*** | .22*** | .01 | .10 |
| SC legitimate authority (MR) | .28*** | .30*** | .11* | .04 | .24*** | .25*** | −.01 | .09 |
| Personal legitimate authority (MR) | .27*** | .28*** | .12* | .04 | .21*** | .21*** | .00 | .05 |
| Moral legitimate authority (FR) | .17** | .24*** | .07 | .15** | .21*** | .19*** | .04 | .02 |
| Prudential legitimate authority (FR) | .26*** | .26*** | .11* | .09 | .26*** | .23*** | .10 | .08 |
| SC legitimate authority (FR) | .23*** | .26*** | .07 | .14* | .21*** | .22*** | .03 | .08 |
| Personal legitimate authority (FR) | .30*** | .32*** | .11 | .18*** | .21*** | .24*** | −.05 | −.04 |
| Maternal behavioral control | — | | | | | | | |
| Paternal behavioral control | .75*** | — | | | | | | |
| Maternal psychological control | .40*** | .16*** | — | | | | | |
| Paternal psychological control | .24*** | .39*** | .37*** | — | | | | |
| Maternal helicopter parenting | .50*** | .43*** | .17*** | .15*** | — | | | |
| Paternal helicopter parenting | .42*** | .52*** | .08 | .15** | .81*** | — | | |
| Maternal relationship quality | −.14** | −.04 | −.39*** | −.11* | .10* | .10* | — | |
| Paternal relationship quality | −.04 | −.01 | −.20*** | −.38*** | .08 | .25*** | .49*** | — |
| M(SD) | 2.01(.89) | 1.92(.88) | 1.36(.43) | 1.32(.42) | 2.01(.81) | 1.84(.76) | 3.79(.83) | 3.30(.95) |

Note. CR: child report, MR: mother report, FR: father report, SC: social-conventional.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

302

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of legitimate authority by domain and reporter.

| Domain | Child, M (SD) | Mother, M (SD) | Father, M (SD) | F value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moral | 2.83 (1.32)[a] | 3.31 (1.24)[b] | 3.50 (1.15)[c] | 28.82*** |
| Prudential | 2.78 (1.18)[a] | 3.61 (1.10)[b] | 3.68 (1.06)[b] | 75.86*** |
| Social-conventional | 2.54 (1.10)[a] | 2.89 (1.20)[b] | 3.13 (1.17)[c] | 25.26*** |
| Personal | 1.75 (.90)[a] | 2.20 (1.03)[b] | 2.25 (1.07)[b] | 31.80*** |
| F value | 139.13*** | 237.05*** | 192.87*** | |

Note. F value on the row represents difference as a function of reporter. F value in the column represents difference as a function of domain. For reporter differences, superscripts in a given row with differing letters are different at $p < .05$. For domain differences, all values in each column were statistically different from one another for mother and father. For child, there was not a significant difference between moral and prudential domains.
***$p < .001$.

as a separate cluster and then combining the most similar clusters systematically until there is one all-inclusive cluster (Ward, 1963). This procedure was conducted on the four social domains (personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral), with domain scores standardized to ensure that classification would not be impacted by differences in scale variability. Because a definitive approach to determining the optimal number of clusters is not agreed upon (Milligan & Cooper, 1985), we used a number of approaches. First, hierarchical dendrograms and agglomeration coefficients were examined. Dendrograms revealed that there were between two and four clusters, and examination of agglomeration coefficients suggested three to four clusters (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). However, one of the objectives of hierarchical cluster analysis is to maximize interpretability, so we also carefully examined the three- and four-cluster solutions to determine whether they were meaningfully distinct on a conceptual level. It appeared that the fourth cluster was merely a small subset of the second and largest cluster and was not conceptually distinct. More specifically, although mean values of parental legitimate authority were statistically different in the fourth cluster, the overall patterns were not meaningfully different from that of the second cluster, suggesting a slightly more extreme version of the second cluster, but not a conceptually different group of individuals. In addition, none of the demographic or outcome variables used in the current study were statistically different between the two clusters when the four-cluster solution was examined. Thus, given the small size of the additional cluster and the lack of conceptual clarity, the three-cluster solution was determined to be the most appropriate (Figure 1).

Cluster 1 ($n = 46$, 11%) consisted of emerging adults who had scores above the mean in all four domains [moral (.90), prudential (1.23), social-conventional (1.17), and personal (1.87)]; so this cluster will be referred to as *Parental Control*, because these emerging adults perceived their parents to have legitimate authority in all four domains. Cluster 2 ($n = 286$, 66%) consisted of emerging adults who had scores slightly above the mean for all domains except for personal, which was below the mean [moral (.24), prudential (.25), social-conventional (.23), and personal (−.09)]; so this cluster will be referred to as *Shared Control*, because these emerging adults perceived their
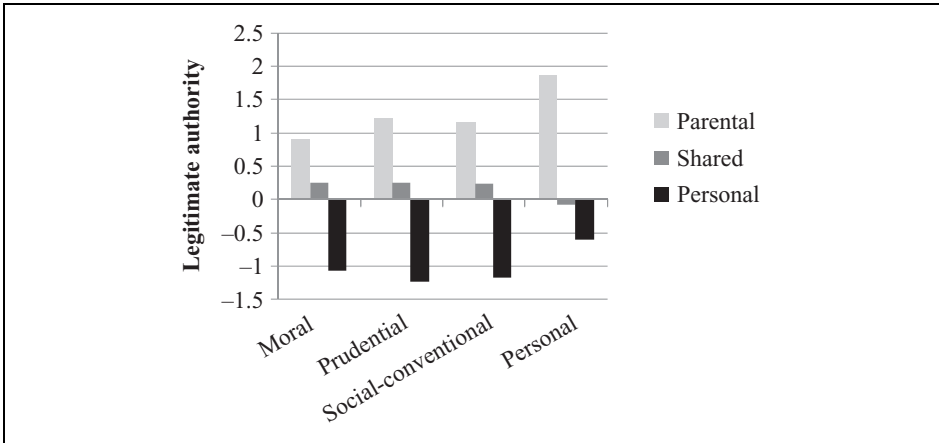
**Figure 1.** Three-cluster solution of parental legitimate authority in four domains.

parents to have moderate legitimate control in some areas, but not others. Cluster 3 ($n =$ 103, 24%) consisted of emerging adults who had scores below the mean in all four domains [moral ($-1.08$), prudential ($-1.25$), social-conventional ($-1.18$), and personal ($-.62$)]; so this cluster will be referred to as *Personal Control*, because these emerging adults did not perceive their parents as having legitimate control in any domain.

## Outcomes as a function of cluster membership

A number of descriptive analyses were conducted to examine distinctions between clusters on various demographic outcomes (e.g., age, gender, race, site, parent participation, residence, and perceptions of adulthood). $\chi^2$ analyses suggested no gender, site, or residence differences as a function of cluster, but found a significant difference as a function of race, parent participation, and perceptions of adulthood. For race, 20% of Asians (compared with 9% of European Americans and 7% of other) were in the Parental Control cluster ($\chi^2(4) = 17.38$, $p < .01$). However, Asians only represented 33% of individuals in the Parental Control cluster, so we cannot assume this cluster is made up of primarily Asian emerging adults. For parent participation, 72% of children in the Parental Control cluster had both parents participate, compared with 56% in the Shared Control and 44% in the Personal Control cluster ($\chi^2(4) = 10.53$, $p < .05$). In terms of perceptions of adulthood, 38% of those in the Personal Control cluster reported feeling like they had reached adulthood, compared with 20% of those in the Shared Control and 28% of those in the Parental Control cluster. Interestingly, the majority (71%) of those in the Shared Control cluster answered the perceived adulthood question "in some ways yes, in some ways no" compared with approximately 50% of individuals in both the Parental and Personal Control clusters ($\chi^2(4) = 16.68$, $p < .01$). An ANOVA was conducted to determine whether age differed as a function of cluster membership, and results suggested that those in the Personal Control cluster ($M = 20.41$, $SD = 2.67$) were slightly older than were those in the Shared Control ($M = 19.38$, $SD = 1.63$) cluster, but

not those in the Parental Control cluster ($M = 19.74$, $SD = 1.91$). An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA; controlling for child age) was also conducted to determine whether parental financial support differed as a function of cluster membership, and results suggested that emerging adults in the Personal Control cluster reported lower levels of financial support from parents ($M = 2.69$) than did those in the Shared ($M = 3.18$) and Parental ($M = 3.18$) control clusters (which did not differ from one another), $F(3,431) = 7.19$, $p < .001$.

As further validation of the distinction between clusters, a number of multivariate ANCOVAs (controlling for race, parent participation, and child age) were conducted to determine whether parental control (including behavioral control, psychological control, and helicopter parenting) and parent–child relationship quality differed as a function of cluster membership. An ANCOVA was also conducted to determine whether parent–child discrepancies on perceptions of legitimate authority differed as a function of cluster membership. All these outcomes were assessed separately for mother and father. In terms of control, there was a significant multivariate main effect of cluster membership for both mother ($F(6, 856) = 7.24$, $p < .001$) and father control ($F(6, 852) = 8.17$, $p < .001$). In terms of the parent–child relationship, there was a significant multivariate main effect of cluster membership for both the maternal ($F(4, 858) = 5.51$, $p < .001$) and paternal relationship ($F(4, 854) = 2.56$, $p < .05$). Univariate follow-up analyses suggested that emerging adults in the Parental Control cluster reported the highest level of maternal and paternal behavioral control and helicopter parenting, followed by individuals in the Shared Control cluster and the Personal Control cluster (who did not differ from one another for behavioral control; see Table 3). In terms of the parent–child relationship, emerging adults in the Personal Control cluster reported lower levels of maternal and paternal relationship quality than did emerging adults in the Parental and Shared Control clusters (which did not differ from one another; see Table 3).

Univariate ANCOVAs (controlling for race, parent participation, and child age) were also conducted to determine the level of discrepancy between parent and child reports of legitimate authority as a function of cluster membership. Because patterns were identical across all four domains, discrepancies were averaged across the four domains (separately for mother and father) as a function of cluster membership. For mothers and fathers (respectively), results suggested that those in the Personal Control cluster ($M = -1.39$; $M = -1.54$) had larger discrepancy scores than those in the Parental ($M = .50$; $M = .43$) and Shared ($M = -.36$; $M = -.50$) Control clusters (which were also statistically different from one another for mother and father models); $F(2, 368) = 57.94$, $p < .001$; $F(2, 299) = 48.68$, $p < .001$. Negative values in the Personal and Shared Control clusters suggest that parents reported higher levels of legitimate authority than did children, while positive values in the Parental Control cluster suggests that children reported higher levels of legitimate authority than did parents.

## Discussion

The results of the current study identified three groups of college students, typically in the first year or two of school, which exhibited differing viewpoints regarding the

**Table 3.** Parental control and the parent–child relationship quality as a function of legitimate authority cluster membership.

| Control | Child report of mother | | | | Child report of father | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parental control M (SD) | Shared control M (SD) | Personal control M (SD) | F test | Parental control M (SD) | Shared control M (SD) | Personal control M (SD) | F test |
| Behavioral | 2.28 (1.09)[a] | 2.04 (.85)[a] | 1.80 (.86)[b] | 5.06** | 2.37 (1.14)[a] | 1.93 (.83)[b] | 1.71 (.82)[c] | 9.18*** |
| Psychological | 1.23 (.33) | 1.36 (.41) | 1.40 (.49) | 2.56 | 1.29 (.42) | 1.32 (.42) | 1.34 (.41) | .22 |
| Helicopter | 2.46 (1.13)[a] | 2.04 (.73)[b] | 1.70 (.72)[c] | 15.58*** | 2.44 (1.11)[a] | 1.84 (.68)[b] | 1.58 (.64)[c] | 22.82*** |
| Relationship quality | 3.98 (.74)[a] | 3.89 (.75)[a] | 3.47 (.93)[b] | 10.82*** | 3.52 (.96)[a] | 3.36 (.90)[a] | 3.06 (1.01)[b] | 5.12** |

*Note.* Means with differing letters are significantly different from one another based on least-significant difference post hoc analyses. All analyses control for child age, race, and parental participation.
**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

legitimate authority of their parents in the personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral domains. The three groups included the *Shared Control* group, in which parents retained some degree of legitimate authority in all domains except for the personal domain, the *Parental Control* group, in which children granted parents legitimate authority in all domains, and the *Personal Control* group, in which children did not concede legitimate authority to their parents in any domain. Findings revealed that these groups differed in a number of significant ways, including the extent to which the college students felt like adults, the amount of parental financial support they received, parental behavioral and psychological control, and the quality of the parent–child relationship.

## Shared control group

Based on our findings, it appears that the shared-control approach may be normative for college students and their parents, as two-thirds of participants fell into this group. Results for this group are interesting as they reveal much about the parent–child relationship during this period of transition. Compared to the other groups, those in the shared control group appear to have a quality relationship with parents rather than having parents who are behaviorally or psychologically controlling. Maybe because they tend to see themselves as adults in some ways but not others, they continue to believe that parents have some degree of control in nonpersonal domains of their lives. However, these individuals do not see their parents as being controlling, and, in fact, report a positive relationship with them. It is uncertain why, during a period in which there are increased expectations for autonomy (e.g., Aquilino, 1997), a shared approach to control can appear to work well for such a large portion of young people.

One possibility may have to do with clarity of boundaries. Studies with adolescents suggest that parents are seen in a more positive light and their adolescents have more positive outcomes when parents are able to maintain distinct boundaries between domains in their parenting practices (e.g., take more actions in children's moral or prudential domains than personal domains) than those parents without clear domain boundaries (Padilla-Walker, 2008; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2006). Therefore, it may be that as long as boundaries are clear during this time of ''in-betweenness'' and instability, then parents and children can negotiate issues of authority and get along. Research also suggests that in the context of a positive parent–child relationship, children tend to allow parents much more latitude on particular practices that might otherwise be seen as controlling (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Thus, it is possible that the same parenting behaviors (e.g., monitoring and involvement) are perceived as caring and loving in the context of a positive parent–child relationship, while they might be perceived as negative or controlling in the context of a poor parent–child relationship.

It may also be that college students must reluctantly but acceptingly concede a degree of control in recognition of the financial and other tangible levels (e.g., health insurance, car, a home to return to during semester breaks and summers) of support they may be receiving as college students. It may be that finances are indeed the central defining aspect of the parent–child relationship upon which any level of control hinges, and those in the Shared Control group may have to relinquish some control commensurate with the support they perceive they are receiving. Future work is needed to better understand how

college students in the Shared Control group balance these issues of authority and control with their parents while maintaining a positive relationship.


## Personal control group

Nearly one-fourth of participants did not believe parents had legitimate authority in any domain. This Personal Control group appeared to be distinct not only in the beliefs they had regarding their parents but also in their actual relationships with them. Results revealed that individuals in the Personal Control group reported the lowest levels of parental financial support, and maternal and paternal relationship quality. Furthermore, they appeared to stand out from their peers in the extent to which they felt like adults, as a larger percentage of them reported feeling like adults than any other group. Interestingly, this group did not report overly high levels of parental control, so it is hard to know whether their perception of lack of parental authority may come because they have distanced themselves from their parents, possibly due to relationships they report as being low in quality, or whether their parents have disengaged from the parenting process. Unfortunately, the cross-sectional, correlational nature of our data makes any statements regarding possible directionality in the associations of these variables purely speculative, but the findings certainly portray a group of individuals who do not feel positively about the relationship they have with, or the support they receive from, their parents, which may either lead to or may be a result of them not feeling that their parents have any authority over their behavior.

Another possible explanation is that this group, on average, was slightly older (20.4 years) than the Shared Control group (19.38 years). Thus, it may be that the older one gets, a natural shift in legitimate authority occurs. However, this explanation alone is unlikely to explain these patterns because results held even after controlling for the age of the emerging adult. In addition, results showed that there was a discrepancy between parents and children in this group in the extent to which children and parents, respectively, see parents as having authority. In other words, parents in this group claim greater authority over their children than children grant to them. This could very well be the context (disagreement over control/autonomy) for the poor relationship quality reported by emerging adults in this group. Indeed, work in adolescence has found that parents restrict adolescents' personal domain more than adolescents want (Smetana et al., 2005) and make more decisions for their children in every domain rather than letting children maintain autonomy (Cumsille et al., 2006). Furthermore, when adolescents perceive parents to be exercising control in inappropriate domains (e.g., personal) they report greater conflict with parents (Smetana, 1995, 2006).

Given that overly intrusive parenting (as perceived by adolescents) is problematic in adolescence, it is no surprise that it would lead to problems in the relationship in emerging adulthood given it is a time in which young people are striving for greater autonomy from parents (e.g., Aquilino, 1997, 2006; Schnaiberg & Goldenberg, 1989). This may be especially true for this group of college students if they see their parents as otherwise disengaged, but still trying to assert authority. Therefore, the findings contribute to the literature by demonstrating that for emerging adults attending college who

deem all domains off limits to parents, there appears to be some problems in the parent–child relationship.

## Parental control group

Findings for the smallest group in the study (the Parental Control group; 11% of participants) point to individuals who are unique when compared with their peers because they tend to grant parents legitimate authority in all domains. Even the majority of *adolescents* reject overly intrusive parental involvement in the personal domain (Smetana et al., 2005), so this group stands out in the amount of authority they extend to parents in all the domains, including the personal. When compared with their peers, this group reported the highest level of maternal and paternal helicopter parenting as well as paternal behavioral control. Thus, at first glance, it appears that young people are granting authority to parents who are reciprocally being controlling. However, the results of the discrepancy analyses found that children reported higher levels of legitimate authority than did parents. Taken together, the findings for this group point to a potentially complex relationship between parents and children.

On the one hand, children may be failing to take on the responsibility of more independence by relying on parents to make decisions and direct their behaviors in various domains of their lives, such that they are eliciting more control on the part of their parents. On the other hand, parents may be so over-controlling that they are hindering the adaptive development of their children as they are transitioning out of the home. Indeed, research with children and adolescents has found that when parents exercise developmentally inappropriate levels of control, children (especially girls) are more likely to be dependent on parents, lacking interest in exploration, and being overwhelmed by challenging tasks (Nix et al., 1999; Thompson, Hollis, & Richards, 2003). Hence, parental control during emerging adulthood may exacerbate these tendencies (being dependent on parents, feeling overwhelmed so relying on parents) because the challenges facing young people may seem daunting to them (leaving home, challenges with roommates, selecting majors, etc.). In sum, parental control may hinder the development of their children's skills, sense of efficacy, or social functioning (e.g., Allen et al., 2002), which then leads these children to rely even more on their parents for direction and guidance, resulting in bidirectional processes between parents and children that may be potentially problematic in emerging adulthood. Again, these are purely speculative explanations aimed at generating possible research questions for future work in this area.

## Limitations and future directions

The findings and this discussion point to additional areas of emphasis for future work including several which would address limitations to the current study. First, when assessing domain of legitimate authority, future studies should rely on self-reported or perceived domain placement. For example, given the developmental age of the current participants, we classified school performance-related behaviors in the social-conventional domain, but choice of college major in the personal domain. However, it is possible that these issues, and many others, are perceived by college students and parents to be

multifaceted in nature (e.g., falling into multiple domains), which highlights the need for future research to determine *perceived* domain placement as a potentially more accurate assessment of legitimate authority as a function of domain. Second, findings showed that a disproportionate number of Asian American emerging adults fell in the Parental Control group. Hence, future work is needed to examine the role of ethnicity in the area of legitimate authority, including issues such as cultural differences in both parents' and young people's beliefs, attitudes, goals, and values. Likewise, similar differences may be the result of religious diversity, and therefore, future work should pay greater attention to subgroup differences (ethnic and religious) within the US in general as well as cultural and religious differences in different countries. Third, there were many more women than men in our sample. Although there were not meaningful gender differences found in the current study, it will be important for future work to more closely examine the role that gender may play in this important aspect of the parent–child relationship. Next, as the sample for this study and the discussion have focused on college students, especially young college students, future work needs to focus on noncollege students regarding the control they perceive their parents to have in various domains of their lives. Indeed, those young people not attending college may vary widely in how they are spending their time. The amount of perceived legitimate authority may vary drastically depending on whether a young person is working, living at home, or appearing directionless in his or her day-to-day behaviors. Hence, there is much to be learned about those who are not attending college. Finally, longitudinal work is needed that begins in adolescence (or younger) and can better tap into the developmental shifts that might happen in young people's views regarding legitimate authority. Similarly, because of the relatively young average age in our sample, longitudinal work is also needed to assess how views regarding parental authority change across the college years. Longitudinal work would also be able to directly examine questions of direction of effects that we were only able to speculate about in the current discussion of our findings.

Despite the limitations of our study and the questions the findings raised for future work, the results of this study make a significant contribution to our understanding of the role that parents may play in the lives of their children from the perspective of emerging adults. Specifically, we found that, as in adolescence (Cumsille et al., 2006), three groups of emerging adults could be identified that varied in their perceptions of the legitimate authority of their parents in the personal, social-conventional, prudential, and moral domains. These groups ranged from ceding control to parents in all domains (Parental Control group), to sharing control with parents in some domains (Shared Control), and to seeing parents as not having any control in any domain (Personal Control). The study also contributes to the literature by revealing that these groups differ in a number of significant ways, including in perception of adult status, parental financial support, behavioral and psychological control, and the quality of the parent–child relationship.

## Authors' note

## Funding

## References

Allen, J. P., Hauser, S. T., O'Connor, T. G., & Bell, K. L. (2002). Prediction of peer-rated adult hostility from autonomy struggles in adolescent family interactions. *Development and Psychopathology*, *14*, 123–137.

Aquilino, W. S. (1997). From adolescent to young adult: A prospective study of parent–child relations during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *59*, 670–686.

Aquilino, W. S. (2006). Family Relationships and Support Systems in Emerging Adulthood. In J. Arnett & J. Tanner (Eds.) *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp. 193–217). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.7.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 469–480.

Arnett, J. J. (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Barber, B. K. (1996). Parental psychological control: Revisiting a neglected construct. *Child Development*, *67*, 3296–3319.

Barry, C. M., Padilla-Walker, L. M., Madsen, S. D., & Nelson, L. J. (2008). The impact of maternal relationship quality on emerging adults' prosocial tendencies: Indirect effects via regulation of prosocial values. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*, 581–591.

Broderick, C. B. (1993). *Understanding family process: Basics of family systems theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Campo, A. T., & Rohner, R. P. (1992). Relationships between perceived parental acceptance rejection, psychological adjustment, and substance abuse among young adults. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, *16*, 429–440.

Carbery, J., & Buhrmester, D. (1998). Friendship and need fulfillment during three phases of young adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *15*, 393–409.

Collins, W., Gleason, T., & Sesma, A. R (1997) Internalization, autonomy, and relationships: Development during adolescence. In J. E. Grusec & L. Kuczynski (Eds.). *Parenting and children's internalization of values: A handbook of contemporary theory* (pp. 78–99). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Cumsille, P., Flaherty, B. P., Darling, N., & Martinez, M. L. (2006). Chilean adolescents' beliefs about the legitimacy of parental authority: Individual and age-related differences. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *30*, 97–106.

Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, *113*, 487–496.

Fingerman, K. L., Cheng, Y., Wesselmann, E. D., Zarit, S., Furstenberg, F., & Birditt, K. S. (2012). Helicopter parents and landing pad kids: Intense parental support of grown children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *74*, 880–896.

Guion, K., Mrug, S., & Windle, M. (2009). Predictive value of informant discrepancies in reports of parenting: Relations to early adolescents' adjustment. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *37*, 17–30.

Hair, J. F., Jr., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (1998) *Multivariate data analysis* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Holahan, C. J., Valentiner, D. P., & Moos, R. H. (1994). Parental support and psychological adjustment during the transition to young adulthood in a college sample. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *8*, 215–223.

Jackson, C. (2002). Perceived legitimacy of parental authority and tobacco and alcohol use during early adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *31*, 425–432.

Johnson, W. L., Giordano, P. C., Manning, W. D., & Longmore, M. A. (2011). Parent–child relations and offending during young adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*, 786–799.

Kenny, M. E., & Sirin, S. R. (2006). Parental attachment, self-worth, and depressive symptoms among emerging adults. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *84*, 61–71.

Kerr, M., & Stattin, H. (2000). What parents know, how they know it, and several forms of adolescent adjustment: Further support for a reinterpretation of monitoring. *Developmental Psychology*, *36*, 366–380.

LeMoyne, T., & Buchanan, T. (2011). Does "hovering" matter? Helicopter parenting and its effect on well-being. *Sociological Spectrum: Mid-South Sociological Association*, *31*, 399–418.

Manzeske, D. P., & Stright, A. D. (2009). Parenting styles and emotion regulation: The role of behavioral and psychological control during young adulthood. *Journal of Adult Development*, *16*, 223–229.

McKinney, C., & Renk, K. (2008a). Differential parenting between mothers and fathers: Implications for late adolescents. *Journal of Family Issues*, *29*, 806–827.

McKinney, C., & Renk, K. (2008b). Multivariate models of parent-late adolescent gender dyads: The importance of parenting processes in predicting adjustment. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, *39*, 147–170.

Milligan, G. W., & Cooper, M. C. (1985) An examination of procedures determining the number of clusters in a data set. Psychometrika *50*, 159–179.

Nelson, L. J., & Barry, C. M. (2005). Distinguishing features of emerging adulthood: The role of self-classification as an adult. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *20*, 242–262.

Nelson, L. J., Padilla-Walker, L. M, Carroll, J. S., Madsen, S., Barry, C. M., & Badger, S. (2007). If you want me to treat you like an adult, start acting like one!' Comparing the criteria for adulthood among emerging adults and their parents. *Journal of Family Psychology, 21*, 665–674.

Nelson, L. J., Padilla-Walker, L. M., Christensen, K. J., Evans, C. A., & Carroll, J. S. (2011). Parenting in emerging adulthood: An examination of parenting clusters and correlates. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*, 730–743.

Nix, G. A., Ryan, R. M., Manly, J. B., & Deci, E. L. (1999). Revitalization through self-regulation: The effects of autonomous and controlled motivation on happiness and vitality. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *35*(3), 266–284.

Nucci, L., Guerra, N., & Lee, J. (1991). Adolescent judgments of the personal, prudential, and normative aspects of drug usage. *Developmental Psychology*, *27*, 841–848.

Padilla-Walker, L. (2008). Domain-appropriateness of maternal discipline as a predictor of adolescents' positive and negative outcomes. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *22*, 456–464.

Padilla-Walker, L., & Carlo, G. (2006). Adolescent perceptions of appropriate parental reactions in moral and conventional social domains. *Social Development*, *15*, 480–500.

Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Nelson, L. J. (2012). Black Hawk Down? Establishing helicopter parenting as a distinct construct from other forms of parental control during emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*, 1177–1190.

Padilla-Walker, L. M., Nelson, L. J., Madsen, S. D., & Barry, C. M. (2008). The role of perceived parental knowledge on emerging adults' risk behaviors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*, 847–859.

Patock-Peckham, J. A., & Morgan-Lopez, A. A. (2009). The gender specific meditational pathways between parenting styles, neuroticism, pathological reasons for drinking, and alcohol-related problems in emerging adulthood. *Addictive Behaviors*, *34*, 312–315.

Schnaiberg, A., & Goldenberg, S. (1989). From empty nest to crowded nest: The dynamics of incompletely-launched young adults. *Social Problems*, *36*(3), 251–269.

Smetana, J., Crean, H. F., & Campione-Barr, N. (2005). Adolescents' and parents' changing conceptions of parental authority. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *108*, 31–46.

Smetana, J. G. (1995). Parenting styles and conceptions of parental authority during adolescence. *Child Development*, *66*, 299–316.

Smetana, J. G. (2006). Social–cognitive domain theory: Consistencies and variations in children's moral and social judgments. In M. Killen & J. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 119–153). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Smetana, J. G., & Asquith, P. (1994). Adolescents' and parents' conceptions of parental authority and personal autonomy. *Child Development*, *65*, 1147–1162.

Smetana, J. G., & Daddis, C. (2002). Domain-specific antecedents of parental psychological control and monitoring: The role of parenting beliefs and practices. *Child Development*, *73*, 563–580.

Steinberg, L., & Silverberg, S. B. (1986). The vicissitudes of autonomy in early adolescence. *Child Development*, *57*, 841–851.

Thompson, A., Hollis, C., & Richards, D. (2003). Authoritarian parenting attitudes as a risk for conduct problems: Results from a British national cohort study. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *12*(2), 84–91.

Turiel, E. (1983). *The development of social knowledge: Morality and convention*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Turiel, E. (2006). The development of morality. In N. Eisenberg, W. Damon, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (Vol. 3, 6th ed., pp. 789–857). Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Turner, E. A., Chandler, M., & Heffer, R. W. (2009). The influence of parenting styles, achievement motivation, and self-efficacy on academic performance in college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *50*, 337–346.

Turner, A., Sarason, I., & Sarason, B. (2001). Exploring the link between parental acceptance and young adult adjustment. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *25*, 185–199.

Urry, S., Nelson, L. J., & Padilla-Walker, L. M. (2011). Mother knows best: Psychological control, child disclosure, and maternal knowledge in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Family Studies*, *17*, 157–173.

Van Wel, F., Ter Bogt, T., & Raaijmakers, Q. (2002). Changes in the parental bond and the well-being of adolescents and young adults. *Adolescence*, *37*, 317–333.

Ward, J. H. (1963). Hierarchical grouping to optimize an objective function. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *58*, 236–244.

Wintre, M. G., & Yaffe, M. (2000). First-year students' adjustment to university life as a function of relationships with parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *15*, 9–37.